



Title of Report:	Request for Partnership working with Outdoor Recreation NI
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 October 2023
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health.
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Funded 100%
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO - n/a
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	

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 ask Members to consider the request received from Outdoor Recreation NI, for Councils across Northern Ireland to support the “Walking for All” (WFA) Project and agree to be “named partners” in the forthcoming application to SEUPB’s Peace Plus programme – Theme 4, Healthy & Inclusive Communities, Investment Area 4.2 / Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion.

2.0 Background

The ORNI/SEUPB project is detailed in **Annex A** – This is a request for Councils with rural settlement populations to work in partnership with ORNI to promote the benefits of “led” walking in rural areas as a conduit towards the creation of healthy communities in rural areas, whilst also tackling social isolation and promoting social inclusion.

The project will work along similar lines to the current partnership Councils have with the PHA (Age Friendly Strategy & Action Plan), through the employment of an officer to coordinate an Action Plan devised by ORNI throughout the duration of the project. Cost of the officer will be met by funding through the Peace Plus programme and Councils will act as the employing authority for the local WFA coordinator, providing office space and officer support (line management).

3.0 Current position

Officers have engaged with ORNI to understand the aims of the programme and its synergy with current strategic priorities within Sport & Wellbeing and Outdoor Recreation. ORNI have also met with Council’s Peace Plus Manager to explore the compatibility with the project’s aims with CCG’s Peace Plus Local Action Plan. Based on that engagement it is recognised that the project, if successful in securing funding, would be compatible with the aforementioned priorities and provide additionality to programmes and activities currently provided by Council.

Annex B provides details of the spread of settlements (by population) across Northern Ireland, and cross border, which will be the focus for the ORNI programme.

Annex C provides details of the medium, small towns, villages, and settlements specific to CCG.

It is anticipated that call for application to the Peace Plus programme will be made in the Autumn with a closing date of December 2023. If successful in securing Peace Plus funding for the project, it is envisaged by ORNI that the coordinator posts will commence in April 2025.

4.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Members of the Leisure & Development Committee consider the request from ORNI and recommend for approval by Council that CCG agrees to be a named partner in the ORNI Peace Plus “Walking for All” project.

Note: in parallel with this recommendation, officers will complete Council’s “Partnership Business Case” documentation for final approval.

In Paper for seeking Council support for the Walking for All project to Peace +

Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) is currently working towards applying to the Peace Plus funding programme, more specifically Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities, Investment Area 4.2 – Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion. Peace Plus is administered by SEUPB.

The proposed project, Walking for All (WFA) is to use led walks as the conduit to contributing to the creation of healthy communities in rural areas whilst also tackling social isolation and promoting enhanced social inclusion.

The project will also create opportunities for sustained, meaningful and purposeful contact between people and groups of different backgrounds, and in so doing will seek to make a direct contribution to peace and prosperity.

The project specifically delivers on

- contributing to the creation of healthy communities (including individuals and entire communities) in rural areas through a health and well-being focused solution.
- providing the opportunities for communities to grow together – economically, socially and culturally.
- helping communities become empowered to address social exclusion ensuring all people have access to quality services and therefore achieving a better quality of life for all.
- encouraging participants to socialise, gain confidence, build relationships in their local communities, interact reducing rural isolation and exclusion and contributing to more peaceful and prosperous rural areas.
- building community networks both cross community and cross border resulting in vibrant, inclusive and sustainable rural communities throughout NI and the border Counties.
- fostering a culture of volunteering – with the project focused on training Volunteer Community Walk Leaders, the project will help build the capacity of rural communities to develop and ultimately sustain activities in their own area.
- supporting rural enterprises e.g coffee shops and supports partnership and collaboration effort at all levels and between all stakeholders involved e.g e NGOs, County Council, County LSP and Local Communities.

This project differs from other existing Council walking initiatives with the focus on training up Volunteer Community Walk Leaders. The Walk Leaders will set up, lead and sustain their own walking

groups across the Council area. These Walk Leaders will be supported at every step by Walking For All Coordinators (see below for more detail).

The proposed project is cross border. Confirmed partners in the Republic of Ireland include Sport Ireland and the Local Sports Partnerships of Counties Louth, Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan. Work is progressing with all Councils in NI (except Belfast City Council) to receive partnership support.

The proposed model for the project includes a core staff team of Project Manager, Finance Officer, Training and Communication Officer and three Regional WFA Managers. These positions will be employed by ORNI as the lead partner in the project. In addition, key to the success of the project is employing a local WFA Coordinator in each of the Council areas in NI and in each of the Local Sports Partnerships in the Republic of Ireland.

