

Document A

Strategic Environmental Assessment

December 2016

The Community Plan contains the vision and aspirations for the Causeway Coast and Glens area for 2030

This document contains a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the potential impact of 'A Better Future Together' for Causeway Coast and Glens rural stakeholders

CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Form

This SEA screening report template was developed by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Ard's and North Down Borough Council, it has been adapted by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Community Planning Manager for use on the emerging priority issues identified by our own community planning processes. The contents of this report relate to the requirements contained within Schedule 1 of the Environment Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004 and will assist in determining the need for an SEA for Causeway Coast and Glens interim Community Plan.

SEA SCREENING REPORT

Part 1

Consultation Body: Department of the Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue,
Gasworks Business Park,
Lower Ormeau Road,
Belfast, BT7 2JA

Legislative Requirement: The Development, implementation and monitoring of the Community Plan is a legislative function prescribed in the *Local Government Act (NI) 2014*.

Part 2

Screening is required as outlined in the 'EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment – (commonly known as the 'SEA Directive' and translated into a Northern Ireland law in '*The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004*'.

Determination

An SEA is not required because the Community Plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, it is high level and any specific activities arising as a result of the outcomes contained within the plan will be separately screened either via the Local Development Planning process or the screening of another strategy. The Community Plan will consist of a series of outcomes and indicators/measures which will be delivered via the strategies and work programmes of various community planning partners.

The Responsible Authority is Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Contact Officer: Elizabeth Beattie, Head of Policy and Community Planning

Signed:.....Date:.....

Context of Causeway Coast and Glens SEA

Strategic Environmental Assessment (“SEA”), namely the environmental assessment of plans and programmes which exist to provide the framework for detailed decision making, was required to take effect within the Member States of the EU by July 21, 2004. It fills the gap not covered by environmental impact assessment Directive 85/337/EEC in requiring the transparent assessment of the likely environmental effects of the hierarchy of plans and programmes which have a strategic role in directing not only development but other interventions in the environment.

At the moment, major projects likely to have an impact on the environment must be assessed under Directive 85/337/EEC. However, this assessment takes place at a stage when options for significant change are often limited. Decisions on the site of a project, or on the choice of alternatives, may already have been taken in the context of plans for a whole sector or geographical area. The SEA Directive plugs this gap by requiring the environmental effects of a broad range of plans and programmes to be assessed, so that they can be taken into account while plans are actually being developed, and in due course adopted. The public must also be consulted on the draft plans and on the environmental assessment and their views must be taken into account.

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment – (commonly known as the ‘SEA Directive’) has the objective of providing for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation of and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with the Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Article 32 of the SEA Directive details the characteristics that ‘plans and programmes’ must possess for the SEA Directive to apply and include those:

‘which are subject to preparation and/or adoption by authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by parliament or Government, and, which are required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions’.

The Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens falls within the scope of Article 2 of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC as it is a plan that is (a) subject to adoption by the Council and (b) is directed by the legislative and regulatory provisions of the *Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014*.

The EU Directive 2001/42/EC has been transposed into Northern Ireland law within the *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004* and provides in Part I that a determination needs to be made as to whether certain plans or programmes are required to undertake an SEA process. Making a determination is the first stage of the SEA process and is referred to as ‘screening’.

Screening is required under the above named regulations to determine whether the policies or objectives of any plan or programme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The aim of this report is to determine if the Community Plan requires an SEA to be undertaken. The objectives are:

- To set out and consider the characteristics of the Community Plan.
- To set out and consider the characteristics of the environmental effects of the Community Plan and the areas likely to be affected.
- To inform and advise the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and Causeway Coast and Glens Community Planning Partnership of the determination made.

Article 2 and 3 of the SEA Directive sets out the criteria which determines the requirement for an SEA process to be processed. Article 3 provides for a determination on a case by case basis as to whether plans are likely to have a significant environmental effect taking into account the criteria of Annex II of the Directive (transposed into Northern Ireland law this refers to Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2004*).

Application of the Screening criteria was applied with guidance from 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and 'Strategic Environmental Assessment: Consultation Bodies' Services and Standards for Responsible Authorities' from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Table 1

