



Portrush Regeneration Strategy Western Peninsula

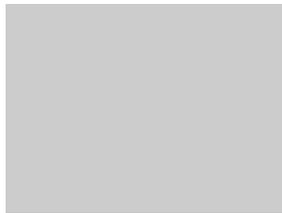


Final Report

Portrush Regeneration Group



March 2007



CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 3

2 POLICY REVIEW 6

3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS..... 8

4 TOURISM ANALYSIS INCLUDING LEISURE BOATING MARKET ASSESSMENT 14

5 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS 30

6 REGENERATION AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES 39

7 CONCEPT OPTIONS AND EVALUATION 43

8 CONSULTATION - PUBLIC EXHIBITION..... 63

9 PREFERRED OPTION..... 67

10 DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL OF PREFERRED OPTION 78

11 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY 80

- APPENDIX 1 - PORTRUSH REGENERATION GROUP
- APPENDIX 2 - DETAILED POLICY REVIEW
- APPENDIX 3 - LITERATURE REVIEW
- APPENDIX 4 - STAKEHOLDER LIST
- APPENDIX 5 - EXHIBITION BOARDS

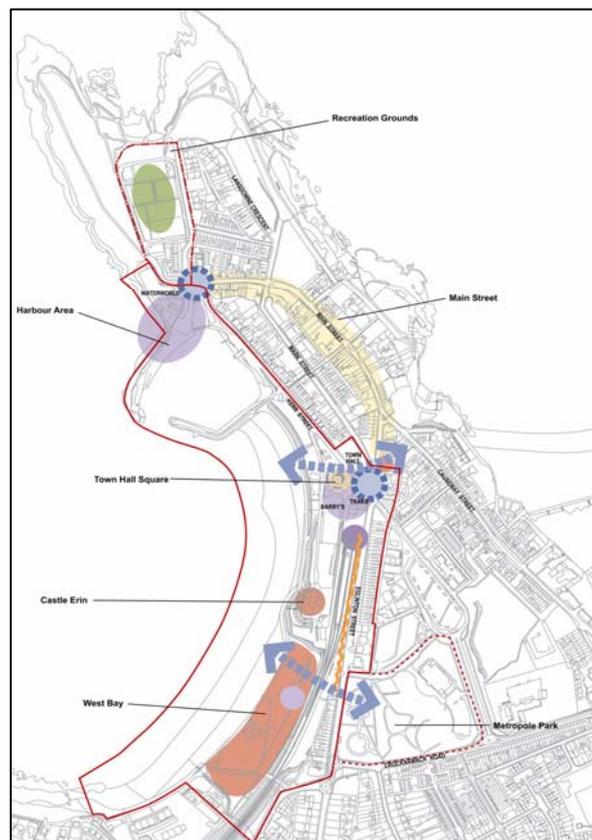
1. INTRODUCTION

Appointment of Consultant Team

- 1.1 GVA Grimley, in association with CHL Consulting, Faber Maunsell and MDS Transmodal was appointed by the Portrush Regeneration Group in July 2006 to produce a masterplan / blue print for an area within the seaside resort of Portrush. Specifically it required the team to identify how the full regeneration potential of the “Western Peninsula” area of Portrush could be realised. This area was selected as a priority, as it offered the greatest opportunity “to change the face” of Portrush for both residents and potential visitors.
- 1.2 The Portrush Regeneration Group is made up of both public and private sector interests, including several local business leaders, Coleraine Chamber of Commerce, Coleraine Borough Council and the Department for Social Development. Its members are listed in Appendix 1. The Group was tasked to steer the development of the Portrush Regeneration Strategy.

The Study Area and Objectives

- 1.3 The study boundary, illustrated by the solid red line on the adjacent plan, covers the Western Peninsula from the Harbour in the north, to West Bay in the South. This area includes the train station area and the Town Hall Square. At an early stage, it was agreed to extend the study boundaries to include the Recreation Grounds to the north and the Metropole Park to the south. These areas had been the subject of recent “expressions of interest”, invited by the Council to determine the best use of the spaces in the future. It was deemed that these areas required to be part of an integrated development strategy for the area, as they offered significant potential for future regeneration opportunities.



- 1.4 In spatial terms the integration of development sites at Metropole Park and Recreation Grounds (dumbbells), the role of

Harbour/Marina facility to attract inward investment and the physical perception and presentation of Western Peninsula area are key to the success of the strategy.

1.5 The core objectives of the Regeneration Strategy included the:

- Preparation of the overall design concept to support the development of the Western Peninsula of Portrush;
- Assessment and proposals for public space and pedestrian linkages both within these areas and linkages to other key locations;
- Proposal of solutions to encourage and facilitate economic and physical integration with other significant areas within Portrush;
- Provision of design guidance;
- Creation of a highly visual document demonstrating completed development;
- Preparation of a development appraisal to establish whether a market demand exists for the proposed uses and if development on the site is viable; and
- Preparation of an implementation plan.



1.6 This appointment built upon extensive research and previous exploration by the Portrush Regeneration Group and work commissioned by Coleraine Borough Council.

The Starting Point – Portrush

- 1.7 Described as a tourism 'honey pot', Portrush is a vital economic contributor and driver of the Coleraine Borough's economy. For Portrush to fully release its potential, the Portrush Regeneration Strategy requires to focus on delivering comprehensive masterplanning, appropriate urban design, significant tourism analysis and integrated planning to deliver a strategy which encourages economic, physical and social regeneration within the town which is attractive to the market in terms of delivery. The aim being, to create a 'step-change' in Portrush's presentation.
- 1.8 Known for its white sandy beaches and lively night-life, Portrush like many other traditional holiday resorts, has experienced significant decline in popularity. Declining tourism appeal has taken its toll on the town and a new, exciting initiative is needed to rejuvenate the area and provide Portrush with the differentiated tourism product that is required to attract a greater market segment.

General Approach by Consultant

- 1.9 Our general approach has been to focus on the regeneration/tourism potential and use urban design to create a viable proposal for the area.
- 1.10 Further to the objectives stated in the terms of reference, the commission required the team to:
- Examine the **regeneration potential** within the wider town environment, its hinterland and the Northern Ireland context to address wider regenerative needs.
 - Comprehensively **review the tourism product** as a prime economic driver for the area, in terms of:
 - **Attractions** - create the necessary environment within which attractors can be fully exploited to offer diversity of experience capable of extending the season and appeal to a wide range of visitors;
 - **Facilities** - create the right mix of land-uses to minimise conflict (retail, residential and leisure), and engender a sense of sustainable community attractive to commercial enterprise;
 - **Transport** - ensure access, both site based and wider town centre opens maximum opportunity for all users;
 - **Services** – develop opportunities for the site to help deliver a range of services capable of sustaining and encouraging future tourism growth; and

- **Public infrastructure** - Create exemplar sea front public realm using best practice and advising on design quality. In addition the reinforcement of the Gateway through appropriate treatment will reinforce the new identity of the town.
- **Capatalise on the fact that most of the land is in public ownership.** This enables prompt delivery of a regeneration strategy capable of promoting a positive “step-change” in resort perception necessary for market repositioning. It also presents the opportunity to maximise private sector investment and joint ventures both within the site and synergies with the outlying development sites at the Recreation Grounds and Metropole Park.

Structure of Report

1.11 The report, sets out the following:

- Section 2: Policy Review;
- Section 3: Socio-economic analysis;
- Section 4: Tourism Analysis including Leisure Boating Market Assessment;
- Section 5: Physical Analysis
- Section 6: Regeneration and Design Principles;
- Section 7: Concept Options and Evaluation
- Section 8: Consultation - Public Exhibition
- Section 9: Preferred Option
- Section 10: Development Appraisal of Preferred Option
- Section 11: Implementation Strategy

2. POLICY REVIEW

- 2.1 Appendix 2 sets out the relevant policy context for detailed reference. However, the main objective in this chapter is to identify strategic policy related issues that require to be addressed or acknowledged.
- 2.2 In developing any future regeneration strategy for the area, it is important that the new strategy is aligned with existing statutory policy at both the strategic and local policy levels. This not only assists with future delivery but also enables “buy in” by key decision-makers and potential investors.

Statutory Policy

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland 2025 – ‘reinforcement of unique settlement identify required’

- 2.3 Whilst Coleraine functions as the main hub providing retail, administrative and commercial services to its hinterland, the triangle formed by the towns of Portrush, Portstewart and Coleraine is widely recognised as a single urban entity. Within this urban triangle, each settlement offers the potential to develop a unique identity and role.



- 2.4 The RDS focuses on achieving maximum tourism benefit for the area (Portrush / Giant's Causeway / North Coast Area – sports/leisure/family holiday, development of local ‘Tourism Gateways’ and to sustain and enhance seaside resorts). This opportunity is required to be reinforced further and is explicitly expressed in the Local Area Plan (Draft Northern Area Plan).
- 2.5 The Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan (2004 - 2013) was launched in April 2004 by DETI. The implementation of the plan is a signature project for the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The Masterplan recommends a major programme of Traditional Resort Enhancement to improve the appearance and function of resorts in relation to the needs of international visitors.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

2.6 A number of relevant PPSs apply to Portrush including:

- PPS 5 – Retailing in Town Centres – imposes restrictions on retail and commercial leisure development outside of town centre boundary; and
- PPS 8 – Open Space – promotes open space retention.

2.7 These PPSs, whilst providing positive guidance on retail investment locations, by giving priority to the town centre, also impose restrictions on open space on many sites within the study boundary. This issue may have implications for the redevelopment of regeneration sites, currently zoned as “Open Space”.

Draft Northern Area Plan 2016 – ‘policy restrictions imposed on key development opportunity sites’.

2.8 Several designations within the Draft Northern Area Plan 2016 impose policy restrictions on regeneration sites within the study area. Open Space and Local Landscape Policy Areas have been designated at West Bay, Recreation Grounds and Metropole Park. This restricts the type and level of redevelopment and the opportunity for regeneration.

2.9 It is hoped that these policy designations can be reviewed through the development of this integrated regeneration strategy in order to release the maximum regeneration benefit for the greater good of Portrush.

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

3.1 An understanding of the socio-economic characteristics of an area is essential to addressing the key regeneration issues. This chapter provides an overview of firstly, the key characteristics of the Portrush economy and secondly, key trends emerging within the residential and commercial property market.

3.2 The following provides an overview of the socio-economic profile for Portrush, Coleraine Borough and Northern Ireland, for comparative purposes. The statistics have been sourced primarily from 2001 census data and a number of key trends emerge as summarised in the table below.

| INDICATOR (Source: 2001 Census) | Portrush | Coleraine Borough | Northern Ireland |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Population 2001 | 6,372 | 56,315 | 1,685,267 |
| Population Growth since 1991 | ↑10.4% | ↑11.7% | ↑6.8% |
| Population Structure: | | | |
| 0-14 years | 19.5% | 20.8% | 22.0% |
| 15-24 years | 13.2% | 14.4% | 14.2% |
| 25-44 years | 27.2% | 27.9% | 29.0% |
| 45-64 years | 22.6% | 22.7% | 21.6% |
| 65+ years | 17.5% | 14.2% | 13.2% |
| Economic Activity: | | | |
| Unemployed | 5.1% | 4.2% | 4.14% |
| Economically Inactive | 41.5% | 37.7% | 37.8% |
| Students | 11.0% | 10.8% | 8.1% |
| Retired | 13.9% | 10.9% | 11.0% |
| Industry of Employment: | | | |
| Primary Industries | 0.6% | 3.6% | 3.0% |
| Manufacturing | 8.7% | 13.1% | 14.2% |
| Transport/Infrastructure | 3.7% | 3.7% | 6.12% |
| Construction | 6.0% | 8.5% | 9.4% |
| Hotel/Catering | 11.6% | 6.6% | 4.5% |
| Wholesale/Retail/Car Repair | 18.4% | 19.3% | 16.7% |
| Finance | 1.4% | 1.9% | 3.0% |
| Real Estate | 6.1% | 6.5% | 7.8% |
| Public Admin/Health/Education | 35.8% | 32.31% | 30.9% |
| Other | 7.8% | 4.6% | 4.4% |
| Religion | Catholic 23% Protestant 70% | Catholic 27% Protestant 69% | Catholic 43% Protestant 53% |
| Multiple Deprivation | SOA ¹ Royal Portrush Ranked 299 th /890 SOAs | Coleraine BC ranked 18 th /26 LGDs ² | |
| Crime and Disorder Domain | 2 nd /890 SOAs | - | |

¹ Super Output Area

² Local Government District

Demographics – Population Growth

- 3.3 The settlement of Portrush operates within the larger urban hub of Portrush, Coleraine and Portstewart. Both Portrush and the Borough experienced growth rates of between 10% and 12% between 1991 and 2001 compared to the Northern Ireland average of 6.8%. This can be accounted for by the emergence of the second home phenomenon and the expansion of the University of Ulster's campus. The Draft Northern Area Plan estimated that in 2001, 25% of all housing in the area was a second home.
- 3.4 The current age structure found within Portrush is not uncommon to that found in the region as a whole. Analysis identifies a higher incidence of over 65s, which is unsurprising given the resort's attractiveness as a retirement location.
- 3.5 Portrush had 70% Protestant population in 2001.

Economic Activity - Typical

- 3.6 Unemployment is slightly higher and economic inactivity enhanced, which is typical of a settlement with a prominent student and retired population.

Industry and Employment – Tourism Primary Economic Driver

- 3.7 Analysis of the industry and employment confirms the relevance of tourism as the primary economic driver for the settlement. 11.6% are employed within the hotel and catering industry, a figure almost double that found in the Borough and significantly higher than the 4.5% experienced in Northern Ireland as a whole.
- 3.8 35.8% of the Portrush population are employed within public administration, health and education. 18.4% employed in retail/wholesale. There is a limited source of this type of employment within the town and it is expected that many commute to Coleraine, or further afield for work. These are typical results for Northern Ireland however, the realisation of the Review of Public Administration may have a significant effect upon these figures in the coming years.

Deprivation – High Crime Rate

- 3.9 Multiple deprivation analysis allows for the identification of small areas of deprivation. A relative ranking system measuring performance within 890 Super Output Areas (SOAs) is used to determine those areas affected by a series of domains including income, employment,

health, education, access to services, living environment and crime and disorder. Analysis of the Royal Portrush SOA revealed that in terms of multiple deprivation, it was ranked 299 out of 890, where 1st is the most deprived and 890 is the least. Outside the lower quartile, this figure is not alarming however, further analysis of each of the individual domains demonstrate that acute problems lie within the crime and disorder measure. Royal Portrush is ranked the 2nd most deprived SOA in Northern Ireland behind only Botanic, an area displaying similar characteristics to that found in Royal Portrush, that is, a significant night time economy and student population.

Tourism – Highly Seasonal

- 3.10 The Draft Northern Area Plan states that although the resident population is only 6,500, the population can peak at almost 20,000 during the summer months. For this reason, it is also important to consider the socio-economics of the visiting population.
- 3.11 Detailed further within the tourism analysis section, the majority of visitors are from the domestic market³. The resort is popular with day trippers, and short stay holiday makers, and attracts a range of ages, particularly young families. Visitors are attracted mainly by general sightseeing, touring and walking and this profile is generally dominated by the lower socio-economic classifications.

In Summary:

- Portrush is experiencing high rates of population growth;
- Tourism is primary economic driver of town – although highly seasonal;
- High incidence of crime and disorder;
- Visitors are generally from the lower socio-economic classifications.

Property Market Analysis

- 3.12 A very definite trend is emerging within Portrush and the North Coast in terms of the success of property market sectors. A number of significant developments have come to light in the past 12 months and throughout the study. Below a summary of the key issues facing the Portrush property market are identified. This has been based on discussion with commercial property agents and active developers within the Borough.

³ Domestic market refers to visitors from Northern Ireland

Residential – Hot Market

- 3.13 The residential property market is extremely buoyant and has experienced significant growth within the last 12 months. The Antrim Coast and Portrush are achieving some of the highest property and residential land values in the region. The recent sale of Castle Erin in November 2006 site included the main buildings set in 3 acres of surrounding land. The land is currently zoned in the draft Northern Area Plan for apartment build.



Commercial – Growing Interest in Hotels and Leisure

- 3.14 The market for commercial property within the hotel and leisure sector is also showing encouraging signs. Of late, there has been much interest by local developers to further develop and diversify the hotel and leisure offer within Portrush. It is widely recognised by the community and local developers that there is a gap in the market, particularly for a high quality 4 or 5 star hotel with conference and spa facilities.
- 3.15 In June 2006, following calls for “Expressions of Interest” from Coleraine Borough Council, a proposal was submitted for Metropole Park. A 3 / 4star hotel with 120 bedrooms was proposed, with associated conferencing facilities and ancillary leisure uses. Interest has also been expressed for further hotel development at the Golf Links Hotel site where initial proposals for a 4 star, 120 bed hotel with spa are proposed.
- 3.16 Interest in developing further hotel accommodation has also been expressed by local land owners on Eglinton Street. It is also recognised that to release the full potential of the resort, accommodation should be able to cater for coach parties, which is generally accepted to be in the region of 80 beds or over.
- 3.17 Local businesses in the hospitality and restaurant trade have also demonstrated their willingness to provide the ‘quality’ dining offer to complement any future development within Portrush.
- 3.18 In conclusion, although significant interest has been noted in a number of potential developments, it will be the market that decides how much can be sustained.



Retail – Will Look After Itself

3.19 Discussions with local property advisors identified a less than temperate market in terms of retail lettings. Although recent new development has included 3 ground floor units on Causeway Street and 5 units on Eglinton Street, it has been reported that lettings have been difficult to secure on existing units on Main Street. This is explained by the seasonality that the retail sector experiences in Portrush, where traditional high street operators are deterred from operating within the resort. The draft Northern Area Plan quoted a vacancy level of 17% within the resort in 2005. The proximity of Coleraine also provides the retailer with an alternative location offering more variety. This trend has led to declining levels of investment within existing units and a deteriorating retail core.



3.20 Technical Supplement 4 – Retailing, of the draft Northern Area Plan demonstrates the extent of leakage that Portrush experiences, in most cases this is to Coleraine and Belfast.

| Type | Main Food | Top-up | Electrical | DIY | Toys/Books/CDs | Clothing & Footwear | Banking |
|---------|-----------|--------|------------|-----|----------------|---------------------|---------|
| Leakage | 86% | 20% | 100% | 97% | 85% | 94% | 41% |

3.21 A number of improvement programmes, including shop front schemes, have experienced limited success. It is therefore envisaged, that if additional footfall can be generated within Portrush, the retail element will sustain and enhance itself.

3.22 There is an opportunity in the interim, to consider additional retail that would complement existing provision and enhance the tourism sector. This could include cafes, outdoor recreation outlets, local craft stores etc., and where improvements in tourism development succeed, so too should these enterprises.

Office – Coleraine Provides Function

3.23 There is limited demand for commercial office development within Portrush and little is available on the market. Coleraine generally provides the ‘triangle area’ of Portrush, Portstewart and Coleraine, with its administrative and commercial office functions.

In Summary

- Residential Market Booming – Emphasis on Quality Apartment Dwellings;
- Significant Interest in Hotel / Hospitality Sector;
- Retail Element will look after itself.

4. TOURISM

4.1 The tourism industry has been subject to a number of significant market changes in recent years and these have been experienced in the Borough. Portrush has a wealth of natural and man-made assets as part of its offer, however, like many other traditional seaside towns, it has experienced decline that results from changing market conditions. Portrush needs to adapt in order to remain a competitive tourist destination and maximise the significant potential that lies within the town.



4.2 As the primary economic driver within the town, tourism development can become the catalyst for regeneration of the Western Peninsula area and the town of Portrush. The paragraphs below consider Portrush's current offer and potential, its competitive positioning, and an assessment of how tourism can be developed further.



Changing Market Trends

4.3 Portrush has been affected by a changing tourism market. Such trends have been considered throughout the formation of the regeneration strategy and include:

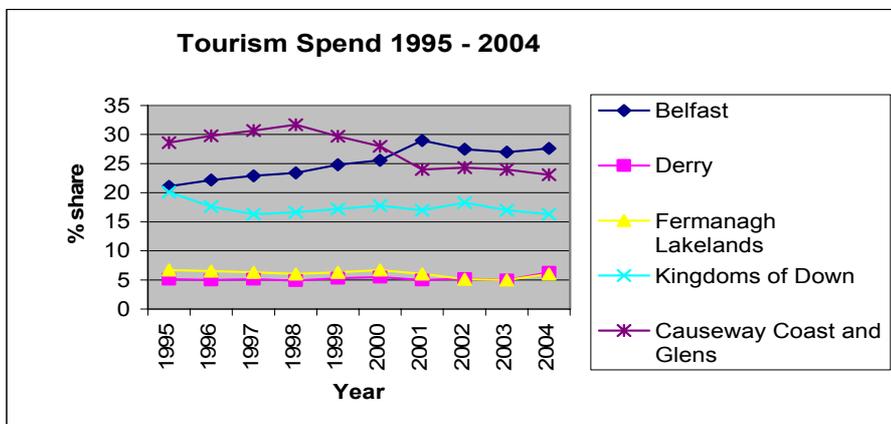
- Increases in 'urban tourism', i.e. short city breaks;
- The attraction of new destinations and 'sunshine' holidays caused by significant growth in 'no frill' airlines and an ever expanding range of choice;
- Rapidly growing use of the internet and direct bookings, resulting in increases in impulse buying, potential for recognition of 'good deals' and customisation of travel arrangements;
- Significant growth in business tourism; and
- Growth in the event and activity related market, where interest is growing in sports activity, eco endorsed and improved cultural/heritage, wellbeing and holistic activities.

Causeway Coast and Glens of Antrim – Use these assets to full potential

4.4 One of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board’s six tourism regions, the Causeway Coast and Glens of Antrim continues to perform strongly within the Northern Ireland context. The area has seen its market share grow in terms of the percentage of Northern Ireland trips and this is clearly a market which Portrush can tap into. This encouraging trend demonstrates the potential that the region holds, and a successful integrated tourism strategy could see Portrush reap the benefits of continued tourism investment within the area. Second only to Belfast, the area attracts around 800,000 visitors a year spending almost £100 million. The table below shows tourism performance of the Causeway Coast and the Glens of Antrim in comparison to Belfast.

| Regional Tourism Estimates Source: NITB | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Year | Area | Trips (000s) | % of NI total | Nights (000s) | % of NI Total | Spend (£m) | % of NI total |
| 2004 | Causeway | 779.0 | 25.7% | 2,928.2 | 25.1 | 99 | 23.1 |
| 2004 | Belfast | 845.8 | 27.9 | 2,917.3 | 25 | 118.3 | 27.6 |
| 2003 | Causeway | 795.6 | 26.2 | 3295.3 | 26.2 | 100.1 | 24.1 |
| 2003 | Belfast | 819.5 | 27 | 3,139 | 25 | 115.9 | 27.9 |
| 2002 | Causeway | 702.6 | 25.2 | 2766 | 24.9 | 96.2 | 24.3 |
| 2002 | Belfast | 705.6 | 25.3 | 2,657 | 23.9 | 108.5 | 27.5 |

4.5 In addition, the diagram below also demonstrates how successful the Causeway Coast and Glens has been in recent years in comparison to the other tourism regions. Having experienced a decline in the late 1990s in terms of market share, the Causeway Coast’s performance in generating tourism spend has begun to stabilise. The reduction in the market share has been as a result of Belfast’s tremendous rise in popularity and of urban tourism however, continued investment planned for the Giant’s Causeway should provide a positive effect on this trend.



