

Causeway Coastal Route Draft Infrastructure Strategy

Consultation Presentation



Have your say!

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<http://bit.ly/4joRVBs>.

What does the future hold for the Causeway Coastal Route?

A process is underway to review infrastructure on the Causeway Coastal Route and to prepare a strategy for its improvement.

This Infrastructure Strategy aims to improve the visitor experience along Northern Ireland's famous Causeway Coastal Route.

It involves an audit of existing infrastructure and the development of a strategy for phased improvements.

A key aim is to strengthen alignment and synergy between the Causeway Coastal Route and the Wild Atlantic Way, creating a more cohesive experience along Ireland's iconic coastal touring routes.

This project has been commissioned by Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland, working in close partnership with Fáilte Ireland, local authorities and trusts along the route

It has been funded by the Shared Ireland Initiative and is being led by Landscape Architects, The Paul Hogarth Company, with Interpretation Design Consultancy, Tandem.

The Causeway Coastal Route: One of the world's most breathtaking coastal journeys.

A place of dramatic landscapes, rich history, and deep connections to land and sea.

What makes the landscape of the Causeway Coastal Route special to you?



The Route

- The Causeway Coastal Route is a 120 mile (193 km) driving route between the cities of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.
- The journey takes the visitor through many fascinating landscapes that are laden with natural beauty, historic intrigue and cultural richness.
- The route includes 2 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the famous World Heritage Site at The Giant's Causeway, with countless attractions and activities on offer along the way.
- The Causeway Coastal Route is a core component of Northern Ireland's tourism offer.
- It is therefore vital to ensure that this valuable asset continues to offer the visitor the best possible experience, while being developed and managed sustainably.



We listened to what you had to say

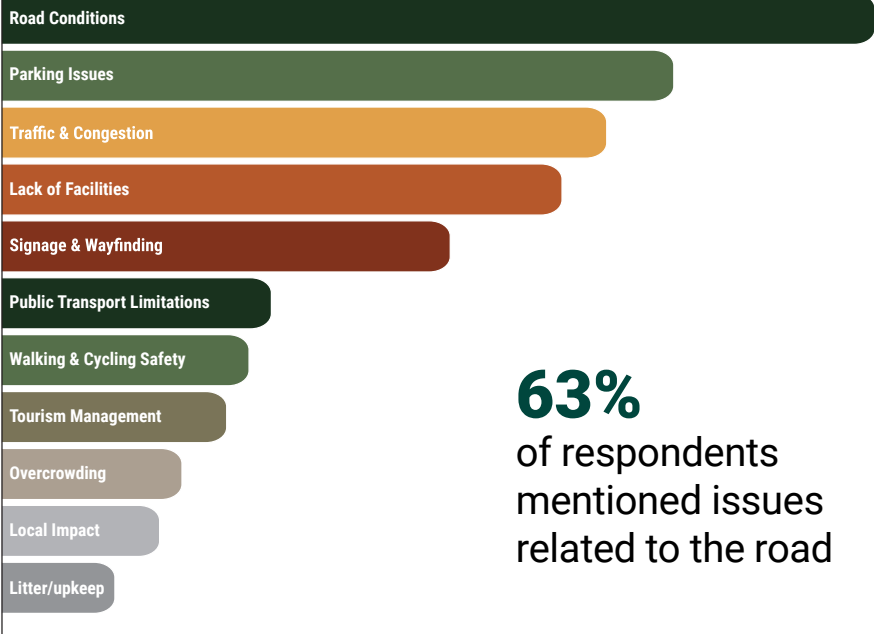
Our public survey in 2024 revealed that while the Causeway Coastal Route is much loved, the experience is impacted upon by issues with its infrastructure.

What are your top 3 priorities for infrastructure investment along the Causeway Coastal Route?



