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Carlingford Visitor Survey, 2011

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Carlingford Visitor Survey 2011

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CARLINGFORD VISITOR SURVEY 2011



Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



DIT-ACHIEV Project: *Achieving Sustainability in Carlingford*

The DIT-ACHIEV Model for the Sustainable Management of Tourism has been developed by the College of Arts and Tourism, Dublin Institute of Technology and is endorsed by the Environmental Protection Agency and Fáilte Ireland. It explores six areas of investigation - Administration, Community, Heritage, Infrastructure, Enterprise and Visitor.

The purpose of piloting this DIT-ACHIEV model in Carlingford is to test its use with the objective to refine and adjust its methodology, so that it can be applied in any Irish tourism destination.

Early indications are that the Model will provide the Irish Tourism Industry with a valuable tool for making its product and management far more sustainable.

In addition to data such as environmental measurements, information on water, waste, energy, transport, examination of local, cultural, environmental and

employment statistics, the model requires the undertaking of three dedicated surveys:

- A Resident Survey
- A Business Survey
- A Visitor Survey

A survey of residents was undertaken in 2010 and the *Business Survey* was run during 2011. With the support of local businesses, this year-long Visitor Survey has taken place throughout Carlingford & Cooley Peninsula, with the vast majority conducted in Carlingford.

This report presents the main findings of 630 **Visitor Surveys** that were conducted between May 2010 and May 2011 (see note below). While the survey provides a good overview of visitors to Carlingford & the Cooley Peninsula, the main focus of this research has been to link the survey to the DIT-ACHIEV Model for Sustainable Tourism Management.

Purpose of Visitor Survey—Turning Findings into Actions

While this survey provides a wealth of information pertaining to visitors to Carlingford and the Cooley Peninsula, it is not an end in itself. Its main purpose is to lead to actions not just conclusions.

The main phase in the research model being followed in this overall project can be simplified as follows;

Data Collection Data Analysis Identification of Issues Planning for the Future

All of this is undertaken under the framework of the internationally recognised **DIT-ACHIEV Model for Sustainable Tourism Management**.

At this stage, a wealth of data has been collected and analysed for Carlingford & the Cooley Peninsula, ranging across the themes outlined above. The next phase will be to identify the most substantial issues which have emerged and to put action plans / methodologies in place, so they can be treated in a systematic and organised fashion.

This will help lead to Carlingford & the Cooley Peninsula becoming a more sustainably managed Tourism Destination into the future.

Analysis of the various surveys and other data collection procedures of the *DIT-ACHIEV Model* will continue towards the identification of overarching issues of concern. In parallel with this, structures will be developed whereby planning for the future can begin.

This is an exciting and challenging time for Carlingford and Cooley tourism, and will help to ensure a healthy and prosperous development into the future.

'I love it here - fabulous atmosphere, friendly people, relaxed pace of life. Great scenery, a short drive from home' (One Visitor's Comment)

Note: surveying took place from 2nd half of May 2010 to 1st half of May 2011 to ensure full 12 month cycle).

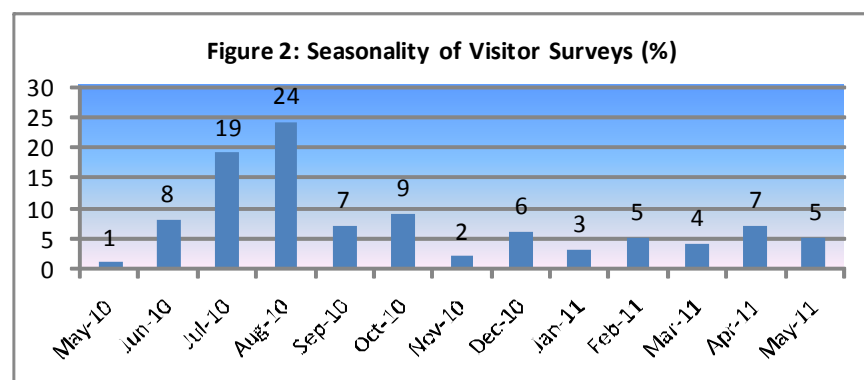
Sept 2011

Survey Details

Locations Where Surveying Took Place: **Figure 1** illustrates where surveys took place. The fact that 80% took place at various accommodations must be borne in mind as it may impact on findings. Also, interpretation must be mindful of the high proportion undertaken in one B&B in particular.

Figure 1: Survey Location	% of Surveys
Carlingford House B&B	42
Mourneview B&B	10
Tourist Information Office	9
Highlands B&B	7
Oystercatcher Accommodation	6
Carlingford Adventure Centre	3
Carlingford Heritage Centre	4
McKevitt's Village Hotel	3
Foy Centre	3
Grove House B&B	2
Harwood Heights	2
Millgrange Cottages	1.5
Shalom B&B	1.5
The Four Seasons Hotel	1
Belmount Self Catering	1
Belvedere Houses B&B	1
Ghan House	1
Dan's Café	1
Beaufort House	0.5
Viewpoint Guest House	0.5
Total	100

Seasonal Distribution of Arrivals: **Figure 2** shows the seasonal breakdown of when surveys were conducted. Local experience suggests July–August tend to be the busiest months.



Visitor Profile

Gender/ Age: 55% of those surveyed were female, 69% were aged between 25 and 54 years of age (**See Figure 3**).

Party Composition: 52% were travelling with a partner (**See Figure 4**) and 17% & 16%, were travelling with their family or group of friends, respectively.

Occupation: **Figure 5** shows that 54% of respondents were either employer/managers or professional (higher & lower), while a further 13% were retired and 3% were students. It is interesting to note that no respondent indicated they were unemployed, however, these could be contained within the 17% who did not specify their occupation.

Group Size: Nearly two thirds of all visitors (64%) were travelling in a party of 2 people (**See Figure 6**) and a further 9% were in a party of four people. 84% were travelling without children, 12% travelled with 1-3 children & 2% travelled with more than 11 children.

