

Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site

Management Plan

2021 – 2027



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Giant's Causeway
and Causeway Coast
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1986

The Vision for the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site encapsulates the aspirations of the Steering Group for the future of the Site:

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site will be recognised as the global leader in the responsible management of dynamic natural sites, encouraging people to celebrate, value and enjoy a Site that demonstrates responsible conservation while providing an exceptional visitor experience. This Site will positively contribute to local and regional communities, while its special qualities, sensitive setting and environment are safeguarded for present and future generations.

Aims & Objectives

Aim 1. Safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting for present and future generations

- a) Conserve the geological and geomorphological attributes of the Site while allowing natural processes to occur
- b) Support a healthy natural environment and uphold the landscape character, setting and sense of place for the Site
- c) Encourage, support and promote outcomes of research and monitoring programmes that inform the sustainable management of the Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting

Aim 2. Demonstrate and support excellent WHS Management

- a) Maintain a strong management structure for effective coordination of activities that influence or impact on the OUV and integrity of the Site
- b) Ensure that sufficient resources are secured to allow effective delivery of the WHS Plan
- c) Share knowledge and collaborate with other Sites to support responsible management practices

Aim 3. Raise awareness and understanding of the Giant's Causeway WHS status

- a) Increase public and sectoral understanding of the Site's WHS status and OUV
- b) Ensure WHS status is recognised and explained to a wide range of audiences
- c) Maintain and improve education, training and research opportunities and facilities at the WHS and beyond

Aim 4. Provide a safe, enjoyable and sustainable visitor experience that does not compromise the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site

- a) Maintain appropriate access to and around the Site that does not compromise the OUV or natural environment
- b) Encourage visitors to make environmentally sustainable choices when visiting the WHS
- c) Encourage development of appropriate and sustainable regional visitor infrastructure

Aim 5. Better engage local communities with the WHS, enabling them to gain greater benefits from the WHS designation

- a) Ensure local community representation is included in WHS management
- b) Enable local communities to be engaged with the WHS and harness the contribution that the Site can make to community life
- c) Support local communities to champion the WHS and its protection

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Foreword

During the late 1950's and in the 1960's much of the world's cultural and natural heritage was becoming under increasing and diverse threats. In response to this, in 1972, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO, adopted The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. In doing so UNESCO encouraged its Member States to identify, protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage sites around the world considered to be of outstanding universal value to humanity. These sites were not be of only national significance, they were to be deemed so valuable that they belonged to all of humanity and should be preserved for future generations to come. According to UNESCO, "heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration."

Almost 50 years later since the signing of the Convention, there are now 1121 World Heritage properties in 167 countries. A look through the list identifies many of our iconic cultural and natural sites. Among the 869 properties of cultural heritage are the Great Wall of China, The Serengeti National Park of Tanzania, The Birthplace of Jesus in Palestine, The Acropolis in Athens, Greece and The Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nearer to home, sites such as Stonehenge, The English Lake District, Brú na Bóinne in County Meath and Hadrian's Wall (Frontiers of the Roman Empire) are all now inscribed as World Heritage properties.

Among the 1121 World Heritage properties, 93 have been inscribed for their geological values. These sites represent major stages or events in the history of our planet or processes which have and continue to shape it. They include the Barbeton-Makhonjwa Mountains of South Africa which at 3.6 to 3.25 billion years old, is one of the Earth's oldest geological structures. Also in South Africa, the Vredefort Dome represents part of a large meteorite impact structure which collided with Earth just over 2 billion years ago. It bears witness to the world's greatest known single energy release event. Mistaken Point in Newfoundland, Canada, contains the oldest known assemblages of large fossils and marks a watershed in the history of life on Earth, dating back to 570 million years ago. The Age of Fishes is represented by Miguasha National Park in Québec, Canada, dating back to 370 million years old. Approximately 65 million years ago, an object from space impacted what is now the Yucatán Peninsula in México, leading to a mass extinction of life, including the dinosaurs. In Denmark, a 15km long fossil-rich coast cliff, the Stevns Klint, offers exceptional evidence of this impact, the mass extinction of life associated with it and the eventual recovery of life.

On the north coast of County Antrim sits one of the 93 World Heritage Properties inscribed for its geological values. The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast is not just an area of globally important geology, it is also one of incredible natural beauty and this was recognised when the property was inscribed in 1986. The rocks here date from approximately 60 million years ago and are associated with the stretching of the Earth's crust that led to the creation of the North Atlantic Ocean. Here, as tectonic plates shifted and Europe and North America split apart, the Earth's crust thinned allowing molten magma to reach the surface and flow as lava. Yet, the rocks at the Causeway have another story to tell because over 200 years these rocks were at the centre of a debate about the origin of such strange, hexagonal columns. Were they deposited from the sea or were they of volcanic origin? The rocks of the Giant's Causeway form a key part of the formation of geology as a science. Indeed the 40,000 interlocked hexagonal columns of basaltic lava truly do make an amazing site. It is no wonder that previous generations associated the rocks with myths and legends. The former Gaelic name of "Clochán na bhFomhórach" hints at an association with the Fomorians, a race of supernatural beings in Irish mythology. A more recent name, "Clochán an Aifir," meaning the "stepping stones of the giant" refers to one of the great heroes of Irish mythology, Fionn Mac Cumhaill, commonly known as Finn Mc Cool. The rocks of the Causeway form a key part of the story of Finn's great rivalry with the Scottish giant Benandonner.

For centuries the people of north Antrim have retained these stories of "Tha Giant's Causey," passing them on from generation to generation. But the people of north Antrim have also done something else. They have taken care of these now famous rocks, they have been their custodians ensuring that today millions of people can see the rocks, learn their stories and celebrate that these rocks are being preserved for all humanity. Today it is the National Trust that manages the site. In doing so, they have many challenges to face. Ever increasing numbers of visitors presents a challenge to any site, especially one as small as the Giant's Causeway. The increasing natural challenges associated with climate change are becoming more manifest whether it be from landslides to the increasing intensity and frequency of winter storms. The Causeway Coast is a working landscape so the management of the property needs to recognise and take into account the needs and aspirations of the local people. This report responds to the challenges associated with managing this wonderful dynamic property. It does so to ensure that future generations from across the world can come and appreciate that the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast justifiably belongs to all of humanity and rightly continues to be recognised as a World Heritage property.

Professor Patrick Mc Kever, Special Advisor to the Global Geoparks Network
Head of Earth Science at UNESCO, 2012 – 2018

Executive Summary

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site is located on the north coast of County Antrim and hosts spectacular geology of global importance. The Site extends 3km along the exposed and rugged coastline, taking in terrestrial and marine areas. Distinctive geological features such as the cliff exposures and 40,000 interlocking causeway stones combine to create a spectacle of exceptional natural beauty which has shaped understanding of Earth's geological history. The Giant's Causeway has become a symbol for Northern Ireland and has long been the premier visitor attraction.

It was inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1986 under Criteria vii and viii in recognition of the Site's geological and geomorphological values, its history of scientific study and its exceptional landscape value. The Site demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value which means its significance is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and is of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

World Heritage Sites are required to have a Management Plan by the World Heritage Committee and UK Government Policy. This Management Plan is not a statutory document. Instead, it draws together a range of policies, plans and strategies, which create a statutory and non-statutory framework that recognises and protects the World Heritage Site and its surroundings.

This Management Plan was prepared by the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT), who act as Secretariat for the World Heritage Site Steering Group. It was developed in collaboration with, and on behalf of, the Steering Group and the State Party representative in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). A programme of consultation was delivered as part of this process. The Steering Group membership reflects conservation, tourism, economic, educational and landowner interests and is formed from landowner, community and organisational representatives.

This is the third iteration of a Management Plan for the WHS and was prepared in a time of change and uncertainty due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The previous Plan was launched in 2013 and since then the Site has faced new challenges and changes, for instance, visitor numbers reaching annual averages of one million and now the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. This Management Plan and associated Action Plan provides a framework for responsibly managing the WHS to sustain the Site's 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV).

National Trust remain property managers of the terrestrial parts of the Site, operating day to day management and providing a variety of visitor facilities and experiences. A key challenge facing the National Trust is managing a popular visitor destination for conservation. A Sustainability Study was commissioned to consider the impact of visitors on the site through the lenses of; Conservation, the visitor experience (anticipated against actual), infrastructural capacity of the sites and wider area and, the impact of increasing tourism on the communities who live and work in the vicinity. The Study's findings are expected to guide sustainable management that supports the OUV and help to realise the Steering Group's vision.

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly has impacted operations at the World Heritage Site. Alongside short-term operational and financial challenges, it is expected that there will be longer-term changes needed as a result of limits placed on visitor numbers and ongoing social distancing measures.

The Steering Group recognise the challenges presented by the impacts of climate change, development pressures and visitor impacts on the Site as well as the opportunities to support the site and local area through improved community connection and research.

The Steering Group will use this Management Plan and the Action Plan as a basis for upholding the OUV of the Site, through a sustainable and responsible approach which engages and considers local community needs. To support this work a range of aims and objectives have been developed.

Aims & Objectives

Aim 1. Safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting for present and future generations

- a) Conserve the geological and geomorphological attributes of the Site while allowing natural processes to occur
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- a) Maintain appropriate access to and around the Site that does not compromise the OUV or natural environment
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- c) Encourage development of appropriate and sustainable regional visitor infrastructure

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- a) Ensure local community representation is included in WHS management
- b) Enable local communities to be engaged with the WHS and harness the contribution that the Site can make to community life
- c) Support local communities to champion the WHS and its protection

The World Heritage Site has a dedicated Steering Group tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Management Plan's aims and objectives through an Action Plan. However, responsibility does not lie with this one group, a range of partner organisations must work in collaboration with the Steering Group if the aims and objectives are to be met. The Steering Group provides strategic guidance on activities at and linked to the WHS. Their work, and this Plan should be promoted and recognised where possible.

The Action Plan presents a suite of tasks designed to meet the Plan's aims and objectives. The Steering Group, alongside other partner agencies need to work in partnership to realise these actions which support the OUV and sustainable Site management. Progress will be monitored and reported against at Steering Group meetings by the WHS Projects Manager (WHSPM). A review in 2023, with an updated Action Plan covering 2024- 2027 will ensure it remains relevant. The availability of funding will determine the rate of implementation, but equally important is proceeding with flexibility to allow the Steering Group to identify and respond to changes in circumstance.



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Aim 1.

**Safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the
World Heritage Site and its setting for present and
future generations**



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1. World Heritage Context

1.1 UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, (more commonly referred to as the World Heritage Convention), was adopted by UNESCO in 1972, recognising the increasing and diverse threats that cultural and natural heritage was facing. The Convention considered that parts of cultural and natural heritage are of such outstanding interest and therefore needed to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee was created to oversee this work.

To be inscribed on the World Heritage List, the nominated property must demonstrate that it has Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). OUV means to have cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

There are three component parts of OUV:

- **Meeting the criteria**
- **Demonstrating authenticity and integrity or, in the case of natural properties, integrity only**
- **Protection and management arrangements to sustain the values of the property**

There are ten criteria for OUV (see Appendix 1) of which the first six apply to cultural World Heritage Sites (WHS) and the remaining four to natural WHSs.

Nominations are submitted by State Parties, the term given to nations that have signed up to the Convention.

States Parties are responsible for caring for their heritage to the standards set out in the Convention, particularly as set out in Article 4, which requires the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage to the utmost of their own resources. The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast was put forward by the UK Government on this basis and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1986, following scientific evaluation by one of the Advisory Bodies (the International Union for the Conservation of Nature -IUCN) to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

The State Parties communicate with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, via the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in UNESCO (the Secretariat to the Committee). While the UK State Party is ultimately responsible for adherence to the Convention and remains the focal point for communication with UNESCO and its Advisory Bodies, the responsibility for the management and protection of the UK's WHSs is largely devolved. In respect of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast the management of the property is led by local stakeholders with the Northern Ireland Executive taking an overview.

The World Heritage Committee, supported by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, issues Operational guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and establishes the basis for and oversees monitoring activities.

IUCN is the official Advisory Body for natural sites under the World Heritage Convention. It evaluates

sites nominated for the World Heritage List under the natural or mixed natural / cultural criteria (the latter in partnership with the Cultural Advisory Body, ICOMOS) and advises the World Heritage Committee on the State of Conservation of natural properties on the World Heritage List.

In 1984, the UK Government ratified the World Heritage Convention. 32 properties in the UK and British Overseas Territories are presently inscribed on the World Heritage List, 27 for cultural heritage, four for natural heritage and one as a mixed Property.

In the UK, World Heritage Sites are non-statutory designations. Associated Management Plans, such as this one, have no statutory basis. Sites and their associated setting are afforded protection through statutory natural environment and heritage legislation, through spatial planning and a range of non-statutory policies and management practices.

1.2 Inscription of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site (referred to as the World Heritage Site, Site or Property) was inscribed on to the World Heritage List in 1986 as a natural World Heritage Site. The Property meets Criteria vii and Criteria viii and is deemed to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value.

A Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) was adopted in June 2013. It identifies the criteria met, assesses condition of integrity and includes a brief statement on the Site's protection and management and requirements for the future.

The World Heritage Centre consider the SOUV the key reference for the future effective protection and management of the Property.

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

Brief synthesis

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast is a spectacular area of global geological importance on the seacoast at the edge of the Antrim plateau in Northern Ireland. The most characteristic and unique feature of the site is the exposure of some 40,000 large, regularly shaped polygonal columns of basalt in perfect horizontal sections, forming a pavement. This dramatic sight has inspired legends of giants striding over the sea to Scotland. Celebrated in the arts and in science, it has been a visitor attraction for at least 300 years and has come to be regarded as a symbol for Northern Ireland.

The Property's accessible array of curious geological exposures and polygonal columnar formations formed around 60 million years ago make it a 'classic locality' for the study of basaltic volcanism. The features of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast site and in particular the strata exposed in the cliff faces, have been key to shaping the understanding of the sequences of activity in the Earth's geological history.

Criterion (vii): *The cliff exposures of columnar and massive basalt at the edge of the Antrim Plateau present a spectacle of exceptional natural beauty. The extent of visible rock sections and the quality of the exposed columns in the cliff and on the Causeway combine to present an array of features of considerable significance.*

Criterion (viii): The geological activity of the Tertiary era is clearly illustrated by the succession of the lava flows and interbasaltic beds which are in evidence on the Causeway Coast. Interpretation of the succession has allowed a detailed analysis of Tertiary events in the North Atlantic. The extremely regular columnar jointing of the Tholeiitic basalts is a spectacular feature which is displayed in exemplary fashion at the Giant's Causeway. The Causeway itself is a unique formation and a superlative horizontal section through columnar basalt lavas.

Integrity

Most of the 70-ha site is in the ownership and management of the National Trust. Access to the coast is by a system of footpaths which allow visitors the opportunity to view the coastal scenery from the cliff tops and also examine the geological features at close range. The path is generally unobtrusive and monitored and maintained to keep it in a safe condition. The cliff exposures and causeway stones, key attributes of the Property, are protected by ownership in perpetuity by The National Trust. The removal of 'souvenir' stones from the Causeway, which occurred before the area was protected, has long since ceased.

Protection and management requirements

The Property has many layers of statutory and non-statutory protection. In addition to World Heritage status, most of the Property is a National Nature Reserve and also forms part of the Giant's Causeway and Dunseverick Area of Special Scientific Interest. Almost all of the terrestrial area of the Property (mainly its vegetated sea cliffs) has been designated as the North Antrim Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive (Natura 2000). The designation of the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which covers an area of spectacular coastal scenery stretching over approximately 29 km, gives formal statutory recognition to the quality of the landscape.

The UK Government protects World Heritage properties and their surroundings under the spatial planning system through a hierarchy of regional and local policies and plans. Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) for Northern Ireland set out policies on land-use and other planning matters. Two PPSs specifically refer to World Heritage properties and SACs, noting that "development which would adversely affect such sites or the integrity of their settings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances."

The National Trust holds most of the land in inalienable ownership, with approximately 5% of the Property remaining in private ownership. The Crown Estate is considered the legal owner of all lands between high and low water mark and has rights over the sea bed within territorial waters. A World Heritage Steering Group comprising relevant stakeholders provides the framework for implementation of the Property's Management Plan, ensuring the conservation of the Property as well as managing visitation, as the Causeway is Northern Ireland's most popular tourist attraction. A world-class visitor centre, aimed at improving both the visitor experience and ensuring the integration of the centre within the landscape in order to maintain the Property's outstanding scenic beauty, has been built by the National Trust.

This management framework ensures delivery of the management requirements for the Property and its Outstanding Universal Value, as well as the conservation requirements arising from all the various designations, with the delivery of a world-class experience of the Property by its visitors.

The Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site Management Plan acknowledges the continuing effects of natural erosion which will gradually alter the cliff exposures. Path routes, and possibly even site boundaries, may need to be changed to accommodate the effects of this process. Changes in sea level or an increased frequency of storm events may also, in the future, affect the degree to which the causeway is accessible or visible. The need to continue to monitor the effects of climate change and erosion is recognised in the Management Plan and associated Action Plan.

Other threats requiring effective protection and management include direct damage to natural features within the Property through human impact. This is addressed through legal control and management by the National Trust. Damage to the setting of the Property through human impact resulting from inappropriate development or land use is addressed through legal and spatial planning control measures.

1.3 Management Plans for the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Committee requires World Heritage Sites to have a Management Plan, or a documented Management System, while UK government policy requires a Management Plan. Operational Guidelines state that a Plan should provide a thorough understanding of the Property, its values and context, and provide a basis for effective management. It also outlines that a Management Plan should ensure effective protection by specifying how the Outstanding Universal Value should be preserved, encouraging participatory means for a Site's management and protection.

The first Management Plan for the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS spanned 2005 – 2012, the second spanned 2013– 2019. Both encouraged partnership working and detailed activities that contributed to the preservation of the OUV, as does this Plan.

The previous Management Plan provided a framework of activity for the Steering Group. However, dedicated financial resources reduced after 2015 and some momentum was lost. An action to identify and secure resources has been included in the accompanying Action Plan.

This Management Plan was developed in collaboration with, and on behalf of, the World Heritage Site Steering Group and the State Party representative in Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). It spans 2021 – 2027.

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT), who act as Secretariat for the Steering Group, produced this Plan and delivered a programme of consultation as part of its development. Consultation was completed with a variety of stakeholders including with Steering Group members, public bodies, agencies, organisations and the public. A summary can be found on the WHS website.

1.4 World Heritage Guidelines and Monitoring

The World Heritage Committee issues Operational Guidelines, policies, and other relevant literature. IUCN has developed positions and advice notes on issues for natural WHSs. The UK Government Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) acts as the UK State Party to the World Heritage Convention and has issued relevant reports. Historic England provides advice to UK Government on its obligations relating to world heritage. Relevant literature has been reviewed in the development of this Plan.

Periodic Reporting

To support the Convention, the World Heritage Committee co-ordinates a monitoring exercise called Periodic Reporting. Two cycles have been completed, in 2005/2006 and 2013. A third is expected in 2022-2023. Sites are required to complete a report as part of this process.

Factors identified as affecting the Property in the 2013 Periodic Report include.

- *Social/cultural uses of heritage; Impacts of Tourism/Visitor/ Recreation*
- *Other human activities; Illegal Activities*
- *Climate change and severe weather events; Storms, Flooding*
- *Sudden ecological or geological events; Avalanche/Landslide*

The summary of management needs noted that *Answers provided have not outlined any serious management need*. The Steering Group and specifically the principal Property managers the National Trust, have acted, where possible, to address these issues.

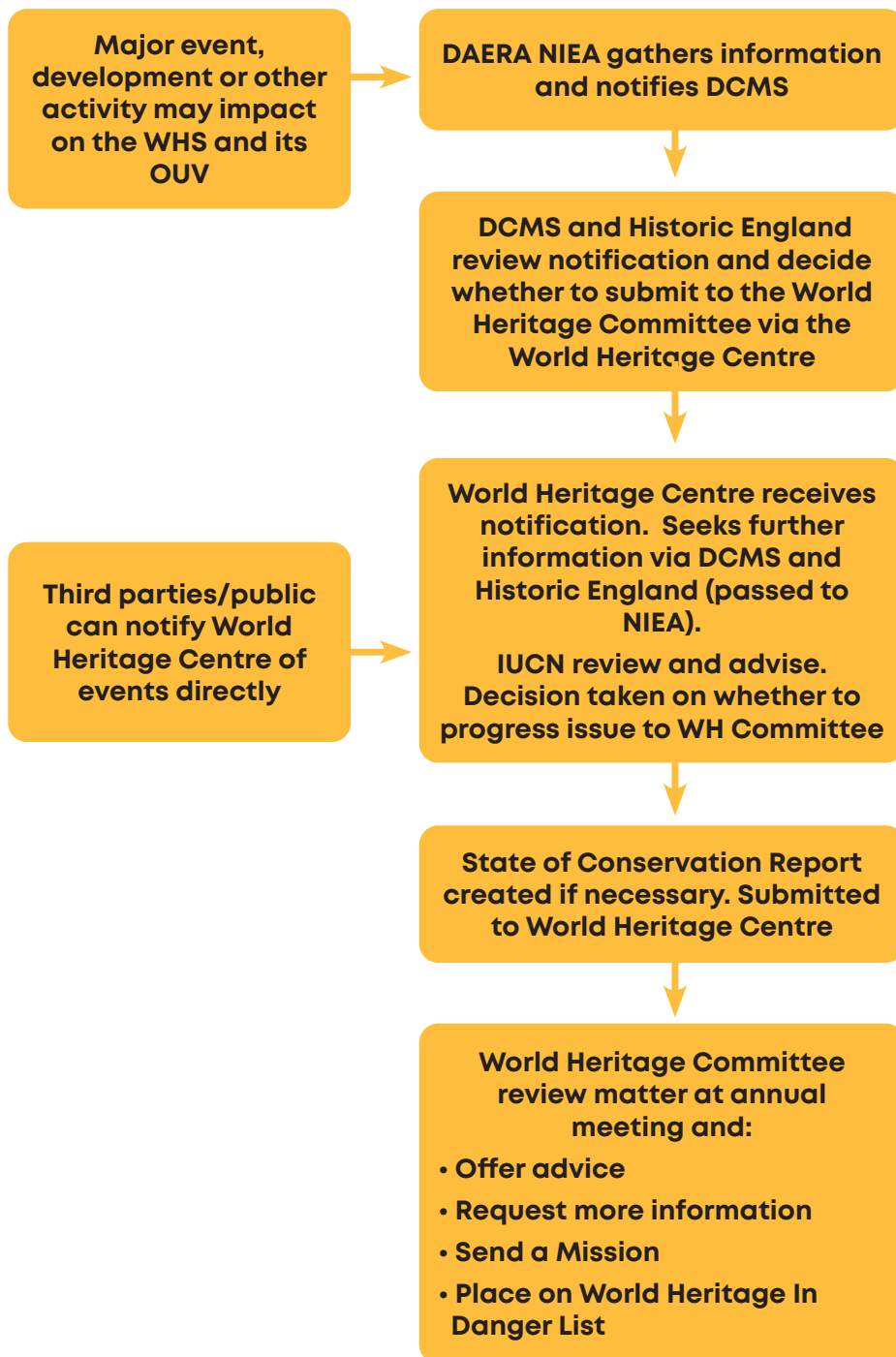


Reactive Monitoring

The World Heritage Committee is involved in monitoring the state of conservation of WHSs. This mechanism is known as Reactive Monitoring. The diagram below details this process and outlines the responsibilities of each party.