The role of the Coordinator includes:

- undertaking an audit of all community groups in the widest sense across the Council area (e.g sporting clubs, Mother and Toddlers groups, Age Friendly clubs, Men's Shed, Church groups).
- proactively engaging with these groups to recruit Volunteer Community Walk Leaders.
- delivering WFA training courses to new Volunteer Community Walk Leaders.
- initially leading walks with the new Walk Leaders to build their confidence and ensure quality control.
- providing ongoing support to Community Walk Leaders to maintain a weekly regular walk as a minimum.
- seeking to integrate existing walking groups (Walking In Your Community and Walking for Health) into WFA and providing the necessary refresher training.
- organising and hosting local networking walks and events for walking groups.
- identifying and delivering 'peace and reconciliation' interventions in specific communities.
- feeding walking group data and case studies to the Training and Communication Officer to populate the WFA website.
- keeping records for monitoring and evaluation purposes and preparing reports for the Regional WFA Managers.
- collectively reporting monthly to the Regional WFA Manager on targets and outputs.
- reporting to the Project Working Group when required.

Given the overall size of the project (c.£6.5 million over 3 years), it is not possible for ORNI to act as the employing body for the 16 Local Coordinators. Consequently the model proposed is that the WFA Coordinators are employed by the individual Councils and Local Sport Partnerships, but all work programmes and outputs will be line managed by ORNI, as the project's lead partner. Coordinators will be in post for three years on a three-year fixed term contract.

The Coordinator post has been evaluated independently at SO1 (Staff Officer) level by Steve Traynor STAHRs, a job evaluation specialist used by many Councils across NI. Funding for all elements of the project is funded 100% through the grant application, with no cost to Council. Funding covers salary, national insurance, pension contribution, essential car users' allowance and statutory redundancy pay.

All Coordinators across the project will have the same Job Description provided by ORNI. Whilst the Council will be responsible for undertaking the recruitment process, ORNI is willing to sit on shortlisting panels/interview panels as an observer, if so desired by Council

Councils will also be given a flat rate of 15% towards administration and 7% towards the Coordinator's travel and subsistence. In addition, each Officer will be given a small programme budget to manage each year towards training costs, materials etc.

It is anticipated that Council will submit a quarterly financial claim to ORNI who will then claim back the funding from Peace Plus and reimburse the Council as quickly as possible.

It is anticipated that the call for applications to the Programme will be made in September/October 2023 with a closing date of December 2023. A 6-9 month assessment period is expected, so it is not anticipated that the Coordinator posts will be in place before January 2025.

Costs in the application are based on a starting date of April 2025. ORNI has sought the assistance of an economist to calculate projected costs for the period April 2025 – end of March 2028 cognisant of increases in inflation during this period and spine point increases on the S01 scale.

There is no expectation that after the three years Councils will have to retain the Coordinator and finance the post from their own existing budgets. However, it is hoped that the outputs of the project will have had such a positive impact on the work of the Council, that some Councils will consider extending the role post-Peace funding. In addition, during the duration of the project, the Project Manager will be tasked with seeking Executive funding to extend the life of the project through negotiations with the Dept of Health, DAERA, DFC and other relevant Departments.

As part of SEUPB's requirement, a Service Level Agreement/Partnership Agreement will be put in place between ORNI as lead partner and the Council.