- 4.6 The Causeway Coast is also home to the 2003 and 2004 most visited attraction in Northern Ireland. The Giant's Causeway has been ranked as Northern Ireland's top visitor attraction in 2004 with 445,327 visitors and has displayed an increase in visitors of 12% since 2003. This is set to grow further with the Giant's Causeway being specified as one of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Signature Projects. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry are leading the project to create a new visitor centre at this World Heritage Site. It is hoped that 2008 will see the opening of the new visitor centre and record numbers of visitors being achieved. Other attractions within the area ranking within Northern Ireland's top 10 most visited include Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge and Portstewart Strand, ranked 8th and 9th respectively.
- 4.7 As stated in the Causeway Coast and Glens Masterplan, 1.1 million tourists are estimated to visit the region in 2008, a projected increase of 34% on the 2003 visitor numbers. The greatest growth is forecast for the international sector.

Coleraine Borough – Must adapt to market changes

- 4.8 The existing tourism strategy has enabled an understanding of the area and assisted in the appreciation of the existing tourism product strengths and weaknesses. Relevant information from the Tourism Development Strategy for the Borough of Coleraine 2001 - 2010, has been selected to provide the context for which to develop the regeneration strategy.
- 4.9 The profile of tourism within Coleraine can be summarised as follows:
- Most important tourism area outside Belfast (1:8 stay-over visitors, 12-13% of Northern Ireland's revenue and significant day-tripper and repeat business market);
 - In 1999, Coleraine Borough Council generated £37.9 million in the area (multiplier effect £55 million);
 - Domestic market accounts for 66%, Great Britain for 16% and Republic of Ireland 7% of expenditure;
 - Proximity to Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site generates "out of state" visitors (30% cited this as the reason for visiting Coleraine Borough Council area);
 - 1:9 employed in tourism sector (key driver of economy locally and regionally);
 - 2:5 use hotels, guesthouses and B&B's, remainder use caravan parks, self-catering or rented accommodation;
 - Most popular visitor attractions are: Barry's amusements (Portrush) – 20%, Crescent (Portstewart) – 18%, Portstewart Strand – 13%, Dunluce Centre (Portrush) – 6%, Dunluce Castle – 4%, Waterworld - 4% and Fantasy Island (no longer in existence);

- 82% of visitors travel to Portrush by car; and
- Overall level of satisfaction is good, however number of areas registered negatively e.g. public hygiene, toilets, litter, legibility, variety of eateries, limited indoor entertainment and transport.

Core Future Strategy

4.10 The Tourism Development Plan establishes three core interrelated strands to the proposed strategy which are consistent with the Portrush Regeneration Strategy.

- A Sharp Market Focus (best prospect market sectors – target led focus);
- Develop Growth Engines (environment, attractors, infrastructure etc); and
- Provide Quality Assurance (quality and value for money, best practice, training for better skills etc).

Portrush Profile – Abundance of Assets

4.11 The principal features of Portrush's current tourism product are summarised in the following paragraphs. Information has been sourced from a variety of sources including the Pidea Report, Coleraine Borough Tourism Strategy, research conducted by the Portrush Regeneration Group and consultation with various tourism operators.

Location and Attractions – Must release full potential of assets

4.12 Portrush's popularity as a destination is founded upon its surrounding natural environment. The town itself possesses two very attractive white sand beaches, West Strand and Whiterocks, both of which have attained blue flag status.



4.13 Portrush is situated along a stunning coast line and is part of the Causeway Coast and Glens region, an area of outstanding natural beauty. Situated a short drive from the resort include: the Giant's Causeway, Portstewart strand, the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, Bushmills Distillery and the River Bann.



4.14 There is only one built heritage attraction in or near Portrush - Dunluce Castle, which is 5 kilometres from Portrush. It attracted over 57,000 visitors in 2005 and there are aspirations to commission a Son-et-Lumière (sound and light) show for the Castle.

4.15 Other attractions in and near Portrush include:

- The Dunluce Centre and playground - a complex operated by Coleraine Borough Council (CBC);
- Waterworld - operated by CBC;
- Barry's Amusements;
- Kiddieland – Currently for sale;
- Portrush Countryside Centre;
- Arcadia; and
- The Recreation Grounds.



4.16 All the attractions, with the exception of the Waterworld's bowling facilities, are seasonal operations. Barry's and Kiddieland have in the past opened out of season but this proved to be uneconomically viable.

4.17 The table below sets out visitor numbers for the main attractions over the past 5 years. Notably, the Giant's Causeway experienced visitor numbers of over 450,000. This is clearly a market that Portrush should be aiming to tap into.

| Facility | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Waterworld (bowling, water slides & play area)* | 72,522 | 72,522 | 65,268 | 73,683 | 72,689 |
| Dunluce Castle | 33,700 | 36,848 | 37,089 | 42,000 | 57,597 |
| Portstewart Strand | 150,000 | 160,000 | 182,584 | 146,368 | 140,000 |
| Recreation Grounds | 16,664 | 15,647 | 16,124 | 15,203 | n.a. |
| Playpark P'R | 14,694 | 10,961 | 11,770 | 8,108 | n.a. |
| Giants Causeway Centre | 400,000 | 406,801 | 374,679 | 445,327 | 464,263 |
| Carrick-A-Rede Rope Bridge | 94,382 | 127,937 | 133,502 | 157,356 | 165,000 |
| Old Bushmills Distillery | 85,870 | 90,588 | 102,672 | 112,630 | 128,750 |

Note: * CBC have indicated that the numbers using only the water amenities have declined, whereas bowling has increased in popularity.

Activities – Must take full advantage

4.18 Portrush is ideally located to capitalise on activity-based holidays. However, to date the resort does not appear to have taken advantage of this opportunity. Activities in the area include:

- **Golf :** Royal Portrush Golf Club located within the town and operates two courses – the Dunluce Links course, often ranked as Ireland's best course, and the Valley Links course, a more affordable 18 hole course;
- **Walking:** Portrush is part of the way-marked Causeway Coast Way. It is a 52 kilometres / 33mile walk from Portstewart to Ballycastle, which takes 2-3 days to complete. It covers varied terrain and takes in the major coastal attractions, i.e. the Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Dunserverick and Kenbane Castles, and the Carrick-A-Rede rope bridge;
- **Cycling:** There are fourteen cycling routes in the Causeway Coast and Glens region. Portrush is part of the Dunluce 12 mile circular route which takes in the Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle and the tourist railway at Bushmills;
- **Boating/Sailing:** There is currently only one operator offering pleasure boat trips from Portrush Harbour. Absence of permanent pontoons restricts visitor numbers. There is much potential to develop this opportunity;
- **Angling:** Sea angling and wreck fishing is offered by 3 operators in Portrush. Angling is also permitted from the harbour and beaches;
- **Cruising:** Commencing this year, the River Bann Pleasure Cruiser is a 60 seat waterbus offering 90 minute cruises daily during the summer season. The trips depart from Coleraine; and,
- **Surfing:** Whiterocks and the West Strand are excellent surfing beaches. CBC has recently completed a new watersports facility at the East Strand with shower and changing facilities. Surfing lessons and a children's summer school are offered by local providers.

Events have lengthened season, Conferences could lengthen it further

4.19 Conferences facilities in Portrush are small and basic. The best standard is offered by The University of Ulster, who provide conference facilities at their Portrush site. The Magherabouy House Hotel, Comfort Hotel and the Royal Court Hotel also offer facilities however, these all have restricted capacities and Portrush is not a well known conference venue.

4.20 Coleraine Borough Council has organised a large number of events in Portrush and the surrounds. These have assisted in lengthening the season and have attracted large numbers of spectators and participants. A list of some major events is provided in the following table.

| Month | Event | Visitors |
|-----------|--|--|
| May | North West 200 Festival of racing | 130,000 people on race day |
| May | Portrush Raft Race & Celtic European Festival of the Sea | 15,000 |
| June | Causeway Coast Amateur Golf Tournament | Previously attracting 1,200 amateur golfers for a week |
| July | Northern Ireland Milk Cup Youth Soccer Festival | 54 teams and supporters/families |
| August | Mini Car Party Weekend | 5,000 attending |
| August | Pipe Band Championships | - |
| September | N. Ireland Air Spectacular | 150,000 spectators |

Tourist Accommodation – Need to diversify offer

4.21 Portrush has a mix of tourist accommodation, including a large camping and caravan provision. The table below outlines the distribution of capacity between the different types of accommodation in 2006.

| Category | No. of Premises | No. of Rooms/Sites | % ensuite | Est. No. of Beds |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Hotels | 8 | 246 | 96% | 669 |
| Guesthouses | 7 | 89 | 82% | 193 |
| B&Bs | 28 | 182 | 78% | 485 |
| Self-catering | 28 | 168 | n/a | 330 |
| Total | 71 | 685 | | 1,677 |
| Caravan Static | 7 | 2010 | | 8,040 ⁴ |
| Caravan Touring | | 549 | | 1,098 |
| Grand Total Bed nights | | | | 10,815 |

4.22 The hotel base in the town is concentrated in the 1star to 3 star categories. There are no 4 star or 5 star hotels in or near Portrush. There have been no new hotel developments in Portrush other than the Ramada in the last few years however, two established properties have recently invested in upgrades / refurbishments.



4.23 A comparison of the accommodation base over the last ten years is outlined below. Although the figures should be used as a guide only, the data indicates a decline in the number of guesthouse and B&B operations and an increase in hotel accommodation. This is consistent with shifting demands in tourism requirements.

⁴ Multiplier effect of 4 beds for each caravan

| Category | 1993 | | 2006 | | % Difference in Bed Spaces |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | No. of Premises | No. of Beds | No. of Premises | No. of Beds | |
| Hotels | 6 | 349 | 8 | 669 | +92% |
| Guesthouses | 22 | 758 | 7 | 193 | -75% |
| B&Bs | 45 | 805 | 28 | 485 | -40% |
| Self-catering | 48 | 326 | 28 | 330 | +1% |
| Total | 121 | 2,238 | 71 | 1,677 | -25% |

Visitor Services – Diversity Required

- **Shopping:** relatively narrow in range. Many of the shops are oriented toward the lower spending visitor.
- **Food & Drink:** There are 49 eating and drinking establishments in Portrush, with offerings to suit all budgets. Although there is a predominance of fast food/takeaway outlets, there is a number of higher quality restaurants located in the town including the Harbour Bar & Bistro and the Ramore Wine Bar. Some of the pubs provide live music and Portrush has an established nightlife reputation.
- **Tourist Information:** There is a seasonal tourist information office located at the Dunluce Centre. It is operated by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and provides a comprehensive range of information and advisory services to tourists, including reservations. There have been suggestions to move the tourist office to the town centre to give it greater visibility.

Tourism Demand

4.24 Statistics on the number of tourists visiting and staying in Portrush are not available. The councils collate data at district level for the NITB. Coleraine Borough Council is outlined below. It should be noted that the majority of accommodation (43% of bed spaces)⁵ and general tourism activity in the Coleraine Borough relates to Portrush.

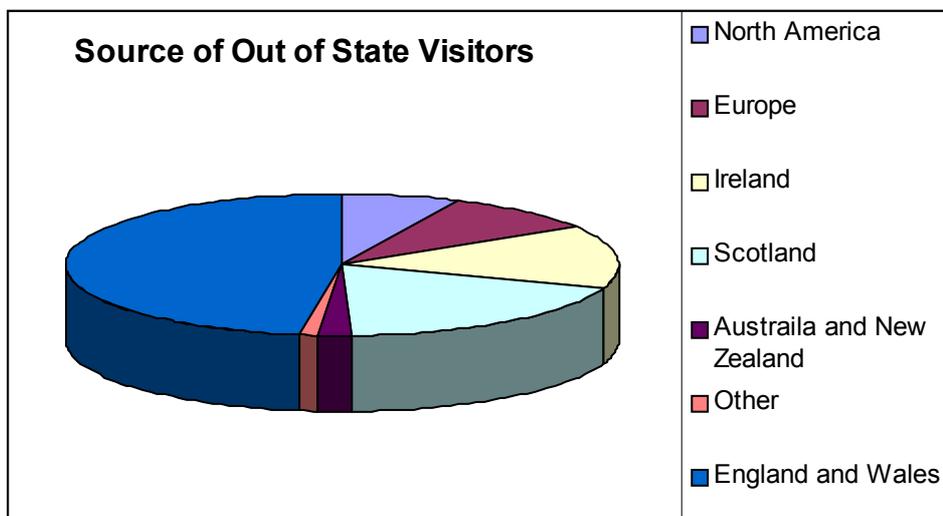
| Year | Coleraine | | | | | |
|------|-------------|------|--------------|------|----------|------|
| | Trips 000's | NI % | Nights 000's | NI % | Spend £m | NI % |
| 2002 | 325.6 | 11.7 | 1,224.2 | 11.0 | 47.1 | 11.9 |
| 2003 | 350.8 | 11.8 | 1,494.7 | 12.2 | 44.6 | 11.0 |
| 2004 | 311.0 | 10.3 | 1,206.6 | 10.3 | 37.6 | 8.8 |

4.25 It is difficult to estimate the number of visitors to Portrush. However, the Council figures of 43% of the total borough bed spaces being located in Portrush suggest that tourists spent almost 519,000 nights in Portrush in 2004. The number of trips, nights and spend have all experienced levels of decline in recent years.

⁵ Information taken from the Portrush Baseline Study July 2006

Profile of Tourists – Domestic tourism dominates

- 4.26 There is very little information available on the profiles and trip characteristics of visitors to Portrush. Therefore, the analysis in this section is based upon the NITB statistics and information collated by the Portrush Tourist Information Office.
- 4.27 The distribution of out-of-state visitors to Northern Ireland by country of origin is shown in the figure below. England is by far the largest source market, and Great Britain accounts for 66% of all overseas visitors.



The Domestic Market – Declining Popularity

- 4.28 Portrush remains a popular destination among domestic holidaymakers and the day tripper market is a large source of business for Portrush. Approximately 749,000 domestic holidays were taken in Northern Ireland in 2004.
- 4.29 There are no current figures available on the day trip market but there was an estimated 2.3 million day trips to Portrush in 1991. The current number is likely to be significantly less and a recent report by the Portush Regeneration Group estimates the 2003 day trip figure at 1.0 million.
- 4.30 The main characteristics of the day trip market to the Coleraine Borough Council Area (CBCA) are:
- Primarily attracted by and engage in general sightseeing, touring and walking. The incidence of visits determined by a special interest e.g. fishing, sailing etc. is low at less than 4%, other than swimming, which influences approximately 10% of the market;

- The majority arrive by car (82%) with train and bus / coach being used by 12% and 6% respectively;
- Almost half of Northern Ireland day-trippers spend between 6 to 12 hours in the area. Out-of-state visitors tend to stay longer.

4.31 The 2003 North Coast Visitor Survey, which surveyed 430 visitors in Portrush and Portstewart, outlines the profile of visitors to the area:

- 62% of the visitors were holidaying or on a short break, 35% were day trippers and 3% were visiting friends/relatives;
- The age profile was mixed - 20% were aged between 16 and 34, 41% were aged between 35 and 49 and the remainder (39%) were over 50;
- Party type: 33% were travelling alone or in a couple, 52% in a family group with children, 13% in a family/friends group and 1% in an organised group;
- Of those staying overnight the majority stayed between four to seven nights;
- On average respondents spent £48 a day on food and drink, and £23 on entertainment;
- The most recent socio-economic visitor profile is from the CBCA 1999 Visitor Survey, and is summarised in Table 2.6. This shows that the current profile is dominated by lower classifications;

| | Northern Ireland | Out-of-state | Holidays |
|------|------------------|--------------|----------|
| AB | 16% | 35% | 26% |
| C1 | 38% | 33% | 36% |
| C2DE | 46% | 32% | 38% |

In Summary:

- The success of the Causeway Coast and Glens of Antrim provides much opportunity;
- The Borough of Coleraine has a solid tourism base upon which to build;
- Portrush must adapt to changing market conditions;
- In order to become a competitive destination, Portrush must release the full potential of its natural/man made assets;
- Portrush holds much scope for the development of activity related tourism;
- Events have made a positive impact on lengthening the season – Development of conference facilities could lengthen it further;
- Portrush must diversify its current accommodation offer – Lack of 4 star / 5 star quality hotel;

- Domestic tourism dominates – World Heritage Site provides the opportunity to tap into ‘International’ market;
- Resort is popular with day trippers who tend to be of lower socio-economic classifications.

Competitive Positioning

- 4.32 Drawing on the review of Portrush’s tourism product and the perspectives offered by the various stakeholders, it is possible to analyse Portrush’s competitive position. The table below outlines the most important points related to the town’s tourism potential rather than setting out an exhaustive list.

| Assets | Obstacles |
|---|---|
| Natural resources (beaches) | Lack of 4-star / 5-star accommodation |
| Location (proximity to major tourist attractions including Giant’s Causeway) | Limited retail infrastructure |
| Outdoor activities (golf, fishing, surfing, cycling, walking) | Negative perceptions in the market (security factors, traditional resort image, ‘Portlush’) |
| Range of events throughout summer | Unsightly and derelict properties within town |
| Family indoor activities and amusements | Short season |
| Harbour | Traffic congestion |
| Quality Restaurants | |
| Part of the Causeway Coast and Glens route | |
| Significant land available for with strong potential for tourism related development - Metropole Site, Recreation Grounds, West Bay | |
| Opportunities | Risks |
| Growth of short-break market | Environmental degradation |
| Development of a marina | Heavy dependence on one main market (self-catering domestic tourist) |
| Broaden and emphasise activity based tourism | Development of competing destinations in Ireland and overseas |
| Development of conference market | Further decline of tourism infrastructure |
| Development of golf market | |
| Close fit with the Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan | |

- 4.33 As can be seen from the table above, Portrush has sufficient core assets on which to base a sustainable tourism industry. The maximisation and protection of the natural resources, development of the tourist product and the range of available activities will be key success factors.
- 4.34 The market and development opportunities proposed (see following section) are in line with the NITB, Tourism Ireland and Causeway Coast and Glen strategies and Portrush will be able build on these institutions’ development efforts and marketing activities to maximum effect.

Strategic Approach to Tourism Development

- 4.35 The strategic approach and the specific proposals are made on a preliminary assessment of need and opportunity taking into account market trends. The actual adoption of the specific proposals by investors requires more detailed feasibility studies.
- 4.36 The tourism development strategy has been elaborated in the context of the tourism profile, the consultations, the competitive positioning analysis, the Causeway Coast and Glens Masterplan and the Coleraine Borough Council Development and Marketing Plans.
- 4.37 In determining the overall strategy, we have considered what markets are available and how Portrush should position itself in relation to these markets.
- 4.38 The key potential target markets for Portrush are:

| Segment | Product Types | Source Markets |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Families | Outdoor Activity Seekers (including beach holidays) | Great Britain |
| Couples | Sightseers and culturalists | Republic of Ireland |
| Empty Nesters | Short breaks | Domestic |
| Business Tourists | Conferences | Great Britain, Republic of Ireland and Domestic |

Source: GVA Grimley

Strategic Framework

- 4.39 Portrush's tourism industry is composed of the total offering of environmentally based natural attractions, built attractions, supporting infrastructure, facilities, amenities and services, manpower and marketing. The primary tourism attractions, the tourism facilities and the supporting infrastructure are interdependent.
- 4.40 The recommended strategic approach is that of a managed approach to tourism growth and development. The strategy involves growing both the tourist base and the average length of stay per visitor, especially in the shoulder months and off-season.
- 4.41 The success of the strategy will depend on improvements to product quality, promotion of the available attractions and activities and effective marketing to build demand. It is important to expand the market base and product offering whilst being cognisant of the current market base i.e. don't throw out the baby with the bathwater - Portrush has a large number of visitors attracted by its current visitor attractions, specifically the beaches, amusements and activity centres.
- 4.42 The key strategic priorities are:

- To enhance the appearance of the town in all areas, and to strengthen the links between the town, its environs and the major attractions in the surrounding area;
- Raise the quality standards of the tourism infrastructure and product. Linked to this is the promotion of the range of activities and attractions available in the town and the surrounds;
- To achieve optimum utilisation of underutilised assets, notably the harbour, Metropole site, Recreation Grounds and the natural amenities;
- To broaden the market base by appealing to a wider audience in the major source markets, specifically increasing the town’s appeal to the higher spend tourist; and
- To extend the tourist season and to achieve higher utilisation rates and improved profitability along with increased employment in the sector.

Development Proposals

4.43 To achieve the strategic priorities outlined above will require action on a number of fronts. The following development proposals are the primary actions required to meet them, and each of the proposals contributes to the complete set of strategic priorities.

4.44 An effective tourism product development strategy is one which seeks to offer visitors a distinctive range of experiences. The driver of the Portrush development proposals is locating tourism products and activities which are located in close proximity to each another.

| Tourism Development Proposals |
|--|
| Improve Appearance of Town Hall Square |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of new plaza and removal of go-kart track |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve existing appearance of Barry’s |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of Kiddieland to open up views to the sea |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-location of railway station to open up views to the sea and animate Eglinton Street |
| Accommodation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of mid size hotel of 4 star standard or higher with state of the art conference facility |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of ancillary leisure and spa facilities |

| |
|---|
| Harbour Development |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of marina with quality facilities for visiting boats (dry dock berths, electricity supply, showering facilities etc.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High standard of outdoor activity centre which would provide equipment and services to facilitate range in outdoor pursuits – encourage lengthening of season |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of 'Gourmet Cluster' |
| West Bay |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in promenade to encourage further use of area |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of significantly upgraded Waterworld to West Bay / Metropole Park |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to existing open space for passive leisure |
| Metropole Park |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in existing open space |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on leisure facilities to possibly include aquarium, mini golf etc. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of significantly upgraded Waterworld |

Marina / Harbour Development

Market Assessment for Leisure Boating Facilities at Portrush Harbour

4.45 As can be seen from the previous analysis, there is potential to further diversify and raise the quality of the offer at the harbour area. A Market Assessment for Leisure Boating Facilities at Portrush Harbour, was prepared by MDS Transmodal. It provided an overview of the leisure boating industry in the UK and Northern Ireland and considered its importance in economic terms.



The potential demand for marina facilities was also assessed following discussions with local marina operators and a review of relevant industry literature. In summary, the report identified

a potential market for marina facilities, that Portrush Harbour could address. See supplement 1 for full report.

4.46 Research has taken the form of stakeholder meetings and telephone discussions with marina management for the following locations:

- Coleraine Borough Council (Coleraine Marina, Portrush Harbour, Portstewart Harbour)
- Seaton's Marina
- Cranagh Marina
- Ballycastle Marina
- Glenarm Marina
- Lough Swilly Marina.

4.47 A comprehensive review of relevant literature and research has also been carried out and an assessment of Bridlington Case Study was examined.

Current Facilities at Portrush Harbour

4.48 Coleraine Borough Council took over Portrush Harbour from the Portrush Harbour Company in the 1970's. There has been little or no commercial shipping activity for the last ten years and the entire harbour is now in the control of the council. This has effectively freed up the North Pier/breakwater and some associated storage sheds for council use, and development.

4.49 The Harbour encloses a water area of some 6,400 square metres (1.6 acres) and is defined by two breakwaters of around 100 metres in length.

4.50 Within the harbour there is a smaller inner dock leading to the north, which covers some 480 square metres. This dock formed part of the original harbour and is a 'listed' structure. Pedestrian access to North Pier is via a footbridge across supports, which divide the inner harbour from the main harbour.



4.51 The harbour is fitted with 92 fore and aft moorings leading from the South Breakwater. Access to the moored craft is by small dinghies and punts, which are tied up around the shoreline and in the inner harbour.

4.52 Alongside the inner part of the North Breakwater are floating pontoon moorings which are generally used for visiting boats. Due to the swell and wind conditions in the winter these pontoons are lifted and stored ashore until the following season.

