

Title of Report:	Portrush & Portstewart Town Plans
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 November 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Information
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

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£10,000
Included in Current Year Estimates	Yes
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	Officer time

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	N/A

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 completion of the draft Town Plans for Portrush & Portstewart.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The development of Town Plans for Portrush and Portstewart is an action outlined under the Prosperity & Place Business Plan 2025-26 for Town & Village Management.
- 2.2 Following a procurement exercise in March 2025, Third Sector Connect was awarded the contract to deliver the project and produce individual Town Plans for Portrush and Portstewart respectively.
- 2.3 Specifically, the contract required the consultants to :
- *Undertake a site assessment of each town;*
 - *Facilitate a minimum of two consultation meetings per town open to all residents of the town to determine local views on the town and the opportunities for future development;*
 - *Prepare and produce a concise report presenting the key findings from the consultation, including town issues and potential projects;*
 - *Identify a range of innovative ideas to address the current problems and issues;*
 - *Prepare and agree with the respective Town Centre Forum an Action Plan to reflect the consultations detailing practical and sustainable initiatives to include timescales, costings and identification of partners, key stakeholders and potential sources of funds; and*
 - *Prepare a Small Town Plan, which must be agreed with the Town Centre Forum.*
- 2.4 Following a socio-economic review of each town, the community engagement was conducted over three phases i.e.:
- a. **Phase 1** – Early engagement with Town Centre Management project officers, on site location visit and a meeting with the respective Town Centre Forum members.
 - b. **Phase 2** – Community engagement and consultation – to gather views from a broad cross-section of the community, a detailed public survey was released and outreach visits to each town to distribute information flyers and speaking directly to business owners and residents.
 - c. **Phase 3** – Analysis of all feedback. Development of draft Town Plan with key findings and a draft Action Plan for each town.
- 2.5 Next Stage is to present the findings to Portrush & Portstewart Town Centre Forums to confirm agreement on the way forward with the key themes and actions that have emerged.

3.0 Outcome

Please see **Annex A** and **Annex B** for further details on each of the individual Town Plans for Portrush and Portstewart, which will act as a guide to the work of Town & Village Management and the wider Council remit going forward.



**Causeway
Coast & Glens**
Borough Council

ANNEX A

Portrush Town Plan

2025

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Strategic Context	5
3.0	Socio-Economic Profile	9
4.0	Community Engagement	13
5.0	Key Findings	15
6.0	Action Plan	22
7.0	Implementation & Monitoring Plan	32



1.0 Introduction

Portrush, located on a stunning peninsula along the Atlantic coast has long held its place as one of Northern Ireland's most iconic seaside towns. The name 'Portrush' is derived from the Irish *Port Rois*, meaning "promontory port," a reflection of its dramatic setting and historic maritime significance. Portrush is both a beloved holiday destination and a dynamic, evolving community.



Nestled along the breathtaking Causeway Coast, Portrush has long been one of Northern Ireland's most iconic seaside towns. Built around a rocky peninsula stretching into the Atlantic Ocean, the town is surrounded by sandy beaches and dramatic cliffs, giving it a unique charm that has drawn visitors for generations. Whether you're arriving by train, car, or even on foot along the coastal paths, Portrush immediately welcomes you with its lively streets, friendly locals, and incredible views.

Portrush has three golden beaches: East Strand, West Strand, and White Rocks. East Strand, with its wide shoreline and boardwalk, is a favourite for locals and surfers alike. It's backed by dunes and a bustling promenade, offering both spaces to relax and places to grab a coffee or ice cream. West Strand, often quieter, is great for families and walkers, while White Rocks offers a more dramatic setting, flanked by limestone cliffs and caves carved by the sea. All three are Blue Flag beaches, a mark of their cleanliness and quality.



The town's centre is packed with character, from its colourful shopfronts to well-loved cafés and amusements. The harbour area, close to Ramore Head, provides a quieter spot for a walk, a bite to eat, or simply a chance to watch the boats come and go. Beyond its beaches and amusements, Portrush is home to one of the world's top golf courses, Royal Portrush Golf Club which has hosted The Open Championship twice and continues to attract international visitors and players.

Portrush may be known for its tourism, but it's also a thriving town, full of local pride and a strong sense of community. Whether you're here for a holiday, a day trip, or to stay for good, there's something in Portrush's unique mix of natural beauty, history, and hospitality that leaves a lasting impression.

1.2 Portrush Town Plan

Portrush attracts significant tourist footfall and the town benefits from excellent connectivity through road and rail networks, enhancing its appeal for both commuters and holidaymakers. However, with this popularity has come pressure. Like many scenic towns across Northern Ireland, Portrush is grappling with the consequences of rising second home ownership, the creation of short-term lets, and a housing market increasingly out of reach for local families.

This Town Plan has been developed in close collaboration with local people. Through public consultation sessions, focus groups, one-to-one interviews, and community workshops, the views and voices of residents, business owners, and community groups have been captured and shaped into key actions.

There is also a clear desire for better support for young people and families. Many participants in the consultation called for improved recreational facilities, such as a new skatepark, accessible community spaces, and youth-focused programming. Similarly, community organisations such as REACH and SWELL were praised for their contributions but expressed a need for more consistent support and infrastructure to grow their impact.

The Town Centre Forum which will lead on the delivery of the Town Plan was raised frequently during discussions, residents were keen to hear more about the forum, how they could get involved and how to raise issues with them.

Environmental sustainability and accessibility were also strong themes. Residents expressed concern about waste management during peak tourism seasons, traffic congestion, and lack of accessible paths and crossings for older people and those with mobility issues.

This Town Plan presents a balanced vision for the future of Portrush: one that acknowledges the town's world-class appeal while securing its foundations as a liveable, inclusive place for those who call it home. The plan prioritises affordable housing, youth development, environmental resilience, and community empowerment. It is rooted in the belief that Portrush's greatest strength lies not just in its landscape, but in the pride and creativity of its people.



Key Assets	Community Groups
• Portrush Library (Libraries NI) • Portrush Medical Centre (GP Practice) • Portrush Primary School • Carnalridge Primary School • Mill Strand Integrated Primary School • St. Patrick's Primary School • Portrush RNLI Lifeboat Station • Portrush Yacht Club • Royal Portrush Golf Club • Portrush Hockey Club • Portrush Football Club • Causeway Chamber of Commerce • The White House, Portrush • Portrush Harbour Office • NIFRS Portrush Fire Station • The Arcadia • Portrush Bowling Club • Waterworld (vacant, future redevelopment opportunity) • Dunluce Centre (vacant, future redevelopment opportunity) • Lansdowne Crescent (public space) • Skatepark • West Strand & East Strand Beaches • Ramore Head • The Skerries (offshore islands)	• Portrush Heritage Group • Portrush Community Playgroup • REACH Portrush • SWELL Portrush • Portrush Youth Club • Portrush Men's Shed • Portrush Parent & Toddler Group • Portrush Coastal Rowing Club • Portrush Scouts & Guides • Friends of the Arcadia • Portrush Music Society • Portrush Environmental Group • Portrush Christmas Lights Committee • Portrush Clean Coasts Volunteers • Portrush Walking Group • Portrush Gardening Club • Portrush Skatepark Advocacy Group • Portrush Integrated Education Supporters • Portrush Mental Health & Wellbeing Network • Portrush Youth Sailing Trust • North Coast Arts Collective • Portrush Coastal Conservation Society

Table 1: Summary of Key Assets and Community Groups Located in Portrush (as highlighted through research and consultation)

2.0 Strategic Context

Before outlining the priorities and actions for Portrush it's important to understand how this Town Plan fits into the wider planning framework. The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Community Plan 2017–2030 provides the overarching strategic vision for the entire Borough. It sets out long-term goals for improving the health, wellbeing, economy, and environment across the area.

This Town Plan doesn't exist in isolation, it has been designed to align with and support the delivery of the Community Plan's objectives, but at a more localised level. By doing so, we ensure that local needs and ambitions feed into the broader regional strategy, and that public services and investment can be better coordinated to create real, lasting impact in our towns.

2.1 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. The 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 this 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 across key themes including health, education, housing, public safety, community services, the economy, and the environment.

Operating on both a borough-wide and neighbourhood level, the Plan is a collaborative initiative shaped through extensive engagement with residents, groups, and stakeholders. This ensures the Plan is grounded in the community's voice and responds directly to the unique challenges and strengths of each area.

The Community Plan identifies three overarching long-term strategic Population Outcomes, aligned with 12 Intermediate Outcomes under the draft Programme for Government:

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 is a sustainable 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 Town Plan, which is specifically tailored to address the unique characteristics and requirements of the individual towns 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 Town Plan contributes to each of the three strategic Population Outcomes as follows:

A Healthy Safe Community

The Town Plan seeks to create a connected and caring community where people feel safe, supported, and able to thrive. This will be achieved through a strong focus on public health, inclusive spaces, and access to vital support services. Priorities include improving access to healthcare, investing in mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and strengthening community safety.

This outcome also involves enhancing recreational spaces, creating opportunities for intergenerational interaction, and promoting volunteering and peer support. Community policing, awareness campaigns, and services for vulnerable groups are also key features. Through these actions, the Town Plan contributes to a place where people can live independently, feel secure, and build strong social connections.

A Sustainable Accessible Environment

The Town Plan promotes a high quality environment that is inclusive, resilient, and celebrated for its natural beauty. This includes preserving green spaces, improving biodiversity, and ensuring infrastructure supports access and sustainability.

Local ambitions include the introduction of enhanced waste reduction, better pedestrian and cycling routes. Accessibility is at the heart of this outcome, from ensuring that buildings and paths are inclusive, to improving transport links and signage for all users. The Town Plan aims to future-proof the area environmentally while ensuring everyone benefits from it equally.

A Thriving Economy

The Town Plan supports a vibrant and inclusive local economy where businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers have the opportunity to grow. It encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly among young people, while supporting existing local businesses through tailored programmes, events, and improved infrastructure.

Skills development, lifelong learning, and digital connectivity are key priorities. The Plan supports initiatives that promote year-round economic activity, sustainable tourism, and local supply chains. By creating conditions for investment, job creation, and enterprise, the Town Plan contributes directly to a fairer and more resilient economy.

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

In conclusion, the Town Plan represents more than just a local action framework, it is an extension of the shared vision for the Borough, set out in the Community Plan. Through aligning local priorities with regional strategies, the Town Plan ensures that each town plays a meaningful role in delivering long-term change.

This strategic alignment provides a unique opportunity to strengthen community resilience, promote sustainable development, and ensure that every resident, regardless of background or circumstance, can benefit from coordinated investment and collective progress across the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

2.2 Wider Strategic Alignment

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

Theme	Policy Alignment
Facility Development	Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure)
Youth Programmes	- 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)
Town Aesthetics	Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure)
Community Safety	Community Safety Framework (Department of Justice)

3.0 Socio-Economic Profile

The statistics referenced in this Town 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.

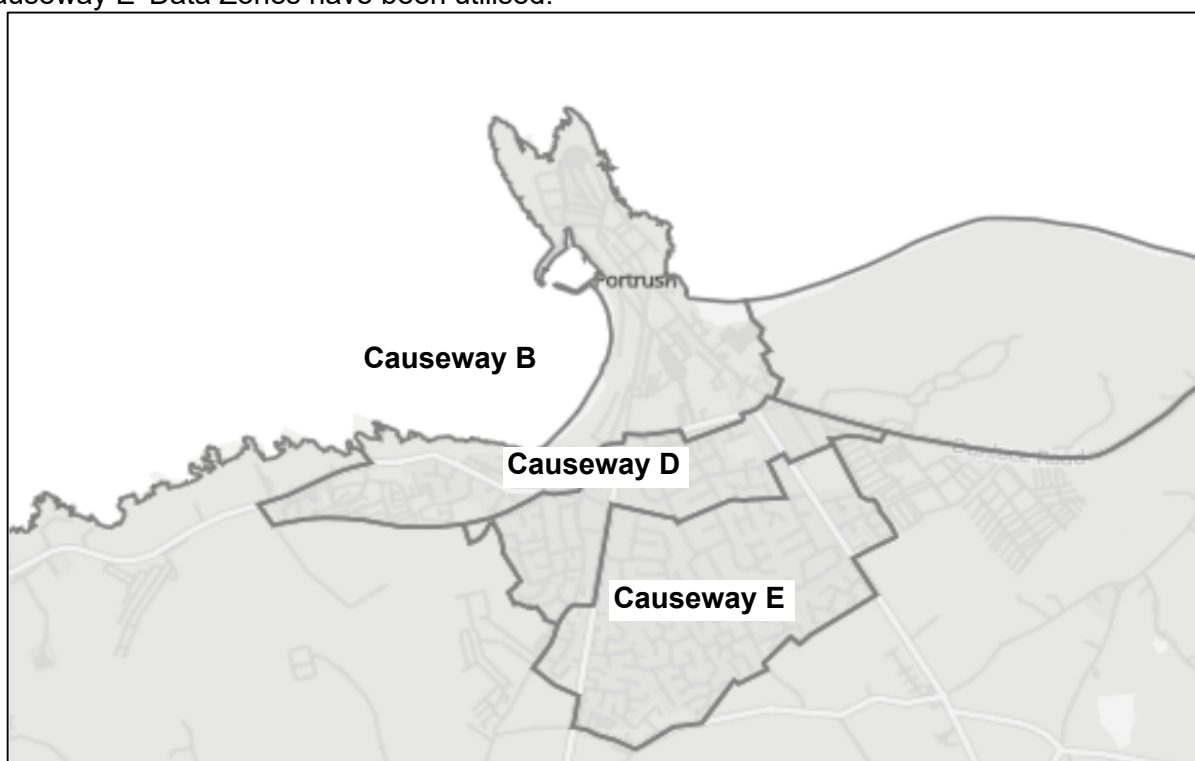
3.1 Statistical Profile

Introduction

In order to gain further insights into key aspects of life in Portrush, to analyse trends and also to undertake various comparative analyses at a sub-regional and regional level, a range of statistics pertaining to the population of Portrush, drawn from various public sources have been collected and presented below.

Statistical Geography

For the purposes of this analysis, Census data from the 'Causeway B,' 'Causeway D' and 'Causeway E' Data Zones have been utilised.



These areas include citizens residing on the main Portrush peninsula, as well as the populated residential areas surrounding the main tourist and commercial centre.

The total population across these three statistical districts is 6,150.

Age Profile

Geography	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Portrush	15%	24%	37%	23%
Causeway DEA	15%	27%	34%	23%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	18%	29%	34%	19%
Northern Ireland	19%	31%	32%	17%

The age distribution of the population of Portrush town is in line with the Causeway DEA averages but is notably more elderly than the Causeway Coast & Glens Council and Northern Ireland averages.

Health

Geography	Very Good or Good Health	Activities Not Limited by a Long Term Health Problem
Portrush	77%	74%
Causeway DEA	78%	75%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	77%	74%
Northern Ireland	79%	76%

Overall, a slightly lower percentage of the population of Portrush enjoys 'Very Good' or 'Good Levels' of Health compared to national averages. Similarly, the percentage of the population whose day-to-day activities are not limited by a long term health problem are marginally lower than the Northern Ireland rate.

