

<b>Causeway Coast and Glens Bonfire Framework</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> February 2018</b>
<b>To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision</b>	

<b>Linkage to Corporate Strategy</b>	
<b>Strategic Themes</b>	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
<b>Outcomes</b>	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Head of Community & Culture Good Relations Manager
<b>Cost: (If applicable)</b>	<b>Net cost through Good Relations £ 500</b> Grant aid £1,500

**The purpose of this report is to present members with the Interagency Bonfire Framework for approval.**

### **Background**

In 2014, the Good Relations audit highlighted a need to develop collaborative approaches to monitor potential challenges in terms of shared and safe space and cultural expression, in order to identify issues early and work together with local stakeholders to find mutually beneficial solutions.

The Good Relations programme has facilitated an interagency partnership approach through the establishment of a Safer Bonfire working group involving relevant statutory agencies.

Stakeholders who participate in the interagency group include: Council – representation by both Good Relations and Environmental Services; Police Service for Northern Ireland, NI Housing Executive, NI Fire & Rescue Service and more recently the NI Environmental Agency.

The overall purpose of the group is to promote safer, stronger and healthier communities while ensuring that both the natural and built environment is safe, respected and valued. Specifically the group seeks to address both environmental, community safety and good relations issues which from time to time are associated with bonfires.

### **Identified need**

The group identified the need to develop an interagency bonfire management framework that would assist in the celebration of cultural identity respectfully, whilst promoting safer, stronger and healthier communities, ensuring that both the natural and built environment is safe, respected and valued.

The process of developing the framework provided an opportunity for statutory bodies to create a baseline, reach agreement on the partners' respective roles and responsibilities, and develop an agreed approach in terms of working with communities on bonfires.

The desired outcome associated with the initiative is improved relationships between local communities, Council and other key partners resulting in safer bonfires for all.

## **Process for developing the framework**

A number of activities were undertaken as part of the process to develop a framework.

These included:

- Surveys of all public agencies and elected representatives;
- Interviews and meetings with both key public agencies and local community groupings;
- Councillor workshop;
- Community meetings with representatives from local groups including bonfire builders;
- Site visits to The Folly in Armagh and Randallstown bonfire initiatives to consider current good practice .
- The compilation of a draft framework for consideration by potential delivery partners.
- Consultation with local community representatives / bonfire builders on their thoughts of the draft framework.

## **Feedback from consultation**

Feedback from community representatives and public agencies resulted in a number of potential areas of agreement:

- Local leadership by individuals and community based organisations is critical in helping to move an area away from problematic bonfire issues to a place where the bonfire is well managed;
- Recognition of current good practice by local communities in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area, led by local communities;
- That there should be no tyres or other toxic materials on bonfires;
- That there should be no flags, emblems or posters that could be construed as hate-related, caveated with the recognition that achieving that may take longer;
- Local communities need support to improve their bonfire management which may include additional resources, support for training, provision of health and safety materials/equipment and support for the collection of unwanted materials;
- Public agencies should be consistent in their approach to both providing support and when necessary, enforcement (particularly in relation to fly-tipping and collecting toxic materials);
- Long-term support is important on issues such as environmental schemes, building relationships with, and the capacity of young people involved in bonfire management. Of particular note is the need to raise awareness among the young people themselves, and the wider community, on the health impact of burning tyres and toxic materials.

The consultation highlighted that ongoing community engagement is a priority and is vital for the successful development and agreement of the bonfire framework.

## **Complimentary Initiatives**

Officers have been working on a number of initiatives specifically aimed at engaging with communities on an ongoing basis to build positive relations and provide support to help build capacity to encourage more positive promotion of cultural identity.

Good Relations, working alongside Environmental Services, have been engaging with local communities to consider how existing celebrations of culture can be delivered in a safer environment for both participants and the wider community.

Council's Good Relations action plan has a variety of projects specifically aimed to engage with key influencers within communities, as well as those who are involved with building bonfires. These include projects targeting bonfire builders on issues of safety and bonfire management, understanding and promoting positive expressions of culture, building positive relations and peer leadership, to name but a few.

Good Relations is managing the Peace IV 'Shaping our Space' project; a re-imagining initiative, working with 8 local communities to look at positive ways to express culture. Some areas have expressed an interest in doing some work around their bonfire site.

Good Relations will also continue to facilitate the interagency bonfire group.

### **Framework**

The bonfire framework outlines the roles and responsibilities of partners within the Bonfire working group and affirms the ongoing, longer term process of continuous engagement with local communities in order to embed the principles into practice.

