



# Mid and East Antrim Shaped by Sea and Stone

# Tourism 2025: Shaping Success in Mid & East Antrim

26 November 2024



**Mid & East  
Antrim**

A land shaped by Sea & Stone

# Programme

	Speakers
<b>10:00</b>	Welcome: Jason Powell, MEA Tourism
	Jessica Hoyle, Tourism NI
	Helen McGorman, Tourism Ireland
	Q & A Session followed by comfort break / trade clinic
<b>11:30</b>	Jason Powell, MEA Tourism
	Colin Morrison, Gobbins City Deal Project
	Jonathan Porter, Carrickfergus City Deal Project
	Allastar McGarry, MEA Economic Development
	Q & A Session followed by networking lunch / trade clinic



# Trade Clinic



Tourism Exchange  
Great Britain



**Mid & East  
Antrim**

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**Go Succeed**  
NI Business Support



**Mid & East  
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# Mid & East Antrim Tourism Industry Day 2025 – Tourism Northern Ireland

Jessica Hoyle

Tourism Experience Brand Manager  
Tourism NI



# The Role of Tourism NI

Tourism NI is responsible for the development of tourism in Northern Ireland, supporting the growth of the tourism industry and for marketing Northern Ireland as a tourist destination.

We form an arm of the Department for the Economy and work closely with a range of organisations to develop the visitor economy.

**Promoting the destination**

**Building the tourism product offering**

**Unlocking the potential of tourism businesses**

**Developing a quality visitor experience**

Our vision is that Northern Ireland is an internationally competitive destination renowned for world class 3-5 day breaks.



# Tourism NI Strategic Plan

**Goal: To Support the industry to increase the value of tourism by 15% between 2024 and 2027**

## Four Strategic Objectives:

### **Good Jobs:**

*A tourism industry that offers secure employment with good pay and conditions, and opportunities for career progression*

### **Regional Balance:**

*All parts of Northern Ireland benefit from tourism as visitors are welcomed across the region*

### **Sustainability:**

*A tourism industry that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable*

### **Productivity:**

*A competitive tourism industry demonstrating innovation and strong management practices*

**Through the development and marketing of an Internationally compelling destination focusing on our Landscape, Heritage, History and Culture and world class Food & Drink offer**

# Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit

Launched 2019 to help Northern Ireland stand out competitively in the tourism landscape

One of 5 'Ireland' Destination & Experience Brands

30% Increase to choose NI as a place to visit

5 Overarching Benefits for Northern Ireland:

1. **Increased Visitor Numbers**
2. **Longer Stays**
3. **Increased Visitor Spend**
4. **Business Growth**
5. **Enhanced Reputation**





# Embrace a Giant Spirit & Your Business

**Embrace a Giant Spirit is designed to be owned and leveraged by everyone working across the tourism industry in Northern Ireland.**

**In building a solid and truly inspiring brand we can succeed in reaching our full potential as a tourism destination.**

- A tourism brand that is relevant, beneficial and engaging for all Northern Ireland's Industry, regardless of size and type
- A tourism brand that is understood and harnessed to maximise potential
- An identity which inspires visitors to engage with your business and also get them excited about all that Northern Ireland has to offer



# A place driven by world-class experiences

**Our visitor promise:**

**To Share the Giant Spirit of Northern Ireland**

**And**

**To Awaken that Giant Spirit in our Visitors**



# Experience Brand Inspirers



The way to share our spirit is to deliver on each of these inspirers for our visitors.

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Each one is a signpost that can guide us in the small changes we make.

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Each one shows us how we can awaken our visitors' own spirits.

# Embrace a Giant Spirit Brand Toolkit

The Guide is designed to be a handy reference tool to help you apply the brand, attract potential visitors and inspire them to discover their own 'giant spirit' while they're here.

## It covers:

- Brand Proposition
- Brand Values
- Use of Logo and Typeface
- Photography Guidelines
- Tone of Voice guidelines
- Colour Palette
- Digital Brand Guidelines



To find out more: [Northern Ireland's Embrace a Giant Spirit Brand | Tourism NI](#)

# How to leverage the brand for your business

**Northern Ireland – Embrace a Giant Spirit is designed to support and strengthen your own business brand identity. Download our digital assets and use the guidance in our brand book to help guide your creativity and promotion.**

## **Northern Ireland Content Pool**

[Northern Ireland's Content Pool \(northernirelandscontentpool.com\)](http://northernirelandscontentpool.com)

Avail of 1000s of brand-aligned photos and videos that can be used to support your marketing. Download our brand assets here including the Embrace a Giant Spirit logo, social media templates and more.

## **Create or update your Discover Northern Ireland business listing**

Ensure your Discover Northern Ireland listing aligns with the brand and our campaigns. Update your imagery and business experience information in line with the brand toolkit via the Tourism NI Business Hub



# Engaging with the brand and maximising opportunities

Year-round Engagement	Tourism NI Marketing Campaigns	International Media Opportunities
<p>Use our brand and campaign hashtags in your social media and online activity <b>#EmbraceAGiantSpirit</b> <b>#MyGiantAdventure</b></p> <p>Tag or mention Discover Northern Ireland in your social media posts <b>@DiscoverNI</b></p> <p><b>Share your content and stories with us:</b> <a href="#">Get involved by sharing your stories &amp; content   Tourism NI</a></p>	<p>Drive bookings by supporting and extending our seasonal campaigns through your own marketing channels, targeting consumers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland</p> <p><b>More information:</b> <a href="#">Opportunities with Tourism NI</a></p>	<p>Keep abreast of media and PR opportunities with Tourism Ireland and reach the international markets and promote your business overseas.</p> <p><a href="#">Opportunities (tourismireland.com)</a></p>



# Experience & Product Development

# Experiential Tourism

More than ever, people are seeking authentic and immersive tourism experiences that delve into the local culture of where they are visiting.

To remain globally competitive, Northern Ireland must offer experiences that meet the ever-changing expectations of holidaymakers and the marketplace, while increasing our capacity to meet demand.

**98%** of travelers said **experiences are very or extremely important** when considering where to go

**83%** of European holiday-makers **prioritise experiences** over traditional sightseeing

Holiday-makers in Europe spent an average of **€500 more on experiences** than accommodation

**70%** of travelers reported higher satisfaction when participating in immersive experiences, leading to a **30%** increase in repeat visits to destinations

**Activities** are the top reason that people might **extend their stay**





# New Experience Development Resources

Through **MyTourismNI**, our innovative e-learning platform we offer **three experience development toolkits** to support our experience sectors. They offer guidance on integrating into the tourism industry, developing unique products, networking, and ensuring sustainability.

1. **Checking your business foundations**
2. **Understanding your customers**
3. **Developing your tourism offer**
4. **Building your networks**
5. **Making it happen**
6. **Supporting Materials**

By following these steps, businesses can create memorable and marketable cultural experiences that appeal to both local and international visitors.

Find out more and register for our e-learning platform:

[MyTourismNI](https://www.mytourismni.com)



Outdoor Experiences in Tourism Toolkit



Lunch & Learn Webinar Series



Arts, Culture and Heritage in Tourism Toolkit



Embrace a Giant Taste Toolkit

# Embrace a Giant Spirit Experience Portfolio

**A continuous learning and development opportunity for established tourism experience businesses, aimed to increase the profitability, visitor appeal and commercialisation of our tourism experience industry.**

Through participation in the Experience Portfolio, you can:

- Access enhanced learning and development opportunities structured around areas of **scalability, growth, key market identification, marketing skills, commercial skills** and **travel trade readiness**
- Form part of Tourism NI's **managed collection of quality-assured experiences** where you can benefit from an **enhanced key account management** relationship with Tourism NI
- Avail of **priority consideration** for programmes and industry opportunities such as international sales opportunities and Tourism Ireland's Overseas Engagement Fund
- Avail of **networking opportunities, enhanced communication** and **product knowledge building opportunities**

To learn more and express your interest in applying: [Embrace a Giant Spirit: Experience Portfolio | Tourism NI](#)



# Industry Development Opportunities

# Innovate NI – Business Innovation Grant

**Do you have a great innovative idea or project, but need financial support to help commercialise it? If so, the Business Innovation Grant (BIG) could be for you!**

BIG helps support sole traders, micro-businesses and SMEs in Northern Ireland to develop and bring their innovation activities to market with a grant of up to £20,000.

To be eligible for BIG, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- Be based in Northern Ireland
- Operate in any sector except for primary agriculture, forestry, logging, fisheries, or aquaculture
- Not be an Invest NI client or have received grant support from Invest NI in the last 5 years
- Have an innovative project that aligns with Innovate NI's definition of innovation: **“The development and implementation of a new or improved product, service, model, or process which is novel, significantly different, and has or will be either introduced to the market or implemented within the business to create value.”**

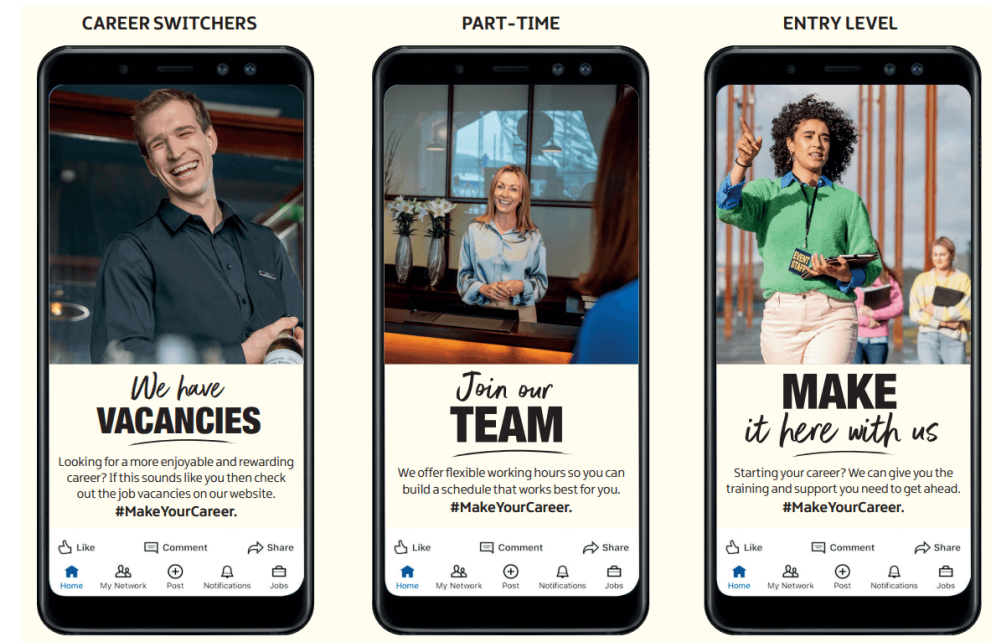
Find out more: [Business Innovation Grant | Innovate NI](#)



# Make it here Campaign

The Make It Here campaign aims to help shift perceptions of what it's like to work in the Tourism & Hospitality industry, encouraging more people to consider starting a career in this fantastic sector.

- **Entry-Level** - have you joined the industry straight from school or university and now forging a career in tourism and hospitality?
- **Career Switches** – were you working in a different sector and decided to switch paths and follow your interests to a career in tourism and hospitality?
- **Work after Retirement** – are you a retiree that now works part-time as a tour guide for example? Ditched the laptop for the bar top?
- **Returners** – did you return after a career break and decide to delve into the world of travel and tourism instead?
- **Unique & usual day-to-day** – does your job surprise people? Have you turned a hobby into a career in travel and hospitality?



Campaign Website: [Make Your Career](#)

# Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Tourism Ireland  
26<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Helen McGorman

Head of Stakeholder Engagement  
Northern Ireland





## Our remit

Grow overseas tourism to the island of Ireland.

Assist Northern Ireland to realise its potential.

Northern Ireland revenue growth

# +6.5%

average year on year  
to 2030

Island of Ireland revenue growth +5.6%  
average year on year to 2030



## Vision

Increase the value of overseas tourism to the island of Ireland, sustainably supporting economies, communities and the environment.

Do so by inspiring visitors and strengthening strategic partnerships, always with a values-led approach.



# Importance of overseas tourism

## Overseas tourists to Northern Ireland (2023)

Market Area	Visitors	Visitor Share	Revenue	Revenue Share
Great Britain	1,435,000	74%	£463m	63%
North America	192,000	10%	£71m	13%
Mainland Europe	215,000	8%	£74m	14%
Other	98,000	8%	£64m	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,900,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£672m</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: NISRA

