



OPEN DOORS TO CULTURE

CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE STRATEGY 2016 – 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Culture, Arts and Heritage is what we do that differentiates us as human beings. It's what gives us our sense of who we are and what we value and our co-ordinates in a bigger world.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council recognises the enormous cultural, artistic and heritage assets within its geographical area. In August 2015 it commissioned Shona McCarthy Consulting to facilitate the process of developing a 5 year Integrated Culture, Arts & Heritage Strategy to cover the period 2016 – 2021 and 3 year Action Plan 2016-19.

This strategy represents an opportunity to recognise, invest in and grow the cultural capital of the Causeway Coast and Glens for the good of its citizens and those who visit. We have arts centres and museums; festivals and artists; dancers and literature; heritage, artefacts and stories; creative projects and people; talent and traditions; language and artistic and historic riches; writers and story-tellers; myths and legends. We need to further develop and promote their enormous value.

The new Council area has a population of over 140,000 people and comprises the four legacy Council areas of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle. The starting point of human settlement in Ireland is in the Causeway Coast and Glens at Mountsandel. Portstewart boasts Northern Ireland's first Arts Centre, Flowerfield, and Limavady is home to one of the newest centres, the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre. We have five well established museums which attract widespread support from the local community as well as international visitors. The Riverside Theatre, the first regional theatre in Northern Ireland, is located in the borough as is Big Telly Theatre Company, the only professional regional theatre company in Northern Ireland outside of Belfast. Ireland's oldest Fair (The Auld Lammis Fair) is held annually in

Ballycastle, and Ballymoney hosts the longest running drama festival in Ireland. There are a wide range of excellent community led festivals including the Danny Boy Jazz and Blues Festival, the Heart of the Glens Festival and Stendhal Festival of Art. The area stages prestigious sporting events including the North West 200 Motorcycle Race, the Northern Ireland International Airshow and the NI Milk Cup, which is the most prestigious youth football tournament worldwide.

The area has pristine Blue Flag beaches, championship golf courses and views of Donegal to the north-west and Scotland to the north-east. The dramatic coastline is considered one of the most scenic in Europe stretching from Lough Foyle to the Glens of Antrim and Rathlin Island in the north, and south as far as the Sperrin Mountains. The National Trust cares for a number of world famous tourist attractions in the area including the Giant's Causeway, Northern Ireland's only World Heritage Site.

The Ulster University campus at Coleraine hosts the University's humanities and

languages, film and journalism, travel and tourism. The School for Media, Film and Journalism has an unrivalled reputation for innovation in new technologies and processes. This resource, coupled with the location of the Project Kelvin hub in the North Coast region, is a key asset for the Digital North Coast initiative and provides a resource for innovation, skills development, student placements and profiling the region as a centre of creative media excellence.

The borough is also home to two Further Education Colleges – the North West Regional College in Limavady and the Northern Regional College which has a campus in both Ballymoney and Coleraine. The Limavady college has a reputation for excellence in visual arts, whilst Ballymoney is equally strong in dramatic and performing arts and music.

The world famous Irish Open tournament was held in the Royal Portrush Golf Course back in 2012. An even bigger event, the British Open, will now be hosted in the town in 2019, giving us the opportunity to open the doors to our cultural riches in an unprecedented way.





Across the Council area, we have unique and distinctive identities in each village, town and townland, but we are also connected by the stones beneath our feet and by many interconnecting stories and identities. Through this strategy we celebrate our regional variations and the unique aspects of each of our component parts, whilst seeking ways to create greater connection, understanding and benefit for the whole region.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

In recognition of the stringent economic environment, as well as the different levels of arts, culture and heritage service provision available within its geographic area, the Council sees the imperative to innovate and bring new ways of working that will have the dual impact of making best possible use of resources whilst ensuring equality of access.

The strategy and action plan creates a clear road map for culture that is authentic to the unique nature of the Council area, that is real and deliverable and that maximizes the area's opportunity to deliver on wider local, regional and national strategies, not only cultural but social and economic. Its primary objective is to ensure that both local ratepayers and visitors to the area have continuous access to high quality, accessible, inclusive and affordable cultural services, including arts, museums and heritage.

