Ballycastle

STRATEGIC TOWN DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

Through Department for Social Development funding, The Ballycastle Town Partnership appointed The Paul Hogarth Company to prepare a Strategic Town Development and Action Plan for Ballycastle in November 2008.

As a key requirement of the Causeway Coast and Glens Masterplan, this plan was required to build on the success of the Draft Town Development Plan which was prepared by the Partnership earlier in the year and which was the subject of an extensive programme of consultation.

The town of Ballycastle is located on the Antrim coastline 47 miles north of Belfast; 19 miles east of Coleraine and 22 miles north-east of Ballymena. It is a town with a population of approximately 5,400, which is enjoyed by its residents and by visitors, many of whom return on a regular basis.

The role of the town is changing, as are the pressures that it is experiencing, physically, economically and socially. It is in that context that this Strategic Development and Action Plan is of such importance. The Plan will articulate a vision of Ballycastle over the next ten to fifteen years, highlighting how its distinctive strengths should be safeguarded and be central to the future of the town as well as outlining opportunities for development in the short, medium and longer term. These will address some of the existing weaknesses and contribute to the comprehensive improvement of Ballycastle as a place to live, work and invest.


Ballycastle Bay
Ballycastle
2000

2. THE EXISTING TOWN ENVIRONMENT

2.01 Location, Location

The town of Ballycastle is to a large extent defined by its location. The town has a clear 'gateway' role to play in relation to the Causeway Coast, with the Giant's Causeway only 10 miles to the west; the Glens of Antrim immediately to the east and Rathlin Island 3.7 miles offshore to the north.

The quality of the town and its magnificent land and sea-scape setting makes Ballycastle a highly desirable place to visit. The town attracts people for day trips, week-ends and longer breaks, many of whom make return visits, including those with second homes and caravans.

Ballycastle is currently the administrative centre for Moyle District Council. Whilst Moyle is the smallest of the 26 Councils in Northern Ireland, it still affords Ballycastle a significance. The Review of Public Administration will lead to the amalgamation of Councils into 11 areas by May 2011. Ballycastle will be at the eastern-most edge of a Council area, which will include Ballymoney, Coleraine, and Limavady as well as Moyle. Whilst the Council structures have yet to be determined, it is likely that Ballycastle will have a reduced administrative role.

The town of Ballycastle has a rich heritage. Whilst the history of the area can be traced back much further, much of the fabric of the town that is evident today dates from the 18th Century. The relative integrity of the historic urban fabric of the town led to it being designated as a Conservation Area.

The industrial heritage, that was so important to the town in the mid 1700s, with Hugh Boyd's collieries, harbour, glassworks, tannery and beachworks located at the Quay are less obvious in what remains today. Even less evident is the importance of the area as the first wireless station in Ireland. Pioneering works by Marconi Company sent signals from Ballycastle to Rathlin Island in 1898. These works by Guiglielmo Marconi and George Kemp internationally influenced technological advances.

Alongside the physical fabric of the town is the historic role of Ballycastle as the home of the 'Ould Lammas Fair' which each August continues a tradition that dates back through the centuries.


Photograph supplied by Danny McGill

Ann Street

Photograph supplied by Danny McGill

Castle Street

Photo Supplied by Danny McGill

2.03 The Role of the Town

Ballycastle is a 'well rounded' town. It has a stable community structure, with good primary and secondary schools and healthcare facilities, though increasingly the latter is provided within regional centres, such as at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine.

Moyle District Council has its administrative centre in the town, but as noted previously this role will change in the short term.

The town has good retail provision, with a predominance of independent traders. The Craft Industry has established a place in the life of the town, contributing to the retail offer as well as to the tourism product. Similarly bar, cafe and restaurants are increasing in number and quality, combining the traditional with the more contemporary. The Marine Hotel is the only hotel in the town and in that respect has a key role to play.

For the visitors, the seafront has the ferry terminal with its daily sailings to Rathlin Island. The infrastructure was developed to facilitate a service to Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre, Scotland. That service is no longer operational, though the physical capacity remains, should it or other routes be considered viable in the future.

The tennis courts and bowling greens adjacent to the seafront are an asset to the town, having a long association with the place, being well-used and of good quality. Similarly the sports pitches at Quay Road, including the relatively new floodlit, all-weather facilities are of significant value to both residents and visitors.

2.04 Emerging pressures and impacts

Whilst Ballycastle is a relatively stable environment, physically, socially and economically, there are some key issues that will or are likely to impact on the town and which the Development Plan should address. These include:

- The consequences of the Council boundary changes in May 2011 will impact on public service employment and on building stock. The future of Sheskburn House should be given particular consideration in this respect.

- Long-standing aims to provide indoor leisure facilities, centred around a swimming pool to meet the needs of the residents and visitors are being considered through a process of site selection, design and assessment of financial viability.

- Supermarket interest in the town continues, with Tescos pursuing proposals for a new store. Issues of planning policy have to date frustrated their aspirations, but alongside this, divergent and strongly held views of local people including the traders has raised the profile of the debate.

- The Youthlinks project has gained significant momentum to provide facilities for young people in the town, to complement the strong sports-based provision that exists. Proposals are based on development of a site at Market Street.

- The Dalriada Hospital site provides a range of healthcare functions and is also the base for the ambulance service. The site is extensive; buildings are in a poor state of repair and occupy a relatively small part of the overall site. In this context and that of ongoing streamlining of health care provision, opportunities to rationalise the operation of the site are emerging.

- The Marine Hotel is pursuing extensive development proposals for its existing site and its expansion to the west, whilst a Planning Application was recently secured in relation to a 50 bedroom hotel with holiday cottages at Whitepark Road on the western edge of the town

- Tourism represents a significant pressure as well as opportunity for the town. Visitor numbers have risen steadily in recent years and as momentum gains towards the redevelopment of visitor facilities at the Giants Causeway, it is likely that this will continue to impact on Ballycastle. The Development Plan will position the town to withstand some of the potential adverse impacts, whilst capitalising on the opportunities.

Photo Supplied by Douglas James


Clare Road
Whitepark Road
Harbour Marina
Ballycastle Bay
Moyle Road
Ballycastle High School
Moyle Enterprise Centre
Fairhead Caravan Park
Cross and Passion College
Ann Street
Leyland Road
Market Street
The Diamond
Dalriada Hospital
Beach
Golf Course
Cushendall Road
Bonamargy Friary
Glenshesk Road
Hillside Road
Ballycastle Forest
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3. ANALYSIS

The Development Plan has been established in the context of socio-economic analysis that was central to the Draft Town Development Plan, complemented by a comprehensive appraisal of the physical environment.

In 2001 the town had a population of 5,089, which equated to 32% of the overall figure for Moyle. Mid year estimates for June 2007 indicated that the population for Moyle was 16,740, assuming therefore that Ballycastle has retained its percentage share, this would suggest that the town would have had a population of 5,356 at that time, which is the basis for the approximate figure of 5,400, which is used in the Introduction and Executive Summary of this document. Within the population profiles, figures show a slightly higher than average percentage of the young and elderly, with a correspondingly lower one for the core working age band of 16 to 59 year olds (56% compared with the NI average of 60%).