### **Key Recommendations**

There are a number of short, medium and longer term recommendations within the framework. The key recommendations include:

- Council should work pro-actively with other public agency partners and local communities towards respectful, legal, safe, environmentally sound and positive bonfires as cultural or historical expressions;
- Where possible Council and other public agencies should facilitate the safest possible siting of bonfires to minimise risk to people, property and land;
- An interagency approach should be taken to work to discontinue the use of negative and harmful health-related materials on bonfires including tyres;
- Partners should encourage innovative approaches including to the design and management of the safest possible bonfires, and support communities if they wish to explore alternatives to a bonfire;
- Ongoing community engagement to reduce and discontinue the use of symbols, materials, posters or material that could be harmful to good relations;
- Further support local communities through the availability of appropriate resources and the development of relevant skills.
- Explore alternative, safer bonfire structures.

### **Initial Developments**

The framework has recommended a series of actions, some of which have already taken place, by way of an action plan. This includes support for training in stewarding, safety, risk assessment, first aid and the production of a good practice booklet which is attached in **Annex B** for information.

Additional recommendations within the framework includes piloting an alternative safer bonfire structure and delivering an environmental project in proximity to a bonfire site in one key location. The bonfire group have therefore proposed delivering a safer bonfire pilot project for the summer of 2018.

The project, building on bonfire initiatives previously delivered through the legacy Ballymoney Borough Council, will involve partnership working between Environmental Services and Good Relations, with additional support from the group's member organisations. The project will focus on working with a local community bonfire grouping to develop a safer, cleaner bonfire structure on an agreed blue print and within an agreed timeframe.

The bonfire itself and its immediate surroundings will be subject to creative environmental improvements through agreement and working in partnership with the local community who would be instrumental in designing and developing an appropriate structure including façade, to contain materials and improve the aesthetics of the site and immediate area. An example of a previous environmental improvement project, delivered through Ballymoney, is attached in **Annex C**.

Local residents involved in the building of the bonfire will be offered suitable training such as safer bonfires, marshalling, manual handling, design, woodwork, etc to encourage community ownership and positive expressions of culture in terms of the design of the structure. **Costs for the project include artists' workshop facilitation, training and materials.**

If the pilot project is successful in terms of community engagement and buy in, the programme would be extended further in 2019 (subject to resources) to encourage greater community participation/uptake in the scheme.

### **Recommendation**

1. It is recommended that members approve the Bonfire Framework (**Annex A**)
2. It is recommended that Good Relations along with Environmental Services develop a pilot project exploring safer bonfires for 2018/19.

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# **Bonfire Framework**

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**January 2018**

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**Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council**

# CONTENT

<b>BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DRIVERS FOR THE FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LEGAL BACKDROP</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEWING</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>16</b>



## 1 BACKGROUND

For a number of years public agencies<sup>1</sup> have sought to work with local communities to try to ensure better managed bonfires.

The outreach undertaken to local communities is now being more formally acknowledged and recognised in this framework.

It is in the best interests of all involved (whether people enjoying bonfires, organising and managing bonfires, or with a legal and public duty relevant to bonfires) that there are legal, safe, environmentally-sound bonfires that respect the tradition they are commemorating while respecting people from other traditions too.

While public agencies can facilitate, persuade and encourage improvement in bonfire management, community leadership is important to make positive change occur locally; and the better the relationship communities have with public agencies the more that can be achieved.

Change may occur slowly, and will require investment of time and effort. It

will benefit from resilience and an understanding of the long-term nature of this work.

### REMINDER

It is in the best interests of all involved that there are legal, safe, environmentally-sound bonfires that respect the tradition they are commemorating while respecting people from other traditions too

This framework is not a Northern Ireland wide policy. Public agencies will have their own Northern Ireland policies and commitments. This is not a substitute for those wider policies and commitments.

This framework is part of a process led by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, supported by other public agencies, to provide a local, bespoke set of guidelines for the management of bonfires in the Borough.

### REMINDER

This framework is not a Northern Ireland wide policy – public agencies will have their own Northern Ireland policies and commitments. This is not a substitute for those wider policies and commitments.

Copies of some of the wider policies adopted by public agencies may be accessed in the appendices.

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<sup>1</sup> When using the term public agencies the document refers to those public agencies involved in the interagency bonfire working group. Not

all aspects of this framework will apply to every public agency. Each public agency has its own roles and responsibilities.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The framework will be of relevance for any bonfire regardless of the community or tradition within which it is held. While part of a wider tradition and a more general political/historical context, are largely local in how they are organised and enjoyed.