Figure 3: Age of Visitors (%)

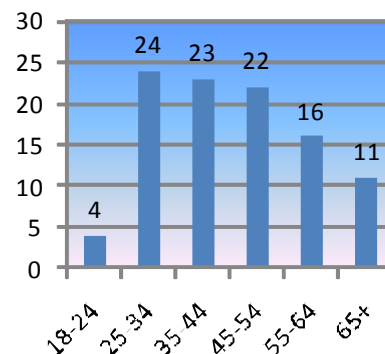


Figure 4: Party Composition (%)

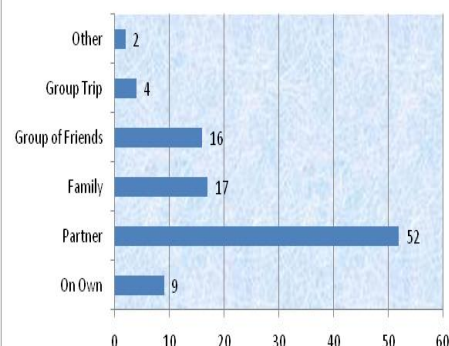
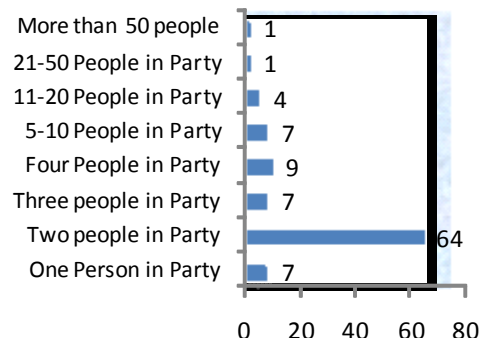


Figure 5: Visitor Occupation (%)



Figure 6: Group Size (%)



Source Markets

Main Source Markets : 49% of the surveyed visitors were from the Republic of Ireland, 32% were from Overseas, and 19% were from Northern Ireland (See Figure 7). In relation to the Overseas Market, 10% were from Britain (England and Scotland), 11% from Mainland Europe and only 7% from North America (USA & Canada). A further 3% were from either Australia or New Zealand and 1% from 'Other Markets'. Looking more closely we see the following:

- Mainland Europe - 4% from Germany and 1% from each of France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland and Russia.
- North American - 6% from USA, 1% from Canada.
- **Visitors from the Republic of Ireland:** The majority of Domestic visitors indicated they were from Dublin (54%). 8% were from Louth, 6% from Wicklow and 5% from Kildare. The 'other' counties refer to Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan, Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal, Offaly, Laois & Limerick, giving a combined total of 8% as

Repeat Business

summarised in **Figure 8**.

Repeat Business: Visitors were asked how many times they have visited Carlingford & Cooley in the last 10 years. **Figure 9** shows that for 54% of visitors this was their first trip. There appears to be a large level of frequent repeat business. 15% were on their second visit, 6%

Figure 7: Visitor Country of Residence (%)

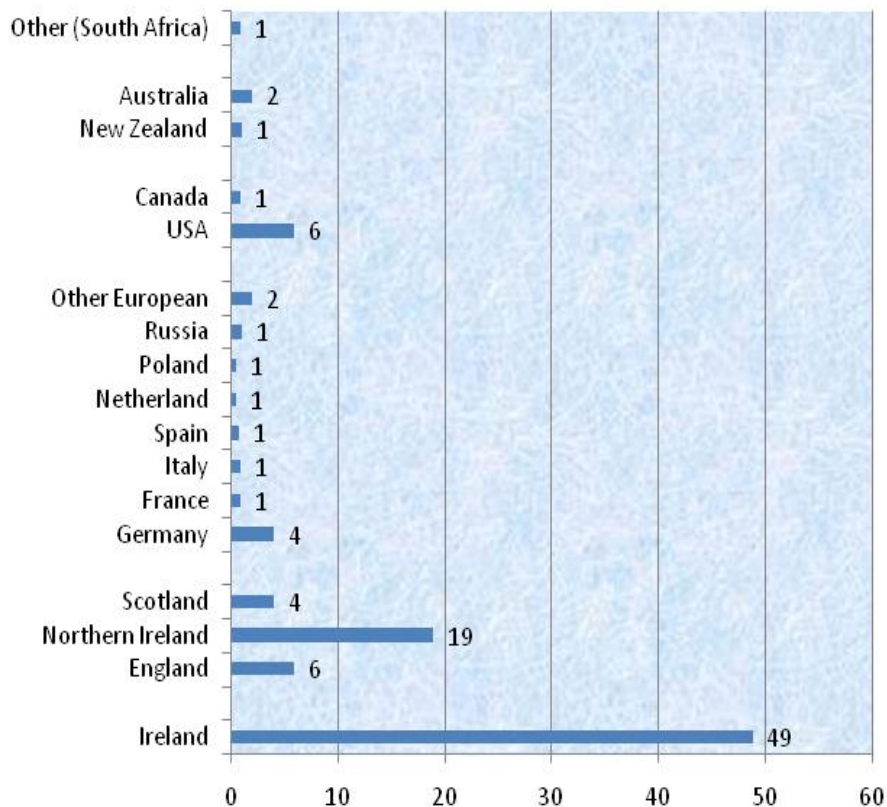


Figure 8: County of Origin - Republic of Ireland Visitors (%)