- 4.53 Portrush is home to an RNLI lifeboat station and a 17-metre Severn Class lifeboat 'Katie Hannan' is moored in the Harbour. There is an associated lifeboat station, which dominates the eastern harbour boundary; it houses a slip from where the inshore lifeboat is launched.



- 4.54 The original lifeboat station is now a museum, and the Southern harbour breakwater is taken up with a café and holiday gift shop.



- 4.55 The Portrush peninsula is open to the Atlantic and can suffer from heavy swell, which can reach 4.0 metres in the winter, and in exceptional conditions can reach 6 to 7 metres. It is considered that extending the North Breakwater could reduce the effect of the swells. The fore and aft moorings in use are regarded as generally able to cope with the usual swells experienced. Although the installation of pontoon moorings has been tentatively considered it is thought that piled pontoons would not be flexible enough to accommodate heavy swells and their use could lead to serious damage to the pontoons themselves and any boats alongside. An extended breakwater would solve the problem.

UK Demand – Significant and Growing

- 4.56 6-7% of the adult population in the UK participate in leisure boating, and industry revenue from this source amounted to almost £2.0 billion in 2005.
- 4.57 The industry grew at a rate of 8.5% between 2003 and 2004, and growth for 2005 is expected to be around 3.3%. There is a large and growing market that is waiting to be tapped.

Northern Ireland Demand – Berth Shortfall Exists

- 4.58 The British Maritime Foundation (BMF) survey of 2003/2004 showed that demand for moorings in Northern Ireland will exceed supply by some 213 berths in 2008/2009.
- 4.59 A survey of local marinas (excluding Portrush) showed that demand (as measured by size of marina waiting lists) had grown from 131 to 185 between 2004 and 2006, an increase of some 40%. Once Portrush's waiting list is included the total berth shortfall reaches 252. An unfulfilled need therefore appears to exist in the area.

Opportunities – Marina Development

- 4.60 To attract the modern marina user, pontoon access is regarded as vital. There is also the possibility that a pontoon layout would allow capacity to be increased. However, present

indications are that pontoons could only be acceptable in the summer months as indeed is the case for the existing pontoons alongside the north breakwater.

- 4.61 Portrush Harbour is at first sight, limited in what can be done to enhance and expand its facilities thereby attracting a greater share of the potential market. The present mooring arrangements are based on fore and aft buoyed moorings attached to ground chains. This limits the potential of the harbour to expand its facilities in its current state. In an ideal situation the berth users would have pontoon access to their boats, which does not require the use of dinghies to access their craft. Unfortunately the wave regime in the area and in the harbour is such that the installation of year round pontoons is regarded as impractical.
- 4.62 To fully realise the potential for marina development it is necessary to consider larger scale developments which could include the construction of a completely new (and larger) facility either enclosing the existing harbour or alongside it, i.e. similar to the proposals for Bridlington Harbour.
- 4.63 For any marina to succeed there is regarded to be a requirement for a 'critical mass' of boats to be attracted to a facility. Although this is regarded as being in the region of 200 berths there are many examples of smaller facilities, which appear to thrive. For example, Ballycastle marina has 74 berths and Glenarm marina has 67 berths.
- 4.64 For Portrush Harbour and the regeneration area to tap into the growing and dynamic leisure boating market it is necessary to give this sector rather more emphasis and consider carrying out an options appraisal to examine what alternatives could be available to Portrush. In this connection a brief discussion has been held with Kirk McClure Morton who maintain an existing computer model which allows modelling of wave heights and swell conditions in the Portrush area which could be used as a first step to determine what practical options are open in terms of installing pontoons, and expanding the harbour. Kirk McClure Morton was also responsible for the installation of the existing pontoons in Portrush and have worked on many marina installations including Glenarm and Carrickfergus.

Economic Benefit – Considerable Direct and Indirect Spin Off

- 4.65 Indications from a study carried out for Bridlington Harbour shows that each boat contributes around £2,900 per year to the local economy. If the shortfall of 252 boats could in be accommodated in Portrush then additional gain is likely to be in the region of £730,000 per year.



In Summary

- 6-7% of the adult population in the UK participate in leisure boating - revenue source of almost £2.0 billion in 2005;
- Growth of 8.5% between 2003 and 2004 – expected growth of 3.3% in 2005 in UK;
- The BMF survey of 2003/2004 showed that demand for moorings in Northern Ireland will exceed supply by some 213 berths in 2008/2009;
- A survey of local marinas (excluding Portrush) showed that demand (as measured by size of marina waiting lists) had grown from 131 to 185 between 2004 and 2006, an increase of some 40%;
- The waiting list for Portrush Harbour was estimated to be 67 in 2006. Therefore, the overall shortfall of berths amongst the marinas (Coleraine, Seaton's, Ballycastle, Glenarm and Portrush Harbour) was 252 boats. The surveys imply a substantial level of demand, which is growing and is as yet unsatisfied and demonstrates that further facilities are needed;
- If the existing shortfall could be accommodated in Portrush then the additional gain is likely to be in the region of £730,000 per year.

5. PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

Location

- 5.1 Portrush is positioned on a peninsula, located between Portstewart and Coleraine, to the south and Bushmills, north. The former three towns, although very individual, are closely interconnected and recognised as one urban area, with Coleraine the more dominant retail and service provider.
- 5.2 Historically, the town evolved around the harbour but more dominantly along Main Street, as was evident in 1853. Development south of the northern part of Causeway Street was limited and the railway servicing the town was a single line.
- 5.3 By 1906 development growth was focused around Kerr Street and Mark Street. In addition, development began around Lansdowne Crescent, Princes Street and along Causeway Street to St Patrick's RC Church. Tramlines were introduced from the railway station along the western peninsula along Kerr Street to the end of the North Pier. Other facilities within this period included swimming baths located on the eastern peninsula and the Royal Portrush Golf Club, located on what is today the Dunluce Centre.
- 5.4 Between 1931 and 1966 the town began to expand further along the coast and southwards, with the northern end of the peninsula by 1931 reflected its present layout. The Northern Counties Hotel and Castle Erin were developed and the golf club was relocated to its current location. By 1946 Barry's amusements was built and by 1966 the Caravan Park on Bushmills Road and the Golf Links Hotel were facilitating the town's tourists.

Wider Context

Urban Form and Character

- 5.5 Portrush has a unique rising topography which peaks centrally between Mark Street and Main Street, before dropping down towards the east / west waterfront, allowing stepped development. This not only allows views from upper levels of buildings located centrally but also provides an interesting and colourful backdrop when viewing the town from the shore. This is further enhanced by an important characteristic of the townscape, the green landscape strip that forms a strong definition between the sea and the built form. One of the highest points of the area is the undeveloped Ramore Head to



the north western tip of the peninsula where views across the harbour and beyond are remarkable. Ramore Head represents one of the town's natural assets and is designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest.

- 5.6 Portrush's built form comprises predominantly small to medium urban blocks. Narrow frontage buildings on elongated plots denote the terraced units within the town's centre whilst larger detached and semi-detached units on bigger plots denote the residential area to the south. Transition between the two areas is denoted in three areas, (1) the roundabout where Crocknamack Road meets Eglinton Street and (2) Crocknamack Road and Causeway Street, (3) Metropole Park, which define the approaches into the town centre.

- 5.7 The buildings are predominantly three storeys in height with landmark structures such as the Town Hall, the Northern Bank, Portrush Presbyterian Church and some three and a half to four storey residential units contributing to the townscape and skyline.



- 5.8 Portrush town centre is situated to the north of the peninsula with Main Street forming the main retail core. However, at present the retail offer is limited with outlets such as the White House and a number of sportswear shops along the northern end of Main Street forming the focus. Further south amusement arcades and eateries create the bulk of outlets leading to the landmark waterfront amusements, Barry's. There is a distinct difference in quality of shop front and retail offer along the street, with the southern end showing signs of a lack of investment and detracting from the overall perception of the town. The core retail area is physically and visually detached from the animation found along the western seafront area.
- 5.9 The harbour is another key part of the town's centre, although its physical nature restricting its potential to be more vibrant, an important hub and assists in lengthening the town's tourism season. The harbour area is discussed in detail under the Study Area Analysis.

Public Realm

- 5.10 There are a number of significant areas of public open space within Portrush. The town's largest area of open space is the coastline and associated promenade, which is well used by pedestrians and cyclists. This area is designated as part of the green belt and also protected as a Local Landscape Policy Area, forming an attractive foreground to the town when viewing it along the coastline. Areas of green open space are located throughout the town however those along the coastline, Kerr Street and at West Bay contribute to the



town's stepped / layered townscape. However, at present, the majority of these open spaces appear to lack a function and are under utilised as amenity areas.

- 5.11 Public gardens, both north of Antrim Gardens and east of the intersection between Main Street, Causeway Street and Eglinton Street, provide attractive settings for adjacent buildings and a landscaped interface between the town's retail core and waterfront, respectively. The Metropole Park and Recreation Grounds, both owned by Coleraine Borough Council, are also areas of public open space, located to the south and north of the town, respectively.



Metropole Park provides a significant open space, including an equipped child's playground and is home to the Dunluce Centre. However, the remainder of this space has limited function and is denoted by low walls and planting, which combined with a lack of natural surveillance and lighting creates an uninviting amenity. The Recreation Grounds includes an equipped child's playground, several tennis courts, two bowling greens and a pavilion. This area appears physically and visually isolated from the town centre, with the intersection between Main Street and Kerr Street and the surrounding built environment forming a perceived point of termination and restricting awareness of the facility.

- 5.12 The qualities of the town's public realm are modest with definite areas showing signs of a lack of investment and function. Lower quality areas include the southern end of Main Street and in front of the Town Hall. Pedestrian / cycle and vehicle conflict, in conjunction with poor environmental quality, not only detracts heavily from both the Town Hall and the adjacent listed building (old train station / Traks) but also dilutes its status as a main pedestrian gateway. However, it should be noted that the public realm on the eastern bay has been enhanced.



Movement and Access

- 5.13 Portrush has relatively good vehicular access via the A2 and A29, both high quality rural 'A' class roads. The peninsula suffers from traffic congestion that is caused by a variety of reasons, such as seasonal influx of traffic and illegal parking and loading. These effect the one-way gyratory system and in turn results in significant queuing on the approach roads and in the town centre, causing traffic to dominate the peninsula. This one-way gyratory route forms the primary access within the town and comprises Eglinton Street, Kerr Street, Main Street and Causeway Street.



- 5.14 There is a secondary road network including Mark Street, Atlantic Avenue, Bath Street, Causeway View, Lansdowne Crescent and Ramore Street which feed into the primary network. The main intersections are located at the Town Hall and Harbour where traffic congestion and pedestrian / cycle severance is increased.
- 5.15 Tertiary routes, such as pedestrian and cycleways are evident along the Portstewart Road where there is clear delineation between users and more notably along the promenade and parts of the seafront, where pedestrian and cycle access is prioritised. Within the majority of the town, pedestrian access is moderate with most streets retaining segregated footways on either side of the carriageway. In areas these footways are substantial in width however, in the majority they are average or narrow, creating congestion amongst users and allowing the street to be prioritised by cars.
- 5.16 Pedestrian / cycle links between the town's retail core and the waterfront are limited, with only one set of steps connecting Mark Street to Kerr Street. This contributes to the isolation of the retail core and enhances the perception of Kerr Street as a barrier to the waterfront. Cycle routes are limited to the seafront. In principle, pedestrian and cycle links and crossing points within the town and between the town and its attractors are poor. This effect on people's movement levels can impact their comfort and in turn direct pedestrian / cycle flows away from certain areas effecting trade.
- 5.17 Parking provision is accommodated on surface car parks located off Dunluce Avenue, the Eastern Promenade and to the north of the town at Lower Lansdowne Road, which services the sports facilities. Further provision is noted at North Pier providing access to the harbour, with additional provision at West Bay. The town accommodates both on-street and off-street parking provision at a rate of 839 spaces and 1720 spaces respectively. It has been noted that although there is adequate supply of car parking spaces within the town, some car parks are under utilised whilst others are at capacity with spill over leading to illegal parking. This highlights that there is a perception that some car parking provision is out of the main circuit or close to where people wish to go.
- 5.18 Aside from private car, regular train and interurban bus services into the town centre enhance Portrush's accessibility. The train station is situated south of the old train station building, its single storey building and surrounding environment appearing run down. The central location of the station makes it highly accessible however its physical condition and problem of anti-social behaviour in the evenings detract from it being a positive transport gateway. In addition, the Portrush Puffer service provides seasonal public transport for short journeys including connections to the main car parks.

- 5.19 Connections to the town from the sea are limited and the harbour area is presently under fulfilling its true potential to positively contribute to the town's attractiveness as a marina destination for boat owners and tourists alike.

The Study Area

- 5.20 The initial study area boundary as defined in Chapter 1, includes the waterfront, area of open space east of the railway, an element of Eglinton Street and associated buildings, the Town Hall, the waterfront amusements and the harbour area. However, in order to create a more comprehensive development area which acknowledged substantial areas of adjacent land / development opportunity sites, the boundary has been extended to include the Recreation Grounds and Metropole Park.
- 5.21 The study area is covered by a number of designations including the protection of the greenbelt, protected open space, landscape policy, area of archaeological potential and area of townscape character.

Study Area Analysis

Character and Urban Form

- 5.22 The area identified is one of the most significant parts of the town, due to its relationship to the sea and elongated shape stretching the majority of the western side of the peninsula. The scale and location of the study area provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen the town's offer and destination appeal however, the designations applied will pose design challenges.
- 5.23 Buildings within the study area vary from 2.5 – 3 storeys. There is a mix of building type and architectural quality, ranging from the landmark red brick Town Hall building, which has recently been restored, to Castle Erin located on elevated ground along West Bay. Castle Erin's position and cream rendered exterior contribute to its prominence on the landscape and isolated appearance, with the quality of its original structure sacrificed by a lesser quality extension.
- 5.24 A key characteristic of the town's built environment is terraced units painted in bright colours, as evident along Eglinton Street. This adds to the visual attractiveness of the area but also reinforces a 'seaside character'. However, within the retail core the quality is more modest with shop fronts and signage evoking a perception of a lack of investment and visual clutter.



- 5.25 Located west of the Town Hall and Kerr Street is Barry's Amusements, which not only comprises both indoor and outdoor facilities but is also iconic to Portrush. The public space between Barry's and the Town Hall is lively and well-used, forming part of Barry's main entrance, however the layout and quality of this area is such that there are a number of places which are not naturally surveyed and encourage anti-social behaviour. Equally, its appearance and the introduction of an amphitheatre structure have little regard to context. To the north west of Barry's is Kiddieland, an outdoor amusement facility. The inward orientation of this facility and blank boundary treatment creates a defensive and unattractive interface with the seafront.
- 5.26 The remainder of the study area along the coastline is predominantly grassed open space with the Harbour area retaining the only additional built form. These consist of a two-storey yacht club and single-storey ancillary storage buildings, which extend along the North Pier, Waterworld and a number of restaurants including the Harbour Bar, Coast Italiano and Ramore Wine Bar, which are all under one owner. The latter two are housed in the most dominant building along the Pier, with a combination of the traditional low rise structure added to by a more contemporary 3 storey building. Waterworld is positioned between Coast Italiano and the Harbour Bar, its single storey brightly coloured façade appearing dated and out of context. The majority of the Waterworld building is located to the rear of Coast Italiano and almost appearing built into the rising landscape, visible only when approaching the Ramore Street area. This part of the town is under-fulfilling its potential, isolated due to the surrounding environmental quality, in particular the two blocks of flatted units on Ramore Street which appear dated and heavy on the landscape when viewed from the seafront. The sense of isolation is furthered by a lack of pedestrian / cycle links and visual connection to the Recreation Grounds, limiting awareness of it.
- 
- 5.27 The study area's eastern boundary runs along Eglinton Lane, east of Eglinton Street, taking in a block of predominantly residential / bed and breakfast units. This north – south alignment is further reinforced by the railway line which runs parallel to Eglinton Street and is defined by a solid stone wall forming a visual and physical barrier between the two, at ground floor level. The railway line's raised nature, west of the Metropole Hotel, provides a visual barrier to West Bay with an archway framing one of the only views from Eglinton Street to the sea, at lower level.
- 5.28 Similar to the tiered topography of the town, the study area has a change in level, stepping down to the waterfront. This is particularly evident between the Town Hall and the promenade,

where the change in level is denoted by steps adjacent Barry's and a ramp connecting to the seafront.

Open Space and Public Realm

- 5.29 Within the site boundary open space comprises grassed areas such as that along the south side of Kerr Street, at West Bay and the beach itself. As previously noted, the open space retains a Landscape Policy designation that could restrict development opportunities.

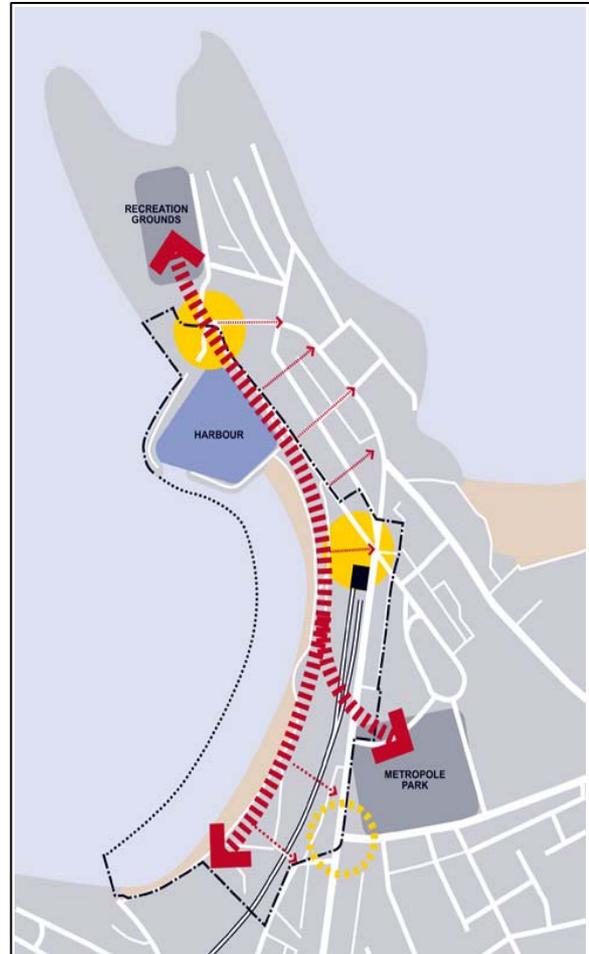
Access and Links

- 5.30 The main road within the site boundary is Eglinton Street, which forms one of the primary routes into the town centre, culminating with Kerr Street to form part of the one-way gyratory system. This system directs the majority of traffic into the town along Main Street and Eglinton Street creating further congestion and increasing car dominance. This is furthered by ineffective loading restrictions and illegal parking which not only restrict traffic flow but also pedestrian / cycle movement and the town's accessibility.
- 5.31 Other access roads include Castle Erin Road, which services the amusements, Mark Street and the North Pier, which facilitates access to the harbour area and car park, and associated bars and restaurants. Vehicular access from Eglinton Street to West Bay car park is off Eglinton Street, just south of the Metropole Hotel under the railway bridge.
- 5.32 Pedestrians and cyclists are provided for with the extensive promenade servicing the beach and connecting the southern part of the site to the Harbour area. Apart from footways on either side of carriageways as part of the road network, additional provision for pedestrians and cyclists is limited. This is particularly evident in the northern end of the study area where links to Main Street are restricted and pedestrian / cycle crossings are limited.
- 5.33 Links between the beach and the town centre are also limited isolating the study area, in particular between the Metropole Park and West Bay and again further north between Barry's amusements and the Town Hall. This will need to be addressed in order to integrate any future scheme with the existing town centre.

Urban Design Analysis Summary

“Creating a circuit”

- 5.34 The adjacent diagram summarises how the area currently functions. Two development opportunity dumbbells exist either end in the form of the Recreation Grounds to the north and the Metropole Park to the south. The solid yellow circles represent hot spots of activity in the form of Barry’s and the harbour area, where additional regeneration potential exists. Generally the flow is north/south. The dotted yellow circle identifies the key access to the town.
- 5.35 The activity flow between these areas requires to be strengthened further to encourage better connections between this area and Main Street. An improved circuit from West Bay north along the promenade, to the harbour, the Recreation Grounds, Main Street and south along Eglinton Street to Metropole Park would achieve a full circuit. This circuit would offer a range of experiences on route.



“Removing barriers and improving access”

- 5.36 At present many barriers exist. The railway wall at Eglinton Street prevents a visitor realising that they have arrived at a seaside location. The sea can not be seen until one approaches the Harbour on Kerr Street. Not only is visual access to the sea denied but also physical pedestrian access is difficult from the town to the West Bay area. One could leave Portrush without knowing that the West Bay exists. This is a major issue to be addressed.

“Improving perception”

- 5.37 The lack of quality in the public realm areas also presents a negative image and perception to users. Although vast areas exist, these are underused and not connected well into the town. Well designed, public realm has the ability to “dress” the town in a very attractive way which will encourage further investment in general. Other competing seaside resorts in Northern

Ireland have already started to invest in this area e.g. Newcastle, Co Down. The promenade, Harbour and Town Hall Square areas present a major opportunity to improve perceptions.

“Creating a pedestrian gateway”

- 5.38 The Town Hall has had major public sector investment over the last few years. An opportunity exists to reduce the dominance of traffic at this area, to create a safer and more attractive environment for the users. This area forms a natural pedestrian gateway to the town that needs to be enhanced further.

6. REGENERATION AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

6.1 A number of regeneration and design objectives have been identified to guide future development and are set out in the following paragraphs. Achieving these will be fundamental to delivering a scheme that integrates with and benefits the wider area. These principles are further complemented by site-specific objectives and design principles which seek to ensure that a high quality development is delivered.

Core Regeneration Objectives

6.2 The core regeneration objectives have been identified in the terms of reference and are referred to in Section 1 of the report. Primarily these aim to:

- encourage and facilitate economic and physical integration with other significant areas within Portrush;
- promote public space and pedestrian linkages both within these areas and linkages to other key locations; and
- develop an overall design concept to support the development of the western peninsula of Portrush and inject quality, to provide design guidance and an implementation plan.

6.3 Throughout this process, the Consultant team have recognised the need to build upon the main economic driver i.e. tourism, but at the same time create a sustainable and more attractive environment for the residents of the town.

6.4 Specifically the objectives require to:

- Enhance the physical appearance of the area, in order to develop a competitive edge;
- Promote new and strengthen existing economic drivers to underpin the economy;
- Develop a quality offering across a range of supporting infrastructure;
- Maximise the potential of currently under utilised assets (natural and man-made);
- Broaden the visitor market base; and
- Extend current summer season and the all year economic base.

6.5 In an ever competitive tourism environment, consumers are becoming more discerning and require higher quality supporting infrastructure, whether it be accommodation, visitor attractions or supporting services e.g. retail. For Portrush to compete effectively, it requires to radically change the quality of offering. Given the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's commitment to promoting the neighbouring World Heritage site at the Giant's Causeway, it is

critical that Portrush as the closest town, is capable of providing quality infrastructure to support government's commitment and to assist in promoting its own sustainable future.

Preliminary Consultation

6.6 These objectives were confirmed from initial consultation with primary landowners and major tourist attractions, tourism operators, local developers, local business representatives, statutory stakeholders and specialist harbour/marina consultees. A full list of those contacted is provided as Appendix 4.

6.7 From the outset, a number of prominent issues emerged. These included:

- Need to 'Think Big' – a small step change is not enough
- Harbour as 'Honey Pot' – with significant potential to promote Portrush as international tourist destination
- Need to improve and update current tourist attractions and supporting infrastructure
- Need to extend short tourist season
- Need for 4* hotel with conferencing/spa facilities
- Potential to relocate train station and open views to the sea
- Opportunity to make better use of West Bay and attract more visitors

Design Objectives

6.8 Through a process of analysis, stakeholder consultation and consideration of best practice, a set of design objectives, which seek to ensure that high quality development is delivered, have been prepared under area based headings and are set out below.