Therefore, the framework reflects the importance of community engagement.

Progress on the management of bonfires and reduction of unlawful or anti-social activities will be long-term. While much good practice exists, transformation of more problematic areas will not necessarily happen in a year. It may take time and include setbacks and challenges. Public agencies should be ready for the long-haul in a long-term process.

It is also a year-long process. Encouraging better bonfire management, whether in its impact on the appearance of an area or on the potential negative impact on health, is also about how the area views itself during the rest of the year. If residents take pride in the attractiveness of an area for 11 months of the year they will be less likely to tolerate unsightly build-up of bonfire materials over many months and are more likely to understand the impact of dioxins if there is a long-term focus on the health of local children.

Principal adverse effects of bonfires have been identified to include:

1. Illegal dumping of waste materials;

2. Anti-social behaviour associated with the event;
3. Air pollution;
4. Visual amenity;
5. Health impact of emissions;
6. Damage to property.<sup>2</sup>

In Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area:

- Community representatives have been involved in developing this framework. They acknowledged that there are issues that need addressed and many are willing to work with public agencies to address them;
- Public agencies acknowledge that they can do more to support good practice and encourage local community leadership to positively respect culture and history;
- All stakeholders accept it is better for a common approach to bonfires in a local area;
- All stakeholders agree to work toward local action plans in areas that may be particularly problematic for bonfire management.

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<sup>2</sup> Bonfires, A report by the interagency working group on bonfires, 2004

### **3 CONTEXT FOR PUBLIC AGENCIES**

Public agencies recognise the important role they have to play. The roles each plays in the interagency group generally include:

#### **Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council**

Council will:

- Take the lead in organising and co-ordinating the interagency bonfire group;
- Engage with local communities and continue to develop relationships on bonfire management;
- Provide resourcing and other support toward positive, lawful cultural celebration;
- Facilitate further dialogue on bonfire management;
- Consider cleaning up after bonfires and cultural celebrations;
- Enforce the law safely where relevant to it as a Council and as a landowner.

#### **Police Service of Northern Ireland**

PSNI will:

- Help to enforce the law so that cultural celebrations are lawful;
- Investigate potential injury, damage to property or other unlawful activity;
- Continue to build relationships within communities related to cultural celebrations;

- Enforce a number of provisions on roads and help other public agencies in the enforcement of the law.

#### **Northern Ireland Housing Executive**

NIHE will:

- Continue to build relationships with local communities related to cultural celebrations;
- Provide funding and other support toward improving bonfire management to include reducing environmental damage, better control collection of bonfire material, reduce fly tipping and disposal of illegal waste, reduce clean-up costs, reduce paramilitary and inappropriate displays of flags and effigies;
- Consider cleaning up after bonfires and cultural celebrations on its land;
- Continue to repair damage to property;
- Enforce the law safely where relevant to it as a landowner.

#### **Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service**

NIF & RS will:

- Carry out site visits to: provide advice on bonfire safety; build good relations with bonfire builders; ensure crews are accepted locally; identify if property or utilities are likely to be impacted for passing on to other agencies;

gain intelligence on hydrant locations, the best approach and resources likely to be required;

- Attend a bonfire related incident when someone from a local community has a concern and requires assistance, to protect life and property;
- While not intending to disrupt bonfires, NIFRS may extinguish a bonfire based on a dynamic risk assessment.

### **Northern Ireland Environment Agency**

NIEA will:

- Provide advice and support to other public agencies;
- Focus suitable attention on the regulation of waste carriers and especially those transporting waste tyres to ensure they are authorised to do so;
- Take enforcement action against any illegal storage of waste tyres that could subsequently find their way on to bonfires;
- Where evidence as to the perpetrator is available, investigate serious incidents and, where sufficient evidence is gathered, take enforcement action against those producers and/or carriers who allow tyres or hazardous waste to be deposited at bonfire sites;

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<sup>3</sup> Other than these bullet points the NIEA is not responsible for any other commitments in this framework.

- Make recommendations on policy and legislation.<sup>3</sup>

### **Department for Infrastructure**

DfI will:

- Help to keep roads clear for access of the public and emergency services;
- If necessary carry out repairs to roads after bonfires have taken place.

