

# Welcome

## Planning for the Future-Regeneration Strategies for Portstewart, Garvagh, Kilrea and Castlerock

**Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us about your village.**

We have listened to your concerns, thought about the issues and now present them back to you along with ideas about what we need to include in any plan for the future.

The purpose of this week's clinic is to provide you with an opportunity to discuss aspects of the work in more detail.

Members of the team will be on hand on Wednesday evening (7-9pm) to talk you through the thinking so far.



# Castlerock

## Key Findings...



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	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Location &amp; Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rail links to Belfast/Londonderry</li> <li>Isolation adds to the appeal</li> <li>Proximity to Coleraine/Benone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor links with other settlements</li> <li>Peripheral location- geographic and physical features limit accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway potential- Causeway Coastal Route/Ferry</li> <li>Building a mutually beneficial relationship with Articlave- that reflects different roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perception as remote (River Bann)</li> <li>Proximity to Articlave which provides basic services</li> </ul>
<b>Demographic &amp; Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong and active community- Castlerock Community Association</li> <li>Peter Thompson Hall as a community facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of provision for young people</li> <li>Ageing community- adds to perception</li> <li>High out-commuting and seasonal population fluctuations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of second home and caravan owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to retain and grow population</li> <li>Nurturing sustainable permanent population growth</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outstanding tourism base, the destination is outstanding, the product should be</li> <li>Proximity to Causeway Coast tourism product</li> <li>Built, natural and cultural heritage base</li> <li>Proximity of the University must be explored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Function as a dormitory / second home residential settlement, Castlerock has no independent economic basis, owing its existence to its superb coastal setting</li> <li>Very limited retail and basic services</li> <li>Low investor confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stronger leisure/retail offer</li> <li>High quality services and amenities, creating a particular market segment for Castlerock</li> <li>As a focus for development limiting pressure for piecemeal development along the coast</li> <li>Accommodation- hotel potential</li> <li>Potential function as a service centre for Binevenagh</li> <li>Developing an evening economy</li> <li>Outdoor pursuits/activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor presentation and diminished reputation as a place to do business</li> <li>Dormitory/second home function developing further</li> <li>Unplanned and inefficient expansion</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location, location, location</li> <li>Stop off point on the Causeway Coastal Route</li> <li>Binevenagh Area of Outstanding natural Beauty</li> <li>River Bann Areas of Special Scientific Interest</li> <li>Castlerock strand</li> <li>Bar Mouth</li> <li>Heritage ( National trust Attractions)</li> <li>Activity Opportunities- Castlerock Golf Course</li> <li>Parking provision close to the beach</li> <li>Railway link</li> <li>Listed buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited range of accommodation</li> <li>No local event capable of attracting visitors from the wider area</li> <li>Car access to beach</li> <li>Not benefiting enough from other events within the Borough</li> <li>Village appears run down</li> <li>Limited retail and catering offer</li> <li>Very limited range of things to do in the evening</li> <li>Tired public realm</li> <li>Poor visitor orientation/ signing</li> <li>Promotion and Marketing</li> <li>Poor beach access and facilities</li> <li>Lack of indoor visitor attractions/ entertainment- make better use of Peter Thompson Hall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superb location. Scope for 50 - 100 bed 4 Star Hotel with Conference facilities health and fitness suite- viability to be tested</li> <li>Extend the range of accommodation</li> <li>Aim to ensure Castlerock Beach achieves Blue Flag Beach status. Use this in all promotional and marketing activity</li> <li>Develop links with activity providers (golf club , waterbus)</li> <li>Improve the retail and catering offer</li> <li>Improve existing access to beach</li> <li>Upgrade overall management of the entire beach area</li> <li>Improve the walking route to Mussenden Temple</li> <li>Visitor orientation and interpretation plan for the entire village area</li> <li>Activity based tourism potential</li> <li>Railway heritage potential</li> <li>Seaweed potential</li> <li>Community Enterprise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sewage problems threaten Blue Flag Beach status</li> <li>Imbalanced development – too many second homes? Pressure on infrastructure</li> <li>Further caravan sites – visually intrusive</li> <li>Further reduction of retail offer</li> <li>Further loss of café/ restaurant/ pub</li> <li>Possible closure of railway - repackaging as a visitor attraction</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outstanding coastal setting- within Binevenagh AONB</li> <li>Diverse landscape of beaches, cliffs, coastal dunes and coastal grasslands, meadows, heathlands and forests</li> <li>Downhill Estate/Mussenden Temple</li> <li>Village Green and outdoor sport fields</li> <li>Village enclosed within its landscape limiting visual impact on the AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No structured landscape to soften the built form or enhance legibility around the village</li> <li>Limited public open space</li> <li>Poorly integrated recent expansion</li> <li>Accessibility around Castlerock (either on foot or by car ) is very difficult, exacerbated by the recent construction of the various cul-de-sac estates</li> <li>The village lacks any spatial built hierarchy, place-making or sense of arrival. It is difficult to identify where the “heart” of the community is</li> <li>Generally tired presentation</li> <li>Impact of local and regional infrastructure on beach and water condition</li> <li>Gap sites and derelict/vacant properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce structure and establishing a simple landscape hierarchy of planting</li> <li>Any densification of the sites north of the railway should be done in a sensitive manner</li> <li>Environmental Improvements</li> <li>Physical improvements along the Promenade</li> <li>Landscape screening to caravan sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infill development failing to form a coherent whole that contributes to their contextual setting</li> <li>Visual impact of caravan sites</li> <li>Poor presentation of beach access points</li> <li>Maintaining the beach and public realm</li> </ul>
<b>Movement &amp;</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Railway link</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor road directional/tourist signage on the approach to Castlerock</li> <li>No continuity in the pedestrian signage for the ‘Ulster Way’ walking routes</li> <li>Footways in poor condition throughout and in key locations including the promenade</li> <li>Limited facilities for cyclists</li> <li>Poor bus services</li> <li>Car parking under pressure during peak season</li> <li>Poor quality of beach access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements to off street parking</li> <li>Improving cycle links and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of railway</li> <li>Car parking along the beach</li> </ul>