Recreation Grounds

6.9 Given the high quality of the natural amenity in this area, a sensitive approach is required to minimise the visual and physical impact of proposals. Key to reinvigorating this area will be the rationalisation of existing uses to allow for the provision of new uses, which will create diversity and assist in extending the season. New and improved leisure facilities are recommended at the recreation grounds to attract residents and visitors to the northern part of the Peninsula. Increasing accessibility and awareness of the facilities will also reinforce this.

Harbour

- 6.10 The harbour is identified as one of the town's unique assets, which is presently under fulfilling its true potential as a significant attraction and lively hub. As a result of analysis and consultation, it is considered that there is sufficient demand to justify expanding the harbour and introducing marina facilities.
- 6.11 It will be important to ensure that development of the marina positively contributes to Portrush's tourism offer by creating a lively 'honey pot'. Increasing quality waterfront restaurants and introducing permanent pontoons, will not only facilitate the needs of local residents and boat owners but also visitors and in turn lengthen the town's tourism season. Physically, the potential reconfiguration and development at the harbour must respect the historic context, existing views from Kerr Street and the town across the harbour and beyond. The location, scale and massing and design of proposed structures and public realm will be crucial in safeguarding and enhancing existing visual assets and structures.

Town Hall Square

- 6.12 As an important pedestrian entrance into Portrush, it is essential that this area is designed for people and not dominated by cars and road infrastructure. In addition to being an arrival point this new civic space forms a focal point and enhances the setting of the recently restored Town Hall. Investment in this area will create a visual uplift and significantly improve the perception of the town centre. A critical design objective is to deliver a visual and physical connection between the Town Hall, the Square and the sea. Key views could be reinforced through the appropriate introduction of glazed pavilion buildings, hard landscape, change in levels and street furniture to frame the visual connections.

Kerr Street

- 6.13 Kerr Street is the main link between the Town Hall square and the harbour area and is presently heavily dominated by traffic with limited pedestrian or cycle crossings. It is a significant link between two key areas and, in conjunction with the promenade, provides part of the interface between the seafront and town. A fundamental design objective for this street is to consider how a balance can be achieved in maintaining its function as a main vehicular access to the area and the introduction of new measures that are required to facilitate improved pedestrian/cycle movement and crossings points and to utilise the seafront location to enhance links back to Main Street. Public realm improvements must be of a high quality and reflect proposed development and increased activity within the area, improving the perception of the town.

Train Station

- 6.14 The train station's location provides easy access into the town for visitors, however as a transport gateway it is low grade and attracts anti-social behaviour in the evenings. The opportunity may exist to relocate the train station opposite Metropole Park. This would open up views to the sea and create development opportunity sites to reinvigorate Eglinton Street. By relocating and in turn providing a new station building, an opportunity exists to develop a contemporary high quality integrated train and bus facility complemented by a public space that will increase the perception of Portrush and provide improved services.

West Bay

- 6.15 The West Bay area is predominantly open green spaces, which lack function, and a pedestrian and cycle promenade. This area needs to be designed to be more visually and physically accessible with pedestrian and cycle links between the West Bay and both the Metropole Park area and town centre upgraded.
- 6.16 The West Bay's prominent location along the shoreline reinforces the need for new development and public realm to be sensitively designed and attract residents and visitors to this area.

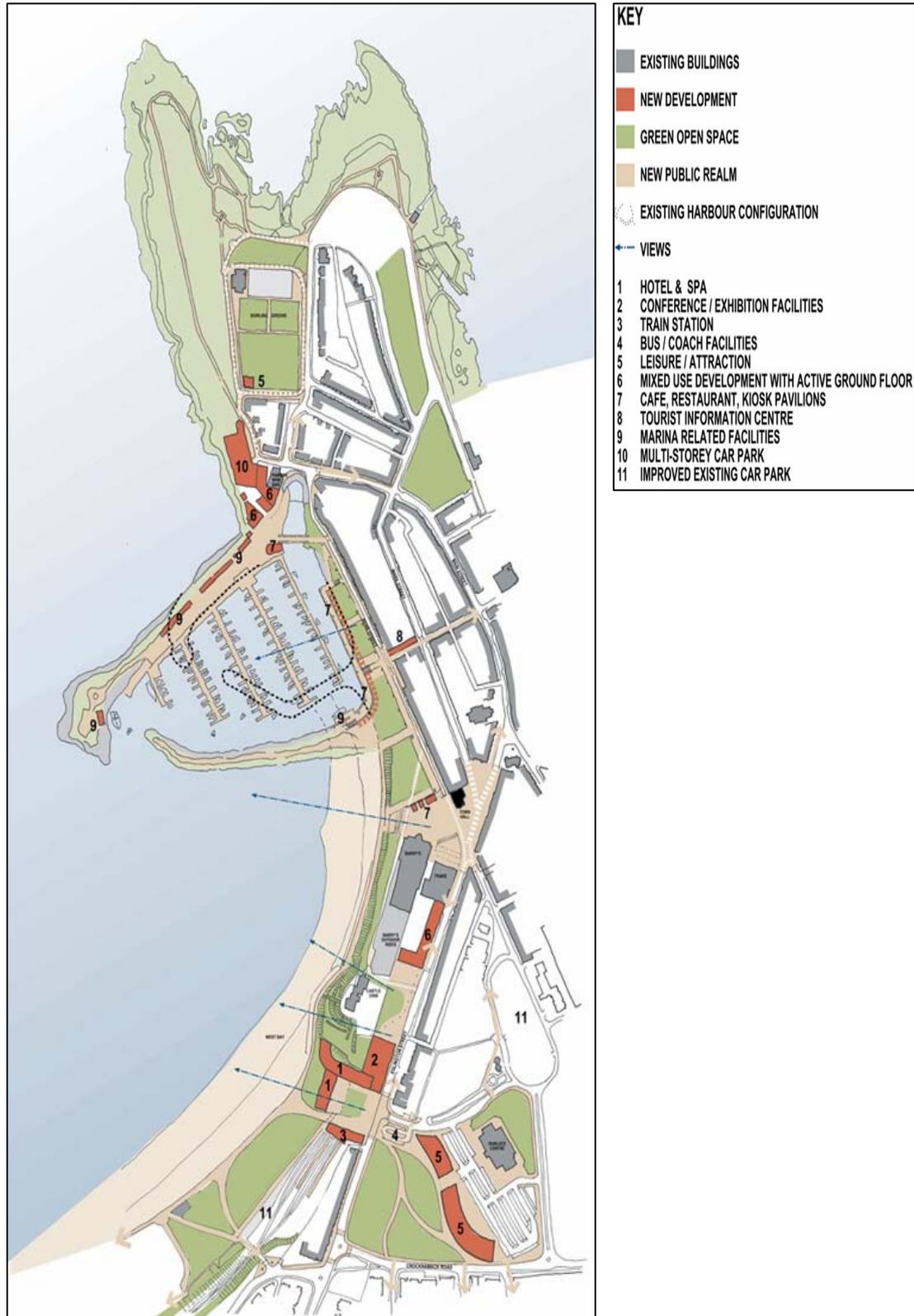
Metropole Park

- 6.17 Metropole Park forms the gateway into Portrush and proposed public realm and development must be of a high quality design to enhance the perception of the town. It is important that this site is developed to complement the other potential sites in order to ensure that the economic benefits are spread across the wider area.

7. CONCEPT OPTIONS AND EVALUATION

- 7.1 Five concepts have been developed and consulted upon at a public exhibition. These have been evaluated against a set of objectives including their ability to deliver wider town centre regeneration, improve tourism offer, deliver high quality design and public realm and deliverability. The five concept options are firstly described and then evaluated below.

Concept A: Harbour with development and boardwalk, hotel adjacent to Castle Erin and railway station relocated.



Recreation Grounds

- 7.2 Concept A proposes that the recreation ground's existing provision is rationalised and upgraded, to allow for the introduction of a new recreation attraction to be located in the southern half of the grounds. The existing bowling green is retained, however the number of tennis courts are reduced by 50%, to release an area of land suitable for either an 18 hole themed crazy golf course with associated pavilion or a multi-purpose sports facility.
- 7.3 To increase awareness and accessibility of this area, pedestrian links are provided between the multi-storey car park and the grounds.
- 7.4 The design of these improvements to the recreation grounds as a leisure amenity will require a sensitive approach to ensure that its natural surroundings and views out to the sea are safeguarded.

Harbour

- 7.5 Concept A extends the north and south piers of the existing harbour, which creates additional development land and facilitates a 250+ berth marina, with permanent pontoons. Restaurants and bars form part of a landmark mixed-use development, reinforcing the existing uses and enlivening the area. This option assumes that the existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush, releasing the rear part of the site for a multi-storey car park, which would be tucked behind active uses and sensitively set into the landscape. Introducing a multi-storey would allow the removal of the existing surface car parking along North Pier, releasing the area for increased activity and a new high quality public space. Increased activity generated by the new development will also be reinforced by a glazed pavilion building and outdoor eating areas, which will encourage activity to spill onto the new space. This enhanced area is also accessed by the improved pedestrian and cycle bridge connecting back to Kerr Street.
- 7.6 Other uses to be located along north pier will include single storey units for uses ancillary to the marina, including a new lifeboat facility, changing and laundry facilities, storage and pumping, which are essential to attract boats, yet limit possible damage if affected by flooding. It will be important to create a balance between old and new elements of the Harbour and therefore reconfiguration will have to be sensitively designed to protect the Harbour's historic elements / structure.
- 7.7 In addition, contemporary single storey glazed buildings will be developed at water level with a boardwalk to further enrich vibrancy around the harbour and along Kerr Street. This development is designed to utilise the topography of the land to ensure that buildings are set into the landscape and views and activity from Kerr Street are not restricted.

Town Hall Square

- 7.8 A new civic space is created to reinforce this area as a pedestrian gateway and enhance the setting of the Town Hall. It assumes that the existing Kiddieland and adjacent property are removed to open up views and access to the sea. New pavilion buildings, in conjunction with steps, a grid of lighting columns and paving, assist in defining the space and reinforce views between the Town Hall and the sea. In addition, the Go-Kart area is to be removed and replaced by water features or public art to create visual interest.
- 7.9 High quality robust paving is used to articulate the space and reinforce its importance. By introducing a shared surface from this area across Kerr Street, to include the Town Hall and part of Main Street, pedestrian priority is achieved and the present intersection of roads is read as an extension to the Square.

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

- 7.10 A new Tourist Information Centre is proposed on Kerr Street with a lift incorporated to increase accessibility between Main Street and Kerr Street. A pedestrian crossing leading across Kerr Street to a ramp and set of steps to the waterfront further enhances this connection.
- 7.11 Public realm improvements, including widening of footways and incorporation of crossing points to increase ease of pedestrian movement, will strengthen the connection between the new Town Hall Square and the Harbour. In addition, it is envisaged that an element of on-street parking and service bays would be provided in an integrated manner. Similarly street lighting, seating, cycle parking and other street furniture must be carefully designed and located so as to avoid visual clutter.

Train Station and West Bay

- 7.12 The train station is relocated and rail tracks pulled back to the existing bus storage area opposite Metropole Park. This creates a new integrated public transport facility and civic space, whilst releasing its former site to accommodate public spaces and new commercial and residential development along Eglinton Street. The proposed development will create active street frontage and provide natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, whilst visually screening the rear of Barry's and Traks. A new extensive area of public open space is located between Castle Erin and Eglinton Street, which maximises links and views to the seafront. These high quality spaces create an attractive approach into Portrush.
- 7.13 A split-level quality hotel, with an integrated spa, conference / exhibition facility and car park, is located south of Castle Erin. The split-level allows part of the hotel to utilise the change in

level to maximise sea views and limiting any physical obstruction, whilst orientating the upper level to provide frontage onto a new public square. The square extends across Eglinton Street creating a positive link between the Metropole Park and the seafront, whilst also providing a quality arrival space from the relocated station.

- 7.14 The promenade and green open spaces are upgraded with lighting, landscaping, and seating and cycle facilities to increase use and create a higher quality interface with the seafront.

Metropole Park

- 7.15 Concept A proposes a new landmark leisure development, e.g. an enhanced Waterworld and Aquarium as possible types of indoor leisure, to provide a prominent gateway into the town. These leisure attractions are positioned in front of the Dunluce Centre which allows a significant area of green open space to be retained parallel to Eglinton Street. A bus terminal adjacent to the relocated train station is also included as part of the Metropole Park development.

Summary

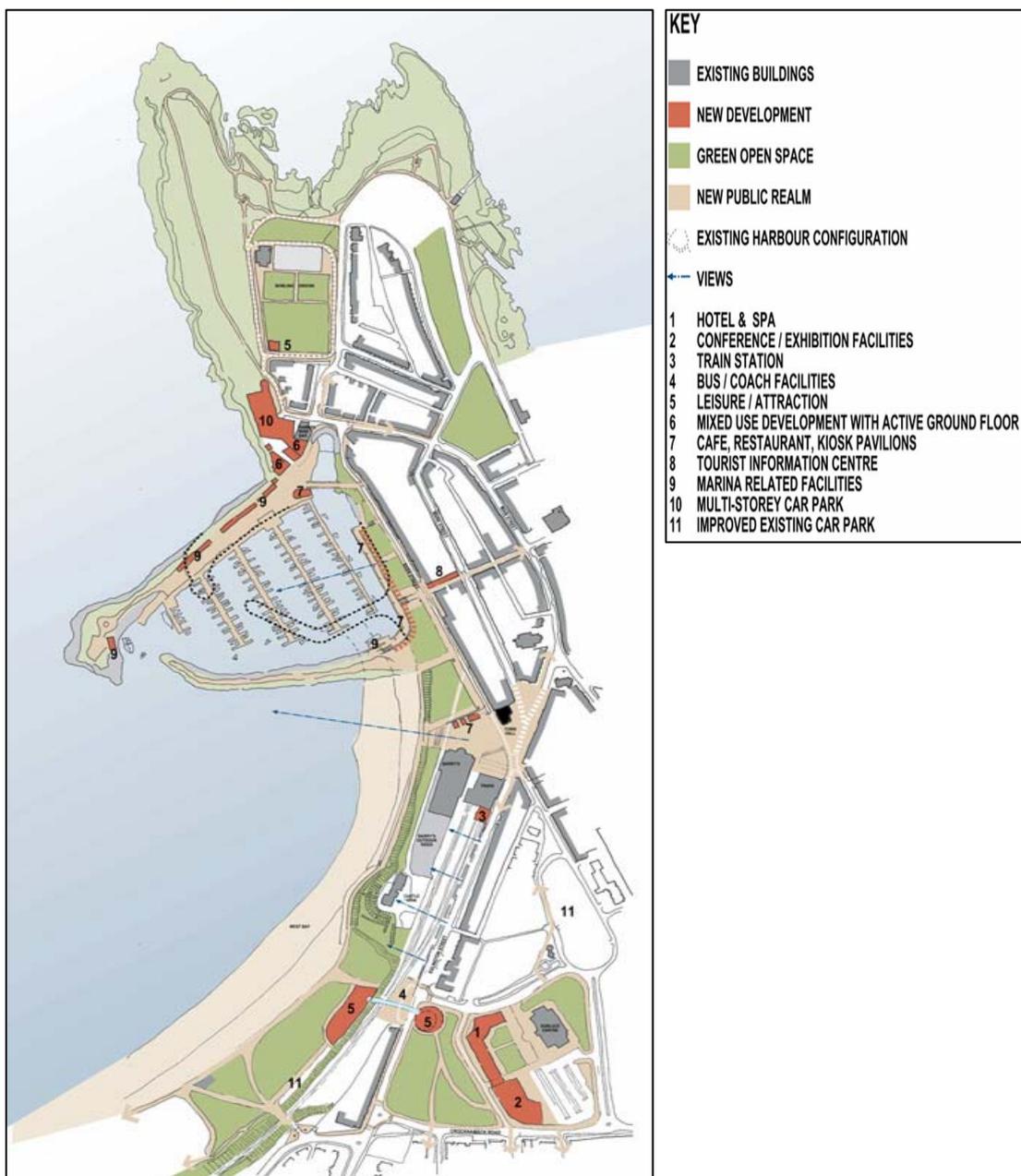
- 7.16 The key strengths of Concept A are the provision of a marina and associated development and the prominent location of the hotel adjacent Castle Erin. The marina will not only revitalise the existing harbour and perception of Portrush but also become a key attractor for those both living in and visiting the town. The hotel's unique location allows it to benefit from open sea views, creating an additional draw and enhancing its 4 / 5 star offer.

Concept A Evaluation

- 7.17 Concept A would:
- Ensure the maximum distribution of a full range of **regeneration catalysts** to maximise connections and economic spin off
 - Make best use of the peninsula, opening up views and connections and in turn exploiting its assets. This option would also maximise the distribution of **tourism** opportunity sites and achieve a 4 / 5 star hotel
 - Provide limited **commercial** infill:
 - Restaurants, a multi-storey car park, pavilion and boardwalk/commercial opportunity at North Pier
 - Commercial / residential uses along Eglinton Street in place of the existing station
 - A hotel/conference/spa at West Bay adjacent Castle Erin

- Leisure focus at Metropole Park
- Create an excellent opportunity to match high quality assets with new high **quality development**
- Deliver an excellent series of interconnected, safe, attractive, **public spaces** that have the ability to change the public face of Portrush

Concept B: Harbour with development and boardwalk, hotel at Metropole Park and railway station as existing



Recreation Grounds

- 7.18 As in Concept A.

Harbour

- 7.19 As in Concept A.

Town Hall Square

- 7.20 As in Concept A.

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

- 7.21 As in Concept A.

Train Station and West Bay

- 7.22 The train station is upgraded but remains at its existing location.
- 7.23 A 'state of the art' Waterworld or other leisure facility is developed at West Bay, positioned parallel to the railway embankment to reduce its visual impact. This building is connected to the new aquarium or other indoor leisure facility on the Metropole Park by a glazed pedestrian bridge. In addition, improved links are provided to the promenade, which is upgraded with lighting, landscaping, and seating and cycle facilities to increase use and create a higher quality interface with the seafront.

Metropole Park

- 7.24 A new quality hotel with an integrated spa, conference/exhibition facility and car park is located in front of the Dunluce Centre, fronting onto an area of public open green space. This open area provides an attractive landscape setting for the hotel and maintains the existing green gateway into the town.
- 7.25 A glazed pedestrian bridge connects two leisure facilities, which may include a new landmark aquarium building and a 'state of the art' Waterworld, over Eglinton Street and the rail tracks to increase accessibility and reinforce arrival into the town.

Summary

- 7.26 The key benefits of this option are the provision of a new marina facility as described in Concept A and the inclusion of the 3 / 4 star hotel, spa and conference / exhibition facility at the Metropole Park. The new pedestrian bridge between leisure uses will also create a

landmark entrance point into the town. In contrast, by retaining the railway station in its existing location, the opportunity to release key development land and provide views and connections to the sea is limited in the south.

Concept B Evaluation

7.27 Concept B would:

- Facilitate a good level of distribution of **regeneration catalysts** but does not maximise circuits/connections and economic spin off
- Make good use of the views and connections in the northern area, however does not fully exploit the peninsula's assets in the south due to the retention of the station, which restricts visual and physical connections to the seafront. This option provides limited distribution of **tourism** opportunity sites and the location of the hotel on the Metropole would deliver a 3 / 4 star quality hotel instead of a 4 / 5 star.
- Create limited **commercial** infill:
 - Restaurants, a multi-storey car park, pavilion and boardwalk/commercial opportunity at North Pier
 - Leisure and connecting bridge at West Bay
 - A hotel / conference / spa at Metropole Park
- Create a modest opportunity to match high quality assets with new high **quality development**
- Facilitate a good series of safe, attractive, **public spaces**, predominantly in the northern part of the study area. The southern part lacks visual and physical integration and reduces the ability to change the public face of Portrush.

Concept C: Harbour with hotel, pavilions on Kerr Street and railway station relocated.



Recreation Grounds

- 7.28 As in Concept A.

Harbour

- 7.29 Concept C extends the north and south piers of the existing harbour. A new landmark development, including hotel, spa, conference facility and multi-storey car park (circa 250 spaces) is located on the north pier. This requires the land to be extended in a sensitive manner. This scheme assumes that the existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush, providing development land for the multi-storey that is visually screened by the other new uses.
- 7.30 Outdoor eating areas, to encourage active spill onto a new quality public open space, will reinforce the increased activity generated by the development. This area is also accessed by the improved pedestrian and cycle-bridge connecting back to Kerr Street.
- 7.31 Other uses to be located around the new marina include single storey units for uses ancillary to the marina, including a new lifeboat facility, changing and laundry facilities, storage and pumping, which are essential to attract boats yet limit negative effects if affected by flooding.
- 7.32 Glazed pavilions parallel to Kerr Street are designed to increase activity within the area. These single storey transparent buildings maximise views of the harbour whilst reducing the visual buffer that would be created by a solid structure.

Town Hall Square

- 7.33 As in Concept A, however the Tourist Information Centre is to be located within one of the new pavilions located in the Square.

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

- 7.34 In conjunction with the new glazed pavilions located between the marina and Kerr Street, improved pedestrian connection between Main Street, Kerr Street and the beach is created. There is the potential to integrate an all-weather escalator parallel to the existing steps to increase accessibility, between Kerr Street and Mark Street.

Train Station and West Bay

- 7.35 The train station is relocated and rail tracks pulled back to the existing bus storage area opposite Metropole Park. This creates a new integrated public transport facility and civic space, whilst releasing its previous site to accommodate public spaces and new commercial

and residential development along Eglinton Street. The proposed development will create active street frontage and provide natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, whilst visually screening the rear of Barry's and Traks. A new extensive area of public open space is located between Castle Erin and Eglinton Street, which maximises links and views to the seafront. These high quality spaces create an attractive approach into Portrush.

- 7.36 A landmark leisure facility, e.g. aquarium is developed at West Bay, positioned parallel to the raised railway embankment to reduce its visual impact yet utilise the synergies of this seafront location.
- 7.37 The promenade is upgraded with lighting, landscaping, and seating and cycle facilities to increase use and create a higher quality interface with the seafront.

Metropole Park

- 7.38 A new landmark leisure development, such as a 'state of the art' Waterworld and leisure facility, provides a prominent gateway into the town. The leisure attractions are positioned in front of the Dunluce Centre which allows a significant area of green open space to be retained parallel to Eglinton Street.