Between 2013 – 2019 seven State of Conservation Reports were logged for the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS (four by the State Party supplying information). The reports focus on two specific development proposals and an energy exploration licence. The World Heritage Committee considered the reports and made five Decisions during this time. In light of one of these development proposals, which was for a golf resort, an IUCN Advisory Mission was invited to assess the overall state of conservation of the Property in 2013. See Appendix 2 for more information. Neither development proposal is currently active and the energy exploration licence term ceased in 2015.

Through the Action Plan the Steering Group will address noted issues. For instance, working to exclude the WHS from energy exploration licensing areas and continuing efforts to realise 2013 Advisory Mission recommendations.





Aim 2.

**Demonstrate and support excellent
WHS Management**



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2. The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site

2.1 Site Description

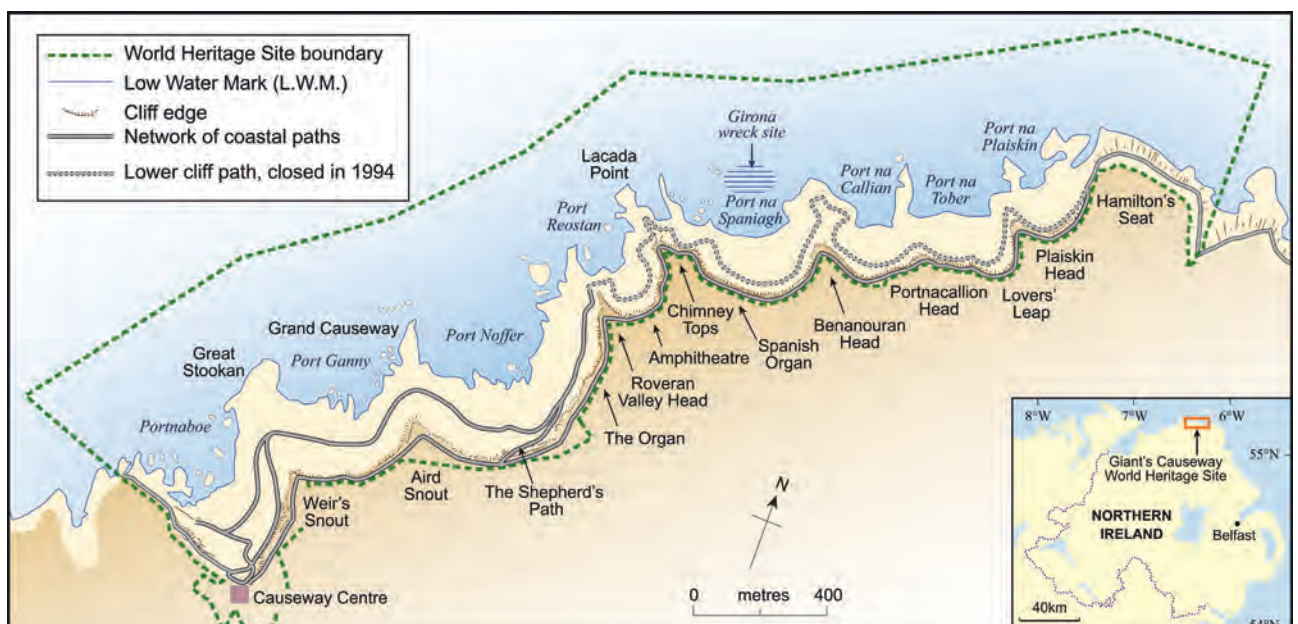
The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast is a spectacular area of global geological importance situated on the north coast of County Antrim, Northern Ireland. The Property, situated at the edge of the Antrim Plateau, extends approximately 3 kilometres along the coast and is about 0.5 kilometres in width. The Property includes terrestrial and marine lands, covering 79 hectares of land and 160 hectares of sea. Maps are available in Appendix 13.

Terrestrial lands, which are somewhat typical of this stretch of coastline, feature a distinctive rugged shoreline, rocky outcrops and an array of geological features. Key features and attributes, as noted in SOUV, are the cliff exposures which display a succession of lava flows and interbasaltic beds, and causeway stones made up of 40,000 interlocking, extremely regular, jointed basalt columns, some of which form a

distinctive pavement at the foot of the basalt cliffs. The boundary also takes in a small amount of land along the cliff top. Geomorphological processes continue to shape and reshape the landscapes of the Site and natural erosion gradually alters the cliff exposures.

The Site hosts visitor facilities including a Visitor Centre, car parks, hotel, retail outlets, access roads and associated paths. Paths allow visitors to examine the geological formations and exposures at close range and are important to the Integrity of the Site (SOUV). The Site is uninhabited, although the Causeway Hotel welcomes guests.

The marine area supports the terrestrial area by providing landscape context and views of the geological features. The Girona Historic Wreck is located within the waters of the WHS Property.



2.1.1 Site Boundary and Setting

Zonation around the Property

In line with the Operational Guidelines, an area adjacent to the Property on the landward side has been designated as the Distinctive Landscape Setting (DLS) to support the WHS via the Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP2016). Map available in Appendix 13. The NAP2016, by its designation and policy, and associated regional planning policy, provide a restricted planning framework for development proposals in the DLS, providing a layer of protection from inappropriate development.

Prior to 2016 two further zones (supportive and connective) were identified; however, these were not formally adopted in the NAP2016 and are no longer afforded specific protection.

Distinctive Landscape Setting

“The landscape closely associated with the World Heritage Site extends several kilometres south from the Site and is visually intrinsically linked, providing both a backdrop for visitors within the Site and a foreground for visitors approaching the Site.” Northern Area Plan 2016.

The DLS is wholly terrestrial, extending approximately 2km along the coastline either side of the Site and inland approximately 4km. It is a rural area with an estimated population of 437 people across

195 permanent domestic dwellings (This figure is based on robust analysis of available property and population data by CCGBC Planning in 2021). The population is spread across small settlements, clusters of housing, individual houses and farmsteads. Agriculture and visitor accommodation represent most of the economic offering and rural roads and lanes transect the DLS, while the Causeway Coast Way skirts the rugged coastline providing walking access.

The landscape and seascape are intimately connected in the DLS and Site with a rugged exposed coastline of high cliffs, rocky headlands and bays sitting below predominantly undeveloped farmland (see section 2.24 for more information on landscape and seascape character).

Modification of Property Boundary 2016

In 2016 the World Heritage Committee approved a minor boundary modification which represented a 1.1% increase from the originally inscribed 236.775 hectares to 239.405 hectares, approximately a 5 metre increase running for most of the landward boundary. A map is available in Appendix 13.

The modification was requested in response to recommendation R15 made by an IUCN Advisory Mission in 2013. It addresses concerns that, should there be significant erosion, the cliff faces, which are key attributes of OUV, would no longer



lie within the inscribed boundary. This matter had also been noted by the World Heritage Committee. The Steering Group supported this modification. Related documents can be found here. Improved, regular monitoring of cliff erosion is needed to assess if the boundary is sufficient and to ensure that the cliff faces, remain within the Property boundary.

The Property now includes land on the cliff top, previously the boundary ran along the top of the cliff face. Most of the 5 metre extension is used as a coastal walking route, with some lands sitting within field boundaries. The views to and from the Site are much increased with some vistas stretching far beyond the DLS. The Steering Group have given some consideration to the new visual reach. Expert advice, such as a critical views assessment, would provide a clearer understanding.

2.2 Natural Heritage

2.2.1 Geology and Geomorphology

The origins of the Giant's Causeway can be traced back 83 million years ago to when the continent of Laurasia (combined North America, Greenland, Europe and Asia) started to fracture and the opening of the North Atlantic Ocean began. Volcanic activity began along newly-developed mid-ocean ridges as well as a number of incipient fractures that never fully opened. One of these ran along the present Irish Sea on a line extending from the west of Wales to the western coastal fringe of Scotland. It was volcanic activity associated with this zone of crustal weakness that formed the rocks of the Giant's Causeway as well as those on adjacent parts of the Scottish coast.

Beginning around 60 million years ago, enormous lava flows extended from volcanoes and the associated fissures that criss-crossed the area, all merging to cover the entire land

surface over hundreds of square kilometres and repeated eruptions thickened this lava pile. These lava flows are all part of the Antrim Lava Group and extend across Northern Ireland to form the Antrim Plateau.

The first lavas to erupt at the Causeway (the Lower Basalt Formation) had a pliant molten surface that produced corded and ropy crusts. As each flow cooled, the surface crust was exposed to the weather long enough (a few tens or hundreds of years) for a thin red soil (laterite) to form before being buried by the next eruption. At the Causeway there were at least six eruptions with such pauses before a long quiescent period when all volcanic activity ceased. The Lower Basalt Formation can be seen in the roadside descending to the Causeway and six flows can be counted in the lower cliff exposure on the east side of Port Reostan.

This period lasted for tens of thousands or maybe even hundreds of thousands of years, and the consequent heavy weathering of the topmost lava flow resulted in oxidation and hydration, which started a series of chemical changes that reached progressively deeper into the basalt. This layer, rich in iron and aluminium is known as the Interbasaltic Formation. During this long dormant period, surface erosion carved the lava field into a richly forested landscape of low hills and deep, wide valleys.

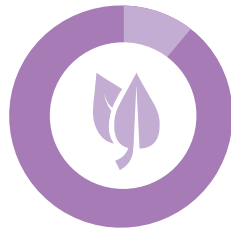




There are

1121

World Heritage Sites
in 167 Countries

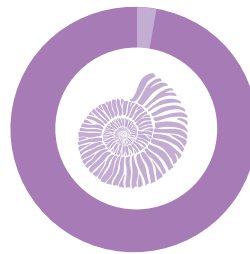


213

are natural sites

and

25



are designated for geology (vii) and landscape (viii)

The Giant's Causeway & Causeway Coast
is one of these 25



The red and grey lithomarges and laterites of the Interbasaltic Formation can be seen on top of the Lower Basalts on the road down to the Causeway but the best outcrops, showing the range of processes and products as well as Giant's Eye corestones, are ideally seen on the headland between Port Reostan and the eponymous Port na Spaniagh.

Volcanic activity began again suddenly and dramatically, with new fissures pouring out vast quantities of mobile lava that obliterated everything in its path. Initially the lava drained into the valleys but at the Causeway it eventually accumulated into a large lava lake in the bend of a river. With a depth of 90m the lake was slow to cool. As the homogenous lava lake cooled slowly and evenly, it developed regular stress patterns as it solidified. As contraction continued these patterns were expressed as evenly spaced cooling cracks that permeated the entire mass, creating thousands of mainly six-sided columns. A further six to eight closely spaced eruptions followed, together creating the Causeway Tholeiite Member, but the first created the thickest flow.

Only the first three flows of the Causeway Tholeiite Member can be seen along this stretch of coast, the rest having eroded back inland. The Grand Causeway is the most spectacular outcrop of the first flow, where marine erosion reveals



over 200m of columnar rock on the main promontory. The dramatic series of tight bays to the east- The Amphitheatre, Port na Spaniagh, Port na Tober and the approach to Hamilton's Seat - are backed by two or sometimes three tiers of magnificent colonnades, representing the first three flows of the Causeway Tholeiites. The extensive cliff exposures of columnar and massive basalt coupled with the Causeway Stones, best displayed in a pavement on the promontory, are key attributes of the Property as stated in the SOUV.



Following this major upheaval there was a further long period of dormancy, succeeded by the final gigantic series of eruptions (the Upper Basalt Formation). The pipes and fissures supplying these last flows passed through the earlier rocks on their way to the surface.

The violent volcanic events recorded in this magnificent coastline, so stunningly displayed at the Causeway and in its easterly cliffs, have made it one of the most celebrated geological sites in the world.

The physical profile of the Site is characterised by headlands and bays. Headlands indicate areas of relative resistance to erosion. Continued erosion at the base of the headlands by wave and wind action has resulted in near vertical cliffs which display the geological features of the Site.

Past geological events and geomorphological processes shaped the landscape we see today. However, the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site is dynamic and continues to change with regular movement of sediment downslope, rockfalls from the upper cliffs and marine erosion and reshaping of the coastline. This dynamism creates many management challenges but also maintains the visually stunning, rugged character of this landscape.

2.2.2 Understanding Earth's History

The Causeways importance to our understanding of Earth's history is recognised through the Site meeting Criteria viii and in the SOUV. The Site was important to the advancement of understanding Earth's history and was widely known from the late 17th century. It provided a subject for philosophical debate specifically surrounding the origins of rocks from a molten state in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Site was the focus of Rev. Dr Hamilton's letters in 1786 in which he was the first to interpret the sequence of lava flows as volcanic in origin. Together with Ramore Head in Portrush, approximately 5 miles west of the WHS, the Causeway,

has been described as one of the most culturally important sites in international geology. It remains a classic locality for the study of basaltic volcanism today and paths and vistas allow visitors to examine the array of dramatic geological features.

After many unsuccessful attempts to represent it, the Causeway was finally convincingly drawn in 1740 in a series of watercolours by a relatively unknown Dublin artist, Susanna Drury. These paintings became the subject of the famous Vivares engravings of 1743, which were widely distributed in Europe, North America and the Far East, firmly establishing the Causeway's fame.

The columnar flows were described in classical architectural terms. The lower, wide and very regular columns of the lower sections were likened to a colonnade while the term entablature was used for the upper zone of narrower, more irregular and often curved columns (Tomkeieff, 1940). Although the terminology was subsequently modified, this descriptive approach has been adopted globally.



2.2.3 A Dynamic Site

The geological foundations of the Causeway may have formed 60 million years ago but continued interactions between the geology, high energy coastal conditions and human intervention have created a complex and constantly changing landscape which supports a diverse flora and fauna. This natural and continual erosion is recognised in the Protection and management requirements section of the SOUV which calls for monitoring and recognises that path routes and boundaries may need to be changed as a result e.g. 2016 Property boundary extension. The Steering Group have and continue to encourage and support Site monitoring.

The Site's dynamic nature is well demonstrated by the occurrence of slope failures. These range in scale from shallow-translational flows to large rotational landslides and rock falls. Continual basal erosion by wave action leads to undermining of basalt at the shore causing slope failure. The oversteepening

of cliffs may result in the collapse of sections, individual columns, or blocks, causing additional material to fall. Although the trigger for many of these failures is often a period of prolonged and/or intense rainfall, this process is continual. Failures are due to fundamental factors including the gradual weathering and weakening of the underlying geology and the undermining of cliffs by marine erosion and/or human excavation to facilitate the construction and maintenance of footpaths.

Screes provide evidence of past and present landscape change. Conditionally stable screes are overlain by a thin soil cover held in place by a vegetation mat. Where undercut by marine erosion or footpath construction, or locally saturated by subsurface moisture flows, the slopes are prone to small translational failures or more extensive slides. When footpaths are partially or wholly covered by debris the National Trust clear the material away.



2.2.4 Landscape and Seascape Character

Landscape Character

The Site undoubtedly presents a landscape of spectacular beauty. The array of geological exposures, specifically the exemplar causeway stone pavement, make the Site distinct among the outstanding coastline at the sea edge of the Antrim Plateau.

In Northern Ireland a process to identify landscape character has been in place since 2000. The Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment (2000) (NILCA) is furthered and complimented by the Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (2016) (NIRLCA). The NILCA provides localised information, while the NIRLCA presents broader and more up-to-date information including likely forces for change, historic and cultural associations as well as perceptive factors.

The technique provides a baseline against which to monitor changes in the landscape character and upon which to develop landscape scale plans and strategies

The World Heritage Site and DLS are prominently mentioned in both assessments and sit as relatively small areas within:

- **NILCA: LCA 57 Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island. Further information here. (See Appendix 4 for key Landscape Characteristics).**
- **NIRLCA : RLCA 16 North Coast and Rathlin Island. Further information here.**

CCGBC is currently undertaking a Landscape Study of the Borough to inform its Local Development Plan (LDP). The indicative publication date for the draft CCGBC Landscape Study is Summer 2021. It will be the most up to date landscape character information and will be discussed by the Steering Group.

Seascape Character

The seascape is an integral aspect of the WHS. Not only does approximately two thirds of the Site lay out to sea, the terrestrial part is predominantly exposed coastline.

The Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment 2013 applied a similar subdivision and characterisation process to the seascape, resulting in Seascape Character Areas (SCAs).

The World Heritage Site is recognised as a defining feature of Causeway Coast SCA 5. (See Appendix 6 for Key Characteristics and Forces for Change for Causeway Coast SCA). The larger Atlantic SCA 22 sits further seaward and links to the Causeway Coast SCA 5. Maps available Appendix 13.

Together this landscape and seascape characterisation provides the Steering Group with a mechanism to monitor change at the Site and DLS, supporting sustainable management in line with the Protection and Management Requirements section of the SOUV.

Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The World Heritage Site and DLS sit within the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Designated in 1989 (a year after the Site was inscribed), under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order (NI) 1985, the AONB gives formal statutory recognition to the landscape quality, wildlife importance and rich cultural and architectural heritage of the Causeway Coast. For more information on the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty see Appendix 7.

2.2.5 Biodiversity

Ecological aspects of the World Heritage Site are not specifically cited in the Statement Outstanding Universal Value however, the natural environment is intrinsically linked to the Property's key attributes and is responsible for its dynamic character and the sense of open, natural landscape.

Marine waters, shoreline, near vertical cliffs and flat lands are home to a variety of habitats including intertidal kelp beds, storm beaches, saltmarsh, coastal swamp, scree, grassy slopes, and a mosaic of dry and wet heath found along the cliff top.

Climate change, sea level rise, non-native species and inappropriate development all pose a threat to the habitats and species within the WHS.



Each habitat supports a variety of flora and fauna, some of which are outlined below:

- **Cliffs and cliff tops host heath patches and lichen, block-like scree slopes are typically species poor while those made of smaller sized material provide more suitable locations for colonisation.**
- **Unimproved grasslands are established across the Site and host maritime and non-maritime species with sub-maritime species such as primrose and wood anemone.**
- **Invertebrate assemblages include the Narrow Mouth Whorl Snail which is protected under the European Union's Habitats Directive.**
- **Mammals such as Irish hare, Irish stoat and rabbits have been recorded at the Site.**
- **Breeding and over-wintering birds are supported. Northern Ireland's only pair of breeding choughs are known to live here. Other breeding species include fulmar, buzzards, peregrine falcons, shags and black guillemot. Eider ducks, razorbills, kestrel, curlew and oystercatchers can be seen and some feed in the sheltered bays below the cliffs.**
- **The shores and waters are home to a plethora of marine life. Notably grey seals, European otters and bottle-nosed dolphins have been spotted.**
- **Recently stromatolites have been identified in Portnaboe in semi-tidal pools fed by ground water.**



National Trust undertake a range of natural environment monitoring and management activities including:

- Ongoing conservation grazing in Portnaboe with the introduction of Dexter cattle in February 2020
- Conservation grazing at Innisfree, Aird and Runkerry
- Hedge planting and restoration around Innisfree
- Nesting fulmar count May/June 2020
- Rockfall and landslide monitoring inspections and incidents logged on a daily basis

Note: Normal survey work has been limited in 2020/21 due to the impact of Covid-19.

The natural environment is so special here it is afforded protection from a variety of designations; National Nature Reserve, Area of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation. More information on these designations and how they support the conservation-led management and protection of the Site is in Section 3.8.



2.3 Cultural Significance, Intangible Heritage and Local Communities

The Giant's Causeway has become a symbol for Northern Ireland, demonstrating its importance to the area and its people. The WHS does not exist in isolation, it is part of the local area, connected to communities, culture and scientific research far beyond the Site boundary or DLS.

As noted in the SOUV the geological formations at the Causeway inspired legends of giants and has attracted visitors for over 300 years. Although many of the myths, stories of past kingdoms, traditions and industries are intangible, stories can often be anchored to landscape features, places, placenames and buildings. See Appendix 8 for more information on cultural and intangible heritage.

Scientific interest in the Giant's Causeway during the 17th Century onwards meant that it became a well-known geological study site. The Site's name and descriptions of the exemplary features spread globally. Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the National Trust and the Steering Group often welcomed local and international researchers on site. The opportunity to view and examine the geological features at close range is important to the Integrity of the Site (SOUV).



2.3.1 Mythology and Folklore

Many myths and tales are linked to the Giant's Causeway, in fact, this is how it was named. Fishermen, shepherds, kelp-gathers and locals used stories to explain the curious appearance of the Causeway Stones long before the geological reasons were known. The most well-known story is that of Finn Mac Cool, or Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Medieval Irish monks first documented the story of this mythical giant.