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## Strategic Objectives...

In response to the key findings of the audit, a series of strategic objectives have been identified for Castlerock. These are the particular elements where intervention is required most urgently, and those that have the potential to act as 'springboards' for future development.



# Castlerock

## Proposed Actions...



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### Objective 1- Redefine the tourism offer

ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Action 1.1-</b> Explore the feasibility of a range of visitor accommodation types, including a hotel as a priority	Improve, upgrade and diversify the visitor accommodation offer
<b>Action 1.2-</b> Ensure Castlerock has a higher profile within current marketing efforts	Market in the context of the wider local and regional offer
<b>Action 1.3-</b> Upgrade beach access and management, encourage beachfront activity / develop timber boardwalk pathways at regular intervals / Upgrade the barmouth pier	Improved beach recreation offer and water access.
<b>Action 1.4-</b> Ensure the highest standards of maintenance and aim to ensure the beach achieves Blue Flag Beach status / Explore the feasibility of limiting the number of cars parking	Improve already high quality beach offer / raise profile and reputation as 'outstanding'
<b>Action 1.5-</b> Upgrade existing walkways / signage and connections with National Trust properties and develop a heritage trail / rambling routes around the village	Exploit local culture & heritage / Connect the rural landscape with the village and the coastal landscape, and other specific points of interest
<b>Action 1.6-</b> Strengthen links with Flowerfield Centre in Portstewart- host local events, training and promotion at Peter Thompson Hall	Support creative industry development
<b>Action 1.7-</b> Encourage activity and accommodation providers to link up to provide packages	Co-ordinated marketing- exploit the full range of attractions and activities on offer
<b>Action 1.8-</b> Promote local events / link to other nearby or regional events	Further capitalise on the success of the 'Milk Cup' and the 'North West 200'
<b>Action 1.9-</b> Carry out a review of existing white on brown tourist signing within the village	Improved visitor orientation
<b>Action 1.10-</b> Carry out a review of the existing pedestrian signage within the village	Improved information and orientation
<b>Action 1.11-</b> Support development of indoor activities / Ensure full use of Peter Thompson Hall	Improved range of activities and attractions all year round
<b>Action 1.12-</b> A 'Pub Welcome' initiative involving small changes, notably replacing obscure glass that deters visitors with a welcoming openness	Physical improvements to streetscape and facades, and a new sense of openness to invite and welcome visitors
<b>Action 1.13-</b> Develop evening entertainment activity / test feasibility through consultation with local stakeholders	Improved visitor experience
<b>Action 1.14-</b> Further promote activity tourism (website / activity tourism mapping)	Raise the profile of activity tourism opportunities
<b>Action 1.15-</b> Explore the feasibility of a Binevenagh AONB / Causeway Coast gateway visitor centre	Develop as a focal point and service centre for Binevenagh and maximise potential as a gateway / stop-off point on the Causeway Coastal Route
<b>Action 1.16-</b> Reassess the node at the junction of Freehall Road (B11) and Mussenden Road (A2)	Improve the physical identification of Castlerock along the coastal route
<b>Action 1.17-</b> Environmental Improvement scheme in and around the Train Station possibly including symbolic sculpture project	A strong and vibrant image for a key arrival point
<b>Action 1.18-</b> Establish an annual event aimed at visitors- possibly start with one (community based) cultural tourism initiative	Focus community energy and broaden the local tourism offer
<b>Action 1.19-</b> Training programmes for accommodation providers / tourism operators / event organizers	Develop tourism products of the highest quality
<b>Action 1.20-</b> Raise profile of the River Bann in marketing material	Further develop links and association with the River Bann as a recreational resource

### Objective 2- Strengthen relationships with other settlements

ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Action 2.1-</b> Work with CRUN (Coleraine Rural and Urban Network) to improve communication amongst Coleraine, Portstewart and Portrush community Development Groups	Creative and efficient co-working between settlements
<b>Action 2.2-</b> Establish a joint Castlerock / Articlave working group/forum	Nurture a complementary relationship with Articlave in terms of community, business and tourism
<b>Action 2.3-</b> Develop one joint project per annum with Articlave (Community / tourism / heritage)	Strengthen local community relationships
<b>Action 2.4-</b> Consult Translink regarding the frequency of trains and local bus services	Further exploit rail links to ensure a compelling timetable attracting casual users and improve public transport provision between settlements



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## Proposed Actions...