Increase value of overseas tourism to the island of Ireland



Supporting economies and communities



Sustaining environment



Inspiring visitors



Strengthening partnerships



World-class team and culture

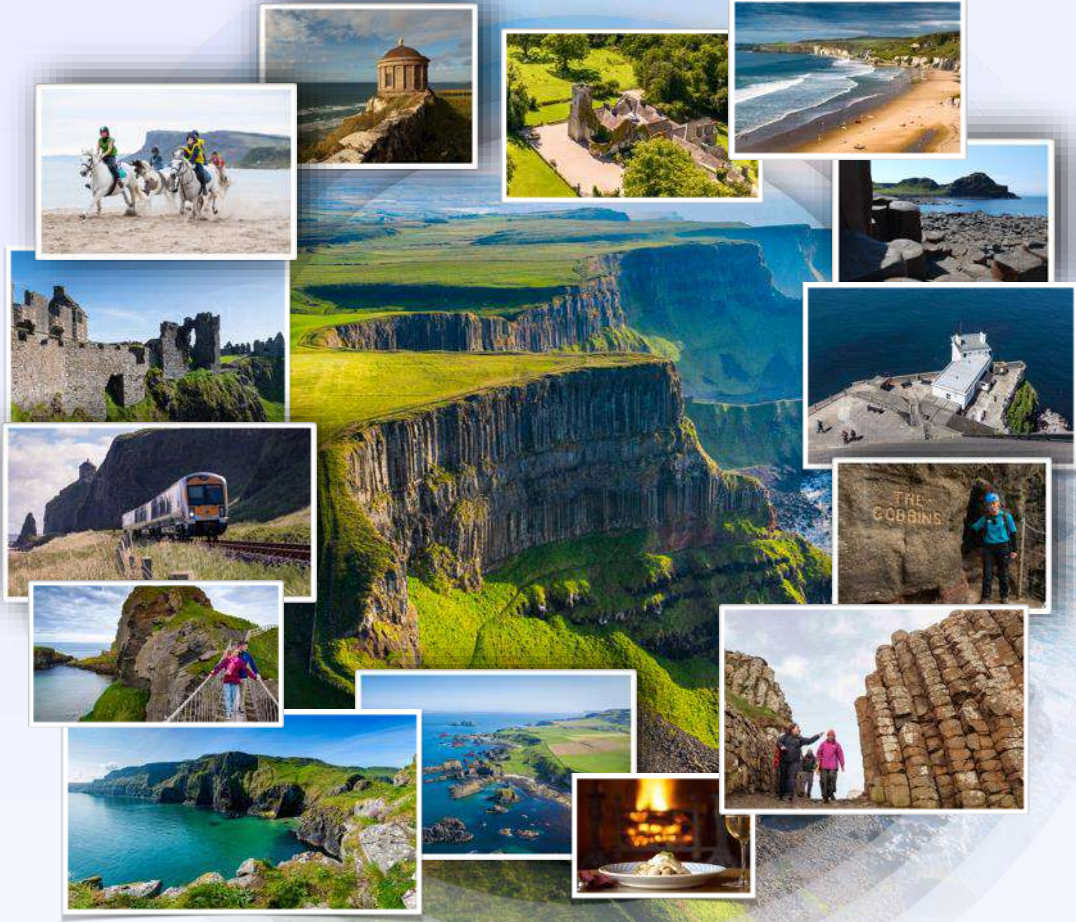




Supporting economies  
and communities

# Northern Ireland

Spread the benefit of overseas tourism across Northern Ireland



Expand bucket lists



Cross-sell nearby hidden gems



Northern Ireland access



Festivals



# Sustaining environment



Inspiring visitors



## Inspiring visitors

Focus: value adding tourism traits



Fill your heart with Ireland 

Fill your heart with Ireland 



**What  
fills my  
heart?**

**Ireland** 





# Northern Ireland 'Embrace a Giant Spirit' campaign

1

2

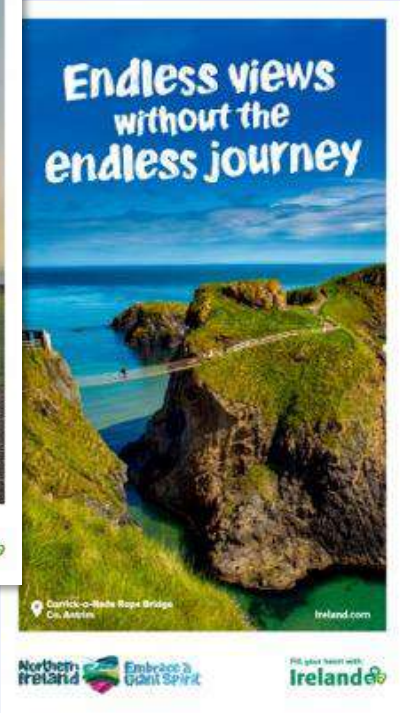
Inspiring visitors

Highlighting ease of access

85m  
opportunities  
to see

**OBJECTIVES**  
To drive consideration for a holiday in Northern Ireland and highlight ease of access.

**CAMPAIGN CHANNELS**  
included TV, broadcast VOD, cinema, outdoor and a media partnership with the Telegraph.

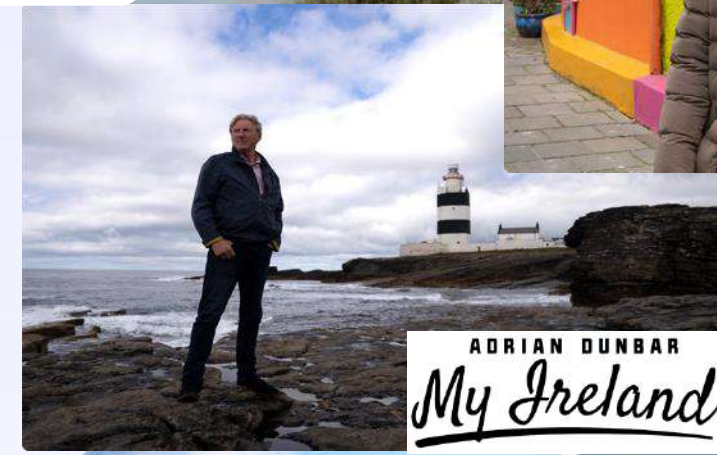




## Publicity – inspiring visitors



1.5bn opportunities to see



**Inspiring visitors – publicity**





Seasonality

# Home of Halloween

Landmark autumn festival



Digital

7m  
followers

80% of visitors research and book online



# Strengthening partnerships



ITB Berlin

Overseas events



IAGTO North America Golf Tourism Convention

Media Visits

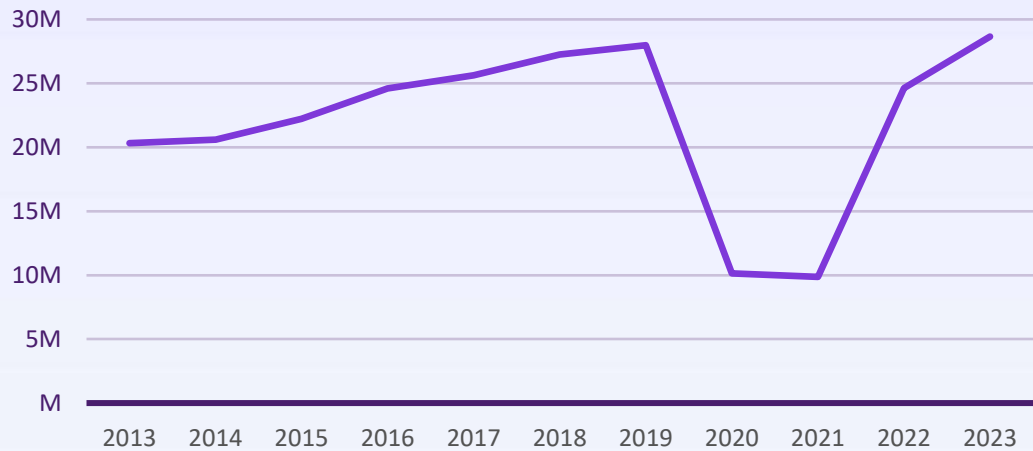




# Strengthening partnerships

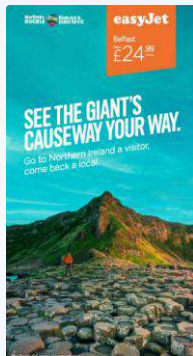
## Air and sea access sets the stage

Island of Ireland Air Seats\*



\* Direct one-way seats available to the island of Ireland

Source: OAG



## Putting Northern Ireland tourism businesses on global stage

# 25,000 meetings

250 NI industry partners in 2024





## Strengthening partnerships

**AMGEN**  
**IRISH OPEN**

Royal County Down, September 2024

THE  
**OPEN**

Royal Portrush, July 2025



Adare Manor, 2027

## Shared Island

- Successful bid of €7.3M with Tourism NI, Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland
- Brand collaboration to build on the success of two iconic routes on the island:
  - Causeway Coastal Route (from Carrickfergus)
  - Wild Atlantic Way (Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim)
- Workstreams include:
  - Small Grants Scheme
  - Causeway Coastal Route audit
  - Upgrades to signature discovery points
- Tourism Ireland:
  - Research programme
  - Marketing programme
  - Industry support programme





# Industry Opportunities

# Overseas Events

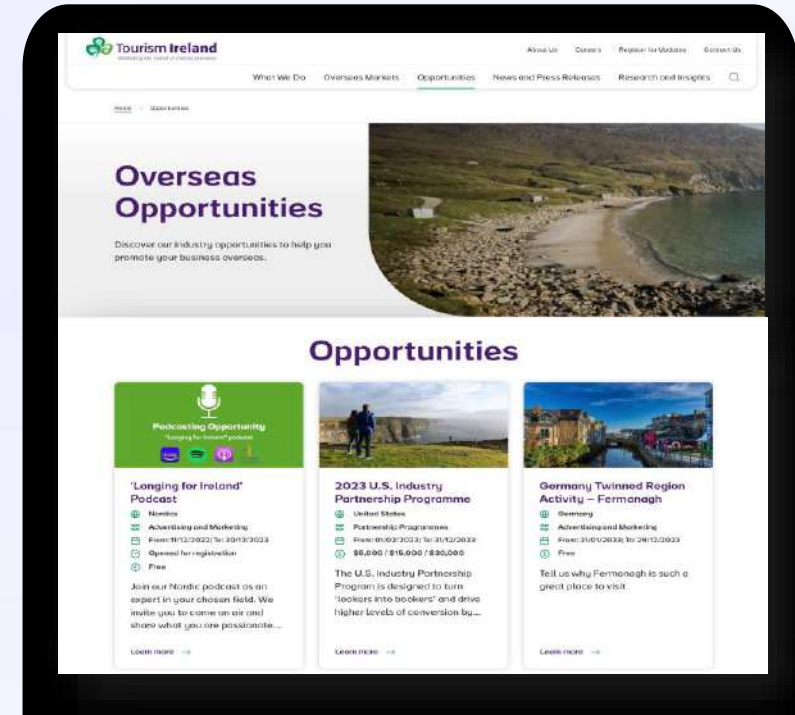
- [Apply via Tourism Northern Ireland](#)
- Be strategic in the events you're applying for



# Industry Opportunities Website

- Register on the Industry Opportunities website for updates and alerts

- Share your updates and social content with us via [industryopportunities@tourismireland.com](mailto:industryopportunities@tourismireland.com)



Link to Youtube video: [Industry Opportunities \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN  
INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES.**



Tourism Ireland partnership with Great Lighthouses of Ireland



# Discover Blackhead Lighthouse



An aerial photograph of a coastal town in Ireland. The town features a mix of white and grey buildings, a prominent road with a bridge, and a sandy beach. The sea is a vibrant blue, and the background shows rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Thank You

The logo for Tourism Ireland, featuring a stylized green shamrock.

Tourism Ireland



# Mid and East Antrim Shaped by Sea and Stone

Jason Powell

Tourism Marketing Manager



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# Why do Visitors come to Northern Ireland?.....



Landscape & Countryside



History & Culture



Cities



Events & Festivals



Hospitality and People



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# Mid & East Antrim Tourism



Trips - 271,639



Overnights – 829,298



Spend – £62,920,877



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# Background

Key Focus for Mid & East Antrim

Growth Area

Regional Spread – 70% jobs outside of Belfast

Visitor numbers nearly at 2019 level, exceeded in some cases

Large growth from ROI, USA, Cruise (GB/Europe coming back)



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# Going Forward



Increase in visitor numbers (sustainably)



Increase in visitor spend



Increase regional spread



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# Travel Trends 2025

...There will be an increased desire for **authentic, off-the-beaten-path** experience

...**Sustainability** will be an even bigger priority

...A blend of **wellness and adventure** will drive travel choices

...Plan trips around **nocturnal, nature-based** activities

...**Family values** will hold more importance

...Trips and experiences will need to cater for **diversity**



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# Mid & East Antrim Focus

- City Deal
- Gracehill
- Causeway Coastal Route – Shared Island
- Neighbourhood Tourism
- Towns



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# Opportunities for You



Increased demand for accommodation



Guided Tours



Unique Experiences



Places to eat



Activities & Attraction



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# New Products/Experiences

- Tour Guides
- Foodie Experiences
- Cultural Experiences
- Historical Experiences
- Water Activities
- Outdoor Activities



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# Case Studies

Food & Drink

## Dobbins Dander & Dine Dobbins Inn

SINCE 1530



Dobbins Inn, 6-8 High Street, Carrickfergus BT38 7AJ

Cultural

## The Giant of Drums Bellahill Culture & Cuisine



7 Bellahill Road, Ballycarry BT38 0LE

Cultural

## Carrickfergus during WWII Lead The Way Tours

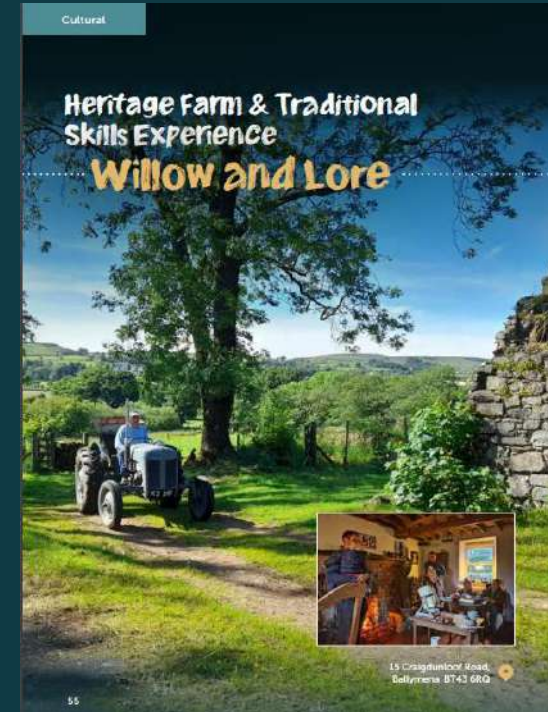


Town of Carrickfergus, with tours starting from beside the Castle BT38 7BG

Courtesy of Tourism Northern Ireland

Cultural

## Heritage Farm & Traditional Skills Experience Willow and Lore



15 Craigmuirloch Road, Ballymena BT43 6RQ

# Business Support & Training

Tourism Ireland

Tourism NI

Council



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# Business Support & Training



Tour Guide/Storytelling



Content Creation/Digital Support



Travel Trade Readiness



Product Development



Networking Opportunities



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# Marketing Support



Website



What's On Section



Photographic/Video



Social Media Campaigns



Links to Destination Campaigns



Promotion at Overseas Trade Shows

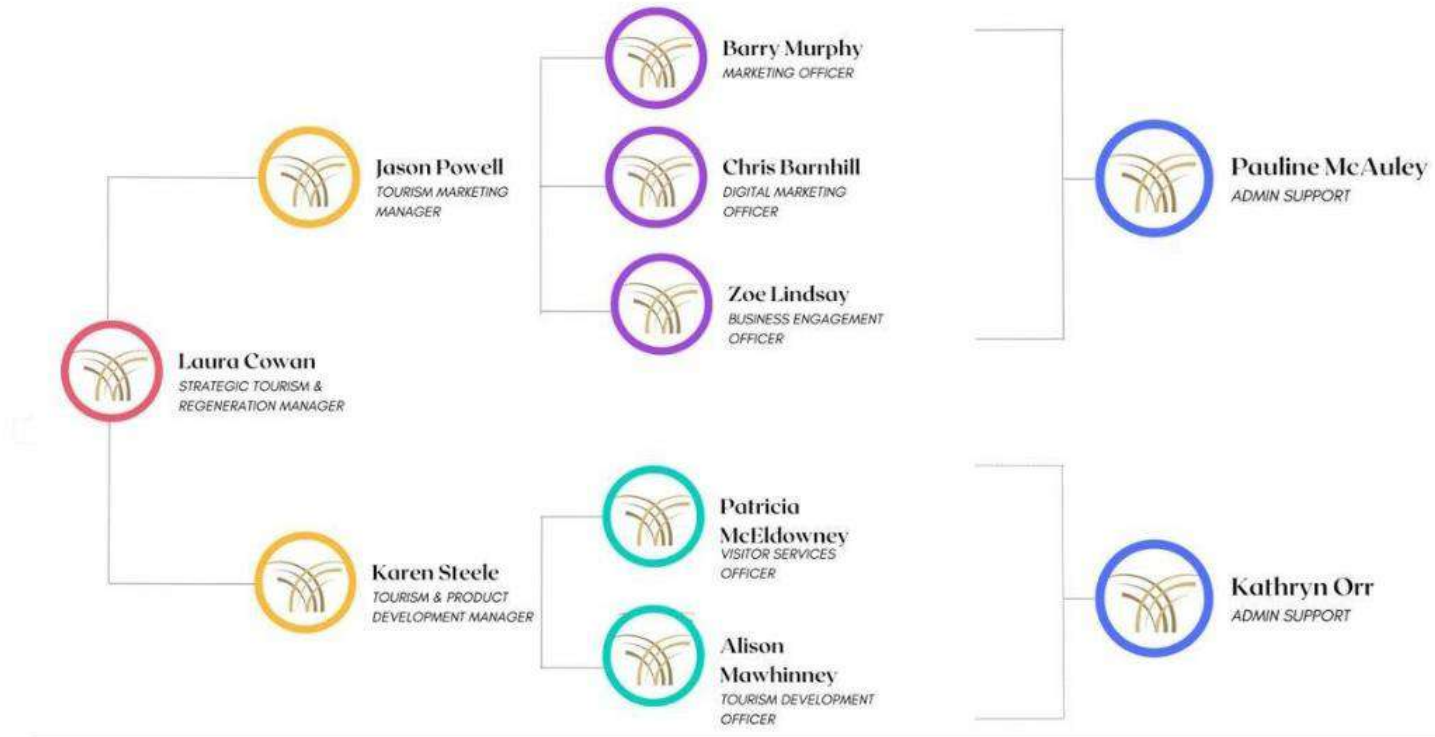


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# MEA Tourism Support

## MEA Tourism Team



E: [tourism@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@midandeantrim.gov.uk)



# Online MEA Support



[www.shapedbyseaandstone.com/trade-support](http://www.shapedbyseaandstone.com/trade-support)

- Key support contacts
- Industry guidance and communications
- Networking opportunities
- Digital marketing opportunities
- Other marketing opportunities
- Key brands and marketing assets
- Skills, training and business support
- Sustainable tourism
- Funding opportunities
- Events support
- Brown tourism signage
- Inclusive tourism
- Visitor servicing support
- Business planning
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)

# The Gobbins Phase II

Belfast Region City Deal

MEA Tourism & Hospitality Event

26 November 2024



**BELFAST REGION  
CITY DEAL**  
A decade of opportunity  
starts **now**

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council

# Gobbins Phase II

## What is the Gobbins?

The Gobbins is a dramatic coastal walk situated on the Antrim Coast in Islandmagee. The Gobbins is known for its stunning sea views, coastal path, and unique structures, it offers an exhilarating and unique journey through one of the area's most spectacular natural landscapes. This walk, which stretches for approx. 3 kilometres, is a perfect blend of adventure, history, and breathtaking beauty.

### History

The Gobbins was originally designed in the early 1900s by the visionary civil engineer, Berkeley Deane Wise, as part of an ambitious plan to develop the region for tourists. The path was intended to allow visitors to explore the rugged coastline and experience its raw beauty up close. Completed in 1902, the Gobbins walkway included bridges, tunnels, and ladders to navigate the challenging terrain.