Deprivation indices for 2005 indicate that the town performs relatively well, indeed the education indices for Glenshesk, Dalriada, and Bonamargy & Rathlin Wards are very good, (each being in the top third of all Wards in Northern Ireland). Figures relating to service provision represent an area of concern, though this is not unusual in relation to rural/dispersed communities.

Unemployment at 3.1% is relatively low compared with the Northern Ireland average of 3.9%, however income levels are also low compared with the average (approximately 68% of the national average and 60% relative to the Belfast average), largely as a result of the high dependency on service sector employment (more than 80%). Estimates suggest that relatively high numbers of people commute to work elsewhere.

Tourism figures highlight that in 2007 significant numbers of people visited areas around Ballycastle – Giant's Causeway (553,063), Rathlin West Light View Point (11,200); and Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge (184,904). In 2007, the Lammas Fair attracted approximately 150,000 whilst other festivals, such as the tennis tournaments and Halloween had attendances of 1,000 and 3,000 respectively.

During the preparation of the Draft Plan, four key questions were asked of those who participated in the consultation process. These were:

- What makes Ballycastle a special place?
- What's good about living in Ballycastle?
- What could be improved?
- What kind of town would you like Ballycastle to be?

A Workshop held in December 2008 consolidated the findings from these questions and the SWOT analysis that took place during the preparation of the Draft Plan.

The following summarises the key issues that emerged:

STRENGTHS

- Natural Beauty
- Gateway location between the Causeway Coast AONB, Antrim Coast and Glens AONB's and Rathlin Island
- Key stopping destination on the Coastal Route
- Outdoor activities (climbing at Fair Head, sailing, golf, tennis, running club)
- Independent retail
- Evening economy
- Local festivals
- Marina and beach
- Good quality open spaces/play parks
- Daytime Translink town service
- On-street parking/free car parking
- Safety
- Identity
- Sure Start
- Primary Care / Health Care
- Inclusive community
- Integrated education
- Welcoming environment
- Built heritage
- Tennis courts/outdoor sports facilities
- Industrial history
- Film club
- Music and arts & crafts
- MS centre
- Ambulance centre
- Ferry service

WEAKNESSES

- Traffic management – (Ann Street loading bays)
- Shop opening hours (Wednesdays and Sundays)
- Accessibility to the Town
- Poor gateway/welcome signs
- Off-peak public transport service
- Poor access to services, i.e. Health Care (located in Coleraine - 25 mins away)
- Toilets are not well located
- Lack of tourist facilities, e.g. hotels
- Lack of indoor activities
- Lack of access to beach
- Management of paths and town facilities
- Services – litterbins always full
- Critical views to hills restricted
- Diamond should be, but is not, the focal point of the town
- Poor coach parking (used to be at Antrim Arms)
- Signage to coach parking
- Car parking at marina during Summer months
- Training, e.g. for hospitality, catering
- Small population base
- Dependant on service/tourism sector
- Poor communication between stakeholders

3.01 SWOT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES

- Plan to position Town – post review of public administration (RPA)
- Gourmet cuisine, with an emphasis on seafood
- Book town
- Forest
- Attract entrepreneurs, investors and people with an existing interest in the town
- Potential added value in introducing additional ferry routes
- Tow River walks
- Indentify landmarks and develop heritage trails
- Accessibility from Rathlin
- Tourism and leisure facilities, i.e. leisure centre, holiday activity centre
- Open path to Jackson's Pool
- Relocate Ann Street depot to Brownfield site at Leyland Road
- Secure appropriate use of Council property
- Tele cottages – micro industries
- Increase dwell time
- Improve shop opening hours
- Lammas Fair
- Motor caravans, noting that significant provision is already available
- Extend Translink town service to Saturday
- Cultural tourism
- High environmental standards/eco-town
- Sustainable tourism
- Provide co-ordinated and integrated marketing

THREATS

- Global economy
- Continued withdrawal of services from rural areas
- Out of town retail development, including supermarkets
- Identity crisis
- Loss of integrity/character of the townscape and loss of protected trees
- Review of Public Administration
- Lack of large employers for career development
- Lammas Fair
- Motor caravans
- Shortage of visitor bed spaces

4. REGENERATION VISION & OBJECTIVES

Analysis of the town, including wide-ranging discussions with people of Ballycastle and the organisations that impact upon it has provided the basis for articulating a vision for the future.

Ballycastle is a town which is enjoyed by its residents and by visitors. The quality of life and welcoming inclusive community is key to the success of the town and should be cherished and never taken for granted. Inevitable and imminent changes must be guided to ensure that the distinctive qualities of the place, including its historic built form, seafront and landscape setting are protected and enhanced, making the best possible use of the great assets that exist. Ballycastle must confidently meet the needs of its community and the expectations of its visitors.

A series of objectives have been identified that are central to delivering this vision:

- Protect the strong community confidence that is key to the quality of life for residents and to the warmth of welcome for visitors
- Safeguard existing facilities and organisations and meet identified needs such as the provision of leisure facilities and facilities for young people
- Identify built and natural heritage assets, protecting those that are in good condition and restoring those that are not
- Strengthen and diversify the economic activity of the town
- Establish appropriate connections between the parts of the town, minimising the impact of vehicles and maximising the enjoyment and ease of movement for pedestrians and cyclists
- Maximise the potential for the town to be sustainable, setting exemplary environmental standards and social, economic and physical principles that allow Ballycastle to adapt to changing demands

5. CONCEPT PLAN

In the context of the analysis of the social, economic and physical environment of the town of Ballycastle, a Concept Plan has been developed that underpins the existing strengths and addresses the issues that undermine its potential. The Concept:

- Retains and strengthens the historic identity of the town
- Promotes and upholds high environmental standards, with clear objectives relative to the urban areas, rural landscape and marine environment
- Improves the landscape setting of the town, particularly around its edges, including the Tow River and gateways
- Conveys a strong, positive and warm welcome to visitors
- Strengthens the connections between Ballycastle and the Causeway Coast, Antrim Glens and Rathlin Island, ensuring that the town benefits from these relationships and is not merely a place to pass through
- Strengthens the year-round distinctiveness and vibrancy of the seafront
- Develops the Diamond as the centre of the town as a place for outdoor events and activities
- Underpins the commercial activity and environmental quality of Ann Street
- Develops Castle Street to capitalise on the historic built form, whilst 'anchoring' the 'top of the town', facilitating increased footfall and commercial activity
- Integrates leisure/tourism facilities to the south side of Quay Road to facilitate connections between the Seafront and the town centre, whilst opening views to the hills
- Develops facilities at Fairhill Street which connect the town, the River and the Forest
- Releases the development potential of sites at Station Road, Market Street, Dalriada Hospital and the Invest Northern Ireland site at Leyland Road
- Underpins the educational performance of the town and provides appropriately targeted training facilities
- Provides increasingly diverse employment opportunities
- Strengthens and diversifies the retail offer of the town
- Increases the tourism profile of the town, ensuring that the quality of provision is high and that the dwell time is increased
- Sporting provision in the town is underpinned
- Facilities meet the needs of the community, relative to issues such as health care and recreation, for all ages


