

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Leisure and Development Committee

Development of a Regeneration Action Plan for the new Borough

11th August 2015

For Decision

Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Transition and Transformation Prosperity Health & Wellbeing Cohesive Community
Lead Officer	Paul Beattie – Head of Prosperity and Place
Cost: (If applicable)	£8,000

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of members to commission the work required for the development of a Regeneration Action Plan.

Background

The Economic Strategy and Action Plan have been approved by Council and this marks the workplan and direction for economic development functions in the lead up to Community Planning in 2017.

The second part of the Prosperity and Place unit's work is that of regeneration.

The need and purpose of a Regeneration action plan is two-fold:

- Not to define new work or a long term direction for regeneration, but to develop a prioritised, needs-based action plan based on the strategic and policy context for regeneration for Northern Ireland, the Causeway Coast and Glens, and the various hubs within the Borough.
- To act as a guide for external departments which have assisted Council in previous years with funding towards town masterplanning, village renewal, and urban and resort regeneration – namely, the Department for Social Development, Tourism Northern Ireland and the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.

An introduction for terms of reference framing the direction of regeneration is attached below for consideration (Annex A). This will allow for an independent, needs-driven assessment of the unit's ongoing workload.

The terms of reference outlines:

- A background to the Borough.
- Some details on the legacy work of the four councils.
- An outline for the development of an Action Plan.

The Department for Social Development has signalled that they too would like to work within an agenda which is backed up by quantifiable evidence of need, as the relationship between the Department and the new Council develops. It should also be noted that one part of the Borough – Limavady – remains within the remit of the North West offices, while the remainder is within the auspices of the Regional Office.

The new Rural Development Programme will again have a significant remit for Village Renewal. While there are several renewal plans in places, some of which have been progressed, there is no assessment of need, or criteria for action against which to prioritise activity.

This study would not include actions which are contained within the wider Portrush Regeneration Scheme, which is separately being considered as a special project/project of regional significance. It will focus on the four main centres within the Borough, and those remaining villages and towns which could avail of funding from the bodies mentioned above.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to consider the need for a quantitative approach to prioritising the need for regeneration actions across the Borough; the need for an independent, expert view; and permission to proceed with commissioning this work. It is recommended that a maximum of £8,000 is allocated to this activity, and this funding is already available within the current Prosperity economic action plan.

ANNEX A

Towards a Place and Regeneration Action Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Introduction: Causeway Coast and Glens Area Profile

The new Causeway Coast and Glens District Council area will have a population of over 140,000 people.

Environment

- With its 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.
- The Borough has four main settlements which service a rich rural hinterland, itself dotted with over forty smaller rural hubs, ranging in size from hamlet to small town.
- Covering an area of almost 2,000 km², the new district takes in some of the most magnificent landscapes on the island of Ireland – from the rich coastal environments of the north coast stretching from Lough Foyle to the Glens of Antrim, and Rathlin Island, and south as far as the Sperrin Mountains.
- There are almost 120 designated environments within the new district, including National Nature Reserves, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the famous World Heritage Site of the Giant's Causeway.

Economy

- The area has a mix of independent and multiple retail centres, attracting shoppers and visitors from all over the wider region.
- The new district has strong links with its agricultural background, with around 1,000 farms and many spin-off businesses and industries forming an important part of the employment mix.
- With the Causeway Coastal Route encompassing the Glens of Antrim to Lough Foyle, a burgeoning tourism sector has become an important contributor to the local economy, mixing a wide range of accommodation, activity and entertainment providers.
- The area has a range of top-class education facilities with several further and higher education institutions. The University of Ulster is situated within Coleraine. Course provision is broad – biomedical sciences, environmental science and geography, psychology, business, the humanities and languages, film and journalism, travel and tourism, teacher training and computing

The legacy Councils of Coleraine, Limavady, Ballymoney and Moyle have all engaged in various degrees of regeneration work in their respective areas. This work, which continues under the new Council, has been driven by government departments, and consequently, it has not always reflected the local need or context.

This work ranges from small-scale village renewal schemes under the Rural Development Programme to the proposed regeneration of Portrush.