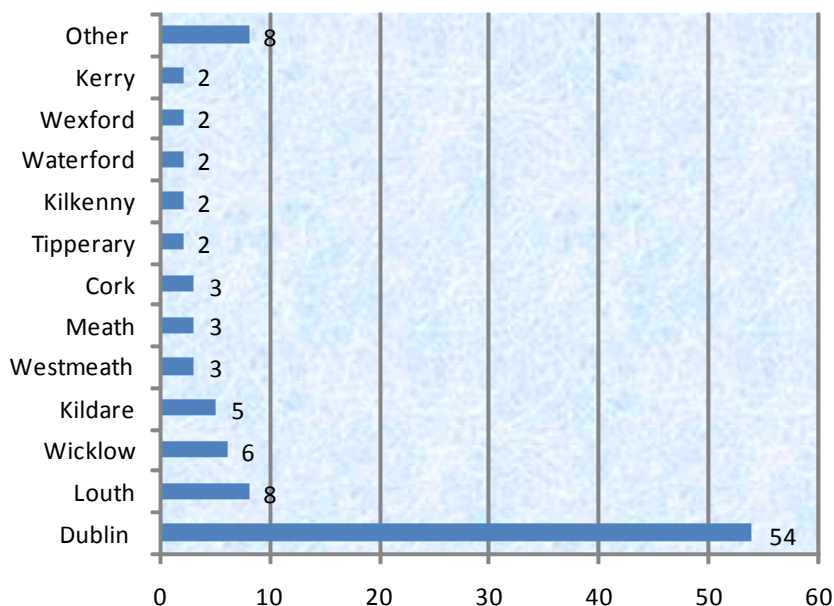
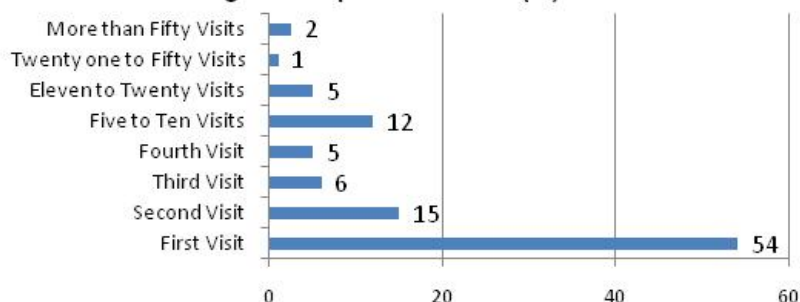


Figure 9: Repeat Customers (%)



Overnight Stays

Staying Overnight: 94% of all visitors who were surveyed stayed in Carlingford & Cooley overnight (**Figure 10**). 93% of Domestic Visitors from the Republic of Ireland stayed at least one night; 94% of Northern Ireland Visitors stayed overnight and 96% of Overseas Visitors stayed overnight. Thus, just 7% of the Republic of Ireland visitors, 6% of Northern Ireland visitors and 4% of Overseas visitors were day trippers. These findings might be affected by the fact that 80% of all surveys took place at accommodation facilities.

Number of Overnight Stays: Of the visitors that stayed overnight, the average number of nights visitors stayed in Carlingford was 2.41 nights. While 49% stayed one night in Carlingford, 30% stayed 2 nights and 8% stayed 3 nights. The average number of nights visitors were staying in the country was 5.5 nights. 32% of visitors stayed one night on their whole trip and 23% stayed two nights indicating that Carlingford was the main destination for most visitors. 20% were staying 7 nights or more on their whole trip.

Accommodation Type

Type of Accommodation Used: 98% of visitors surveyed were staying in paid accommodation (**See Figure 11**). 71% stayed in a B&B, 17% stayed in either a Hotel/Guesthouse or Specialist Accommodation, 5% stayed in self-catering and 4% in a hostel.

Figure 11: Type of Accommodation used (%)

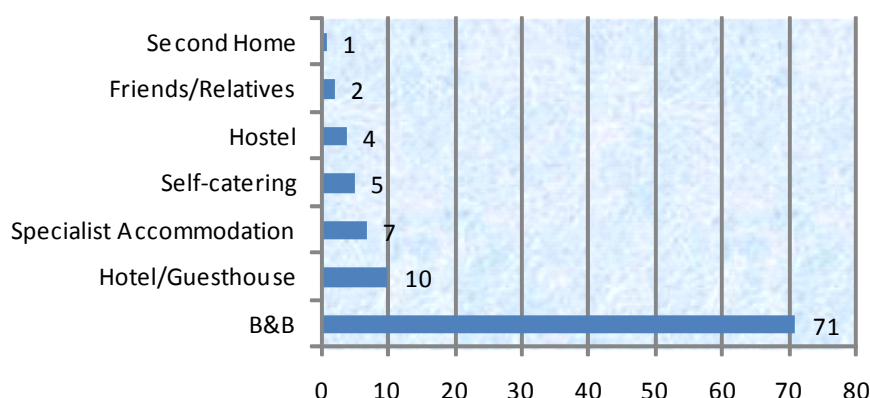
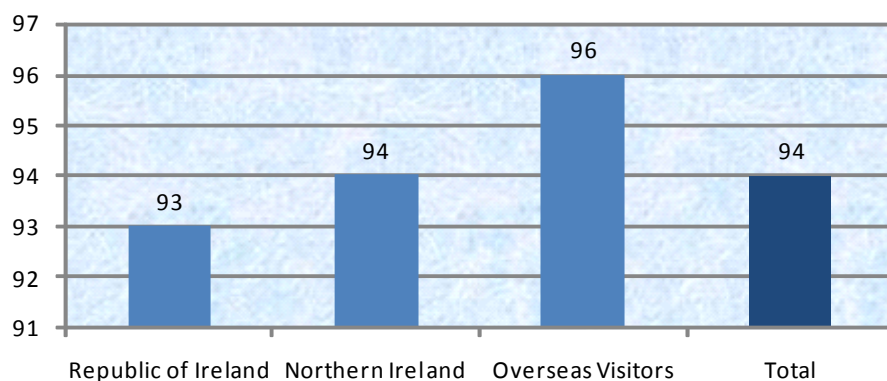


Figure 10: Visitors Staying Overnight (% of Each Market) (%)