It is generated from a wide-ranging and inclusive consultation process that takes in the views, ideas and aspirations of stakeholders from community, cultural and related sectors. It also recognises the wider policy environment, the full range of cultural assets, existing and possible partnerships, and specific stakeholder agencies.

The desired outcomes for the strategy as identified by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are as follows:

- Strengthening of the culture, arts and heritage infrastructure across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area





- Promotion of the cultural profile of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area on a local, regional, national and international scale
- Identification of key strategic themes
- Stronger partnership working to deliver on agreed objectives
- Increased participation in culture, arts and heritage activity
- Increased footfall to culture, arts and heritage facilities
- Acknowledgement, understanding and active promotion of the wider contribution and benefits of culture, arts and heritage towards:
 - Promoting equality and tackling social exclusion
 - Promoting good relations, developing social capital and encouraging community development
 - Improving the health and well-being of the local community
 - Contributing positively to economic regeneration and the tourism product
 - Skills development, education and life-long learning
 - Promoting citizenship and civic pride
 - Maximising the unique selling points of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area

This work builds on the strong foundations set in place by the former legacy councils and their arts and heritage teams. It brings together the potential of our cultural activities and assets across the borough. Our new vision sets out a framework for cultural activity and development that will connect, galvanise, create shared goals and will be borough-wide.

MISSION, THEMES & STRATEGIC AIMS

This is a time of great change across public administration in Northern Ireland, but it is also a time of real possibility and excitement for the Causeway Coast and Glens. The economic climate is challenging but we have the leadership and the opportunities to promote our cultural credentials as part of the long-term identity and appeal of this area. Our mission statement and the five overarching themes set





out the vision for the Culture, Arts and Heritage Strategy and Action Plan.

These themes were derived from the consultation process as well as research into the needs of the area and fit with the wider strategic context.

MISSION

Develop Culture, Arts and Heritage to deliver health, wealth and happiness.

This mission will deliver on the Council's corporate vision which is to *"maximise the benefits of our unique location and landscape by providing ambitious, accessible, innovative and efficient services which fulfil customer expectations"*.



FIVE CORE THEMES

1. Enhancing our cultural venues & assets
2. Investing in creative learning & skills development
3. History, heritage and cultural tourism
4. Participation, inclusion and equality
5. Communication and advocacy

Theme 1: Enhancing our cultural venues & assets

Strategic Aim: We will use our landscape and our cultural assets and activities to enable opportunities for both local people and visitors to participate in the culture, arts and heritage of the area.

Theme 2: Investing in creative learning & skills development

Strategic Aim: We will support the creative development of our young people and our creative practitioners through training, skills development and providing opportunities to showcase work.





Theme 3: History, heritage and cultural tourism

Strategic Aim: We will promote a sense of pride, identity and deeper understanding of our area by bringing together the many stories, histories, identities and languages.

Theme 4: Participation, inclusion and equality

Strategic Aim: We will ensure increased access to and participation in culture, arts and heritage to marginalised and excluded groups (including section 75 groups).



Theme 5: Communication and advocacy

Strategic Aim: We will engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders to both increase participation in cultural activity and to strengthen the cultural infrastructure within the area. We will raise greater awareness of culture, arts and heritage within the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES

1. Our cultural life will reflect our world-class reputation as an area of natural beauty
2. Increased access to and participation in cultural activities and events
3. Increased and appropriate partnerships will be in place
4. Cultural assets maximised by working in partnership with increased levels of collaboration and sustainability
5. Culture, Arts and Heritage is a social and economic driver for the area and is recognised as such
6. Strengthened cultural infrastructure
7. Causeway Coast and Glens will be seen as a culturally vibrant area





Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY

Tel: 028 7034 7034

A full version of Open Doors to Culture is available to download from
www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

We are happy to provide any of the information in this document in alternative formats on request.