To date, the following work has been undertaken by the former legacy Councils. This list is not exhaustive, but merely reflects the breadth of activity which has been undertaken over the past few years:

Coleraine	Masterplan for Coleraine Town Centre.	Portrush Regeneration Scheme (DSD –led) Village Renewal Schemes in Castlerock, Garvagh, Kilrea, Articlave and Macosquin.	ReVitalise Shop Front Schemes. Environmental Improvement schemes in Coleraine, Portrush and Kilrea among others. Ongoing market research, footfall, etc.
Limavady	Masterplan for Limavady Town Centre.	Public Realm Scheme for Town Centre completed. Village Renewal Programme for Gortnaghey, Burnfoot, Foreglen and Dungiven.	Revitalise Shop Front Scheme. Wifi scheme.
Moyle	Masterplan for Ballycastle Town Centre.	Village Renewal Schemes in Mosside, Ballintoy and others.	ReVitalise Shop Front Scheme. Wifi scheme. Transport Assessment.
Ballymoney	Masterplan for Ballymoney Town Centre.	Village Renewal Schemes across the Borough. Externally-led Townscape Heritage Initiative for Ballymoney.	ReVitalise Shop Front Scheme. Wifi scheme. Transport Assessment.

Council's new structure means that several units will have a responsibility aspects of regeneration. However, regeneration has been placed within a new unit of the Leisure and Development Department – Prosperity and Place.

While economic development and tourism have their own strategies and action plans under the new Council, there is now a need to develop and prioritise an evidence-based, locally-driven action plan for regeneration.

Service Provision

Council wishes to appoint a suitably qualified team to prepare an independent Place Action Plan for the new Council area. The Action Plan, which will be prepared in partnership with the Council and other stakeholders, will complement the existing Prosperity Strategy and provide a basis and justification for decision making on the promotion, implementation and timing of future regeneration initiatives in Causeway Coast and Glens.

Action Plan Development

The preparation of this Action Plan is a means of addressing and prioritising the challenges faced by the new Borough, in an independent manner. It will provide a framework for coordinated action pertaining to the development of the physical environment with particular regard to the themes of:

- Town and Village Development
- Coastal and Resort Development

In moving the regeneration agenda forward, Council wishes to undertake the following tasks:

- Initiate an action plan based on the strategic and policy context for regeneration for Northern Ireland, the Causeway Coast and Glens, and the various hubs within the Borough
- Quantify the challenges which need to be addressed in:
 - The main town centres in the Borough
 - Settlements within the classification of towns and intermediate settlements – populations of 1000 and above
 - The coastal zone and the issues of environmental preservation and development
- Revisit, amalgamate and prioritise actions from the four main masterplans
- Review the previous works associated with the Rural Development Programme's Village Renewal measure, and previous Tourism strategies, indicating potential future programmes in both these remits
- Review and prioritise planned works associated with the Tourism Strategy, and current regeneration agenda, for the Borough
- Distil this work further by developing an agenda of works across the Borough, based on need and quantitative evidence

Notwithstanding the review work of Village Renewal under the previous Rural Development Programme, which include many small villages and hamlets, the consideration of towns and settlements over 1000 population should include:

- Coleraine, Limavady, Ballymoney, Ballycastle.
- Portstewart, Garvagh, Kilrea, Castlerock.
- Dungiven, Ballykelly, Greysteel, Feeny, Burnfoot.
- Bushmills, Armoy, Cushendun, Cushendall, Mosside.
- Cloughmills, Dunloy.

This document will be the main direction of travel for the next three years, dovetailing into the initial work towards Community Planning. After this period, it will be revisited, evaluated and updated.

Outcomes and Outputs

The final document will be a prioritised approach to regeneration within the Borough, and cover three main sections, in no particular order and if relevant:

- Town Centre Regeneration - a prioritised list of actions for the next three years, gleaned from evidence and need in the main urban hubs of Coleraine, Limavady, Ballymoney and Ballycastle.
- Village Renewal – a tiered approach to prioritised need in smaller towns and villages across the Borough, where relevant.
- Coastal and Resort Regeneration – based on the current plans for regeneration in Portrush, Portstewart, Ballycastle, Benone and other villages which have a tourism focus in future development.

- Overall, an independent, ranked list within the three sections noted above, which will act as a guide for members, officers and external departments when considering priorities for action in the field of physical regeneration.

In moving this action plan forward, the initial consideration should refer to town centre masterplans, village renewal plans and a top level view of the needs of the settlements mentioned above.

Consultees

In developing this action plan, the successful tenderer will be expected to discuss the existing and future development of the above areas with a fixed group of consultees. These will include:

- Elected Members.
- Council officers currently engaged in the regeneration agenda.
- Tourism Northern Ireland.
- Rural Development Programme and Local Action Group.
- Department for Social Development.
- Business Groupings, such as the Chambers of Trade and Commerce.