What you said:

- Public feedback through the survey raised a number of key infrastructure concerns, including **road conditions, congestion and parking**, particularly at popular destinations along the route.
- While these wider transport-related issues sit beyond the remit of this current project, we recognise their importance. Ongoing engagement is taking place with partners such as the **Department for Infrastructure and local Councils**, who are actively exploring these longer-term challenges.
- **This project is focused on improving signage and wayfinding**, which was also a strong theme in the consultation. Respondents pointed to inconsistent, unclear or poor-quality signage across the route.
- A detailed signage audit carried out by the project team confirmed this, identifying over **2,000 signs** – many of which contribute to visual clutter or don't meet modern standards for accessibility or clarity.
- We believe there's a real opportunity to **streamline, update and enhance signage**, helping people move through the landscape more confidently and enjoyably, while respecting the character and capacity of each location.



63%
of respondents
mentioned issues
related to the road



More than a driving route: It's time to think differently.

The Causeway Coast is a special landscape that cannot withstand an infinite increase in vehicles travelling along its shores.

The Draft Strategy aims to encourage the visitor to stop for longer and get out of the car to meaningfully engage with the landscape, the place and its people.

From a Route to a Region: A New Way to Explore.

It is proposed to define the Causeway Coastal Route as a region. This will be used to welcome visitors from all directions and to develop and promote attractions and activities throughout the area; not just those on the coastline.

Do you agree that defining and promoting the Causeway Coastal Route as a region, rather than just a route, will be beneficial to the area?

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The Landscape Area

- While our coastal landscape and views to the sea will always be the focus of attention, there lies so much to do and see a short distance inland.
- Defining the Causeway Coast as a region seeks to reframe the experience away from a simple driving route with a start and a finish, to a rich collection of coastal places that deserve deeper exploration.
- This area will be defined by the natural landscape (rather than administrative boundaries) and by existing landscape designations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Signage would welcome the visitor into the area from its many access points and encourage them to take time in getting to know this special place.



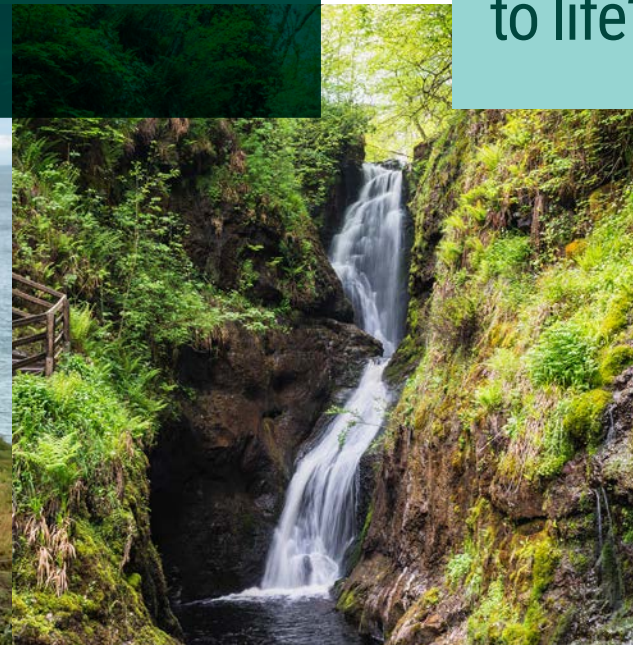
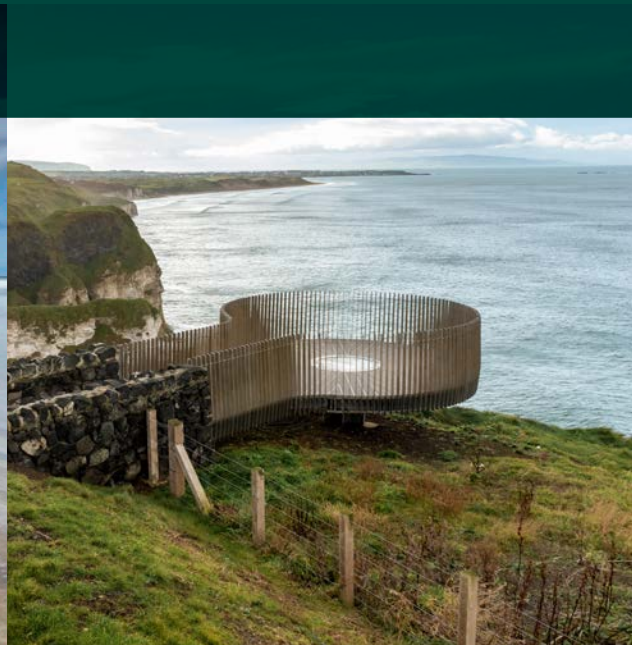
A Landscape of Stories