#### 4 DRIVERS FOR THE FRAMEWORK

It is acknowledged that:

- Bonfires will occur – the framework is not an attempt to undermine the hosting of bonfires or peoples' enjoyment of the tradition of bonfires, where communities support a bonfire. It is aiming to promote healthy, safe, lawful family-friendly events or celebrations that may include bonfires or alternatives;
- Public agencies will be mindful of their legal obligations and their requirement to uphold the law; while mindful also of the tradition and history of bonfires, and the support for bonfires within communities;
- All involved – public agencies, communities, organisers and elected representatives – will be mindful of potential positive/negative impact on the health, home and family lives of people living and gathering close to bonfires;
- Consultation with residents and involvement of communities in planning, managing and implementing public agency response to bonfires will be a year-round process;
- Public agencies will ask communities to play their part in hosting safe, legal and positive bonfires that do justice to their local traditions; and public agencies commit to play a wider role in supporting communities through related initiatives as outlined in the sections below especially relating to community engagement.

In implementing the framework inter-agency partners agree to:

- Work pro-actively with other public agency partners and local communities towards respectful, legal, safe, environmentally sound and positive bonfires as cultural or historical expressions;
- Work to discontinue the use of negative and harmful health-related materials on bonfires including tyres;
- Facilitate, where possible, the safest possible siting of bonfires to minimise risk to people, property and land;
- Encourage innovative approaches including the design and management of the safest possible bonfires, and support communities if they wish to explore alternatives to a bonfire;
- Work to reduce and discontinue use of symbols, materials, posters or material that could be harmful to good relations;
- Be open to further support to local communities through the availability of resources and development of skills;

Along with local communities public agencies aim to:

1. Support good relationships with local communities within which a bonfire is held;
2. Support positive, lawful and respectful celebration of history and culture;

3. Ensure bonfires are environmentally friendly and protect the health and well-being of local communities;
4. Adhere to their legal and public duties and obligations.

Public agencies should be mindful, as they deliver the framework that:

- Community leadership is important;
- Some areas that have made significant improvement in how bonfires are managed, may believe it unfair to focus now on those areas that have not;
- Some communities may believe the framework is designed to undermine bonfires and cultural celebration.

However, the beneficial outcomes of implementing the framework in the long-term may include:

- Safer, lawful, family-friendly and positive celebrations of culture;
- Improved relationship between local communities and public agencies on a sensitive issue such as cultural celebration;
- Reduced potential for deterioration of community relations.

## 5 LEGAL BACKDROP

Public agencies and all involved in constructing or managing bonfires should be mindful of the law. The framework is not a substitute for the legal obligations of those organising and supporting bonfires or the duties under the law of public agencies. The framework is designed to facilitate cross-sectoral working to better manage bonfires in the long-term.

Public agencies are aware of their current legal obligations and potential legal issues that may arise in the long-term.

A summary of the relevant legislation applicable to all involved in constructing, managing and supporting bonfires includes:

- Litter (NI) Order 1994

The Order may facilitate Council taking enforcement proceedings usually for fly-tipping at bonfires sites on a relatively small scale especially household goods being discarded illegally.

- Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997

The Order would permit the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or the Council to remove waste on land if it was to prevent pollution or a risk to health. The NIEA may prosecute land-owners for allowing the illegal dumping of waste materials.

- Roads (NI) Order 1993

The Department for Infrastructure may require removal of materials on a road, or may remove it themselves if dangerous. The PSNI are responsible for enforcement including actions likely to obstruct roads or cause damage.

- Public Order (NI) Order 1987 – including causing damage to roads, obstruction and breach of the peace

The PSNI is responsible for enforcement of issues arising from disorderly behaviour or breach of the peace, and in some circumstances where there is hate motiva-

tion.

- Criminal – civil - Damage (NI) Order 1977

Related to offences for destroying or damaging property and possessing something with the intent to destroy or damage property.

- Environment (NI) Order 2002

Places a duty on the Department for Communities (formerly Environment) to maintain air quality and on Councils to review and implement air quality strategy.

- Fire and Rescue Services (NI) Order 2006

Obligates the Fire and Rescue Service to do what is reasonable to prevent a fire or protect life and property.

### REMINDER

The framework is not a substitute for the legal obligations of those organising and supporting bonfires or the duties under the law of public agencies

- Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878

Provides powers to Councils to deal with a nuisance such as smoke.

- Trespass or civil trespass

Use of land without the landowner's permission.

- Article Eight European Convention on Human Rights

Obligations to respect a person's private and family life, home and his/her correspondence subject to certain restrictions that is in accordance with law and necessary in a democratic society.

Public agencies are expected to pro-actively uphold the law including a right to interfere to protect health.

- Article Ten European Convention on Human Rights

Upholds the right of people for freedom of expression subject to certain restrictions that is in accordance with law and necessary in a democratic society.

Public agencies are expected to pro-actively uphold the law including a right to interfere to protect health.