In the early years, the Gobbins became a popular tourist attraction. However, over time, the walkway fell into disrepair and was eventually closed to the public in the 1950s. The Gobbins was reopened in 2015 following major investment and is once again a must-see destination for nature enthusiasts, adventurers, and anyone who appreciates dramatic landscapes



# Gobbins Phase II

## What is the Gobbins?

### Features and Attractions



The Gobbins walk is about 3 kilometres long and runs along the cliff top and bottom just above the Irish Sea. It is considered a moderate-to-difficult hike, with steep climbs, narrow paths, and some sections that require a bit of bravery to navigate. Some of the most notable features of the walk:

- 1. Cliffside Pathway:** The main walkway is suspended along the cliff edges, giving visitors a thrilling experience as they walk directly above the crashing waves below.
- 2. Bridges and Tunnels:** The Gobbins boasts a series of bridges and tunnels that were carefully constructed to blend with the natural environment. The tunnels, some of which run through the cliffside, add a sense of mystery and excitement to the walk.
- 3. Cave Views and Wildlife:** One of the highlights of the Gobbins is the chance to observe local wildlife. The cliffs are home to a variety of seabirds, and visitors might spot puffins, guillemots, and other seabirds along the path. The sea is also rich in marine life, including seals and dolphins.
- 4. Gobbins Visitors' Centre:** Located at the starting point of the walk, the visitor centre offers an introduction to the history of the Gobbins and provides essential information about the walk, safety measures, and local wildlife. It is an excellent resource for anyone embarking on the hike

# Gobbins Phase II

## What is the Gobbins?



# Gobbins Phase II

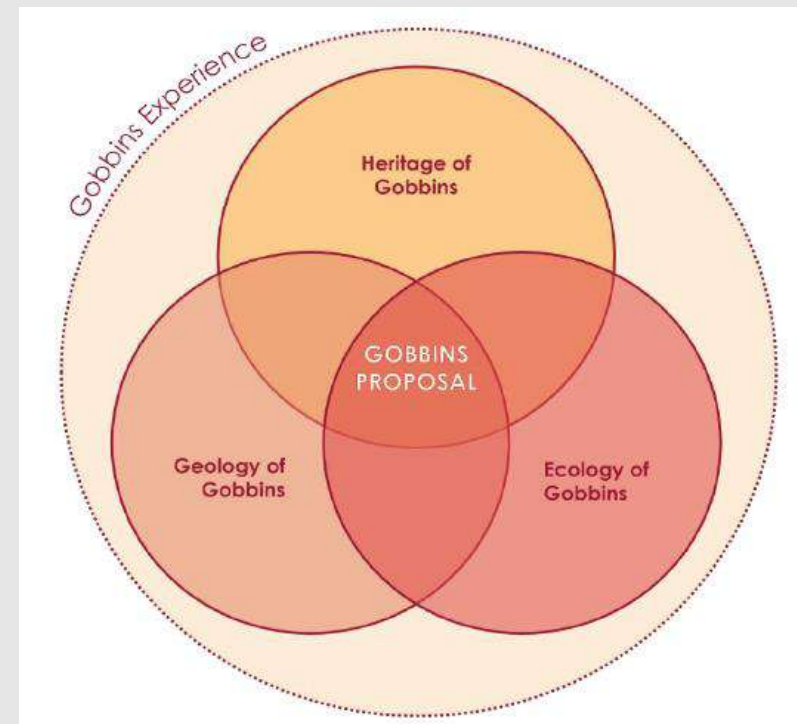
## What is the Gobbins Phase II?

The design concept for The Gobbins Phase 2 draws on a combination of heritage, geology and ecology, inspired by the landscape and history of the site. With this concept, the proposal aims to enrich the visitor experience by embracing and developing the Gobbins vision: “Carved from the rock. Steeped in history. Teeming with wildlife.”

The geology of The Gobbins is unique, formed of amygdaloidal basalt specific to the area and named ‘Gobbinsite’. During its ancient formation, cooling lava filled with air pockets created voids in the basalt rock that filled over time with minerals, resulting in a starry night texture of dark rock and light-coloured inclusions, observable where the cliff has been eroded by the sea.

The Gobbins is home to Northern Ireland's only mainland colony of puffins, which burrow into the existing cliff-side soils churned up by glaciers, and are key to The Gobbins ecology. They are known to breed beyond Gordon's Leap, north of the proposed welcome hub location. The existing Gobbins cliff base route passes through tunnels in the basalt rock, allowing visitors momentarily to inhabit these voids within the cliff, evoking the experience of resident birdlife.

The proposed concept intertwines these themes of geology, ecology, and visitor experience, with a journey through solid and void, light and dark, enclosure and exposure.



# Gobbins Phase II - Overview

## What is the Gobbins Phase II?

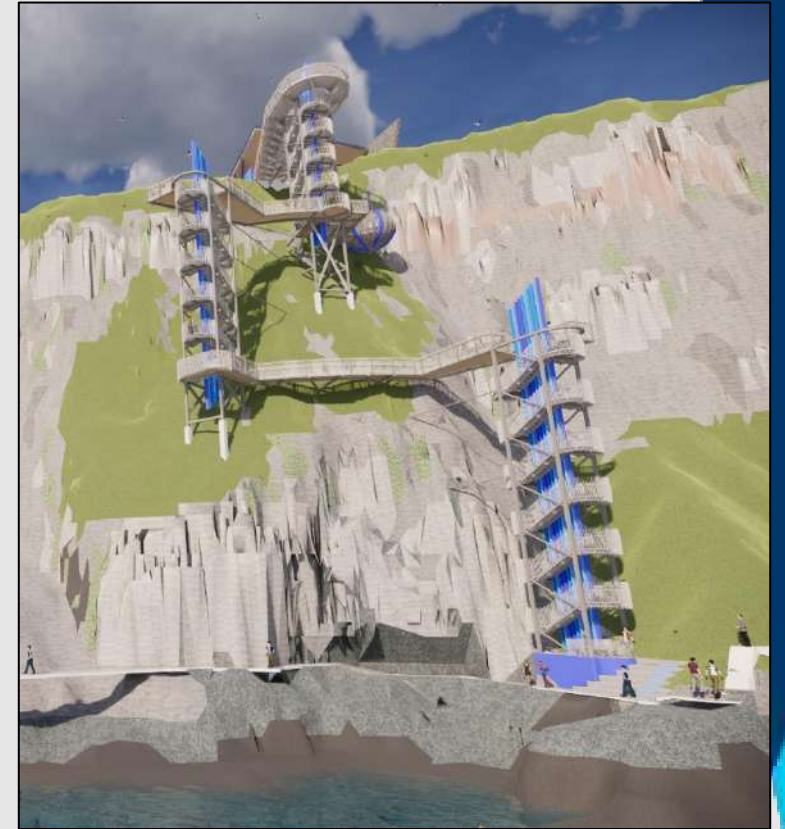
ELEMENT 1	ELEMENT 2	ELEMENT 3	ELEMENT 4	ELEMENT 5
<p>Ingress Structure</p>	<p>Welcome Hub</p>	<p>Virtual Reality Digital Enhancement at the existing Visitor Centre and Cliff top path</p>	<p>Refurbishment of Cliff Top Path Network</p>	<p>Visitor Servicing</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A new entrance point to The Gobbins Coastal Path, in the area close to Gordon's Leap</li> <li>2. A new access the coastal pathway from the cliff top, approx. 60m above the Antrim Coast</li> <li>3. A cliff top viewing platform</li> <li>4. Viewing platforms along the way</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A link with the new ingress structure on the cliff top</li> <li>2. Control access to The Gobbins Path</li> <li>3. Provide amenity facilities (equipment store, small tea point, toilet facilities)</li> <li>4. Relatively small compared to the existing visitors centre, in the rustic and rural setting of the site</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A new Virtual Reality (VR) tour of The Gobbins coastal path and cliff path to include history, flora &amp; fauna, and geology.</li> <li>2. A review of options to include VR/AR to elements of the path network</li> <li>3. Update of the existing Interpretive fit out of the Visitors Centre and new Welcome Hub</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refurbish cliff top walkway</li> <li>2. Improve access, by the way of viewing areas and platforms, and a spectacular Rope Bridge</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Address the impact on the service provided to the users and operators of the attraction</li> <li>2. A new access road with a turning circle close to the new ingress and Welcome Hub</li> <li>3. Limited parking for public access near Welcome Hub</li> <li>4. Reconfiguration of the existing Car Parking at the Visitor Centre to increase the parking capacity</li> <li>5. New additional Car parking at/or close to the visitors' centre.</li> </ol>

# Gobbins Phase II - Overview

## Ingress Structure

The purpose of the ingress structure is to provide a new “WOW” feature entrance point to The Gobbins Coastal Path, this will:

- Address the current capacity issues, allowing the visitor number to increase.
- Will be unique and World Class.
- Will allow visitors to access the coastal pathway from the cliff top, approx. 60m above
- Starting at the cliff top viewing platform, visitors would descend the ingress to an area close to Gordon’s Leap, which is presently the most northern point of the tour
- Will be designed to be sympathetic to the environment whilst at the same time creating a World Class attraction
- Providing viewing platforms, providing a breath-taking birds-eye view of unique fauna etc. and unparalleled access to the wild North Coast.



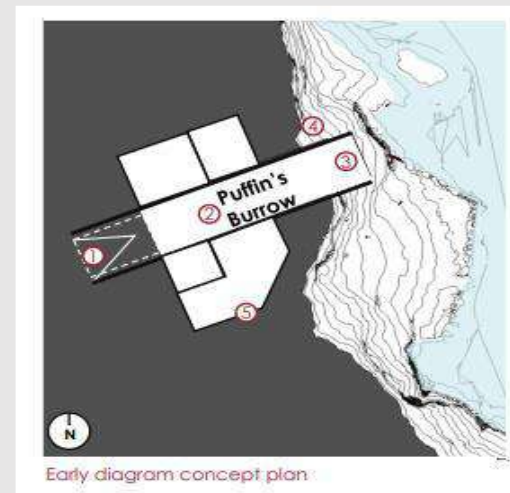
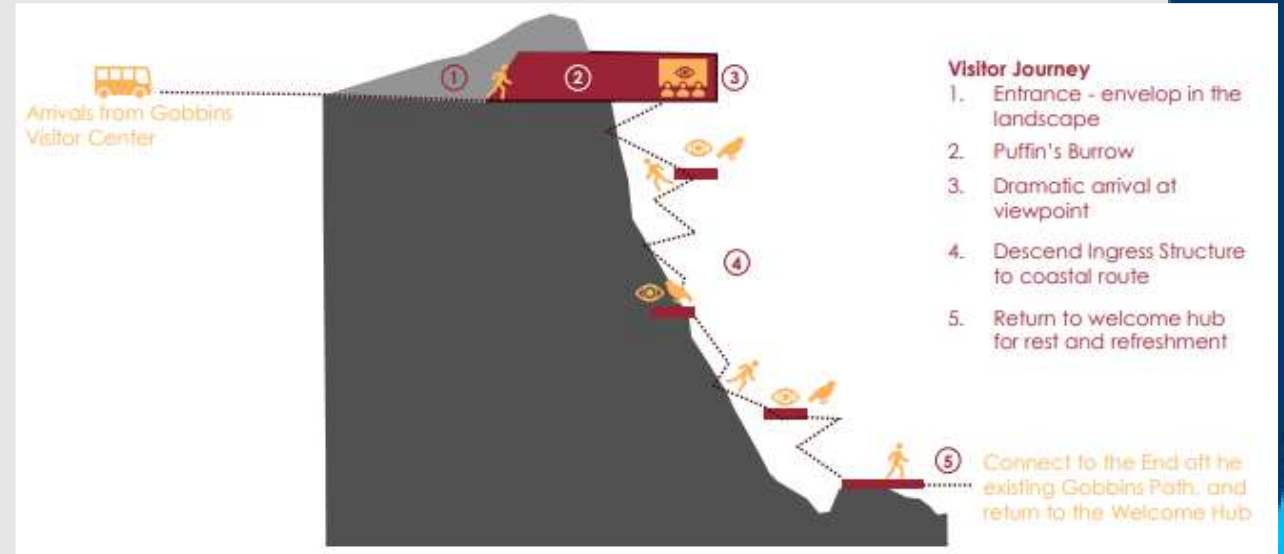


# Gobbins Phase II - Overview

## Welcome Hub

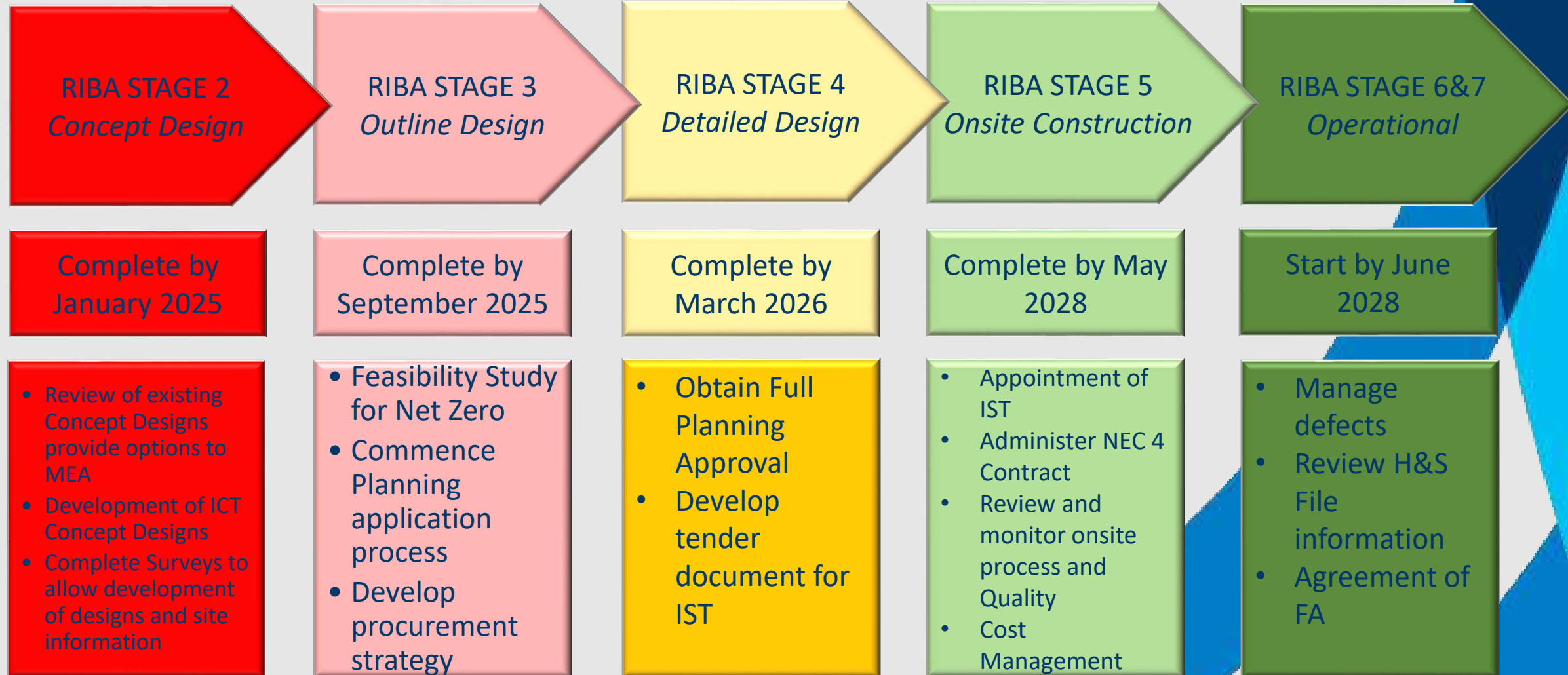
### The Welcome Hub will be;

- Integrated into the ingress structure.
- Act as starting point for the new offering.
- Will provide a means of controlling access.
- Provide much needed amenity facilities to the Gobbins path.
- Will be a relatively small building that is designed to complement the new ingress structure as well as the rustic and rural setting of the site.



# Gobbins Phase II - Overview

## Programme



# Gobbins Phase II - Overview

## The Gobbins Phase II Aims & Objectives

*“The Gobbins will establish itself as one of Northern Ireland’s top 10 paid attractions by 2033”*

- To provide a world-class, internationally renowned visitor attraction that will attract more Out of State (OoS) visitors to Northern Ireland to benefit the entire region;
- To increase tourism spend in NI by 2033
- To create inclusive employment opportunities for all
- To provide an exemplar of a sustainable tourism offering
- Attract footfall of 424k annually across the attraction
- Improved access with year-round offering

# Gobbins Phase II - Overview

## The Gobbins Phase II Aims & Objectives

*“The Gobbins will establish itself as one of Northern Ireland’s top 10 paid attractions by 2033”*

- Increase number of overnight stays by 102k pa
- Increase number of day trip visitors by 284k pa
- Increase number of Out of State visitors by 208k pa
- Increase GVA by £3.1m pa by 2033
- Significant Job Creation over the lifespan of the project
  - 31.5 direct jobs at The Gobbins site
  - 106 indirect and induced jobs
  - 137 total direct, indirect and induced jobs
  - 140 direct, indirect and induced construction jobs