Responsible Authority	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (as facilitator of the Community Plan)
Contact Address/ Person	Mrs Elizabeth Beattie Head of Policy and Community Planning Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council 7 Connell Street Limavady Co. Londonderry 028 7772 2226 Elizabeth.beattie@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk
Approval Signature	E Beattie
Date of Submission	
Title of Plan	Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan
Purpose of Plan	The Community Plan will be a strategic long-term plan for the geographical area of Causeway Coast and Glens which will inform the design and delivery of public services. The Local Development Plan will provide the spatial strategy for the Community Plan.
What Prompted the Plan (i.e. legislation, regulatory or administrative provision)	The Council has a legislative duty, under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 to 'initiate, maintain, facilitate, and participate in Community Planning'. The Community Planning (Partners) Act requires statutory partners to participate and assist the Council in the discharge of its duties in relation to Community Planning.
Subject	Community Planning
Period covered by the Plan	10-15 years with a review of performance against outcomes published every two years and a review of the plan every four years.
Area covered by the Plan	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council a (map attached at appendix 1)
Summary of nature/content of the Plan	The Community Plan will set out the long-term vision, desired outcomes and indicators for the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a baseline of the existing conditions in the area; - An integrated view of the social, economic and environmental needs of the area in the context of regional, national and European policies and strategies and taking account of communities and issues that extend into neighbouring council areas and jurisdictions; - Long-term vision for the area; - Long-term outcomes against which progress can be monitored and evaluated via a set of indicators; - A focus on delivering in the short to medium term to achieve the long-term vision - Governance structure and delivery arrangements
Are there any proposed Plan objectives? a. Are these attached?	Our plan will have outcomes rather than objectives. These are still in development but our proposed vision, goals and values are attached for information (see appendix 2).

Criteria for determination of the likely significance of effects on the environment

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to –

(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan is a long-term strategic framework for the Causeway Coast and Glens area developed by the Council and its partners as outlined in the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014; the Local Government (Community Planning Partners Order) 2014 and associated Community Planning guidance. It will provide the strategic and policy direction for the delivery of services by community planning partners within the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

Its key principles and purpose will be to determine:

1. A shared vision for the Causeway Coast and Glens geographic area.
2. Shared outcomes and cross cutting principles.
3. Delivery mechanisms for key public services to assess performance against outcomes.
4. Increased collaboration and partnership to deliver better coordinated and more effective public services.
5. A coordinated approach and a shared commitment to citizen engagement.
6. A sustainable approach to improving services and wellbeing of all citizens in relation to social, economic and environmental well-being.

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will hopefully be achieved via the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by various community planning partners. The Plan will not identify specific locations or projects/activities but will contain high-level outcomes and indicators/measures to determine progress. Therefore the plan will not set any precedent for development.

(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan will be the influential and strategic plan governing the Causeway Coast and Glens geographic area. It will inform all other partner agency plans who are legally obliged to align plans and strategies to 'take account' of the Community Plan. The *Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014* and the amendments to the *Planning Act (NI) 2011* provide a statutory link between the Community Plan and Local Development Plan. The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Sustainable Development 2014 clearly states that Councils 'must take account of the Community Plan when preparing a Local Development Plan'.

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will hopefully be achieved via the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by various community planning partners. Other Council plans, including the Economic Development Strategy, Tourism Strategy, Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Rural Development Strategy may be implementation vehicles for the delivery against the social, economic and environmental well-being outcomes and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Community Plan will not specify locations or specific activities that should be undertaken to achieve its outcomes and therefore will not set any precedent for development.

(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The *Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014* states that community planning will 'identify long-term objectives in relation to the district for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in NI'. Community Planning Guidance (section 8 page 22) states that the Community Planning Partnership 'should set out sustainable development and integration of social, economic and environmental priorities as a key principle of their community plans and should have regard to the Executive's Sustainable Development Strategy in development of their Community Plan'.

The community planning outcomes are based on the three pillars of sustainable development and will help promote social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will hopefully be achieved via the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by various community planning partners. The Community Plan will identify key priorities and outcomes in relation to the environmental well-being of the area but these will be taken forward via the development of action plans or via other strategies. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will hopefully be achieved via the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by various community planning partners. The Community Plan is the long-term strategic framework for the Causeway Coast and Glens area affecting the Council and its partners as outlined in *the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014; the Local Government (Community Planning Partners order) 2014 and associated guidance*. It will provide strategic and policy direction for the delivery of services by all of its partners. It is expected that all partners will take account of community planning outcomes in terms of their own corporate and business planning processes. However, legislative functions and responsibilities of each of the partners' will remain the duty of the designated body.

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to –

a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan will set the overall strategic and policy direction on issues relating to the environment which will be implemented utilising action plans and associated strategies where applicable. Outcomes and indicators identified within the Community Plan will have their own associated delivery mechanisms.

It is likely that other strategies and plans that have been informed by the Community Plan or that will help implement the aims and actions of the Community Plan could themselves have permanent and irreversible effects. These include, for example, decisions linked to the Local Development Plan such as housing development, road infrastructure, walking routes and protection of coastal communities. These plans or activities will undoubtedly be subject to their own Environmental Impact Assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The Community Plan will be a collaborative document which is informed by a wide and diverse range of statutory and support partners as outlined in the *Local Government (Community Planning Partners Order) 2014*. The collation of data and evidence across boundaries in relation to social, economic and environmental well-being and development of associated long-term outcomes and actions will

create a platform to develop real synergy across many service areas. The Community Plan will ultimately seek to improve environmental well-being and one of the goals of Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan is to create a sustainable, high quality and cohesive environment (built and natural) that is valued and accessible. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(c) the trans boundary nature of the effects;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

Causeway Coast and Glens does not border with the Republic of Ireland but there will be a need for discussion and engagement with neighbouring Councils to consider potential implications and areas of collaborative work that will increase the positive impact the Plan may have.