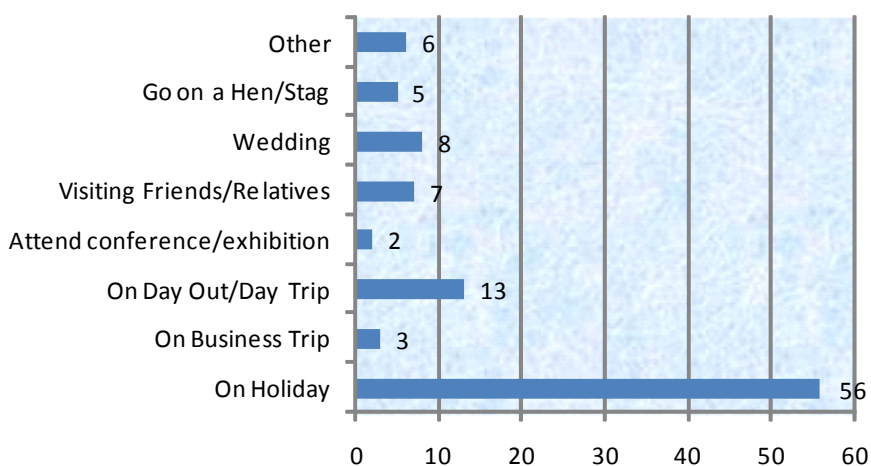
Purpose of Visit

Main Purpose of Visit: Identifying the main reason why people visit Carlingford & Cooley and the factors 'influencing' their decision to choose to visit the area can help to understand people's motivations and thus assist in marketing and selling the area.

The most popular reason for visiting was 'Holiday' which was the main

purpose for 56% of visitors (**See Figure 12**). A further 13% were 'on a day out/day trip' and 8% indicated they were specifically in the area to attend a wedding, 5% to attend a 'hen/stag' and 6% for 'Other' reasons such as to attend Irish Dance Camp, to visit the activity centre, to attend specific festival, on a school trip or for genealogical reasons.

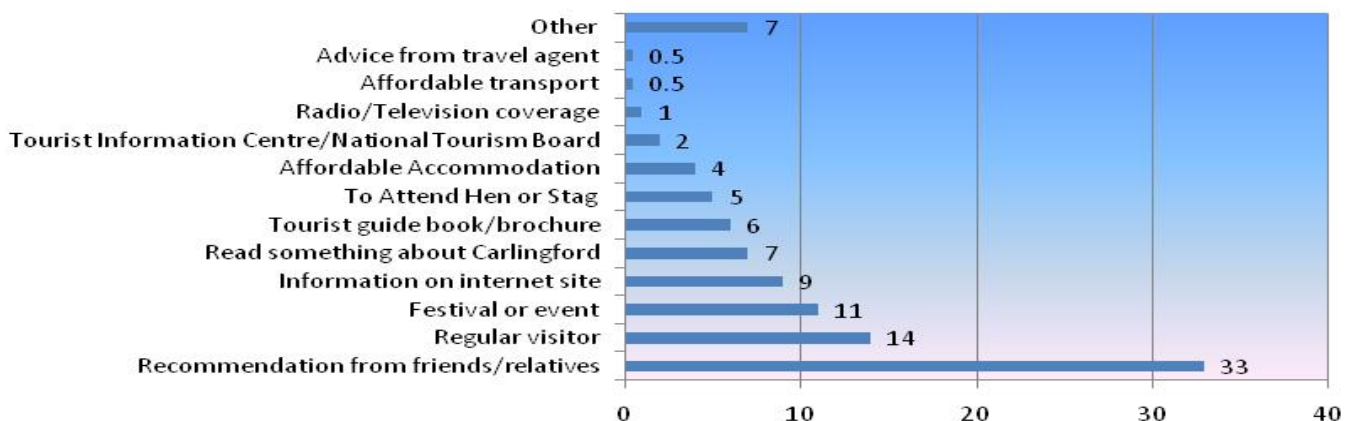
Figure 12: Main Purpose of Visit (%)



Why Choose Carlingford

Reason for Choosing Carlingford & Cooley: The main factors influencing visitors to visit Carlingford & Cooley for 33% was being influenced by recommendations from friends/relatives and a further 14% were regular visitors as shown in **Figure 13** overleaf. Combined, these account for 47%.

Figure 13: Reasons for Choosing Carlingford (%)



A further 11% choose Carlingford to attend a specific festival or event. Weddings accounted for half of these. Information obtained on the internet was an influence for only 9% of visitors. Influences from traditional tourist information sources, such as tourist information offices and travel agents are extremely low at 2% and 0.5% respectively. 'Other' factors influencing 12% of visitors to visit Carlingford & Cooley included:

- Being frequent visitor (25 respondents),
- Being part of a group e.g. school trip, dance camp (20),
- To part-take in activities at Carlingford Adventure Centre (8)
- On business (8); Regular visitors (7) & Proximity to Dublin (7).

Guide Books Used: Only 82 respondents indicated that guidebooks/reading something on Carlingford influenced their decision to visit the area with The Lonely Planet being the main one mentioned by name (15 mentions).

Websites Used: The main websites identified were Carlingford.ie (9 respondents), Tripadvisor (6), Google search engine (6), discoverireland.ie (4), Tourism Ireland website (2) and visitireland.com (2). Various other sites were used by visitors, but they were unable to recall the name of the websites.

Festival/Events: The main festival & events mentioned by respondents as factors that influenced them to visit Carlingford & Cooley included Weddings, Ceol Ceolann, Humanist Summer School, Irish Dance Camp,

Inheritance 2010, Oyster Festival, Poc Fadha and Heritage Festival.

Activities Undertaken

Activities Undertaken: Figure 14 provides a summary of all the main activities visitors engaged in while visiting Carlingford & Cooley and shows that 73% of those who responded indicated that they had dined in restaurants, 69% had visited a pub/bar and 57% had visited a 'natural heritage sight'. Almost half had engaged in walking activities. Shops also appear to be

strong beneficiaries of the tourism industry given that 46% of visitors went shopping. A further 38% visited 'built heritage sights'.

- Water-based activities engaged in included kayaking, sailing and canoeing.
- Sporting activities included Badminton Tournament, Dance Camp & various activities at Carlingford Adventure Centre e.g. orienteering, high ropes, water activities & raft/team building.
- 'Other' activities included Genealogical research, bird watching & on business.