Summary

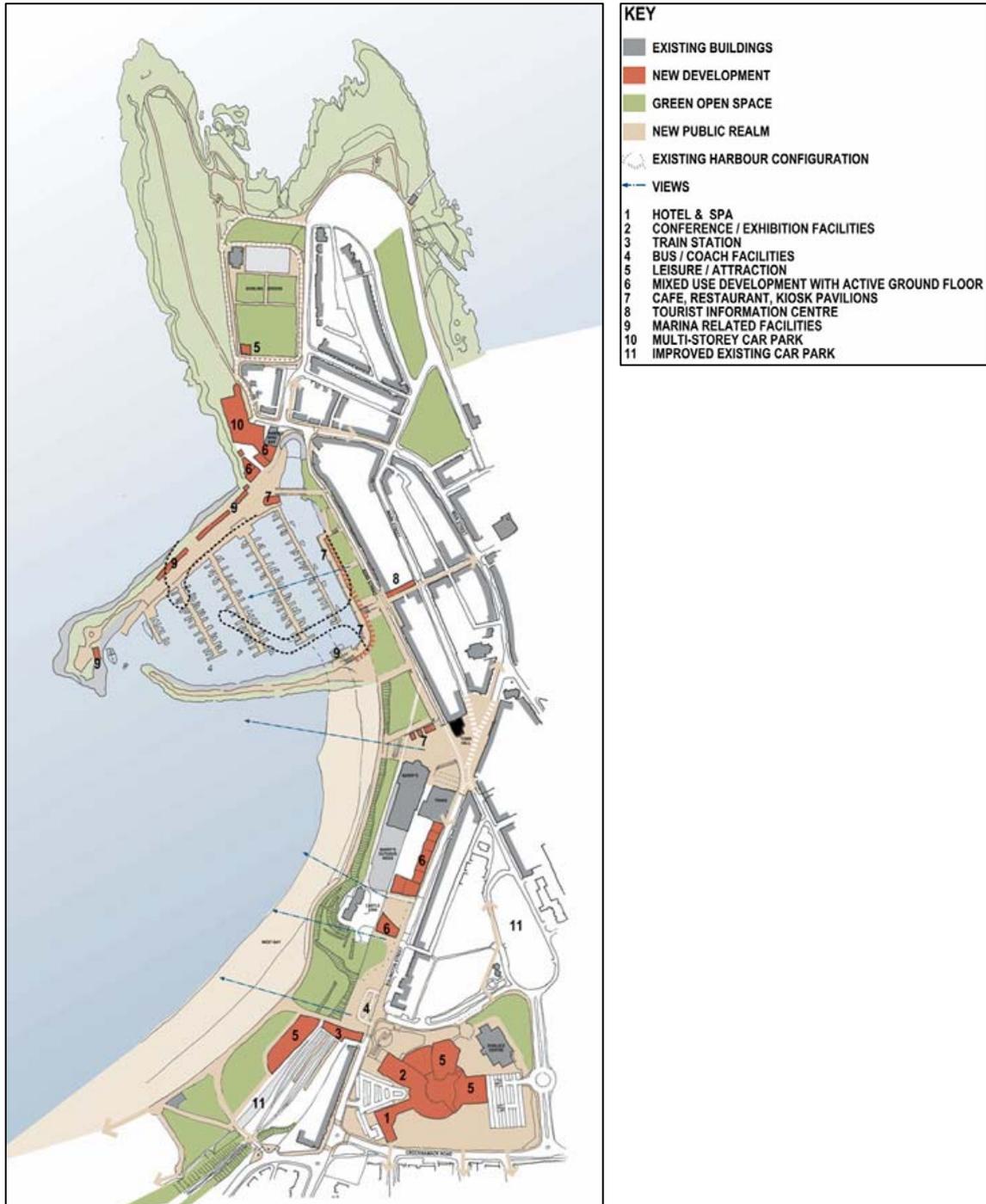
- 7.39 The key benefits of this concept are the provision of a new marina facility and the relocation of the train station, which not only opens up views to the sea along Eglinton Street but also provides new development land. Although commercially this option delivers the hotel and associated facilities, the location of them around the harbour / marina may create additional traffic congestion within the area and that the level of development proposed may be considered too intense.

Option C Evaluation

- 7.40 Concept C would:
- Ensure excellent distribution of a full range of **regeneration catalysts** to maximise circuits/connections and economic spin off
 - Make best use of the peninsula's assets such as views and connections to the sea and distribute **tourism** opportunity sites to a maximum, including the provision of a new 4* hotel
 - Facilitate **commercial** infill:

- A hotel / conference / spa, restaurants and pavilion, and a multi-storey car park at North Pier
- Commercial / residential uses along Eglinton Street in place of the existing station
- Leisure at West Bay
- Leisure at Metropole Park
- Create a good opportunity to match high quality assets with new **high quality development**. Consider design impact of harbour development extreme
- Deliver an excellent series of interconnected, safe, attractive, **public spaces** that have the ability to change the public face of Portrush

Concept D: Harbour with development and boardwalk, hotel at Metropole Park and railway station relocated.



Recreation Grounds

7.41 As in Concept A.

Harbour

7.42 As in Concept A.

Town Hall Square

7.43 As in Concept A.

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

7.44 As in Concept A.

Train Station and West Bay

7.45 As in Concept C, although the aquarium is replaced by a 'state of the art' Waterworld at West Bay.

Metropole Park

7.46 An internalised mixed-use development is located centrally on Metropole Park and includes a hotel and conference / exhibition facility, aquarium, internal and external leisure facilities, retail and food court. Car parking and service areas are located on Eglinton Street.

Summary

7.47 The key benefits of this option are the provision of the marina and the relocation of the train station, which allows increased views and connections to the sea from Eglinton Street. Although the scheme would deliver the hotel and leisure mix, the internalised nature of this scheme will limit public activity and natural surveillance within the area and may not deliver a high quality gateway to Portrush.

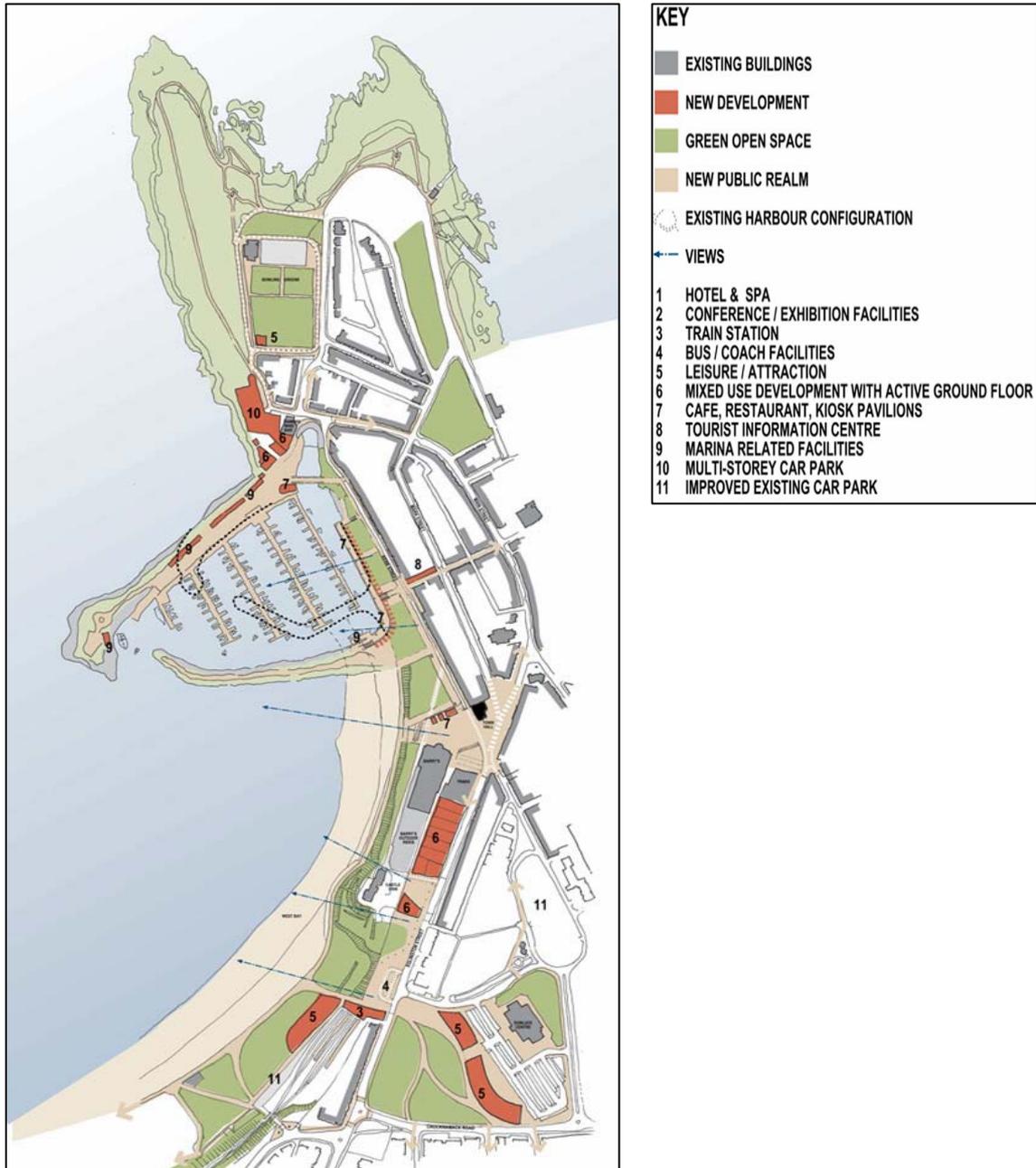
Concept D Evaluation

7.48 Concept D would:

- Ensure a good distribution of a range of **regeneration catalysts** but could potentially shift the town centre uses to Metropole Park through the scheme's internalised self-sufficient nature. Therefore, this option does not fully maximise circuits/connections and economic spin off

- Makes very good use of the peninsula's assets such as views and connections to the sea and maximises the distribution of **tourism** opportunity sites, including the provision of a 3 star hotel
- Facilitate **commercial** infill:
 - Restaurants, a multi-storey car park, pavilion and boardwalk / commercial opportunity at North Pier
 - Commercial / residential uses along Eglinton Street in place of the existing station
 - Leisure at West Bay
 - A hotel / conference, retail and leisure facilities at Metropole Park
- Create a good / modest opportunity to match high quality assets with new **quality development** - exception of internalised, poorly designed Metropole Park scheme at the town gateway
- Deliver a good series of interconnected, safe, attractive, **public spaces** that have a more limited ability to change the public face of Portrush. The main reason being the form of proposed development at Metropole Park. The issues being: limited public open space, no positive frontages and lack of natural surveillance and safety.

Concept E: Harbour with development and boardwalk, hotel outside peninsula area and railway station relocated.



Recreation Grounds

7.49 As in Concept A.

Harbour

7.50 As in Concept A.

Town Hall Square

7.51 As in Concept A.

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

7.52 As in Concept A.

Train Station and West Bay

7.53 As in Concept D.

Metropole Park

7.54 As in Concept C.

Summary

7.55 The benefits of this scheme include the provision of the marina, the relocation of the station releasing development land along Eglinton Street and the distribution of uses encouraging links from the Metropole to the seafront. However, the provision of the hotel outside the peninsula lessens the tourism offer.

Concept E Evaluation

7.56 Concept E would:

- Ensure a good distribution of a range of **regeneration catalysts**, with exception of the hotel. This option would maximise circuits but with slightly less economic spin off
- Make good/marginal use of the peninsula's assets by opening up of views and connections to the sea. This option distributes **tourism** opportunity sites but does not deliver a hotel
- Facilitate **commercial** infill:

- Restaurants, a multi-storey car park, pavilion and boardwalk / commercial opportunity at North Pier
- Commercial / residential uses along Eglinton Street in place of the existing station
- Leisure at West Bay
- Leisure at Metropole Park
- Create excellent opportunity to match high quality assets with new high **quality development**
- Deliver an excellent series of interconnected, safe, attractive, **public spaces** that have the ability to change the public face of Portrush

Summary of Concepts

- 7.57 In all concepts the Recreation Grounds are rationalised and upgraded to allow for new activities to be introduced, create better awareness and links to the facility and lengthen the period it is used.
- 7.58 Reconfiguration of the Harbour's north and south piers is part of all the concepts to allow for a 250+ berth marina, with new development such as restaurants and cafes along the pier and a new multi-storey car park located in place of the existing Waterworld. The removal of surface car parking along the northern pier opens up the opportunity for outdoor eating areas and in turn increased public activity. In Concept C a hotel, spa and conference / exhibition facility is included along the north pier, developed as a landmark mixed-use scheme. However, on all other concepts only commercial and restaurants are encouraged, focused along a new boardwalk.
- 7.59 The Town Hall Square is redefined using pavilion buildings and upgraded paving and landscape features to reinforce it as a pedestrian gateway into the town, whilst enhancing visual connection between the Town Hall and the sea. This scheme sees the relocation / removal of Kiddieland in order to open up the seafront in a positive manner. In Concept C, the Tourist Information Centre is accommodated in one of the pavilions on the Square.
- 7.60 Similar to the Town Hall Square, the treatment of Kerr Street and the Northern Promenade remain consistent throughout all the concepts except Concept C. Concepts, A, B, D and E create a better pedestrian environment, with increased pavement widths and pedestrian and cycle crossing points. These concepts include the provision of the Tourist Information Centre at the pedestrian link between Kerr Street and Mark Street with an internal lift providing increased accessibility. In contrast, Concept C relocates the Tourist Information Centre into one of the pavilions at the Town Hall Square and incorporates an all weather escalator to

provide better connection between Kerr Street and Mark Street, however all environmental / public realm improvements remain consistent.

- 7.61 Concepts A, C, D and E incorporate the relocation of the train station and the rail tracks, south adjacent to Metropole Park, releasing the former station site for new development of residential and commercial uses. The relocation of the station also allows new public spaces to be provided along Eglinton Street and the inclusion of visual and physical links to the sea. Concept B is the only scheme, which does not relocate the station and instead upgrades the existing provision.
- 7.62 The hotel is located at West Bay in Concept A, allowing maximum views to the sea and achieving 4 / 5 star quality hotel. In Concept B, C, D and E West Bay is utilised for indoor leisure uses.
- 7.63 In Concept A, C and E leisure is also located on the Metropole Park, whilst in B and D both hotel, spa, conference / exhibition facility are provided on the Metropole Park in addition to leisure uses. Concept E is the only scheme, which does not accommodate a hotel, instead it is envisaged that a high quality 4 / 5 star hotel is located off the peninsula.

8. CONSULTATION – PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Consultation Process

- 8.1 A public exhibition was held in Portrush Town Hall to display Options A to E and to stimulate debate and gauge opinion on them. An initial five day consultation period was extended to enable wider public participation and between the 18th October 2006 and 28th October 2006, much interest was generated with over three hundred and seventy people registering their attendance. Attendees were encouraged to submit a comment sheet or discuss their comments with the consultant team. The exhibition boards, as displayed at the event, are attached as Appendix 5 and a summary of the key comments raised for each of the development areas are highlighted below.

Recreation Grounds

- 8.2 Comments received for the Recreation Ground's proposal were overwhelmingly positive. It was widely recognised that the existing bowling greens and tennis courts provide a valuable amenity to the local and visiting people of Portrush and that they should therefore, in part, be retained. Much support was received for the upgrade of the current facilities.
- 8.3 It was also widely agreed that the area would provide an appropriate opportunity to develop further the town's current leisure offer. It was suggested that this could be a covered facility to enable year round participation with the most popular suggestions including an adventure golf course, leisure facility and café. This would be subject to further viability studies being undertaken.

Harbour Area

- 8.4 The proposal for the harbour was undoubtedly the most commented upon at the exhibition. The majority of the comments were positive surrounding the development of a marina and it was widely acknowledged that development of this area would enliven the town and act as a catalyst for further regeneration within it. It was widely recognised however, that much emphasis should be placed on ensuring that any development should be environmentally sensitive and sustainable. It was suggested that comprehensive research should be undertaken in order to ensure that a marina will not be developed to the detriment of the surrounding natural assets, particularly West Strand and the current wave regime.

- 8.5 In terms of the level of commercial development at a marina, whilst it was recognised that a number of ancillary boating and leisure facilities would be advantageous, there was strong opinion that a hotel development at this location would be extreme.
- 8.6 The development of a boardwalk was also treated with general support. Whilst it was agreed that there was a need to encourage commercial development to this area, as in other successful tourist resorts, the same degree of attention should be given to ensure that the development is carried out sensitively. The principle of a boardwalk and improved promenade was supported so long as this had no impact on the views from Kerr Street or to the surrounding natural assets.
- 8.7 Traffic and congestion was cited as a major problem for this area and whilst it was generally agreed that the development of a multi-storey car park at this area would help to alleviate some of the parking pressure, there were concerns that extra traffic congestion would arise as a result. It was therefore noted, that development in this area would have to go hand in hand with a robust traffic management solution.

Town Hall Square

- 8.8 Almost full support was recorded for the proposals for the Town Hall Square, particularly, the opportunity to reinforce the area as a pedestrian gateway to the peninsula and the opening up of views to the sea. The relocation or removal of Kiddieland, the amphitheatre and the go-kart track, was welcomed in order to achieve this. The issue of a town centre night club and the ensuing anti-social behaviour around the square was identified as a very negative point to be addressed.
- 8.9 General support was recorded for improvements to existing public realm however, it was noted that this should be conducted in a sensitive and tasteful manner. The work completed on the Town Hall to date received much praise and it was suggested that the relocation of the Tourism Information Centre to this area should be encouraged.

Train Station / West Bay

- 8.10 Whilst it was widely agreed, that the views released as a result of the relocation of the train station were advantageous, there was a certain degree of suspicion that the released development land would be sold to a developer for further apartment build. Although this was cited as one of the dominant reasons for responding negatively to the relocation of the train station, the possibility of an enhanced, integrated rail and bus station and the potential to animate Eglinton Street received many positive responses.
- 8.11 Limited support was noted for large levels of physical development along the lower level West Bay grassed area. There was however, particular support for the enhancement of the current

public realm, calls for further beach facilities and particularly the retention of the existing car parking to encourage further passive usage of the area.

- 8.12 Castle Erin was considered an ideal site for a hotel by the majority of those consulted, with public concern noted regarding further residential development on West Bay or at Castle Erin.

Metropole Park

- 8.13 Much opinion was also offered on the proposals for Metropole Park. There was great dissatisfaction of the proposal to comprehensively develop the full site however, there was general recognition that the area provided the ideal opportunity for further development, and enhancement of the existing leisure offer, particularly the creation of a wet weather facility. Of key concern to many of the respondents, was that at least in part, Metropole Park should retain an area of green, open space for passive leisure recreation.

Hotel

- 8.14 It was widely accepted that there was a gap in the market and that Portrush required the addition of a high quality 4 or 5 star hotel. This should ideally incorporate conference and spa facilities.
- 8.15 Castle Erin was generally regarded as the most appropriate site for such a development on account of its natural surroundings. Whilst support was also recorded for the development of a hotel at the out of town, Golf Links Hotel site, it was accepted that the regenerative effect that this would have on the town may be minimal. A level of support was also recorded for the development of a hotel at Metropole Park however, not if this meant the complete loss of green space.

Public Realm / Environmental Improvements

- 8.16 It was widely acknowledged that public realm improvements could be implemented with immediate effect and make a considerable difference to the town in the short term.

Preferred Concept

- 8.17 A limited number of responses specified a preferred option however, from the comments received on each of the concepts it was clear what aspects of each of the options were preferred.
- 8.18 From those responses submitted, Option A was the clear favourite (Harbour with development and boardwalk, hotel adjacent to Castle Erin and railway station relocated) and this was followed by Option D (Hotel and leisure hub at Metropole). Lagging behind were Options B

(Hotel at Metropole and Railway as existing), E (Hotel outside of peninsula) and lastly C (Hotel at Harbour).

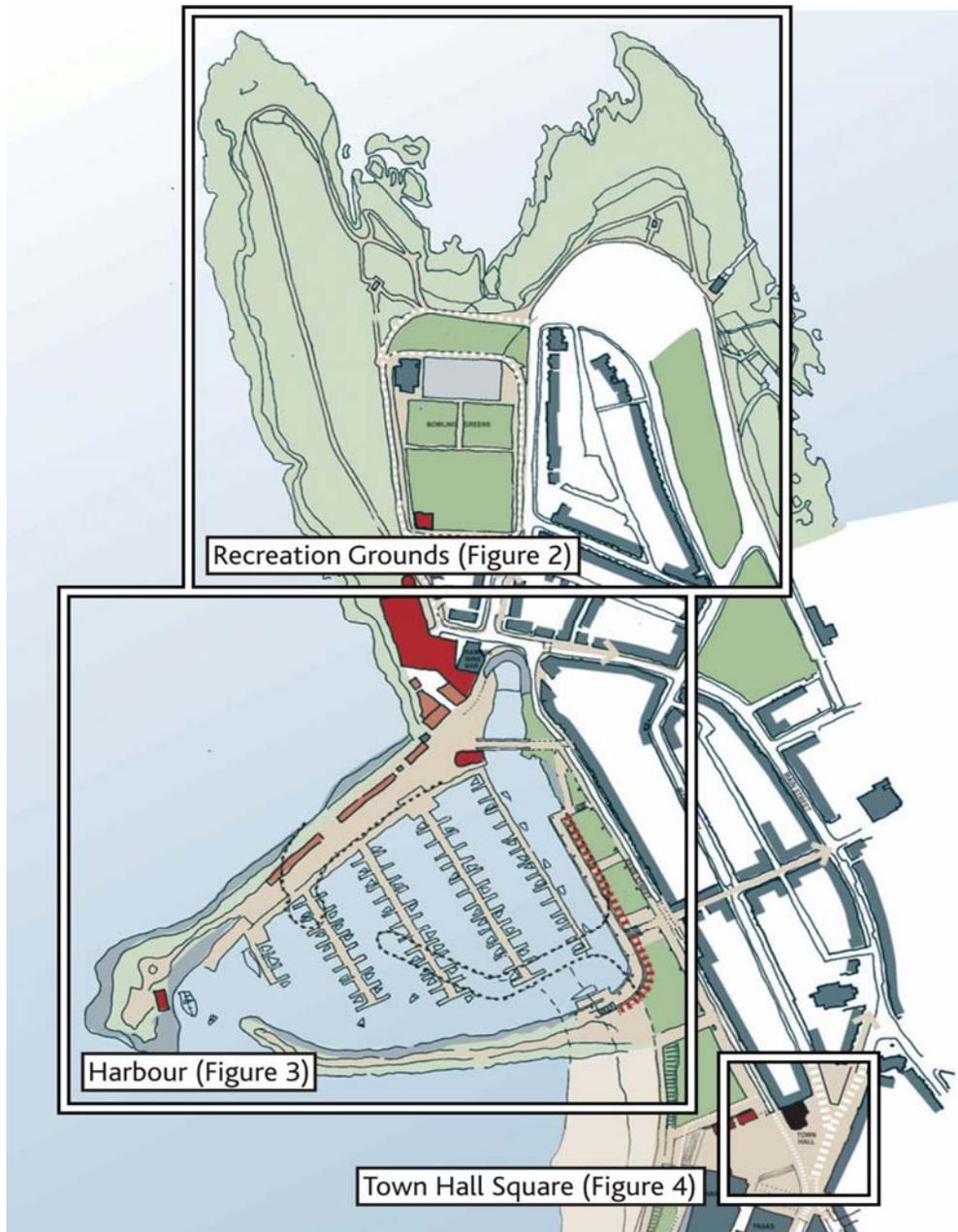
9. PREFERRED OPTION

- 9.1 As a result of the evaluation and consultation process Concept A and D have been refined to incorporate feedback and a preferred concept has been developed, which includes two variations for the southern half of the area including the Train Station, West Bay and Metropole Park.