According to the tale, Finn Mac Cool created the Causeway so that he could reach Scotland and fight his rival, the Scottish giant Benandonner. Finn saw Benandonner in the distance and realised he was much bigger than he had expected, so he fled back home along the causeway, losing a boot along the way and telling his wife Oonagh everything upon his return. However, Benandonner used the causeway to bring the fight to Finn and on reaching Finn's house he knocked the door and demanded to fight.

Oonagh told Finn to pretend he was asleep and covered him in a blanket. She told Benandonner that Finn was out, and the sleeping Finn was their child Oisín. Benandonner took one look at the enormous baby and feared what size his father must then be. Benandonner fled back to Scotland tearing up the Causeway as he went so that Finn could not follow him, leaving only its remnants at the Giant's Causeway and at Fingal's Cave on the Scottish island of Staffa.

Features such as the Giant's Boot, Giant's Organ and Giant's Harp are linked to the tale of Finn Mac Cool.

2.3.2 Sites of Significance

The Giant's Causeway sits within a rich patchwork of communities, natural and built features that together reflect how the area has been lived in, altered, and developed over centuries. (See Appendix 8 for further information). Some features and buildings within the WHS, DLS and environs are recognised by the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities. These include:

Portnaboe Harbour - Industrial Heritage

Causeway Hotel- Listed Building B1 grade

A Burnt Mound at Aird – Sites and Monuments

Coal Mine at Aird – Industrial Heritage

2.3.3 Local Communities

The World Heritage Convention encourages World Heritage Site's to become a function in the life of the community (Article 5 World Heritage Convention) and the Operational Guidelines confirm the important role of local communities in protecting and conserving WHSs.

The World Heritage Site is uninhabited, however, about 437 people live in the DLS. They are impacted by the popularity of the Giant's Causeway in various ways.

The Giant's Causeway is internationally recognised and so provides a strong sense of identity and place for local people. Many local people's family heritage and memories are connected with the Site or the tourism that grew up around it. 13% of jobs in the Council area are in tourism (2019). The Site itself is a significant employer, either through the National Trust which

employs 75 full time staff and more in peak season or through other independent businesses. Outside the Site many derive a living by providing or working in businesses that offer accommodation, tours, hospitality and gifts/crafts to purchase.

The Causeway Coast Way connects the settlements of Bushmills, Portballintrae and Ballintoy to the Site. The National Trust operate a free parking pass for residents in BT57 postcode area, supporting local people to access the WHS. National Trust usually run two popular community open days, a range of community development courses and support, through venue space and staff time, the locally established Potato Festival that celebrates potato breeder John Clarke.

However, local community's relationship with the Site is not entirely harmonious. Some of the challenges include issues with inappropriate parking on rural roads, pinch points of traffic congestion, general disturbance, a perceived disconnect with the Site and more stringent planning regulations within the DLS. The Steering Group hope to address some of these issues and improve community relations via a range of Actions in the Action Plan. The National Trust continually work with the community to address issues and support their connection to the Site. See Appendix 12 for more information on each community.

2.4 Current Context and Facilities

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site has retained the title of Northern Ireland's premier tourist attraction for many decades. As such it is extremely important to the local and regional economy and supports substantial direct and indirect employment. The National Trust own and manage most of the land including visitor facilities. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on operations at the World Heritage Site, as well as the short-term operational and financial challenges, it is expected that there will be longer-term changes needed as a result.

Throughout 2020 and 2021 the National Trust had to close the Visitor Centre for intermittent periods and operate reduced visitor numbers and visitor experience. Historical visitor and environmental data, information and management approaches are based on a set of criteria that may no longer apply in the 'new normal'. It will be necessary to establish meaningful data based on the 'new normal' to inform future planning and decision making.



© Tourism NI

2.4.1 Visitor Facilities and Infrastructure at the World Heritage Site

There is a cluster of visitor facilities at the south-west corner of the Property, some of these facilities and infrastructure sit outside the Property boundary.

The National Trust operate and maintain the majority of visitor infrastructure including a world-class visitor centre, hotel, car parking and paths.

Visitor Facilities and Infrastructure at the World Heritage Site, or directly adjacent:

- **The National Trust Visitor Centre.**
- **The Causeway Hotel operated by the National Trust.**
- **The Nook restaurant. Adjacent to the WHS and in private ownership.**
- **Parking for cars and coaches including a coach drop-off system. Three car parks are available.**
- **A public transport bus stop. Used by Park and Ride and standard buses.**
- **Outdoor seating located near the visitor centre and on associated paths.**
- **Public toilets.**
- **A public telephone opposite the visitor centre entrance.**
- **A path network leading to various parts of the site and connecting to the wider area. Including interpretive and safety signage and some seating.**
- **A road, including turning circles, leading from the Visitor Centre to the Causeway Stones. A wheelchair accessible shuttlebus services this route.**

In line with advice in the Operational Guidelines, the National Trust develop and deliver visitor facilities, interpretation and infrastructure which is appropriate for the Property's protection and management requirements set out in the SOUV. An effective and inclusive presentation of the Property that meets visitor needs, in relation to the provision of safe and appropriate access is provided. The National Trust operate a ranger system that encompasses visitor management and safety, visitor tours including educational programming, as well as conservation and site management activities.

Opened in 2012 the Visitor Centre is sympathetically designed and integrates into the landscape to help maintain the Property's outstanding scenic beauty. It has a basalt clad exterior mimicking the form and shape of the Causeway Stones and a variety of resource efficient systems are imbedded in the building. The World Heritage emblem is displayed at the Visitor Centre and in suitable locations around the visitor area.

National Trust Visitor Centre facilities include:

- *An interpretive exhibition showcasing the stories and science behind the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site.*
- *A variety of interactive media which display the story of the World Heritage Site, including management activities.*
- *A café with indoor and outdoor seating.*
- *A retail area.*
- *A Tourist Information Centre and Bureau de Change.*
- *Toilets.*
- *Audio-guide handsets that provide interpretation in a variety of languages and topics. These assist visitors with hearing and sight difficulties visit and understand the site.*
- *A range of guided tours, led by National Trust rangers start at, or near the Visitor Centre.*
- *Facilities are usually open 9am - 5pm Winter/ 9am - 7pm Summer.*

The National Trust endeavour to support local businesses. 80% of craft for sale in the Visitor Centre is produced locally and the National Trust work in partnership with selected experience providers.

2.4.2 Access within and to the World Heritage Site

Approximately one million people a year visit the WHS. Many travel to it by car and coach while some walk or cycle. Throughout the Site paths provide access and a shuttle bus is available for priority passengers. Visitors can access the WHS through the Visitor Centre or by foot for free via the Public Right of Way. Two thirds of visitor access is via the Visitor Centre.

Walking Routes

Access to the coast via footpaths to view the coastal scenery and examine the geological features at close range is important to the integrity of the Site however, maintaining access in a dynamic landscape presents a management challenge for the National Trust. The SOUV recognises this and determines that path routes may need to change to accommodate continuing natural erosion, thus allowing for safe visitor management.





A network of footpaths (or trails), of varying lengths and accessibility, transect the Site. CCGBC facilitate further aspects of the cliff top path through permissive path agreements with private landowners. This connects the WHS to the Causeway Coast Way, a 33 mile walking trail, which passes through the Site. This route is part of the much longer Ulster Way and International Appalachian Trail.

A Public Right of Way (PROW) investigation is ongoing for part of the path network at the Site. It is Council's duty to investigate PROWs and if evidence supports the PROW Council must assert, protect and keep it open. The Steering Group are updated on such matters by a Council Officer who sits on the Steering Group.

- *Green trail - Disabled access trail leading to Runkerry Head picnic area with views of the Giant's Causeway (700m). It is Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and accessible for prams and wheelchairs. However, some help from a carer may be necessary on parts of the path. The path continues to the village of Portballintrae however it is not suitable for disabled access beyond the picnic area.*
- *Blue trail- From the Visitor Centre to the Grand Causeway and Port Noffer (1.2km).*
- *Red trail- From the Visitor Centre to Port Noffer via the cliff top path and Shepherd's Steps (1.2km).*
- *Yellow trail- Cliff top path travelling east. Part of the Causeway Coast Way.*



Shuttle Bus

A shuttle bus service, operated by public transport provider Translink, runs from the rear of the Visitor Centre to the Causeway stones along a tarmac road which is a PROW. Only selected vehicles can use this road; the shuttle bus, maintenance vehicles and emergency services. The

bus service is intended to prioritise disabled visitors and those unable to walk to the Causeway stones.

The 2013 IUCN Advisory Mission recommended the service use electric vehicles to improve sustainability. The Steering Group completed some research into the viability of this and in 2019 an electric bus was trialled. Limitations in braking capabilities and the short but very steep route, mean current electric buses are not able to service this route. The Steering Group and Translink will review the matter when technology improves.

The shuttle bus has not run during the pandemic and its future operation needs to be considered in the post-pandemic recovery plan.

Getting to the World Heritage Site

Most visitors arrive by car, bus or coach to the Visitor Centre area where there is carparking, a coach drop-off point and some coach parking for those operators who work with the National Trust.





Two main road routes link Belfast City (60 miles south) and environs, to the WHS. First is the Causeway Coastal Route, which is the marketing brand provided to the coastal roads connecting Belfast to Derry~Londonderry via Ballycastle and second is an inland route consisting of the M2 motorway, A26 dual carriage way and smaller roads via Bushmills.

Visitors arriving by coach usually enter the Visitor Centre and remain at the WHS for 1.5 to 2 hours.

Park and Ride bus services from Bushmills usually operate March to October while regular bus routes from Coleraine, Ballycastle and Belfast stop at the visitor area. Concessions on Visitor Centre entrance fees are given when a valid public transport ticket is presented.

The Giant's Causeway Tramway is a private enterprise that operates seasonally from Bushmills and stops a few hundred metres away from the Visitor Centre.

Cycle Network Route 93 passes close to the Causeway while the Causeway Coast Way walking path connects villages to the Site.

A handful of sightseeing boat tours take in the area, usually departing from Portrush, Portballintrae or Ballycastle. These tend to form only a small part of operators' business and are not an everyday event.

2.4.3 Education and learning opportunities at the Site

The Site has long offered opportunities for learning, it was key to shaping the understanding of the sequences of activity in Earth's geological history in the 17th Century and remains a classic locality to study basaltic volcanism.

World Heritage Sites are encouraged to develop educational and capacity building programmes that connect with local communities, schools, universities and museums. Such efforts should strengthen understanding of the special tangible and intangible heritage and the dangers threatening it (Decision 43 COM 11A / Article 27 of the World Heritage Convention). National Trust realise much of this ambition through programming at and via Site. Hundreds of school pupils take part in curriculum applicable education programmes annually. A range of awareness and education activities, including three youth engagement and capacity building programmes, are also delivered locally by the National Trust. In recognition of these efforts the National Trust Giant's Causeway were awarded the Sandford Award for Heritage Education in 2013.

The National Trust at the Giant's Causeway was approved as an Open College Network (OCN) Training Centre in 2019 and guides and rangers can be trained here in topics such as tour guiding. Information related to World Heritage and the special values of the Site is included in training and visitor tours.

Researchers are welcomed and facilitated when possible. The National Trust also conduct research at the Site, notably the Sustainability Study which is intended to inform sustainable and responsible management practices for the Site (research ongoing).

As recommended by the 2013 IUCN Advisory Mission, researchers are invited to present research conclusions to the Steering Group. The mechanism of tracking, promoting, and signposting to research conducted at, or including, the Site is not well established. The Steering Group and National Trust hope to strengthen this in coming years.

The Causeway Memorial School

The Causeway Memorial School is adjacent to the Property and within the DLS. It was built 1915 by the Macnaghten family and operated as a primary school until 1962, later functioning as an educational resource centre providing a living-history experience until 2013.

The Causeway Memorial School Trust (building owners/operators) approached the National Trust with a view to asking them to take over responsibility for the school building. In September 2019 ownership transferred to the National Trust who intend to work with the local community to establish a long-term vision and purpose for the building, on which extensive renovations are required.

2.4.4 Visitors and Tourism

The Giant's Causeway is a symbol for Northern Ireland, this is testament to its popularity as a visitor attraction. It is synonymous with tourism as demonstrated by Tourism NI's new experience brand, 'Embrace a Giant Spirit'. The WHS is marketed locally, nationally and internationally by a number of agencies and organisations.

Tourism is worth approximately 4.9% of GDP in Northern Ireland and is a key economic driver for the Causeway Coast area. Since 2013 visitor numbers to NI have increased steadily. In 2018 visitor spend across all markets in Northern Ireland totalled £968m, with 69% generated by out of state visitors (£669m). Tourism NI aims to grow tourism from out of state markets to £1 billion by 2025, via increased overnight stays and visitor spend.

The economic importance of the Site is undeniable. Before the COVID-19 pandemic the National Trust employed 75 full time staff, with more at peak seasons, contributing over £1.5 million to the local economy via wages. Research indicates the Giant's Causeway is worth £484.26 Million to the NI economy (2018). However,

further research to understand the value of the UNESCO designation is needed and matched with efforts to ensure this is recognised and valued within NI Government and society. The Steering Group will seek opportunities to explore this in the coming years.

The National Trust Visitor Centre opened in mid-2012 and served as a catalyst for large increases in visitor numbers which reached about one million per year by 2017. A high proportion are international visitors with 160 countries represented. Domestic visitor numbers plateaued at around 150,000 while overseas visitor numbers continued to grow.

Visits remain somewhat seasonal (May to September). A peak day in the summer months typically brings in excess of 5,000 visitors, while winter months average 500 visitors per day. Note these are pre- pandemic figures, 2020 has seen a 95% reduction in visitors.

The 2013 IUCN Advisory Mission recommended that visitors be better dispersed through the year to reduce visitor pressure on the Site at peak times. Stakeholders made efforts to encourage this however, weather remains a deciding factor for visitors.

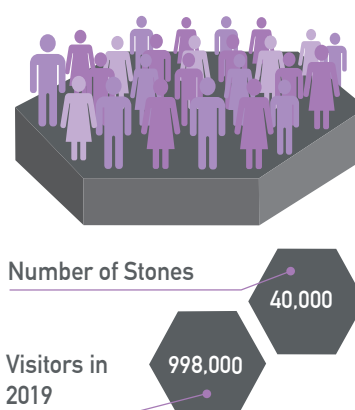


	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site Visitor Numbers	754,000	788,000	851,000	940,000	1,012,000	1,039,000	998,000

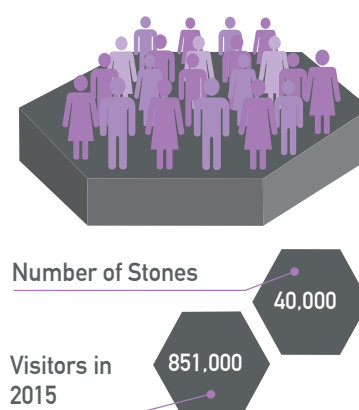
High visitor numbers put pressure on site management and the sensitive environment. National Trust and the Steering Group recognise this pressure. National Trust are keen to re-evaluate the site's visitor capacity with a view to delivering a quality

visitor experience while conserving the Site. To better understand visitor capacity and impact, including the potential threat to OUV, the National Trust commissioned a Sustainability Study. See section 3.2 for more information.

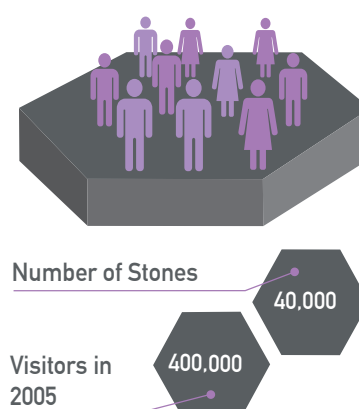
25
visitors per
stone in 2019



21
visitors per
stone in 2015



10
visitors per
stone in 2005



It is usual for visitors to be on a programmed coach excursion, originating in Belfast or Dublin, which typically includes 1.5 to 2 hours at the Site and use of visitor facilities. Recently cruise ships have added to coach tourism as passengers are offered excursions to the Giant's Causeway. This market grew rapidly in 2018 with 128 ships docking in Northern Ireland, representing an increase of nearly 90% on the previous year. National Trust works with operators to manage visitor numbers and plan arrival times.

Coaches are a familiar sight on the roads approaching the Site with the peak number of coaches in a day reaching 85 (only including operators which work with National Trust). The National Trust operate a booking system for coaches, covering the World Heritage Site and Carrick-a-rede, to facilitate visitor management and parking. Not all companies comply, instead dropping visitors off

on the roadside. Some coaches park inappropriately causing congestion on the rural roads, in nearby villages and coastal laybys or car parks. Before 2020 this was a growing issue which negatively impacts the landscape character and lives of residents. All appropriate agencies need to address this issue.

The Causeway remains a tourism honeypot for day-trip visitors. Nonetheless, before the pandemic, the local tourism offering had expanded and diversified to encourage visitors to explore more of the area and stay for longer. CCGBC supported this activity via its Tourism and Destination Management Plan 2015-2020, specifically through this key objective *'Generate more visitors, motivate them to spend longer in the area and visit throughout the year.'*



Aim 3.

**Raise awareness and understanding of the
Giant's Causeway WHS status**





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3. Site Management & Governance

3.1 Landownership

There are six bodies with legal rights to the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site. Landownership maps are available in Appendix 13.

- **The Crown Estate;**
- **The National Trust;**
- **Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council**
- **Three private landowners.**

The Crown Estate

The Crown Estate is the majority landowner and owns about 160 hectares, approximately two thirds of the Property. It is the legal owner of all land between the Mean High and Mean Low Water Mark which includes the inter-tidal area. It also owns the seabed within the territorial waters of the United Kingdom. No active management of the Site's marine aspects is undertaken by The Crown Estate.

National Trust

Since 1961 the National Trust has held almost a third of the Property including the key attributes, through freehold or leasehold agreements. It currently owns or leases, and manages approximately 95% of the terrestrial site, including almost all of the cliffs and foreshore, the Causeway Hotel and the Visitor Centre. It is responsible for public access and visitor management at the Site and along the coastal path. The National Trust rents some of the cliff-top lands adjacent to the Site to a tenant farmer.

National Trust land holdings are inalienable, meaning it is duty-bound to maintain the Property in perpetuity, as far as possible in its natural state, for the nation to enjoy. The National Trust cannot sell or mortgage inalienable land without the formal approval of the National Trust's Board of Trustees. Approval is only granted if the matter is considered of national interest and all possible steps have been taken to avoid or mitigate the risk of damage to the Property. If the National Trust's Board of Trustees is not satisfied that necessary actions have been taken, the matter becomes subject to Special Parliamentary Procedures.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

CCGBC retains legal interest in certain lands which have been leased to and managed by the National Trust since 2005. This pertains to the carpark known as Carpark 1 beside the Visitor Centre. CCGBC also facilitates sections of the cliff top path through permissive path agreements with private landowners connecting the WHS to the Causeway Coast Way.

Private landowners

Three private landowners own lands within the Property boundary. This accounts for small portions of land near the landward boundary of the Site, mostly used for the cliff top walking route and are mainly under maintenance by National Trust.

Agencies with an interest

Several agencies and organisations have management responsibilities for, or an interest in, the World Heritage Site. Many of these are represented on the Steering Group (indicated in bold).

A brief description of Steering Group member organisations is available in Appendix 9 and a brief description of Marine and Fisheries Division is available in Appendix 10.

- **Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT)**
- **Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)**
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Marine and Fisheries Division
- **Department for the Economy (DfE), represented by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI)**
- **Department for the Economy (DfE), Tourism NI**
- Department for Infrastructure may become involved in planning applications of regional or national interest.





3.2 Site Management

The National Trust holds most of the terrestrial land in inalienable ownership and operates day- to -day management activities, they are regarded as the Property Manager. Marine aspects of the site are not subject to routine management.

National Trust manages the OUV of the site and the various designations and protections assigned by the relevant agencies. These responsibilities are mirrored by its own organisational strategy, 'Playing our Part' and its focus on landscape protection, welcoming everyone and providing opportunities for people to get involved. This has been reflected in the additional resource given to site management over the years although this has been severely impacted by the financial challenges of COVID-19. In 2018 National Trust spent over £150,000 on conserving the local environment.

The National Trust usually operate a three-year Property Business Plan which directs and details management activities at the Giant's Causeway. This allows for emerging

challenges or opportunities to be addressed. The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted this management cycle. The National Trust have had to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and focus on recovery.

National Trust Sustainability Study

There are inherent challenges in managing a highly desirable tourism destination for conservation and long-term protection. As a result National Trust commissioned the sustainability study in 2019 to consider the impact of visitors on the site through a range of lenses. These include:

- **Conservation**
- **The visitor experience (anticipated against actual)**
- **Infrastructural capacity of the sites and wider area and**
- **The impact of increasing tourism on the communities who live and work in the vicinity.**

Preliminary findings have been delayed but should be available in 2021.

The study provides an assessment of the vulnerabilities of the Property to social, economic, environmental and other pressures and changes, including disasters and climate change, as well as considering the impacts of trends and proposed interventions. It is expected that it will inform and shape future management at the WHS and will be a key resource for the Steering Group. The study itself supports the Vision and Aims the Steering Group hold for the WHS.

The Site is part of two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) (one marine), a National Nature Reserve (NNR), an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These designations support sustainable, conservation-led management, thus supporting the Site's protection and OUV.





3.3 Status of the World Heritage Site Management Plan

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan is not a statutory document. It brings together details of all the designations and planning policies relevant to the property, together with a summary of the management arrangements. The Management Plan shows how the protection and management arrangements are harnessed effectively to sustain the value and integrity of the WHS.

The Plan is financially supported by NIEA and is supported and endorsed by relevant stakeholders. It encourages a participatory approach to the Property's conservation and protection and provides an agreed

framework for the sustainable management of the WHS and its environment.