Qualifications and Employment

Area	No Qualifications	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 and Above	Apprenticeship or Other
Portrush	21%	6%	14%	14%	36%	9%
Causeway DEA	23%	5%	13%	16%	35%	8%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	26%	6%	14%	16%	29%	9%
Northern Ireland	24%	6%	14%	16%	32%	8%

The population of Portrush boasts a higher level of educational attainment when compared to District Electoral Area, Council and National Averages.

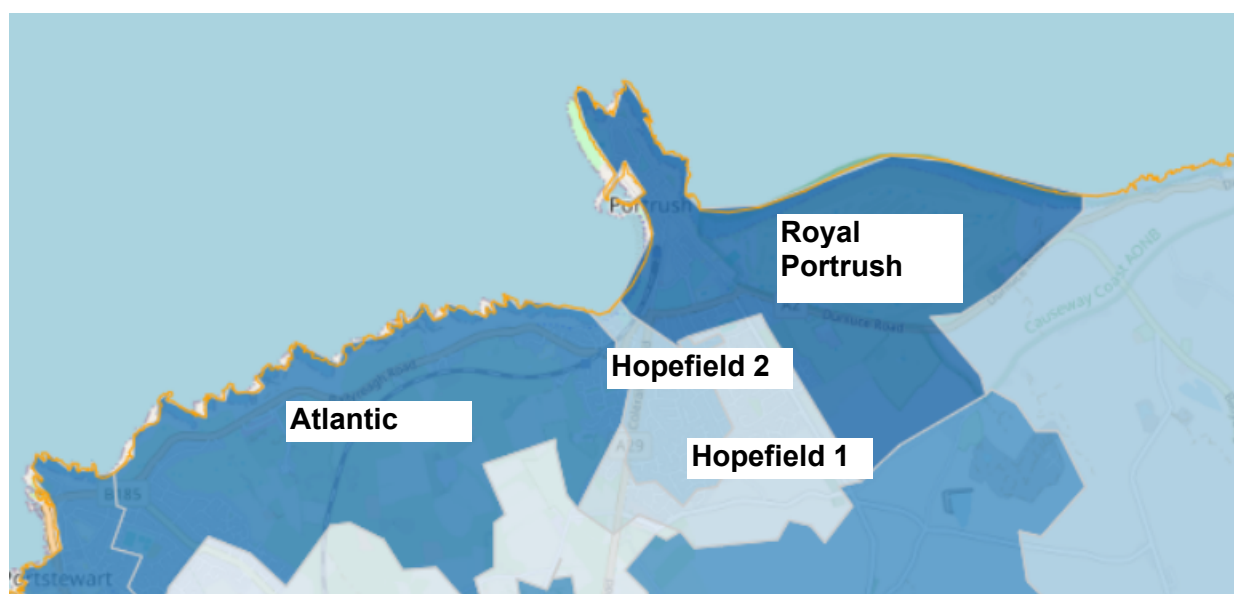
A lower percentage of the town population (21%) hold no qualifications when compared to the Northern Ireland population overall (25%). Likewise, the percentage of the town's population with a Level 4 qualification or above (36%) is four percentage points higher than the 32% average within the national populace.

Area	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Hotels and Restaurants	Transport	Finance	Public Sector	Other
Portrush	1%	6%	5%	29%	4%	12%	36%	5%
Causeway DEA	5%	7%	6%	27%	5%	12%	33%	4%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	5%	8%	11%	23%	5%	11%	33%	4%
Northern Ireland	4%	9%	8%	21%	7%	14%	33%	4%

Overall, the labour market of Portrush displays similarities with the rest of the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area in that the largest sector of local employment is Public Sector and other government jobs. However, where a key difference arises is that the Portrush area has a markedly higher percentage of the local population (29%) employed in Hotels and Restaurants compared to the Northern Ireland average of 21%, highlighting a strong reliance on the hospitality sector in the town.

Deprivation Analysis

In 2017, the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency published its findings in relation to the relative levels of deprivation facing communities across NI. This analysis was conducted at Super Output Area (SOA) level, enabling detailed analysis of smaller populations to be carried out. For the purpose of this analysis, the population of Portrush comprised of 4 Super Output Areas, namely: Atlantic, Hopefield 1, Hopefield 2 and Royal Portrush.



The key findings and rankings are outlined below:

- In terms of the overall Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM), the SOA of Royal Portrush was the most deprived of the 4 SOAs and ranked 105th most deprived out of the 890 SOA's in Northern Ireland. The income domain in Royal Portrush ranked 32nd, falling within the top 5% most deprived in NI. The Employment domain ranked 140th.

- Of particular concern was that Royal Portrush also ranked 18th in terms of Crime and Disorder Deprivation, falling amongst the 5% most deprived neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland in this regard.
- Pockets of deprivation are also evident in the Atlantic SOA with the income domain ranked 124th.
- The least deprived SOA in Portrush was Hopefield 1 with a MDM of 626.

Conclusion

Overall, the analysis of relevant statistics for Portrush highlight a number of key considerations, including:

- The age profile of the local population is more elderly than CCG Council or Northern Ireland National averages;
- The overall health and skills profile of the local population is marginally poorer than local averages;
- Educational attainment and skills in the area are higher than District Electoral Area, Council and National Averages.
- Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour stands out as a strand of deprivation and disadvantage which is of particular concern.



4.0 Community Engagement

Phase 1- Project Inception and Early Engagement

The development of the Portrush Town Plan began with an project kick off meeting between the appointed consultants, Third Sector Connect, and officers from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. This session was used to establish key objectives, discuss local context, and agree timelines. Shortly after, a site visit to Portrush was carried out to observe the town's layout, existing infrastructure, community assets, and areas of interest first-hand. An introductory meeting was then held with the Portrush Town Centre Forum to initiate dialogue, gain early insights, and shape the approach to community engagement. This phase also included desktop research to identify relevant strategies, policy documents, and statistical data that would inform the Town Plan, ensuring alignment with the overarching Community Plan and regional development goals.

Phase 2- Community Engagement and Consultation

To gather views from a broad cross-section of the community, a detailed public survey was created and launched on the Council's digital engagement platform. This was widely promoted through multiple channels, including the Council's official social media platforms, targeted email communications, and networks shared by the Town Centre Forum. In addition, consultants undertook outreach visits to Portrush, distributing promotional leaflets and speaking directly to residents in local shops, cafés, and community spaces to encourage participation.

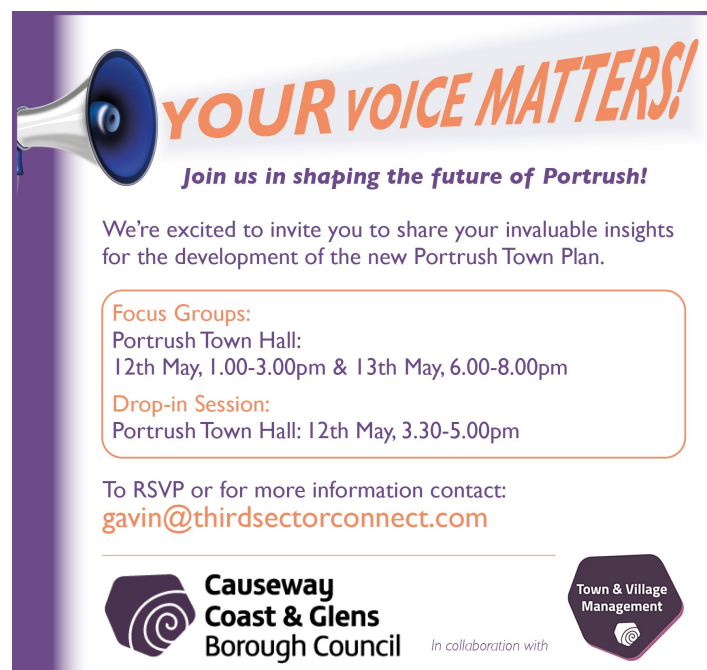


Figure 4: Social Media Graphic to Communicate Consultation Events

A series of structured focus groups were then delivered to facilitate deeper conversation and collective insight. These were held in both the afternoon and evening to ensure accessibility for a wider audience. During the sessions, participants worked in groups to carry out a SWOT analysis of the town, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They also discussed and prioritised specific actions they wished to see reflected in the Town Plan. To ensure inclusivity, a drop-in session was also held in the town, providing an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to speak with the consultants one-to-one in a more informal setting.

Phase 3: Analysis, Drafting, and Refinement

Following the close of the engagement period, all feedback, both from the survey and in-person sessions, was analysed in detail. Key themes, priorities, and concerns were identified and grouped under emerging objectives. A draft Town Plan was then developed based on these findings and shared with Council officers and the Town Centre Forum for review. Feedback was collected and incorporated into a refined version of the plan, ensuring the final document accurately reflects the aspirations and needs of the Portrush community.



5.0 Key Findings

The town of Portrush is home to a diverse range of assets that contribute to its identity, quality of life, and community resilience. Throughout the consultation process, local residents, business owners, and community groups identified a wide variety of features, spanning natural, commercial, cultural, and community spaces, that are viewed as essential to the life and vibrancy of the town. These assets not only support everyday activity but also offer opportunities for future development, heritage promotion, tourism, and social wellbeing.

The following list outlines the key community assets identified through public engagement, reflecting what people value most in their town and where they see potential for investment and improvement.

Commercial Assets	Healthcare Assets	Natural Assets
• Independent retail shops and cafés • Hospitality sector including local hotels, restaurants, and bars (especially seasonal trade) • Tourism-related businesses including surf schools, bike hire, and B&Bs • Artisan and seasonal markets during summer months • Town centre business mix offering local services (e.g. salons, bakeries, convenience shops)	• Portrush Medical Centre (GP services) • Local pharmacies offering NHS and private services • Community mental health support groups (referenced in consultation) • Access to nearby health hubs in Coleraine for extended services	• East Strand and West Strand beaches • White Rocks beach and caves • Ramore Head and coastal path • The Skerries islands (offshore) • Gregg's Pool (historic outdoor bathing pool) • Dunes and wildlife habitats along the coast
Heritage Assets	Community Assets	Other Assets
• The Arcadia building (Victorian promenade heritage) • Portrush Town Hall • Barry's Amusements / Curry's Fun Park (cultural landmark) • Lifeboat Station (RNLI history dating back to 1860) • Portrush Heritage Group • Historic railway station and architecture	• REACH • SWELL community group • Local churches and church halls used for community functions • Public toilets and visitor facilities • Youth Club and Men's Shed • Flowerbeds and civic enhancements supported by local volunteers	• Train station (transport connectivity to Coleraine and Belfast) • Bus routes and stops connecting the town regionally • Waterworld (vacant, earmarked for redevelopment) • Dunluce Centre (unused but strategic site) • Lansdowne area (open space and event site) • Skatepark • Town car parks and Harbour Office

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

Recreational Activities	Sporting Activities	Youth Activities
- Walking groups and community fitness events - Beach clean-up programmes and environmental volunteer efforts - Seasonal public art and music performances - Use of beach and cliff path for leisure and wellbeing - Community cinema nights and creative workshops	- Royal Portrush Golf Club and associated tournaments - Portrush Football Club - Portrush Hockey Club - Surfing clubs and water sport hire companies - Portrush Yacht Club – sailing, regattas, and the charity raft race - Gym and personal training classes run in community spaces	- Portrush Youth Club (weekly sessions and seasonal events) - Scouts and Guides - Youth involvement in beach clean-ups and events - Programmes through REACH and SWELL - Informal peer groups using skatepark and beach areas - Limited access to indoor space for winter youth programming (noted as a gap)

5.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Strong community spirit and civic pride - Vibrant tourism identity with international appeal - World-class natural environment including beaches, headlands, and marine views - Longstanding recreational heritage (golf, amusements, festivals) - Variety of independent businesses and cafés - Established community groups (REACH, SWELL, Heritage Group) - Accessible via road, rail, and public transport - Popularity of annual events (e.g. NW200,	- High proportion of second homes and short-term lets impacting housing supply - Limited availability of affordable housing for locals - Underuse of key public assets (e.g. Waterworld, Dunluce Centre) - Seasonal economy with reduced activity in winter months - Lack of accessible, indoor youth spaces - Insufficient clarity and awareness of the role of the Town Centre Forum - Poor condition of certain public realm areas and town signage - Limited parking and congestion during peak season - Overreliance on tourism without year-round economic balance - Perceived lack of investment in basic infrastructure (toilets, lighting, bins)

Opportunities	Threats
• Redevelopment of Waterworld and Dunluce Centre as community/tourism hubs • Expansion of active travel options (cycle paths, walkways, park & stride) • New and improved skatepark • Enhanced role and visibility of the Town Centre Forum • Creation of new community events outside peak season • Potential for improved youth services and skatepark facilities • Promotion of Portrush as a heritage and environment destination • Strong base for creative industries and social enterprises • More inclusive community hub spaces (multi-use for different ages) • Green and sustainable tourism development • Better signage, accessibility, and public realm improvements	• Further decline in year-round population due to housing unaffordability • Continued rise of short-term holiday lets reducing rental availability • Risk of losing local identity due to overtourism • Impact on school enrolment and services from demographic shifts • Pressure on healthcare and emergency services in peak season • Climate-related coastal erosion and environmental pressures • Lack of youth engagement leading to increased anti-social behaviour • Risk of disengagement if consultation outcomes are not followed through • Dependence on external funding to deliver large-scale infrastructure improvements

5.2 Survey Findings

In order to support the findings which emerged through consultation, and also in order to ensure that as many individuals from the Portrush community as possible to provide their views and feedback on the strengths and challenges associated with their town.

The survey was open for responses between 8th May and 23rd May 2025, and was promoted via social media, posters, posters and leaflets drops and direct emails. During this time, and as a result of these efforts, a total of 249 responses were received.

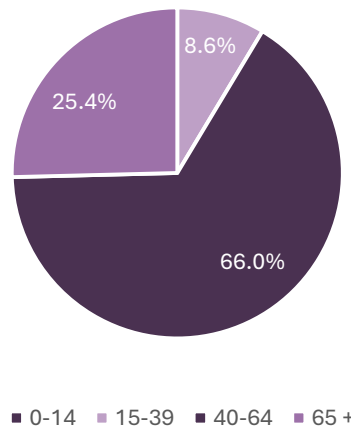
1. Background of Respondents

For the purposes of monitoring responses and ensuring a representative sample of respondents, some background information was requested from participants. This included Age, Gender and Residential Status.

Age

The age profile of respondents is presented as follows:

Age Profile of Respondents



The majority of respondents (66%) were aged between 40 and 64, with just over a quarter (25.4%) aged over 65. Just 8.6% of respondents were under the age of 40.

Gender

A majority of respondents (60.7%) were female, compared to 36.9% males.