### Objective 3- Re-discover the village core

ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Action 3.1-</b> Environmental improvement scheme for the village core and along the Promenade	Revitalise and define the village core, establish a design language
<b>Action 3.2-</b> Explore the option of cobble sett paving across the railway line junction / Retain and upgrade the historic walkway gantry, timber fencing and traffic signals	Create a visual threshold into Castlerock and introduce visual reminders of the village's historic origins
<b>Action 3.3-</b> Introduce a tree avenue along Sea Road from where the road bends south-east (Liffock lands) to Castle Walk	Denote the transition from a rural landscape to an urban area
<b>Action 3.4-</b> Explore the principle and feasibility of redeveloping the Guysmere site	This is an important site with the potential for sea views as one approaches along Sea Road
<b>Action 3.5-</b> Introduce tree planting along Main Street at strategic points along the route	Define spaces and improve legibility of the village core
<b>Action 3.6-</b> Develop a design guide that addresses building heights, façade treatment, street setting, visual impact etc	Ensure consistently high standards of new design in the village
<b>Action 3.7-</b> Create a civic space at Christ Church that extends across Main Street	A focal point and high quality public realm
<b>Action 3.8-</b> Create a small church square at the Presbyterian Church that extends across Circular Road	A focal point and high quality public realm
<b>Action 3.9-</b> Create a third small historic space at the Twelve Apostles	A focal point and high quality public realm
<b>Action 3.10-</b> Develop and implement a public art strategy	Interpretation of heritage, upgrade physical appearance, provide points of interest and focal points that aid orientation

### Objective 4- Channel community spirit & vision

ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Action 4.1-</b> Establish communication forum for residents and caravan owners	Integrate second home / caravan owners with local residents
<b>Action 4.2-</b> Consult with local community / youth groups regarding demand for activities	Further develop youth activities
<b>Action 4.3-</b> Ensure a full programme of events and activities at the Peter Thompson Hall	Make full use of existing facilities
<b>Action 4.4-</b> Support one community based event with input from all sections of the local community	Encourage community events
<b>Action 4.5-</b> Provide a 'welcome pack' for new residents / second home owners	Encourage engagement and involvement of all the community
<b>Action 4.6-</b> Support a social economy reference group / forum	Improved networking to explore potential and opportunities

### Objective 5- Develop an urban environment that reflects the quality of its setting

ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Action 5.1-</b> Re-consider car access to the beach	Reduce visual and environmental impact of cars on the beach
<b>Action 5.2-</b> Secure sensitive redevelopment of gap sites	Tackle vacancy and dereliction
<b>Action 5.3-</b> Introduce structured landscaping to define central and peripheral areas and spaces	Soften the built form and enhance legibility around the village
<b>Action 5.4-</b> Consider landscape screening of caravan sites	Minimise visual impact
<b>Action 5.5-</b> Widen the existing footway along Sea Road from its junction with Circular Road	Provide an opportunity for better cycle and pedestrian links to the beach
<b>Action 5.6-</b> Formalise existing route to Downhill Palace Gateway Cottage	Improve access to Downhill
<b>Action 5.7-</b> Improvements to Freehall Road (B11) and School Lane	Provide better access from western areas into Castlerock / Connect Castlerock to Downhill Palace
<b>Action 5.8-</b> A habitat corridor could be created to enhance bio-diversity and promote wildlife corridors between the coastal and inland habitats	Create a stronger landscape structure to enclose Castlerock on the eastern and western boundary

### Objective 6- Support and encourage small business and enterprise

ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Action 6.1-</b> Explore evening economy feasibility (seasonal at first) through consultation with local stakeholders	Encourage evening economy activity, tailored to seasonal requirements
<b>Action 6.2-</b> Provide training and business support including retail training and support for managers and owners (customer care / management etc) in line with the Council's Economic Development Strategy	Support local business and service provision
<b>Action 6.3-</b> Explore university outreach opportunities	Strengthen links between university and local business
<b>Action 6.4-</b> Brief small businesses in preparation for RPA	Ensure awareness of changing functions and structures, and the implications for local business
<b>Action 6.5-</b> Host local enterprise clinics	Promote local entrepreneurship



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## Proposed Physical Interventions...