**BELFAST REGION  
CITY DEAL**

A decade of opportunity  
starts **now**



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council

# **CARRICKFERGUS CITY DEAL**

## **Tourism Presentation**

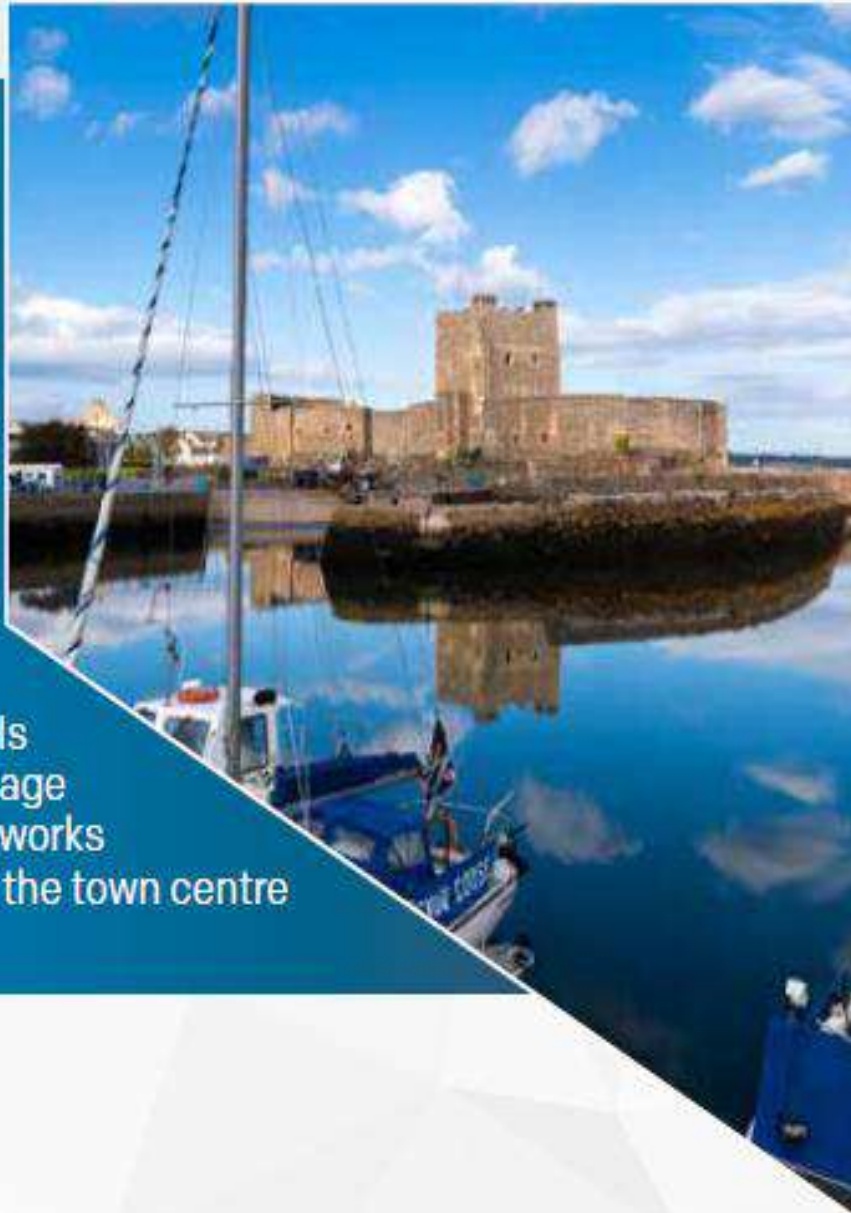
### **November 2024**

# WHAT IS IT?

## Carrickergus Castle, Walls and Public Realm

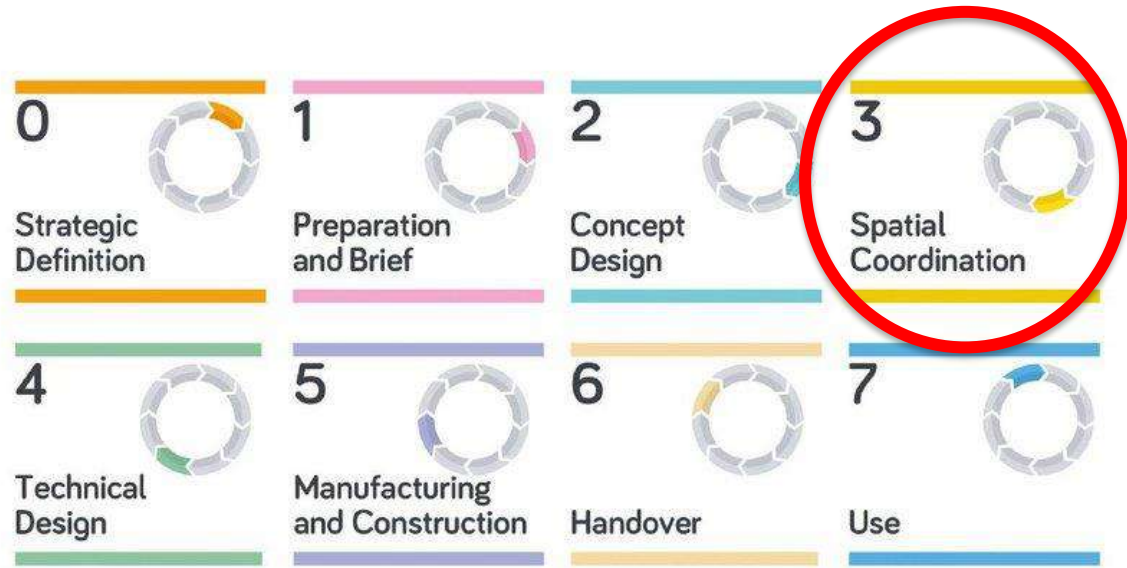
A programme of investment to regenerate, reposition and rebrand the town of Carrickfergus, placing it firmly on the map as an authentic heritage-led tourism hub, part of the wider Belfast Story and the 'must visit' starting point to the internationally recognised Causeway Coastal Route.

This will include the development of the Castle, Walls and surrounding environment as a world class heritage site and visitor attraction, high quality public realm works enhancing the Castle setting, facilitating access to the town centre and creating a venue for residents and visitors.



**Budget £42m**

# WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS



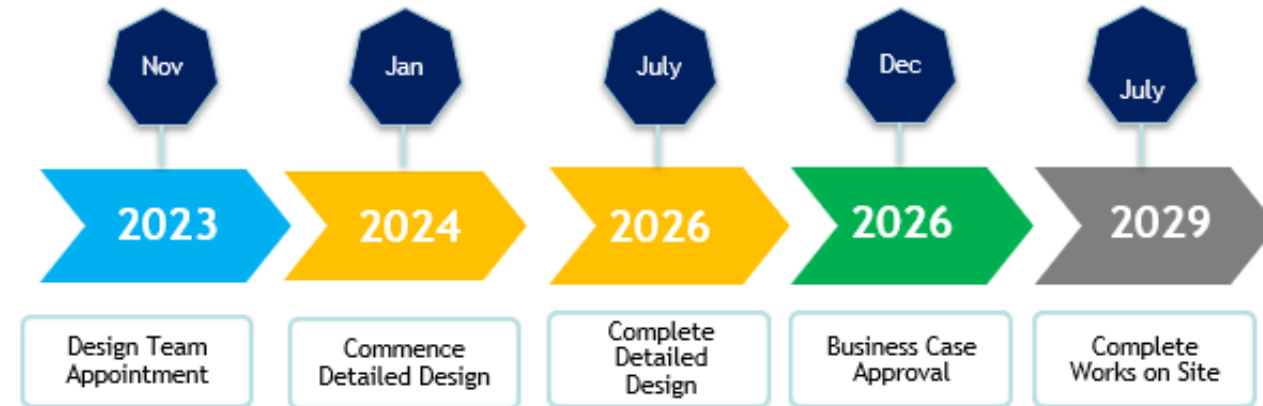
## RIBA Stage 2 – Concept Design

The design process begins here! Using the information we have gathered so far; we start to develop architectural concepts in line with the project brief and budget. We conduct design reviews with clients and stakeholders and develop architectural drawings and concept designs.

## The Next Stage

### RIBA Stage 3 – Spatial Coordination

This stage serves to ensure the design meets the client's spatial requirements. Here we carry out design studies and costing exercises to test the design in line with the project brief. By the end of this stage, we'll have coordinated all architectural and engineering information required for the planning process and submitted any required planning applications.



# CARRICKFERGUS REAWAKENED



Project managers, Architects, Structural Engineers,



Mechanical & Electrical Engineers, Cost Consultant



Interpretive Consultant

**Tandem**

Conservation Architects

**Alastair Coey Architects**  
HISTORIC BUILDING SPECIALISTS

Landscape Architects: McIlwaine Landscape Architects





# CARRICKFERGUS REGENERATION MASTERPLAN



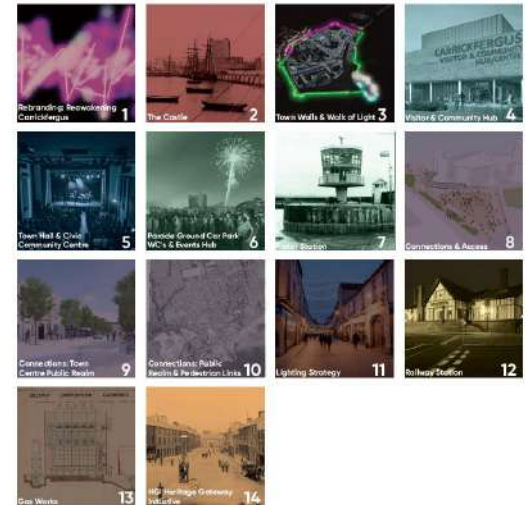
## Map Key

- Train Station
- Major Tourist Attraction
- Public Parking Area
- Proposed Public Realm Works
- Proposed Civic Building - New Build or Refurbishment
- Arterial Road Route
- Proposed DFI Road Connections
- Active Travel - Existing & Proposed Upgrades
- Town Walls Heritage Walk & Walk of Light
- Carrickfergus Lighting Strategy
- Carrickfergus Heritage Gateway Properties
- Significant Heritage Properties Involved in Lighting Strategy
- Underpass: Lighting & Safety Refresh



- 1 Carrickfergus Castle Refurbishment
- 2 Flame Gasworks Refurbishment
- 1 Pocket Park - Northgate Square
- 2 Pocket Park - St Bride's Walls
- 3 Pocket Park - Marine Highway
- 4 Town Centre Public Realm Refresh
- 5 Harbour Square Public Realm
- 6 Holiday Inn - Pedestrian Link
- 7 Radar Tower - Light Sculpture
- 8 Marina Information Point
- 9 Carrickfergus Greenway
- 10 Joymount Garden & North Bastion
- 11 Fisherman's Quay
- 12 Marine Promenade
- 13 Public WC Refurbishment
- 14 Underpass Refurbishment
- 15 West Gate (Irish Gate) Sculpture
- 16 Optimist Pavilion Refresh
- 17 Seating & Public Realm Improvements
- 19 The 'Result' Resting Place
- 20 Landmark Sculpture to Railway Station
- 1 Civic Centre Community Hub
- 2 Town Hall Arts & Culture Venue
- 3 Visitor & Community Hub

**Carrickfergus Castle**  
 Banquet Facility  
 Roof Viewpoint  
 Better Access  
 Updated Exhibits



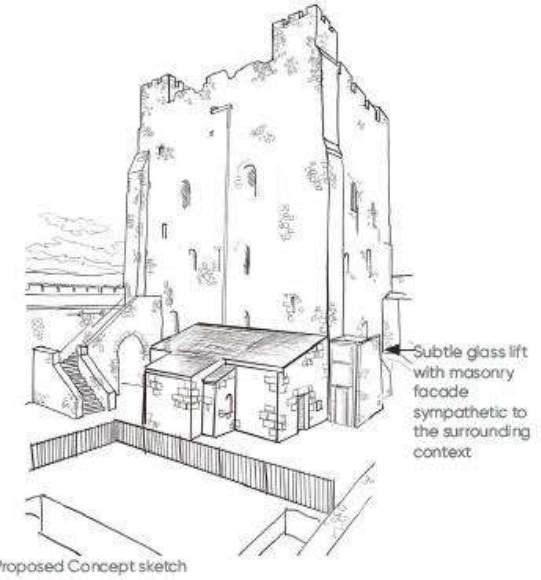
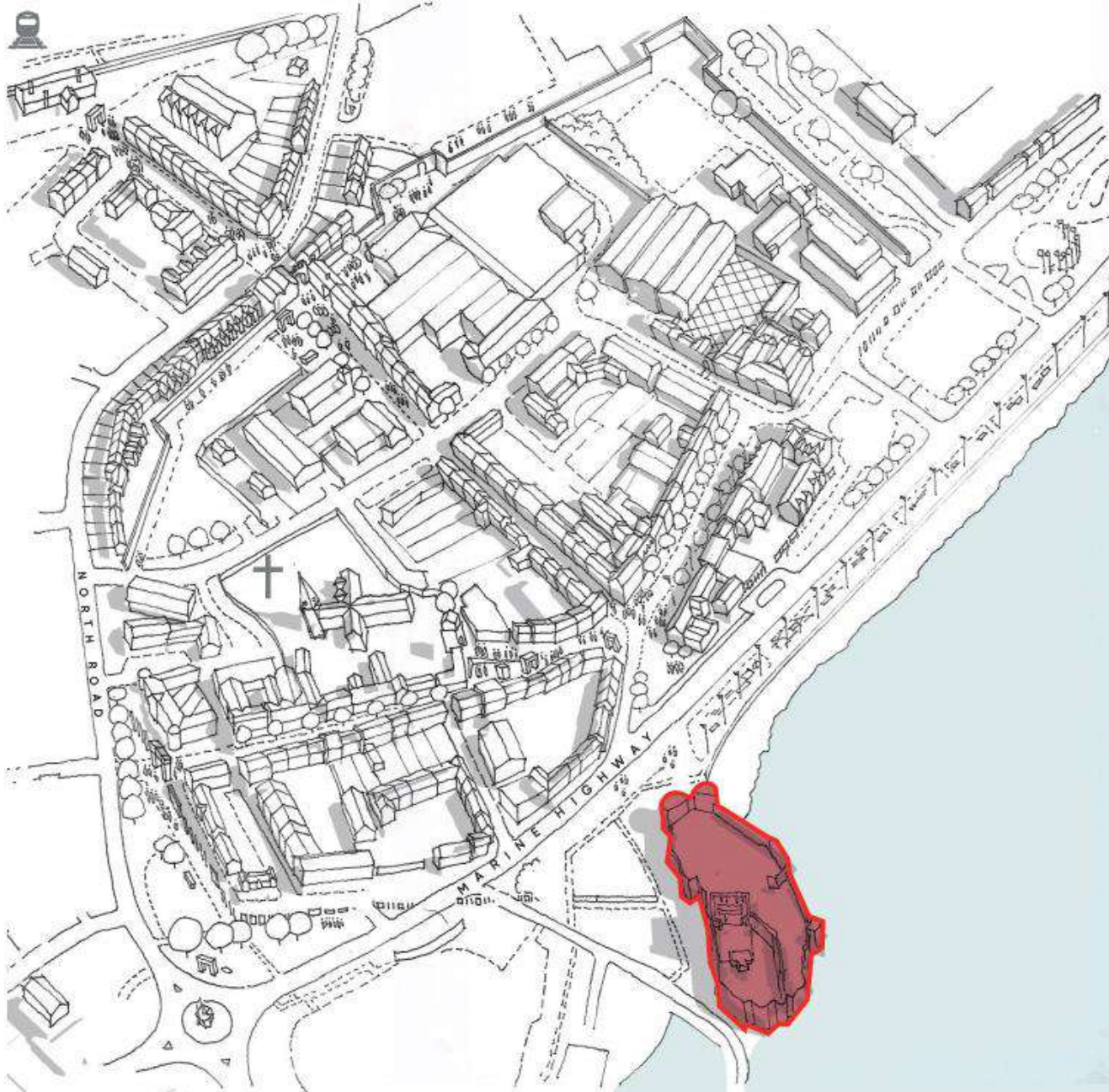
# PROJECT BRANDING CONCEPT



## The Gateway to the Causeway Coast

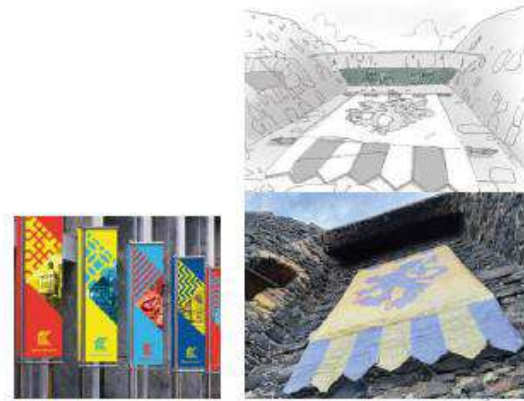


# THE CASTLE – IMPROVE ACCESS



# THE CASTLE - INTERPRETATION

- 1 Approach
- 2 Entrance
- 3 Welcome
- 4 Middle Ward
- 5 Inner Ward
- 5a Courtyard
- 6 Changes in the castle
- 7 Explore the castle
- 8