Residential Status

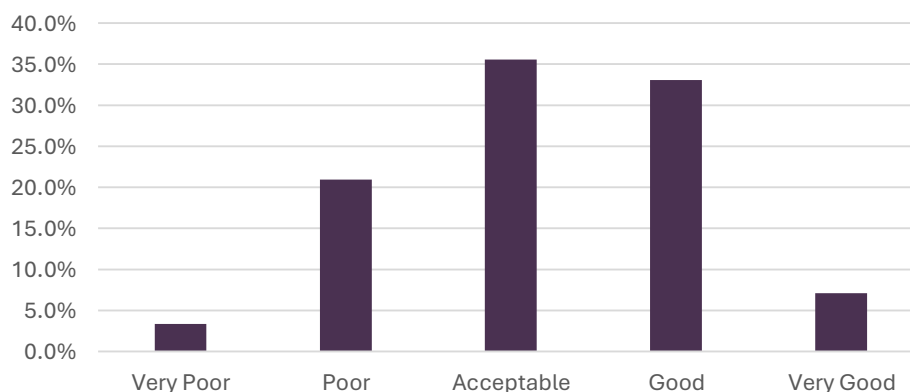
A sizeable majority of respondents (203, 82.9%) noted that Portrush was their primary, permanent residence, with a further 18 respondents (7.3%) stating that whilst they owned a home in the town, it was as a second home.

24 responses (9.8%) of responses were received from those living outside of Portrush in nearby towns and villages such as Coleraine, Ballymoney, Portballintrae and Portstewart.

Perceptions and Opinions of Portrush

The prevailing sentiments amongst those participating in the survey leaned towards Portrush being a positive place to live, though the most commonly selected individual response was that the town was an Acceptable (35.6%)

What is your perception of Portrush as a place to live?



Moreover, when asked to rate how likely they would be to recommend Portrush to family and friends for living and visiting, the most commonly selected response (26.3% of respondents) was that respondents would give the town a 'ten' out of ten. The average score received was 7.3.

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on a range of aspects relating to life in the town, with a summary of sentiments expressed presented below:

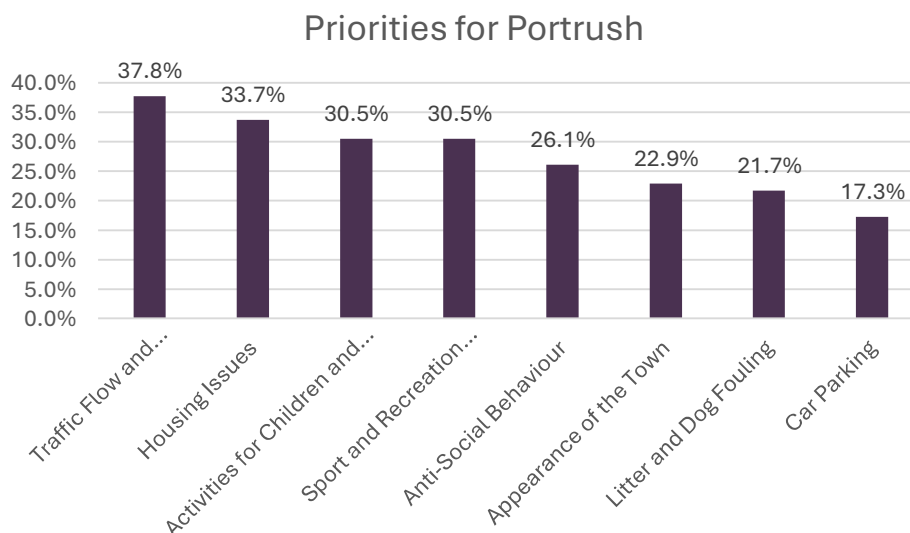
Aspect of Everyday Life	Commentary
Cleanliness of Streets	36.0% of respondents believed the cleanliness of Portrush's streets to be 'Poor'. Just 18.2% of respondents recorded a positive response to this aspect of town life.
Condition of Streets	The most common prevailing opinion that the condition of Portrush's roads was 'Acceptable'. This view was held by 47.0% of participants
Accessibility	Whilst over one third of respondents (33.6%) believed accessibility of amenities in Portrush were 'Poor' or 'Very Poor,' the most commonly held opinion amongst survey respondents was that accessibility was 'Acceptable'.
Pedestrian Friendly	The attitudes expressed towards the friendliness of Portrush towards pedestrians were generally positive, with 33.6% of participants believing this aspect of life in the town to be 'Good' or 'Very Good'. 40.5% believed that Portrush's Pedestrian Friendliness was 'Acceptable'.
Availability of Public Transport	Availability of public transport was considered to be one of the more positive aspects of life in the town, with almost half of respondents (45.7%) believing the frequency of bus and train services to be 'Good' or 'Very Good'.
Traffic Congestion	Traffic Congestion stood out as one of the most negative aspects of life in Portrush. A sizeable majority of respondents (76.1%) believed that congestion in the town was 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'. Only 5.3% of those surveyed responded positively.
Street Lighting	Overall, there were no concerns raised in relation to the provision of Street Lighting in Portrush, with 38.1% of respondents claiming that this aspect of the town was 'Good' or 'Very Good,' and a further 52.6% believing it to be 'Acceptable'.
Availability of Car Parking	Similar to traffic congestion, the availability of car parking was considered, by survey respondents, to be one of Portrush's biggest challenges as 48.6% of participants believed Car Parking in the town to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Town Signage	The provision of signage in Portrush was considered to be of an adequate standard, with 34.8% of respondents considering signage in the town to be 'Good' or 'Very Good' and a further 53.0% believing provision to be 'Acceptable'.
Open Space	Opinions regarding the quality and quantity of Open Space in Portrush were generally positive, with 41.3% of participants believing this to be 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

Aspect of Everyday Life	Commentary
Play Park	Positive sentiments were expressed at the number and condition of play parks in the town, with 38.1% of respondents believing play provision to be 'Good' or 'Very Good' and a further 29.1% believing provision to be 'Acceptable'.
Community and Sporting Facilities	Survey participants highlighted a strong displeasure with the provision of sporting facilities in Portrush, with over three quarters (76.5%) believing current availability to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'. This was one of the poorest ranked aspects of life in Portrush across all thematic areas surveyed. The provision of community spaces was also deemed to be inadequate, with 47.4% of respondents believing current amenities to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Aligned with the findings of statistical research undertaken, anti-social behaviour was a notable concern amongst survey participants, with 69.6% of survey participants highlighting that ASB levels in Portrush were 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Vandalism	Vandalism was also considered to be a social challenge in Portrush, with 56.3% of survey respondents considering the levels of damage in the town to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Littering	Concerns were raised as to the levels of littering which are prevalent in Portrush, with 79.4% of respondents considering litter in the town to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Derelict Buildings	With 81.4% of respondents believing dereliction in Portrush to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor,' regenerating Derelict Buildings stood out as the most negatively perceived aspect of life in the town amongst survey respondents.
Friendliness of People	The friendliness of the town's people was cited as one of its strongest assets, with 73.3% of survey participants believing this feature of the local population to be 'Good' or 'Very Good'. Similarly, a majority of respondents (59.9%) also believed that the atmosphere in the town was 'Good' or 'Very Good'.
Economy	Aspects of the town's economy which were viewed in a positive light by those participating in the survey included: • 66.8% of respondents believed that the Hospitality Provision in the town was 'Good' or 'Very Good'. • 37.2% of respondents believed that the Quality of Shops was 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

Aspect of Everyday Life	Commentary
	Aspects of the town's economy which were viewed less favourably by survey respondents included: 32.4% of respondents believed that the Variety of Shops was 'Poor' or 'Very Poor', compared to 27.5% who recorded positive sentiments. Views on the town's evening economy were split - 33.2% of respondents believed that the town's evening economy was 'Good' or 'Very Good', however the same percentage also believed this feature of Portrush to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Culture	The survey results highlighted a scope for improvement in terms of the quality of arts, culture and community events held in the town, with 43.7% of respondents considering current events, programmes and activities to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Digital Connectivity	Overall, digital connectivity was considered to be of an adequate standard by survey respondents, with 38.5% considering provision to be 'Acceptable,' the most commonly selected response.

Conclusions from Survey

Concluding the survey, respondents were asked to provide information regarding their top three priorities for the town.



In line with previous sentiments expressed, Traffic Flow and Congestion emerged as the most commonly selected response, with Housing, Activities for Children and Young People as well as Sport and Recreation Facilities also emerging as the most salient issues in need of addressing.



6.0 Summary of Priorities

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

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & INCLUSION	Establish a strong, representative Portrush Town Forum and community-led decision-making platforms.	• To rebuild trust with residents, ensure transparency, and better reflect local voices in planning and service delivery. • Community repeatedly expressed feeling ignored or excluded from Council decisions. • To raise public awareness of the role, reach and function of the Portrush Town Forum. • To enable the Portrush Town Forum to constructively engage with Stakeholders including Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to enhance communication between community, council and other stakeholders.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT	To address the urgent need for Affordable Housing and Sustainable Development in Portrush, a coordinated set of actions must be implemented including: • A robust, community-led housing strategy should be developed to increase the availability of social and affordable homes, ensuring that local families can remain in the town. This is essential to stabilise school enrolments, sustain community life, and reduce the outflow of young adults. • A cap on short-term holiday lets, including Air BnBs and second homes, is needed to prevent Portrush from becoming a seasonal "ghost town." Policies must prioritise year-round residency and support long-term tenancy.	• House prices are pushing families out, school numbers are dropping, and second homes dominate. • Urgent action is required to keep the town liveable for year-round residents. • Community life is being inhabited due to lack of local population all year round. • Affordable housing and sustainable development are urgently needed in Portrush to address deepening social, economic, and community challenges. • Local families are being priced out as property prices and rents have risen sharply due to second homes, holiday lets (like Air BnBs), and speculative development. This has made it nearly impossible

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	- Planning regulations should be strengthened to prevent overdevelopment and protect the town's unique character. Developments must reflect the needs of residents rather than catering solely to high-end tourism or speculative investment. - Affordable housing is also vital to support the local economy. Key workers in hospitality, health, and education need access to homes within the town to maintain essential services and reduce reliance on commuting. - Ultimately, delivering inclusive and sustainable development will help Portrush remain a vibrant, multi-generational, and economically balanced community well into the future.	for local families, key workers, and young people to afford to stay in the town. - Impact on Schools and Services as families leave, local schools face falling enrolments, threatening their future viability. Essential services also suffer from staff shortages because workers can't afford to live locally. - Seasonal Living Is Eroding Community Life as many homes in Portrush are empty for much of the year, creating "ghost streets" and undermining the town's sense of community. This seasonal pattern weakens social cohesion and year-round economic activity. - Unsustainable Development Pressures with large apartment blocks and luxury developments being built without adequate infrastructure planning (e.g. sewage, parking), placing strain on local services and damaging the town's character. - Future Generations at Risk without intervention, young people growing up in Portrush won't be able to afford to live there as adults. These risks breaking generational ties and turning Portrush into a town for tourists only, not residents.
YOUTH & FAMILY FACILITIES	Youth and Family Facilities in Portrush are vital to supporting the wellbeing, development, and inclusion of children, young people, and families. Currently, there is a lack of year-round, accessible spaces for recreation, learning, and connection—particularly for teenagers. Investment is needed in modern, inclusive facilities such as a permanent skate	- Lack of Year-Round Activities as young people have few safe, engaging places to go, especially during poor weather, leading to boredom and antisocial behaviour. - Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing with Access to inclusive, active spaces helps improve mental health and reduce isolation for both children and parents.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	park, upgraded play areas, and youth centres offering wet-weather activities. These facilities will reduce antisocial behaviour, promote physical and mental health, and ensure that Portrush is a welcoming place for families to live and grow. Creating safe, engaging spaces will help retain young residents and strengthen the town's long-term resilience.	- Without suitable facilities, families are less likely to stay in or move to Portrush, impacting schools and community sustainability. - Addressing Generational Gaps by creating spaces where young people feel valued fosters intergenerational understanding and long-term community cohesion. - Encouraging Healthy Lifestyles with facilities like skate parks, play areas, and sports grounds to promote physical activity and positive development. - Lack of year-round youth provision is leading to antisocial behaviour and disengagement. Children and young people repeatedly cited few safe, inclusive places to gather.
TRAFFIC & PARKING	Implement a traffic management plan, introduce residents' parking schemes, and control campervan congestion. Improved traffic management measures to address issues caused by car cruisers and heavy traffic. Potential Solutions to Traffic & Parking issues in Portrush focus on improving access, safety, and quality of life for residents and visitors. Key actions might include introducing a residents' parking permit scheme to prioritise local access, especially during peak tourist seasons. A comprehensive traffic management plan is needed to reduce congestion, improve emergency access, and discourage anti-social driving behaviours such as car	- Congestion is impacting emergency access, putting lives at risk during peak periods and major events. - Residents struggle to find parking, especially during tourist season, reducing quality of life and access to services. - Campervans and car cruisers cause disruption, with illegal or inconsiderate parking and anti-social behaviour. - Lack of clear traffic management leads to confusion, poor flow, and frustration for both locals and visitors. - Over-reliance on cars during busy periods increases pollution, noise, and safety concerns in residential and town centre areas.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	cruising. Additional solutions include designated campervan parking zones, better signage and pedestrian routes, and exploring weekend pedestrianisation in key areas. These measures will create a safer, more accessible town centre and reduce pressure on local infrastructure.	
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	To enhance Environmental Sustainability in Portrush, a range of practical and community-driven actions are needed: • Expand recycling infrastructure across the town by installing clearly marked bins for waste separation in public spaces and at key tourist locations. • Introduce community-led green initiatives, such as allotments, community gardens, and tree planting projects, to promote biodiversity and local food growing. • Implement town-wide litter reduction strategies, including public education campaigns, visitor signage, and increased enforcement on dog fouling and illegal dumping. • Promote sustainable travel options, such as improved cycle paths, mobility scooter hire, and park-and-ride schemes to reduce car dependency and pollution. • Support a circular economy by encouraging local businesses to reduce single-use plastics, reuse materials, and participate in community clean-up and environmental awareness efforts. Together, these actions will create a cleaner, greener Portrush that protects its natural beauty and strengthens	Environmental Sustainability is needed in Portrush for several important reasons: • Litter and pollution are damaging the natural environment, particularly the beaches, coastline, and public spaces that are central to the town's identity and tourism appeal. • Waste infrastructure is inadequate, with a lack of recycling options and overflowing bins during busy periods contributing to environmental degradation. • The town's biodiversity is under pressure, and there is a growing need to protect green spaces and support local wildlife through more sustainable practices. • Air and noise pollution from traffic and tourism are impacting the quality of life for residents, especially during peak season. • Local people want to take ownership of their environment, and better support is needed for community-led sustainability projects that promote pride, health, and resilience.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	environmental responsibility among residents and visitors alike.	
HERITAGE, ARTS & CULTURE	The Portrush Town Plan can address Heritage, Arts & Culture by celebrating the town's rich history and creative identity while making its assets more visible and accessible to residents and visitors. Key actions may include: • Restoring and repurposing culturally significant buildings such as the Dunluce Centre, Waterworld, and the Town Hall for community use, exhibitions, and cultural events. • Developing a heritage trail with digital and physical information boards, linking landmarks like the harbour, Arcadia, and coastal zones to promote cultural tourism and local pride. • Supporting public art and sculpture installations that reflect local stories, maritime heritage, and community identity offering opportunities for photo points and visitor engagement. • Hosting annual arts and culture festivals, such as wellness, food, and music events, to build a year-round cultural calendar that supports local creatives and draws footfall in the off-season. • Encouraging collaboration with local groups like Coastal Vocals, theatre companies, and heritage organisations to co-design inclusive cultural programming.	Addressing Heritage, Arts and Culture in Portrush is essential to preserve the town's unique identity, promote community pride, and diversify its appeal beyond seasonal tourism. There are culturally significant buildings that are underused or at risk of dereliction, and local cultural groups lack dedicated space and support. There is strong community interest in celebrating Portrush's maritime history, creative talent, and shared traditions. Enhancing visibility through trails, events, and public art will help reconnect residents with their heritage, attract visitors year-round, and support local artists and organisations. Without action, valuable cultural assets may be lost, and the town's character further eroded by overdevelopment.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	These actions will help preserve Portrush's unique character, strengthen community pride, and diversify the town's appeal beyond summer tourism.	
TOURISM MANAGEMENT	The Portrush Town Plan can address Tourism Management by creating a more balanced, respectful, and sustainable relationship between visitors and the local community. Key actions might include: • Developing a year-round tourism strategy that supports off-season events, cultural festivals, and family-friendly activities to reduce reliance on peak summer trade. • Introducing visitor education campaigns that promote responsible behaviour, environmental awareness, and respect for residents especially around littering, parking, and noise. • Regulating short-term lets and second homes through planning policy to protect housing for permanent residents and prevent "ghost town" conditions in winter. • Improving infrastructure for tourism, including designated campervan parking, enhanced public toilets, and clearer signage, to reduce pressure on local services. • Encouraging partnerships with local businesses to retain visitor spending within the town and ensure tourism directly benefits the community through employment and investment.	Tourism Management is needed in Portrush to ensure that the benefits of tourism do not come at the expense of the local community. Seasonal overcrowding, littering, and disrespectful visitor behaviour are straining local infrastructure and services. Short-term lets and second homes are driving up housing costs, pushing out local families and creating a "ghost town" effect in the off-season. Without better planning and balance, tourism risks undermining the very community and environment that attract visitors in the first place. A managed, sustainable approach is essential to protect Portrush's identity, improve quality of life, and support the local economy year-round.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	By implementing these measures, the plan can help ensure that tourism continues to support Portrush's economy while preserving its liveability, identity, and long-term sustainability.	
LOCAL ECONOMY & BUSINESS SUPPORT	The Portrush Town Plan should address Local Economy & Business Support by strengthening year-round trade, reducing seasonal dependency, and empowering local entrepreneurs. Key actions may include: • Providing targeted grants and training to help local businesses adapt to digital marketing, extend operating seasons, and improve resilience. • Developing a year-round events calendar to attract consistent footfall and reduce reliance on summer tourism, supporting shops, cafes, and service providers. • Introducing reduced business rates or incentives for independent and long-standing local traders to ease financial pressures and encourage retention. • Improving signage, infrastructure, and wayfinding to make town centres more accessible and inviting for shoppers and visitors alike. • Ensuring fair trading conditions during major events by prioritising local vendors over outside traders and promoting ratepayer participation. • Enhancing collaboration between Council and businesses, ensuring local voices are heard in decisions that impact economic development and town planning.	• The town's economy is highly seasonal, making it difficult for local businesses to survive outside the summer months. • Rising costs and limited support are putting pressure on independent shops and traders, risking closures and job losses. • Major events often benefit external traders, leaving local businesses feeling excluded and unsupported. • Digital skills and marketing gaps prevent many small businesses from reaching wider audiences or adapting to changing consumer habits. • A strong local economy supports community resilience, job creation, and a vibrant town centre that serves both residents and visitors year-round.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	These steps will help build a more sustainable, inclusive, and locally driven economy, ensuring Portrush thrives beyond peak season.	
PUBLIC SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE	The new Portrush Town Plan can significantly improve Public Services & Infrastructure by addressing long-standing gaps, modernising essential facilities, and ensuring they meet the needs of both residents and visitors. It can: • Reopen and repurpose underused buildings like Waterworld and the Dunluce Centre to provide vital community and cultural spaces. • Improve public amenities such as toilets, bins, seating, and access points, particularly in high-footfall areas like beaches and town parks. • Upgrade roads, pavements, and lighting to enhance safety, accessibility, and the overall appearance of the town. • Strengthen digital and transport infrastructure, including better signage, public transport links, and Wi-Fi access. • Ensure long-term maintenance and accountability for public assets, encouraging Council transparency and regular investment in infrastructure upkeep. These improvements will help create a town that is safer, more inclusive, and better equipped to support everyday life and seasonal demand.	• Many essential facilities are outdated or underused, such as Waterworld, Dunluce Centre, and public toilets, limiting their benefit to the community. • Basic infrastructure is under strain, with issues like poor road conditions, inadequate lighting, and insufficient bins highlighted during peak tourist periods. • Access and safety are concerns, especially for elderly residents, families, and people with disabilities, due to uneven pavements, lack of seating, and poor signage. • Seasonal pressures overwhelm services, including waste management, parking, and public toilets, making the town less enjoyable for both locals and visitors. • There is a strong call for transparency and accountability, as residents feel Council-owned buildings and services are not being maintained or used in the public interest.