The Site derives much of its legal protection from European level Special Area of Conservation designations. These designations have been retained since the UK left the European Union (see section 3.7.2). Further national/regional protection is afforded through a designated ASSI, NNR and AONB. Meanwhile, various statutory planning policies/strategies recognise and make provision for the WHS, providing further protection.

3.4 The World Heritage Site Steering Group

A Steering Group provides a participatory WHS management function. It includes individuals and stakeholders who represent local communities, governmental, non-governmental and private organisations, and landowners who have an interest and involvement in the conservation and management of the Property. A secretariat role for the Steering Group is financially supported by NIEA and fulfilled by Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust through a part-time Projects Manager role (WHSPM).

The Steering Group is responsible for collaborating on the development and implementation of the World Heritage Site Management Plan and associated Action Plan. The aims and objectives included in these Plans reflect the conservation requirements of the WHS, while also promoting sustainable practices and opportunities that may benefit local people and raise awareness of World Heritage generally. This is the only group dedicated to safeguarding the OUV and integrity of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site.

The Steering Group represents conservation, tourism, recreation and local community interests. While such a range of interests can occasionally result in differing opinions and outlooks, all members unanimously agree that protection of the OUV and integrity of the World Heritage Site is the most important consideration.

To ensure local community interests are represented an elected member of CCGBC was invited to join in 2015.

At times external experts are invited to present or advise on certain matters. The Steering Group want to increase this external expert participation in the coming years to ensure a

comprehensive understanding of World Heritage and appropriate topics.

Members of the Steering Group

- *Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, including WHSPM role (Secretariat)*
- *Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. Representatives from the Coast and Countryside team and Planning Department. One elected representative*
- *The Crown Estate*
- *Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)*
- *Department for the Economy (DfE), represented by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI)*
- *Department for the Economy (DfE), represented by Tourism NI*
- *Independent member with nature conservation expertise. Currently also representing the Council for Countryside Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (Chair)*
- *The National Trust*
- *Private Landowner*
- *Queen's University Belfast*

A brief description of Steering Group member organisations is available in Appendix 9.

3.5 Governance Framework

Several organisations, departments, groups and committees are involved in World Heritage. The key bodies are briefly outlined below.

UNESCO World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee is responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The World Heritage Committee consists of representatives from 21 of the State Parties to the Convention elected by the General Assembly of State Parties to the Convention. It sets policy and oversees its implementation and decides, amongst other things, which nominated properties should be added to the World Heritage List, which should be regarded as in danger and which should be deleted from the List. In exercising these responsibilities, it reviews reports and correspondence from State Parties and others, such as State of Conservation reports.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Based in Paris, the World Heritage Centre is the head office location of UNESCO World Heritage staff. It acts as the Secretariat to the World Heritage Committee and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Committee and monitoring their implementation, in line with the terms of the Convention and the Operational Guidelines.

Advisory Bodies

The Convention lists three advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee. IUCN is the advisory body on nature. It advises the Committee on WHS policy, nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List, and the state of conservation of natural and mixed World Heritage Sites. IUCN also publishes advice on issues related to natural World Heritage Sites. IUCN has a National Committee within the UK comprised of representatives of a wide range of nature conservation organisations; the Committee promotes and supports the work of IUCN within the UK.

UK Government Departments

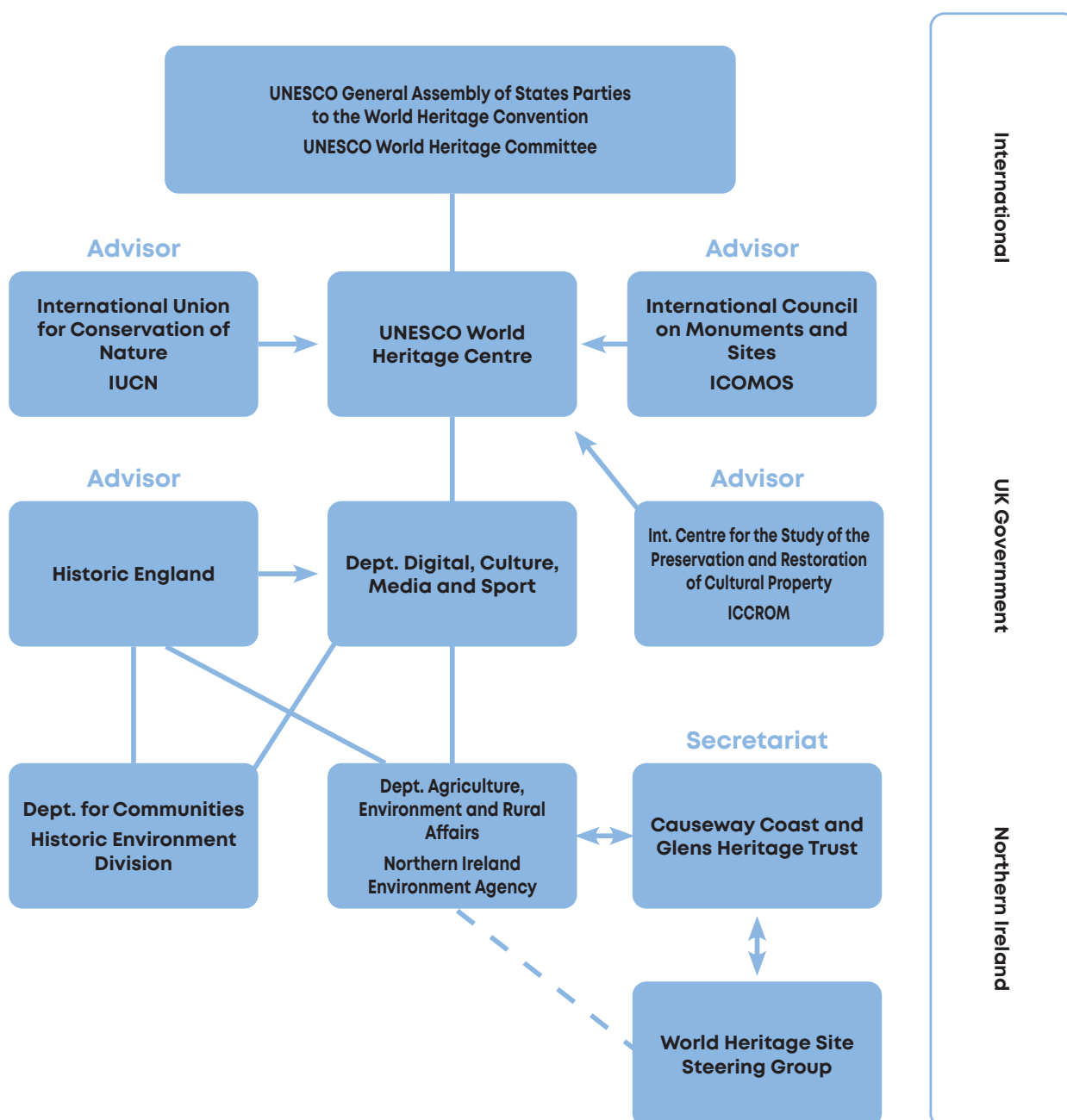
In the UK the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) acts on behalf of the UK Government as the State Party to the World Heritage Convention. It is responsible for ensuring that the UK meets its obligations to the Convention. In practice responsibility for cultural and natural heritage is largely devolved to the governments of the home countries within the UK and its overseas territories and management of World Heritage properties is often further devolved to local stakeholders. Nevertheless communication with the World Heritage Committee, Centre and Advisory Bodies is all undertaken via DCMS as UK State Party to the Convention.

Historic England is DCMS's statutory adviser on all aspects of the historic environment of England. In addition, where it is the UK government which has ratified international heritage conventions, Historic England advises DCMS on meeting its obligations across the whole of the UK. In relation to natural WHS such as the Giant's Causeway, it is beyond Historic England's remit to advise on natural heritage, but it can still advise on how the terms of the Convention can be met.

In Northern Ireland devolved responsibility lies with two Departments. The Department for Communities (Historic Environment Division) oversees communication and guidance to potential WHS nominations as currently these present cultural attributes and this division hosts the relevant expertise. While the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) or more specifically NIEA, an agency within this Department, oversees the Giant's Causeway as it is inscribed for natural heritage reasons and NIEA hosts natural environment expertise.

NIEA oversee management of the World Heritage aspects of the Property and is responsible for liaison with DCMS in relation to all aspects of the management of the Site. This includes, where necessary, drafting State of Conservation reports and notifying DCMS of changes which have the potential to impact on the OUV of the Site. NIEA represents the Site at national forums and communicates its work in ensuring the effective management of the Site.

The relationships and extended line of communication is complex and nuanced. The Steering Group are committed to clarifying communication structures and improving working relationships with all actors/agencies.



3.6 Connection and Collaboration with other Sites

Many places face similar challenges as those at the Giant's Causeway namely climate change, the need to balance visitor impacts with the natural environment and supporting local communities, and now the financial and visitor management implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration and partnership with other UNESCO sites and protected areas offers the opportunity to celebrate heritage whilst conserving the world's cultural, ecological and geological diversity, and promoting sustainable economic development.

The Steering Group connects with a variety of places and management organisations. Through sharing experiences, best practice and ideas, improved solutions to heritage management can be discovered.

World Heritage UK

World Heritage UK undertakes networking, advocacy and promotion for the UK's WHSs, and the Tentative List Sites.

CCGHT maintain an associate non-voting membership for the Steering Group, acting as point of contact and representative. The Chair has engaged with relevant meetings and consultations.

National Trust General Manager for the Giant's Causeway has been a WH:UK Board Trustee since its formation and hosted a WH:UK Members Meeting in June 2016.

Sisterhood with Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes UNESCO WHS

In September 2018, the WHS entered into a Sisterhood Agreement with Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes World Heritage Site, Republic of Korea. Jeju Island is also designated as a UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve and a UNESCO Global Geopark.

Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2007, under the same two criteria as the Giant's Causeway, it too displays some regular jointed columnar basalts. Similarities extend beyond geological formations. Both Properties experience similar challenges of increasing visitor numbers to natural, dynamic, rural locations as well as the potential impacts of climate change, especially on features along coastlines and to sensitive habitats.

It is hoped this Sisterhood Agreement will foster collaborative research, learning and better communication.



Signing of Sisterhood Agreement between Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes WHS and Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS.



UNESCO Global Geoparks

The Steering Group has been connected with both UK and Irish UNESCO Global Geoparks and Geopark Committees, and numerous Geoparks from around the world for some time. These connections grew partly due to the internationally significant geological heritage of the Giant's Causeway and partly due to the conversation around and within Geoparks about how to address pertinent challenges.

The Steering Group has acted as a de facto UNESCO Global Geopark development group, taking steps to explore the suitability and potential benefits of establishing a UNESCO Global Geopark for the wider area, with the WHS at its core. A working group has been established to take this task forward however, the Steering Group is a key stakeholder in the process.

3.7 Policy Context

This Management Plan is not a statutory document. Instead, it draws together a range of policies, plans and strategies that are in operation in Northern Ireland, which create statutory and non-statutory framework that recognises and protects the World Heritage Site and its surroundings. Key policies and plans are set out below, in a hierarchy and some context and comment is provided.

3.7.1 Planning Context

The relevant planning policies and designations relating to the WHS and its setting are contained in Planning Policy Statement 6: Archaeology and Built Heritage, and the Northern Area Plan 2016. These seek to protect the WHS and its setting from inappropriate development. With the transfer of the majority of planning powers from the Department of the Environment to local Councils in 2015, under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, Councils are now responsible for the following planning functions:

- **Local Development Plan preparation (Plan Strategy Adoption expected 2023 and Local Plan Policies to be adopted 2026)**
- **Development Management (determining the vast majority of planning applications); and**
- **Planning Enforcement.**

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) retained planning powers in respect of the following:

- **Determination of regionally significant and ‘called-in’ planning applications.**
- **Regional Development Strategy (RDS).**

- **Regional planning policy.**
- **Planning Legislation.**
- **Performance management; and**
- **Oversight and guidance for councils.**

Regional Development Strategy 2035

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) Building a Better Future is an overarching statutory, strategic planning framework and is issued by the DfI. It addresses economic, social and environmental issues with a view to achieving and encouraging sustainable development.

Several Regional Guidance (RG) and Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) points relate to the WHS.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement 2015 (SPPS), Planning For Sustainable Development sits alongside Planning Policy Statements (noted below) but it will supersede them when the Local Development Plan is fully adopted in 2026. It promotes a sustainable approach and encourages safeguarding of special assets and heritage.

Within the document Regional Strategic Objectives are supported by Regional Strategic Policies. The policies must be taken into account in Local Development Plans.

World Heritage Sites are specifically addressed under *Archaeology* and *Built Heritage* and *Renewable Energy* sections. Note that in Northern Ireland WHSs are recognised under built heritage and archaeology sections of planning policy.

The SPSS states the following:

Archaeology and built heritage

Regional strategic objectives:

6.4 secure the protection, conservation and, where possible, the enhancement of our built and archaeological heritage.

- promote sustainable development and environmental stewardship with regard to our built and archaeological heritage; and
- deliver economic and community benefit through conservation that facilitates productive use of built heritage assets and opportunities for investment, whilst safeguarding their historic or architectural integrity.

Regional Strategic Policy:

World Heritage Sites

6.6 Development that would adversely affect the Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site (WHS) or the integrity of its setting must not be permitted unless there are overriding exceptional circumstances.

6.7 Inclusion of a WHS on a list published by UNESCO highlights the outstanding international importance of the site as a material consideration in the determination of planning and listed building consent applications, and appeals. Planning authorities must carefully consider applications affecting the Outstanding Universal Value of such sites, particularly taking into account the safeguarding of critical views to and from the site, the access and public approaches to the site and the understanding and enjoyment of the site by visitors.

Renewable Energy

6.223 A cautious approach for renewable energy development proposals will apply within designated landscapes which are of significant value, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site, and their wider settings. In such sensitive landscapes, it may be difficult to accommodate renewable energy proposals, including wind turbines, without detriment to the region's cultural and natural heritage assets.

Planning Policy Statements

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) provide policy for governing various aspects of land use and development across Northern Ireland. Currently they sit alongside and supplement the SPSS but where there is overlap the SPSS supersedes individual PPSs. All PPSs will cease once the Local Development Plan is adopted.

WHSs are strongly represented and protected under PPS6: *Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage* (1999). This is the case even though the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast is inscribed for natural values and attributes. The key policy states:

Policy BH 5: The Protection of World Heritage Sites

The Department will operate a presumption in favour of the preservation of World Heritage Sites. Development which would adversely affect such sites or the integrity of their settings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The following PPSs have been identified as most relevant to the World Heritage Site.

- **PPS 2: Natural Heritage (2013)**
- **PPS 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage (1999)**
- **PPS 16: Tourism (2013)**
- **PPS 18: Renewable Energy (2009)**
- **PPS 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside (2010)**

Northern Area Plan 2016

The Northern Area Plan 2016 is the current development plan for the area. The WHS is included within the Countryside and Coast section. This plan affords recognition and enhanced protection to the Site and the DLS through the following policies and designation:

- *Policy COU 2: The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site*
No development will be approved within the World Heritage Site unless there are very exceptional circumstances directly related to the provision of essential facilities for visitors and which would not be detrimental to the landscape or scientific interest of the Site.
- *Designation COU 3 The Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site*
The Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site is designated as identified on the Countryside Maps.

- *Policy COU 4 The Distinctive Landscape Setting of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site*
No development within the Distinctive Landscape Setting outside of settlement development limits will be approved except:
 - 1. exceptionally modest scale facilities, without landscape detriment, which are necessary to meet the direct needs of visitors to the World Heritage Site.*
 - 2. extensions to buildings that are appropriate in scale and design and represent not more than 20% of the cubic content of existing buildings.*
 - 3. replacements of existing occupied dwellings with not more than a 20% increase in the cubic content.**These allowances will be permitted once only.*



Local Planning Authority

The Regional Development Strategy provides the regional guidance, under which the SPSS, PPS and the Northern Area Plan 2016 provide the planning policy framework for CCGBC, the local planning authority.

The Council operates the following to support planning functions:

- **A ‘Scheme of Delegation’:** this details planning functions that have been delegated to planning officers and those which require to be determined by the Council’s Planning Committee (a committee made up from the Borough’s elected representatives); and
- **A ‘Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee’:** this details the procedures to be followed by the Planning Committee (that are not already covered by the Council’s Standing Orders and Councillors’ Code of Conduct).

CCGBC is currently preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. When adopted it will replace the Northern Area Plan 2016, the existing suite of Regional Planning Policy Statements (known as PPSs) and a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents.

Creation of the Local Development Plan follows a prescribed process of evidence gathering, issuing of various papers for consideration and consultation. It started in 2016 and is expected that the Plan Strategy will be adopted in 2023 and the Local Planning Policies in 2026.

The Steering Group have engaged with this process at appropriate points and is working to ensure that the plan will retain, and where appropriate strengthen existing measures for protection of the WHS. A Planning Officer sits on the Steering Group providing clarification and updates.

Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy 2010

The Sustainable Development Strategy provides a framework, to help inform decision making and encourage sustainable development across Northern Ireland. Objectives within this strategy generally support the Site.



3.7.2 Natural Environment Designations

Such is the importance of the natural environment at the Site that statutory and non-statutory designations have been applied to land within and running beyond the Property boundary. These designations provide further protection for the WHS and are recognised in the Protection and Management Requirements section of the SOUV.

DAERA NIEA are the relevant government agency for natural heritage designations and provide information, monitoring activities and in some cases, management plans for designated areas.

Key conservation designations:

- **North Antrim Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**
- **Giant's Causeway National Nature Reserve (NNR)**
- **Giant's Causeway & Dunseverick Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)**
- **Skerries and Causeway Marine Special Area of Conservation (Marine SAC)**

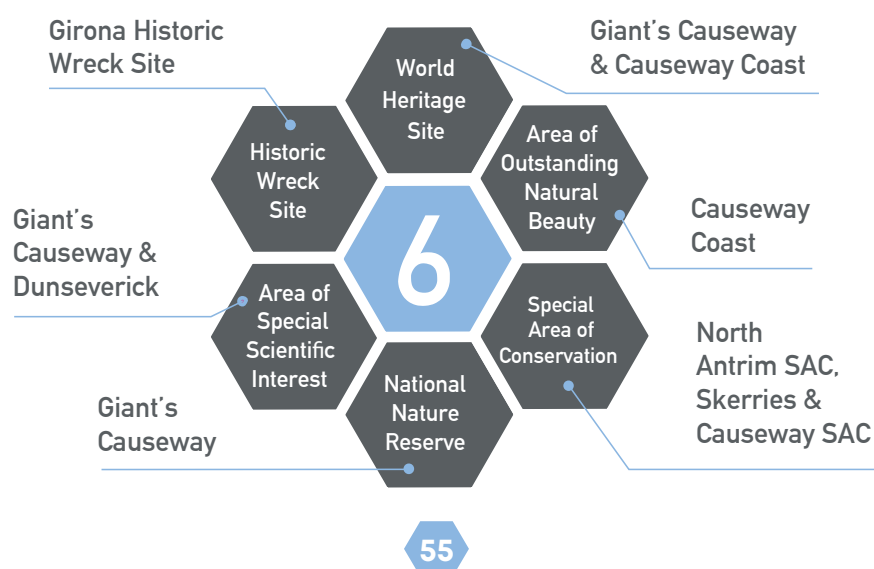
Further information on each can be found in Appendix 11. Maps available Appendix 13.

The North Antrim Coast SAC and the Skerries and Causeway SAC include the terrestrial and marine aspects of the WHS. These designations are part of the Natura 2000 network, created via the Habitats Directive which in turn is supported by The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (Habitats Regulations). These designations are important for maintaining or restoring rare habitats and ensuring that rare species can survive on a long-term basis. Their management demands a cautious, nature-focused, approach which is beneficial to the WHS.

In 2017 NIEA embarked on a four-year programme to develop Management Plans for SACs. The Steering Group will support these plans where possible.

Note, SACs a European designation, have been upheld in UK legislation following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

Types of natural environment designations at the Giant's Causeway



Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020

The Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020, prepared by DAERA, outlines how Northern Ireland can meet its international and local targets for the protection of biodiversity, supporting communities and the economy.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

This plan is under the authority of CCGBC and provides information and presents actions to support habitats and species within the Borough. This includes species and habitats within the WHS and DLS.

Northern Ireland's Geodiversity Charter

The Northern Ireland Geodiversity Charter, prepared by GSNI, outlines and emphasises the importance and international significance of Northern Ireland's geology and geomorphology. Activities at the World Heritage Site support and promote geodiversity. The Steering Group have and continue to support the aims of the Charter.

Marine Act (Northern Ireland) (2013) and draft Marine Plan

The majority of the WHS is marine. The Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 provides a framework for Northern Ireland's seas including a marine planning system, improved marine nature conservation and enhanced marine licensing.

DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division has taken steps to develop a Marine Plan including extensive research and public consultation. Once published it will include the marine portion of the WHS.

Other relevant environmental plans, policies and strategies

A variety of other plans, policies and strategies combine to further protect, monitor and support the environment at the WHS. Some focus on a specific feature or location e.g. the Girona Historic Wreck while others, such as the National Trust's Property Business Plan sets out the day to day activities for the teams on site, ranging from site monitoring to visitor management. Together these support the WHS, OUV and Steering Group vision for the WHS.

Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2013- 2023

Giant's Causeway National Nature Reserve Plan 2006

National Trust Property Business Plan

Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009

Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment

Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment Map Viewer

Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment

Note the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Landscape Study is expected to be published following publication of this Plan.

Protection of Wrecks Act 1973

3.7.3 Community & Society

Northern Ireland Executive Office - Outcomes Delivery Plan

The Northern Ireland Civil Service developed, and currently work to, an Outcomes Delivery Plan. It is structured around a framework of 12 Outcomes of economic, environmental and social wellbeing.

This plan guides much of government's activity in Northern Ireland and it, and any future iteration, should be considered by the Steering Group.