Photo by Little Fire

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ACTION PLAN

Based on the Regeneration Vision and Concept Plan, a comprehensive vision for the Town has been developed. In outlining the potential project partners, Moyle District Council is named in the context that its role will be assumed by the successor Council after May 2011, and likewise that DSD's regeneration responsibilities will also transfer to the new authority. The key content of this is summarised as follows:

Photo by Christian Guevara


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DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND ACTION PLAN

1. Organisations & Structures
2. Town Gateways
3. The Seafront
4. The Diamond
5. Ann Street
6. Castle Street
7. Castle Street/Market Street
8. Clare Street
9. Fairhill Street
10. Quay Road
11. Dalriada Hospital
12. Education
13. Moyle Road
14. Lammas Fair
15. Public Transport
16. Town Trails, Interpretation & Orientation
17. Ramoan House
18. Bonamargy Friary

6.01 ORGANISATIONS AND STRUCTURES

1a For the Partnership to fulfil its potential it is proposed that funding be secured from the key stakeholders, including the private sector, for a full time person, possibly combining the role of Town Centre Manager, along with administrative support.

TIMESCALE:	Immediate
PARTNERS:	Moyle District Council, DSD, Ballycastle Town Centre Partnership
ACTIONS:	Secure funding to employ a Project Manager and Administrative Support Officer

1b Delivery of the vision for Ballycastle will require the focused and co-ordinated efforts of a range of organisations. Over time the parties and levels of input will vary, but it is important that the sense of ownership and commitment to realising the benefits to the town remains consistent. This will have particular challenges during the period of transition to the new Council structures, during which time, it is anticipated that many of DSD's current responsibilities will transfer to the local authority. It is set within this context that it is proposed that Ballycastle Town Partnership should play a central role.

It is proposed that the constitution of the Partnership should retain a balance between the public, private and voluntary sector, along with elected representatives. It is proposed that dynamic individuals, including local entrepreneurs be approached, to ensure that the Partnership is enterprising in its approach to the challenges.

The Town Partnership will be responsible for driving forward the vision, co-ordinating projects and ensuring that as new proposals emerge, they are considered in respect of maximising their value and potential leverage to Ballycastle as a whole.

It is proposed that the Town Partnership should establish Project Management Boards for each of the projects/initiatives that together form the vision for Ballycastle. The Boards will be formulated to draw on the necessary skills and resources for the specific task and have a clearly defined point at which the project is completed and the Project Management Board will be dissolved. It will be the responsibility of each Board to set realistic targets and to evaluate progress, providing regular reports to the Partnership.

It is important that key partner organisations commit their support to developing the Town Partnership and to the Development and Action Plan being its central focus. To this extent, it is proposed that the Plan should be presented to Moyle District Council, seeking its full endorsement and support, and similar assurance sought from the Department for Social Development.

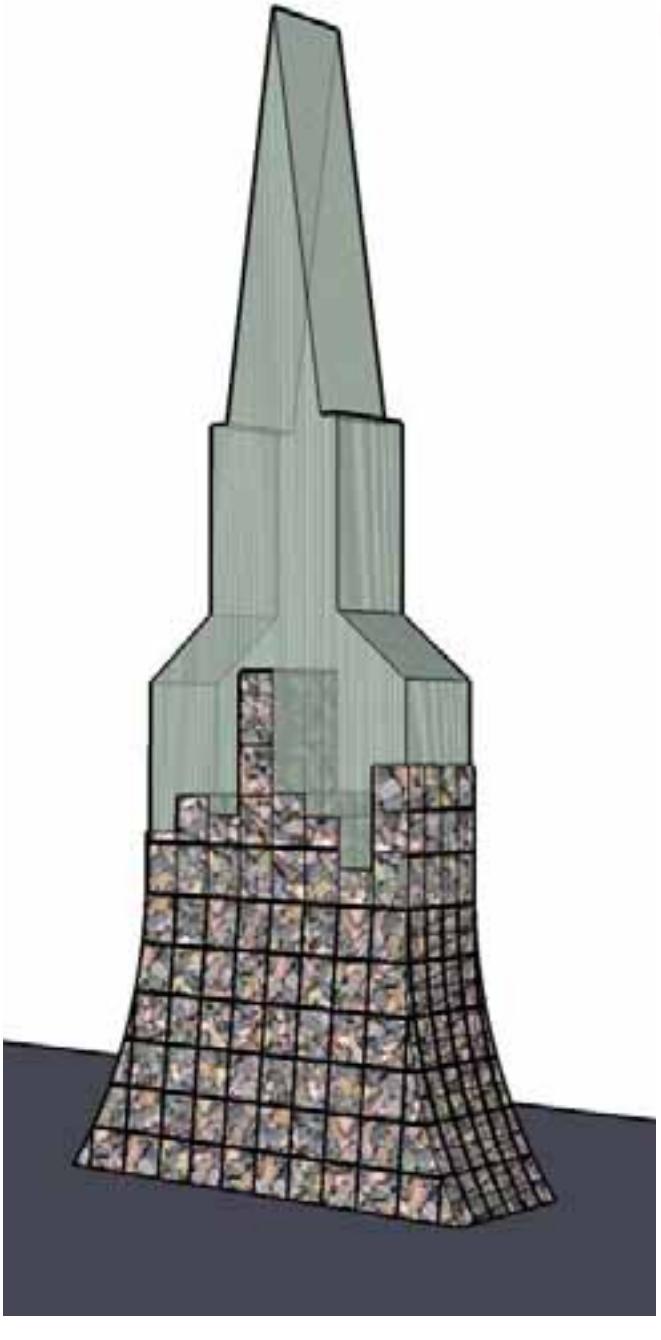
TIMESCALE:	Immediate
PARTNERS:	Led by Ballycastle Town Partnership, supported by Moyle District Council, DSD, Roads Service, Planning Service, Translink, PSNI, NEELB, Health Trust
ACTIONS:	In the context of the Development Plan vision, review the composition of the Partnership and its constitution, shaping the membership and operational arrangements to meet the challenges

1c In an effort to be focussed in the functions of the town, it is proposed that the existing Retail Environment Working Group should be integrated with the Town Partnership.

TIMESCALE:	Short-term
PARTNERS:	Led by Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS:	Review with the Partnership and the Working Group the functions of the Group and ensure that its integration in the Partnership is effected, to the maximum benefit of the town as a whole.

1d The recently established Chamber of Commerce should be of significant benefit to the town. It will be important to support and encourage the Chamber to be an active organisation, representing all within the business community.

TIMESCALE:	Short-term
PARTNERS:	Led by Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS:	Provide support and encouragement to the Chamber, monitoring activity and as appropriate highlighting concern if it is considered that sections of the business community do not consider the organisation to be inclusive/representative



6.02 TOWN GATEWAYS

Ballycastle has a key roll to play as a gateway to the wider area. It is important to provide a strong and positive welcome to visitors at its threshold. Gateway signs in these locations should provide a warm welcome introducing the character and distinctiveness of the town, in turn contributing to civic pride. It is proposed that the gateway signs should use materials and forms which have a resonance with the town relating to familiar profiles. As an example a materials palette would include the use of beach washed pebbles, glass and stone.