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
HEALTH & WELLBEING	The Portrush Town Plan can positively impact Health & Wellbeing by creating a more inclusive, supportive, and active community environment. It can: • Provide safe, accessible spaces for physical activity, such as a skate park, walking routes, and improved sports facilities. • Support mental health and social connection through the creation of community hubs, youth centres, and inclusive programming for all ages. • Promote cleaner air and greener surroundings by managing traffic, reducing pollution, and expanding green spaces and tree planting. • Increase access to services and support for vulnerable groups, including those affected by social isolation, disability, or neurodiversity. • Encourage a culture of wellbeing through arts, culture, volunteering, and nature-based initiatives that build resilience and pride in place. These measures will help Portrush become a healthier, more connected, and more compassionate town.	Health and wellbeing improvements are needed in Portrush to address a range of physical, mental, and social challenges affecting the local community: • Limited facilities for young people and older adults have led to social isolation, inactivity, and a rise in antisocial behaviour. • Mental health concerns are increasing, especially among young men and families under housing and economic stress, yet support is limited and not always visible. • Access to inclusive, welcoming spaces is lacking, particularly for people with disabilities, neurodivergent individuals, and those needing year-round support. • Air and noise pollution from traffic and seasonal overcrowding are negatively impacting quality of life and public health. • Residents are calling for safer, community-focused spaces to meet, exercise, socialise, and access support especially in underused buildings like Waterworld and the Dunluce Centre. Improving health and wellbeing is essential to build a more resilient, supportive, and connected Portrush for all ages and backgrounds.
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	Improving Civic Engagement through the Portrush Town Plan is essential to rebuild trust, strengthen community ownership, and ensure that future decisions genuinely reflect the needs and aspirations of local people. Here's why it matters:	Civic engagement is urgently needed in Portrush because: • Anger and frustration are prevalent with many residents feeling ignored by decision-makers,

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
	- Residents feel unheard and excluded, particularly around planning decisions, housing, and the use of public assets—leading to frustration, apathy, and disengagement. - Stronger relationships between citizens, community groups, and statutory bodies can create more transparent, inclusive, and accountable decision-making. - Civic engagement fosters shared responsibility, encouraging people to contribute to and take pride in the future of their town. - Empowered communities are more resilient, better able to tackle local challenges collaboratively, from housing and youth services to environmental issues. - Building trust in local government and institutions will improve uptake of services, encourage participation in local initiatives, and lead to more effective, sustainable outcomes. In short, improved civic engagement ensures the Town Plan is not just about Portrush, but shaped <i>by</i> and <i>for</i> the people who live there.	especially around housing, development, and the use of public buildings. - There is a breakdown in trust between the community and statutory bodies, with repeated concerns about a lack of transparency, communication, and accountability. - Key planning decisions are seen as top-down, with little or no community involvement, leading to resentment and a sense of powerlessness. - Community groups are stepping in to fill gaps left by public services yet feel unsupported and excluded from formal processes. - Without meaningful engagement, there is a risk of further division, apathy, and missed opportunities to harness local energy, ideas, and solutions for the town's future. Improving civic engagement will help heal divisions, empower residents, and ensure Portrush thrives as a town shaped by its own people.



7.0 Action Plan

Theme	Priority	Actions	Community Benefit	Supporting Partners
Civic Engagement	High	i. Establish a Town Forum reflective of the community. ii. improve Council communication. iii. co-design local initiatives	Builds trust in Council. Empowers residents. Encourages collaboration	Council, REACH, Swell, Town Forum, Local Stakeholders
Affordable Housing & Sustainable Development	High	i. Develop affordable housing strategy with stakeholders including elected representatives. ii. cap short-term lets. iii. review planning policies for sustainable development	Keeps families in town Protects character Provides housing security	Council Planning Dept, NIHE, Local Developers
Youth & Family Facilities	High	i. Develop skate park and youth hub. ii. improve play parks and wet-weather facilities	Supports youth mental health Provides safe and inclusive spaces	Youth Services, Schools, Sports Clubs, Community Groups
Traffic & Parking	High	i. Implement residents' parking permits. ii. Manage campervans. iii. Pilot pedestrianised zones iv. Explore 'park n stride' areas	Improves access and safety Reduces congestion and anti-social driving	PSNI, Infrastructure Dept, Local Residents
Environmental Sustainability	Medium	i. Expand recycling points. ii. Install public bins. iii. create community garden and tree planting schemes iv. Public awareness and education campaign	Cleaner town Promotes climate awareness and green spaces	Environmental NGOs, Council Waste Services, Volunteers

Theme	Priority	Actions	Community Benefit	Supporting Partners
Heritage, Arts & Culture	Medium	i. Restore key culturally significant sites. ii. create digital heritage trail. iii. support public art and local festivals	Preserves heritage. Strengthens identity Engages creative community	Heritage Trust, Arts NI, Local Historians, Cultural Groups
Tourism Management	High	i. Create a year-round tourism plan. ii. introduce visitor education. iii. regulate holiday lets	Reduces seasonal pressure. Improves resident-visitor balance	Tourism NI, Council, Local Businesses, Community Groups
Local Economy & Business Support	High	i. Provide business grants. ii. support digital training. iii. promote all-season events	Strengthens local economy. Retains jobs. Boosts town vitality year-round	Chamber of Commerce, Business Networks, Council
Public Services & Infrastructure	High	i. Reopen/repurpose Waterworld, Dunluce Centre; ii. upgrade toilets, roads, signage iii. Feasibility studies for sites iv. Community consultation	Improves quality of life Ensures inclusive and updated services	Council Services, Community Trusts, Local Contractors
Health & Wellbeing	High	i. Develop inclusive community spaces. ii. improve access to sports and wellbeing programmes	Boosts mental and physical health. Supports vulnerable groups	Health Agencies, Schools, Community Hubs, Sport NI

Note: Portrush Town Forum and CCG should agree timeframes for the above Implementation & Monitoring Plan and seek support to identify / secure funding

8.0 Monitoring and Implementation

The Portrush Town Plan has been designed to be a dynamic and evolving document that reflects the aspirations, needs, and priorities of the Portrush community. The plan is owned by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, ensuring alignment with broader strategic objectives, while being driven by the Portrush Town Centre Forum, which is made up of local residents, elected members, statutory agencies, business owners, and community groups.

To ensure the Town Plan remains relevant, realistic, and responsive to the changing needs of the town, a clear and transparent approach to monitoring and evaluation has been established. This process will be key to tracking the impact of the plan and enabling continuous learning and adaptation.

While the Council retains ownership of the Town Plan, responsibility for monitoring and evaluation will rest primarily with the Portrush Town Centre Forum. The Forum meets regularly and is well positioned to oversee delivery, evaluate progress, and maintain close ties with the wider community.

Each meeting of the Town Centre Forum will include a standing agenda item for reviewing the implementation of the Town Plan. This regular review process will enable:

- Monitoring of project and action delivery
- Alignment checks with community priorities and strategic goals
- Discussion of emerging opportunities or challenges
- Consideration of proposals to update or revise elements of the plan
- Monitoring Framework

Monitoring data will be drawn from Council departments, community partners, statutory agencies, and local businesses. Feedback from residents and stakeholders will also play a critical role in capturing lived experience and community satisfaction.

An annual review of the Town Plan will be coordinated by the Town Centre Forum, in partnership with the Council. This review will assess:

- Delivery of actions and achievement of objectives
- Challenges or barriers encountered, and solutions applied
- Shifts in community needs, economic conditions, or strategic priorities
- Levels of community engagement and satisfaction

Following this review, an Annual Town Plan Update Report will be published and made accessible to the public. This report will inform updates to the plan and help ensure it remains relevant, impactful, and widely supported.

A core principle of the Portrush Town Plan is active community involvement. The public will be encouraged to provide feedback, contribute ideas, and stay informed through a range of channels including public events, surveys, and online platforms.

To support this, the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has developed a dedicated webpage for the Portrush Town Centre Forum. This page will host the latest updates, meeting minutes, project reports, and opportunities to get involved.

Appendix 1 - Portrush Town Forum

As this is the first-ever Town Plan developed for Portrush, it marks a significant milestone in how the town plans for its future, placing community voice, partnership working, and local accountability at the centre of decision-making. To ensure that this plan remains a living, responsive document, Causeway Coast and Glens Council will have ownership over the Plan, with Portrush Town Centre Forum being responsible for driving its delivery.

What is a Town Centre Forum?

A Town Centre Forum is an advisory group made up of people who live, work, or represent the local area. Members typically include representatives from community organisations, independent businesses, youth groups, resident associations, elected councillors, and staff from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. The Forum provides a structured way for these stakeholders to work together, ensuring that decisions about the town's development are inclusive, coordinated, and locally informed.

Purpose of the Forum

The core purpose of the Portrush Town Centre Forum is to act as a consultative and advisory body to the Council, with the specific aim of helping to sustain and enhance the vitality of the town centre. The Forum supports collaborative working and facilitates open communication between local voices and council departments, ensuring that the development of Portrush is rooted in the needs and ambitions of the community.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

As the Town Plan moves into the delivery phase, the Portrush Town Centre Forum will take on a number of important responsibilities, including:

- **Driving the delivery** of actions set out in the Town Plan.
- **Providing feedback** to Council officials and elected representatives on progress and emerging issues.
- **Championing the plan** locally, ensuring that it remains visible, accessible, and responsive to public input.
- **Monitoring progress** through regular review of milestones and outcomes.
- **Generating ideas and proposing initiatives** to address both long-term goals and short-term priorities.
- **Coordinating across sectors** to ensure joined up working between community, business, and local government.

Forum members are expected to attend meetings, participate actively in discussions, and act as ambassadors for the town centre and the Town Plan.

Membership and Participation

Membership of the Town Centre Forum is open to any group, organisation, or business based in the Portrush town centre area who wishes to play an active role in shaping its future. The Town & Village Management Team within the Council encourages participation from:

- Community groups
- Independent businesses and retailers
- Commerce and hospitality
- Youth and resident groups
- Other voluntary or civic organisations

The Council is committed to ensuring that the Forum reflects the diversity of Portrush and welcomes expressions of interest from all sectors and backgrounds.



**Causeway
Coast & Glens**
Borough Council

ANNEX B

Portstewart Town Plan

2025

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Strategic Context	5
3.0	Socio-Economic Profile	9
4.0	Community Engagement	13
5.0	Key Findings	15
6.0	Action Plan	22
7.0	Implementation & Monitoring Plan	32

1.0 Introduction

Portstewart is one of Northern Ireland's most picturesque and well-loved coastal towns. Situated along the Causeway Coast, it offers a unique blend of natural beauty, strong community identity, and visitor appeal. The town is characterised by its wide, sweeping promenade, stunning views across the Atlantic Ocean, and the iconic Portstewart Strand, an iconic beach managed by the National Trust. These features, alongside the cliff walks, The Crescent, and vibrant town centre, make Portstewart a distinctive and attractive place to live, visit, and invest in.