The Causeway Coastal Route is a journey of remarkable diversity, weaving together landscapes, stories, communities and characters over its length.

With so much richness along the way, it is helpful to understand how different 'chapters' in the story of this landscape exhibit their own unique character.

These chapters enrich the interpretation and visitor experience through storytelling, making stronger connections with places and more meaningful engagement with the landscape.

Can you share any special locations and / or stories to bring these chapters to life?



Derry/Londonderry and Beyond: Where City Walls Meet Open Skies

Here, the Wild Atlantic Way meets the Causeway Coastal Route, the vibrant energy of Derry-Londonderry gives way to the vast, open landscapes of the Causeway Coast.

This chapter is defined by sweeping views and open skies that signal the beginning of a new coastal adventure.

Strands of Discovery: Golden Sands and Coastal Gems

The journey winds past sandy beaches and lively seaside towns.

The character here is coastal charm: windswept dunes, rocky shores and vibrant communities that invite visitors to linger and explore.

The Causeway Coast: Giant Views, Timeless Shores

This iconic chapter is marked by dramatic cliffs and rugged beauty of the 'Giant' Causeway Coast.

This is a landscape of grandeur, where towering cliffs meet the ocean stirring below and stories from the mythological shores inspire awe.

The Route of the Glens: Villages and Valleys of Story and Song

The nine Glens of Antrim form a rich tapestry of sheltered valleys, rolling hills and villages steeped in tradition.

Each village offers a glimpse into life in the landscape, where a culture of storytelling, music and connections to Scotland abound.

From Lough to Shore: A Road Through Time

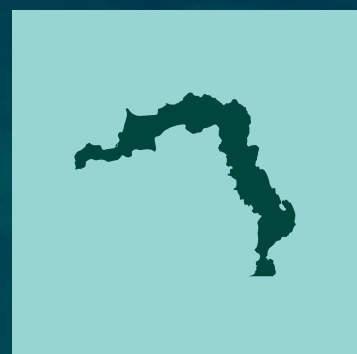
This chapter transitions from urban landscapes to loughshore views, through a landscape steeped in history.

This blend of past and present tells a story of resilience and transformation.

The Draft Strategy comprises

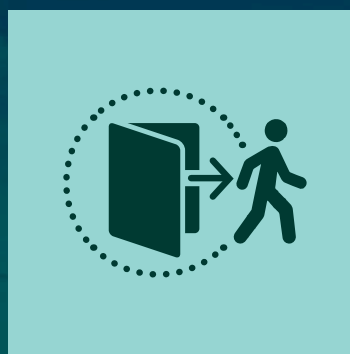
the following 7 components

Together, these aim to position the Causeway Coastal Route as a landscape-based destination, rather than a simple linear driving route. There will be a clear hierarchy of places and experiences to help visitors navigate and engage with the area.