TIMESCALE:	Short-term
PARTNERS:	Led by Ballycastle Town Partnership, supported by Moyle District Council and DSD. Consulting with Roads Service, Planning Service and property owners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; procure design team; develop design proposals; secure approvals and implement scheme

6.03 THE SEAFRONT

3a Comprehensive improvement of the public realm is proposed. This will include:

- Improved links, providing access for all to the beach
- Rationalise the existing car park area, to reduce pedestrian vehicle conflicts and to allow it to be closed to vehicles and used as a civic space for events and as an area for pedestrian activity during busy periods
- Improve the public realm associated with the marina/harbour/ferry terminal area, rationalising functions and creating a people-friendly, safe environment
- Develop coastal path linking westwards to Jackson's Pool and caves
- Establish a seafront promenade along the old quay adjacent to the tennis courts, with links to Mary Street and across the Glenshesk River
- Incorporate orientation signs, within improved parking areas as part of the wider Causeway Coastal Route initiatives

TIMESCALE:	Short to medium term
PARTNERS:	Led by DSD, supported by Ballycastle Town Partnership and Moyle District Council. Consulting with Planning Service, Roads Service, NIEA and other landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding for consultant fees; appoint a design team to prepare integrated, phased and costed public realm proposals. Secure capital funding in one or more traunches; appoint a design team(s); prepare design proposals; secure approvals; and implement scheme(s)

Photographs by rmainuk

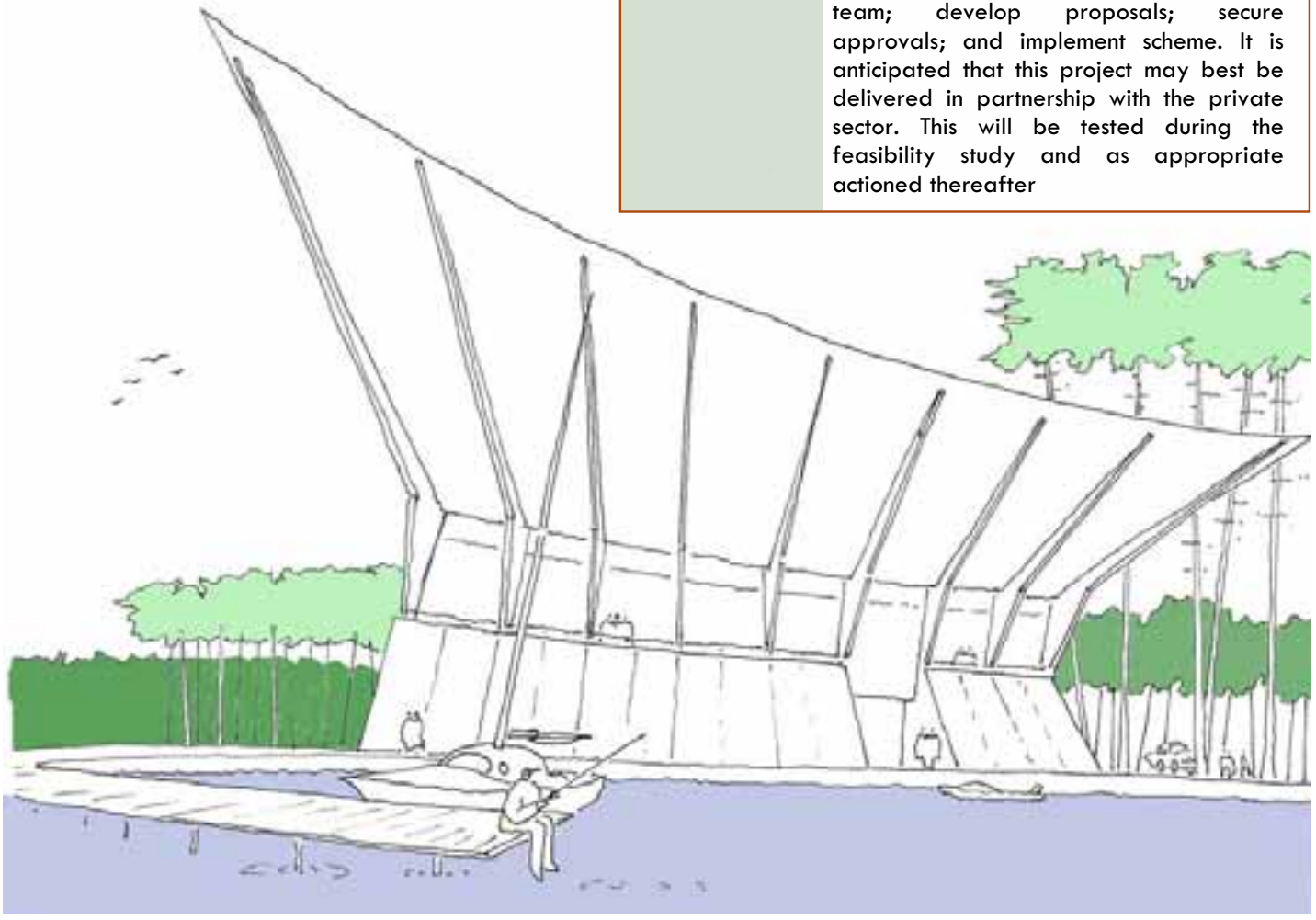
3b Develop Ballycastle as a centre of excellence for watersports/marine activity. Develop a new seafront facility that incorporates a watersports centre, new pavilion for the tennis courts/bowling, panoramic café/terrace, marine environmental education and youth facilities. Encourage the private sector to become involved in the provisions of water sports/marine activities.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Led by Moyle District Council, supported by DSD, NIEA, DCAL, Sports Council, NITB, Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS:	Secure funding for a feasibility study; appoint consultants; determine viability/cost; assuming that the scheme is viable, secure capital funds; appoint design team; develop proposals; secure approvals; and implement scheme. It is anticipated that this project may best be delivered in partnership with the private sector. This will be tested during the feasibility study and as appropriate actioned thereafter. It is antisipated that the increased range of activities and profile can be progressed in advance of construction of new facilities.


ENTA

3c Develop a new yacht club facility and associated promenades to capitalise on the impressive outlook of the northern pier.