Portstewart has a rich and layered history, shaped by maritime traditions, tourism, and generations of families who have built their lives in the area. Its development was closely tied to the Stewart family in the 18th century, from which the town gets its name, and it has grown steadily from a genteel seaside resort into a thriving, multi-generational community. Today, it maintains much of its charm and continues to draw visitors for its natural environment, its strong local schools, and its peaceful yet lively character.

The town's sense of place is built on more than its setting. It benefits from a strong civic spirit, active churches and community groups, a well-established local economy, and excellent educational links, including proximity to Ulster University. Community events such as the Red Sails Festival, summer concerts at The Crescent, and seasonal markets at Flowerfield Arts Centre all contribute to Portstewart's identity and provide valuable opportunities for shared experiences.

However, like many towns along the north coast, Portstewart also faces challenges. Increased tourism, rising property prices, and a growing number of second homes and short-term let's have put pressure on housing, community infrastructure, and local services. Public feedback has also

highlighted gaps in youth provision, indoor recreational space, and access to shared community hubs.

It is within this context that the Portstewart Town Plan has been developed to protect what is most valued about the town while ensuring it remains a liveable, inclusive, and sustainable place for future generations.

Key Assets	Community Groups
• Portstewart Primary School • St. Colum's Primary School • Dominican College • Portstewart Strand • The Crescent • Flowerfield Arts Centre • Portstewart Town Hall site • Local Churches • Promenade • The Warren Bowling Green • Portstewart Football Club • Convent Walk	• Portstewart Community Association • Portstewart Men's Shed • Portstewart Primary School PTA • Youth clubs and church-based youth groups • Saint Vincent de Paul (local chapter) • Rotary Club of Coleraine (serving Portstewart) • Agherton Parish Church • Portstewart Baptist Church • Portstewart Presbyterian Church • Star of the Sea RC Parish Church • Burnside Presbyterian Church • Event committees (e.g. Red Sails Festival organisers) • Volunteers supporting The Crescent and environmental upkeep • Local arts, music, and wellbeing programmes at Flowerfield • Portstewart Football Club • Portstewart Football Club Academy

1.1 Portstewart Town Plan

The Portstewart Town Plan has been developed to provide a clear, community-informed vision for the future of the town. It is the first plan of its kind for Portstewart and was shaped through a detailed process of engagement with residents, community groups, businesses, and stakeholders. This included public consultation events, surveys, and direct discussions, all designed to ensure the plan genuinely reflects the needs and ambitions of those who live and work in the town.

The Town Plan identifies key priorities and proposed actions across areas such as housing, youth provision, shared spaces, transport, environmental sustainability, and economic development. It aims to bring together council services, community initiatives, and funding opportunities in a coordinated way to deliver real change on the ground. It also sets out a framework for partnership working and ongoing dialogue between residents, service providers, and decision-makers.



2.0 Strategic Context

Before outlining the priorities and actions for Portstewart it's important to understand how this Town Plan fits into the wider planning framework. The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Community Plan 2017–2030 provides the overarching strategic vision for the entire Borough. It sets out long-term goals for improving the health, wellbeing, economy, and environment across the area.

This Town Plan doesn't exist in isolation, it has been designed to align with and support the delivery of the Community Plan's objectives, but at a more localised level. By doing so, we ensure that local needs and ambitions feed into the broader regional strategy, and that public services and investment can be better coordinated to create real, lasting impact in our towns.

2.1 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. The 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 this 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 across key themes including health, education, housing, public safety, community services, the economy, and the environment.

Operating on both a borough-wide and neighbourhood level, the Plan is a collaborative initiative shaped through extensive engagement with residents, groups, and stakeholders. This ensures the Plan is grounded in the community's voice and responds directly to the unique challenges and strengths of each area.

The Community Plan identifies three overarching long-term strategic Population Outcomes, aligned with 12 Intermediate Outcomes under the draft Programme for Government:

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 is a sustainable 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 Town Plan, which is specifically tailored to address the unique characteristics and requirements of the individual towns 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 Town Plan contributes to each of the three strategic Population Outcomes as follows:

A Healthy Safe Community

The Town Plan seeks to create a connected and caring community where people feel safe, supported and able to thrive. This will be achieved through a strong focus on public health, inclusive spaces, and access to vital support services. Priorities include improving access to healthcare, investing in mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and strengthening community safety.

This outcome also involves enhancing recreational spaces, creating opportunities for intergenerational interaction, and promoting volunteering and peer support. Community policing, awareness campaigns, and services for vulnerable groups are also key features. Through these actions, the Town Plan contributes to a place where people can live independently, feel secure, and build strong social connections.

A Sustainable Accessible Environment

The Town Plan promotes a high quality environment that is inclusive, resilient, and celebrated for its natural beauty. This includes preserving green spaces, improving biodiversity, and ensuring infrastructure supports access and sustainability.

Local ambitions include the introduction of enhanced waste reduction, better pedestrian and cycling routes. Accessibility is at the heart of this outcome, from ensuring that buildings and paths are inclusive, to improving transport links and signage for all users. The Town Plan aims to future-proof the area environmentally while ensuring everyone benefits from it equally.

A Thriving Economy

The Town Plan supports a vibrant and inclusive local economy where businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers have the opportunity to grow. It encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly among young people, while supporting existing local businesses through tailored programmes, events, and improved infrastructure.

Skills development, lifelong learning, and digital connectivity are key priorities. The Plan supports initiatives that promote year-round economic activity, sustainable tourism, and local supply chains. By creating conditions for investment, job creation, and enterprise, the Town Plan contributes directly to a fairer and more resilient economy.

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

In conclusion, the Town Plan represents more than just a local action framework, it is an extension of the shared vision for the Borough, set out in the Community Plan. Through aligning local priorities with regional strategies, the Town Plan ensures that each town plays a meaningful role in delivering long-term change.

This strategic alignment provides a unique opportunity to strengthen community resilience, promote sustainable development, and ensure that every resident, regardless of background or circumstance, can benefit from coordinated investment and collective progress across the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

2.2 Wider Strategic Alignment

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

Theme	Policy Alignment
Facility Development	• Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure)
Youth Programmes	• 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)
Town Aesthetics	• Regional Development Strategy 2035 (Department for Infrastructure)
Community Safety	• Community Safety Framework (Department of Justice)



3.0 Socio-Economic Profile

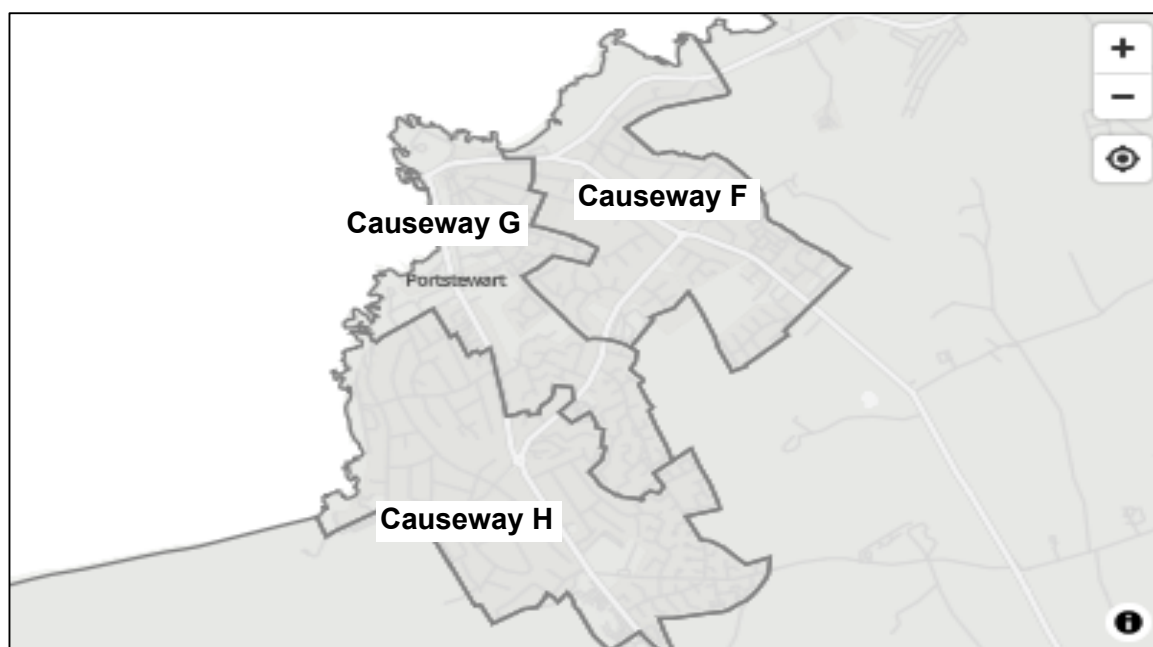
The statistics referenced in this Town Plan reflect the most current data available, extracted from the 2021 Census, and has been supported by analysis of the 2017 Multiple Deprivation Measures for the area.

Introduction

In order to gain further insights into key aspects of life in Portstewart, to analyse trends and also to undertake various comparative analyses at a sub-regional and regional level, a range of statistics pertaining to the population of Portstewart, drawn from various public sources have been collected and presented below.

Statistical Geography

For the purposes of this analysis, Census data from the 'Causeway F,' 'Causeway G' and 'Causeway H' Data Zones have been utilised. These three areas cover all residential neighbourhoods in Portstewart without accounting for any of the population residing in the rural areas surrounding the town.



The total population across these three statistical districts is 7,853.

Age Profile

Geography	0-15	16-39	40-64	65+
Portstewart	14%	32%	30%	24%
Causeway DEA	15%	27%	34%	23%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	18%	29%	34%	19%
Northern Ireland	19%	31%	32%	17%

The population of Portstewart can be concluded to be composed of a greater percentage of the population in the 16-39 and also the 65+ age categories than regional and national averages.

Health

Geography	Very Good or Good Health	Activities Not Limited by a Long Term Health Problem
Portstewart	79%	75%
Causeway DEA	78%	75%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	77%	74%
Northern Ireland	79%	76%

Overall, the health of the Portstewart population can be concluded to be in line with national averages, however the percentage of the population enjoying 'Very Good' or 'Good' health is higher than both the Causeway DEA and Causeway Coast and Glens Council averages.

Qualifications and Employment

Area	No Qualifications	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4 & Above	Apprenticeship or Other
Portstewart	16%	4%	11%	20%	42%	7%
Causeway DEA	23%	5%	13%	16%	35%	8%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	26%	6%	14%	16%	29%	9%
Northern Ireland	24%	6%	14%	16%	32%	8%

The population of Portstewart boasts a significantly higher level of educational attainment when compared to District Electoral Area, Council and National Averages.

A much lower percentage of the town population (16%) hold no qualifications when compared to the Northern Ireland population overall (24%). Likewise, the percentage of the town's population with a Level 4 qualification or above (42%) is ten percentage points higher than the 32% average within the national populace.

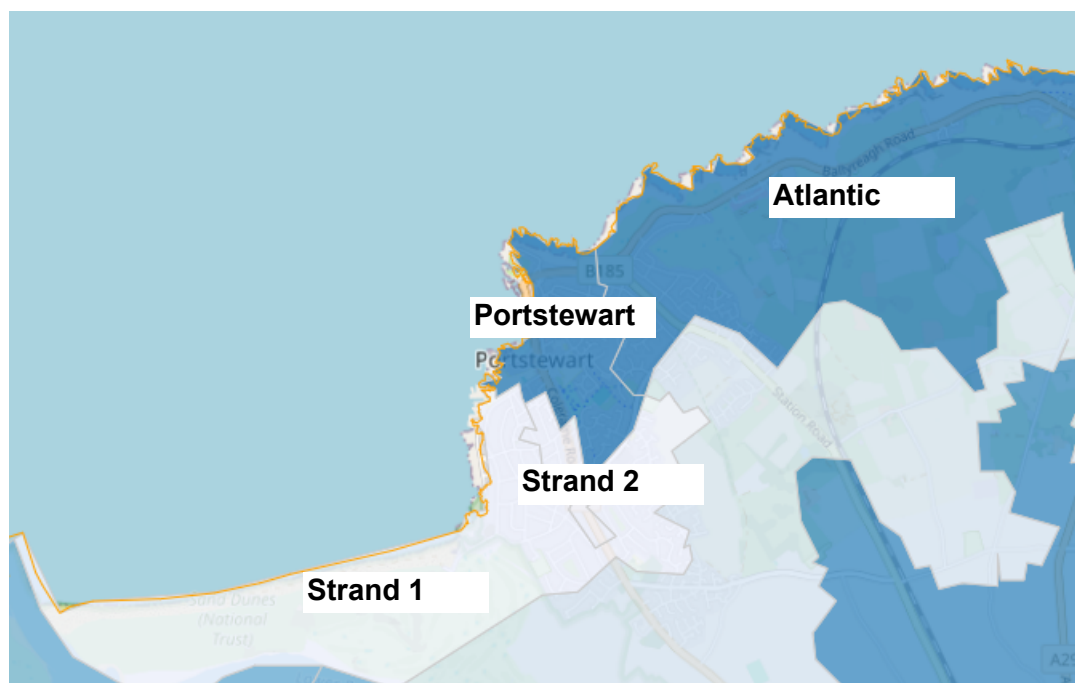
Area	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Construction	Hotels and Restaurants	Transport	Finance	Public Sector	Other
Portstewart	1%	6%	4%	31%	5%	14%	34%	5%
Causeway DEA	5%	7%	6%	27%	5%	12%	33%	4%
Causeway Coast & Glens Council	5%	8%	11%	23%	5%	11%	33%	4%
Northern Ireland	4%	9%	8%	21%	7%	14%	33%	4%

Overall, the labour market of Portstewart displays similarities with the other towns and villages on Northern Ireland's Atlantic Coast, with the largest sector of local employment being Public Sector and other government jobs. A key feature of the local economy which is markedly different from the rest of the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area and also Northern Ireland overall is that a high percentage of the population (31%) are employed in Hotels and Restaurants, highlighting the importance of the hospitality sector to the local economy.

Deprivation Analysis

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

For the purpose of this analysis, Portstewart comprised of 4 Super Output Areas, namely: Atlantic, Portstewart, Strand 1 and Strand 2.



The key findings and rankings are outlined below:

- In terms of the overall Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM), the SOA of Atlantic was the most deprived of the 4 SOA's and ranked as the 213th most deprived area of the 890 SOAs in Northern Ireland. Income deprivation in the Atlantic SOA is also of concern, ranking 124th out of 890, amongst the 15% areas of highest deprivation in this regard.
- Portstewart SOA had an MDM of 253, and was also considered to be amongst the 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland in terms of income deprivation, ranking 170th.
- Crime and Disorder in Portstewart was the indicator in which the town performed poorest, ranking 40th – amongst the 5% most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland in this regard. The area experiences high rates of anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and public order offences, though it should be noted that these statistics relate to offences recorded in Portstewart, as opposed to offences specifically carried out by those residing in the town.
- The least deprived SOA's in Portstewart are Strand 1 (MDM 835th) and Strand 2 (MDM 861st) making them 2 of the more affluent SOA's in NI.