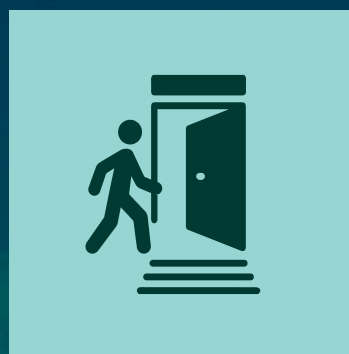
Landscape Area

A visitor region to promote attractions and activities



Entry Points

Entry points, welcoming the visitor and reinforcing brand identity



Welcome Hubs

Places outside the area that provide public transport, information and accommodation



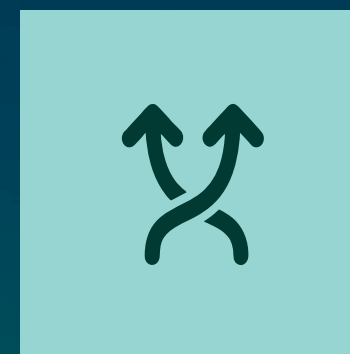
Signature Points

World-class, must-see attractions with infrastructure to support high visitor numbers



Discovery Points

Special places that encourage the visitor to slow down, step out, and connect with the land



Routes

Routes to explore the area by foot, cycle and public transport, as well as the car



City, Towns & Villages

Facilities that welcome and provide for the visitor

Signature Points: Iconic Landmarks Unmissable Experiences

These will be the world-class, must-see attractions with suitable infrastructure to support high visitor levels.

Some exist already while others will require investment to adequately perform this role.

Which locations stand out as truly iconic to you?



Signature Points

- As with the Wild Atlantic Way, Signature Points are special locations that no visit would be complete without.
- Some, such as the Giant's Causeway and Derry Walls, have received significant investment and already offer an award-winning visitor experience.
- Others, such as The Gobbins Phase 2 and Carrickfergus Castle, are the focus of major development works planned for the coming years through City and Growth Deals.
- Causeway Coastal Route Signature Points are still to be decided.
- All locations must be developed to the highest quality and have capacity for high visitor numbers.
- This will mean that some popular existing attractions will have too many spatial or environmental constraints to perform this role.



Discovery Points: Immerse yourself in the Landscape

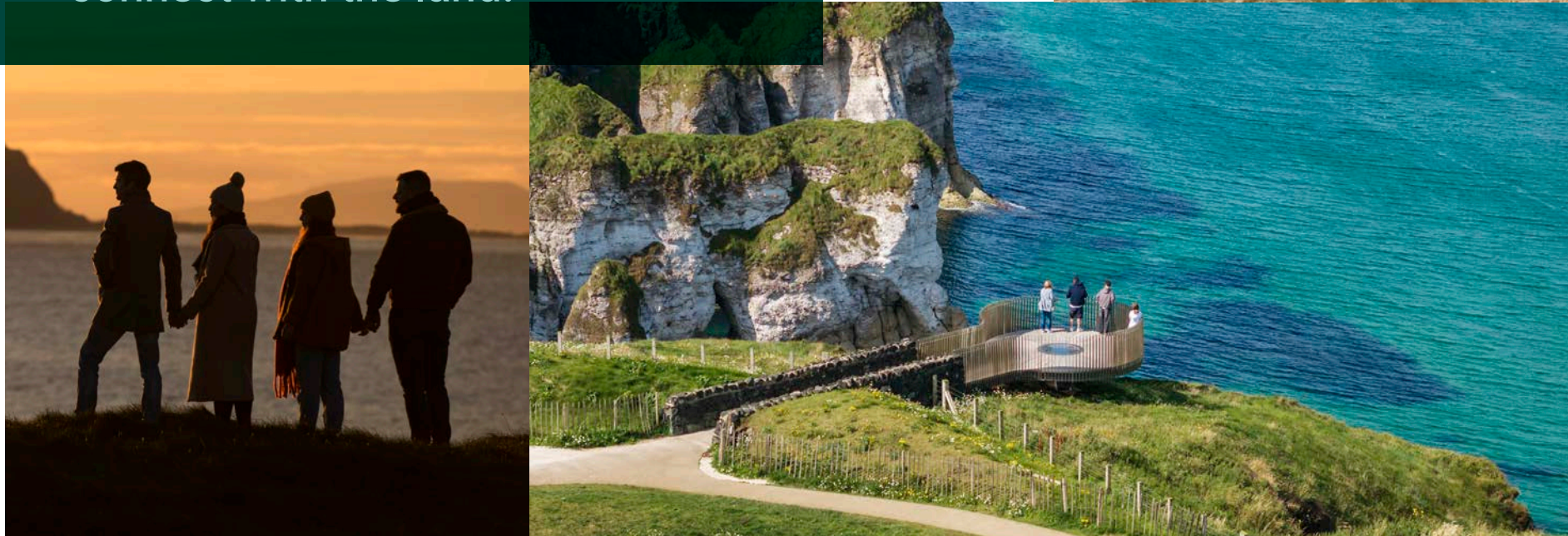
At each of these carefully chosen locations, a deeper exploration will be encouraged.