TIMESCALE:	Long term
PARTNERS:	Led by Moyle District Council, supported by DSD, DCAL, Sports Council, NITB, Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS:	Secure funding for a feasibility study; appoint design team; determine viability/cost; assuming that the scheme is viable, secure capital funds; appoint design team; develop proposals; secure approvals; and implement scheme. It is anticipated that this project may best be delivered in partnership with the private sector. This will be tested during the feasibility study and as appropriate actioned thereafter



3d Underpin the role of the ferry service to Rathlin and maximise the benefits to the town associated with decisions to be taken by the Northern Ireland Assembly and Scottish Executive, relative to the future of the service to Scotland.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Led by Moyle District Council, supported by DSD, NITB, Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS:	Engage with the decision makers, to maximise the benefits of the ferry services to the town


Photo by little fire

3e Develop and continue to promote 'Menu of Moyle' as a branding initiative which focuses on providing high quality, local food produce in the District. Set within this context, opportunities to distinguish Ballycastle as a town with a particular emphasis on seafood should be pursued, developing existing cafes and restaurants and focusing attention on diversifying the year-round offer. This should include new establishments and opportunities to redevelop/re-position existing ones.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Led by Moyle District Council, supported by DSD, NITB, Ballycastle Town Partnership, Chamber of Commerce
ACTIONS:	Secure funding for study; appoint consultants; assess the existing offer and the potential, including opportunities for redevelopment of Council owned premises; secure necessary project funds; appoint consultants; issue development briefs/marketing material; and implement initiatives

Photo by code_martial


Menu of Moyle
PROUD OF OUR PRODUCE

3f Encourage the appropriate development of the Marine Hotel as a key asset for the town.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership to lead discussions with the owners of the hotel to maximise the benefits to the town as a whole, resulting from the proposed development

3g Promote the redevelopment of Sheskburn House site for tourism/leisure facilities, maximising the value of its River frontage and facilitating pedestrian/cycle linkage along the Tow River.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Moyle District Council, NITB, DSD, Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS::	On determination of the structures and estate requirements of the new Council, agree the appropriateness of disposing of this site. Assuming that this is agreed, prepare a development brief, seek private sector bids and facilitate delivery. In parallel with this, the relocation of existing facilities including the Tourist Information Centre

3h Extend and upgrade the Tow River Walkway, making connections to Mary Street, Fairhill Street and linkages to the town centre to the north.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Moyle District Council, DSD, Ballycastle Town Partnership
ACTIONS:	Landowners should be identified and agreements reached in relation to the viability and timing of establishing the various sections of Walkway. Budgets for capital works, legal fees and for consultants should be secured; designs developed; approvals secured and scheme(s) implemented

6.04 THE DIAMOND

4a Prepare traffic management proposals to rationalise parking and traffic movement, with the objective of maximising space that can be used by pedestrians and for events. By providing increased parking in adjacent areas, it is proposed to remove parking from the Diamond itself, with the possible exception of some limited provision for those with disabilities. Opportunities to access the Co-op car park from Station Road should be considered to allow through movements to be limited to the north side and Fairhill Street. Alongside this, issues associated with the management of parking within the Co-op site should be reviewed, ensuring that this is integrated with the wider public provision.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, NIEA, Co-op, Chamber of Commerce, frontagers
ACTIONS:	Secure funding for study, appoint consultants, establish circulation and parking parameters that form the basis for the design of the public realm

4b Develop high quality public realm, including rationalised signage that provides an appropriately high quality setting for the surrounding landmark buildings and that maximises the potential for appropriate uses including space for adjacent properties to provide external tables and chairs.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, NIEA, Co-op, Chamber of Commerce, frontagers
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultant; design public realm based on the transport assessment; secure approvals and implement scheme

4c Undertake a comprehensive lighting scheme for the Diamond, to illuminate the flanking buildings, including the landmark Holy Trinity Church, its trees and the Memorial.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, NIEA, Co-op, frontagers
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultant; design lighting scheme; secure approvals and implement scheme

Photo by Ian McMaster

Photo by Danny McGill

6.05 ANN STREET

5a Underpin the retail activity in this area and improve linkages to the Ann Street Car Park. Alongside this, it is proposed to establish a Living Over the Shop (LOTS) initiative for the area targeting funding for the restoration of the upper floors of the commercial properties.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Lottery Fund, NIHE frontages
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultant; design public realm; secure approvals and implement scheme. Chamber of Commerce to promote the businesses of the town, co-ordinate training, service provision – including opening hours and presentation. Establish awards to encourage improvements in quality and to recognise achievements

5b The land around Station Road has significant potential to contribute more substantially to the vitality of the town. It is proposed to release this opportunity by relocating the Translink and Roads Service Depots to the Leyland Road Invest Northern Ireland site. This will reduce the impact of heavy vehicle movements in the central area, whilst facilitating opportunities to create access to the existing Co-op car park, without impacting on the Diamond. Assembly and servicing of this land can create a significant development opportunity for the town. This might appropriately be capable of accommodating mixed-use development including retail, commercial and residential use, or as a supermarket location. Development of this site should improve pedestrian links to Ann Street and a strong landscape to the river to the south.

TIMESCALE:	Phased – Medium Term road infrastructure work to facilitate improvement of the Diamond, leading to long term comprehensive development
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Translink, Moyle District Council, INI, frontagers, other landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultants to prepare a feasibility study/Masterplan for the site; secure funding for assembly of the site/infrastructure; relocate Translink and Roads Service Depots to INI site at Leyland Road; appoint consultants to design the site infrastructure including access to the Co-op car park; secure approvals and implement infrastructure. Prepare a development brief for the site; invite bids; facilitate the approval of the scheme most advantageous to the town and promote delivery

6.06 CASTLE STREET

Promote micro-industries/studio spaces in the outbuildings to the south of Castle Street. This will bring into active use historic buildings that are currently disused/under-utilised. This business/craft accommodation will contribute to the economic activity of Ballycastle. Opportunities to extend the existing Museum should be considered, including the potential to incorporate a café facility. It is proposed to establish a Townscape Heritage Initiative for the area targeting funding for the restoration of the historic properties. Comprehensive streetscape improvements should complement the wider proposals for the area.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, Chamber of Commerce, NIEA, Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, frontagers/landowners; INI; DETI
ACTIONS:	Secure funding to scope the micro-industries project; prepare marketing information; administer a grants scheme and facilitate take-up of the opportunities. Secure funding to undertake a feasibility study/business plan for the Museum; secure necessary capital/revenue funding to appoint design team; develop design proposals; secure approval and implement scheme Secure funding; appoint consultants; design public realm; secure approvals; implement scheme Chamber of Commerce to promote the businesses of the town, co-ordinate training, service provision – including opening hours and presentation. Establish awards to encourage improvements in quality and to recognise achievements

6.07 CASTLE STREET / MARKET STREET

Undertake comprehensive redevelopment of the area from Castle Street to Market Street. This will retain the historic buildings and structures, but will redevelop vacant areas of land and key sites on Market Street, including the Council Depot, which should be relocated to the Invest Northern Ireland site at Leyland Road. Development of this area will incorporate new public sector office provision, allowing Sheskburn House to be released for redevelopment. Opportunities to provide office accommodation (a business centre), training/college facilities, Youthlinks and a health centre in this location should be considered. It is proposed that high quality toilet facilities be incorporated in the development to replace the existing provision at the corner of Clare Street. These facilities will strengthen footfall in the area and facilitate improvement of the existing retail activity. Significant car parking provision will be incorporated, with vehicular and pedestrian links to both Castle Street and Market Street.