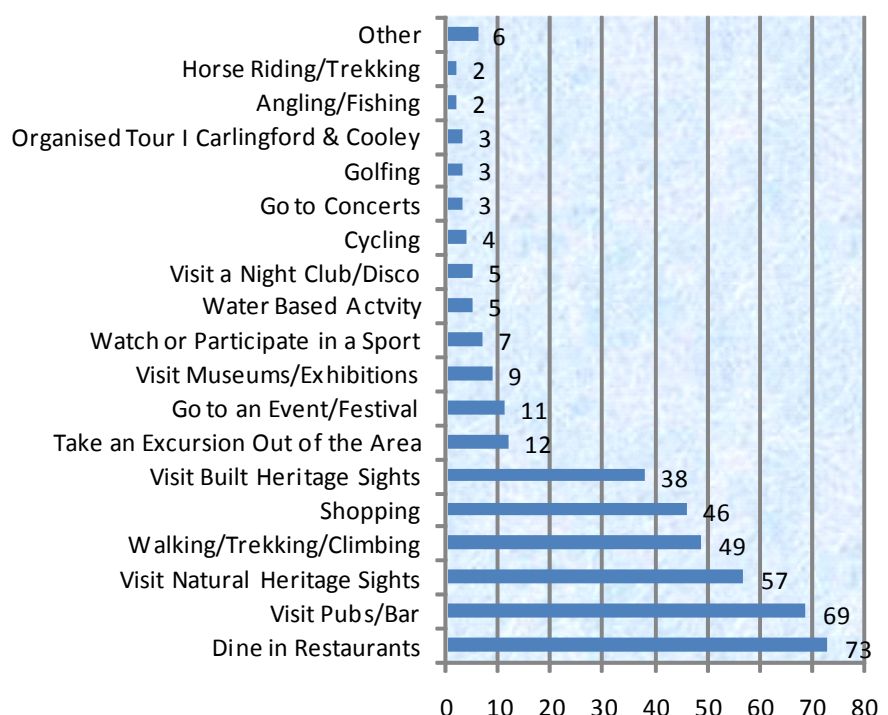
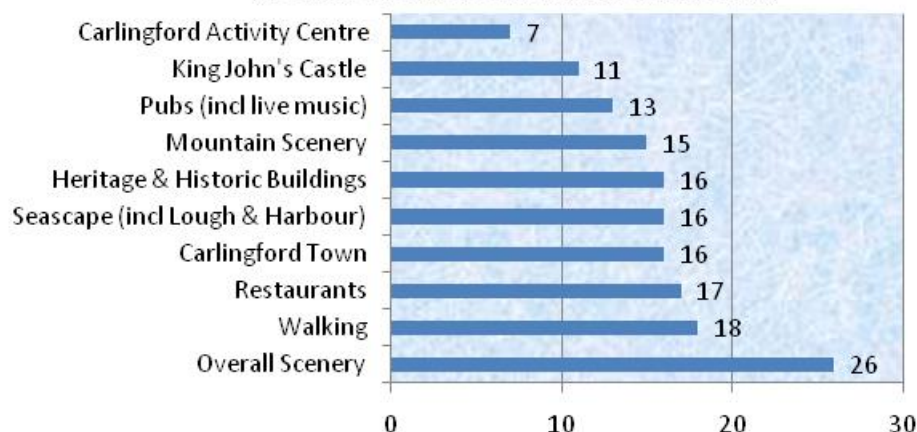
Figure 14: Activities Undertaken in Carlingford (%)
(% of all respondents engaging in each activity)

Figure 15: Favourite Attractions (%)
(Chart represents Top 10, many more selected)
(% of all respondents engaging in each activity)



Favourite Attractions

Top Attractions: Figure 15 illustrates the attractions which visitors identified as their 'favourite'. The overall scenery was cited by 26% as their favourite attraction (in response to an open-ended question). A further 18% mentioned walking, 17% noted the quality of the restaurants and 16% each mentioned Carlingford Town and its appearance, the seascape (including Carlingford Lough and the Harbour area) and heritage and historic buildings. The mountain scenery was cited by 15%.

Best Experience

Best Experiences: Respondents were asked to indicate the best experience to date, of their visit to Carlingford & Cooley (See Figure 16). Again, the Scenery/Landscape was cited by 16% along with the 'hospitality/friendly & helpful people' (also 16%). Restaurants and the related dining out experience was cited by 15% as their best experience along with good accommodation by 14% and walking/climbing by 9%. A further 5% noted Carlingford town as the best experience and praise of the Town included the town itself, its architecture, historic buildings and streetscape were specifically mentioned. The nightlife/music in pubs and festival/events were also highlighted as best experiences (5% each).

Worst Experiences: Respondents were also asked to indicate the worst experience of their visit (See Figure 17). It is encouraging to note that 46% of visitors specifically

stated that they had 'no bad experience'. Figure 17 shows that 'parking/traffic congestion' and 'poor weather' (8% each) were the main negative experiences. The poor quality of food/service (6%) in Carlingford along with perceived poor value for money (6%) were also mentioned as a negative experience. Anti-social behaviour and pollution were cited by 5% as issues of concern. Anti-social behaviour mainly related to night time noise and the specific areas of concern regarding pollution related to ship wreck in harbour, dog dirt, dirty toilet/beaches, uneven pavements and unfinished houses. Not enough activities for children and criticism regarding inconvenient business opening hours were also noted by 5% & 4% respectively.