The visitor will be invited to slow down, step out and connect with the land.



Discovery Points

- Discovery Points will be key locations at which the visitor is encouraged to take time to enjoy the landscape.
- They will have places to park and be linked wherever possible to public transport.
- In time, Discovery Points may also become trailheads for foot and cycle paths that invite the visitor to explore the area.
- It is proposed that unique structures will be designed for each location that add to the visitor experience.
- Discovery Points have not yet been decided and will be identified in collaboration with local stakeholders, communities, and landowners.
- These may be viewing platforms or seating areas and will be carefully designed to fit into the surrounding landscape.
- While each design will be different, consistent elements and materials will reinforce the ethos and identity of the Causeway Coastal Route.



Where would
you propose a
Discovery Point?



City, Towns & Villages: The Heart of the Journey

These destinations have a key role to play on the Causeway Coastal Route as places to stay, explore and enjoy the famous hospitality.

Each place must be equipped to give the visitor the best possible welcome.



City, Towns & Villages

- The settlements along the Causeway Coastal Route enrich the visitor experience.
- They are best placed to offer accommodation and hospitality, as well as having their own things to see and do.
- Local businesses and services stand to receive the most economic benefit from a successful and sustainable Causeway Coastal Route.
- As part of wider processes of planning and urban regeneration, it will be necessary to ensure that each place has the right infrastructure to avail of the opportunities associated with the Causeway Coastal Route.
- This should include adequate parking (including for coaches), range of accommodation options and public toilets.
- The development of public transport and active travel infrastructure will also be encouraged.



How would you like to see our towns and villages benefit more from the Causeway Coastal Route?



To achieve this, we need to let the landscape lead...

Sometimes the best way to improve a place is by taking things away.

It is proposed to 'un-design' various locations along the Coastal Route, retaining facilities, but removing clutter and giving more space to nature.



Land & Seascapes

- The Causeway Coastal Route's most treasured assets are its breathtaking land and seascapes, and their rich diversity of flora and fauna.
- As the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss intensify, it is more important than ever to protect and conserve these natural wonders.
- To 'un-design' should mean removing unnecessary items, such as redundant signs and furniture, from existing places such as car parks, lay-bys and viewpoints.
- The look and feel of these spaces will be softened with an appropriate palette of natural and recycled materials, while the quality of wildlife habitat will be improved.
- In doing so, we will also help to make the route more attractive in keeping with its natural beauty.

Can you think of a specific location on the Causeway Coastal Route that would benefit from being 'un-designed'?



What Happens Next

We'd love to hear your views on this draft Strategy – whether you live, work, or travel along the Causeway Coastal Route.

Your input will help us shape a final Action Plan, which will guide the delivery of signage and wayfinding improvements across the route.

This will:

- Identify priority areas for improvements
- Support consistent, place-sensitive design
- Align with other emerging plans and funding opportunities, including *Shared Island Initiative*

We also know that signage is just one piece of the puzzle. Issues like road upgrades, congestion and parking are vital to the overall experience of the route. These are already being considered by relevant departments and agencies, and we're working to ensure this project complements and connects with those wider efforts.

Together, these layers of work will help shape a better-connected, more accessible and memorable experience for everyone.



Have your say!

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Thank You

Please encourage everyone to have their say.

Together we can protect and enhance this special landscape.