Following the completion of all research and analysis of relevant statistics, a range of conclusions can be drawn. These include:

- Any actions regarding community or social development should take cognisance of the needs of a population which is more elderly than regional averages.
- The health of the local population in Portstewart is broadly in line with local and regional standards.
- A significantly higher percentage of those living in the town hold a Level 4 qualification or higher
- The levels of Crime and Disorder Deprivation experienced locally are amongst the worst in Northern Ireland. This is therefore a high priority area.



4.0 Community Engagement

Phase 1- Project Inception and Early Engagement

The development of the Portstewart Town Plan began with a project kick off meeting between the appointed consultants, Third Sector Connect, and officers from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. This session was used to establish key objectives, discuss local context, and agree timelines. Shortly after, a site visit to Portstewart was carried out to observe the town's layout, existing infrastructure, community assets, and areas of interest first-hand. An introductory meeting was then held with the Portstewart Town Centre Forum to initiate dialogue, gain early insights, and shape the approach to community engagement. This phase also included desktop research to identify relevant strategies, policy documents, and statistical data that would inform the Town Plan, ensuring alignment with the overarching Community Plan and regional development goals.

Phase 2- Community Engagement and Consultation

To gather views from a broad cross-section of the community, a detailed public survey was created and launched on the Council's digital engagement platform. This was widely promoted through multiple channels, including the Council's official social media platforms, targeted email communications, and networks shared by the Town Centre Forum. In addition, consultants undertook outreach visits to Portstewart, distributing promotional leaflets and speaking directly to residents in local shops, cafés, and community spaces to encourage participation.

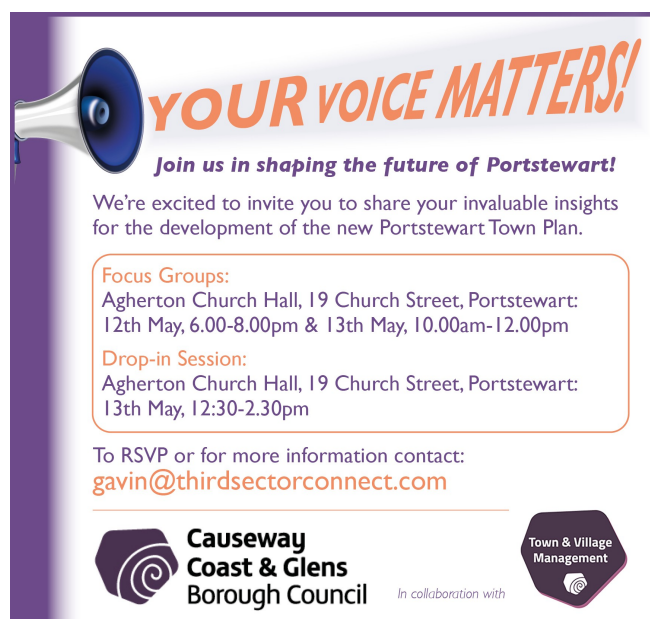


Figure 4: Social Media Graphic to Communicate Consultation Events

A series of structured focus groups were then delivered to facilitate deeper conversation and collective insight. These were held in both the afternoon and evening to ensure accessibility for a wider audience. During the sessions, participants worked in groups to carry out a SWOT analysis of the town, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They also discussed and prioritised specific actions they wished to see reflected in the Town Plan. To ensure inclusivity, a drop-in session was also held in the town, providing an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to speak with the consultants one-to-one in a more informal setting.

Phase 3: Analysis, Drafting and Refinement

Following the close of the engagement period, all feedback, both from the survey and in-person sessions, was analysed in detail. Key themes, priorities, and concerns were identified and grouped under emerging objectives. A draft Town Plan was then developed based on these findings and shared with Council officers and the Town Centre Forum for review. Feedback was collected and incorporated into a refined version of the plan, ensuring the final document accurately reflects the aspirations and needs of the Portstewart community.



5.0 Key Findings

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
- Independent shops and local cafés - Promenade-based hospitality venues (restaurants, bars, takeaways) - Artisan and seasonal markets at Flowerfield Arts Centre - Grocery and convenience stores - Local salons, service providers, and retailers	- Portstewart Medical Centre (GP practice) - Portstewart Family Practice (GP Practice) - Local pharmacies	- Portstewart Strand - Cliff path connecting to Portrush - The Crescent - Views of the Skerries and Inishowen Peninsula - Surrounding coastlines and dunes
Heritage Assets	Community Assets	Other Assets
- Flowerfield Arts Centre - Portstewart Town Hall site - Traditional churches and religious buildings - Maritime and promenade heritage - Dominican College	- Portstewart Community Association - Portstewart Golf Club - Portstewart Men's Shed - Saint Vincent de Paul (local chapter) - Rotary Club of Coleraine (including Portstewart) - Community allotments at Mullaghacall Park - Church halls and meeting spaces - Library and arts programming at Flowerfield	- Public toilets and benches - Car parks and civic bins - Bus routes and stops connecting to Coleraine and surrounding towns - Town Hall (potential shared space) - Access to broadband and mobile networks - Primary schools and youth-friendly facilities

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

Recreational Activities	Sporting Activities	Youth Activities
- Cliff walking, jogging, and coastal trails - Gardening at community allotments - Arts, crafts, and creative workshops at Flowerfield - Summer events at The Crescent - Red Sails Festival - Church-run coffee mornings and social clubs	- Football through Portstewart FC (youth and adult) 3 Golf Courses at Portstewart Golf Club - PE and after-school sports in schools - Fitness classes held in community or church halls - The Warren Bowling Green	- Church youth groups and youth fellowships - Events and creative sessions at Flowerfield Arts Centre - Informal gathering spaces (The Crescent, beach)

5.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Strong sense of community and civic pride • High-quality natural assets, including Portstewart Strand, cliff paths, coastal views • Good selection of primary & secondary schools with positive relationships between them • Vibrant and diverse community groups and churches • Flowerfield Arts Centre providing cultural, recreational, and inclusive services • Active sports scene (football, GAA, bowling, golf, surf school) • Generally low levels of anti-social behaviour – this was the perception of residents as noted at consultations. • Accessible town layout, walkable for most residents • Events like the Red Sails Festival create a strong sense of identity • Proximity to Portrush and good road connections • RNLI presence	• Significant housing affordability issues, due to short-term lets & second homes • Declining school enrolment linked to housing issues • Lack of a central community hub or Town Hall space • Underuse or inaccessibility of existing facilities • Insufficient youth services and dedicated youth spaces • Residents unaware of the Town Centre Forum and their role • Poor upkeep of key public areas (Diamond, Crescent, Harbour) • Derelict buildings and visual neglect at town entrances • Limited consultation or co-design in Council-led initiatives • Lack of start-up or creative spaces for local entrepreneurs or makers • Promenade prioritised over other areas like the Diamond and Harbour Hill • Outdated infrastructure (e.g. street furniture, footpaths, lighting)
Opportunities	Threats
• Transforming The Warren into a shared community asset (skatepark, 3G pitch, hub) • Redevelopment of derelict buildings (e.g. old police station, old go-kart site) • Greater promotion & activation of the Crescent area • Establishment of a Town Hall or inclusive community hub for events/services/library • Regular markets and events to support traders year-round • More inclusive use of Flowerfield Centre (e.g. affordable bookings, café, outdoor cinema) • Co-designed events calendar with input from residents and businesses • Enhanced public realm: flowers, murals, Victorian lighting, improved signage • Harbour improvements for tourism, recreation, and aesthetics • Governance refresh of Town Centre Forum with wider engagement • Greener transport options and better traffic enforcement (e.g. traffic calming, resident parking zones) • Partnership with local schools, churches, and U3A to improve engagement • Encourage innovation by supporting local crafts and makers	• Continued growth of second homes reducing year-round population and eroding community cohesion • Would like more communication with the Council regarding the Town Centre Forum and planning • Failure to retain and attract young people due to lack of affordable housing and opportunities • Seasonal economy dominance – over-reliance on summer trade • Increasing traffic, lack of parking enforcement, and pedestrian safety issues • Poor maintenance of public spaces undermines town's appeal • Missed regeneration opportunities due to slow planning processes or funding gaps • Further exclusion of underrepresented groups from planning and decision-making

5.2 Survey Findings

In order to support the findings which emerged through consultation, and also in order to ensure that as many individuals from the Portstewart community as possible to provide their views and feedback on the strengths and challenges associated with their town.

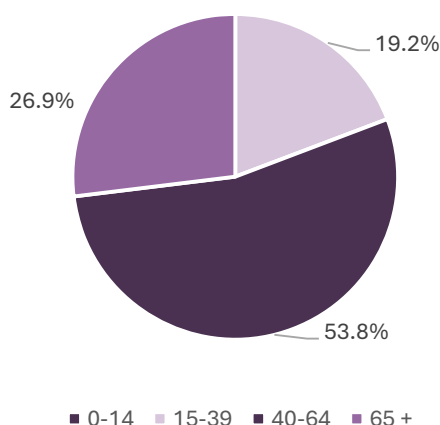
The survey was open for responses between 8th May and 23rd May 2025, and was promoted via social media, posters, posters and leaflets drops and direct emails.

1. Background of Respondents

For the purposes of monitoring responses and ensuring a representative sample of respondents, some background information was requested from participants. This included Age, Gender and Residential Status.

Age

Age Breakdown of Participants



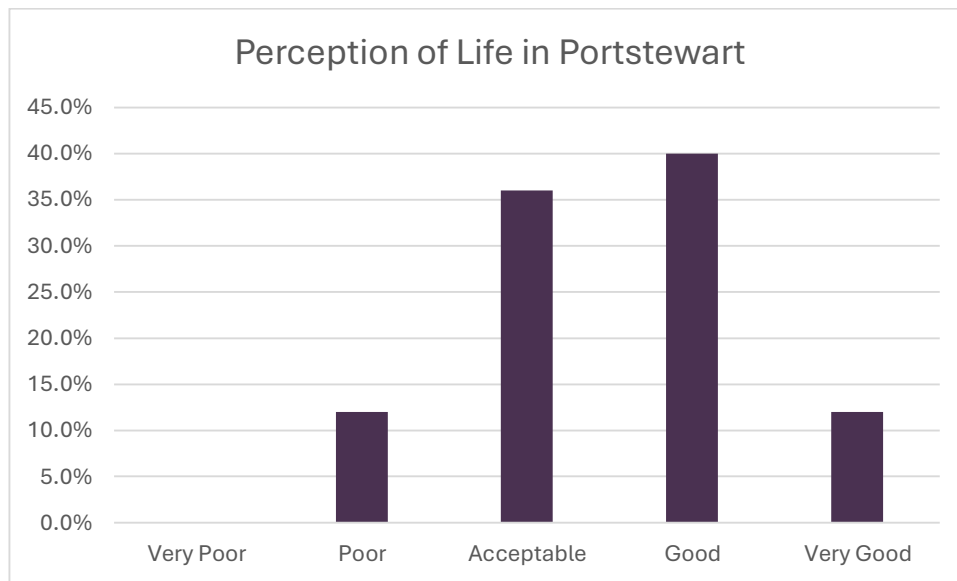
Although the survey was successful in securing participation across all adult age demographics, the majority of respondents (53.8%) were aged between 0 and 14.

A majority of respondents (65.4%) were female compared to 34.6% males.

Residential Status

Almost all survey participants (96.2%) were residents of Portstewart, giving legitimacy to the survey as being reflective of the needs of those living in the town. 88.5% of participants also stated that they had lived in the town for over 10 years, highlighting an acute awareness by survey participants of the strengths and challenges of living in the town.

Perceptions of Life In Portstewart



Overall, perceptions of life in Portstewart were mostly positive amongst survey respondents, with a majority of respondents (52.0%) believed that life in the town was 'Very Good' or 'Good', with just 12.0% of participants expressing negative sentiments.

Moreover, when asked to rate how likely they would be to recommend Portstewart to family and friends for living and visiting, the most commonly selected response (34.6% of respondents) was that respondents would give the town a 'ten' out of ten. The average score received was 8.0.

Respondents were also asked to provide feedback on a range of aspects relating to life in the town, with a summary of sentiments expressed presented below:

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

Aspect of Everyday Life	Commentary
Cleanliness of Streets	The cleanliness of Portstewart's main thoroughfares were generally considered to be positive, with 50.0% of survey respondents believing them to be 'Very Good' or 'Good'.
Condition of Streets	Similarly, the condition of the town's streets were generally considered to be of an acceptable standard, with 38.5% of respondents considering them to be 'Very Good' or 'Good,' 30.8% considering them to be 'Acceptable,' with just 26.9% of respondents believing them to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Accessibility	Accessibility of the town's amenities was believed to be adequate by survey respondents, 38.5% of which considered accessibility in Portstewart to be 'Very Good' or 'Good'.
Pedestrian Friendly	The prevailing sentiment amongst survey respondents was that Portstewart's pedestrian friendliness was 'Acceptable'. This was the most commonly selected response, chosen by 46.2% of participants.
Availability of Public Transport	The responses received pointed to Public Transport provision in Portstewart being viewed favourably by survey respondents, with 38.5% considering availability to be 'Very Good' or 'Good,' and a further 42.3% considering this to be 'Acceptable'.
Traffic Congestion	Traffic Congestion in Portstewart was one of the most negatively viewed aspects of life in the town by survey respondents, with a majority (53.8%) considering congestion to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Street Lighting	Street lighting in Portstewart was not considered an issue at all. 53.8% of survey respondents considered this aspect of life in the town to be 'Very Good' or 'Good'. No survey respondents reported negative sentiments regarding this aspect of everyday life in the town.
Availability of Car Parking	The responses provided in relation to availability of Car Parking in Portstewart were similar to those expressed in relation to congestion, with over two thirds of respondents (69.2%) believing there to be too few car parking options in the town.
Town Signage	The quality of town signage in Portstewart was not considered to be a pressing challenge – 34.6% of respondents believed this aspect of the town's infrastructure to be 'Very Good' or 'Good,' with a further 57.7% considering provision to be 'Acceptable'.
Open Space	Overall, survey respondents believed the quality and availability of open space in Portstewart to be positive, with 42.3% of respondents considering open space to be 'Very Good' or 'Good' and a further 46.2% considering this to be 'Acceptable'.
Play Parks	The quality of the play parks in Portstewart were deemed to be worthy of improvement by survey participants, with 46.2% of respondents believing play provision to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Community and Sporting Facilities	One of the biggest challenges facing those living in Portstewart is considered to be the quality and availability of community and sporting amenities in the town. 57.7% of survey respondents considered sporting facilities in the town to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor,' and an even greater percentage of participants (84.6%) felt that community facilities in the town were either 'Poor' or 'Very

Aspect of Everyday Life	Commentary
	Poor'. 80.8% of respondents also felt that Community Spaces such as libraries and other shared venues were 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	With 30.8% of participants believing anti-social behaviour to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor,' this was considered to be a challenge in need of addressing by survey respondents. However, although negative sentiments expressed were strong, addressing traffic congestion and facility provision were considered to be more pressing priorities for the town.
Vandalism	Vandalism was not considered to be a widespread problem, with 34.6% of survey respondents considering levels in the town to be 'Very Good' or 'Good'. Just 23.1% of participants considered vandalism to be an aspect for concern in Portstewart
Littering	In terms of town aesthetics, Littering – unlike Vandalism – was reported to be more of a pressing concern, as 57.7% of survey respondents believed the levels of litter in Portstewart to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Derelict Buildings	The levels of dereliction and unused buildings in Portstewart were considered to be of great concern by survey participants, with almost three quarters of participants (73.1%) believing dereliction levels in Portstewart to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Friendliness of People	Friendliness of those living in Portstewart was considered to be one of the town's strongest assets, with 88.5% of survey respondents believing that the friendliness of the town was either 'Very Good' or 'Good'.
Economy	Matters pertaining to Portstewart's economy were positive overall: • 76.9% of respondents believed that Hospitality Provision in the town was 'Very Good' or 'Good' • 42.3% of respondents believed that the Quality of Shops were either 'Very Good' or 'Good' • 42.3% of respondents believed that the Evening Economy in Portstewart was 'Very Good' or 'Good' • 38.5% of respondents believed that the Variety of Shops was either 'Very Good' or 'Good'
Culture	Cultural events and services were acknowledged by survey respondents to be in need of improvement – 34.6% of respondents considered arts and culture events to be 'Poor' or 'Very Poor'.
Digital Connectivity	Digital connectivity was considered positive by survey respondents, with majority (53.8%) believing provision to be 'Very Good' or 'Good'.