A Better Future Together – A Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens 2017-30

'A Better Future Together' provides a long-term vision and plan for the Borough based on an analysis of needs and priorities and identifies opportunities to address them. The Causeway Coast and Glens Strategic Partnership develop and implement the plan with fourteen statutory partners working together to deliver on it via a Delivery Plan. Actions are reviewed and change periodically to adapt to the changing environment and identified needs.

Community Planning offers a delivery mechanism and opportunity to address issues relevant to the WHS and DLS. Some Steering Group members participate in Community Planning and should continue to promote and safeguard the Site through this work.

The actions currently relevant:

ACTION 21 Promote and encourage local residents and visitors to take pride and enhance the natural and built environment within the Causeway Coast and Glens area

ACTION 22 Implement initiatives on protected natural heritage areas in the Causeway Coast and Glens area

ACTION 17 To create opportunities to explore, develop and maintain public spaces with a focus on people, wildlife and outdoor recreation across the Causeway Coast and Glens area.



UN Sustainable Development Goals

World Heritage Sites contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) with World Heritage explicitly referred to in Goal 11.4. Many of the goals are relevant to WHS and the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS for instance; Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 13: Climate Action, Goal 14: Life Below Water and Goal 15: Life on Land.

The World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy (Policy on the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention 2015) recognises the inherent potential of WHSs to contribute to all dimensions of sustainable development.

The Steering Group will reflect on the Policy and carry out a review exercise (actioned in the Action Plan) to identify current practices and further mechanisms by which the Site can deliver and support the UNSDGs.

National Trust's operations are guided by the principles of long-term conservation and public access to special places while benefiting the local area, echoing some UNSDGs.



The creation of a Responsible Tourism Manager role at the Site, and the Sustainability Study signifies the commitment to improving sustainability. The Study's findings will guide appropriate management changes which are likely to include controlling visitor numbers, focusing on quality tourism, enhanced inclusion and mitigation against natural hazards and climate change.

Other relevant community and society plans, policies and strategies

CC&GBC Tourism & Destination Management Plan 2015-2020
Tourism NI annual Operating Plan





Aim 4.

**Provide a safe, enjoyable and sustainable visitor
experience that does not compromise the
Outstanding Universal Value of the Site**



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4. Challenges & Opportunities

Effective conservation is concerned with the successful management of change. Change is inevitable if the Site is to respond to the needs of present-day society. Effective management... is concerned with identification and promotion of change that conserves and enhances the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the Site, and also with the modification or mitigation of any changes that might damage the Outstanding Universal Value. (Historic England)

This section looks at some of the changes and challenges experienced by the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site and highlights opportunities that contribute positively to sustainable management, ultimately seeking to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value, and uphold the Convention. The section is not set out in order of priority.

FACTORS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Environmental		
Climate Change, Dynamic Natural Processes & Hazard Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased flood risk Increased risk to visitors from natural hazards Damage to coastal habitats Increased frequency of cliff & slope failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased research opportunities for monitoring geomorphological change & impact on flora & fauna Development of transferable hazard management strategies models
Visitor Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing/minimising visitor impact on the physical environment (e.g. damage, traffic congestion etc.) Managing/minimising visitor impact on flora & fauna Reliance on visitor generated revenue for site management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased revenue generation to fund site management & education initiatives Financial input to the wider community & local economy
Marine Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited understanding of the marine areas Managing increased visitor engagement with the marine environment through increase in boat excursions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased opportunities for research into the physical & ecological characteristics of the near & intermediate coastal environment
Socio-economic		
Socio-economic Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserving the character of the site while seeking to increase visitor numbers Encouraging a move away from 'day tripper' tourism to a model where visitors spend more time & money exploring the wider area around the WHS Focus on volume rather than value from visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Geopark to embed the WHS within the wider landscape Develop initiatives aimed at equalizing visitor numbers across the year to alleviate seasonal pressures on the site
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to encourage & support greater community conversations & involvement regarding management plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for greater community involvement with the work of the Steering Group
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse impact of development close to the site detracting from the distinctive landscape setting Potential renewal of interest in exploitation of mineral gas and renewable resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater proactive communication between stakeholders to support appropriate & sympathetic development opportunities that would benefit the wider community
Education & Research		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More research is needed targeted at better understanding the current & future challenges facing the site Maintaining strong connections with other WHS sites within the UK & further afield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability Study expected to inform responsible Site management Scope for increased education outreach to local students (primary, secondary & tertiary), tourists & the wider community – this could support connection with the local community
Political		
Brexit Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty over the impact on visitor numbers with a decrease resulting in reduced revenue for the site & the wider community Future implications for nature conservation designations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NI Environment Strategy may enhance support the natural environment
Covid-19 Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty regarding post-Covid-19 recovery of international visitor numbers Safely managing visitor movement within site if social distancing persists into the near future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus marketing strategies on encouraging more visitors from within the island of Ireland Reassess how a sustainable visitor model should work, in particular how to balance conservation with tourism and to reduce the risk associated with reliance on overseas visitor volume
Northern Ireland Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some uncertainty over responsibilities, duties & lines of communication between the Steering Group & the NI Executive 3-year hiatus of Executive has delayed some policies and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish new & more robust lines of communication with the Executive

4.1 Environmental

4.1.1 Resilience and Risk Preparedness

The Site's resilience and capacity to deal with change will be better understood following the National Trust's Sustainability Study. Whilst management practices and procedures that support the Site will be developed based on this study, an assessment of the Property's (terrestrial and marine) risk preparedness and vulnerability in terms of climate change, natural hazards, financial resources and other risks is needed. This has been further highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although some aspects of this matter are discussed below, a Property analysis focusing on WHS matters would better inform the Steering Group and future management practices. This will be a key focus for the Steering Group over the coming years.

4.1.2 Climate Change

Changes to the climate will impact on the WHS through modified seasonal weather patterns, rising average temperatures, increased rainfall and rainfall intensity and sea level rise. It is important to note that the challenges arising from the effects of climate change will have varying significance over different timescales. In the short to medium term, over the next few decades, the main changes of concern to the Site are increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (e.g. high windspeeds, increase in rainfall intensity etc.) and the impact of storm surges on the coastline, with associated risk of occasional temporary flooding of parts of the site. In the medium to long term, over the next century, the effects of sea level rise will become more significant and will exacerbate the impact of storm surge events and ongoing coastal erosion at the site. This poses an increased risk to visitors and access.



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UK Climate Projections (UKCP) confirms sea-level rise in the UK which will affect Northern Ireland's coastline by increasing flood risks and vulnerability to storm surges, proving detrimental to coastal environments, habitats and species.

Projections indicate that sea levels may rise by up to 90cm by the end of the century. This will result in more of the terrestrial lands at the Site being under water, reducing access to and availability of some key features such as the Causeway Stones, which will be further submerged. The lower path network is particularly vulnerable and may even become submerged, reducing access. The foreshore and cliffs are likely to experience increased erosion from the sea; while intensified storm surges, coupled with increased rainfall, will increase cliff failure rates. This may exacerbate deterioration of the geological features, which support the Site's OUV.

Habitats, flora and fauna are also prone to impacts from climate change. A rise in sea levels will wash out some foreshore habitats; more frequent storm surges will place pressure on marginal habitats such as salt marsh and the variety of species present may change due to rising average temperatures. This includes the establishment and spread of invasive non-native species, some of which are already present and are appropriately managed by the National Trust.


Although the Site is vulnerable to projected climate change, the geological features mentioned in the SOUV are visible because of erosion, and were created by significant Earth processes in past climates. It is a dynamic landscape, as recognised in the SOUV, which has undergone many changes throughout millennia and will continue to change. However, it is likely that climate change, particularly increased rainfall in the winter months, will exacerbate many

of these dynamic features, especially landslides and rockfall. The challenge is to better understand these processes through research and respond to the inevitable changes and mitigate against them where possible. The Steering Group should explore the Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI) (James Cook University), a rapid assessment tool specifically developed for application in World Heritage (WH) properties. The CVI considers OUV and community vulnerability in calculations.

Government and the Steering Group recognise the threat of climate change and have responded in a number of ways. For instance, the extension of the Property boundary in 2016 sought to mitigate against the potential of the cliff faces (key attributes) ending up outside of the original boundary through erosion. Regular monitoring of cliff erosion is needed to determine if the boundary is adequate.

The NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024 (DAERA) recognises natural capital as a key priority area and outlines government functions to support and develop mitigation measures. DAERA has initiated development of an Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland which presents an opportunity for climate change impacts and other key matters at the World Heritage Site to be recognised and actions attributed. The revised conservation management plans for the North Antrim Coast SAC and Skerries and Causeway Marine SAC will include information on climate change and appropriate management measures to mitigate against adverse changes. NIEA, and DAERA, have a key role to play in raising awareness of the Sites vulnerabilities and in supporting research, management and mitigation activities.

Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019–2024 Key Priority Areas and Outcome Objectives

NICCAPP2 Key Priority Areas	NICCAPP2 Outcome Objectives and Visions
NC Natural Capital, including Terrestrial Coastal/Marine/Freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NC1: We will have species, habitats and water bodies that are resilient to the impacts of climate change. - NC2: We have coastal communities, habitats, landforms and infrastructure that are resilient to impacts of climate change. - NC3: We have soils and woodland that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The National Trusts' *Playing our Part* strategy and *Land, Outdoors and Nature* plan recognise climate change as the biggest threat facing its properties. Management plans and procedures, in line with the Strategy, are in development and the National Trust continue to support their Shifting Shores approach and work with natural processes, as much as is possible, at coastal properties.

The Sustainability Study will provide a range of data to form a baseline for future monitoring.

National Trust advocate for a Coastal Observatory in Northern Ireland to promote development of research-based coastal management.

A Responsible Tourism Manager post for the National Trust's North Coast properties was created in 2018. Alongside other tasks this role will seek to implement the recommendations of the Sustainability Study.

Key to measuring change at the WHS is first understanding the processes taking place followed by continued monitoring. The Giant's Causeway holds the potential to, once again, inform science by acting as a research and monitoring site for climate change. A weather monitoring station at the Giant's Causeway captures a variety of data and would inform research greatly. The Steering Group will seek, and support, research which contributes to developing a robust evidence base and sustainable management practices. It will also seek to raise awareness of the threats of climate change to the Site amongst policy makers, local people and visitors. Any measures put in place must take account of the World Heritage designation and support the OUV.

4.1.3 Dynamic Natural Processes and Hazard Management

The extensive cliff exposures of columnar and massive basalt, along with the Causeway Stones and the visibility of geological activity from the Palaeogene Period (formerly the lower part of the Tertiary period) provide the basis for inscription on the World Heritage List under criterion vii and viii. These features were created by geological processes and exposed through natural erosion, so it stands to reason that the Site continues to experience dynamic natural processes.

Although basalt, the main rock-type, is relatively hard, interaction between the geology and high energy coastal conditions result in a constantly changing landscape. There is a need to better understand and manage these geo-hazards.

Slope failures are the primary dynamic process and range from shallow translational mudflows to large rotational landslides and rockfall. Slope failures:

- **have intrinsic importance as geomorphological features and continuously create new exposures for scientific study.**
- **are essential in maintaining the overall rugged nature of the coastline and are crucial to the creation of the Site's spectacular landscape; and**
- **regularly expose soil and bedrock which are instrumental in maintaining the Site's biodiversity.**

These dynamic processes present challenges for site management and in some ways threaten the OUV. The 2013 IUCN Advisory Mission highlighted attrition of natural features through natural processes, such as cliff erosion or sea level change, as one of three risks to the OUV. The Steering Group partially addressed this concern through the boundary extension in 2016.

The National Trust face challenges in maintaining safe visitor access. Through partnership research with the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen's University Belfast an online natural heritage database and integrated hazard assessment tool was established in 2013. This tool enables the National Trust to identify where specific processes occur, the likelihood of their occurrence and potential impacts. An update to this research is required and should make use of current technologies and cover more parts of the Site.

The Steering Group will champion research that includes citizen science to promote community understanding and participation in the management of the WHS.



4.1.4 Visitor pressures

Balancing conservation alongside providing a quality visitor experience remains challenging. Impacts from visitors has been noted as an issue (State of Conservation Reports) and a risk to OUV (IUCN Advisory Mission 2013), for more than a decade. Visitor numbers surpassed projections, exceeding one million per year and reaching highs of 5,000 visitors per day.

The site is open for visitors to access on foot 24/7, although visitor services are only provided when the visitor centre is open.

National Trust deliver visitor management and strive to support the OUV of the Site. They encourage good visitor behaviour and reduce access to some areas temporarily for nature conversation and safety.

The financial revenue derived from visitors supports Site management and provision of visitor experiences. This benefits the Site greatly yet leaves it vulnerable to changes in the tourism market, especially as most visitors are from international markets. This vulnerability was brought sharply into focus by Covid-19 restrictions. The National Trust should be supported in efforts to secure the finances necessary to maintain the Site and OUV, reducing reliance on visitor revenue.

Visitors tend to concentrate around visitor facilities, the Causeway Stones, the lower path network and the western third of the cliff top path, increasing pressure in these areas. Desire lines criss-cross the flatter land between established paths (including the tarmac road) and the shoreline. Established paths are well trodden and adjacent vegetation significantly degraded. Sustainable, sympathetic path design and management are used and should continue to be supported. The visual and noise

impacts of visitors is noticeable, especially at peak times and can detract from the enjoyment of the spectacular rugged scenery and landscape character.

The Sustainability Study includes research into visitor motivations, behaviours, experience and movements on the Site and will inform future management practices.



Coins lodged between joints in the Causeway Stones, predominantly near the lower shuttle bus turning circle, are noticeable and the practice has become a somewhat minor trend with visitors. National Trust staff generally maintain a presence in this area which helps deter the practice. Research into the extent and impacts of this activity on the Stones is needed, as well as recommendations on how to resolve the issue. Steering Group members such as NIEA and GSNI are well placed to guide this priority research.

Visitor impacts are felt in the DLS and beyond. Inappropriate parking along road verges and near visitor facilities is often dangerous and disrupts residents daily activities. Efforts to address this should be co-ordinated by all relevant organisations. A strategic review of parking facilities should be conducted. Relatively heavy traffic and isolated congestion

in the wider area has become an issue for local communities and might need to be addressed through a review of the regional tourism and travel infrastructure.

The marine aspect of the Property provides space to contextualise the landscape. Boat tours are increasing in popularity and while tourism diversification is welcomed, and visiting by boat provides fantastic vistas of the Site, if it were to significantly increase it might detract from the sense of open seascape. Similarly, helicopter tours, which are not a regular offering, would significantly detract from the natural setting and visitor experience on the ground.

Competitive and charity outdoor recreation events such as runs and marathons occasionally use the Site, mainly the cliff top path. This can degrade path conditions, increase litter and cause difficulties for local residents. It is known that the path is used for cycling which is dangerous for the cyclists and for other pedestrians. This may be difficult to manage but steps to better understand the user numbers and frequency of cycling on the path and steps to further discourage it should be taken.

All relevant organisations, and the Steering Group, should encourage sustainable practices which are in-keeping with the Site's natural, rural setting.



4.1.5 Marine areas

With the majority of the Property being marine, a better understanding and translation of the qualities and features of this part of the WHS is needed. DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division and others, including research bodies, are well placed to provide current information and undertake further research. Engagement activities and use of new technologies could contribute to a better understanding of the WHS's marine environment and might significantly add to the offering of the Site.

Some coastline surveys exist, including bathymetric surveys, but there is scope for further, regular surveying and monitoring. The Giant's Causeway should be promoted as a key location for marine surveying.

The coastline and waters hold cultural and industrial heritage significance and offer fantastic panoramas of the cliffs and geological features. The Steering Group and others should take steps to explore and promote opportunities for research and utilising these themes to connect with local communities.

4.2 Socio-economic

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought into focus the socio-economic importance of the WHS. The period of recovery offers the opportunity to rethink some aspects of how the Site operated within the local context and ensure that the new normal for the WHS and wider communities is more sustainable than before.

4.2.1. Socio-economic potential of the World Heritage Site

The Giant's Causeway remains Northern Ireland's premier tourism attraction. Its importance to the regional and local economy is significant and it supports many direct and indirect jobs.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that the Visitor Centre was closed or operated reduced visitor numbers in line with social distancing, this was the case for all of the tourism sector. National Trust and others are keen to refocus priorities away from relying on high volume international visitor numbers, hoping this will prove beneficial in the short and long-term.

Tourism marketing bodies, such as Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI, will be focusing on recovering the tourism sector in the near future and usually aim to increase tourism revenue and numbers. A balance with conserving the special values of the Site and DLS needs to be struck.

A better understanding of the Site's values and vulnerabilities by those involved in tourism development might foster a more responsible approach to the promotion of the Giant's Causeway. The Sustainability Study may provide an initial resource for this. It should be noted that the prominence of the Giant's Causeway in tourism marketing, by Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland, reduced in recent years.

An economic appraisal focusing on the WHS designations value would build on existing economic research and provide a rationale for encouraging further resource allocation, awareness and support of the WHS and its DLS.

Most visitors arrive by car, bus and coach, often on prescribed itineraries, stopping at the Giant's Causeway and one or two other

leading attractions in the area. This 'day-tripper' trend has limited direct benefit for local towns and villages. The potential to increase economic gain for local communities from the Causeway's significant visitor numbers is great. Organisations and independent groups have made significant progress in developing the local offering. The Steering Group, and other stakeholders, should continue to support and enhance these efforts.

A range of diversification efforts to distribute the number of visitors more evenly throughout the year and over a much wider area have been delivered, aligning with 2013 IUCN Advisory Mission 2013 recommendation R.6. Regional and local programmes such as Autumn festivals, marketing and promoting the benefits of off-season travel have contributed and should be supported in the covid-recovery period and beyond.

Efforts to develop a UNESCO Global Geopark in the area presents the opportunity for a holistic management mechanism. This may support responsible management practices while encouraging visitor spread and more meaningful engagement with the local communities.

4.2.2 Community Involvement

Community participation in World Heritage management holds many benefits. Community interests are represented on the Steering Group by an elected CCGBC representative, as well as a private landowner. Consultation for this plan offered a range of opportunities for the community to get involved, however, turn out and engagement was lower than hoped for.

The Steering Group should seek ways to better involve and link local communities with WHS management. The wealth of tangible and intangible cultural heritage presents opportunities for this.

During Covid-19 lockdown local people visited and walked the Site, reengaging with and appreciating the Site. Relevant stakeholders should try to maintain this improved local connection with the WHS.

The National Trust offer several community events, training programmes and volunteering opportunities. The re-imagining of the Causeway Memorial School is intended to be shaped by the local community and may provide a space and resource for them.



Sharing information on World Heritage, the Site's special values (OUV), cultural heritage and biodiversity has many benefits and is important. This task does not sit solely with the National Trust to deliver via visitor facilities and experiences. The Steering Group will review how World Heritage related information is presented to various audiences at the Site and across stakeholders. A communication plan will guide clear and informative messaging to a variety of audiences including citizens of Northern Ireland, decision makers, and those whose activities impact the Site, such as tourism bodies, local residents and employees. Special focus on local audiences and those with enhanced needs will be given. New technologies will be used where appropriate.

4.2.3 Development within the World Heritage Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting

Development is a prominent force for change in the WHS and DLS. It has been noted as a risk to OUV in State of Conservation reports and the 2013 IUCN Advisory Mission report.

Various planning policies and strategies seek to protect the Site and its DLS through special recognition and heightened scrutiny however, development remains a threat as demonstrated by the proposed golf resort development in 2012 and other residential and commercially minded applications. Planning system changes present opportunities to better safeguard the Site and DLS while decision-makers locally and regionally must continue to recognise and protect the Site and DLS through policies, plans and decisions. The Steering Group have a key role to play in raising this agenda with decision-makers locally and regionally and will do so via ascribed actions in the Action Plan.

About 437 people live in the DLS. The Steering Group recognise the need to balance this community's needs with the protection of the WHS and DLS. However, the cumulative impact of development within the DLS could significantly impact the Site's landscape character. All decision-makers should consider the long-term impacts of development planning policies and decisions and take a strategic approach to local development and regional infrastructure development.

The emerging CCGBC Local Development Plan represents one mechanism for maintaining and possibly enhancing protection, as well as raising awareness of the Site's special values. The Steering Group must continue contributing to this process ensuring emerging Policies are robust, serve the local community while also conserving the values, features, character and sense of place of the WHS and its DLS.

Assessments such as the Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment (NIRSCA) 2014 and the NIRLCA 2016 provide sound guidance which should be followed.

A critical views assessment to and from the Site should be completed in a format which can inform decision making. This is increasingly important as the 2016 boundary extension resulted in land along the cliff-top sitting within the boundary, meaning the visual reach of the site was greatly enhanced.

It is recommended that DfI, in line with retained development planning powers, introduce a system of reviewing planning applications made within the Site and DLS and provide clear guidance and a supportive oversight function to Council, where appropriate. To bring this about the Steering Group must better engage with DfI to make clear the issues including calling for a regional visitor infrastructure review.

In its role as devolved State Party representative, NIEA must continue to notify and communicate with DCMS as the State Party and via them with the World Heritage Centre and advisory bodies, regarding any application or proposed project that may threaten the OUV. It is recommended that NIEA engage with DfI to ensure, where appropriate, the use of Environmental Assessments in line with IUCN guidance.

Potential of development in the marine aspects of the WHS needs to be better understood. Information and expertise should be sought from DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division and others about the area and what the developing Marine Plan for Northern Ireland means for the WHS.

Exploration of energy resources

There has been interest from companies wishing to explore the area's natural resources including minerals, offshore renewable energy creation and geothermal energy. This may become more prevalent as the search for clean energy grows (linked to UNSDG 7). The Department for the Economy and The Crown Estate undertake related licensing activities.

The World Heritage Committee, supported by IUCN research, ask State Parties and industry to operate a 'no-go' commitment regarding extractive activities within World Heritage properties and to make every effort to ensure that extractive companies located in their territory cause no damage to World Heritage properties (Committee Decisions 37 COM 7 and 40 COM 7).