1 Approach 2 Entrance

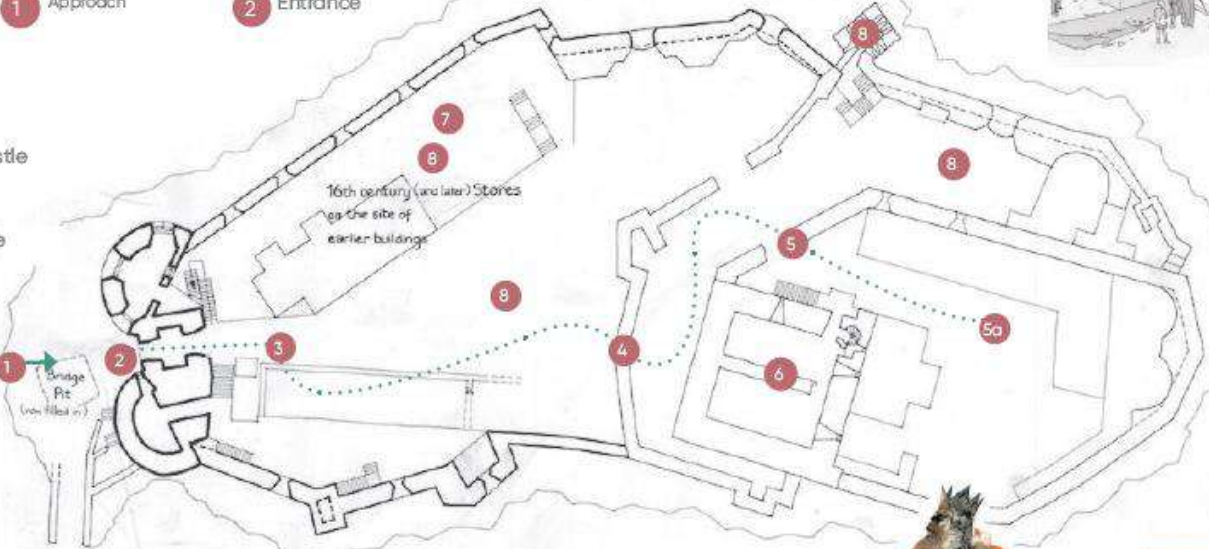


3 Welcome (tour pick-up point)

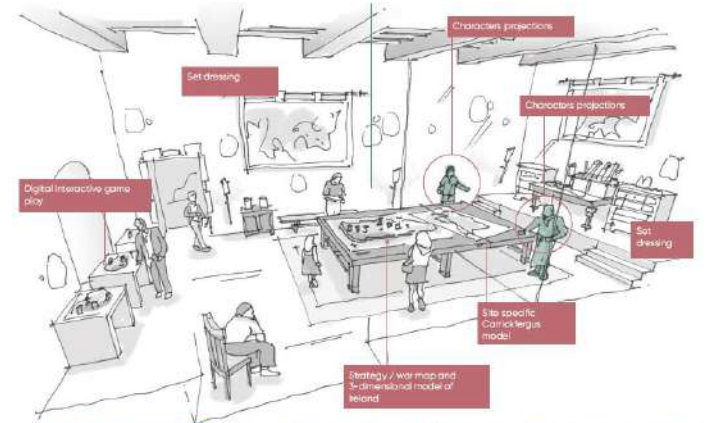
Listen to voices from the past



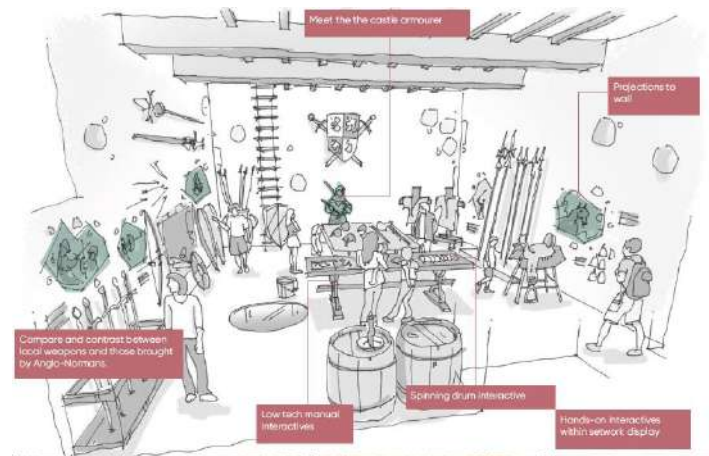
4 Middle Ward



5 Inner Ward



A digital game or a physical one will offer a reward. It will be linked to a teaching / learning outcome.



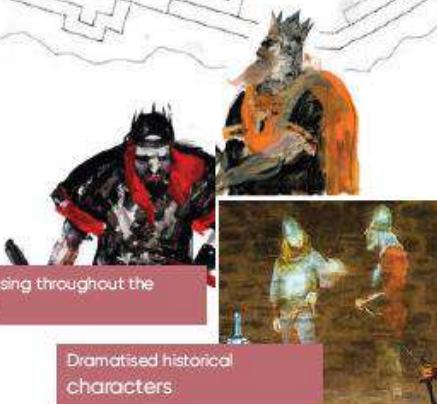
Screens and AR will depict a timeline of diverse individuals associated with the site



6 The Great Tower

Set dressing throughout the tower

Dramatised historical characters

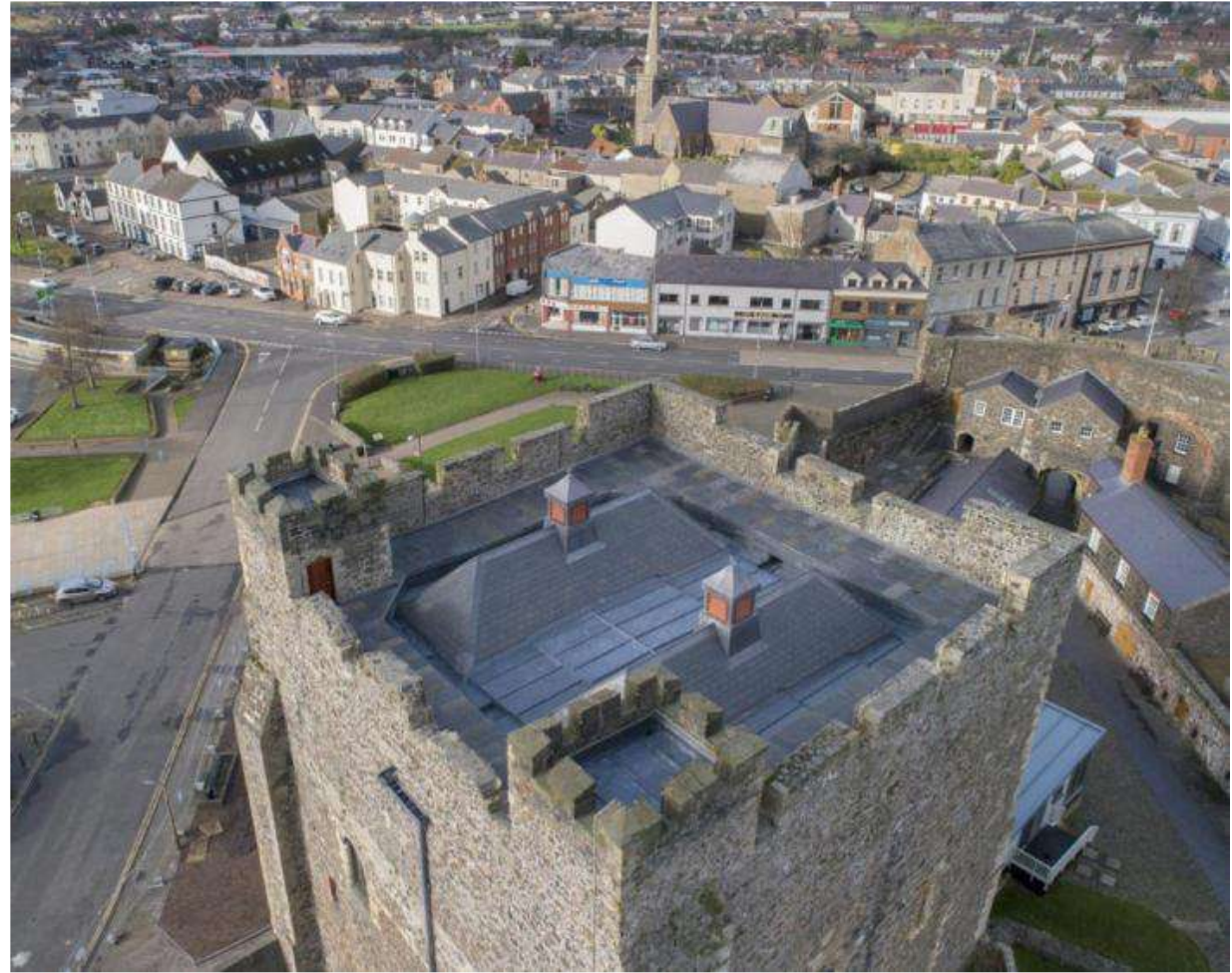
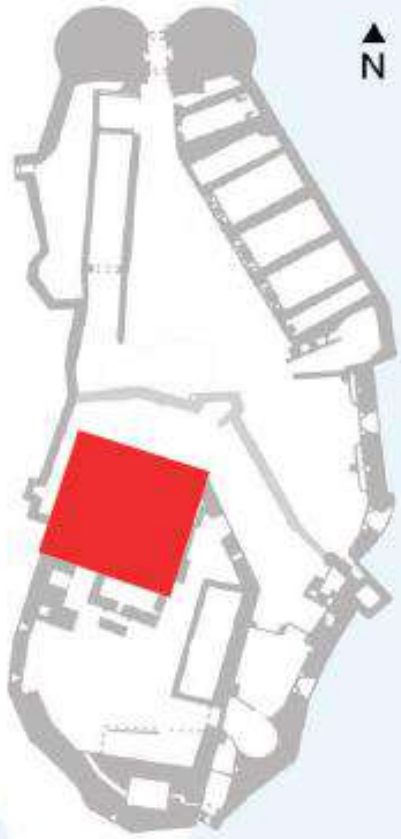


5a Courtyard

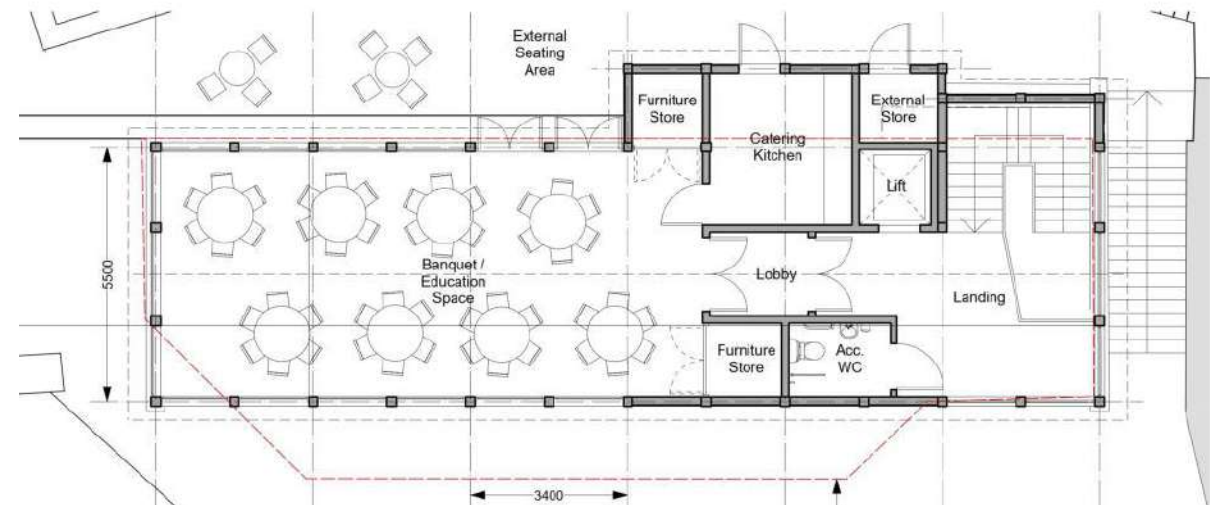
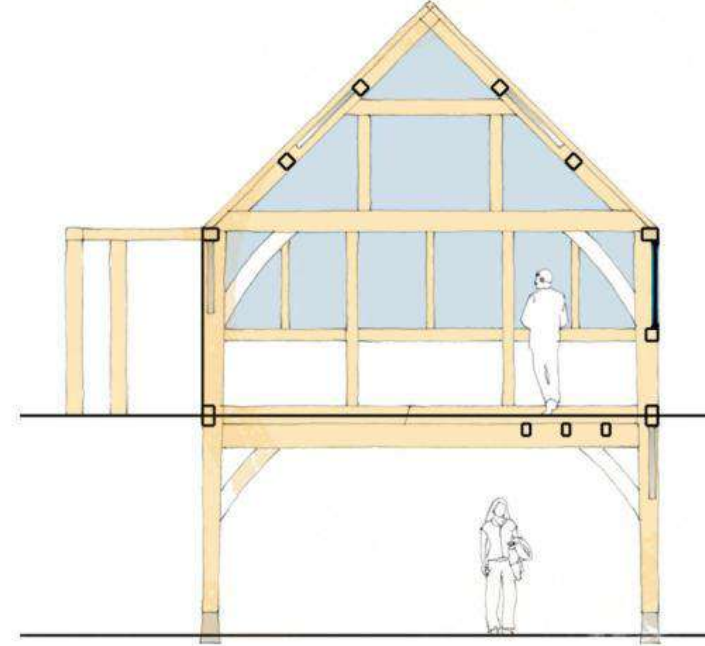
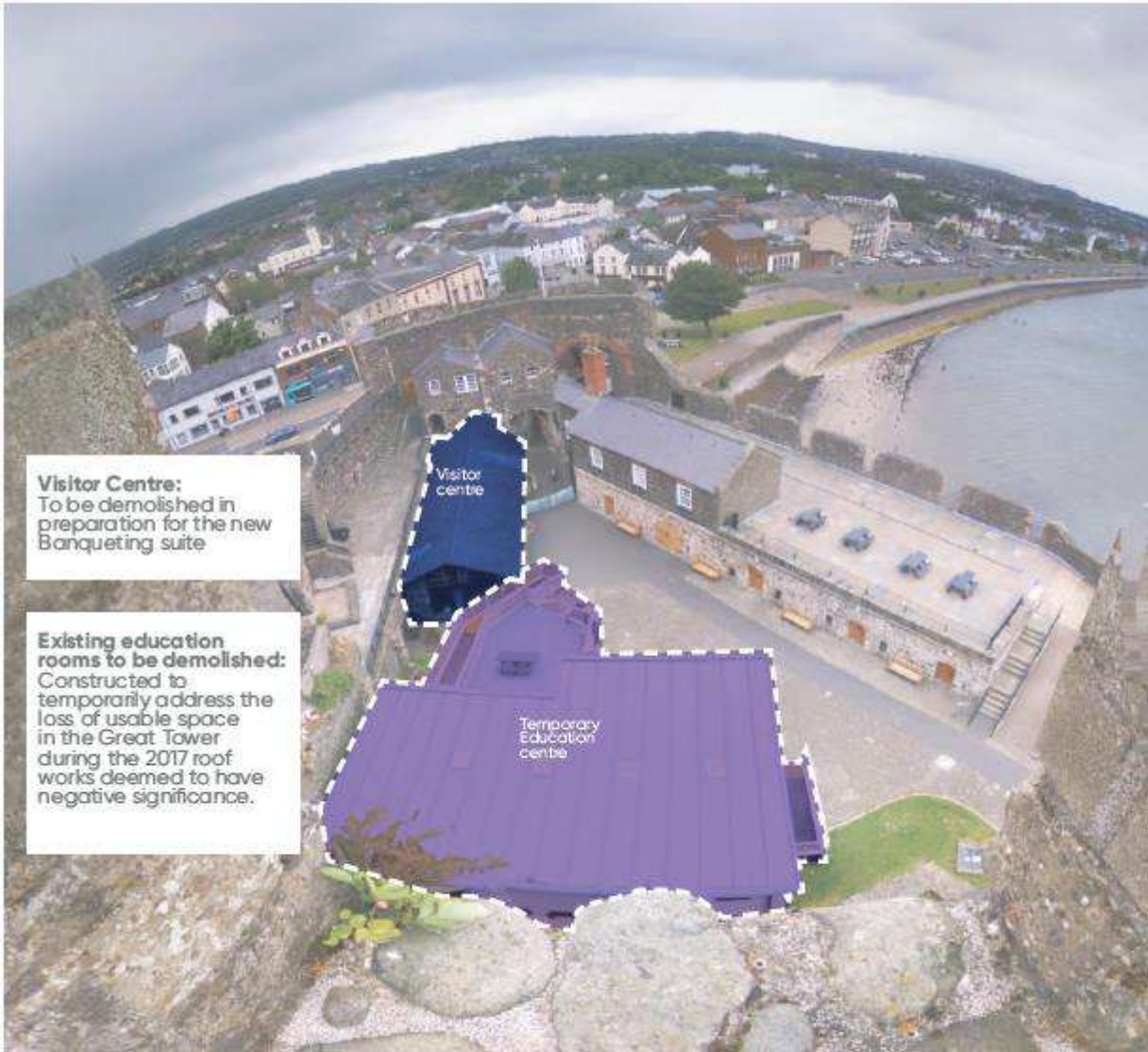