Figure 16: Best Experience in Carlingford & Cooley Peninsula (%)

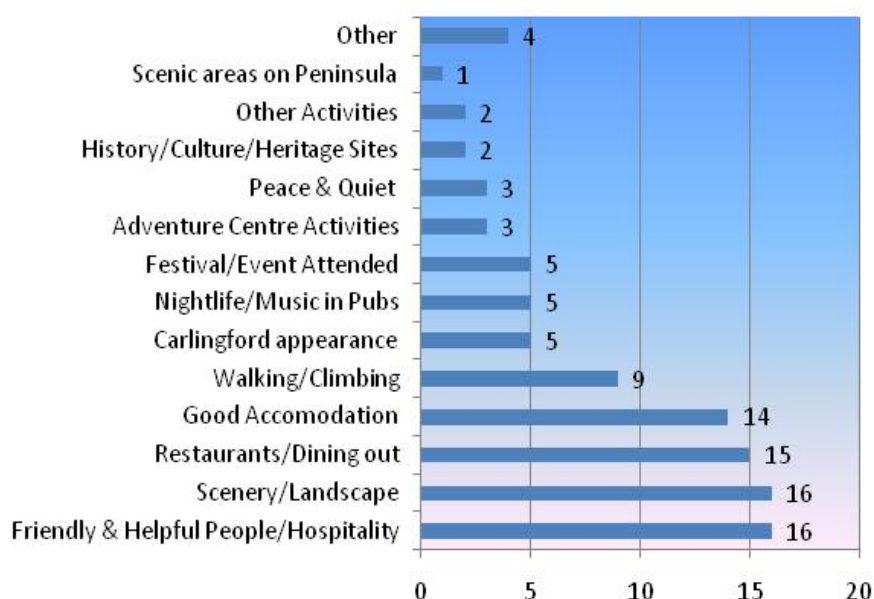
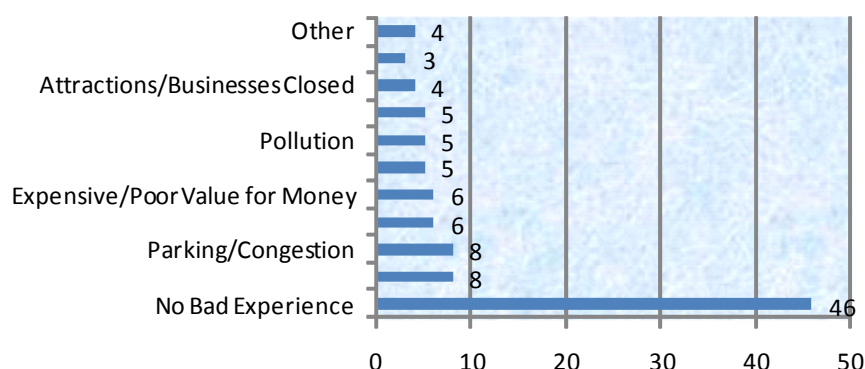


Figure 17: Worst Experience in Carlingford & Cooley Peninsula (%)



Environment / Infrastructure Management

Visitor perception of local management issues was assessed through asking respondents to rate a series of management issues – classifying them as Excellent; Good; Fair; Poor; Very Poor or Don't Know. The various issues were overwhelmingly positive, as can be seen in the predominance of yellow (Excellent) and blue (Good) ratings.

Environment / Infrastructure Management. The environmental / infrastructural issues (See Figure

18) with the highest levels of 'Excellent' rating were Quality of the Natural Environment (78% Excellent) and Quality of the Built Environment (55% Excellent). While Quality of Water in the Rivers and Lakes and Quality of Water in Lough only received 27% & 23% respectively in the 'Excellent' category, 43% and 44% respectively stated that they did not know how to rate them. The issues receiving the highest negative ratings were Traffic Flow (3% 'Poor') and Car Parking Facilities (4% 'Poor') & Level of Noise (4% 'Poor' or 'Very Poor').

Facility Management

Facility Management. Restaurants & Walking Access received the highest combined positive ratings (Excellent & Good combined – 88% & 87% respectively). (See Figure 19). Also scoring highly were Management of Foot Paths (74% Excellent & Good) and Variety of Attractions (68% Excellent & Good). The highest scoring negative ratings were Public Toilets & Shopping (6% and 7% respectively), respectively and Signage (5% Poor and Very Poor combined). None of the facilities received a Very Poor Rating.

Figure 18: Tourist Perception of Environmental Management (%)