Periodically The Crown Estate runs a structured leasing/licensing process for distinct parts of its offshore business (energy, minerals and infrastructure) and issues Seabed Survey Licenses. The Crown Estate recognise the importance of designations, such as WHSs, and provides information and safeguarding measures. The Crown Estate note that there has been no significant interest in the waters off the north coast of Northern Ireland and remain committed to communicate with the Steering Group if such an application is made.

A petroleum exploration license that overlapped with the Property was issued by the Department for the Economy (2011-2015). No work or development was proposed within the WHS however, this demonstrates the need for better understanding and recognition of WHS status among Government Departments. The Steering Group, especially the devolved State Party NIEA, must advocate for the Site on this matter.



4.3 Education & Research

The World Heritage Site's contribution to learning is recognised through its inscription under criteria viii. Although the Site supports a range of education and research activities there is an opportunity to make it a research hub, extending learning opportunities available to local people and others. Development of a research repository, virtual or physical, would greatly support this aspiration, as would encouraging citizen science in research and monitoring activities.

Research that improves understanding, aids sustainable management and better connects local people with the WHS and its DLS will be welcomed and supported by the Steering Group. The Steering Group should identify research needs and opportunities and work collaboratively with the two local universities to realise these. The National Trust's Sustainability Study is an exemplar of research. It should be used as a vehicle to inform not only local understanding of managing natural landscapes but promoted and shared with international audiences.

Formal and informal learning, at the WHS and further afield, should continue and new opportunities to engage local people with World Heritage concepts and/or derive further benefits from the designation should be supported. The Steering Group should take steps to ensure all sectors of society, especially those underrepresented, are provided for and steps taken to connect them with World Heritage.

4.3.1 Connecting and collaborating with other sites

There are many benefits to connecting with other UNESCO sites and protected areas, especially geological sites. Much can be learned through common experiences.

Steering Group members have connected with; World Heritage UK, UNESCO Global Geoparks and their Committees (Irish, UK and international levels), Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes WHS, a number of organisational fora and welcomed visiting representatives and researchers. Such efforts should be continued and enhanced.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are of particular interest, with the Steering Group acting as a de facto UNESCO Global Geopark development group, a task now being taken forward by a separate working group. The opportunity to collaboratively manage an area of outstanding geological heritage in a holistic way, promoting research and community development speaks well to some of the issues at the WHS and wider area. The Steering Group should continue to support efforts to establish a Geopark as part of better collaborative working in the wider area.

The Steering Group should continue to connect and collaborate with other sites and places, exploring concepts and projects that benefit the Site while contributing to the vision for the WHS of being the global leader in sustainable management of a dynamic natural site.

The National Trust's Sustainability Study has earned international interest. Opportunities to share information about this research should be taken.

4.4 Political

Brexit

The UK left the EU in January 2020. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 means laws relating to nature conservation are currently upheld in UK legislation. This supports nature conservation designations at the WHS. It is unclear how leaving the EU may affect the Site, but tourism may be negatively impacted, reducing revenue.

Northern Ireland Executive

The Northern Ireland Executive reformed in early January 2020, after almost a three-years hiatus. This delayed some efforts such as approval of the Marine Plan and a review of countryside planning for

renewable energy and sustainable development.

The Steering Group must connect and work with the Executive, Department Ministers (especially the DAERA Minister), elected representatives and the NI Civil Service to raise awareness of the WHS, the issues facing it and encourage all facets of Government to adequately consider the WHS in decision making.

The emerging Office for Environmental Protection and the Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland present opportunities to enhance and clarify recognition and protection of the WHS.

Covid-19 Legacy

The pandemic brought challenges and opportunities for the WHS. Visitor numbers significantly reduced in 2020 and it is expected they will remain below pre-pandemic levels for a number of years.

Visitor facilities closed, or operated on a reduced level throughout 2020, reducing revenue. Visitor revenue supports site management. At times rangers were not on site monitoring and delivering some maintenance tasks. The break in visitors allowed the natural environment to recover and it seemed that local people enjoyed visiting the WHS during this time.

This pause in visitors provide an opportunity for the National Trust to rethink visitor modelling and rebuild visitor capacity which better aligns with responsible tourism and sustainability. All stakeholders should approach Covid-recovery with a view to enhancing sustainability for the WHS and DLS.



Aim 5.

Better engage local communities with the WHS and enable them to gain greater benefits from the WHS designation



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5. Achieving Objectives, Implementing Actions

5.1 Vision, Aims & Objectives for Giant's Causeway WHS Management Plan 2021-2027

The Vision for the World Heritage Site encapsulates the aspirations of the Steering Group for the future of the Site.

The Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site will be recognised as the global leader in the responsible management of dynamic natural sites, encouraging people to celebrate, value and enjoy a Site that demonstrates responsible conservation while providing an exceptional visitor experience. This Site will positively contribute to local and regional communities, while its special qualities, sensitive setting and environment are safeguarded for present and future generations.

The following aims and objectives have been developed to help realise this vision and address challenges facing the site. They are also intended to make the most of potential opportunities, while supporting the World Heritage designation and sustainable management. Objectives underpin each aim and a range of actions have been developed for each objective. These are set out in the Action Plan.

Aim 1. Safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting for present and future generations

- a) Conserve the geological and geomorphological attributes of the Site while allowing natural processes to occur
- b) Support a healthy natural environment and uphold the landscape character, setting and sense of place for the Site
- c) Encourage, support and promote outcomes of research and monitoring programmes that inform the sustainable management of the Site and its Distinctive Landscape Setting

Aim 2. Demonstrate and support excellent WHS Management

- a) Maintain a strong management structure for effective coordination of activities that influence or impact on the OUV and integrity of the Site
- b) Ensure that sufficient resources are secured to allow effective delivery of the WHS Plan
- c) Share knowledge and collaborate with other Sites to support responsible management practices

Aim 3. Raise awareness and understanding of the Giant's Causeway WHS status

- a) Increase public and sectoral understanding of the Site's WHS status and OUV
- b) Ensure WHS status is recognised and explained to a wide range of audiences
- c) Maintain and improve education, training and research opportunities and facilities at the WHS and beyond

Aim 4. Provide a safe, enjoyable and sustainable visitor experience that does not compromise the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site

- a) Maintain appropriate access to and around the Site that does not compromise the OUV or natural environment
- b) Encourage visitors to make environmentally sustainable choices when visiting the WHS
- c) Encourage development of appropriate and sustainable regional visitor infrastructure

Aim 5. Better engage local communities with the WHS, enabling them to gain greater benefits from the WHS designation

- a) Ensure local community representation is included in WHS management
- b) Enable local communities to be engaged with the WHS and harness the contribution that the Site can make to community life
- c) Support local communities to champion the WHS and its protection

5.2 Implementation of the Management Plan

Responsibility for delivering on the vision, aims and objectives of this Management Plan does not sit with one organisation, agency, or representative. Instead a combination of Steering Group partners and other organisations share this responsibility and collaborate to achieve actions and objectives.

The Steering Group provides strategic guidance on activities and operations occurring within and around the Site and reviews progress, adapting focus and activities, as necessary. The main mechanism for this is through the Action Plan.

Change is inevitable and may take many forms, presenting both risks and opportunities. The Steering Group will take a practical approach to addressing the changing needs of the Site.

CCGHT continue to provide a secretariat service for the Steering Group through a part-time Projects Manager role (WHSPM resourced by DAERA NIEA). The WHSPM will work with the Steering Group to promote and implement the Plan undertaking some management and monitoring activities.

The Steering Group and other partners must promote the Management Plan within their own agencies, organisations or communities. This is especially important as the Plan is not a statutory document. The Plan is primarily available digitally via NIEA's website and the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site webpage, hosted and maintained by CCGHT. More needs to be done to translate the Plan into formats for the general public and local communities.

The Action Plan sets out activities that contribute to the Aims and Objectives of the Management Plan. These are attributed to a range of agencies and organisations, most of which are represented on the Steering Group. Actions look to the short, medium and long-term and some may be ongoing with no set completion date.

The WHSPM will encourage and help to co-ordinate delivery of the Action Plan, monitoring and reporting on progress regularly. A new Action Plan will be developed for 2024-2027.

DAERA NIEA make some resource available for activities but this does not cover the full range of activities. Many activities rely on the existing resources of other organisations. Insufficient resources poses a risk to

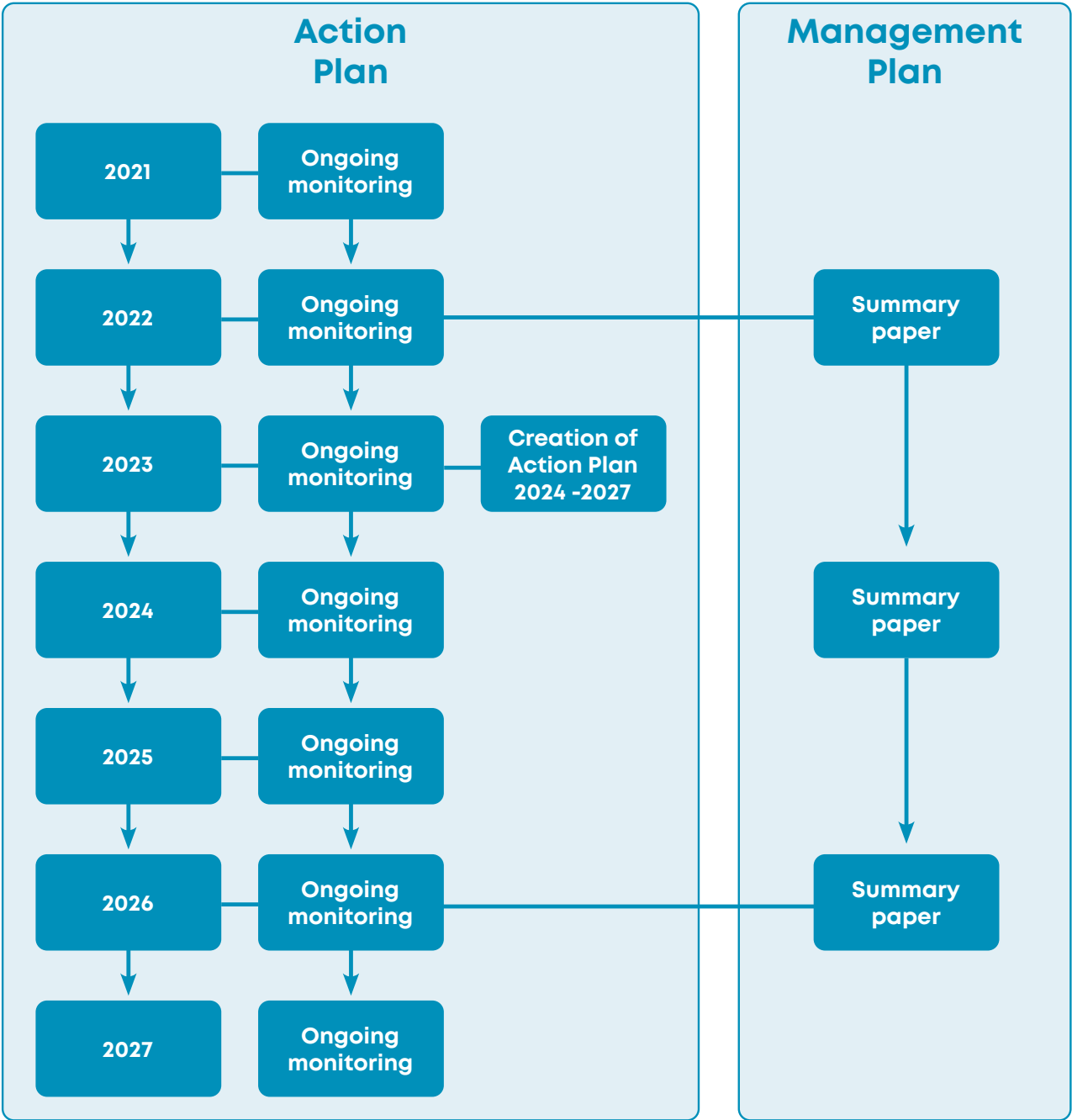
implementation, as was the case for previous Plans. Additional funding is needed to fulfil all the actions. Steering Group members and the Secretariat must work to identify and secure necessary resources.

5.3 Monitor and Review Mechanisms

The Management Plan will be reviewed for accuracy biennially. Policy, organisational and other changes will be documented in a brief summary, developed by the Secretariat for the Steering Group. It will be made available on the website and considered as an addendum

to the Management Plan. This mechanism will allow the Steering Group to remain well briefed and focused on pertinent issues.

Ongoing monitoring and annual reviews of the Action Plan will be completed by the Secretariat, reviewed by the Steering Group and made available online. A pragmatic approach to delivery of actions will be taken, for instance some actions may be delivered in ways not prescribed in the Action Plan. The Steering Group will work collaboratively to address issues arising from any reviews.



Abbreviations

ASSI	Area of Special Scientific Interest
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BGS	British Geological Survey
CCGBC	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
CCGHT	Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
CNCC	Council for Natural Conservation and the Countryside
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DDCMS	Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DLS	Distinctive Landscape Setting
DoENI	Department of the Environment
EU	European Union
GSNI	Geological Survey Northern Ireland
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IUCN	International Union for Nature Conservation
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LDP	Local Development Plan
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MPA	Marine Protected Area
dNAP	Draft Northern Area Plan
NI	Northern Ireland
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NICLA	Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment
NIRLCA	Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment
NIRSCA	Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NT	National Trust
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
PROW	Public Right of Way
OCN	Open College Network
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
RDS	Regional Development Strategy
RLCA	Regional Landscape Character Area
RG	Regional Guidance
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCA	Seascape Character Area
SPA	Special Protection Area
SOUV	Statement of Outstanding Universal Value
SPPS	Strategic Planning Policy Statement
TNI	Tourism Northern Ireland
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
WHS	World Heritage Site
WHSPM	World Heritage Site Project Manager
WHUK	World Heritage UK
WRG	Weathering Research Group
UK	United Kingdom

Appendices

Appendix 1

UNESCO - Outstanding Universal Value Criteria for Inscription of World Heritage Sites

Cultural Criteria

- i. To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.
- ii. To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.
- iii. To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living, or which has disappeared;
- iv. To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.
- v. To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.
- vi. To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria).

Natural Criteria

- vii. To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.
- viii. To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.
- ix. To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.
- x. To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Appendix 2

IUCN Advisory Mission 2013

In early February 2012 the DOE NI (NIEA) informed the World Heritage Centre of a proposal for a large-scale golf resort development starting some 550m south of the boundary and within the Distinctive Landscape Setting (DLS). As expected, the Centre requested further information.

In late March 2012 planning permission was granted by the DOE NI Minister who had joint responsibility for the determination of planning decisions and natural heritage in Northern Ireland. The Minister decided the economic and tourism benefits qualified as exceptional circumstances and the potential benefits outweighed the adverse impact on the landscape. The National Trust objected to the proposed development and challenged the Minister's decision, calling for a judicial review. This was not granted.

The World Heritage Committee considered the matter at its 2012 meeting and requested the development be halted until its potential impact on the OUV was assessed. (Decision 36 COM 7C). IUCN was invited to conduct an Advisory Mission to assess the overall state of conservation of the Property and provide technical advice on its conservation and heritage-led development.

During the Advisory Mission, in February 2013, an IUCN representative met with the Steering Group, NIEA, National Trust and visited the World Heritage Site and surrounding area.

The subsequent report, issued in March 2013, identified the following risks to OUV:

- Damage to the landscape setting through inappropriate development

or land use (namely the golf resort development)

- Attrition of natural features through natural processes such as cliff erosion or sea level change
- Damage to natural features through human impact

The report concluded that *'the values for which the Property has been inscribed according to criterion viii, and which relate to geological phenomena, have been maintained. The cliff exposures and causeway stones, which are key attributes, are not deteriorated. However, the Outstanding Universal Value in terms of the Property's natural beauty (criterion vii) is exposed to threats through planned major development, related land use and changes in the landscape character of the Property's setting (and proposed buffer zone). The proposed golf development constitutes a threat to the integrity of the Property and its Outstanding Universal Value through an irreversible new landscape and visual impacts that affect the setting of the Property, as well as the damage to the biodiversity which gives the wider landscape its character.'*

15 recommendations accompanied the report (see Appendix 3). NIEA and the Steering Group reviewed the recommendations and developed 10 actions which were added to the existing Action Plan (see Appendix 4). One recommendation encouraged extending the WHS boundary. A Minor Boundary Modification was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2016 (Decision: 40 COM 8B.35).

This experience sparked debate amongst the Steering Group but proved to reaffirm purpose and the Group's focus on ensuring that the OUV and Integrity of the Site and its DLS is protected. A Planning Officer now sits on the Steering Group in an advisory capacity.

The golf resort development is not being pursued. Planning permission expired in 2017 and the land has changed ownership.

Appendix 3

Advisory Mission Recommendations

R1. The impacts of the proposed development on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Property of Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast appear sufficiently significant that the development of the golf course should not be permitted in its proposed location;

R2. The State Party should review its procedures for notifying the World Heritage Committee about planned developments that could potentially impact on World Heritage properties, and ensure that potential impacts on Outstanding Universal Value are adequately assessed, including as an explicit part of the required Environmental Impact Assessment for such developments;

R3. The State Party is advised to strengthen the position and recognition of World Heritage sites in national law, including in all regions of the State, so that developments that create negative impacts on Outstanding Universal Value are not permitted;

R4. The draft Management Plan for the site should include more detailed and site specific guidelines for management of the proposed buffer zone to the Property and activities proposed in the draft plan of actions should be upgraded with a set of measurable indicators, as well as with chapters on financial and staff management;

R5. The reporting system on the implementation of the yearly management plans should be further clarified and the respective responsibilities of the WHS Officer

and the WHS Steering Group for the preparation, coordination and implementation of the Management Plan should be clearly specified; R6. Activities to distribute the number of visitors throughout the year more evenly and thus prevent further increase of visitors during the periods of the highest peaks should be undertaken;

R7. Diesel buses for transportation of visitors from the visitor centre to the cliffs and back should be replaced with electric vehicles;

R8. Additional Park and Ride facilities should be considered in order to reduce the environmental impact of additional numbers of visitors which are expected to visit the site in the future;

R9. World Heritage logos should be included on signs along the paths and additional explanation of the importance and particularities of World Heritage properties compared to other forms of national and international Protected Area designations should be given at the visitor centre. In addition to the above recommendations, the mission reiterates the recommendations of the 2003 joint UNESCO/IUCN mission to the World Heritage Property of Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast, including those which remain unfulfilled or only partially fulfilled:

R10. Carefully revise all zoning arrangements in order to preserve the landscape values of the Property and the AONB surrounding the Property, including the definition of a clear and appropriate buffer zone, which should be linked to the proposed zoning plan of the AONB (this is proposed in the dNAP, and thus would be addressed when it is adopted);

R11. No developments, which could potentially threaten the OUV of the site should be allowed, and any

development proposal should not be approved before the proposed buffer zone to the WHS is approved and a management plan for the site put in place (the State Party notes in comments on the draft mission report that “A management plan is in place, a setting is defined in the dNAP, planners are using the dNAP”. However, the mission has noted above 7 that both the buffer zone is not formally in place, and that a development that threatens OUV has been permitted);

R12. Relevant bodies should provide research results to the management bodies for relevant onsite application with regard to presentation, site information and visitor safety (this is an ongoing action and the mission recognises that extensive studies have been carried out, and there was a presentation given on the innovative techniques used as part of the mission, as noted by the State Party);

R13. Natural threats (sea water rise, frequency of storm events) due to expected climate change should be carefully monitored and appropriate mitigation measures to address these threats should be undertaken (this is an ongoing action and the mission recognises that progress has been achieved and research undertaken as an input to the management plan).

R14. The state of conservation of the WHS, its surrounding AONB and the seascape linked to it, should be enhanced. (The State Party notes that this is the aim of the management plan, and other relevant plans).

R15. Revision of the WHS boundaries should be undertaken, in order to include a larger portion of the cliff top. (The State Party notes that this issue is being monitored).

R16. Diversification of tourism facilities which would not impact the OUV should be explored.

Appendix 4

Actions Developed from Advisory Mission Recommendations

R.3 Ensure all actions in Management & Action Plan have measurable timescales and dedicated lead agencies.

Chapters or links to National Trust plans on financial and site management will be included when drafting the new management plan in 2018.

R.6 Develop and present activities which will enhance more even distribution of visitors throughout the year.

R.7 Every two years undertake a review of options for introducing electric vehicles on the route from the Visitor Centre to the Causeway Stones.

R.8 Assess current and potential park and ride demand and if appropriate improve the number of park and ride facilities.

R.9 Include the UNESCO World Heritage Site logo on all appropriate signage when these are replaced

R.9 Provide visitor information on World Heritage Site status compared to other local, national and international protected area designations.

R.12 Sharing of research results will be made a specific condition of access to the WHS for research purposes.

R.15 Submit a formal application for a minor revision of the WHS boundary along the cliff-top edge.

R.16 Present options for the diversification of tourism activities within and around the WHS.

Appendix 5

Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment: LCA 57 Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island.

Key Characteristics:

- High plateau landscape with distinctive rugged coast, stepped profile and rocky knolls. Coast includes unique formation of the Giant's Causeway.
- Exposed sheep grazed landscape of windswept trees and broken walls; gorse on rocky knolls separates small fields of rough grazing.
- Rural landscape with villages associated with coastal bays; large, white hotels on cliff tops; modern bungalows; old derelict cottages on knolls.
- Ruined castles on cliff top locations along the coast. Long views are available from elevated areas across the coast and inland.