Try on and dress-up elements

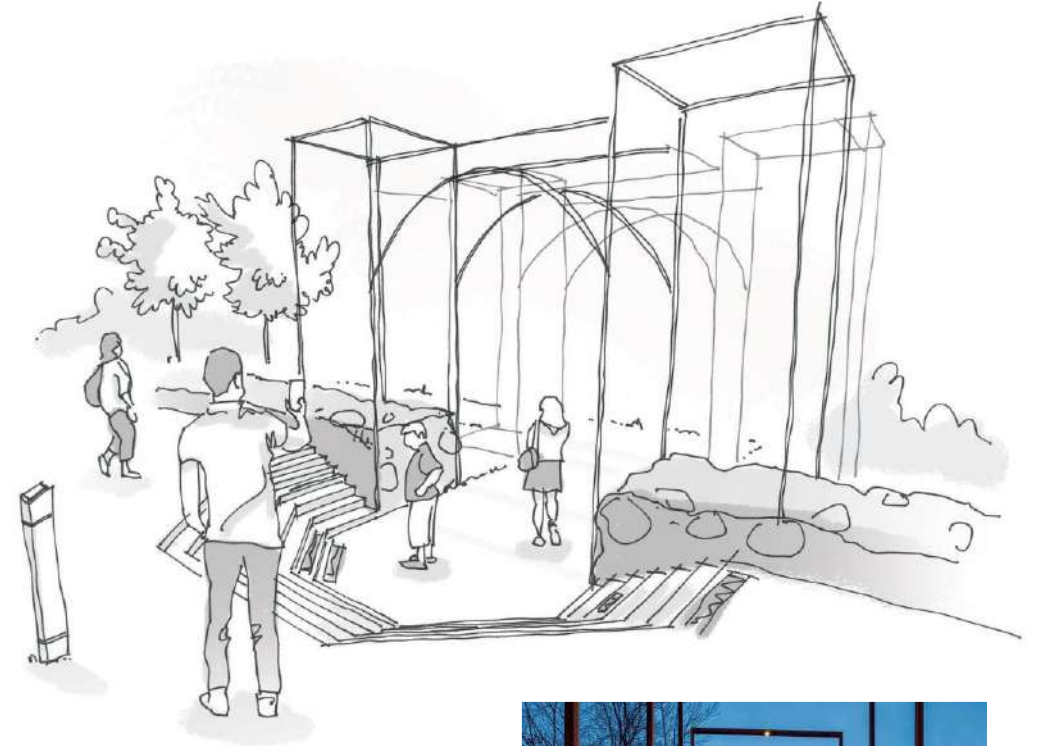
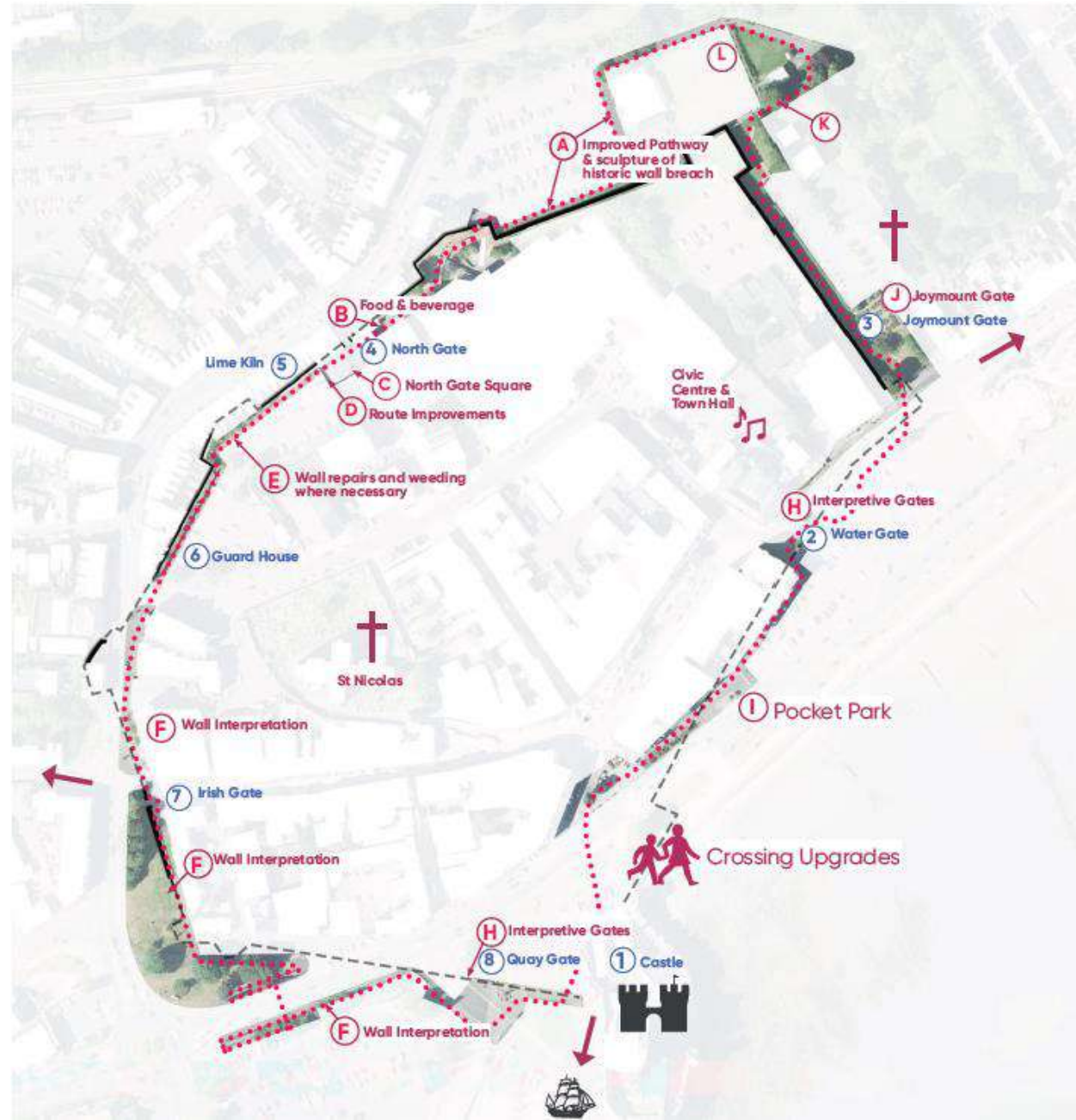
# THE CASTLE – ROOF TOP WALK

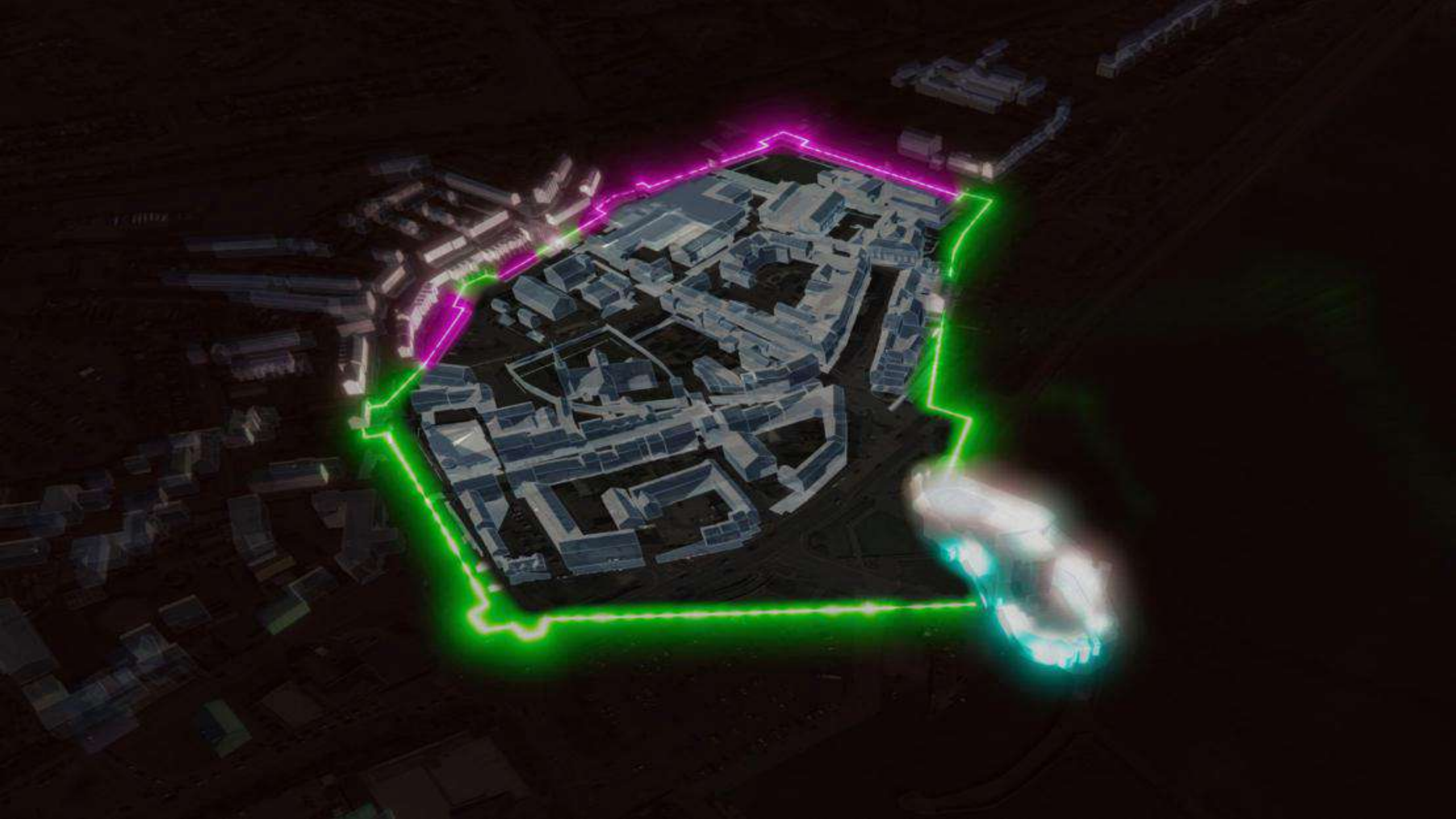


# THE CASTLE – BANQUETING EXPERIENCE



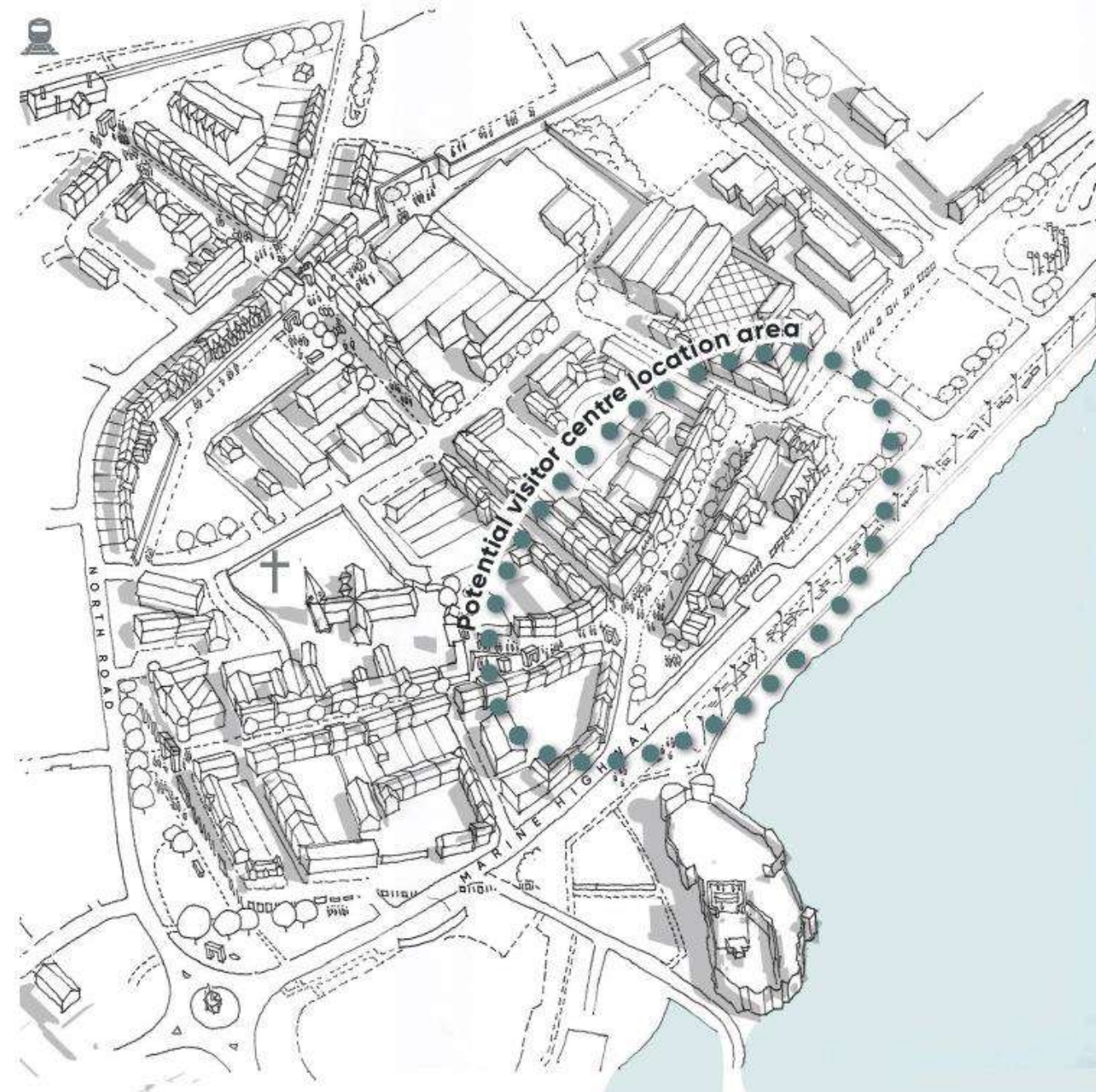
# THE TOWN WALLS



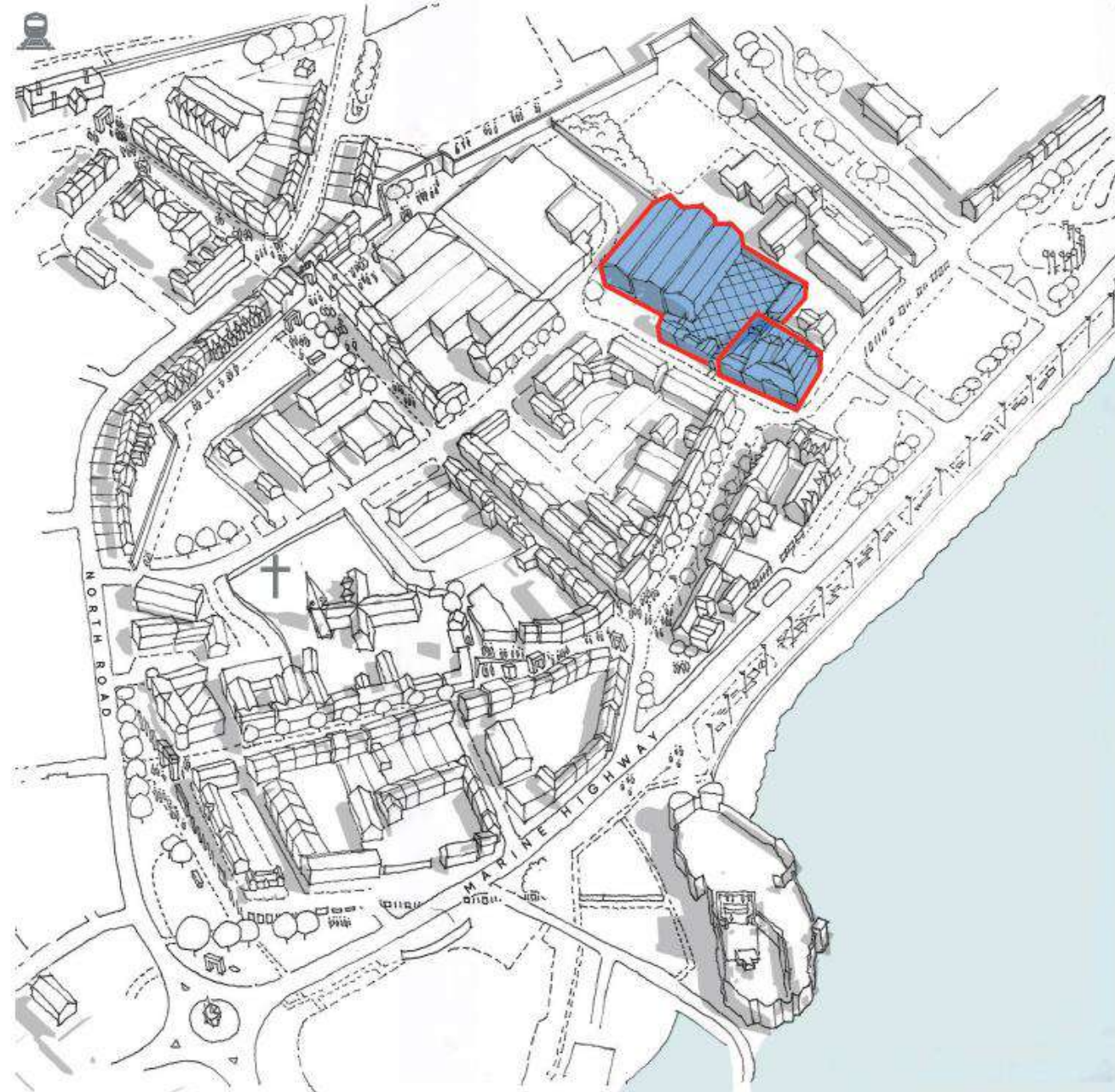




# THE VISITOR HUB



# TOWN HALL & CIVIC CENTRE ARTS VENUE



## Access Segregation

To enhance access strategies and establish clear separation between public-facing events and council offices, improving safety, security, and wayfinding for all building users.

## Jubilee Hall

To modernise the Jubilee Hall for concerts and events, by upgrading acoustics, adaptable seating, enhanced stage and lighting, and a state-of-the-art AV system while improving the overall look and feel and access.