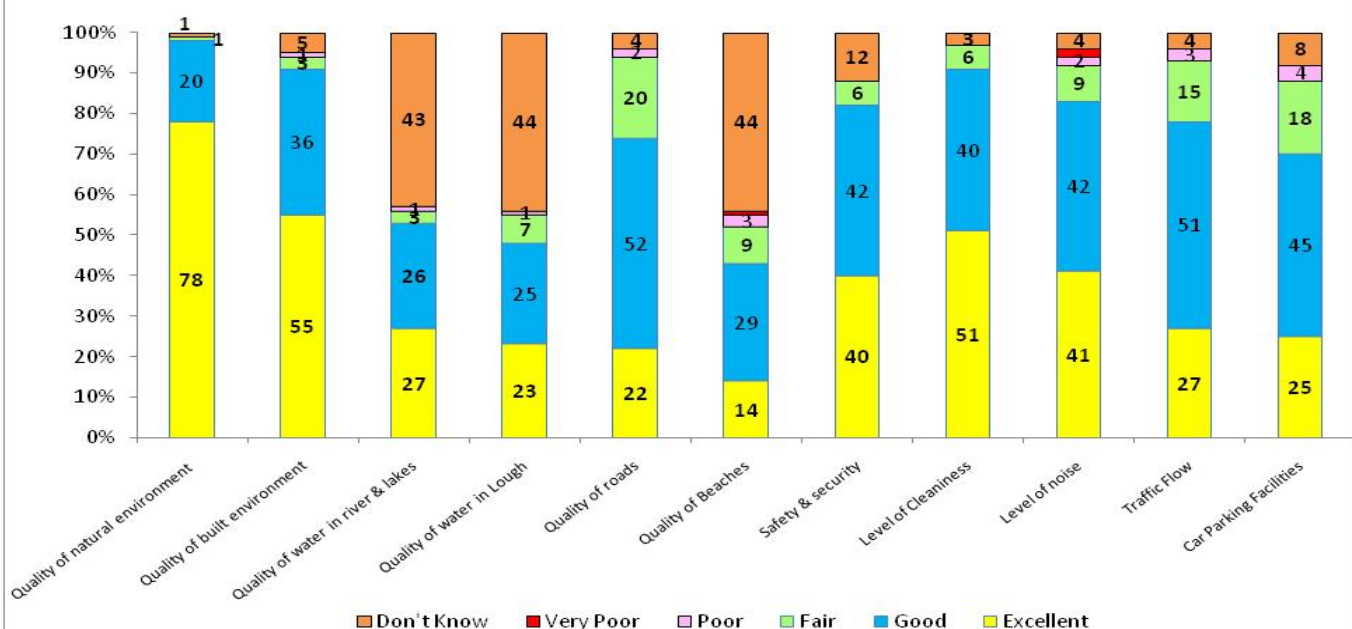
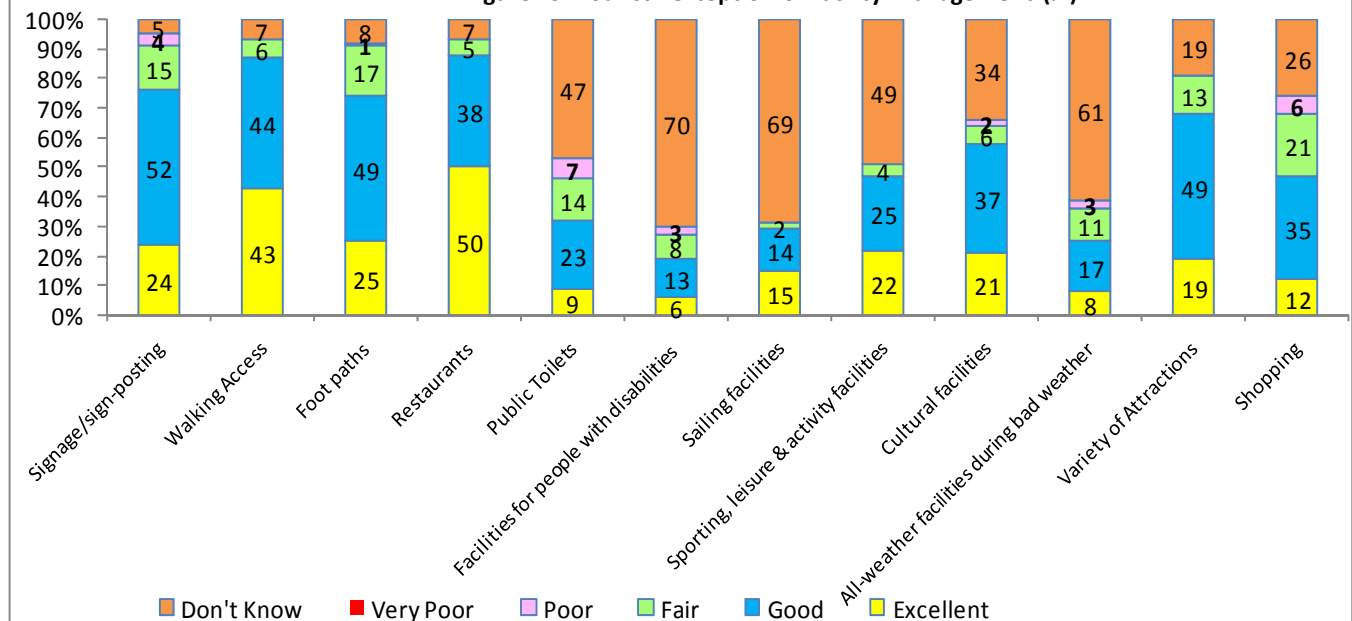


Figure 19: Tourist Perception of Facility Management (%)



Transport Issues

Perception of congestion: Traffic flow was rated excellent or good by 78% of visitors, with a further 15% only rating it as 'fair' (See Figure 20). Dissatisfaction with traffic flow appears to be due to problems with managing the one-way system, navigating narrow streets and traffic congestion and road closures during busy periods such as during festivals, as noted in open-ended questions.

Car parking facilities was rated excellent or good by 70% of visitors, with 18% rating it fair or poor. The main difficulty with car parking facilities, evidenced in response from open-ended questions, appears to be with lack of availability at times. The small numbers of 'don't know' responses refer to those that did not use any transport while in the area (on a tour bus, on foot etc), while some who had their own / rented cars did not appear to use them very much while in the area.

Crowding

Visitor Perception of Crowding: Figure 21 shows that 93% of all visitors feel 'there is the right balance of tourists and locals'. At least 92% of all markets feel 'there is the right balance of tourists and locals'. In fact, 94% of Irish visitors feel there is the right balance, while 5% of Overseas Visitors and 4% of visitors from Northern Ireland would like to see more tourists in the area.

Local Friendliness / Quality of Service

Local Friendliness: Perception of local friendliness is extremely high as outlined in Figure 22. 98% rated friendliness as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'. Furthermore an extensive number of comments were made relating to the friendliness of the local people, particularly regarding the specific accommodation where they stayed. It appears the local people and their natural hospitality is one of the unique selling propositions of the area.