(d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

The overall purpose of the Community Plan is to improve health and well-being across social, economic and environmental issues for all the citizens that live, work or visit the Causeway Coast and Glens area. While the Community Plan will include outcomes, indicators and delivery mechanisms will not contain information on specific projects as these will be undertaken via a Community Planning partner and if specific projects would require a SEA these would be undertaken separately. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

Causeway Coast and Glens boasts a rich and diverse landscape with a coastline which stretches over 140km along the Atlantic Coast from Lough Foyle to the Glens of Antrim. It has a population of just over 143,000 people making it the 7th most populated Council area in Northern Ireland. The Community Plan covers the whole of the Borough and all the services that are delivered for the benefit of people in the Borough. Community planning focuses on improving social, economic and environmental well-being and the outcomes currently being discussed relate to our natural environment being protected, accessible, enhanced and understood. The Plan may seek to improve our understanding of local environmental systems and help people adapt to the impact of coastal processes by increasing their own resilience and ability to cope.

The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –
(i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
(ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
(iii) intensive land-use;

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will hopefully be achieved via the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by various community planning partners.

The Community Plan is unlikely to have a significant impact on the environment. Quality and accessibility of the local environment as well as understanding and living in harmony with environmental processes are potential priority issues that will be addressed within the Community Plan. The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international Protection status.

Likely to have significant environmental effects YES NO

Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)

Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan will be centred on a number of strategic high-level outcomes, with corresponding indicators/measures, which will hopefully be achieved via the development and implementation of strategies and programmes by various community planning partners.

There are a diverse range of conservation sites of international, national and local importance throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens area. The sites have been designated to preserve a wide range of NI priority habitats and species.

Causeway Coast and Glens has a large number of protected sites and habitats:

1 – UNESCO World Heritage Site (only one in Northern Ireland)

4 – Areas of Outstanding Beauty

61 – Areas of Special Scientific Interest

4 – Special Protection Areas

13 - Nature Reserves

108 – NI Priority Species recorded

148 - Local Landscape Policy Areas

209 – 148 – Local Landscape Policy Areas

14 – Special Areas of Conservation

3 – RAMSAR Sites

39 – Priority Habitat Sites

2 – Wildlife Trust Sites

2 Sites of Community Importance

The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

Summary of Screening Report and the significant environmental effects of Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan.

The Community Plan will be the long-term strategic framework document providing the overarching policy and strategic outcomes focused framework for the delivery of services by community planning partners within the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

The Plan will be focused on outcomes, indicators and delivery mechanisms to ensure that the vision and commitments contained within the Plan are realised. Sustainable development and its principles have been integrated into the community planning process and the Plan will focus on improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough.

The Community Plan falls within the scope of Section 5(4) but as it does not set a precedent for development, and due to it being based on a series of high-level outcomes, the implementation of the plan will not have a significant environmental impact.

Following careful review and consideration it is recognised that the Community Plan does not require an SEA because it falls short of the scope of Section 5(1). The Community Plan will not set a precedent to development and will not specify specific locations for activities.

Appendix 1 – Geographical area covered by Causeway Coast and Glens

The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council represents 143,000 plus people and has a geographical area of some 2,000km²



Appendix 2 –Vision, Values and Goals of Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan

Vision: ‘A Better Future Together’

Values & Underpinning Principles

Respect – We will encourage fairness making decisions based on evidence, need and equality

Participation – We will involve and engage all our community, building partnership working, co-operation and collective ownership of the Community Plan.

Innovation – We will be ambitious and imaginative in all that we do.

Integrity – We will be open, transparent and accountable in our activities and in our decision making.

Sustainability– We will promote respect for our environment, a prosperous economy and a resilient community through working together

Goals



**A Sustainable
Accessible
Environment**

**A Healthy Safe
Community**

**A Thriving
Economy**

VISION – ‘A Better Future Together’

GOALS -

1. A Sustainable Accessible Environment
2. A Healthy Safe Community
3. A Thriving Economy

VALUES –

1. **Respect** – encourage fairness and respect, making decisions based on evidence, need and equality.
2. **Participation** – involve and engage all our community, building partnership working, co-operation and collective ownership of the Community Plan.
3. **Imagination** – be ambitious and innovative in all that we do
4. **Integrity** – be open, transparent and accountable in our activities and in our decision making
5. **Connecting People and Places** – promote access, sustainability and resilience through working together