## Storage

Improved flexible storage for events furniture

## Lobby

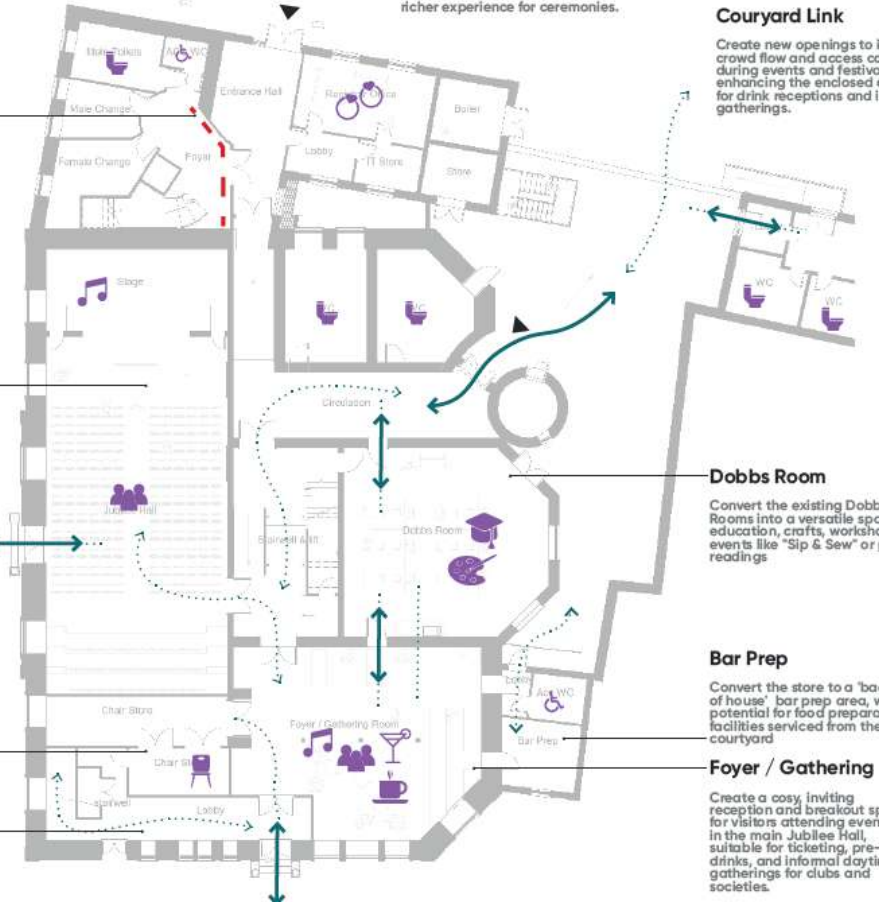
Improved lobby and access to the Jubilee balcony for a more streamlined concert experience

## Registrar office

Maintain the registrar's office while offering more booking options and enhanced facilities to create a richer experience for ceremonies.

## Courtyard Link

Create new openings to improve crowd flow and access control during events and festivals, enhancing the enclosed courtyard for drink receptions and intimate gatherings.



## Dobbs Room

Convert the existing Dobbs Rooms into a versatile space for education, crafts, workshops, and events like 'Sip & Sew' or poetry readings

## Bar Prep

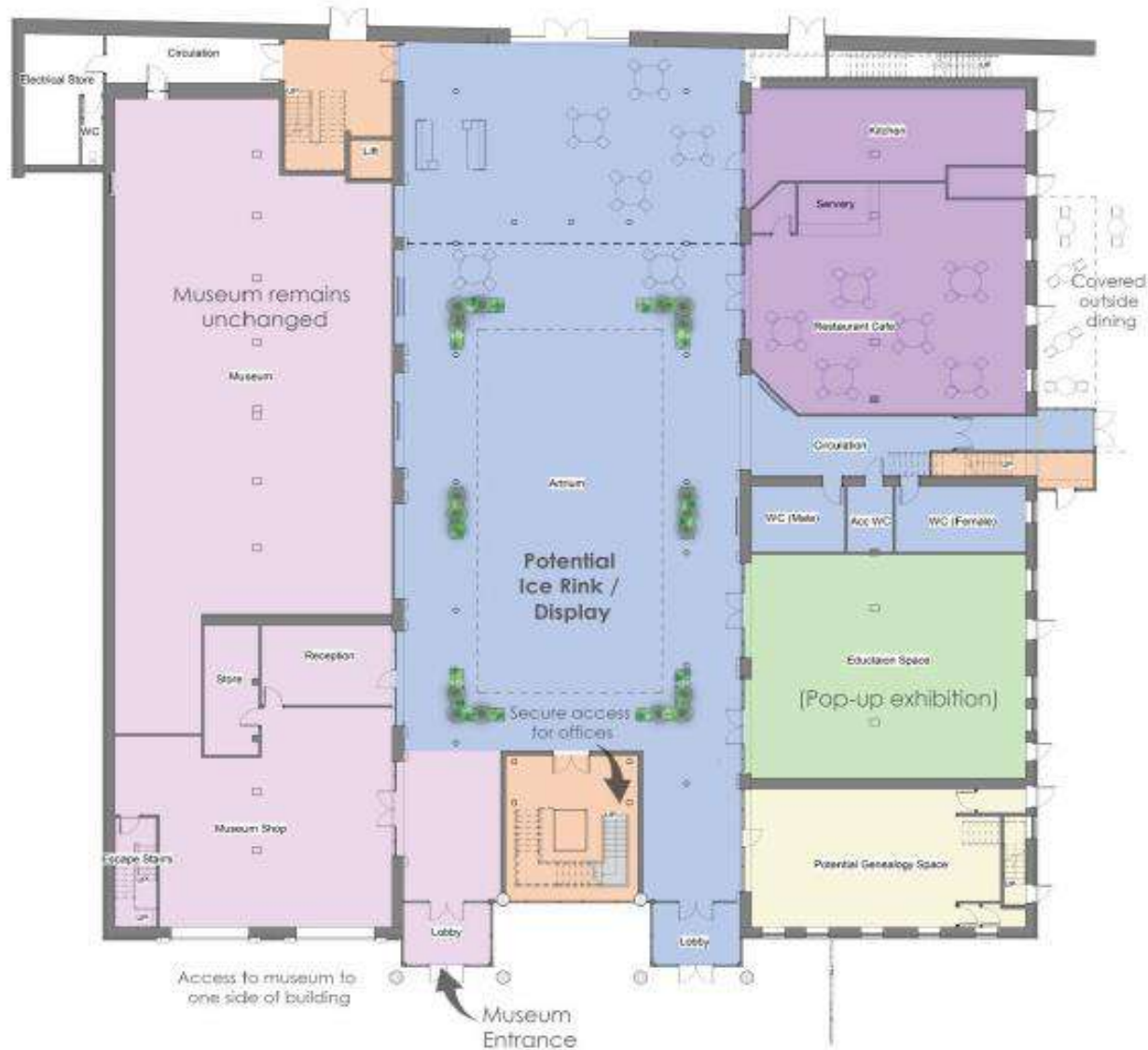
Convert the store to a 'back of house' bar prep area, with potential for food preparation facilities serviced from the courtyard

## Foyer / Gathering

Create a cosy, inviting reception and breakout space for visitors attending events in the main Jubilee Hall, suitable for ticketing, pre-show drinks, and informal daytime gatherings for clubs and societies.



# TOWN HALL & CIVIC CENTRE



- Museum extent
- Public
- Bookable
- Office (Secure)
- 3rd Party
- F+B



Atrium space with greening of existing balconies



Cafe/ Restaurant space



Educational space - with flexible furniture

# TOWN HALL & CIVIC CENTRE



# HARBOUR SQUARE



## 6.4 Proposals

### Refurbish WCs

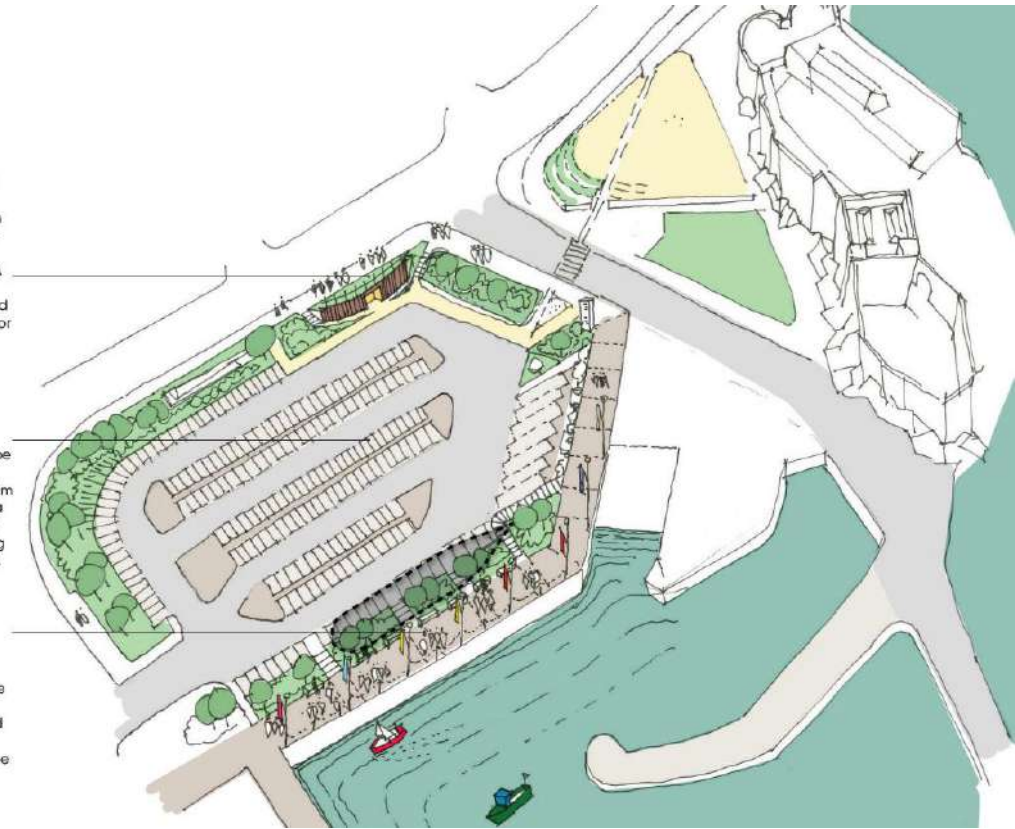
The existing toilets are functional, are in need of an overall refresh. Whilst easy to overlook, they can significantly influence the first and last impressions of a visitor's experience. A thoughtful refresh could enhance their function and leave a good impression for visitors and locals.

### Car Park Refresh

The car park could be softer, greener & landscape focused by introducing more generous public realm to reinvent the space for a wide range of events and concerts while maintaining the vital parking capacity.

### Schooner Spot

The sea front has great potential to host the 'Resit' schooner along the harbour promenade. An area will be future proofed to facilitate this as and when refurbishment can be confirmed.



# THE ROCK OF FERGUS MARINE PROMENADE

Along the Marine Promenade there is an opportunity to integrate a striking element of public realm interpretation.

A newly commissioned piece of writing will form the basis of the interpretation. This piece, conceptualised as 'The Rock of Fergus' will focus on Fergus Mór Mac Eric, and reveal the many layers of Carrickfergus from its earliest history: including the promontory, the sea, its harbour, castle and people.



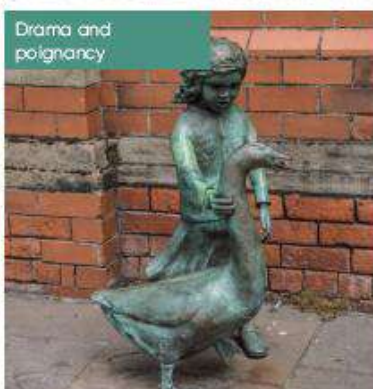
Opportunities along the promenade



Interpretation within seating and hard landscaping



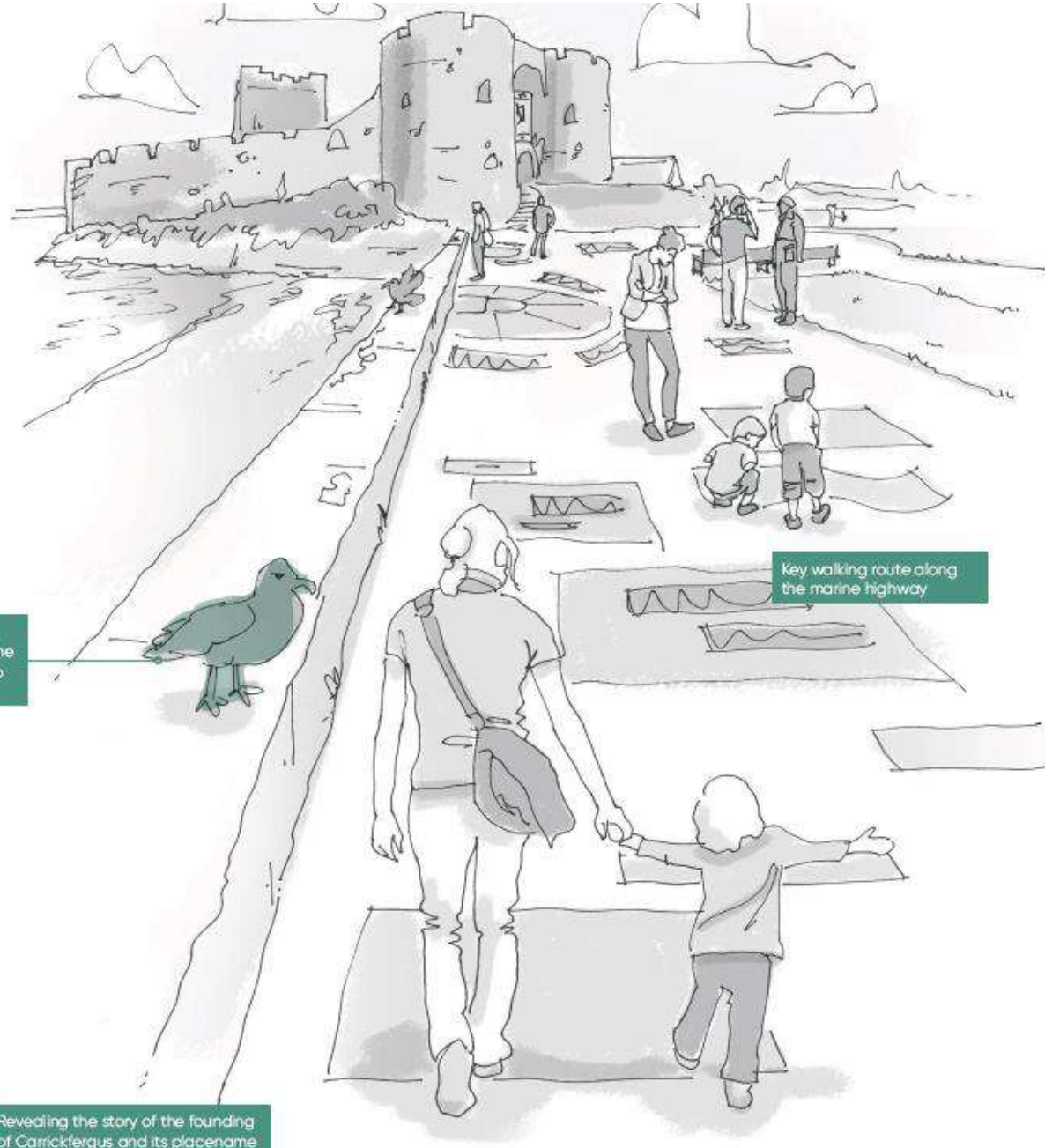
Sculptural element to discover throughout the town, relating to audio and/or AR stops



Drama and poignancy



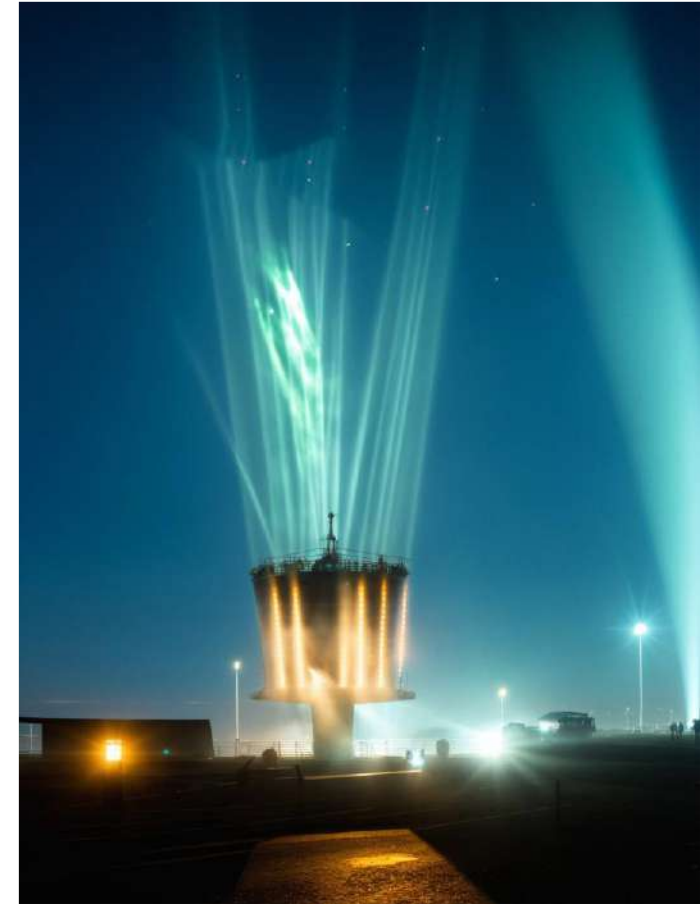
Revealing the story of the founding of Carrickfergus and its placename