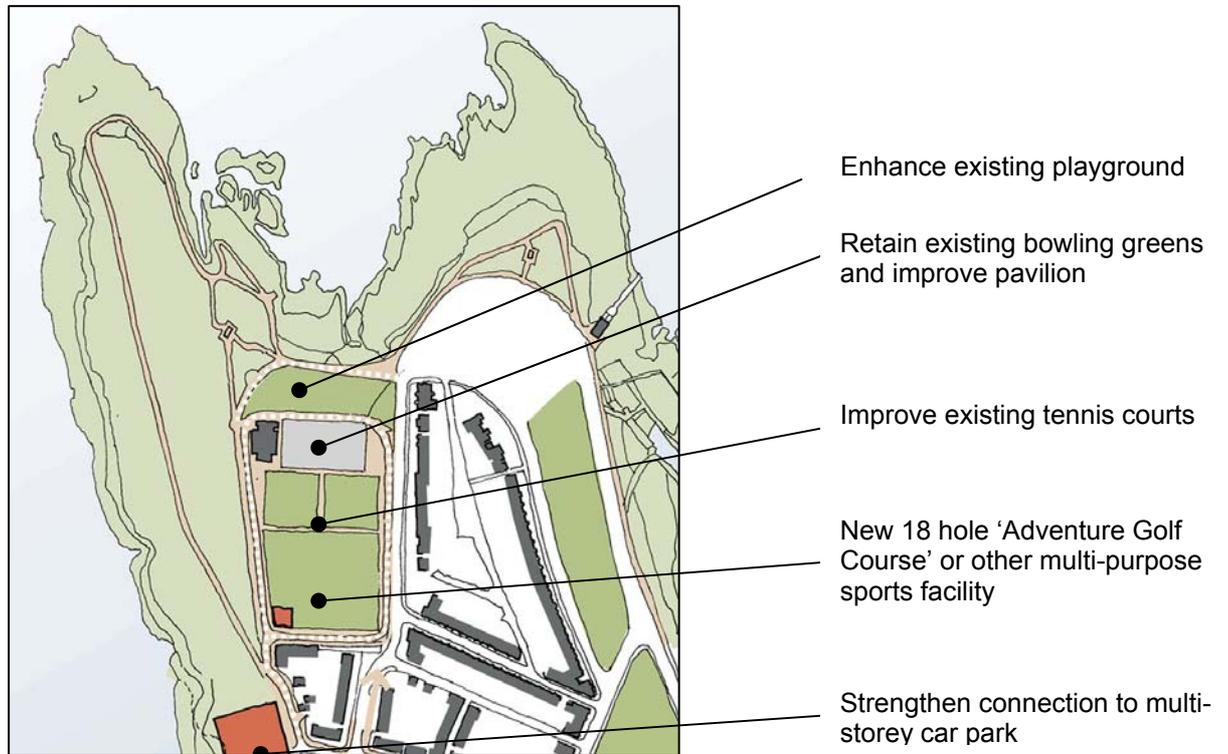
Preferred Option - Northern Area

- 9.2 Figure 1 illustrates the preferred option for the northern area.

Figure 1 Preferred Option - Northern Area Context Plan



Recreation Grounds (Figure 2)

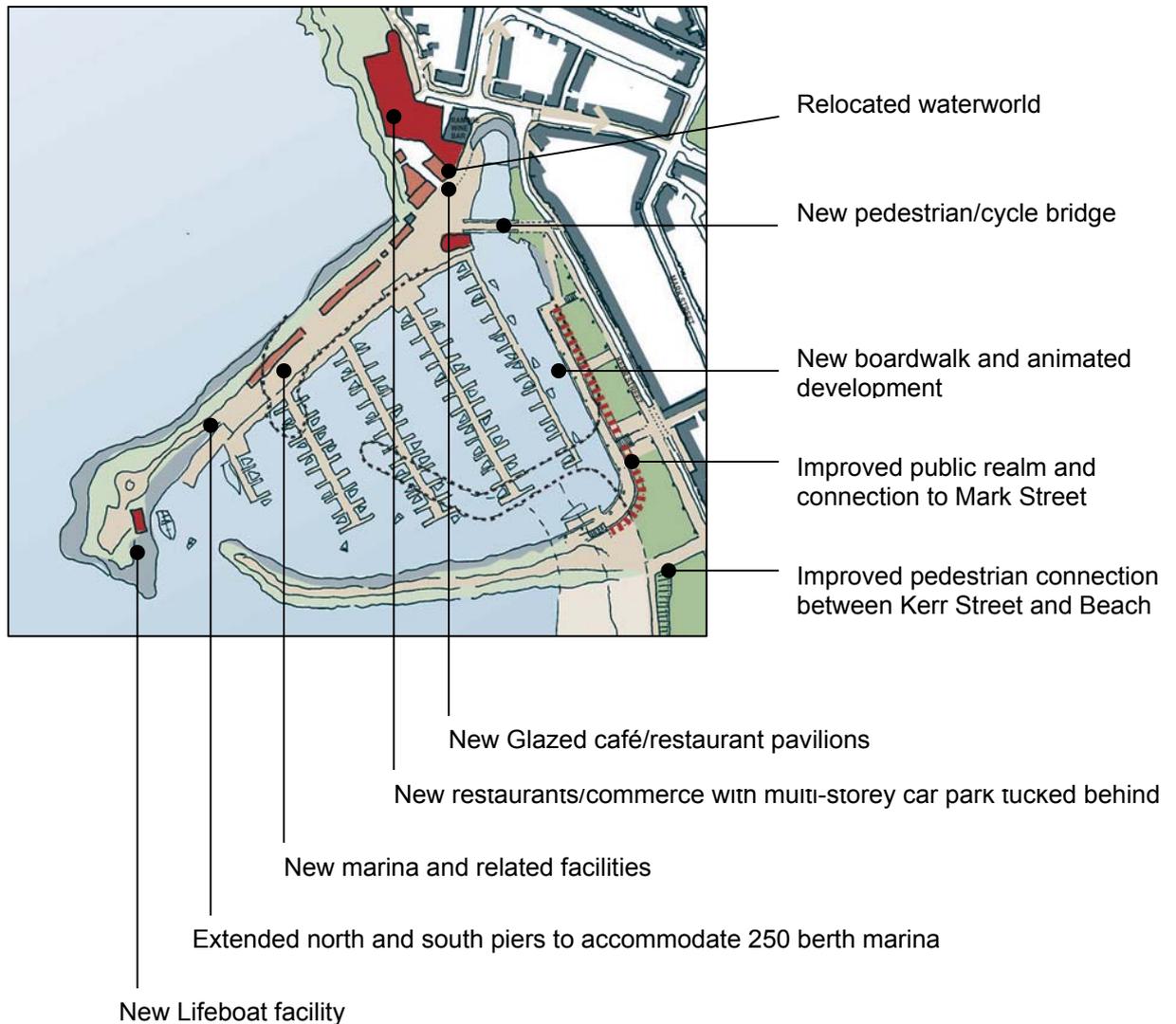


9.3 The preferred option (Figure 2) proposes that the Recreation Grounds' existing provision is rationalised and upgraded, to allow for the introduction of a new recreation attraction to be located in the southern half of the grounds. The existing bowling green is retained, however the tennis courts are reduced by 50%, to release an area of land suitable for either an 18 hole themed crazy golf course with associated pavilion, or a multi-purpose sports facility.

9.4 To increase awareness and accessibility of this area, pedestrian links are provided between the multi-storey car park at the harbour and the grounds. The location of the Recreation Grounds is well serviced by the existing car park at Lansdowne Road and there appears to be adequate capacity at this location. However, due to the one-way system in operation and one access to the facility via Ramore Avenue, it is likely that the junction of Kerr Street / Main Street / Ramore Street and Harbour Road will require to be rationalised to help facilitate traffic flow.

9.5 The design of these improvements to the Recreation Grounds as a leisure amenity will require a sensitive approach to ensure that its natural surroundings and views out to the sea are safeguarded.

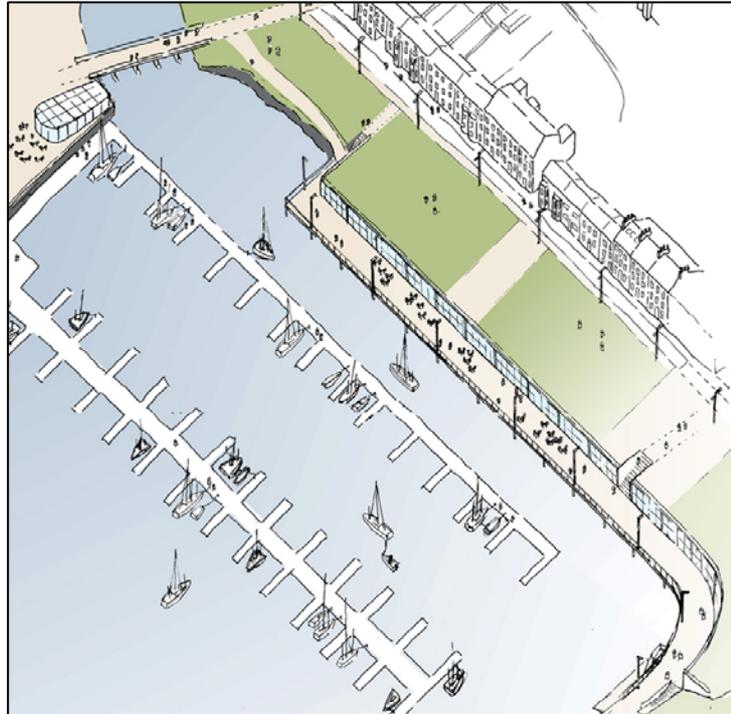
Harbour (Figure 3)



9.6 The preferred option (Figure 3) extends the north and south piers of the existing harbour, which creates additional development land and facilitates a 250+ berth marina, with permanent pontoons. Restaurants and bars form part of a landmark mixed-use development, reinforcing existing uses and enlivening the area. This option assumes that the existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush, releasing the rear part of the site for a multi-storey car park which would be tucked in behind the active uses and sensitively set into the landscape. The increased activity generated by the new development will be reinforced by a glazed pavilion building and outdoor eating areas which will encourage activity to spill onto a new high quality public open space. The improved pedestrian and cycle-bridge connecting back to Kerr Street also access this enhanced area.

9.7 Other uses to be located along North Pier will include single-storey units for uses ancillary to the Marina, including a new lifeboat facility, changing and laundry facilities, storage and pumping, which are essential to attract boats yet limit possible damage if affected by flooding.

9.8 In addition, contemporary single-storey glazed buildings will be developed at water level with a boardwalk to further enrich vibrancy around the Harbour and along Kerr Street. This development is designed to utilise the topography of the land to ensure that buildings are set into the landscape and views and activity from Kerr Street are not restricted.



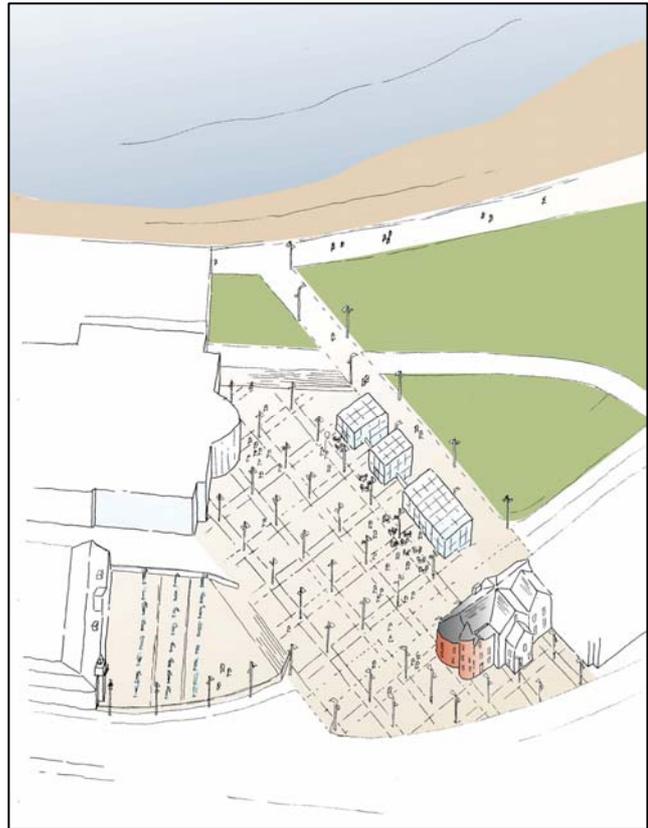
9.9 The quantity and type of development at the harbour is reflected in the proposal to provide an off street multi-storey car park (with car parking charges) utilising part of the existing Waterworld site. Introducing a multi-storey will allow removal of a significant amount of the current parking by the Harbour frontage to facilitate high quality open space with outdoor eating area etc and the multi-storey car park will also help cater for the demand associated with the new development proposals. It is anticipated that the car park will be accessed off Main Street west of Ramore Street and therefore this will remove traffic from Harbour Road. Given that traffic flows to the harbour will be significantly reduced it is likely that the junction of Kerr Street, Main Street, Ramore Street and Harbour Road will be required to be rationalised to help facilitate traffic flow and improve pedestrian / cycle connections.

9.10 The size of the car park has taken cognisance of the existing parking provision in Portrush and also Planning Policy Statement 13 Transportation and Land Use and Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking.

9.11 The proposals also include the extension of the existing cycling network to the harbour area with a cycleway on the new bridge. Good quality cycle parking should also be provided at this location.

Town Hall Square (Figure 4)

9.12 A new civic space is created to reinforce this area as a pedestrian gateway and enhance the setting of the Town Hall. It assumes that the existing Kiddieland and adjacent property are removed and possibly relocated to open up views and access to the sea. New pavilion buildings, in conjunction with steps, a grid of lighting columns and paving, assist in defining the space and reinforce views between the Town Hall and the sea. In addition, the Go-Kart area is to be removed and replaced by water fountains to create visual interest. The Tourist Information Centre is to be located in one of the pavilion buildings within the square.



9.13 High quality robust paving is used to articulate the space and reinforce its importance. By introducing a shared surface from this area across Kerr Street, to include the Town Hall and part of Main Street, pedestrian priority is achieved and the present intersection of roads is read as an extension to the Square.

9.14 There are a number of transportation issues associated with Town Hall Square. These are summarised as follows:

- There are strong pedestrian linkages although desire lines are not served directly
- A certain amount of pedestrian non compliance occurs during the holiday period
- Current layout exacerbates delays and impacts on junction operation

9.15 In order to promote pedestrian continuity and priority, pavement widths and crossing opportunities should be improved while dropped kerbs and tactile paving should be provided at all side road locations.

9.16 The preferred concept relocates the War Memorial approximately 9 metres to the south of its present location but addresses all the existing issues by removing the severance from the Town Hall to Eglinton Street and formalising the right turn movements from Mark Street and

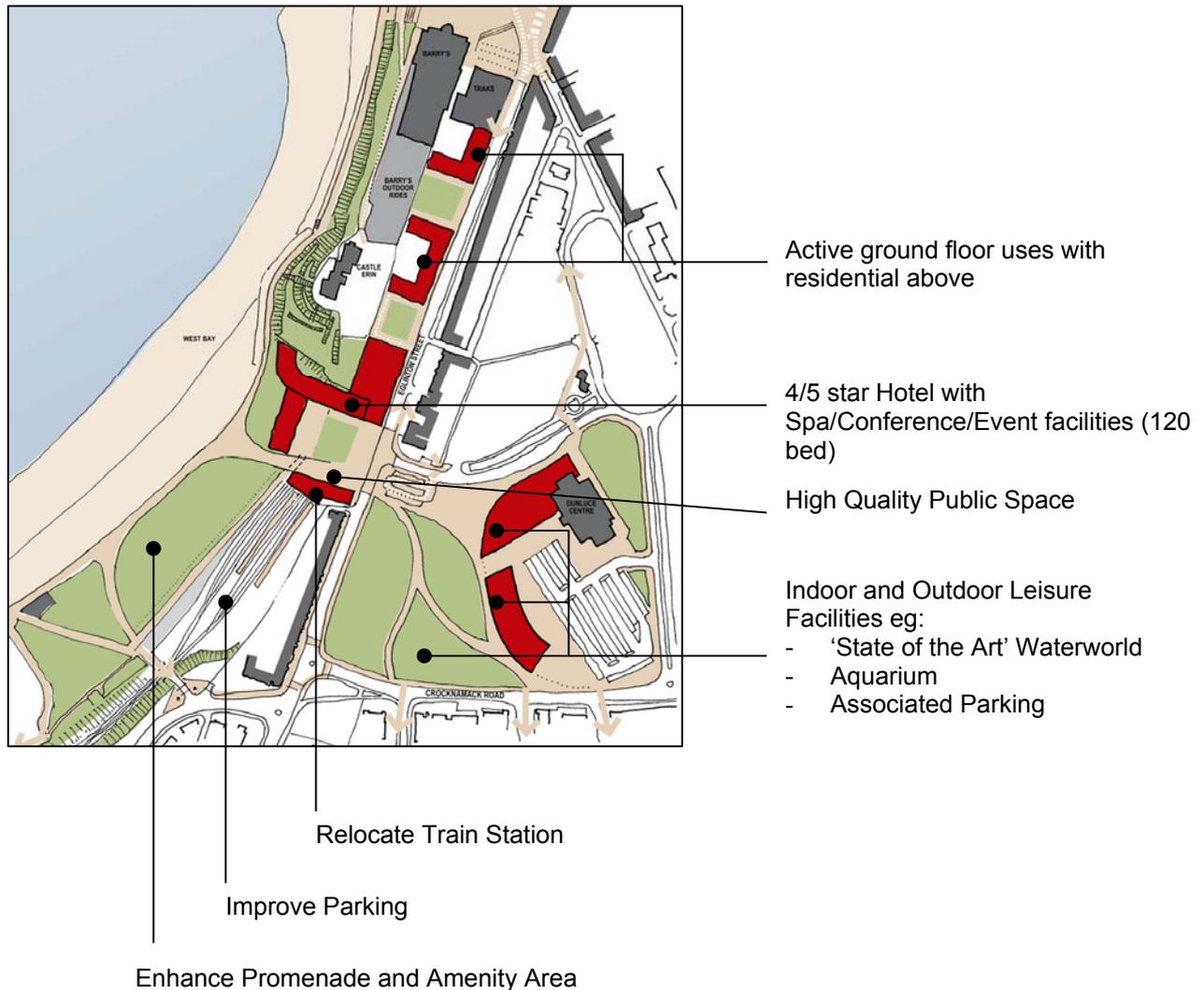
Eglinton Street into Kerr Street. This option further enhances the journey ambience for non-motorised users by providing further crossing points at Eglinton Street South and Dunluce Avenue.

- 9.17 This option would provide a more enhanced pedestrian environment and a more straightforward traffic layout without the need to ban the right turning movement into Kerr Street and allows for the introduction of additional pedestrian facilities at Dunluce Avenue and Eglinton Street South. Good quality cycle parking should also be provided at this location.

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

- 9.18 In conjunction with the new activity created by the boardwalk and associated development, improved pedestrian connection between Main Street, Kerr Street and the beach is created. There is the potential to integrate an all-weather escalator parallel to the existing steps to increase accessibility, between Kerr Street and Mark Street.
- 9.19 Public realm improvements, including widening of footways and incorporation of crossing points to increase ease of pedestrian movement will strengthen the connection between the new Town Hall Square and the harbour.
- 9.20 It is envisaged that an element of on-street parking and service bays would be provided in an integrated manner. Similarly street lighting, seating, cycle parking and other street furniture must be carefully designed and located so as to avoid visual clutter.
- 9.21 The proposals for Kerr Street will help improve current conditions for pedestrian and cyclists. The level of parking along Kerr Street is broken up through the addition of kerb build-outs to facilitate improved pedestrian facilities, especially on the eastern side of the street. On the western side the improved public realm will allow better pedestrian footways and a cycle track which will remove cyclists from hostile traffic conditions. This will also connect into the existing cycle network and facilitate the aspirations of the Portrush Local Transport Study as indicated by the draft Sub Regional Transport Plan. Good quality cycle parking should also be provided at this location.

Southern Area - Train Station / West Bay / Metropole Park (Option1)

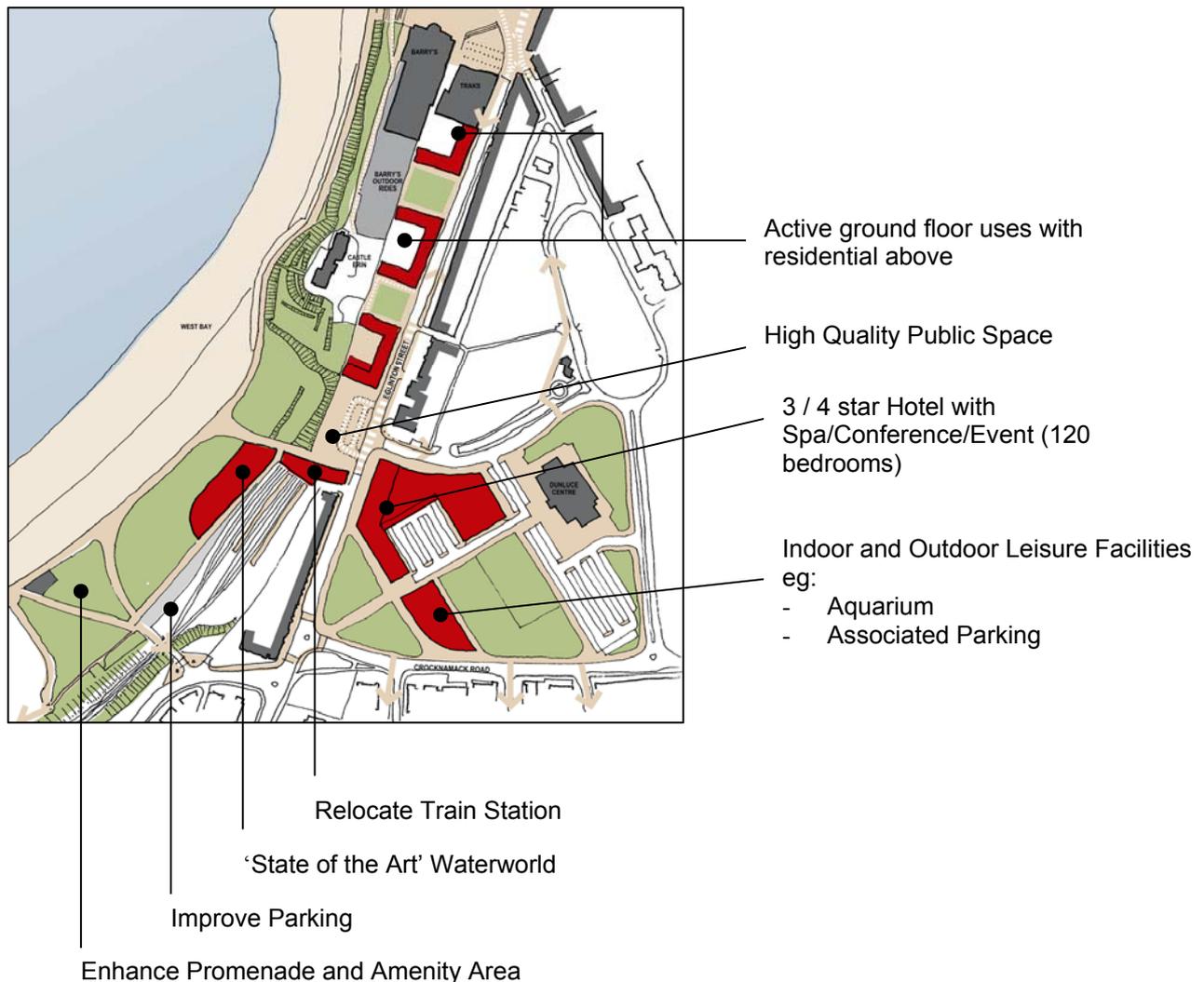


9.22 This variation of the preferred option relocates the train station and pulls back the rail tracks to the existing bus park area opposite Metropole Park. This creates a new integrated public transport facility and civic space, whilst releasing its previous site to accommodate public spaces and new commercial and residential development along Eglinton Street. The proposed development will create active street frontage and provide natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, whilst visually screening the rear of Barry’s and Traks.

9.23 A split-level 4 / 5 star quality hotel, with an integrated spa, conference / exhibition facility and car park, is located south of Castle Erin. It fronts onto a new public square and is orientated to maximise sea views. The square extends across Eglinton Street creating a positive link between the Metropole Park and the seafront, whilst also providing a quality arrival space from the relocated station.