## 6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Interagency group agrees to develop and sustain a community engagement plan which it will deliver year-on-year. The community engagement plan will be led by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council but it will involve public agencies as relevant, elected representatives and community leaders.

Early engagement on bonfire management is desirable, as is early engagement in developing the framework.

There are three critical groups for that engagement:

- Developing relationships, trust and clarity of roles between officials representing public agencies – as members of the inter-agency bonfire safety working group;
- Developing understanding and support from elected representatives (Councillors) as primary interlocutors between communities, the media and public agencies; and as a strategic lead of one of the public agencies;
- Developing understanding and support from local communities and key players within those communities, including those involved in constructing and managing bonfires.

For bonfires in July and August, community engagement will begin in September the year before.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council undertakes to facilitate a consultation event to explore what has worked well and less well for bonfires over the summer, areas that have been problematic and areas that have improved.

A community engagement and communications timetable is outlined as an appendix.

### ACTION POINT

Council will organise a consultation event each September to review bonfires over the summer and start to plan for the next year

## 7 EMPOWERMENT

The interagency working group will agree a number of interventions, phased over an initial three years, and reviewed every September. The commitments will give life to the framework.

These interventions may include:

- Specific plans for particular areas to tackle with consistency a problematic bonfire in an area or/and support an area which is working well and would benefit from continued investment of time and effort;
- Youth work intervention during the year but especially during the summer;
- Environmental improvement work in and around areas where bonfires are sited combined with encouragement to collect and store materials in a reasonable timeframe;
- The

discontinuation of tyres from bonfires;

- Provision of support to increase health and safety activities and

measures at bonfires and bonfire sites;

- Help communities to explore alternative sites for bonfires where relevant, involving whole communities;
- Support for good relations work that encourages positive, respectful cultural and historical celebration;
- Exploration of innovative ways for cultural celebration that presents alternatives to traditional bonfires;
- Enforcement where relevant.

Good practice bonfire management will be recognised and those areas will be eligible for ongoing public agency encouragement.

In areas of good practice bonfire management:

### AS PART OF THIS FRAMEWORK, PUBLIC AGENCIES AGREE TO:

- Further encourage well-managed, legal, and safe celebration of history and culture where communities support a bonfire;
- Develop a good practice booklet on organising a bonfire including policies on tyres, other toxins, and location.

- Assist local communities identify alternative suitable sites for a bonfire if a bonfire site is lost due



- to regeneration, buildings or other local factors;
- Assist local communities that wish to explore alternatives to a bonfire;
- Support local communities where signage for bonfire sites would be helpful for crowd management and material collection;
- Develop one new year-long environmental scheme at a bonfire site to encourage tidiness in the area in the summer, and sustain that scheme with local community in future years;
- Provide resourcing to support a respectful family oriented celebration – and help communities access funding opportunities;
- Advise bonfire management committees or local community organisations and bonfire builders;
- Develop a plan for the removal of toxic materials from bonfire sites;
- Remove unsuitable material from bonfire sites, when safe, in a timely way.
- Collect material for the bonfire no more than ten weeks before the bonfire is due to be lit;
- Build bonfires a sufficient distance from houses and community facilities to ensure they are not endangered or damaged, and that use of those homes and facilities by local people, families and children is not restricted;
- Support public agencies having access to the site without hindrance to remove materials that cause health and safety issues for local people or that may promote hatred;
- Ensure there are no huts contained within bonfires to promote the safety of children and young people;
- Light the bonfire sufficiently early.

**AS PART OF THIS FRAMEWORK LOCAL COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES MAY AGREE TO:**

- Identify issues from the good practice booklet that will help them form a To Do list of actions for the future;

## 8 RESOURCING

Public agencies recognise that providing support to local communities in the form of resourcing, where those communities sign up to the bonfire framework, is an important encouragement to better bonfire management.

Resourcing could support a variety of actions to better organise and manage bonfires. These may include:

- Family fun activities;
- Stewarding training for bonfire management;
- First aid training with focus on bonfire management;
- Risk assessment training for bonfires;
- New physical features for a bonfire such as fences or sand bases.

Resourcing should be available in sufficient time to allow activities to take place in the run up to and including bonfires in the July-August period.

Public agencies will also explore innovative approaches to bonfires and will explore the potential for a beacon programme.

### REMINDER

Public agencies recognise that providing support to local communities in the form of resourcing, where those communities sign up to the bonfire framework, is an important encouragement to better bonfire management.

## 9 ENFORCEMENT

This framework does not have enforcement as a central theme – the framework is focused on developing relationships between local communities and public agencies, and trying to work with people to improve bonfire management.