Conclusions

Following an analysis of all survey results, a number of conclusions can be made. Overall, survey respondents believed much of life in Portstewart to be positive. However, a number of key challenges were recurrently identified throughout the consultation as being in need of addressing. These included issues associated with car parking and traffic management, as well as the provision of adequate community and sporting facilities for local people to avail of.

Community spirit and also the strength of the local economy were considered to be the strongest features of everyday life in the town.



6.0 Summary of Priorities

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

THEME	DESCRIPTION	WHY IS IT NEEDED?
GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATION	The Town Plan must address widespread concerns about poor communication, lack of transparency, and limited local influence over decisions affecting Portstewart. Many residents reported not knowing who their councillors are, how to contact council staff or departments, or how to get involved in local consultations and planning. To rebuild trust and improve civic engagement, the Plan proposes: • Clearer contact points and communication channels for residents to raise issues with the council or relevant agencies. • A reinvigorated and more transparent Town Centre Forum, with visible membership, clear purpose, and opportunities for local participation. • Regular, accessible updates on projects, funding, and events via physical noticeboards, social media, and local networks. • A co-design approach to town planning ensuring local people has a say in how money is spent, what events are delivered, and how spaces are developed. By strengthening governance and improving communication, the Town Plan aims to restore public	Why Governance & Communication Improvements Are Needed in Portstewart: 1. Residents Feel Disconnected from Decision-Making Many people don't know who their councillors are or how to contact council staff or departments. This fuels frustration and a sense that local voices are not being heard. 2. Lack of Transparency and Accountability There's little visibility on how decisions are made, how funding is allocated, or who sits on local forums like the Town Centre Forum. This leads to mistrust and disengagement. 3. Inadequate Communication Channels Important updates about consultations, services, and local events are not reaching everyone. Residents have asked for more visible and accessible information such as noticeboards, local newsletters, or better use of social media. 4. Missed Opportunities for Community Involvement People want to be part of shaping their town but

	confidence, empower residents to take part in shaping their town, and ensure decisions reflect the lived experience and needs of the community.	don't know how to get involved. Without clear, inclusive engagement processes, valuable local knowledge and ideas are being lost. 5. Better Governance Builds Stronger Communities Transparent, responsive, and inclusive local governance helps build civic pride, trust, and collective ownership of the town's future. Improving governance and communication is essential to create a more informed, empowered, and connected community in Portstewart.
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & COMMUNITY COHESION	Portstewart is facing a housing crisis that threatens its long-term community stability. High rents and unaffordable property prices have made it increasingly difficult for local people especially young families—to remain in the town. The rise in second homes and short-term lets has reduced year-round residency, leaving some estates dormant and local primary schools facing falling enrolments. Many residents feel priced out, unheard, and disconnected from the planning process. The Town Plan proposes a multi-pronged response. It will prioritise the delivery of affordable and social housing for local families, including exploring public land for housing development under local residency criteria. It will also advocate for legislative reform—such as second-home taxes and occupancy requirements—to ensure housing serves the needs	1. Local Families Are Being Priced Out House prices and rents have risen sharply, making it unaffordable for many local residents particularly younger people and families to stay in the town. 2. Primary Schools Are Under Threat Falling school enrolments are directly linked to a decline in year-round family housing. If this continues, local schools could become unsustainable. 3. Second Homes Are Dominating the Market Many homes are now used as holiday lets or stand empty for much of the year, creating “ghost estates” and reducing community life. 4. Breakdown of Community Cohesion Longstanding residents feel increasingly

	of permanent residents, not just investors or holidaymakers. Planning processes should be reviewed to ensure that future developments support long-term community wellbeing. Safeguards will be introduced to maintain a balanced housing mix and protect community infrastructure. A long-term housing strategy will be developed with key partners, aimed at sustaining schools, services, and generational continuity. Housing is at the root of many challenges in Portstewart. Addressing it is essential to protect the town's identity, social fabric, and future as a thriving coastal community.	disconnected and ignored. The sense of belonging and generational continuity that once defined Portstewart is under pressure. 5. Planning System Failing Local Needs Concerns were raised about inappropriate development being approved without delivering benefits for the local population. 6. Tourism Is Replacing Permanent Residency Visitor demand is reshaping the housing market, but without safeguards, it risks undermining the town's liveability. 7. Wider Social and Economic Impacts Without action, Portstewart could become a seasonal town with fewer services, weakened infrastructure, and a hollowed-out economy. Addressing housing is fundamental to preserving Portstewart as a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable place to live.
COMMUNITY HUB & SHARED FACILITIES	Portstewart currently lacks a neutral, accessible civic space where the whole community can gather, access services, and take part in activities. While the town has strong faith-based facilities, there is a clear gap in shared, non-denominational infrastructure that supports social cohesion across all groups. The Town Hall, now closed to the public with unclear ownership, represents a significant opportunity. With investment and clarity of purpose, it could be	• Lack of Neutral, Civic Space Portstewart currently has no central, non-faith-based facility where all residents can gather, access services, or engage in community life. This limits inclusion and civic participation. • Town Hall Is Underused and Unclear in Ownership The Town Hall has been closed to the public for some time, despite being ideally located and full of

	transformed into a welcoming community hub hosting event, the library, council services, and spaces for groups and organisations. Its central location makes it ideal for civic use and community connection. Additionally, The Warren is a key opportunity site. The Town Plan proposes developing a floodlit 3G sports pitch that could serve local clubs, boost sports participation, and support shared education initiatives between St Columb's and Portstewart Primary School. It would also provide year-round access for wider community use, including youth activities. Improving access to shared facilities is essential to rebuild local trust, foster inclusion, and support the town's future. The Town Plan will prioritise repurposing underused assets and investing in facilities that bring people together, strengthen social ties, and ensure Portstewart has infrastructure fit for a modern, integrated community.	potential. Its closure has created frustration and left a gap in accessible civic infrastructure. Heavy-Reliance on Faith-Based Facilities While churches are active and valued, there is strong demand for a shared space that welcomes all residents equally, regardless of background or belief. Need for Community-Led Services and Events Many groups youth, families, older residents have limited access to suitable spaces for meetings, workshops, or activities. A hub would support health, wellbeing, and social connection. Shared Sports Facilities Could Strengthen Education and Inclusion A 3G pitch at The Warren would benefit local schools (e.g., St Columb's and Portstewart Primary) and clubs, encouraging shared use and integration. Rebuilding Trust and Connection A visible, well-managed community facility would signal investment in the town's social fabric and help rebuild trust between residents and the council. In short, Portstewart needs shared facilities to foster unity, support active community life, and meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.
YOUTH PROVISION & ACTIVITIES	Portstewart currently offers limited facilities and activities for young people, leading to disengagement, boredom, and growing concerns around antisocial behaviour. The Town Plan aims to	Lack of Dedicated Youth Facilities Young people in Portstewart have few places to go or things to do, especially outside of summer. This leads to boredom, frustration, and in some cases, antisocial behaviour.

	address this by creating more inclusive, accessible, and year-round opportunities for youth engagement. Key proposals include redeveloping the Crescent area with modern, all-weather play equipment suitable for various age groups, and transforming the old go-kart site into a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). These spaces would offer safe, vibrant places for socialising, sports, and recreation. The plan also supports the creation of a floodlit 3G pitch at The Warren, which would benefit local clubs and schools while providing structured, shared-use space for young people. Additionally, there is a call for more evening and seasonal events aimed at teenagers and young adults to ensure they feel part of community life, especially outside the busy summer period. By investing in safe spaces, accessible facilities, and inclusive programming, the Town Plan seeks to keep young people active, involved, and rooted in the town. This approach supports their wellbeing, helps prevent isolation or antisocial behaviour, and contributes to the long-term strength and sustainability of Portstewart's community.	No Safe, Inclusive Spaces to Socialise There is a shortage of youth-friendly spaces that are accessible year-round. Without dedicated, safe environments, young people are left to gather in unsuitable areas like car parks or beaches. Antisocial Behaviour Concerns Community feedback repeatedly raised issues such as “boy racers” on the promenade and beach misuse. These behaviours are often symptoms of disengagement and lack of alternatives. Existing Facilities Are Outdated or Underused Spaces like the Crescent and the old go-kart site are poorly equipped or underutilised but have strong potential to be transformed into vibrant, youth-centred areas. Need for Positive Engagement and Inclusion There's limited provision for informal education, youth-led projects, or skills-building. Young people currently lack a visible role in community planning and activity. Long-Term Community Sustainability Investing in youth now supports the town's future. It helps retain families, builds skills, and nurtures the next generation of community leaders. In short, without improved youth provision, Portstewart risks losing its younger population and the social balance that sustains a healthy, thriving community.
--	---	--

FLOWERFIELD ARTS CENTRE ACCESS	The Town Plan recognises Flowerfield Arts Centre as a valued community asset offering arts, culture, and events. However, consultation feedback highlights that it is not accessible to all residents, with barriers such as cost, limited awareness, and perceptions of exclusivity, particularly among families from housing estates or lower-income backgrounds. To address this, the Town Plan proposes a more inclusive, welcoming and community-focused approach to maximise Flowerfield’s potential. Key Actions: • Improve affordability for local groups by reviewing hire fees and introducing subsidised access for community-led projects. • Enhance promotion and visibility, ensuring a wider audience is aware of what’s on through clear, community-friendly communications. • Create a more welcoming environment, including exploring the addition of a small café or social area that encourages drop-in use. • Widen its role as a shared space, offering room for youth activities, workshops, and intergenerational programmes. • Partner with schools and local organisations to create co-designed, locally relevant content and events. By improving accessibility, visibility, and affordability, the Town Plan aims to unlock Flowerfield’s full	1. Perceived as Exclusive or Unwelcoming Many residents especially from estates or lower-income backgrounds feel that Flowerfield is “not for them.” This limits community participation and undermines its role as a shared public asset. 2. Cost Is a Barrier for Local Groups Several community groups reported that hire fees are too high, preventing them from using the space regularly. This restricts opportunities for grassroots activities, especially those aimed at youth or older people. 3. Underused for Community Purposes While Flowerfield offers high-quality arts and culture programmes, it is not fully integrated into everyday community life. There’s potential for broader usage, including meetings, youth engagement, and informal drop-in spaces. 4. Lack of Visibility and Awareness Many residents are unaware of what Flowerfield offers. Improved communications and community-focused marketing are needed to ensure it’s accessible in practice not just in theory. 5. Potential to Reduce Pressure on Other Spaces With no town hall or central community hub, Flowerfield could help fill this gap—if made more accessible and flexible.
--	---	--

	potential as an inclusive creative hub that serves all of Portstewart's community, not just a select few.	6. Promotes Inclusion and Wellbeing Increasing access to creative and cultural space supports mental health, social cohesion, and intergenerational connection—core goals of the Town Plan. Improving access to Flowerfield is essential to ensure it serves the whole Portstewart community, not just a few.
TOWN IDENTITY, AESTHETICS & ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE	The Town Plan should prioritise enhancing Portstewart's visual appeal, identity, and first impressions, responding to concerns that key areas feel neglected, outdated, or inconsistent with the town's natural beauty and character. Key improvement areas include: • The Diamond: Redesign layout to improve traffic flow, add more seating, greenery, and lighting, and create a welcoming civic space. • Promenade and Harbour Hill – Address mismatched furniture, add coordinated seating and signage, and invest in repairs and visual upgrades to one of the town's most photographed areas. • Town Entrances (e.g. from Portrush) – Introduce landscaping, signage, and public art to enhance arrival experience and reinforce Portstewart's identity. • Derelict and Underused Buildings – Support regeneration of vacant buildings (e.g. beside The Convent, old police station) to reduce visual blight and stimulate town centre vitality.	1. Key Areas Feel Neglected Residents consistently highlighted that parts of the town particularly the Diamond, Harbour Hill, and promenade look tired, cluttered, or outdated, and don't reflect Portstewart's quality of life. 2. Poor First Impressions at Town Gateways The main approach from Portrush lacks any sense of arrival or identity. Visitors often enter without any clear visual cue that they're entering a distinctive coastal destination. 3. Mismatch in Public Realm Quality While some areas have seen upgrades (like the promenade), others have been left behind. The Diamond, for example, lacks adequate seating, greenery, or character, creating an imbalance in the town's presentation. 4. Derelict and Vacant Buildings Undermine Character Prominent empty or underused sites such as the old police station and properties beside The Convent detract from the town centre's appearance and community pride.