Appendix 6

Northern Ireland Regional Seascape Character Assessment – SCA 5 Causeway Coast

Key Characteristics

- Crashing waves against a very dramatic, rugged and exposed coastline of high vertical basalt and chalk cliffs.
- Striking geomorphological features including the world famous Giant's Causeway, the dramatic architecture of the raised beach and integral stacks and cliffs between White Park Bay and Ballintoy and an impressive submerged palaeo-cliff shoreline off White Park Bay and the Giant's Causeway.
- A prevailing undeveloped character with a strong sense of remoteness experienced along much of the coastline.
- Extensive and panoramic views across wild open sea and adjacent SCAs with distant views of the Kintyre Peninsula, Jura, Islay, Arran, and the hills of Inishowen.
- Relatively shallow seas with submerged sandbanks, sea caves and reefs.
- A number of small uninhabited rocky islands and outcrops located near to the coastline.
- An intricate pattern of bays, islets, rocky headlands and outcrops.
- Swaths of semi-natural coastal grasslands with patches of gorse along open cliff tops and steep slopes.
- Intimate and sheltered fishing harbours at Ballintoy, Dunseverick and Portnaboe.
- High energy seas with strong currents

Forces for Change

The coast is generally exposed to the north, north-east and north-west and is vulnerable to erosion in the light of rising sea levels and projected increases in extreme weather events.

Appendix 7

The Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Causeway Coast AONB spans approximately 18km between Portrush and Ballycastle and inland as far as the town of Bushmills. The WHS is recognised as a key feature of the AONB and the AONB is referenced in the SOUV.

The AONB hosts spectacular coastal scenery including dramatic cliffs and headlands, a rocky storm-torn coastline, sweeping sandy beaches and small harbours. Immediately inland the landscape changes to intensively farmed land. Small settlements, including examples of clachans, are a feature in the landscape. and Farm buildings and single dwellings standing out in the open landscape. Historic castles and relic defence buildings along the coast hint at the rich, turbulent cultural history of the area. A rich variety of flora and fauna lives within the AONB and these play a vital role in terms of biodiversity and landscape character. AONB Map in Appendix 13.

A Management Forum delivers a framework of co-ordinated activities to support and improve access, enjoyment, conservation and understanding of and to the AONBs heritage. The Forum's activities and aims align well with those of the WHS and are considered to contribute to its protection. There is significant cross-over between the AONB Forum and the Steering Group which proves beneficial.

Appendix 8

Heritage and Early Tourism Information

Early Development in the Area

Remains of a Mesolithic human settlement was uncovered close to the shores of the River Bann and is known as Mountsandel. It is the earliest known site of human settlement in Ireland. Closer to the WHS are Lissanduff Earthworks in Portballintrae which provide evidence of a Bronze Age settlement and are a State Care Monument.

The north coast was important for fishing and trading. Historic defences such as Dunluce Castle, Dunseverick Castle and Kinbane Castle sit perched on cliff edges as reminders of a turbulent past. Dunluce Castle, a medieval ruin, is the most intact of the three and occupies a dramatic location on an exposed rocky outcrop acting as a distinctive landmark from all angles.

As trade grew so did harbours and the communities connected to them, for example, Ballintoy. Lime Kilns in Ballintoy, built in 1860 and granted Listed Building status in 2019, act a reminder of past trading and industry.

Carrick – a – rede was made famous by a rope bridge, first erected in 1755, to connect the rocky outcrop to the mainland. Atlantic salmon were caught as they swam through the narrow channel between this small outcrop and the mainland. Carrick-a-Rede is in National Trust ownership and managed as part of the same portfolio as the Giant's Causeway. It is a popular visitor attraction, receiving over 400,000 visitors per year.

Within the WHS kelp walls in Portnaboe and several other bays further to the east are evidence of past industry. They were used to dry

kelp harvested from the shores which was later burnt to produce an ash rich in chemicals such as iodine and alginates.

Place names and language

Place names, town lands, language and dialect are important in the area and are used in everyday conversation. They often signify purpose, past use, historical events or connections to other places, which is unsurprising in a landscape that inspired legends of giant's and was important for sea trade and travel. Even the name Giant's Causeway comes from tales of past legends.

This aspect of heritage offers a platform to connect with local communities.

Many local words are connected to Gaelic and although language changes over time, meaning can still be derived. Aird, a townland which sits on the cliff top above the Causeway means headland or high ground. While Port na Callian translates as either the girl's bay, if linked to the Gaelic word cailín for girl, or Cailleach which means hag or witch.

Some names are more descriptive. A little cove called Brenther within Portnaboe, probably means steep harbour, coming from Norse origin while Portnaboe means Port of the Cow.

Port na Spaniagh was named in commemoration of the sinking of the Spanish Armada Galleass, La Girona.

The Girona Historic Wreck

The Girona was a galleass of the Spanish Armada which sank in stormy seas along the Causeway coast on 26th October 1588. After fighting battles in the English Channel, the ship sailed northwards, picking up crew from wrecked Armada ships along the way. When it reached the

Giant's Causeway, it was carrying some 1,300 men, significantly more than the 500 it was designed for.

During a storm it struck the rocky causeway coast. It is believed that only five people survived, although some accounts say nine. The wreck is commemorated in the name of the bay near the wreck site, Port na Spaniagh.

In 1967 Robert Stenuit re-discovered the wreck and salvaged cannons and a wealth of gold coins and jewellery, some of which are exhibited in the Ulster Museum.

The wreck of the Girona is a designated Historic Wreck Site safeguarded under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. It is a criminal offence to interfere with or dive on a wreck designated under Section One of the Act without a licence. The Girona is currently the only designated Historic Wreck Site in Northern Ireland.

Early tourism at the Giant's Causeway

The Giant's Causeway has been a visitor attraction for over 300 years, popularised by scientific interest and celebrated in the arts, as noted in the SOUV. Following the engraving of Susanna Drury's paintings in the 1700s interest increased. Visitor numbers grew throughout the 1800s and by the 1860's two hotels operated at the top of the cliff; the first iteration of the Causeway Hotel was built in 1836 and Kane's Royal Hotel was built in the 1860's. Both hotels had guides associated with them who offered tours and boat tours.

Access to the region was greatly improved by the Belfast to Portrush railway, completed in the 1855 and tourism to the Giant's Causeway was further boosted in 1880 by the Causeway tram. This was the world's first hydroelectric tramway and

brought people from Portrush which subsequently closed in 1949.

In 1896 barriers were erected around the Causeway and admission was charged at a turnstile. The barriers remained in place for almost 70 years. They were removed when the National Trust became landowners in 1961. Some of the anchoring pillars for these barriers can still be seen today.

The trend for taking or trading in souvenir Causeway stones was linked to early tourism at the Causeway and has long since ceased. A diaspora of Causeway Stones exists locally and possibly further afield. Through the Action Plan the Steering Group intend to investigate this.

Appendix 9

A brief description of WHS Steering Group member agencies and organisations.

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, including WHSPM role (Secretariat)

The Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust was established in 2002 and its Mission Statement is:

‘to raise awareness of the special qualities of the natural, built and cultural heritage of the Causeway Coast & Glens area including the Antrim Coast & Glens, Causeway Coast and Binevenagh Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; promoting environmental management and sustainable development that aims to conserve and enhance the unique heritage of the area for the benefit of all.’

CCGHT host the role of World Heritage Site Projects Manager, a part time role including providing a secretariat service for the WHS Steering Group, co-ordinating delivery of the associated Action Plan and also completing UNESCO Periodic Reporting exercises on behalf of the WHS.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council was formed in 2015. It covers an area of 760 sq. miles (1980 km²) with a population of 144,246 (June 2018) residents who are represented by 40 elected Councillors. The Council delivers a variety of services for the residents of and visitors.

The Giant’s Causeway has long been the premier visitor attraction to the Borough and the Council values the UNESCO World Heritage Site status it holds. The Council strives for a sustainable approach across all activities including economic

development, tourism development and destination management.

The Council supports the protection of the World Heritage Site status and participates on the Steering Group. Currently the Planning Department and Coast and Countryside Team (Leisure and Development) and one elected representative attend this group.

CNCC

The Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC) was established in 1989 under the provisions of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.

It advises the DAERA on nature conservation and related natural environment matters.

The Crown Estate

The Crown Estate is a specialist real estate business, created by an Act of Parliament to manage a diverse portfolio of land.

Its coastal holdings include the seabed around England, Wales and Northern Ireland and around half the foreshore, including the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site.

The Crown Estate actively manages its portfolio to deliver strong returns for the nation's finances. Every year it returns 100% of its profits to HM Treasury for the benefit of the nation's finances.

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an Executive Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

NIEA's primary purpose is to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's

environment, and in doing so, deliver health and well-being benefits and support economic growth.

The Agency's key priorities are:

1. a full compliant regulated industry
2. freshwater and marine environment at "good status"
3. a compliant crime free waste sector
4. good habitat and landscape quality with species abundance and diversity
5. promote environmentally sustainable development and infrastructure

DAERA NIEA are the devolved State Party representative for the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site. DAERA NIEA completes State of Conservation Reports for the WHS and is the local point of contact for the World Heritage Committee. DAERA NIEA's aim is to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast WHS is maintained and celebrated

DAERA NIEA part-resources the World Heritage Site Projects Manager role and some associated projects. DAERA NIEA hold authority over other terrestrial designations at the WHS including North Antrim Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Giant's Causeway National Nature Reserve (NNR),

Giant's Causeway & Dunseverick Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). These provide additional layers of protection for the WHS.

Department for the Economy (DfE), represented by the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI)

The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) was founded in 1947

and is part of the Department for the Economy Northern Ireland (DfE). It is staffed by scientists of the British Geological Survey (BGS) under contract to DfE.

The primary role of GSNI is to provide geoscience information and services to inform decision-making. The GSNI maps, models and monitors the ground we live on and provides geological advice and information in support of, but not exclusively for, planning, land use, environmental protection, natural resource assessment and geotourism development.

Department for the Economy (DfE), represented by the Tourism NI

Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI) is responsible for the development of tourism and the marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination to domestic tourists, from within Northern Ireland, and to visitors from the Republic of Ireland. TNI is a non-departmental public body of the Department for the Economy and works closely with other tourism bodies to help develop the visitor economy in Northern Ireland and to market Northern Ireland to incoming visitors.

Independent member with nature conservation expertise (Chair)

National Trust

National Trust, is a charity and membership organisation for heritage conservation. Its properties include historic houses, monuments, gardens, parks and nature reserves. National Trust land holdings are inalienable, meaning it is duty-bound to maintain the Property in perpetuity, as far as possible in its natural state, for the nation to enjoy. It cannot sell or mortgage inalienable land without the formal approval of the National Trust's Board of Trustees.

The National Trust holds about 95% of the terrestrial part of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site through freehold or leasehold agreements since 1961. This includes the key features and attributes of the Site such as the spectacular cliff faces. It owns and operates the Visitor Centre, other visitor facilities and is responsible for public access and visitor management.

Private Landowner

Three private landowners each own a small portion of land within the World Heritage Site. The land tends to be part of a larger agricultural property running inland from the cliff edge and is used as the cliff top path, with some extending into agricultural fields.

Queen's University Belfast

Queen's University Belfast joined the prestigious Russell Group of 24 research-intensive UK universities in 2006.

The Weathering Research Group (WRG) is part of the Environmental Change Research Cluster in the School of Natural and Built Environment. It includes researchers who continue a long-established tradition of delivering internationally recognised research on topics including rock weathering, the management of complex landscapes and the application of geospatial technologies, including GIS, to the monitoring of landscape change. Queen's, through the WRG, has had significant involvement with the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site.

Appendix 10

DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division hold responsibility for: Protecting Northern Ireland's coastal and marine environment via legislation, licensing and permits and conservation activities; Sea fisheries, aquaculture and fish health policy in Northern Ireland.

Appendix 11

Key conservation designations

North Antrim Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The terrestrial aspect of the World Heritage Site falls within the North Antrim Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SAC includes the cliffs, beaches, platforms and isles between White Park Bay in the east and Runkerry Strand in the west. The narrow-mouthed whorl snail, *Vertigo angustior*, is the species identified as the primary reason for this designation. This area supports the only known living population of this snail in Northern Ireland.

A variety of habitats are identified as significant but not the primary reason for the designation. These are: annual vegetation of drift lines; Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*); species-rich nardus grassland, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas; and vegetated sea cliffs.

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site:

1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts

The North Antrim Coast represents an extensive area of hard cliff along one of the most exposed coastlines in Northern Ireland. The site exhibits contrasting geology. The western part is centred on the Giant's Causeway with its geochemically alkali and

*intermediate basaltic high cliff, interspersed with a series of coves. The eastern section hosts the limited active and extensive fossil chalk sea-cliffs. The basalt series supports a range of communities including those associated with rock crevices and cliff ledges, and with a range of typical maritime grasslands and heath. Notable species for the site include Wilson's filmy-fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii*, thyme broomrape *Orobanche alba*, hare's-foot clover *Trifolium arvense*, zigzag clover *Trifolium medium* and common juniper *Juniperus communis*. The chalk cliffs support mesotrophic and calcareous grasslands*

Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site

- *1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines*
- *1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*)*
- *2120 "Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes")"*
- *2130 "Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes")" * Priority feature*
- *6230 Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas in Continental Europe) * Priority feature*

Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site

*1014 Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior**

*The North Antrim Coast supports the only known living population of narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo**

angustior in Northern Ireland. The species was rediscovered in 2002 at two separate localities on the site. Both support strong populations of the species in areas of ideal habitat – i.e. tall, lightly-grazed, damp grassland – and it is likely that they have persisted for many decades.

Skerries and Causeway Marine Special Area of Conservation (Marine SAC)

In Northern Ireland designation of SACs with Marine Components is carried out jointly by DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division and DAERA NIEA Natural Environment Division. The designations protect the features, habitats and species. Marine SACs are protected and conserved by working with the various maritime competent authorities to ensure that activities under their control are managed appropriately.

Almost 100% (99.2%) of the designated area is marine. The Marine SAC covers 10,867.43 hectares. The terrestrial aspect includes the Giant's Causeway & Dunseverick (ASSI), which includes the World Heritage Site apart from a small aspect located around the visitor centre. This demonstrates the multiple layers of designations and therefore protection at the World Heritage Site.

The Skerries and Causeway marine SAC area contains a wide variety of ground types, depths (down to 155m), tidal strength (up to 6 knots) and exposure to wave action (to a wave base 70-80m deep). This produces a complex mosaic of habitats that contain many rare and priority species. Many of the rare habitats and species present are there as a result of the warming influence of the Gulf Stream, the variation in underlying geology of the reef, the complex tidal currents and the interaction between reef and sandbank in this area. It is also an

important site for marine mammals, particularly the harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*.

Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site

- 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
- 1170 Reefs
- 8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves

Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection

- 1351 Harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Giant's Causeway National Nature Reserve (NNR)

National Nature reserves are chosen from among the very best examples of Northern Ireland's wildlife, habitats and geology. Their designation is a public recognition by Government of their importance.

The Giant's Causeway NNR was designated in 1987 due to its natural beauty, geological features and biological interest. The NNR covers almost exactly the terrestrial territory of the WHS. A small portion of inland area around the Visitor Centre and car parks is not included.

Giant's Causeway & Dunseverick Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) are protected areas that represent the finest wildlife and geological sites that make a considerable contribution to the conservation of natural places. They are identified by scientific survey and by and large remain in private ownership. They are designated by DAERA NIEA under the Environmental (NI) Order 2002. The Giant's Causeway and Dunseverick ASSI was designated

in 2000 and covers a predominantly coastal area including the terrestrial aspects of the World Heritage Site. The outstanding geological features of the Causeway, the exposed cliffs and bays are recognised by the ASSI designation.

The following habitats, features and species are notable in the ASSI.

- Maritime cliff communities - the cliff lands are enhanced by patches of heath, flushes, slips and screes, rock exposure with lichen cover and ledge / crevice flora. A variety of birds including Choughs and overwintering birds are supported at the site.
- Wet and dry heath - the relict heath and species-rich grassland on the clifftop are of particular significance, representing valuable relicts of a vegetation which was presumably once wide-spread along these cliff-tops;
- Species-rich grasslands - The large extent of unimproved grassland within the NNR is particularly notable as are the stands of greater woodrush, *Luzula sylvatica*.
- Saltmarsh - This contains some uncommon species, including the saltmarsh flat-sedge, *Blasmus rufus*, which is rare in Ireland.
- Strandline and Intertidal communities - these include coastal vegetated shingle, which comprises the rare and decreasing species, oysterplant *Mertensia maritima*, and bedrock with rock pools; and
- Sub-tidal communities - This area is dominated by bedrock with wave-cut platforms often reaching substantial widths and boulders providing habitats rich in biodiversity. Further offshore, sand dominates the seabed.

Appendix 12

Portballintrae (Outside DLS)

Portballintrae is a small coastal village with approximately 600 residents. It developed as a fishing village and some fishing vessels still use the harbour but, it is mainly used for recreation now. Artefacts recovered from the Girona were brought onshore here. In the village are Lissanduff Earthworks, a State Care Monument consisting of two large circular earthworks with concentric ramparts date to the Bronze Age (3000BC). It has yet to be fully understood or archaeologically excavated.

A thatched cottage overlooking the harbour is the last example of the cottage style that once surrounded the bay. Housing is now mostly modern townhouses, holiday homes, replacement dwellings and a sizeable holiday park. Runkerry House, situated to the east across the bay on Runkerry Headland was built in the 18th century by Edward Macnaghten, of Dundarave, and is in private ownership today. The Causeway Coast Way runs through the village providing access to the World Heritage Site.



Lisnagunogue & Dunseverick (Lisnagunogue and Dunseverick Castle are inside the DLS and Dunseverick area and harbour are outside the DLS)

Lisnagunogue is an inland hamlet south of the World Heritage Site. The public house forms the focal point of the settlement and the Church is a distinctive landmark.

Dunseverick is home to a cluster of houses and is associated with the nearby harbour, and Dunseverick Castle & Earthworks which are Scheduled Historic Monuments. Dunseverick lies at the northern end of one of the royal roads from Tara, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland. The remains of the castle are a popular stop on the Causeway Coastal Route driving route and there is a small carpark for visitors.

Portbradden (outside the DLS)

Consisting of just fifteen houses, Portbradden is located under a cliff at the western end of White Park Bay. Portbradden translates as Port of the Salmon and a traditional salmon fishing station was located here. The small slipway remains operational.

White Park Bay is an important archaeological site and was home to some of Ireland's early settlers. Evidence of these Mesolithic and Neolithic peoples are sometimes exposed in the Bay, which is also a popular recreation spot with residents and visitors alike.

Bushmills (Outside DLS)

Bushmills is considered the gateway to the Giant's Causeway. It is the largest nearby settlement with 1,300 residents and developed as an industrial town from the 1600s onwards with the River Bush powering at least seven mills. The Macnaghten family played a role in shaping Bushmills. Their efforts can be seen in the clock tower and courthouse as well as their former private residence, the Grade A Listed Building, Dundarave House which lies between Bushmills and the Site.

Renowned architect Clough Williams-Ellis designed the former Grammar School and the Causeway Memorial School, located adjacent to the World Heritage Site. Bushmills was designated as a Conservation Area in 1992. There are several amenities and attractions for visitors including shops, a seasonal visitor information centre and the Bushmills Distillery, the oldest licensed distillery in the world which attracts over 130,000 visitors per year (2017). Park and Ride facilities are in place from Bushmills to the Giant's Causeway. The privately run Giant's Causeway Tramway operates seasonally linking Bushmills and the Site. A walking path follows the tram's route and provides the only off-road route from Bushmills to the Causeway.



Ballintoy (Outside the DLS)

Ballintoy is home to approximately 150 people. The main aspect of the village is inland and a narrow winding road leads down to the harbour. The uninhabited Sheep Island sits proudly offshore. The harbour, Parish Church and a striking private residence are notable features.

The harbour, constructed from limestone, was relatively large and accessible and so became a hub for fishing. Lime kilns close to the harbour in 1860 remain fairly intact and were granted Listed Building status in 2019. Recent interest in the village has increased since HBO's 'Game of Thrones' used the harbour area as a film location. Ballintoy has two translations, one Town of the North, while another refers to it as the place of the axe.