However, public agencies also have legal duties and will uphold and enforce the law as relevant.

A summary of the most relevant legislation is summarised in the framework.

Aside from those pieces of legislation public agencies are mindful of the additional civil liabilities that landowners may have. This includes private landowners but may also include public agencies such as Council, NIHE and the Department of Infrastructure.

Therefore, public agencies, including those who are landowners, will take their legal duties and their safeguarding responsibilities seriously.

### REMINDER

This framework does not have enforcement as a central theme – the framework is more focused on developing relationships

## 10 COMMUNICATIONS

The interagency group will be mindful of the need for timely, clear and positive communication to communities and the media. The core messages and how communication is undertaken should be agreed before each summer.

Each agency should identify a key person to co-ordinate communications from their perspective, whether or not they take a public role.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will liaise with Councillors who both speak for communities and speak for the Council. Council should work with Councillors to ensure they are fully informed of positive and collaboratuive work taking place, legal obligations of public agencies including Council, and the long-term aspiration of the framework.

Councillors also acknowledge their obligations to keep informed and be aware of work that is being undertaken and their responsibilities to promote good relations.

Communication should focus on a) how and when public agencies will engage with local and regional media before and during the bonfire season, and b) how good practice will be shared between stakeholders including community representatives throughout the year.

A communications timetable is included as an appendix.

**ACTION POINT**  
Each agency should identify a key person to co-ordinate communications from their perspective, whether or not they take a public role

## **11 MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING**

The framework should be monitored by the Interagency Group with regard to timeframes, achievement of performance indicators and budgets.

It is anticipated the framework will be formally revisited in September each year as part of an annual assessment of the summer carried out with communities including bonfire builders and supporters.

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## 12 **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The following additional information has been provided by public agencies for use by all stakeholders. It includes wider policy commitments and protocols on a Northern Ireland-wide basis.

### **Fire and Resecue Service**



Bonfire Management  
Framework - V1.pdf



CIB No. 8 - Bonfire  
Advice.pdf

### **Northern Ireland Housing Executive Funding Criteria**



2017 COH UPDATED  
BFM POLICY.DOCX

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**Appendix A:** Timetable for key actions

<b>Activity</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>	<b>2019/2020</b>
Agree the bonfire interagency framework	✓		
September review of the summer and plan for next year	✓	✓	✓
Production of good practice booklet	✓		
Environmental project in proximity to bonfire site in one key location		✓	✓
Provision of support focused on areas agreeing to good practice booklet and framework		✓	✓
Quarterly estate tidy ups in partnership with local community and possibly a community-based initiative such as Supporting Communities		✓	✓
Support for training in stewarding, safety, risk assessment and first aid		✓	✓
Pilot an alternative safer structure in an area agreed by local community		✓	✓
Enforcement where necessary and relevant	✓	✓	✓

## Appendix B:

### Communications and Engagement Timetable

The protocol on engagement and communication will include at least ten key actions each year such as (not all starting in 2017):

<b>Date By:</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>April</b>	Public agencies will agree key messages and communication plan
<b>April</b>	Development of an enforcement communications plan agreed by public agencies
<b>April-August</b>	Intensive communication April-August with local communities and the media focusing on the real and negative impact on health of hazardous materials (including tyres) in bonfires
<b>May</b>	A new environmental initiative in a bonfire related area
<b>June</b>	Briefing for elected representatives on role, work anticipated/undertaken, key messages, challenges
<b>June-August</b>	Facilitation of visits by public agencies to bonfire sites to provide formal or informal advice on safety
<b>Ongoing</b>	Engagement with local communities on a gradual basis over the next five years exploring community attitudes and opinions to bonfires and alternatives
<b>Ongoing</b>	Engagement with young people and bonfire builders by public agencies on an all-year basis but especially April-August
<b>Ongoing</b>	Development of individual plans for areas with bonfires
<b>Ongoing</b>	Exploration of establishment of a local bonfire forum in areas to act as a focal point for safety and management issues
<b>Ongoing</b>	Continued support for, and promotion of, good practice in bonfire management
<b>September</b>	Review of each summer in September with local communities, resulting in an updated engagement plan for the next 12 months
<b>October</b>	Production of information on alternatives to bonfires
<b>October</b>	Youth and community engagement plan agreed for the next 12 months

## KEY CONTACTS:

### CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will engage with local communities and continue to develop relationships to assist in ensuring safer bonfire management.

Our Environmental Services and Good Relations departments can provide some resourcing and other support toward positive, lawful cultural celebrations.