TIMESCALE:	Long term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, Health Trust, INI, DEL, DETI, NIEA, frontagers, other landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultants to prepare a feasibility study/Masterplan for the site, including delivery options relative to the role of the public and private sector; secure funding for assembly of the site/infrastructure; relocate Council Depot to INI site at Leyland Road. Progress delivery by agreed mechanism

6.08 CLARE STREET

Bounded by historic properties and to some extent in a poor state of repair, Clare Street presents great opportunities for the town. It is proposed to strengthen the craft sector in this area, undertaking the adaptive re-use of the historic buildings, including the establishment of a Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme. This would be complemented with appropriate high quality contemporary infill. The building spaces that are created would include managed workspace, niche retail such as book and antique shops and café units. It is proposed to consider the traffic management of the street, as part of the comprehensive strategy (6.004a). The potential to close the street to through traffic will be considered. This would facilitate development of this charming street as a pedestrian environment, through which cyclists can travel, allowing space for outdoor dining, exhibition space and stalls.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, Health Trust, NIEA, DCAL, NITB. Heritage Lottery Fund, frontagers, other landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultants to prepare a feasibility study/Masterplan for the site, including delivery options relative to the role of the public and private sector, and secure funding for assembly of the site/infrastructure. Progress delivery by agreed mechanism, including necessary Roads Orders

6.09 FAIRHILL STREET

9a Fairhill Street has significant development potential. The amusement hall and cattle mart, whilst both still operational, have potential for redevelopment, along with the River's Agency Depot alongside the Tow River. The River itself is at its closest to the town centre, and should appropriately be the focus of regeneration. To the south, access to Ballycastle Forest and Knocklayde is currently under-utilised.

It is proposed to undertake a comprehensive regeneration scheme for this area. This will strengthen the connections between the Diamond, the River and Forest. Opportunities to animate the street and river frontages should be promoted. This will integrate the scheme which the Council have developed for which consents are being sought.

It is proposed to develop a rural outreach centre at the southern end of the Street, marking the entrance to the Forest. This will be used as an activity and educational resource centre. It may also become a centre from which the Lammas Fair can operate. The centre will facilitate access to the Forest and to a network of pedestrian, orienteering, cycle and pony-trekking routes, including the use of the old railway line and the Tow River Walk.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, DCAL, CAAN, Forest Service, NITB, NIEA, frontagers, other landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultants to prepare a feasibility study/Masterplan for the site, including delivery options relative to the role of the public and private sector and secure funding for assembly of the site/infrastructure. Progress delivery by agreed mechanism, including short-term opportunities to establish the various routes

9b Undertake a comprehensive streetscape design of Fairhill Street, to maximise its use and safety for pedestrians and cyclists, providing effective north-south connections, from the Forest to the caravan sites at the north of the town.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, NIEA, frontagers/ landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultants; design public realm; secure approvals; and implement scheme

6.10 QUAY ROAD

The break in the built street frontage to the south of Quay Road separates the seafront from the central areas of the town. Panoramic views over the Forest and Knocklayde are a defining characteristic of the town. These have been recently restricted by the construction of a stone wall.

A strategic opportunity exists in this location to provide leisure/tourism facilities in such a way that it re-establishes the open vistas, whilst connecting the economic and social activity of the two parts of the town. Moyle District Council has made significant progress in its objectives to develop facilities which meet the needs of the community and also of visitors. As this project progresses, opportunities to integrate these facilities with improvements to the Quay Road street frontage should be considered. This might appropriately utilise the ground profiles to conceal parking below street level with the public realm of the streetscape extending above it, to maximise the impact of the panoramic views. The leisure/tourism facility would include not only the swimming/leisure pools, cafe and fitness facilities, but also gallery space, multi-purpose rooms for community activities, conferences, etc.

Facilities would:

- Address issues associated with the current lack of space for use by the community
- Create opportunities for use as a conference venue as a key component in extending the 'season' beyond the traditional summer months
- Provide tourist information, visitors welcome facilties and high quality public toilets

Within the development and constructed against the steep ground profiles, it is proposed that extensive, multi-deck parking be provided. This would serve the needs of the development, but also have the potential to be used as an alternative to the seafront car park to allow it to be used for events during busy periods.

Development of this area would necessitate relocation of the existing play area. Opportunities to reposition this facility adjacent to the Integrated School to the east, may appropriately be considered.

Comprehensive streetscape proposals should complement the wider development. The design of the southern elevation will be critical, ensuring that it utilises the sunny aspect and appropriately integrates with, and relates to, the environment of the Tow River.

TIMESCALE:	Short to Medium term
PARTNERS:	Moyle District Council to lead, with input from Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Planning Service, DCAL, Sports Council, NITB, NIEA
ACTIONS:	Support the ongoing feasibility and forthcoming exemplar design work to ensure that the opportunities for the town and value are maximised. Secure funding commitments; appoint design team, prepare proposals; secure approvals and deliver the scheme. This project requires early action to ensure that opportunities are not missed

6.11 DALRIADA HOSPITAL

It is proposed that the Health Trust should review the future potential of this site and opportunities for its redevelopment of health provision. This area has significant potential for improvement. It is proposed that the ambulance services be relocated. Opportunities to consolidate and improve the healthcare provision either on the site or within a more centrally located site such as that at Castle Street/Market Street should be pursued. This may be appropriately complemented by sale of some or all of the land for development, recognising that whilst contrary to planning policy the site may be appropriate for consideration as a location for a supermarket.

TIMESCALE:	Long term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, Health Trust, Ambulance Service, PSNI, Moyle District Council, DSD
ACTIONS:	Review with the partners the future of the site and agree how the benefits to the town can be maximised through the various scenarios and over time as changes are delivered

6.12 EDUCATION

12a Ballycastle has a strong educational base and the role of Ballycastle High School and the Cross & Passion College and the Primary Schools are central to that. The Secondary Schools have an established practice of collaboration, which should be encouraged. As pupil numbers change in the future, it will be important to protect the central focus of Moyle Road. Links to the schools for walking and cycling should be promoted.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, NEELB, CCMS, DEL, Moyle District Council
ACTIONS:	Review with the partners the future opportunities and agree how the benefits to the town can be maximised through the various scenarios and over time as changes are delivered

12b It is proposed to establish the viability of establishing a Further Education provision, which might appropriately have a focus on catering/tourism services and environmental management. The Castle Street/Market Street site would be an appropriate location for such a facility, strengthening the links with the secondary schools.