- 9.24 Aside from the hotel, there is no new development on West Bay. However the existing green open spaces are upgraded with lighting, landscaping, seating and cycle facilities to increase use and create a higher quality interface with the seafront.
- 9.25 One of the key aspects of this part of the study is the relocation of the train station and associated bus facilities which will allow the development concepts to come forward. The relocation has the potential to enhance existing facilities for both train and bus users including the provision a new train station and a superior facility for bus passengers and bus operations allowing good interchange between public transport modes.
- 9.26 The public transport proposals allow excellent accessibility to this location. No specific parking provision has been provided as part of the proposals but cognisance should be taken of the existing parking stock in Portrush and also Planning Policy Statement 13 Transportation and Land Use and Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking.
- 9.27 The existing parking at West Bay has been reconfigured to accommodate the proposal to pull back the train station to a more southerly location.
- 9.28 Within the Metropole proposals there is parking provision with improvement to and extension of the existing car park, and we have assumed that these are stand-alone and adequate for the purposes of their development. Good quality cycle parking should also be provided at this location.

Southern Area - Train Station / West Bay / Metropole Park (Option 2)



9.29 Similarly to Option 1, this option relocates the train station and pulls back the rail tracks to the existing bus park adjacent the Metropole Park. This creates a new integrated public transport facility and civic space, whilst releasing its former site to accommodate public spaces and new commercial and residential development along Eglinton Street. The proposed development will create active street frontage and provide natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, whilst visually screening the rear of Barry's and Traks.

9.30 A 'state of the art' Waterworld or other leisure facility is provided at West Bay, positioned parallel to the railway embankment to reduce its visual impact. It is envisaged that a combination of leisure and seafront location will act as a draw providing movement between the north and south of the town and also between the Metropole and West Bay / seafront. The existing area of amenity open space and promenade will be enhanced by upgrading the existing amenity open space and promenade, with lighting, landscaping improvements, and

seating and cycle facilities to increase use and create a higher quality interface with the seafront.

9.31 The Metropole development includes a 3 to 4 star quality hotel with spa, conference / exhibition facility and parking located to the north west corner of the park, with indoor and outdoor leisure facilities further south. This arrangement will enable a combination of green space, the hotel and new train station to define the entrance into the town centre whilst, although limited, views of the sea can be obtained from the north western corner of the hotel.

9.32 Approach to transport is similar to Option 1.

Option 1 versus Option 2 – “The Preferred Concept”

Achieving a 4/5 star hotel, spa and conference facility

9.33 Option 1 presents the opportunity for maximum regeneration to be delivered. It accommodates a site for the high quality hotel (4/5 star rating), adjacent to Castle Erin. This iconic site offers a unique setting capable of attracting a “state of the art” facility which takes advantage of the sea side views, complemented by a range of spa attractions and an integrated conference centre capable of generating business all year around. Although a similar sized hotel, and conference facility could be accommodated at the Metropole Park area, as illustrated in Option 2, it is unlikely that this location will deliver the highest quality hotel offering. It is anticipated that a 3/4 star hotel is more likely to be attracted. One of the critical aspects of 4/5 star accommodation in a seaside resort is the requirement for bedrooms to look onto the sea. This could not be delivered at the Metropole Park site.

9.34 In addition Option 1 makes best use of the natural assets and ensures the greatest distribution of regeneration benefits throughout the resort. This option would also allow for a leisure focus to be established at the Metropole Park area. From consultation to date, this would appear to be a preferable development scenario.

10. DEVELOPMENT APPRAISAL OF PREFERRED OPTION

10.1 A development appraisal was conducted on the preferred option. This process included:

- Quantification of the proposed land uses;
- Establishment of the development value of the proposed option, distinguishing public and private outputs; and
- Establishment of construction costs, associated professional fees, assumptions for developer profit where applicable.

10.2 An analysis was undertaken of the costs and values for the following key projects:

- Northern Area;
- Train Station/ West Bay "A";
- Metropole "A"

10.3 The analysis provided an indication of the scale of commitment required to deliver regeneration projects in these areas. The results show that there is a requirement for external funding to secure the delivery of the Harbour, Public Realm and leisure offer. The total cost of delivery of the preferred option is likely to be in the region of £80 million to be raised from a range of both public and private sources. From an initial search of existing funding sources both the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the European funding programmes of Peace III and the Interreg will need to be explored in more detail.

10.4 The values and costs associated with the 3 projects were assessed as follows:

- The Northern Area has a value of approximately £9m. The cost of developing the scheme amounts to about £34m which leaves a deficit of £25m. A significant part of the deficit relates to harbour construction (£15m) and public realm (£5m) which accounts for about 50% of the total deficit for the overall scheme;
- The Train Station/West Bay area is estimated to have a value of £30m. The proposed scheme has an estimated cost of £36m leaving a deficit of about £6m;
- Metropole is estimated to have a value of £3m and a scheme cost of £12m which leaves a deficit of £9m.

- 10.5 On this basis the estimated overall deficit in costs is circa £40 million. The figures are “broad brush” but give an indication of the scale of commitment required to deliver regeneration projects in these areas.
- 10.6 It is proposed that the preferred option will be phased over a short - medium timescale with a number of quick wins. The following is an indication of how the regeneration strategy could be phased.
- First stage - public realm, recreation grounds (early win in council ownership and cost effective);
 - Second stage – harbour and
 - Third stage - 4/5 star hotel, spa and conference facility adjacent to Castle Erin. Leisure at Metropole could be delivered simultaneously.
- 10.7 Section 11 outlines the strategy for procuring partners, anticipated tasks and associated timescale for delivery.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Maintain PRG Momentum

- 11.1 To date the Portrush Regeneration Strategy Group has driven the strategy forward. It is critical that the group maintains the momentum and steers the next stages of the project forward. The regeneration strategy is the “blueprint” for maximising Portrush’s regeneration potential. Given the commitment to prepare a regeneration strategy, which has subsequently achieved significant “buy-in” by the local community and key stakeholders, this is a solid foundation upon which to deliver.
- 11.2 Private sector finance is needed to deliver the strategy for regeneration which will be directly related to maximising the economic and regeneration benefit to the Portrush area. This will require a long term commitment and considerable expertise on the part of CBC and the PRG to manage the delivery of key projects by private sector partners.
- 11.3 Many early tasks will require to be actioned, to maintain current levels of confidence and commitment.

Commence Stakeholder Engagement

- 11.4 The first task will be to secure early stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders will require to be identified and meetings set up to discuss ways of working together. This will involve both private and public representatives.
- 11.5 The private sector is already demonstrating its confidence and willingness to invest. Recent expressions of interest in the Metropole Park, the sale of Castle Erin and significant investment and transactions in Lower Main Street, Causeway Street and Eglinton Street are evidence.
- 11.6 Translink own the existing railtrack, an essential element upon which to deliver the hotel/conference centre. Mc Laughlin and Harvey have recently acquired Castle Erin to develop. It is important that these key stakeholders work with the Regeneration Strategy to achieve maximum effect.
- 11.7 On a political level, lobbying will need to commence, to promote Portrush in terms of investment priority. The World Heritage Site requires supporting infrastructure to secure full economic impact for the region and for Northern Ireland. Portrush, “Northern Ireland’s Premier Resort” as the closest town, is well placed to provide such infrastructure. It will be essential to promote Portrush as an international tourist destination in line with the World Heritage Site and Northern Ireland’s strategic vision for tourism.

Early action required on Statutory Policy

- 11.8 The Draft Northern Area Plan imposes several policy restrictions on key development sites in the town. It is essential that this be reviewed in the context of the overall regeneration strategy for the West Bay Peninsula area. For change to take place, careful consideration needs to be directed to how West Bay and specifically the area adjacent to Castle Erin can be developed in the future. This can be delivered in a way that doesn't compromise the open space designation over the whole area, rather it adds to the vibrancy and creates better use of the area.
- 11.9 Similarly land use zonings, specifically open space designations at the West Bay, will also need to be reconsidered in this context.
- 11.10 The Draft Area Plan is a land use plan prepared in advance of this regeneration strategy. Given that the strategy has significant "buy-in" by stakeholders and the public, serious consideration requires to be given to determine how this regeneration strategy can be incorporated into statutory policy.
- 11.11 The strategy is one that integrates all potential development sites in a way to achieve maximum impact. If each element is broken down and assessed individually, from a land-use point of view this would undermine the combined impact of the change required.
- 11.12 If we want to change the "face of Portrush", policy frameworks need to be flexible to accommodate market dynamics to capture the potential investment, otherwise it will go elsewhere. This should be done in a way that gives certainty to the investors in terms of a clear development framework "The Regeneration Strategy". We now have the blueprint for the revitalisation of Portrush.
- 11.13 It is recommended that an outline planning application is submitted for the preferred option to clarify the policy position.

Phasing of delivery – Quick Wins

- 11.14 It will be important to secure a number of quick wins. The following is an indication of how the regeneration strategy could be phased.
- First stage - public realm, recreation grounds (early win in council ownership and cost effective);
 - Second stage – harbour and
 - Third stage - 4/5 star hotel, spa and conference facility adjacent to Castle Erin. Leisure at Metropole could be delivered simultaneously.

11.15 The timing associated with the core elements should have a degree of flexibility to allow for full participation with the private sector with whom it will be essential to work. The table below illustrates the anticipated tasks and associated timescale for delivery.

| Action | Priority/Timescale | Key Organisations | Notes |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Portrush Regeneration Group: | | | |
| Maintain PRG momentum | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | |
| Agree Implementation Plan and Timescale | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | Identify "quick wins" |
| Review representation and roles | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | |
| Stakeholder Engagement: | | | |
| Translink | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | Initial discussions have commenced |
| Mc Laughlin Harvey | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | Initial discussions have commenced |
| Other relevant interests | Medium | PRG/CBC | Agree relevant interests |
| Work with private sector | Ongoing | PRG/CBC | Ongoing |
| Lobbying/Marketing | | | |
| Commence political lobbying | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | Agree key contacts and target |
| Marketing of strategy | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | PR strategy to be worked up |
| Policy: | | | |
| Consult with Planning | High - Immediate | PRG/Planning | Ensure alignment |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Service (DNAP) – | | Service | with statutory policy |
| Submit Outline Planning Application | High - Immediate allow six months for decision process | PRG/Planning Service | Preferred option – |
| Phasing: | | | |
| Development brief for Hotel | Subject to outline planning consent | PRG/CBC | Clear parameters for bidders |
| Development brief leisure elements | Subject to outline planning consent | PRG/CBC | Clear parameters for bidders |
| Harbour and public realm | Subject to funding | PRG/CBC | |
| Leisure at Metropole | Dependent upon development brief process | PRG/CBC | |
| Funding: | | | |
| Heritage Lottery | High – Immediate dependant upon programme finalisation | PRG/CBC | Landscape Partnerships (£250k- £2m), Parks for People (£250k- £5m), Big Lottery Fund |
| Peace III 2007 - 2013 | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | Public realm |
| Interreg | High - Immediate | PRG/CBC | Harbour and public realm |
| Private Sector Partners | High - Ongoing | PRG/CBC | Harbour |

Procuring Developer Partners

- 11.16 It is anticipated that close working with the private sector will facilitate the delivery of core commercial elements and the issues around the procurement of private sector partners is considered in the following paragraphs.
- 11.17 The procurement option will take into consideration the various parties that could be involved in regeneration, the contract management resources available to CBC/PRG, the project objectives and the skills required to achieve them, the time available to carry out the projects and the appropriate allocation of duties, responsibilities and risks.
- 11.18 The Council's in house resources should be utilised to manage the delivery process and a number of key questions will need to be addressed
- What can the Council afford to spend on these projects?
 - What can the Council provide from its own internal resources?
 - What is the time scale within which the projects must be completed?
 - What are the management resources that the council has available to manage the project?
 - Can the Council define accurately what it wants/needs to have delivered by prospective regeneration partners or is producing that definition part of the project which prospective partners are required to undertake?.
- 11.19 The extent of Council owned land and privately owned land in each of the key sites is a key factor in determining the way forward. One of the options for the council is to consider having a partner to assemble land which is currently in private ownership.
- 11.20 Timescales are important and sites need to be prioritised in the staged delivery of regeneration projects to maximise the opportunity as well as ensuring successful implementation.
- 11.21 The private sector is already demonstrating its confidence and willingness to invest. Recent expressions of interest in the Metropole Park, the sale of Castle Erin and significant investment and transactions in Lower Main Street, Causeway Street and Eglinton Street are evidence.
- 11.22 The delivery options open to the Council broadly fall into three categories:
- A staged or simultaneous marketing of the sites on an individual basis;

- The packaging of sites, so that one or more project can be undertaken by the development partner;
- The simultaneous marketing of the sites as a portfolio with a view to selecting a number of developer partners to co-ordinate and implement the development on a comprehensive basis.

11.23 The first two options are preferred as this will ensure that the momentum and interest that has been built up in Portrush in delivering these regeneration projects can be maintained.

Appendix 1 – Portrush Regeneration Group

Appendix 1 – Portrush Regeneration Group Members

Coleraine Borough Council established the Portrush Regeneration Group (PRG) as a sub group of 'Leading Tourism North', Council's Tourism Task Force. The PRG has been tasked with the responsibility for the delivery of a sustainable strategy for the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the resort.

The group comprises:

- Richard Sterling, Chairman
- Professor Stephen Boyd, University of Ulster, Tourism Expert
- Ian Snowden, Department for Social Development
- Ken Bustard, Planning Service
- David Alexander, Coleraine Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Ashley Moore, Business Representative
- Mary O'Neill, Hotel Representative
- Councillor Sandy Gilkinson, Coleraine Borough Council
- Moira Mann, Head of Development Services - CBC & PRG
- Peter Thompson, Tourism Manager – CBC & PRG

Appendix 2 – Detailed Policy Review

Appendix 2 - Detailed Policy Review

Below we assess the existing policy context within which the masterplan has been developed. The Regional Development Strategy, Planning Policy Statements and the Draft Northern Area Plan 2016 are the key statutory policy instruments that provide a context. Other non-statutory regeneration policy documents have also been assessed. Both statutory and non-statutory policies are presented in the following paragraphs.

Statutory Policy

Regional Development Strategy – ‘alignment required’

The Regional Development Strategy sets out the future development of Northern Ireland to 2025. It was prepared under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. The RDS sets the higher-level, longer-term strategic policy direction and allocation of land, and is a material consideration on individual planning applications and planning appeals.

Within the Family of Settlements report, Coleraine is identified as the ‘main hub’. It lies on a main transport corridor having direct links with both Londonderry and Belfast. Whilst Coleraine functions as the main hub providing retail, administrative and commercial services to its hinterland, it is widely recognised that the ‘small towns’ of Portrush and Portstewart essentially function as a single urban entity.



The plan focuses on achieving maximum tourism benefit for the area (golf and Portrush / Giant's Causeway / North Coast Area – sports/leisure/family holiday, development of local 'Tourism Gateways' and to sustain and enhance seaside resorts)

Planning Policy Statements (PPS) – ‘development implications’

Planning Policy Statements impose a statutory obligation on development proposals, to conform to guidance. In the case of the Portrush Regeneration Strategy, it is particularly important to adhere to the following policy statements.

- PPS 5 – Retailing in Town Centres – Imposes restrictions and commercial leisure development outside of town centre boundary
- PPS 8 – Open Space – open space retention

It will be important to recognise the restrictions that both the PPSs and the designations within the Draft Northern Area Plan will impose on the strategy. We have encouraged consultation with the Planning Service throughout the process and hope that a certain element of flexibility can be achieved.

It is hoped that designations can be overcome through the development of a town wider strategy and that when its greater good in regenerative processes is proven that restrictions may be relaxed to ensure that the greater good for the community, in terms of regeneration is achieved.

Draft Northern Area Plan 2016 'policy restrictions imposed'

The Draft Northern Area Plan 2016, designates Portrush as an other main town. Portrush provides a specialist tourism role as a sea-side resort. A small town, with a 2001 population of 7000, the plan recognises that together with the neighbouring towns of Coleraine and Portstewart, the three essentially function as a single urban settlement commonly known as the 'Coleraine Triangle'.

The aim of the plan is to "achieve an attractive, compact and efficient living environment". The plan also "provides for further expansion of Coleraine Town Centre as a major retail and commercial centre within the plan area".

Of significant influence to the study is the array of Policy restrictions imposed on the site. On particular relevance is the plethora of Local Landscape Policy Designations. Identified to protect the natural setting of the town, designations prohibit further development to these areas, accepting only alterations or amendments to existing buildings. identified:

- Designation LLPA 01 – Ramore Head – Further Development Unacceptable
- LLPA 04 – Royal Portrush
- Designation PHL02 – West Bay LLPA - Those features or combination of features that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity and character are protected.
- Designation PHL 03 – Metropole LLPA

Draft Northern Area Plan 2016 – Final Draft Response from Coleraine Borough Council for DoE Planning Service – 2005

Sets out the formal response of CBC to the Draft Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016, providing a range of support representations and objections relating to the draft plan published in May 2005.

Of particular note and relevance to the Portrush Regeneration Strategy are a series of objections, a summary of which are provided below.

Object to Policy HOU 3 Apartment Development in Settlements with Pressure for Second Homes –
CBC concerned that specific identification of Areas of Opportunity for Apartment Development will be interpreted as encouragement/preference for future apartment development. CBC concerned that it will appear that preference is being given to apartment development amid sensitivities concerning second homes within the area. Ask that policy be further defined to ensure presumption in favour of apartment development is not assumed.

Objection to strategic policy in relation to the regeneration of the tourist resorts of the plan area –
Should be a key objective of the resort. Council also object to the omission of strategic policy that protects existing tourism accommodation / facilities from change of use – protection of Borough's complete tourism product.

Objection to Policy TOU2 omission – prevent development of second home developments

Support protection of coastline through Green Belt and Local Landscape Policy designations

Portrush

Objection to Housing Zoning PHH 24: The Council objects to the zoning of land at Castle Erin for residential development and its inclusion within the Area of Opportunity for Apartment Development

Portrush Area of Opportunity designation will be interpreted as a positive designation with strong presumption in favour of apartment development.

Object to failure to produce supplementary guidance for the Portrush Peninsula to ensure scale, nature and appearance of development is appropriate.

Existing built development at Ramore Head as an Area of Existing Open Space

Object to Station Square as a Target Site where built development would be allowed – high quality landscaped open space

Landscaped area around Town Hall and Amphitheatre should be designate Resort gateway – Plan fails to recognise importance of this

Residents Parking on peninsula – need to recognise balance between residents and visitors

Ramore Head LLPA PHL 01– object to omission of emerging strategy for Portrush by the Portrush Regeneration Group. Request that reference is given within the text for PHL 01 that allows for sympathetic, high quality, innovative design proposals for non-residential, recreation/tourism development that will promote regeneration of resort

West Bay LLPA PHL 02 – same as above

Metropole LLPA PHL 03 – As above

Objection to the word 'incidental' used to describe use of buildings within LLPA

Causeway Street civic amenity area should not be included within Metropole LLPA

Appendix 3 – Literature Review

Appendix 3 – Literature Review

Planning

- Regional Development Strategy, Department for Regional Development
- Regional Transportation Strategy, Department for Regional Development
- Planning Policy Statements, Department of the Environment
 - PPS1 – General Principles
 - PPS3 – Access, Movements and Parking
 - PPS5 – Retailing and Town Centres
 - PPS6 – Areas of Townscape Character
 - PPS8 – Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation
- Draft Northern Area Plan 2016, Department of the Environment

Strategic

- North West Economic Corridor Study, 2003, North West Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan, 2004 / Operational Plan, 2006-2009 & Visitor Survey 2005, Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Partnership
- Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS – Management Plan, 2005, Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Partnership
- CBC Tourism Development Strategy, 2001-2010 / Marketing Strategy 2004, Coleraine Borough Council

Portrush Specific

- PIEDA Report 2006 Update 'A Fitting Response', Coleraine Borough Council
- PIEDA Report 1993 'A Fitting Response', Coleraine Borough Council
- Portrush Survey 2005, Portrush Regeneration Group

- Annual Tourist Information Centre Report, 2005, Coleraine Borough Council

Harbour / Marina Specific

- The UK Leisure Marine Industry Bulletin 2004-2005
- The UK Leisure Marine Industry Bulletin 2003-2004
- A Code of Practice for the Design Construction and Operation of Coastal and Inland Marinas and Yacht Harbours (The Yacht Harbour Association)
- Moorings and Marinas Audit, Coastal Sectors 2003/4 (British Marine Federation)
- County Donegal Marina Development Strategy (Deloitte February 2004)
- Coleraine Harbour Commissioners, Marina Development Feasibility Study Paper (Andrew Jagers Associates 1997)
- Bridlington Marina Feasibility Study stages 1 & 2 (Scott Wilson KBR July 2004)
- Bridlington Tourism Study (Roger Tym & Partners, July 2004)

Appendix 4 – Stakeholder List

Appendix 4 – Key Stakeholder List

| Name | Interest |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Coleraine Borough Council | Options Presentation |
| Ken Bustard | DoE, Planning Service |
| Ashley Moore | Business Interest/Developer/Trader |
| Professor Stephen Boyd | University of Ulster |
| Peter Thompson | Coleraine Borough Council – Tourism Manager |
| Moira Mann | Coleraine Borough Council – Director Development Services |
| Andrew Dixon | Environment and Heritage Service |
| John Young Andrew Huston | Roads Service |
| Mal McGreevy Richard Knox | Translink |
| Victor Freeman | Harbour Manager |
| Richard McKay | Harbour Master |
| James Heaney | RNLI, Co-ordinator |
| George and Jane McAlpine | Harbour Inn and Restaurants |
| Colin Fletcher | 55 Degrees North and Developer |
| Raymond Gray | Peninsula and Eglinton Hotel, Developer |
| Roy Bolton | Bushmills Inn |
| Rachel Anderson Proprietor | Beluah Guest House Albany Lodge Guest House |
| Frank and Christina Trufelli | Barry's Amusements |
| Geoff Dodds | Waterworld |
| Robbie Martin | Traks |
| Avril Gracey | Castle Erin |
| Wilma Erskine | Royal Portrush Golf Club |
| Sharon Scott | Coleraine Town Centre Manager |
| Don Wilmont | Causeway Coast and Glens Region Marketing Manager |
| Kathleen McBride | NITB |
| Peter Wilson | Golf Links Hotel |
| Chris Gordon | Developer |
| Billy Thompson | Cromore Builders – Property on Kerr Street |
| Paul Crawley | Developing on Eglinton Street |
| Mr Alistair Kennedy | Kennedy Group Ltd |
| Mr David Patton | Developing Bath Street |
| Mr Dessie Wreath | Director of Technical Services, CBC |
| Kenneth Cheevers | Developer |

Appendix 5 – Exhibition Boards

INTRODUCTION

The Portrush Regeneration Group in July 2006, appointed GVA Grimley, in association with CHL Consulting (Tourism Consultants), Faber Maunsell (Transport Consultants) and MDS Transmodal (Harbour / Marine Development Specialists), to prepare a regeneration strategy for the Western Peninsula of Portrush.

Aim

The project aims to deliver a regeneration strategy focussing on the Western Peninsula, maximising its attractiveness and viability for tourists and residents alike. A series of regeneration options have been developed in order to rejuvenate the town and encourage regeneration throughout.

Study Area

The study boundary, illustrated by the solid red line on the adjacent diagram, covers the Western Peninsula from the Harbour in the north, to West Bay in the south. Although not within the study boundary, the Recreation Grounds and Metropole Park (strategic development opportunity sites) have been given consideration in the development of the options. Expressions of development interest have recently been invited by Coleraine Borough Council for both sites.