Council can facilitate dialogue on bonfire management and work with local bonfire builders to plan and consider cleaning up after bonfires and cultural celebrations.

However, Council also has a duty to enforce the relevant legislation and protect its property. A number of staff have been appointed within the council to work with communities to fulfil the role outlined above and can be contacted as follows:

### ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Environmental services can provide advice and support to assist you in planning and organising your bonfire safely to reduce the negative impact on the environment. Resources can also be provided to ensure safety at bonfire sites and assistance that can help to reduce the cost of clean ups.

Contacts:

<b>Jackie Barr</b> (Coleraine & Limavady)	Tel: <b>07889 539 353</b>
<b>Warner Kirkpatrick</b> (Ballymoney)	Tel: <b>07841 970 331</b>
<b>Bryan Edgar</b> (Ballymoney)	Tel: <b>07809 552 931</b>
<b>Aidan McPeake</b> (Moyle)	Tel: <b>07525 667 673</b>

### GOOD RELATIONS

Good Relations can provide support to ensure positive promotion of culture. Developing new and building on existing relations is key to ensuring continued community engagement. Through our Good Relations Programme we can advise, support and facilitate dialogue and mediation to assist in reducing tensions. The Good Relations team can facilitate bonfire safety training and provide a range of opportunities for communities who wish to promote positive cultural identity.

Contact:

**Patricia Cameron**, Good Relations Manager  
Tel: **028 7776 0304** or Mobile: **07702 331 430**

Or

**Julie Welsh**, Head of service for Community and Culture  
Tel: **028 7034 7034** or Mobile: **07802 214 901**

### NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

NIF+RS will on request, carry out site visits to provide advice on bonfire safety, build good relations with bonfire builders, ensure crews are accepted locally, identify if property or utilities are likely to be impacted, identify hydrant locations, the best approach and resources likely to be required.

NIF+RS will also attend a bonfire related incident when someone from a local community has a concern and requires assistance, to protect life and property.

While not intending to disrupt bonfires, NIF+RS may extinguish a bonfire based on a dynamic risk assessment.

### HOUSING EXECUTIVE

HE's Community Cohesion Unit, continues to build relationships with local communities in relation to cultural celebrations. Support can be provided to community groups toward improving bonfire management to reduce environmental damage, better controlled collection of bonfire material, reduce fly tipping and disposal of illegal waste, reduce clean-up costs.

HE will enforce the law where relevant to it as a landowner.

Contact:

**Eddie Breslin**, Good Relations Officer, Cohesion Unit,  
Mobile: **07769 977 897** (9am to 5pm only)  
for help with any bonfire issues relating to N.I.H.E.  
Estates, within the Causeway Coast and Glens Area.

### PSNI:

PSNI help to enforce the law. They will investigate potential injury, damage to property or other unlawful activity.

Local PSNI teams continue to build relationships within communities to ensure positive cultural celebrations.

PSNI will also enforce a number of provisions on roads and help other public agencies in the enforcement of the law.

Contact:

**Inspector Donna Bowden**, PSNI 101 Ext **63968**  
Mobile: **07801 738 181**

**Sergeant Michael O'Loan**, PSNI 101 Ext **83020**  
Limavady

**Inspector David Burns**, PSNI 101 Ext **40946**  
Dervock / Ballymoney / Cloughmills / Rasharkin

This Leaflet has been produced by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council through financial support provided by the Executive Office's, District Council's Good Relations Programme.

# BONFIRE SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council aims to engage with local communities to encourage safer bonfire management in order to support positive promotion of cultural celebration.



## CULTURAL CELEBRATION:

The tradition of bonfires goes back centuries. Fire was used in early days to celebrate Light's victory over Darkness and marked the control over fire, lighting the dark of night.

According to the Arcade dictionary of origins, a bonfire was a fire in which bones were burned. Historically bonfires were also used as means of communication, primarily to warn of danger.

In Northern Ireland a traditional bonfire has associations with religious or political events. Generally they are used to commemorate feast days or celebrate victories of historical significance.

## CELEBRATING SAFELY

Bonfires can be great fun but each year some of the events have seen injury to people, damage to property and negative environmental impact.

This leaflet provides some useful advice on managing bonfires to ensure safer, stronger and healthier communities while ensuring that both the natural and built environment is safe, respected and valued.

## PLAN

Planning is key to having a safe and successful bonfire. Advice and support can be provided if you involve organisations such as community groups, land owners (eg housing executive), Fire Service, Police and the local council.