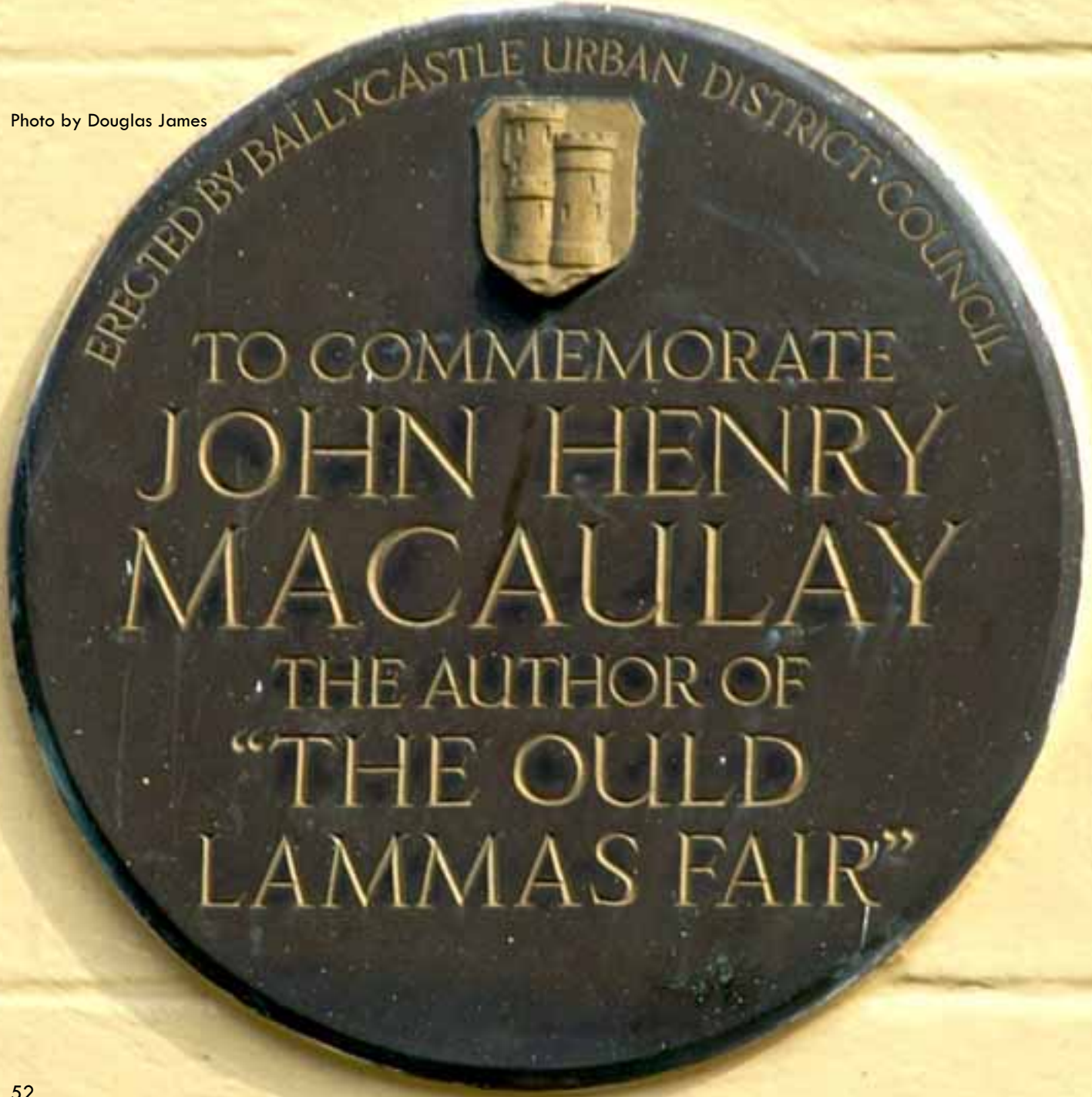
TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, NEELB, CCMS, DEL, Moyle District Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, BCW
ACTIONS:	Secure funds to undertake a feasibility study; appoint consultants; review the potential for a college facility; assuming that the viability is confirmed, define the scope of the facility; secure capital funding; appoint design team (or incorporate within the design team for the Castle Street/Market Street development); prepare proposals; secure approvals and implement scheme

6.13 MOYLE ROAD

13 As the focus of the educational life of the town, it is proposed that Moyle Road should be the subject of comprehensive streetscape design to ensure its safe use for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly given its steep profile. The road also provides a strategically important link to the caravan sites to the north and should be designed to encourage access from these areas to the centre of the town and to the Forest with its network of foot and cycle routes to the south.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Roads Service, Moyle District Council, the schools, NIEA, frontagers/landowners
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultants; design public realm; secure approvals and implement scheme.

Photo by Douglas James



6.14 LAMMAS FAIR

The Lammas Fair has a widespread and long-standing reputation that brings large numbers of visitors to Ballycastle. However for some there is a belief that the experience could be improved. It is important that this distinctive part of Ballycastle's programme of activities should be the subject of a detailed review, with the objective of securing its long-term future as an event that is valued by residents and visitors and which contributes to the promotion of the town. Opportunities to lengthen the fair and to focus on the elements of quality and distinctiveness must be central to the recommendations that emerge.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, DSD, Moyle District Council, NITB
ACTIONS:	Secure funding; appoint consultant; review the objectives, organisation/ management of the Fair and produce clear recommendations in relation to its future. Secure necessary funds and implement recommendations

6.15 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Translink have worked over the last few years to provide an effective bus service to and around the town, during the daytime. The service in the evening, at weekends and early in the morning is extremely limited, curtailing opportunities for commuters and recreational use. Whilst it is acknowledged that Translink do not consider the demand to warrant services during these periods, it is important that the town should continue to consider, with Translink, opportunities to address this situation.

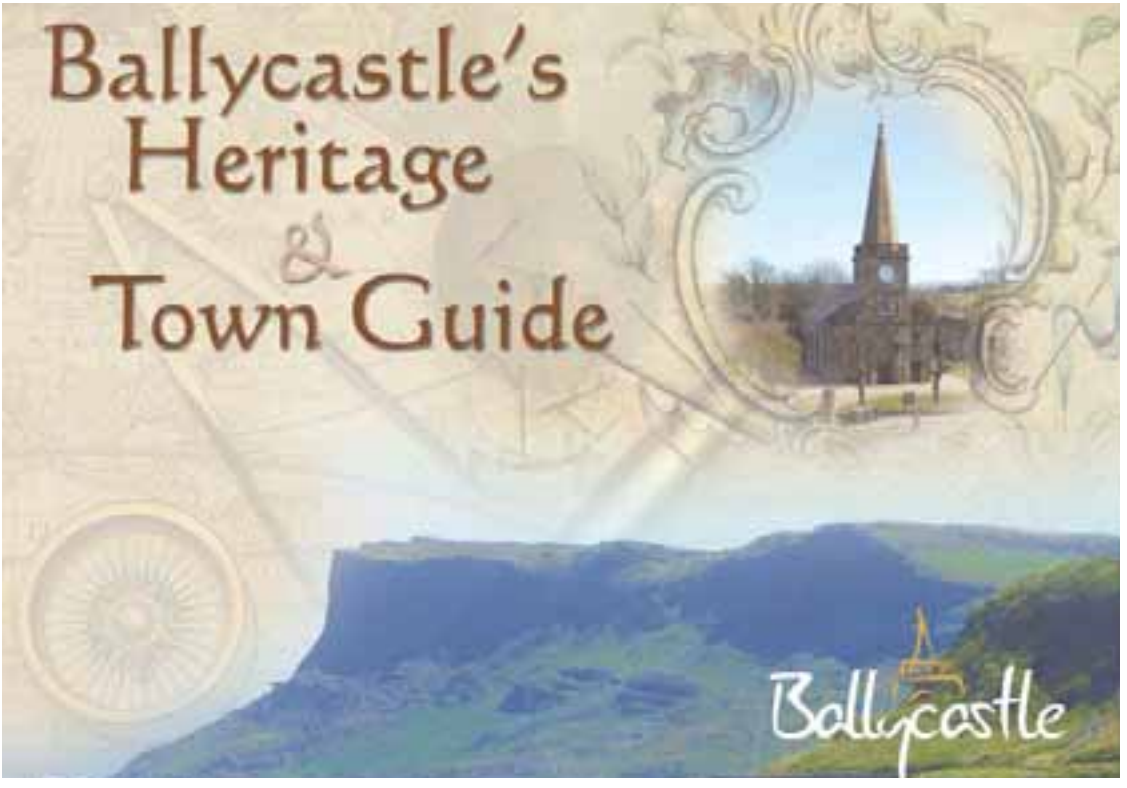
TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, Translink
ACTIONS:	Establish a forum to review the bus services and opportunities to better meet the changing needs of the people of Ballycastle