Key walking route along the marine highway



# THE RADAR STATION



# CONNECTIONS & PUBLIC REALM

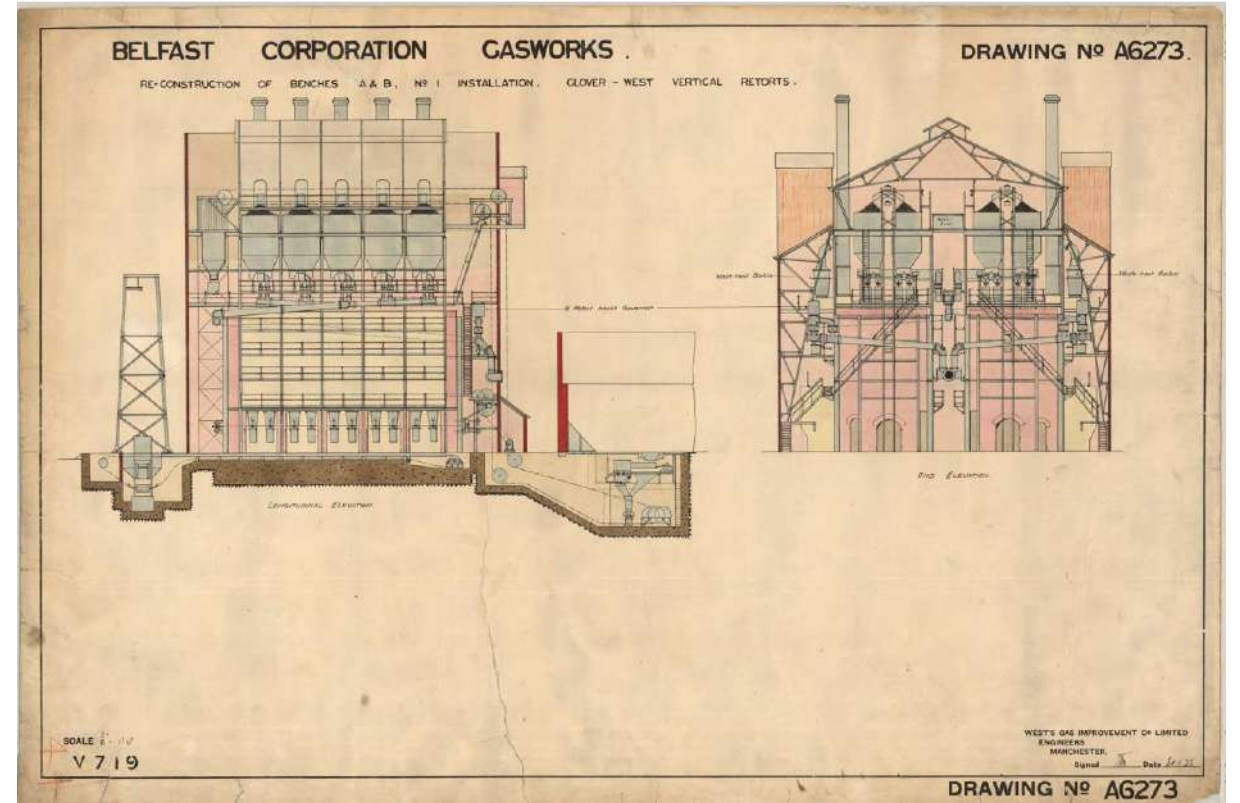




# LIGHTING STRATEGY



# THE GAS WORKS



# CARRICKFERGUS OTHER ASSETS

Marine Gardens



Play park



Marina & Harbour



Shaftsbury Park



Andrew Jackson & US Rangers



St Nicolas Church



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT


**Mid-East Antrim Borough Council**  
**Garrickfergus City Deal Regeneration Project**

**Your Feedback**

Any comment or view will be considered carefully in the design team's developing further detailed proposals. We would also welcome all those with an interest in the proposal to come along to the public consultation on 11th March 2025 at the Garrickfergus Community Centre.

Website Link:  
[garrickfergusregeneration.com](http://garrickfergusregeneration.com)

QR Code:









Workshop Theme	Programme Period
<b>Workshop 1</b> Theme 1 <b>People</b> : Growing Your Skills and Resources	May 2024
<b>Workshop 2</b> Theme 2 <b>Place</b> : Knowing Your High Street	July 2024
<b>Workshop 3</b> Theme 3 <b>Imagining</b> : What Your High Street Could Become	September 2024
<b>Workshop 4</b> Theme 4 <b>Delivering</b> : How to Focus and Prioritise	December 2024.....NOW MARCH 2025
<b>Workshop 5</b> Theme 5 <b>Monitoring</b> : Confirming Progress	March 2025 .....NOW JUNE 2025
<b>Workshop 6</b> Theme 6 <b>Maintaining</b> : Loving Your Place	June 2025 .....NOW SEPTEMBER 2025

# Business Growth Support

Ally McGarry  
Business Client Manager

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council



Funded by  
UK Government



# Go Succeed

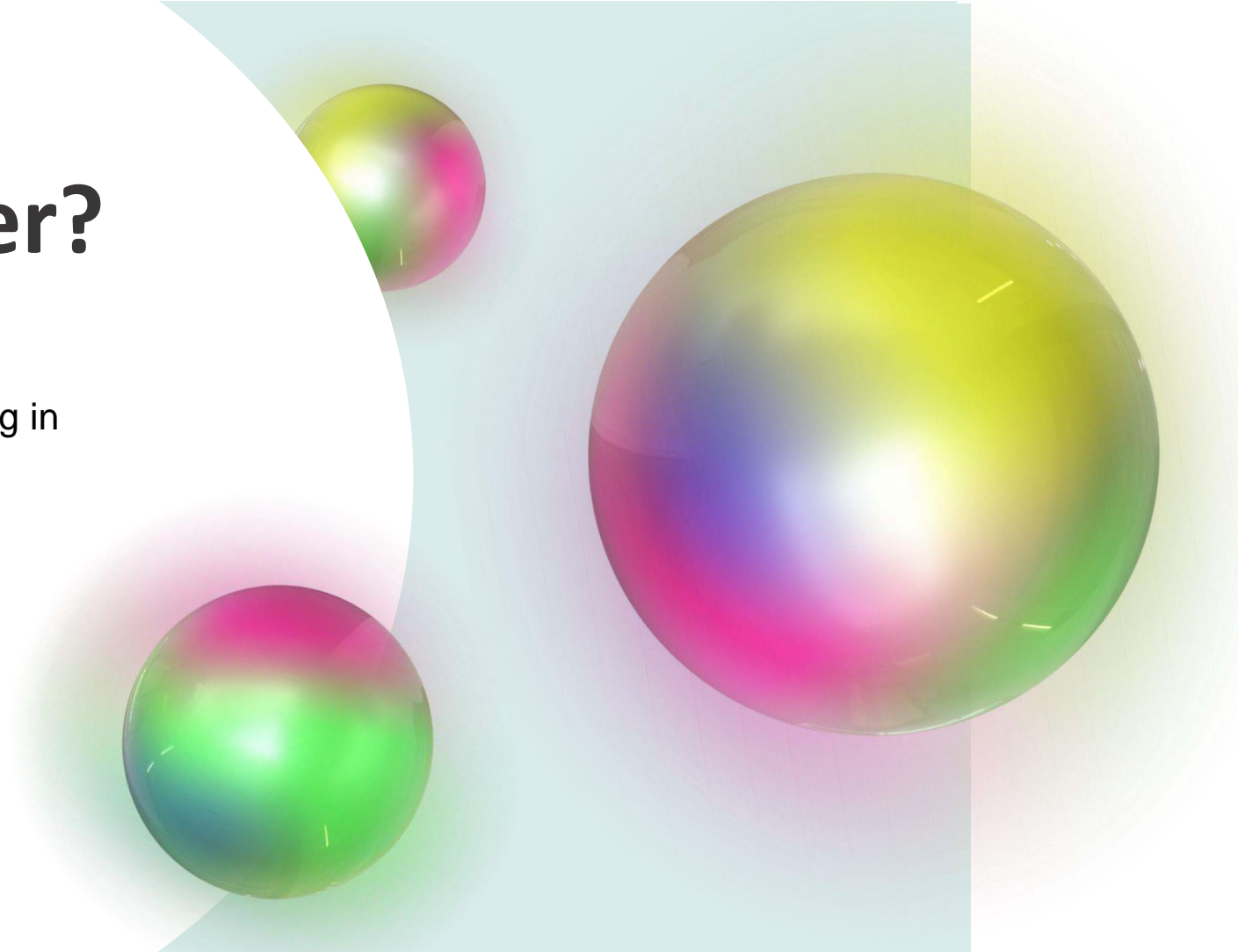
NI Business Support



# What does it offer?

- Business Diagnostic
- Up to 21 hours free bespoke mentoring in a specific area of need
- Tailored Masterclasses
- Peer to Peer Networks
- Up to £4k Grant to support business growth

Enquiries: [www.go-succeed.com](http://www.go-succeed.com)



# Areas of Support

Business Planning / Strategy Development	Distributed ledger systems/ blockchain technologies
Business Management	Cyber Security
Business Operations, Efficiencies, production & logistics	Marketing & Sales (Traditional)
Employment / Human Resources	Social Media / Digital Marketing
Financial Management	Sales development / brand development
Customer Experience Management	Exporting / New market identification
ICT / Digital	Strategic Business Growth
E-commerce	Innovation support / product & process development / R&D
Legislation / Compliance	Procurement / Tendering
Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)	Skills Development
Process automation via robotics/cobotics	Environmental Sustainability
Big-data and analytics	Productivity, Efficiency, Sustainability (resilience)
Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)	Staff management/leadership
Artificial intelligence and machine learning	





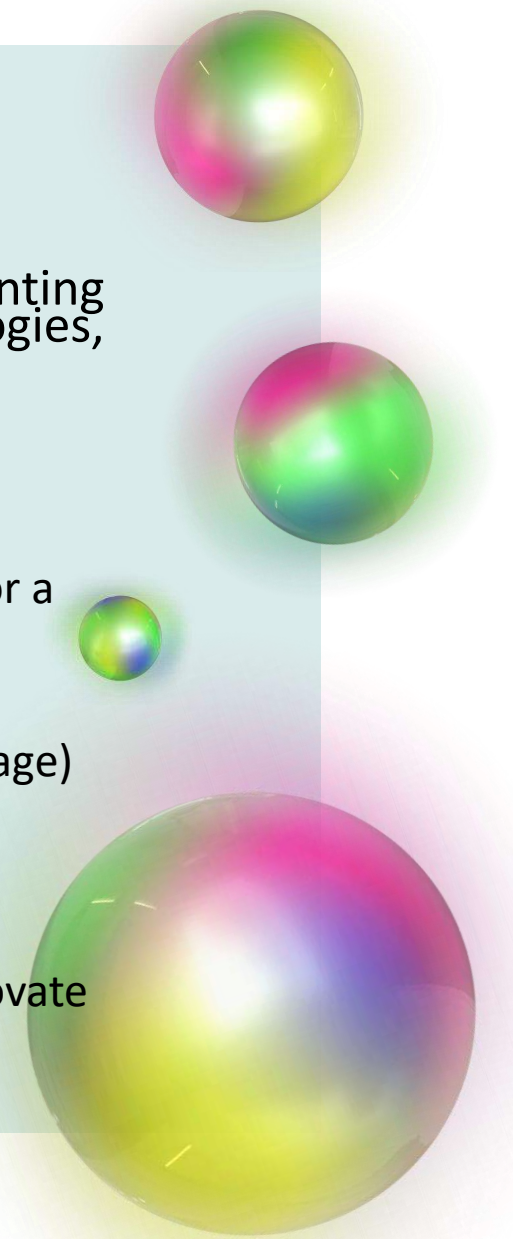
# Green to Grow

Bespoke Programme providing **specialist advice** on implementing sustainability measures such as renewable energy, low-carbon technologies, and waste reduction to help your business become more sustainable.

December 2024 – March 2025

## Why Participate?

- Awareness of climate change and how to improve environmental impact for a sustainable future
- Cost savings and financial efficiency
- Enhanced resource efficiency (e.g., reduced energy, water, and material usage)
- Contributing towards Net Zero / reduced environmental impact
- Added value in products and services from benefits realisation
- Expanded customer reach, improved corporate image, and reputation
- Referrals to stakeholder organisations i.e. Invest NI, Intertrade Ireland, Innovate NI, Further Education Colleges, Universities etc. to avail of additional complimentary support



# Digital Edge

Designed to help SMEs improve their digital marketing, leverage AI tools, and optimise their online presence for sustainable growth.

## What's on offer:

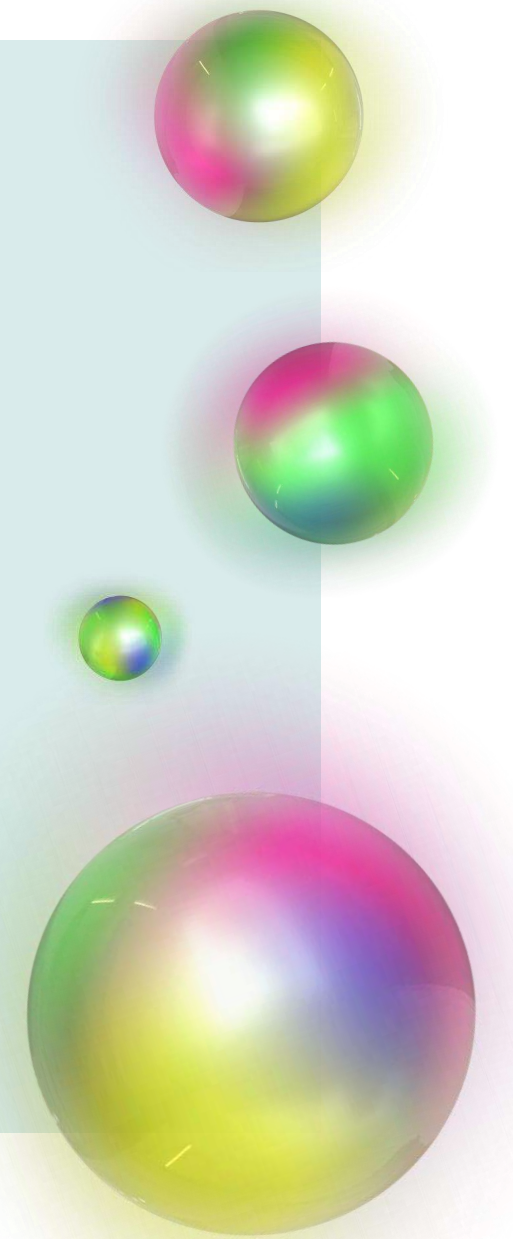
- **4 Learning Sessions**

1. **Building an Effective Digital Strategy:** Develop a tailored digital marketing plan with measurable goals focused on audience targeting and engagement.
2. **Social Media Marketing and Online Advertising:** Learn to craft effective, low-cost social media campaigns, leverage paid ads, and utilize social platforms to build brand visibility and generate leads.
3. **SEO and Website Optimization for Growth:** Focus on DIY SEO techniques, improving website user experience, and ensuring mobile-friendliness to drive organic traffic.
4. **AI Tools for Small Business:** Explore practical uses of AI for SMEs, such as content generation, customer service automation (e.g., chatbots), predictive analytics, and improving productivity through AI-driven insights.

- **21 Hours of One-to-One Digital Mentoring**

- **Bespoke Digital Marketing Growth Plan**

- December 2024 – March 2025



# Balmoral Show 2025

Wednesday 14th May to Saturday 17th May

Exciting Showcase Opportunity for Tourism Businesses:

- **Showcase** - Mid and East Antrim Borough based **Food** Tourism Experiences
- **Wraparound support programme (worth up to £1,365)**
  - *Offering up to 21 hours mentoring during Feb & March 2025 to help you prepare for the showcase*
- **Link to apply:** [Balmoral Show 2025 | Mid and East Antrim Borough Council](#)

**Expressions of Interest Close Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December @ 12noon**

# Digital Transformation Flexible Fund

Round 4 Funding: Next call anticipated to open March 2025

1. Expression of interest opens (4 weeks)
2. Successful EOIs invited to submit full application to the fund (4 -6 weeks)
3. Full applications assessed (4-8 weeks)
4. 8-10 weeks after application LoOs issued
5. Approx 3-month timeframe to purchase and install equipment and submit claim

**Digital Transformation Plan Required\***

**Visit:** [Digital Transformation Flexible Fund \(dtff.co.uk\)](https://dtff.co.uk)

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council

# Digital Transformation Flexible Fund



**Visit:** [Digital Transformation Flexible Fund \(dtff.co.uk\)](http://dtff.co.uk)

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)



**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council

# Contact Me:

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**Ally McGarry**

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07880 378153



# Questions?



**Mid & East  
Antrim**

A land shaped by Sea & Stone