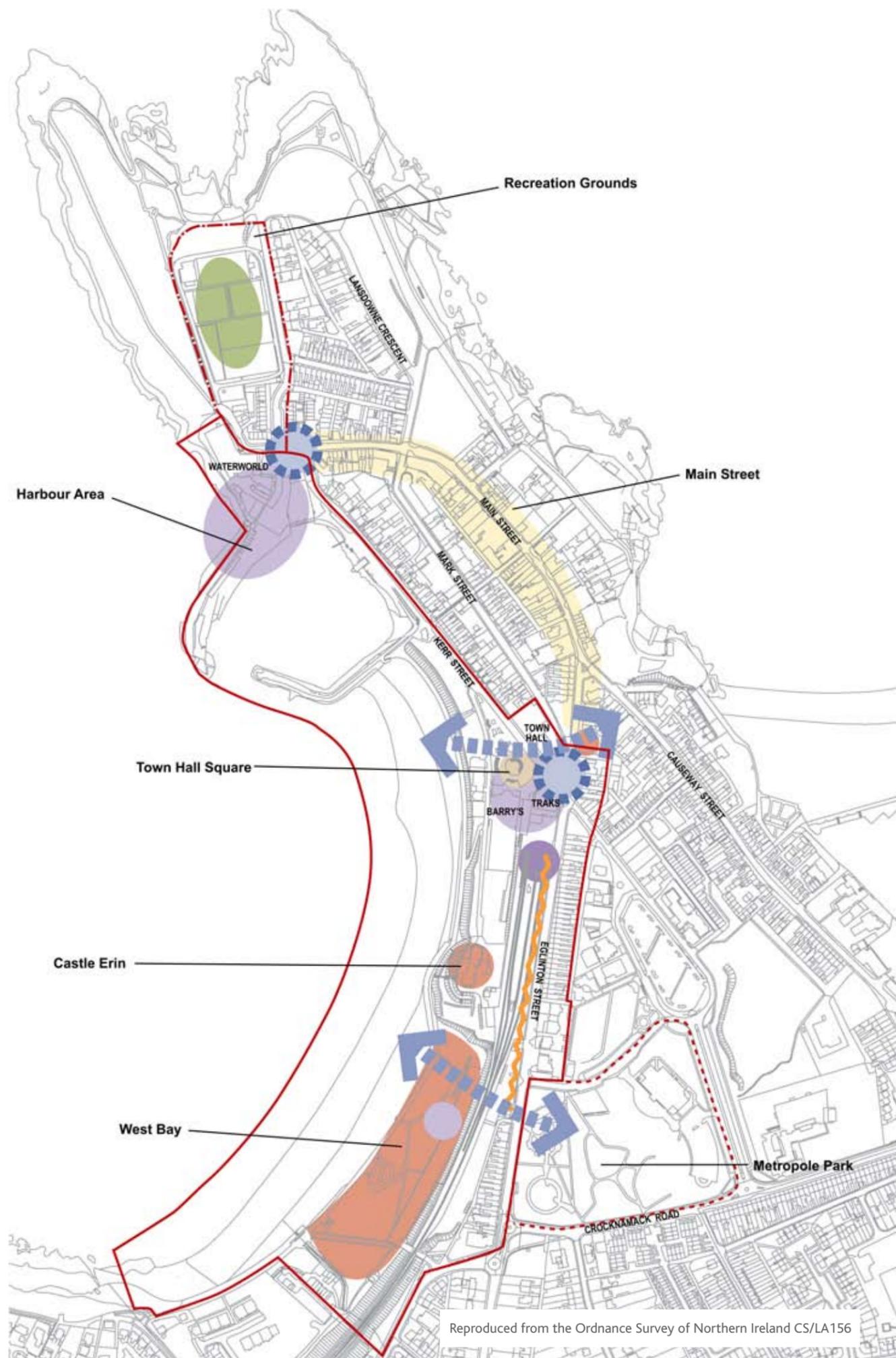
Purpose of Exhibition

The purpose of today's event is to give you the opportunity to understand the process undertaken to date and to comment on a range of development options for the Western Peninsula area.

Please note that comment sheets are available for completion and should be placed in the box provided.

Alternatively, please feel free to express your opinion to any member of the consultant team present.

The exhibition boards will remain on display Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am to 8pm and Saturday until 4pm, should you want to come back to view.





PROCESS

Over the past few months, the consultant team has assessed regeneration policy context, reviewed best practice, listened to stakeholders, assessed current market conditions and identified priority issues. From this a series of development options have been formulated, these are the subject of today's exhibition.

Stakeholder Feedback

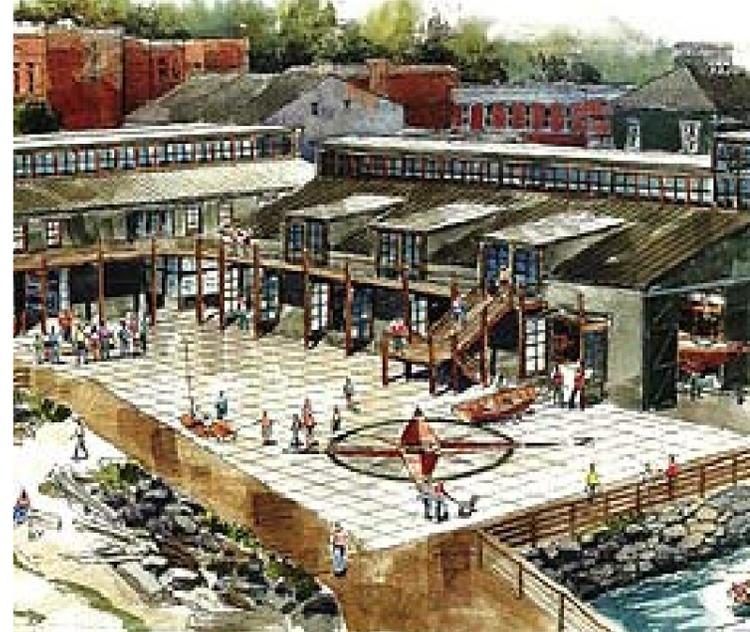
First stage stakeholder consultation was conducted with a number of statutory bodies, significant land owners and the investment and business community. Key issues included:

- Think big – small step change is not enough!
- Harbour as the "honey pot" with significant potential to promote Portrush as an international tourism destination
- Need to improve and update current tourist attractions and supporting infrastructure
- Need to extend the short tourism season
- Need for a 4* quality hotel with conferencing/spa facilities
- Potential to relocate train station and open views to the sea
- Opportunity to make better use of West Bay and attract more visitors
- Need to promote public realm improvements to help create "the new face of Portrush"
- Need to distribute economic wealth and development opportunity throughout area

Regeneration Objectives

In summary five objectives were identified to underpin our regeneration strategy. These included the need to:

1. Enhance appearance in order to develop a competitive edge
2. Develop a quality offer
3. Maximise potential of currently under utilised assets
4. Broaden market base
5. Extend current summer season



CONTEXT & CONTENT

Portrush has the potential to strengthen itself as an international tourist destination, at the same time as increasing its attractiveness as a place to reside. Its abundance of both natural and man made attractions have ensured that it has attracted generations of families and visitors to the resort both to live and to play.

However, in order for the resort to release its full potential, it is important that development opportunity is spread across the length of the Peninsula to create maximum benefit to the wider area. Development sites at Metropole Park in the south, and the Harbour and Recreation Grounds to the north offer significant potential.



Key Development Sites

Certain sites within the town have been prioritised and it is important that these sites are developed for the most appropriate uses and in a complementary way.

The sites include the:

- Harbour;
- Recreation Grounds;
- Town Hall Square;
- Metropole Park;
- West Bay; and
- Train Station.



Harbour – demand to justify enhanced marina facilities exists. Note, for every extra leisure boat an additional £2,900 per year can be generated as a contribution to the local economy. This equates to an average of £88 per crew member for spend on shore (Bridlington Marina Feasibility Study, produced by Scott Wilson July 2004). Today, the harbour attracts, on average, only four visitors per night during the summer months. In order to release the capacity for growth, permanent pontoons need to be erected. This would require reconfiguration of the piers and breakwaters in order to develop these facilities.



Recreation Grounds – new and improved leisure facilities are required to pull visitors to the northern part of the Peninsula. Given the high quality of the natural amenity in this area, a sensitive development approach is required to minimise visual and physical impact.



Town Hall Square – it is essential that this area creates a pedestrian entrance to the town as an area given back to the public with minimal vehicular/pedestrian conflict. Civic space and enhanced visual access to the sea are deemed important.



Metropole Park – this area acts as the gateway to the town. It is important that the site is developed to complement the other potential sites to spread the economic benefits across the wider area.



West Bay – West Bay area needs to be redesigned to improve the level of visual and physical access and usability within the extensive green open space area. Pedestrian links between the West Bay and both the Metropole Park area and town centre require upgrading.



Train Station – the opportunity exists to relocate the train station, opening up views to the sea and creating development opportunity sites to reinvigorate Eglinton Street.

Environmental Improvements – in all options environmental improvements should be of a high quality and sensitively designed, making use of local, natural, robust materials to reinforce the unique character of Portrush. This should include appropriate public art, signage, lighting and street furniture. These improvements shall remain constant throughout all options.

On the next five exhibition boards we present a range of options for the Western Peninsula. It is important to note that the following options are conceptual only.

CONCEPT - A

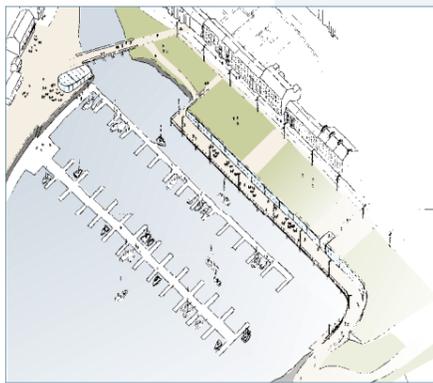
Please note the option presented is conceptual only

Harbour

Extended North and South Piers to create additional development land and facilitate 200+ berth marina

New mixed use landmark development including restaurants and bars with multi-storey car park hidden behind (circa 250 spaces)

Assumes that existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush



New high quality public open space enlivened with outdoor eating areas etc

Improved pedestrian/cycle bridge

Contemporary single storey glazed buildings at water level with boardwalk to encourage vibrancy whilst maintaining views from Kerr Street

Marine activity leisure uses including commercial boating

Train Station/West Bay

Train station relocated and rail lines pulled back to the existing bus parking area opposite Metropole Park

New commercial development creates active street frontage, enhances natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, and screens the rear of Barry's and Traks

New extensive tiered public open space maximises sea views

Spilt level quality hotel, that maximises sea views, with integrated spa, conference/exhibition facility and car park

New square opens up sea views and strengthens visual and physical connection to Metropole Park

New train station and adjacent bus and coach facilities

Improved promenade with integrated lighting, landscaping, seating and cycling facilities



KEY

- EXISTING BUILDINGS
 - NEW DEVELOPMENT
 - GREEN OPEN SPACE
 - NEW PUBLIC REALM
 - EXISTING HARBOUR CONFIGURATION
 - VIEWS
- 1 HOTEL & SPA
 - 2 CONFERENCE / EXHIBITION FACILITIES
 - 3 TRAIN STATION
 - 4 BUS / COACH FACILITIES
 - 5 LEISURE / ATTRACTION
 - 6 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT WITH ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR
 - 7 CAFE, RESTAURANT, KIOSK PAVILIONS
 - 8 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
 - 9 MARINA RELATED FACILITIES
 - 10 MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK
 - 11 IMPROVED EXISTING CAR PARK

Recreation Grounds
Enhanced leisure opportunity

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

Lift access between Main Street and Kerr Street incorporated within Tourist Information Centre

Improve the promenade, maximise pedestrian connections between Kerr Street and the beach and create unique, usable public space



Town Hall Square

New civic space acts as pedestrian gateway to Portrush and enhances the setting of the Town Hall

Opens up new views to the sea

Minimises visual and physical conflicts caused by traffic

Assumes that the existing Kiddieland is relocated



Metropole Park

New landmark leisure development including enhanced Waterworld and aquarium with improved public realm creates prominent gateway to Portrush

CONCEPT - B

Please note the option presented is conceptual only

Harbour

Extended North and South Piers to create additional development land and facilitate 200+ berth marina

New mixed use landmark development including restaurants and bars with multi-storey car park hidden behind (circa 250 spaces)

Assumes that existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush



New high quality public open space enlivened with outdoor eating areas etc

Improved pedestrian/cycle bridge

Contemporary single storey glazed buildings at water level with boardwalk to encourage vibrancy whilst maintaining views from Kerr Street

Marine activity leisure uses including commercial boating

Train Station/West Bay

Improved train station and pedestrian connections

Existing wall punctured to frame views of the railway, Barry's and Castle Erin

Provision for 'state of the art' Waterworld connected to Metropole Park over Eglinton Street via glazed pedestrian bridge

Improved promenade with integrated lighting, landscaping, seating and cycling facilities



- KEY**
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
 - NEW DEVELOPMENT
 - GREEN OPEN SPACE
 - NEW PUBLIC REALM
 - EXISTING HARBOUR CONFIGURATION
 - VIEWS
- 1 HOTEL & SPA
 - 2 CONFERENCE / EXHIBITION FACILITIES
 - 3 TRAIN STATION
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 - 9 MARINA RELATED FACILITIES
 - 10 MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK
 - 11 IMPROVED EXISTING CAR PARK

Recreation Grounds
Enhanced leisure opportunity

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade
Lift access between Main Street and Kerr Street incorporated within Tourist Information Centre

Improve the promenade, maximise pedestrian connections between Kerr Street and the beach and create unique, usable public space



Town Hall Square
New civic space acts as pedestrian gateway to Portrush and enhances the setting of the Town Hall

Opens up new views to the sea
Minimises visual and physical conflicts caused by traffic

Assumes that the existing Kiddieland is relocated



Metropole Park
Iconic aquarium building with glazed pedestrian bridge over Eglinton Street creates prominent gateway to Portrush

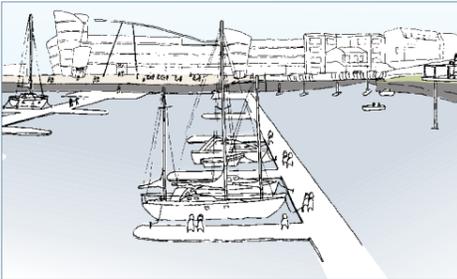
New quality hotel, spa with conference/exhibition facility and car park set in attractive landscape setting

CONCEPT - C

Please note the option presented is conceptual only

Harbour

Extended North and South Piers to create significant development land and facilitate 200+ berth marina



Iconic hotel and spa with multi-storey car park tucked in behind (circa 250 spaces)

Assumes that existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush

New high quality public open space enlivened with outdoor eating areas etc

Improved pedestrian/cycle bridge

Marine activity leisure uses including commercial boating

Train Station/West Bay

Train station relocated and rail lines pulled back to the existing bus parking area opposite Metropole Park

New commercial development creates active street frontage, enhances natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, and screens the rear of Barry's and Traks

New tiered public open space maximises sea views

Significant public space opens up extensive sea views and strengthens visual and physical connection to Metropole Park

New public transport interchange with integrated rail, bus and coach facilities

Provision for unique landmark aquarium building

Improved promenade with integrated lighting, landscaping, seating and cycling facilities



- KEY**
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
 - NEW DEVELOPMENT
 - GREEN OPEN SPACE
 - NEW PUBLIC REALM
 - EXISTING HARBOUR CONFIGURATION
 - VIEWS
- 1 HOTEL & SPA
 - 2 CONFERENCE / EXHIBITION FACILITIES
 - 3 TRAIN STATION
 - 4 BUS / COACH FACILITIES
 - 5 LEISURE / ATTRACTION
 - 6 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT WITH ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR
 - 7 CAFE, RESTAURANT, KIOSK PAVILIONS
 - 8 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
 - 9 MARINA RELATED FACILITIES
 - 10 MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK
 - 11 IMPROVED EXISTING CAR PARK

Recreation Grounds

Enhanced leisure opportunity

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

Contemporary glazed pavilions encourage vibrancy along Kerr Street and these single storey transparent buildings maximise views of the harbour

Improved promenade and pedestrian connection between Main Street, Kerr Street and the beach with unique, usable public space



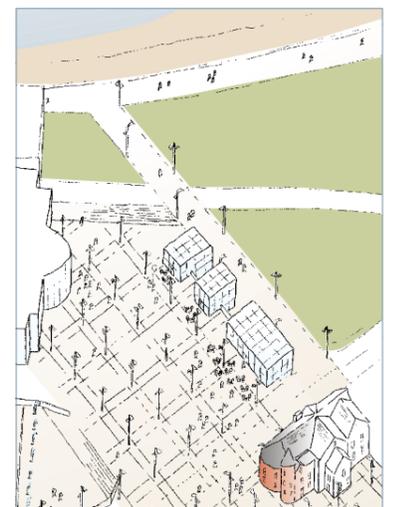
Town Hall Square

New civic space acts as pedestrian gateway to Portrush and enhances the setting of the Town Hall

Opens up new views to the sea

Minimises visual and physical conflicts caused by traffic

Assumes that the existing Kiddieland is relocated



Metropole Park

New landmark leisure development including 'state of the art' Waterworld and improved public realm creates prominent gateway to Portrush

CONCEPT - D

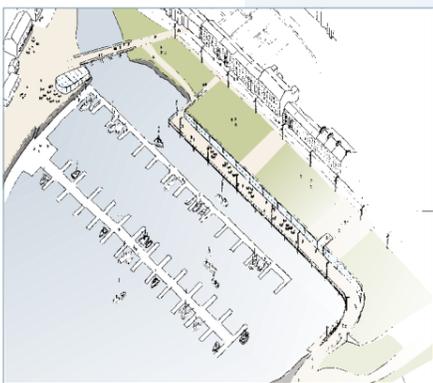
Please note the option presented is conceptual only

Harbour

Extended North and South Piers to create additional development land and facilitate 200+ berth marina

New mixed use landmark development including restaurants and bars with multi-storey car park hidden behind (circa 250 spaces)

Assumes that existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush



New high quality public open space enlivened with outdoor eating areas etc

Improved pedestrian/cycle bridge

Contemporary single storey glazed buildings at water level with boardwalk to encourage vibrancy whilst maintaining views from Kerr Street

Marine activity leisure uses including commercial boating

Train Station/West Bay

Train station relocated and rail lines pulled back to the existing bus parking area opposite Metropole Park

New commercial development creates active street frontage, enhances natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, and screens the rear of Barry's and Traks

New tiered public open space maximises sea views

Significant public space opens up extensive sea views and strengthens visual and physical connection to Metropole Park

New public transport interchange with integrated rail, bus and coach facilities

Provision for 'state of the art' Waterworld

Improved promenade with integrated lighting, landscaping, seating and cycling facilities



KEY

- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- NEW DEVELOPMENT
- GREEN OPEN SPACE
- NEW PUBLIC REALM
- EXISTING HARBOUR CONFIGURATION
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- 8 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
- 9 MARINA RELATED FACILITIES
- 10 MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK
- 11 IMPROVED EXISTING CAR PARK

Recreation Grounds

Enhanced leisure opportunity

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

Lift access between Main Street and Kerr Street incorporated within Tourist Information Centre

Improve the promenade, maximise pedestrian connections between Kerr Street and the beach and create unique, usable public space



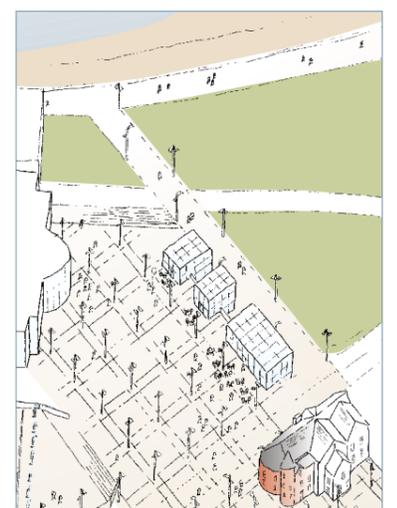
Town Hall Square

New civic space acts as pedestrian gateway to Portrush and enhances the setting of the Town Hall

Opens up new views to the sea

Minimises visual and physical conflicts caused by traffic

Assumes that the existing Kiddieland is relocated



Metropole Park

New internalised mixed use development including: hotel and conference/exhibition facility, aquarium, internal and external leisure facilities, retail, food court and car parking

CONCEPT - E

Please note the option presented is conceptual only

Harbour

Extended North and South Piers to create additional development land and facilitate 200+ berth marina

New mixed use landmark development including restaurants and bars with multi-storey car park hidden behind (circa 250 spaces)

Assumes that existing Waterworld is relocated and enhanced elsewhere in Portrush



New high quality public open space enlivened with outdoor eating areas etc

Improved pedestrian/cycle bridge

Contemporary single storey glazed buildings at water level with boardwalk to encourage vibrancy whilst maintaining views from Kerr Street

Marine activity leisure uses including commercial boating

Train Station/West Bay

Train station relocated and rail lines pulled back to the existing bus parking area opposite Metropole Park

New commercial development creates active street frontage, enhances natural surveillance to avoid anti-social behaviour, and screens the rear of Barry's and Traks

New tiered public open space maximises sea views

Significant public space opens up extensive sea views and strengthens visual and physical connection to Metropole Park

New public transport interchange with integrated rail, bus and coach facilities

Provision for 'state of the art' Waterworld

Improved promenade with integrated lighting, landscaping, seating and cycling facilities



KEY

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Recreation Grounds

Enhanced leisure opportunity

Kerr Street and Northern Promenade

Lift access between Main Street and Kerr Street incorporated within Tourist Information Centre

Improve the promenade, maximise pedestrian connections between Kerr Street and the beach and create unique, usable public space



Town Hall Square

New civic space acts as pedestrian gateway to Portrush and enhances the setting of the Town Hall

Opens up new views to the sea

Minimises visual and physical conflicts caused by traffic

Assumes that the existing Kiddieland is relocated



Metropole Park

New landmark leisure development including aquarium and improved public realm creates prominent gateway to Portrush.

Hotel

New quality hotel, spa with conference/exhibition facility and car park outside the Peninsula area but within Portrush

NEXT STAGES

- Take on board feedback from exhibition/consultation process
- Refine and select preferred option
- Undertake development appraisal on preferred option
- Complete regeneration strategy by end of November 2006

WE NEED YOUR COMMENTS!



COMMENTS SHEET

Western Peninsula Regeneration Strategy - Public Exhibition of Development Options

The Portrush Regeneration Group and GVA Grimley hope that you will be able to take a few moments to make your comments known on our options. Topics that you might want to consider making comments on include:

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|--|--|
| Recreation Grounds: What is needed? (open space adventure golf, mixed use leisure, covered leisure) | |
| Harbour Development: Scale of development Type of development uses Hotel Marina Boardwalk development | |
| Town Hall Square: Views to sea Relocation of existing development New development (e.g. Tourist Information Centre) Public space and art Pedestrian entrance | |
| Train Station: Station relocation Integrated train and bus facility Open views Development potential Development potential Reinvigoration of Eglinton Street | |
| West Bay: Indoor Leisure Parking Connections with Metropole Views from Eglinton Street Public realm/environmental improvements | |
| Metropole Park: Leisure Other development Town gateway | |
| What is the best site for any future hotel development? (within or outside Peninsula area) | |
| Are high quality public realm/environmental improvements necessary? Priority areas Public art Signage, lighting and street furniture | |
| Other issues? | |
| Do you have an option preference? | |

Name:
Address:

Business (if applicable):

Deadline for return of comments Saturday 21st October 2006

If you wish to take a comments sheet away today, please return to the Portrush Town Hall by the date above.