Photo by Gary McMurray

6.16 TOWN TRAILS, INTERPRETATION AND ORIENTATION

The Ballycastle Heritage and Town Guide booklet was recently published which provides an introduction to the town and its facilities. It is proposed that an active review process be implemented to ensure that this literature and other complementary components such as information boards, directional signage, websites and guides are consistent in their provision of information, encouraging increased dwell time and linked visits. Integration with the Causeway Coastal Route should be facilitated, including development of orientation points, in accordance with the Causeway Coastal Route Technical Study, at the Seafront, Bonamargy Friary and Marconi's Cottage.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, NITB, Moyle District Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Regional Tourism Partnership.
ACTIONS:	Review existing provision, establish a brief for the provision of deficient elements and for management of the system; secure funding; design components; secure approvals; implement initiatives and manage the system



6.17 RAMOAN HOUSE

The historic Ramoan House property to the north-west of the town centre has significant potential to be developed to contribute to the social and economic activity of the town and to breathe new and appropriate life into the premises. A number of development scenarios have been considered, including community arts facilities. It is important that Ramoan House is restored and that appropriate uses are introduced. However this should be set in the context of complementing the proposed/existing facilities within the town centre, rather than seeking to duplicate provision. It is in this context that a Feasibility Study for the site is proposed.

TIMESCALE:	Short term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, NITB, Moyle District Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Regional Tourism Partnership
ACTIONS:	Secure funding, appoint consultants to undertake a feasibility study in relation to the site

6.18 BONAMARGY FRIARY

Bonamargy Friary and graves have great historic significance. The location of the Friary on the southern approach to Ballycastle and set within the landscape of the golf course, contributes relatively little to the visitor experience of the town. Opportunities should be explored to enhance the setting and accessibility including parking provision, foot and cycle path links and signage, whilst respecting the issues associated with the surrounding golf course. This is one of the key sites identified within the Causeway Coastal Route Technical Study and as such, opportunities for improvement should facilitate integration within the wider Coastal Route.

TIMESCALE:	Medium term
PARTNERS:	Ballycastle Town Partnership, NITB, Moyle District Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Regional Tourism Partnership
ACTIONS:	Secure funding, appoint consultants to develop outline proposals, establish budget costs, secure capital budget, develop design proposals, secure consents, implement the proposed works


Photo by minipixel

PROJECT PRIORITIES CHART

		Timeframe	Priority
1	**Organisations and Structures**		
1a	Employment of a project manager	Immediate	High
1b	Town Partnership	Immediate	High
1c	Retail Environment Working Group	Short	High
1d	Chamber of Commerce	Short	High
2	**Town Gateways**		
	Installation of Welcome Signs	Short	High
3	**The Seafront**		
3a	Public Realm Improvements	Short/Medium	High
3b	Watersports Facility, Marine Acivities and Tennis Pavilion	Short/Medium	Medium
3c	Yacht Club	Long	Low
3d	Links to Rathlin and Scotland	Short	Medium
3e	Cafe Culture and Resturant Diversity	Short	High
3f	Marine Hotel Development	Short	High
3g	Sheskburn House	Medium	High
3h	River Walk	Medium	Medium
4	**The Diamond**		
4a	Traffic Management	Short	High
4b	High Quality Public Realm	Short	Medium
4c	Lighting Scheme	Short	High
5	**Ann Street**		
5a	Improve Linkages to Station Road Car Park	Short	Medium
5b	Redevelopment of Station Road Car Park	Long	High/Medium/Low
6	**Castle Street**		
6a	Promote Micro-Industries and Studio Space	Short	Medium
7	**Castle Street/Market Street**		
	Comprehensive Redevelopment	Medium	High/Medium/Low

		Timeframe	Priority
8	**Clare Street**		
	Pedestrianisation and Development of a Craft Sector	Medium	Medium
9	**Fairhill Street**		
9a	Rural Outreach Centre & Riverside Regeneration	Medium	Medium
9b	Streetscape Design	Medium	Medium
10	**Quay Road**		
	Regeneration	Short/Medium	High
11	**Dalriada Hospital**		
	Potential Redevelopment	Long	Low
12	**Education**		
12a	Promote Pedestrian and Cycle Access to Moyle Road	Short	High
12b	Establishment of a Further Education College	Medium	High/Medium
13	**Moyle Road**		
13a	Streetscape Design	Short	Medium
14	**Lammas Fair**		
	Review of Lammas Fair	Short	High
15	**Public Transport**		
	Extending Existing Services	Short	High
16	**Town Trails, Interpretation and Orientation**		
	Improvements to Existing Provisions	Short	High
17	**Ramoan House**		
	Restoration and Redevelopment	Short	Medium
18	**Bonamargy Friary**		
	Enhancing access and interpretation	Medium	Medium

TIMEFRAME **Immediate:** 0-6 Months **Short:** 6 Months - 3 Years **Medium:** 3-10 Years **Long:** 10+ years

7. CONCLUSIONS

Ballycastle is a distinctive town, enjoyed by its residents and by visitors. It has many strengths and characteristics that should be protected for future generations. But whilst many things have not changed significantly over the years, the town must now ensure that the social, physical and economic developments which are imminent and significant are positively guided to ensure that Ballycastle, far from being diminished by the experience, becomes an increasingly good place to live, work, invest and visit.

There are uncertainties in relation to the impact that the Review of Public Administration will have on Ballycastle after the change of Council administration in May 2011. There are opportunities to make strongly the case for the provision of a Leisure Centre to meet the needs of local people and visitors. It is set against this backdrop, that it is important for the town, through the Town Partnership, to establish a strong vision for the future and then to proactively manage the process of delivery.

Whilst many people stress how much they value Ballycastle as it is today, standing still is not an option. Change will happen and through the vision of the Development and Action Plan, the Town Partnership will work with the people of the town and wide ranging stakeholders to ensure that Ballycastle better meets the needs of its people, whilst providing an improved visitor offer that capitalises on its position at the gateway to some of Northern Ireland's finest natural heritage. The vision highlights the importance of diversifying and strengthening the economy of the town, and as a key part of this, extending the 'season' outwith the core summer months and reducing the risks associated with our unpredictable climate.

The vision that is conveyed combines short, medium and long term initiatives. Realising this vision will require the concerted and focussed efforts of the community, voluntary, public and private sector organisations. Significant resources will be required, including budget allocations.

Ballycastle has undergone many changes over the years, including profound ones associated with the rise and fall of industry. It is important that all of those who contribute to the life and function of the town should work together to ensure that future success is built upon the great legacies of the past.

MOYLE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ballycastle Town Partnership

Department for Social Development

www.dsdni.gov.uk

the paulhogarth company