	• Street Enhancements – Introduce Victorian-style lighting, flower displays, and pavement upgrades, especially around the shopfront side of the promenade. These improvements will help boost civic pride, tourism, and economic activity, while ensuring Portstewart feels clean, cared-for, and reflective of the strong community spirit it's known for. A refreshed public realm is essential to strengthening the town's identity and appeal.	5. Aesthetic Upgrades Can Drive Economic and Social Benefits A more attractive, walkable, and unified town environment supports local businesses, encourages footfall, and boosts tourism. 6. Community Pride and Identity Residents want a town that reflects the vibrant, community-oriented, and scenic nature of Portstewart. A well-maintained and distinctive public realm is key to that vision. In short, improving aesthetics and identity is essential for civic pride, economic resilience, and the town's sense of place.
EVENTS & LOCAL ECONOMY	The Town Plan will position events as a central driver of Portstewart's local economy, community identity, and year-round vibrancy. While the town benefits from seasonal tourism, residents feel Portstewart is currently underperforming compared to Portrush, particularly in terms of events and winter activity. To address this, the plan proposes a more inclusive, co-designed events strategy that reflects community priorities and supports local businesses. Residents want to see innovative, regular, and diverse events throughout the year not just in the summer such as craft markets, night events, food festivals, and winter programming to attract off-season footfall.	1. Portstewart Feels Left Behind Residents feel that nearby towns like Portrush receive more investment and host better events, leading to frustration and a sense of being overlooked. 2. Seasonal Economy Portstewart's economy relies heavily on summer tourism. There is a clear need to attract visitors and support local businesses year-round, especially in the quieter months. 3. Lack of Innovative, Local Events Current event offerings are limited and not always designed with community needs in mind. Residents

	Key public spaces such as the promenade, Diamond, and Crescent will be better utilised for event activity, while improvements in public realm and aesthetics (e.g. seating, lighting, signage) will help create more inviting venues. The plan also calls for resident input on event funding decisions to ensure the community sees local value and benefit. By increasing footfall, extending the tourist season, and supporting local makers and traders, the Town Plan will ensure events do more than entertain—they will strengthen the local economy, build civic pride, and foster a more connected, resilient community.	want more say in what's delivered and how funding is allocated. 4. Underused Public Spaces Key locations like the promenade, Diamond, and Crescent have untapped potential to host markets, festivals, and community events that would boost footfall and vibrancy. 5. Support for Local Traders and Creatives A stronger events programme could create platforms for local makers, food producers, and artists, helping grow the town's unique identity and economy. In short, a vibrant events strategy is essential to support local business, build community pride, and ensure Portstewart thrives beyond the summer season.
PARKING & TRAFFIC	The Town Plan should tackle growing concerns around parking pressures, traffic flow, and enforcement gaps in Portstewart. As the town grows and attracts more visitors, these issues are having a direct impact on residents' quality of life. Key actions include: • Introducing more resident-only parking zones, particularly in areas like Old Church Court where private bays are frequently misused. • Reviewing and improving traffic management in problem areas such as the	Why Parking & Traffic Improvements Are Needed in Portstewart: 1. Residents Struggle with Inconsiderate Parking In areas like Old Church Court, private parking bays are regularly misused by visitors, causing daily frustration for residents and a lack of respect for local property. 2. Visitor Pressure Is Outpacing Infrastructure As a popular seaside town, Portstewart experiences seasonal surges in traffic. Current

	Diamond and Strand Road, including the potential for more double yellow lines and a refreshed traffic calming plan. • Revisiting stalled Department for Infrastructure (DFI) proposals for road safety upgrades, including resurfacing and anti-skid surfaces. • Improving enforcement of parking restrictions, littering, and anti-social driving behaviours like beach “donuts” and pavement misuse at the Crescent. • Enhancing signage and visibility to make parking rules clearer for residents and visitors alike. These changes aim to create a safer, more accessible, and better-managed town centre and residential environment, supporting both residents and tourism while protecting public space from misuse.	parking and traffic systems are not coping with this increased demand. 3. Lack of Enforcement Undermines Rules People report tourists ignoring parking restrictions, causing congestion and safety issues. Without visible enforcement, rules are ineffective. 4. Traffic Safety Concerns Long-standing traffic calming plans (e.g. anti-skid surfaces) have stalled, leaving dangerous conditions in busy areas like the Diamond and Strand Road. 5. Anti-Social Driving Behaviours Issues such as “donuts” on the beach and motorbikes on pavements contribute to a sense of lawlessness and reduce the town’s appeal and safety. 6. Clarity and Access Are Needed Poor signage and inconsistent rules confuse both locals and visitors. Clearer communication can improve compliance and reduce conflict. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure safe, fair, and accessible movement in the town for both residents and visitors, especially during peak times.
PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY & CLEANLINESS	The Town Plan should address widespread concerns about the cleanliness, upkeep, and overall quality of public spaces in Portstewart. While the town is naturally beautiful, several key areas suffer from	1. Littering and Dog Fouling Are Ongoing Issues Residents regularly report problems with litter and dog mess, particularly in busy areas. These issues

	littering, dog fouling, outdated infrastructure, and inconsistent maintenance. Key proposals include: • More visible litter and dog warden patrols, particularly in high-traffic areas and during peak visitor periods. • Improved and better-placed bins and signage to encourage responsible behaviour from both residents and tourists. • Removal or repurposing of outdated structures, such as old phone boxes, to improve the town's appearance and usability. • Investment in key public spaces like the Herring Pond, Harbour, and Harbour Hill to enhance seating, lighting, pathways, and viewing areas. • Regular maintenance schedules to ensure public spaces remain clean, safe, and welcoming year-round. By improving the condition, cleanliness, and accessibility of its shared spaces, the Town Plan aims to promote civic pride, protect the town's natural assets, and ensure Portstewart remains a pleasant place to live, visit, and enjoy.	affect health, safety, and enjoyment of shared spaces. 2. Outdated or Neglected Infrastructure Old phone boxes, mismatched furniture, and worn pathways create a run-down appearance and detract from the town's natural beauty. 3. Tourism Pressures Increase Wear and Tear Portstewart's popularity as a visitor destination places added strain on public spaces, especially in peak seasons. Without proper upkeep, these areas become overused and untidy. 4. Key Assets Are Underused or Undervalued Natural and coastal features like the Harbour, Herring Pond, and Harbour Hill could offer much more value as attractive, usable community and visitor spaces if maintained and enhanced. 5. A Clean, Well-Maintained Environment Encourages Respect Well-kept public spaces are more likely to be respected by both locals and tourists, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving the town's image. 6. Civic Pride and Community Wellbeing Clean, accessible public areas support health, inclusion, and social connection—vital for community morale and quality of life.
--	--	---

		Improving public space quality is essential to protect Portstewart's charm, support tourism, and foster community pride.
REGENERATION OF OPPORTUNITY SITES	The Town Plan should prioritise the regeneration of underused and derelict sites across Portstewart to revitalise key areas, enhance community infrastructure, and meet long-term local needs. These sites present significant potential for community use, economic growth, and visual improvement. Key proposals include: • Town Hall: Currently closed to the public with unclear ownership, this centrally located building could become a neutral, shared civic hub—providing space for the library, council services, events, and public engagement, complementing Portstewart's faith-based venues. • The Warren: Identified as a prime site for a floodlit 3G pitch, community hub, or skatepark. This would support youth activity, club use, and shared education between St Columb's and Portstewart Primary School, improving year-round access to sports and recreation. • Crescent Area: Needs full redevelopment with better seating, surfacing, and year-round children's play equipment, as it's the only large public space in the town. • Old Go-Kart Site: Proposed for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) or informal gathering space for young people.	Why Regeneration of Opportunity Sites Is Needed in Portstewart 1. Key Sites Are Underused or Derelict Buildings like the old Town Hall, police station, and former go-kart area are sitting idle or in poor condition, creating eyesores in central locations and missing vital opportunities to serve the community. 2. Lack of Accessible Community Spaces There is no neutral, inclusive civic hub in Portstewart. Existing venues are limited or faith based. Regenerating sites like the Town Hall or Warren would provide much-needed shared, welcoming facilities for all ages and backgrounds. 3. Strong Demand for Youth, Sport & Education Facilities The Warren has huge potential to support youth activity and shared school use through a floodlit 3G pitch, addressing the current lack of facilities for young people and clubs. 4. Support for Vibrancy and Local Economy Revitalised public spaces and active buildings would stimulate local business, attract footfall, and

	• Derelict Properties (e.g., beside The Convent, Old Police Station, St Joseph's Hall): These buildings could be converted into community centres, social enterprises, or creative hubs through public-private partnerships or community asset transfer. • Harbour Area: Improve mismatched furniture, enhance railings, steps, and viewing points to reflect its role as a key visual and historic feature of the town. Through strategic regeneration, the Town Plan could breathe new life into neglected areas, provide much-needed community and youth spaces, and ensure that all parts of Portstewart reflect its character, pride, and potential.	create opportunities for markets, events, and community enterprise. 5. Improving Visual Appeal and Civic Pride Derelict or neglected areas (like the Crescent and Harbour) negatively impact the town's image. Regeneration will improve aesthetics and reinforce Portstewart's identity as a vibrant, cared-for destination. 6. Efficient Use of Existing Assets Many of these sites already have infrastructure or historic value. Repurposing them is a cost-effective, sustainable way to meet local needs and future-proof the town. Regeneration is essential to unlock Portstewart's full potential and ensure it grows in a way that benefits the whole community.
--	---	--



7.0 Action Plan

Theme	Priority	Actions	Community Benefit	Responsibility
Governance & Communication	High	i. Establish clear contact points. ii. revamp Town Centre Forum; use noticeboards & social media. iii. embed co-design in local town management	✓ Greater trust in council ✓ Improved engagement, better decision-making	Council Communications Team, Local Councillors, Community Organisations
Housing Affordability & Community Cohesion	High	i. Identify public land for affordable housing. ii. develop local residency criteria. iii. lobby for legislation on second homes	✓ Retain families, ✓ sustain schools, ✓ support year-round community life	NIHE, DfC, Housing Associations, Local MLAs and DEA Councillors
Community Hub & Shared Facilities	High	i. Reopen and repurpose Town Hall. ii. develop 3G pitch at The Warren. iii. create neutral community spaces	✓ Increased access to inclusive facilities, ✓ stronger community connections	Council Land & Property Team, Sport NI, Local Schools
Youth Provision & Activities	High	i. Redevelop Crescent with inclusive play. ii. build MUGA at go-kart site. iii. seasonal youth events	✓ Reduced anti-social behaviour, ✓ improved youth wellbeing and engagement	Youth Services, PSNI, Schools, Local Sports Clubs, Council Estates Department, Council Sports Development Team
Flowerfield Arts Centre Access	Medium	i. Subsidise community use. ii. expand marketing; add café/social area. iii. increase co-programming	✓ More inclusive arts access, ✓ support for creativity and wellbeing	Arts Council NI, Flowerfield Management, Community Groups
Town Identity, Aesthetics & Arrival Experience	Medium	i. Upgrade Diamond; ii. improve entrances; iii. restore derelict buildings; iv. Victorian-style street enhancements	✓ Boosted civic pride, tourism appeal, and economic vitality	DfI, DfC, Local Businesses, Heritage Organisations,

Events & Local Economy	Medium	i. Co-design events. ii. use Crescent/Promenade for markets and fairs. iii. promote year-round programming	✓ Increased footfall, stronger local economy, ✓ year-round vibrancy	Events Team, Traders, Tourism NI
Parking & Traffic	Medium	i. Expand resident-only zones. ii. enforce traffic laws. iii. reintroduce DFI traffic calming plans	✓ Safer streets, ✓ less congestion, ✓ better quality of life for residents	DfI, PSNI, Council Enforcement Team
Public Space Quality & Cleanliness	Medium	i. Boost warden patrols. ii. improve bins/signage. iii. regular maintenance. iv. enhance coastal assets	✓ Cleaner, more attractive and usable public environments	Environmental Services, RNLI, Local Volunteers
Regeneration of Opportunity Sites	High	i. Repurpose Town Hall; ii. regenerate Crescent, Harbour, and go-kart site; iii. convert vacant buildings	✓ Enhanced public assets, youth space, community pride	Council Planning, DfC, Private Developers, Community Trusts

Note: Portstewart Town Forum and CCG should agree timeframes for the above Implementation & Monitoring Plan and seek support to identify / secure funding

Monitoring and Implementation

The Portstewart Town Plan has been designed to be a dynamic and evolving document that reflects the aspirations, needs, and priorities of the Portstewart community. The plan is owned by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, ensuring alignment with broader strategic objectives, while being driven by the Portstewart Town Centre Forum, which is made up of local residents, elected members, statutory agencies, business owners, and community groups.

To ensure the Town Plan remains relevant, realistic, and responsive to the changing needs of the town, a clear and transparent approach to monitoring and evaluation has been established. This process will be key to tracking the impact of the plan and enabling continuous learning and adaptation.

While the Council retains ownership of the Town Plan, responsibility for monitoring and evaluation will rest primarily with the Portstewart Town Centre Forum. The Forum meets regularly and is well positioned to oversee delivery, evaluate progress, and maintain close ties with the wider community.

Each meeting of the Town Centre Forum will include a standing agenda item for reviewing the implementation of the Town Plan. This regular review process will enable:

- Monitoring of project and action delivery
- Alignment checks with community priorities and strategic goals
- Discussion of emerging opportunities or challenges
- Consideration of proposals to update or revise elements of the plan
- Monitoring Framework

Monitoring data will be drawn from Council departments, community partners, statutory agencies, and local businesses. Feedback from residents and stakeholders will also play a critical role in capturing lived experience and community satisfaction.

An annual review of the Town Plan will be coordinated by the Town Centre Forum, in partnership with the Council. This review will assess:

- Delivery of actions and achievement of objectives
- Challenges or barriers encountered, and solutions applied
- Shifts in community needs, economic conditions, or strategic priorities
- Levels of community engagement and satisfaction

Following this review, an Annual Town Plan Update Report will be published and made accessible to the public. This report will inform updates to the plan and help ensure it remains relevant, impactful, and widely supported.

A core principle of the Portstewart Town Plan is active community involvement. The public will be encouraged to provide feedback, contribute ideas, and stay informed through a range of channels including public events, surveys, and online platforms.

To support this, the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has developed a dedicated webpage for the Portstewart Town Centre Forum. This page will host the latest updates, meeting minutes, project reports, and opportunities to get involved.

Appendix 1 - Portstewart Town Forum

As this is the first-ever Town Plan developed for Portstewart, it marks a significant milestone in how the town plans for its future, placing community voice, partnership working, and local accountability at the centre of decision-making. To ensure that this plan remains a living, responsive document, Causeway Coast and Glens Council will have ownership over the Plan, with Portstewart Town Centre Forum being responsible for driving its delivery.

What is a Town Centre Forum?

A Town Centre Forum is an advisory group made up of people who live, work, or represent the local area. Members typically include representatives from community organisations, independent businesses, youth groups, resident associations, elected councillors, and staff from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. The Forum provides a structured way for these stakeholders to work together, ensuring that decisions about the town's development are inclusive, coordinated, and locally informed.

Purpose of the Forum

The core purpose of the Portstewart Town Centre Forum is to act as a consultative and advisory body to the Council, with the specific aim of helping to sustain and enhance the vitality of the town centre. The Forum supports collaborative working and facilitates open communication between local voices and council departments, ensuring that the development of Portstewart is rooted in the needs and ambitions of the community.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

As the Town Plan moves into the delivery phase, the Portstewart Town Centre Forum will take on a number of important responsibilities, including:

- **Driving the delivery** of actions set out in the Town Plan.
- **Providing feedback** to Council officials and elected representatives on progress and emerging issues.
- **Championing the plan** locally, ensuring that it remains visible, accessible, and responsive to public input.
- **Monitoring progress** through regular review of milestones and outcomes.
- **Generating ideas and proposing initiatives** to address both long-term goals and short-term priorities.
- **Coordinating across sectors** to ensure joined up working between community, business, and local government.

Forum members are expected to attend meetings, participate actively in discussions, and act as ambassadors for the town centre and the Town Plan.

Membership and Participation

Membership of the Town Centre Forum is open to any group, organisation, or business based in the Portstewart town centre area who wishes to play an active role in shaping its future. The Town & Village Management Team within the Council encourages participation from:

- Community groups
- Independent businesses and retailers
- Commerce and hospitality
- Youth and resident groups
- Other voluntary or civic organisations

The Council is committed to ensuring that the Forum reflects the diversity of Portstewart and welcomes expressions of interest from all sectors and backgrounds.