## LOCATION OF BONFIRES

Local consultation should be carried out as to where a bonfire will be located. If residents are consulted, it is less likely that there will be complaints from locals. The site of a bonfire should be in an unenclosed space well away from houses, garages, sheds, fences, overhead cables, trees and shrubs. Bonfire sites should be well away from areas where kids usually play.

As a guide, the location of a bonfire should be at ratio of at least 1:5, meaning that the nearest property should not be any closer than 5 times the height of the bonfire.

Wind direction should be taken into consideration to ensure that smoke and fumes do not blow across spectators or nearby homes.

Bonfires should not be positioned on tarmac or asphalt surfaces. If the weather is dry, preferably the surface should be damped down. Ideally a bonfire should be in an area and on a surface that can be easily cleared and cleaned afterwards.

## COLLECTING MATERIALS FOR BONFIRES

Stockpiling material in open sites can be dangerous particularly for children and can make the neighbourhood look unsightly and encourage vermin.

Bonfires are often used as a means to dispose of waste materials, sometimes materials that are subject to legal control because of environmental and health impact. Dumping of this waste should not be supported by local communities. Legal action can be taken against anyone who dumps controlled waste at bonfire sites. Examples of control waste include tyres, chemicals, household waste, flammable liquids etc.

If any controlled waste is dumped at a bonfire site, it is advisable to contact the land owner to have the waste removed. This may be the Housing Executive or the environmental services at your local council (contact details are provided in this leaflet) or possibly a private land owner who can arrange to have it removed.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BURNING OF CONTROLLED WASTE ON BONFIRES

The uncontrolled burning of waste on bonfires can produce substances that can harm the environment. Black smoke contains volatile organic compounds and dioxins which affect the air quality and health of people nearby, particularly the elderly.

The burning of tyres, plastics and upholstered furniture or painted materials may cause problems for asthmatics, bronchitis sufferers, and people with heart conditions and children.

Smoke prevents local residents enjoying their garden, opening windows, hanging out washing and also reduces visibility in the neighbourhood and surrounding roads.

The burning of tyres in particular causes the remains of the bonfire to smoulder for several days prolonging the exposure to the toxins produced.

This also creates a negative perception to tourists or visitors to the area.



## STRUCTURE

Stability during the whole burn is key to building a safe bonfire!

When building a bonfire you should think about not only size, but density and dampness. There should be an even distribution of weight and combustibility all around.

The bonfire should be a manageable size.

Remember if it's 5 meters tall it should be at least 25 metres from the nearest building / structure.

It should not contain any potentially hazardous materials that could explode or give off toxic fumes e.g. tyres, gas cylinders, aerosols, batteries etc.

## LIGHTING UP

The fire should only be lit under the guidance and supervision of a responsible adult.

NEVER use flammable liquid such as petrol or paraffin to light the fire as these can cause an explosion. Domestic fire lighters should be used. A few points around the bonfire should be used to ensure it is lit and burns evenly.

## BE RESPONSIBLE

Keep children away from the bonfire.

Spectators should also be kept far enough away from the burning fire. They should be in an area where they can not be trapped.

Ensure there is plenty of water nearby. Check nearby buildings, out buildings, sheds, tanks etc to ensure they are not subjected intense heat.

In the event of an emergency dial 999.

## AFTER THE EVENT: CLEANING UP

It is important to keep the area around the bonfire site as tidy as possible. An untidy bonfire site can make the neighbourhood look unsightly. A smouldering fire remains a risk! It can leave smoke and unpleasant smells for days after the event.

Planning the clean-up is important to ensure the area is cleared and returned to normal as much as possible after the event. Remember, a smouldering bonfire site can remain extremely hot for several days. It is important that the fire is completely extinguished and as soon as safe to do so, the site and surrounding area should be cleared of all debris.

## BONFIRES CAN HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS THAT INCLUDE:

- **Illegal dumping of waste materials**
- **Anti-social behaviour associated with the event**
- **Air pollution**
- **Visual amenity**
- **Health impact of emissions**
- **Damage to property**

## REMEMBER:

Following the advice and information within this leaflet and planning your bonfire sensibly can help to ensure your bonfire is an enjoyable event for everyone within your community. It can also help to reduce and minimize damage to public land, thus reducing clean up and reinstatement costs.

If the bonfire is planned and managed safely and sensibly, these affects can be reduced making them safer for the whole community.

## FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVES

Cages or fences to outline the size of the bonfire, sand bases and willow beacons should be considered for safer and more environmentally friendly methods of having a bonfire to celebrate culture.



## Annex C

### Bonfire Framework Legacy Ballymoney Bonfire Safety Project at Stranocum