Appendix 13

Maps

WHS in UK and Ireland context

WHS Location in Northern Ireland

WHS in within Council Area

WHS Boundary

WHS and Causeway Coast AONB

WHS and Special Areas of Conservation

WHS and Area of Special Scientific Interest

WHS and National Nature Reserve

WHS and NI Landscape Character Areas

WHS and NI Regional Landscape Character Areas

WHS and NI Regional Seascape Character Areas



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Appendix 13

Maps

WHS in UK and Ireland context



Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast
World Heritage Site



0 100 200 mi



0 250 500 km



Map Data (C) 2020 Google

WHS Location in Northern Ireland



Date Map Created

01/09/2020

Scale

1:700,000

0 10 20 mi



0 10 20 km



WHS in within Council Area



Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Date Map Created - 01/09/2020

Scale - 1:300000

 World Heritage Site

 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

0 5 10 mi



0 7.5 15 km





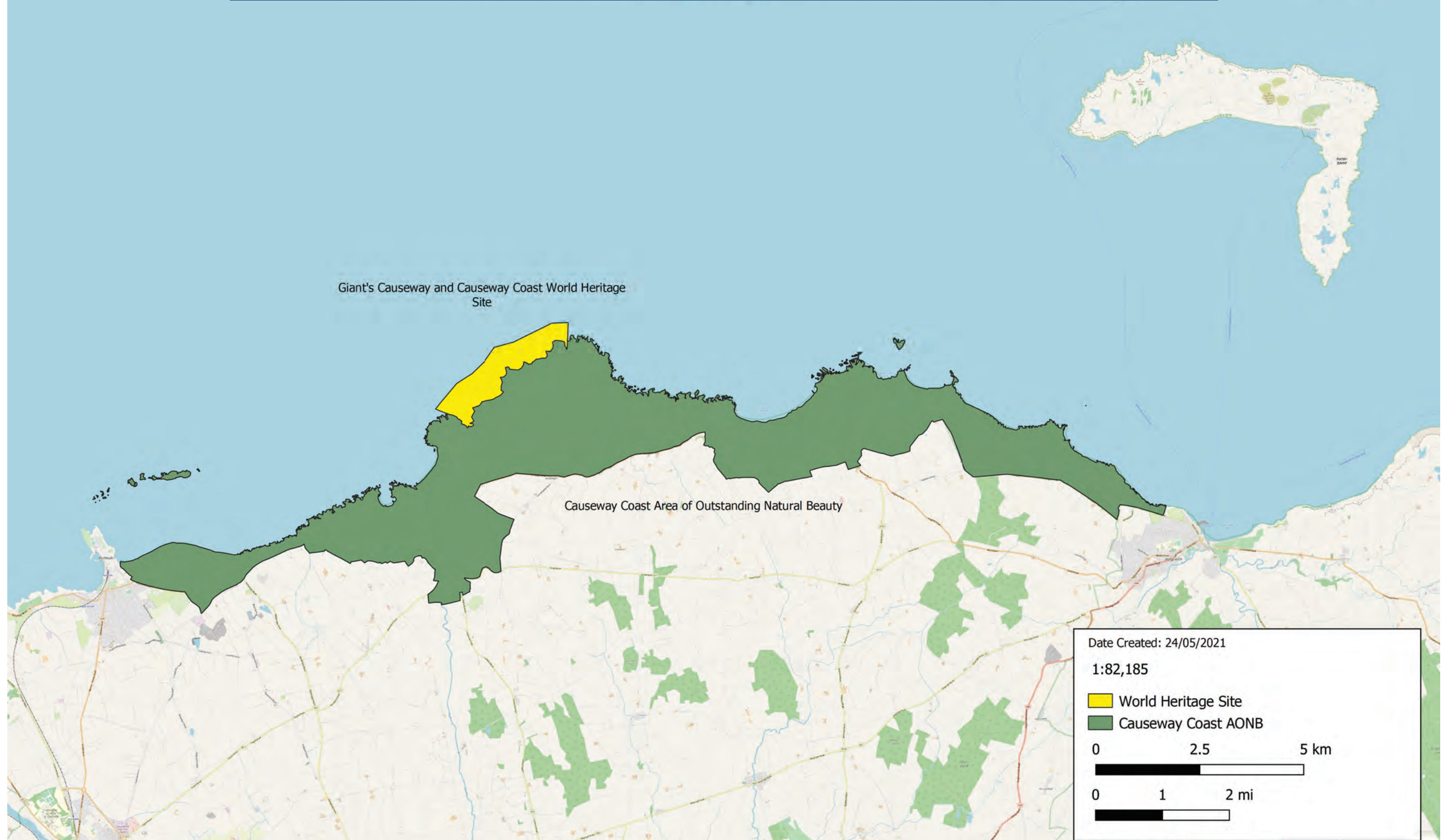
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Scale: 1:17,000
Drawn by: 2345672
Date: 13 May 2021

Description:

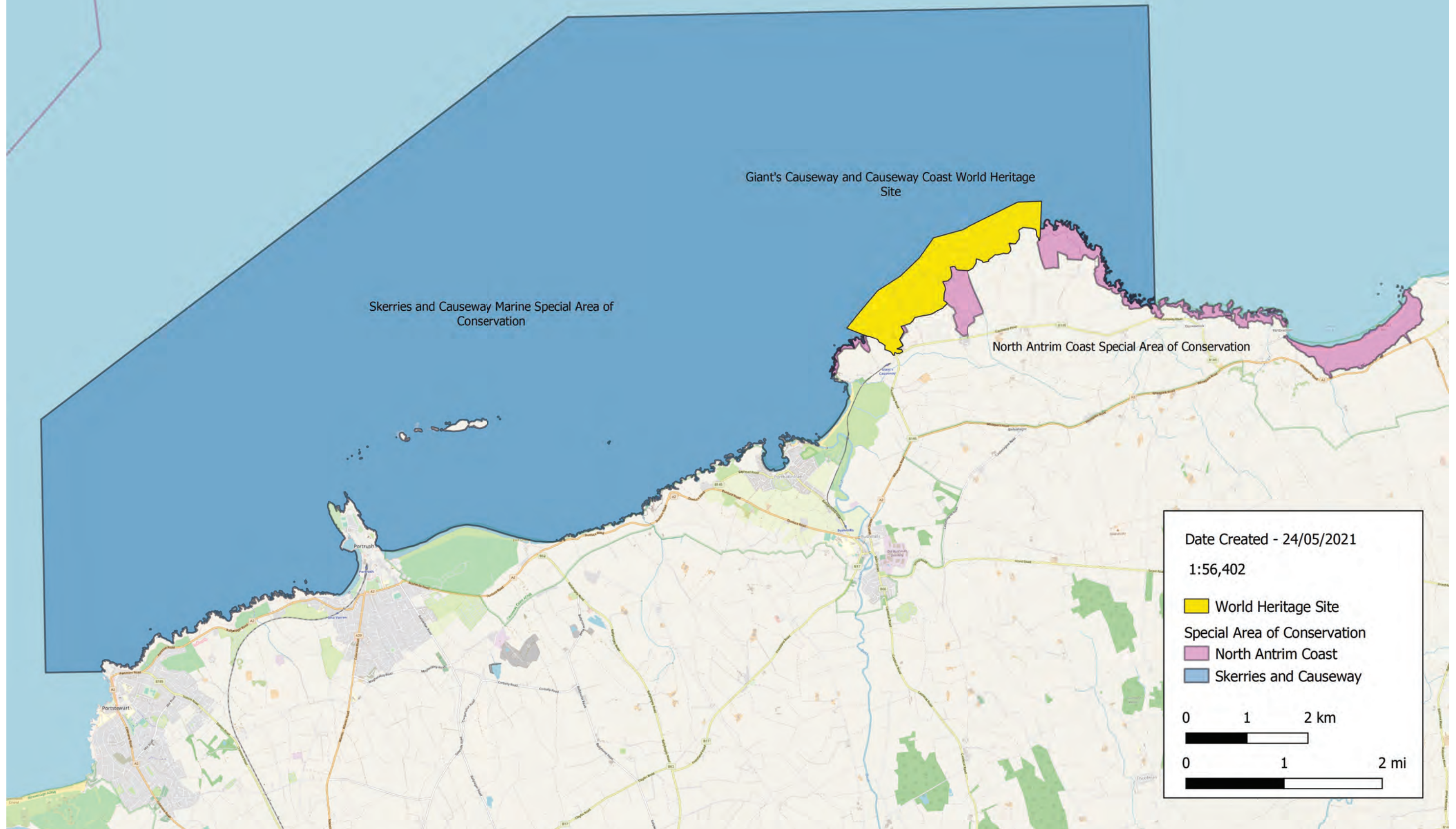
Reflecting modifications to the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast
World Heritage Site boundary approved on 16th November 2016
(UNESCO Decision Code: 40 COM 8B.35)

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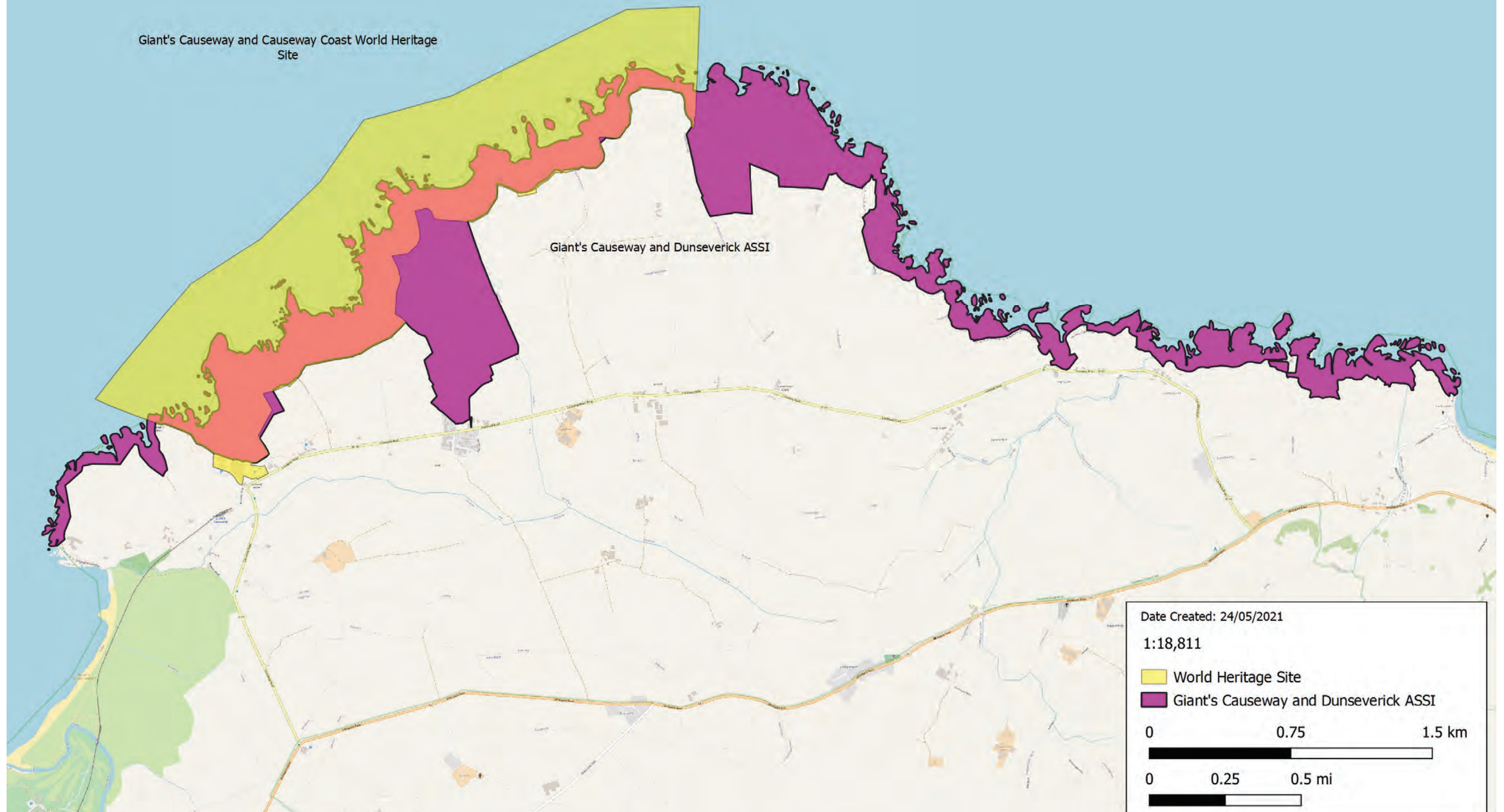
WHS and Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



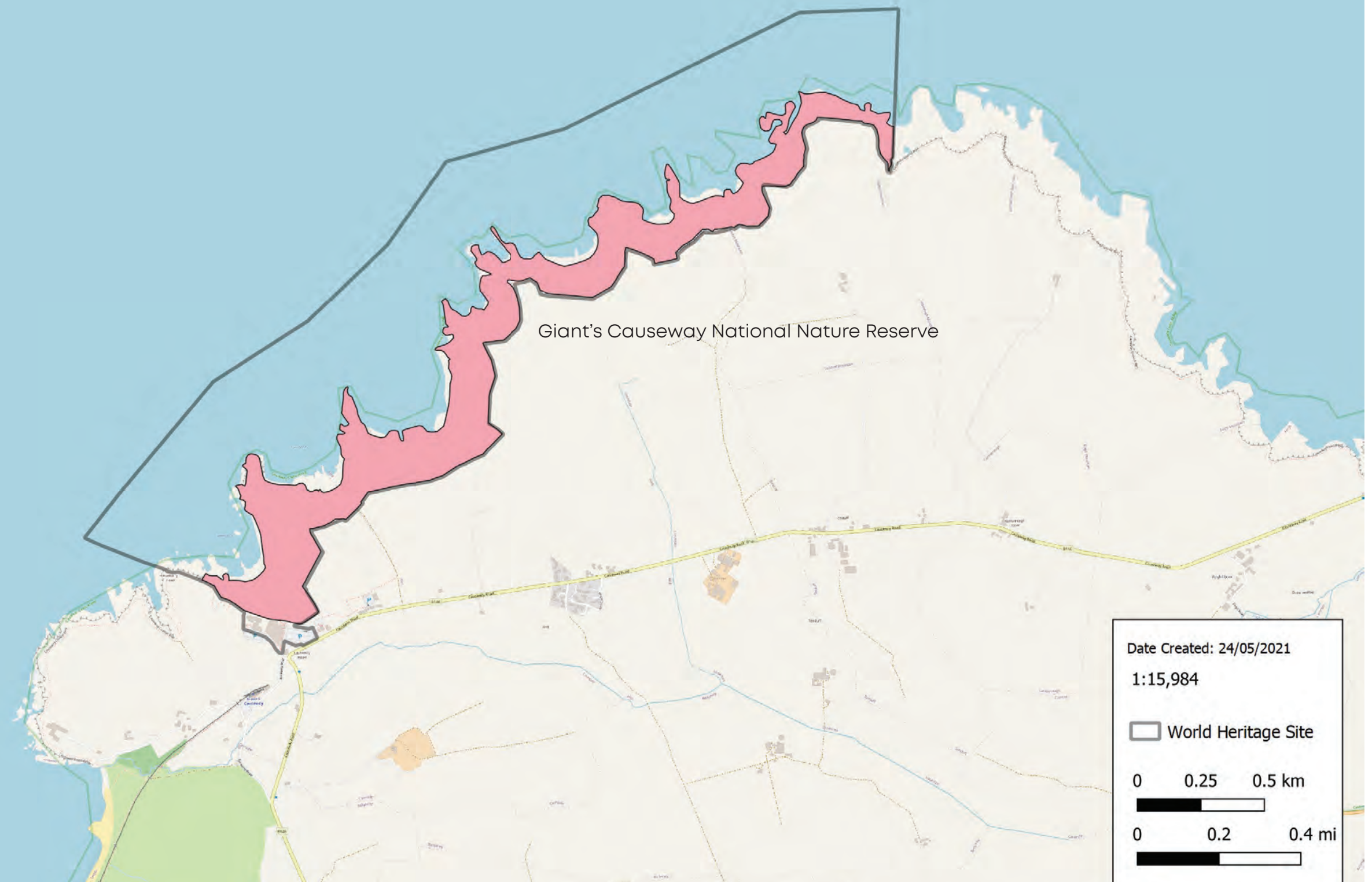
WHS and Special Areas of Conservation



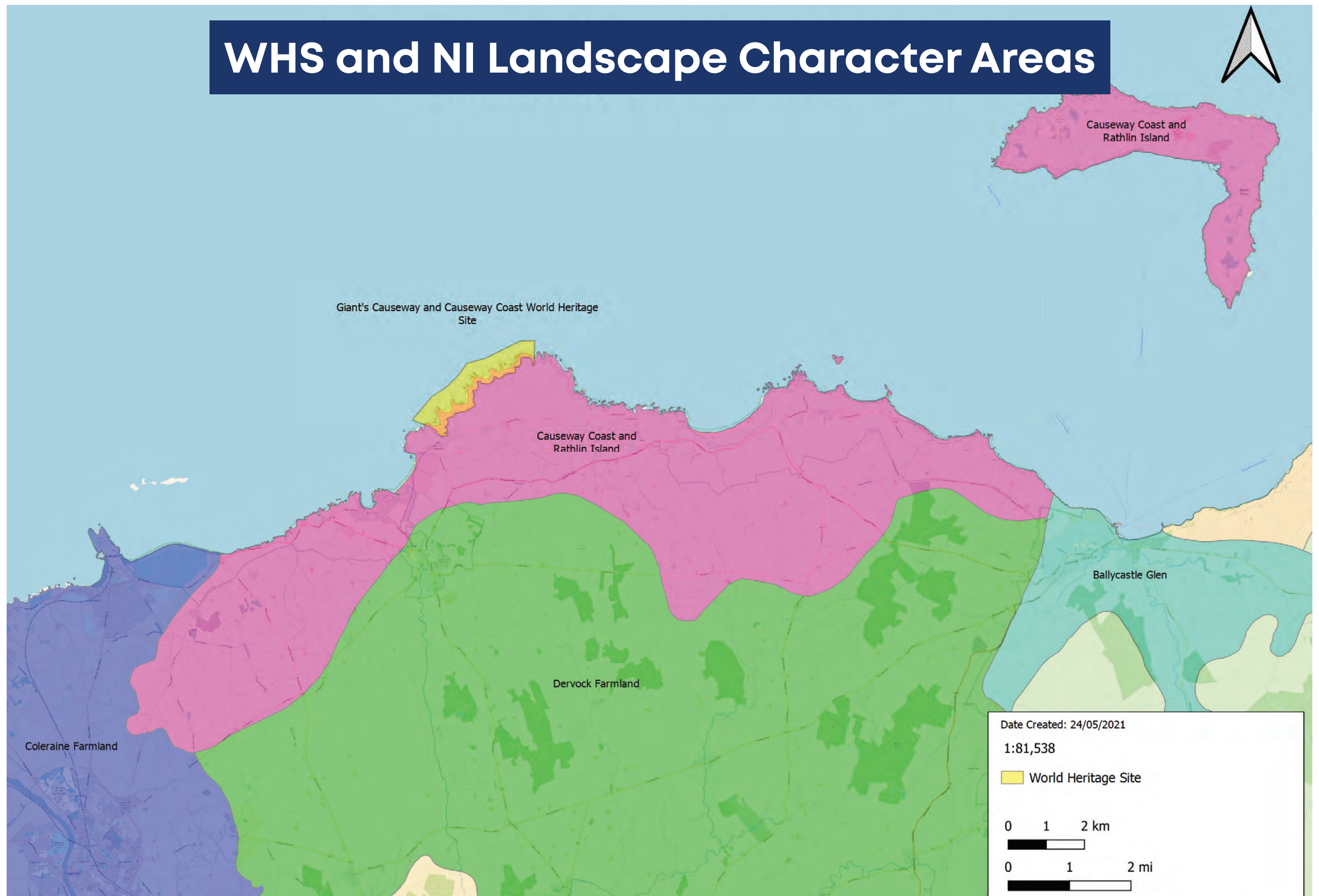
WHS and Area of Special Scientific Interest



WHS and National Nature Reserve



WHS and NI Landscape Character Areas



WHS and NI Regional Landscape Character Areas




Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site

North Coast and Rathlin Island NI Regional LCA

Date Created: 24/05/2021

1:167,037

 World Heritage Site

0 1 2 km



0 1 2 mi



WHS and NI Regional Seascape Character Areas

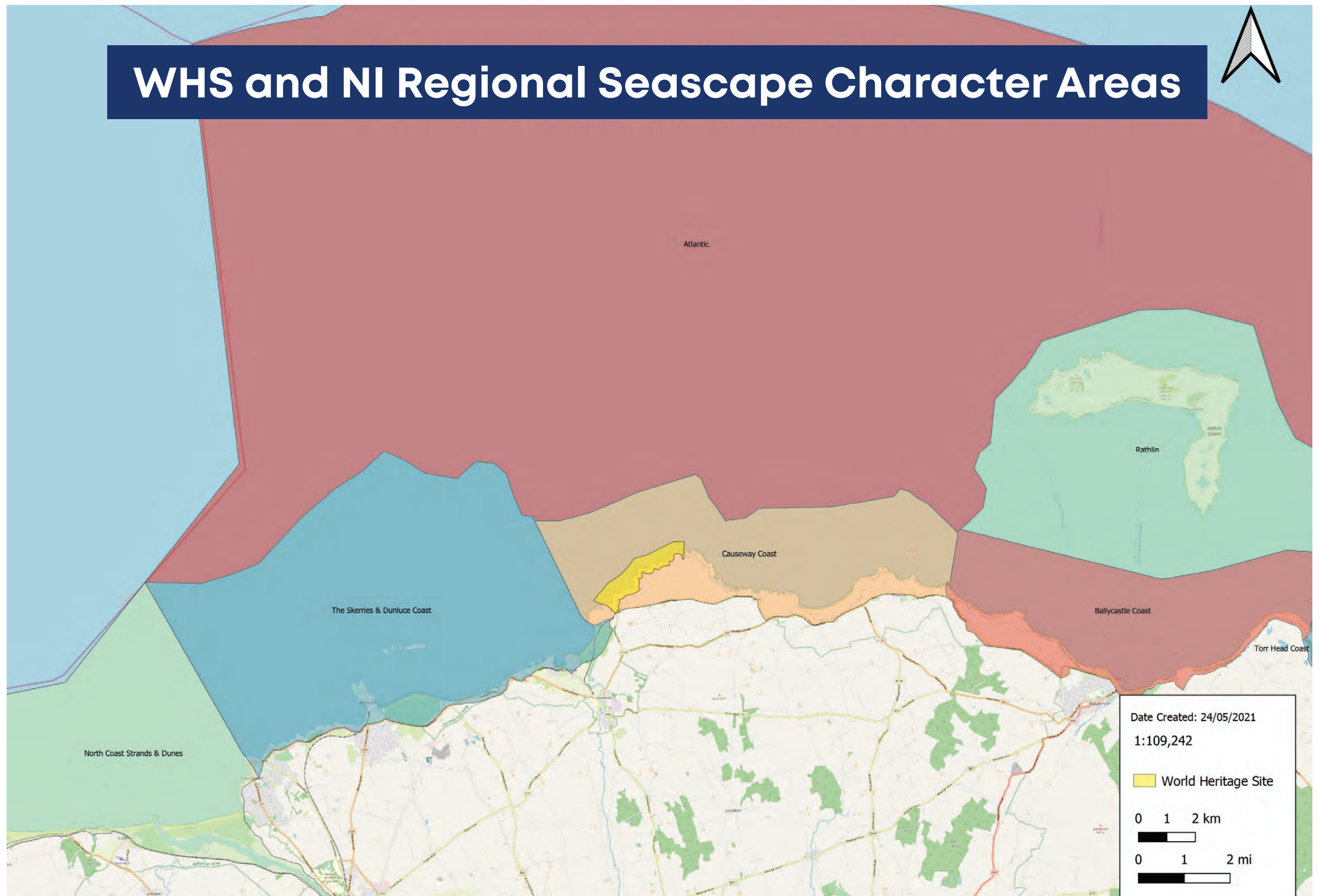






Photo credit: Art Ward