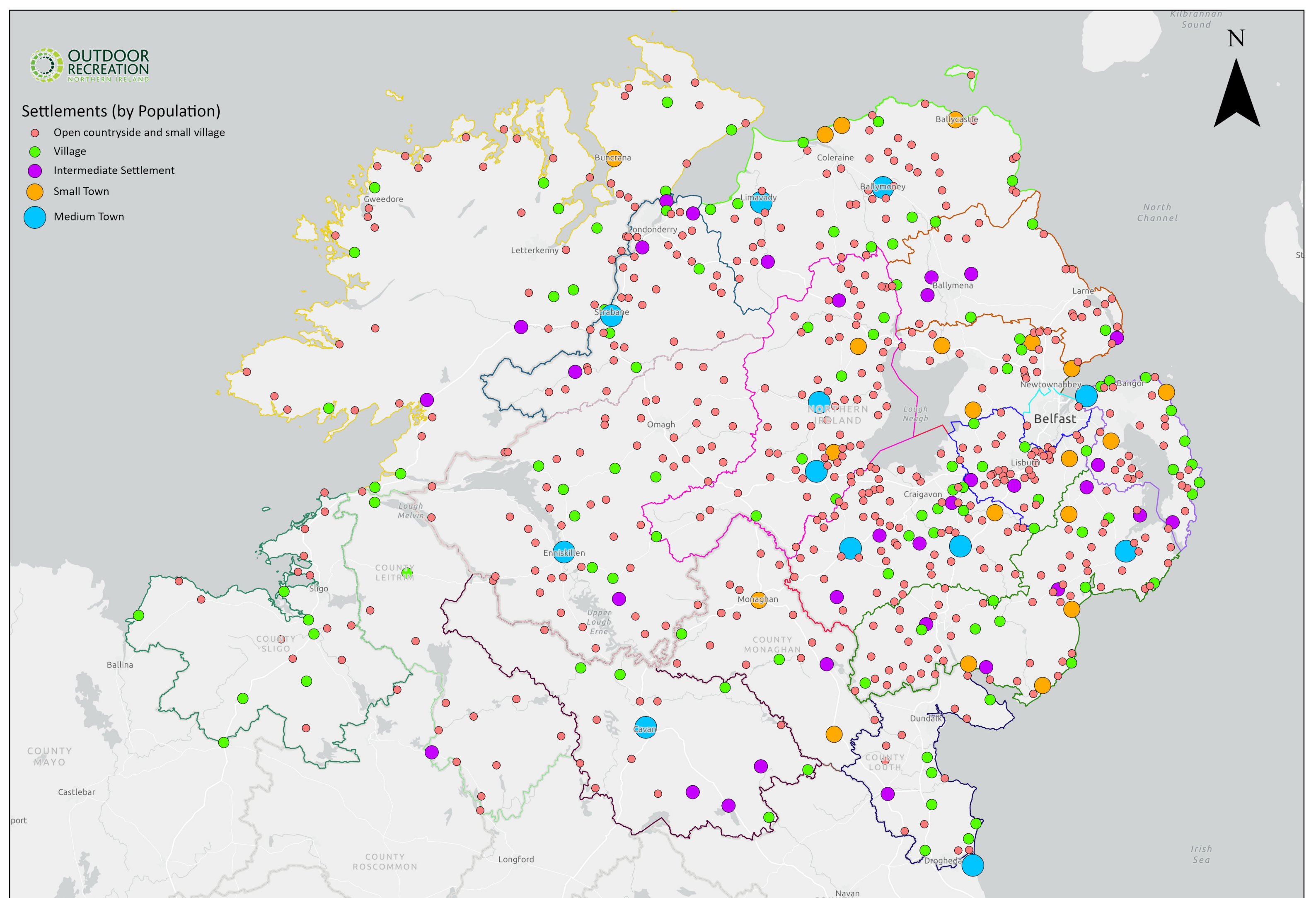
ORNI is seeking agreement from Council to:

1. Formally support the project by being a named partner in the forthcoming application to Peace Plus
2. Agreeing to act as the employing authority for the WFA Local Coordinator.
3. Providing office space and administrative support as required throughout the length of the project.
4. Offering Officer support throughout the project when required to assist the Coordinator.



Settlements (by Population)

- Open countryside and small village
- Village
- Intermediate Settlement
- Small Town
- Medium Town



GREYSTEEL	1465	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
DUNGIVEN	3288	INTERMEDIATE SETTLEMENT	Causeway Coast and Glens
PORTSTEWART	8003	SMALL TOWN	Causeway Coast and Glens
KILREA	1678	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
CLOGH MILLS	1318	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
LIMAVADY	12032	MEDIUM TOWN	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLYCASTLE	5237	SMALL TOWN	Causeway Coast and Glens
BUSHMILLS	1295	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
RASHARKIN	1115	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
LOUGHGUILLE	396	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
DUNAGHY	391	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
DRUMSURN	452	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
ARDGARVAN	108	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CHURCH BAY	54	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CASTLEROE	441	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLYTOBER	62	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
GLENKEEN	85	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
FEENY	690	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BURNFOOT	239	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
LISCOLMAN	222	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CRAIGAVOLE	74	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLYVOY	167	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
MAGHERAHONEY	77	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
DERNAFLAW	299	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
MOSS-SIDE	297	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BUSHVALE	115	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
GLENARIFF BAY	155	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
PORTRUSH	6454	SMALL TOWN	Causeway Coast and Glens
DUNLOY	1194	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLYKELLY	2107	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
GARVAGH	1271	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLYMONEY	10402	MEDIUM TOWN	Causeway Coast and Glens
CASTLEROCK	1256	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens

LARGY	162	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
DERVOCK	714	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
KNOCKNACARRY	176	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
ARTIKELLY	313	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CORKEY	202	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BOVEEDY	72	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
GLENULLIN	177	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
GLACK	244	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
FINVOY	195	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
WATERFOOT	520	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
FOREGLEN	274	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BENDOORAGH	622	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
GORTNAHEY	286	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CARNEATLY	97	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLINTOY	150	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
PORTBALLINTRAE	601	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
ARTICLAVE	922	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CUSHENDALL	1280	VILLAGE	Causeway Coast and Glens
MACOSQUIN	614	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BELLARENA	328	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALNAMORE	897	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
DRUMAGARNER	59	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BALLYBOGY	529	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
ARMOY	500	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
DERRYKEIGHAN	136	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
STRANOCUM	297	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CUSHENDUN	144	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
BOLERAN	132	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens
CLAREHILL	134	Open countryside and small village	Causeway Coast and Glens