Figure 20: Rating of Transport Issues (%)

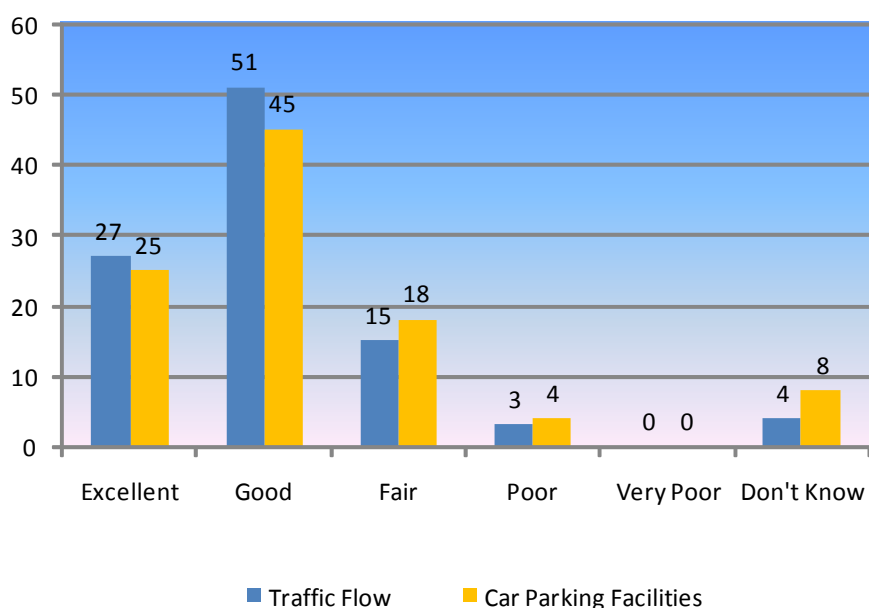


Figure 21: Expectations in relation to Crowding (%)

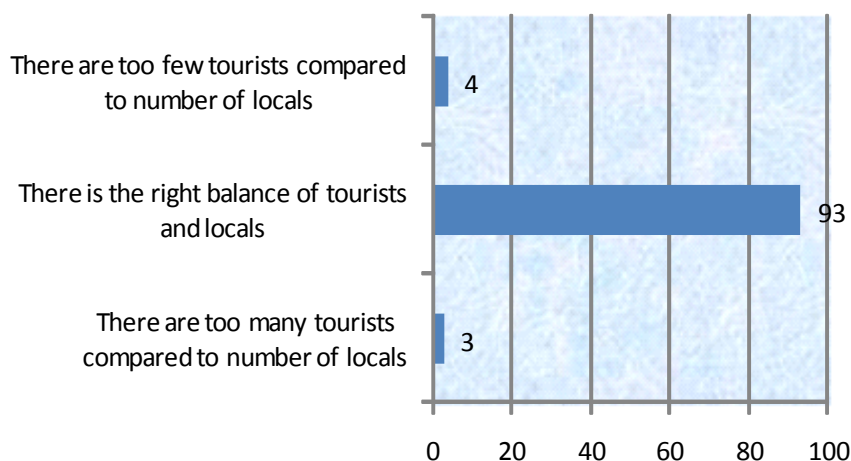
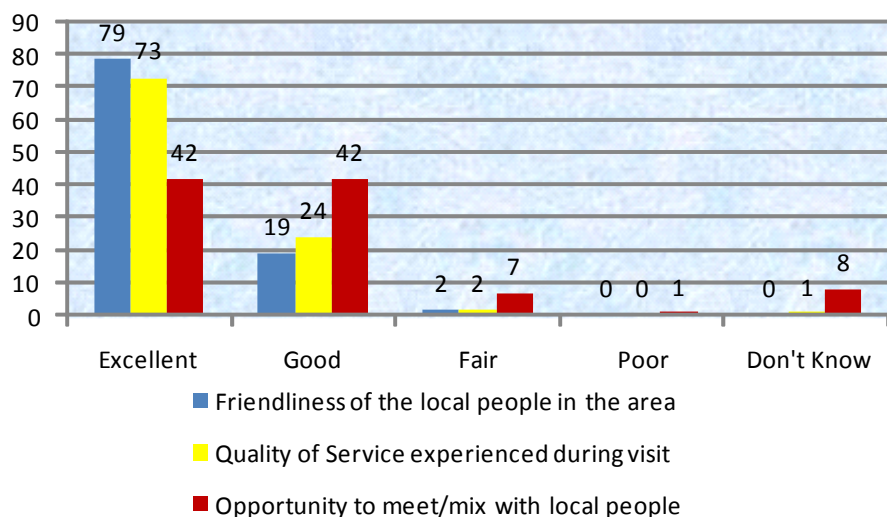


Figure 22: Rating of Friendliness (%)



Local Friendliness (cont'd):

'Quality of Service' was also considered extremely high with 97% rating it as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'. Visitors also appeared to be very satisfied with the 'Opportunity to Meet/Mix with Local People', with 84% rating it as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

Transport TO / AROUND Carlingford and Cooley

Assessment of transport options was conducted through identifying the forms of transport used to and around Carlingford & the Cooley Peninsula and the related rating of same.

Travel TO Carlingford: Figure 23 shows that use of own or rental / hire car were the main forms of transport used to travel to Carlingford & Cooley (69% and 19% respectively). The third preferred option was private bus for 4% of respondents. The other noted form of transport to Carlingford & Cooley was public transport (3%).

Travel AROUND Carlingford:

Use of own car was also the main form of transport used to travel around Carlingford & Cooley for 56%, with a further 22% walking around the area.

Public Transport

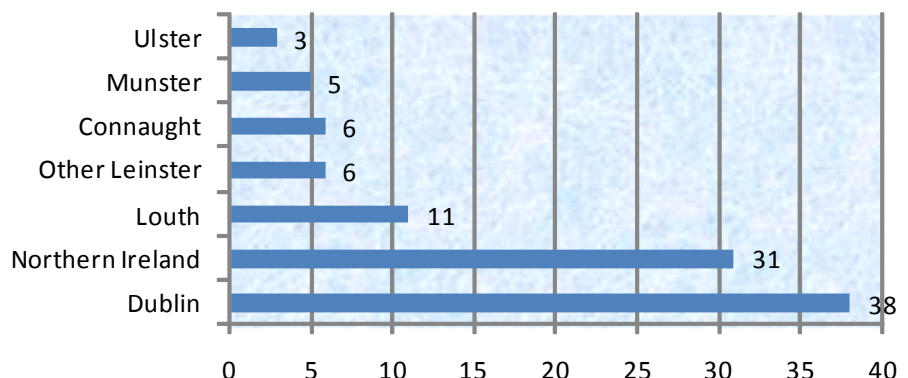
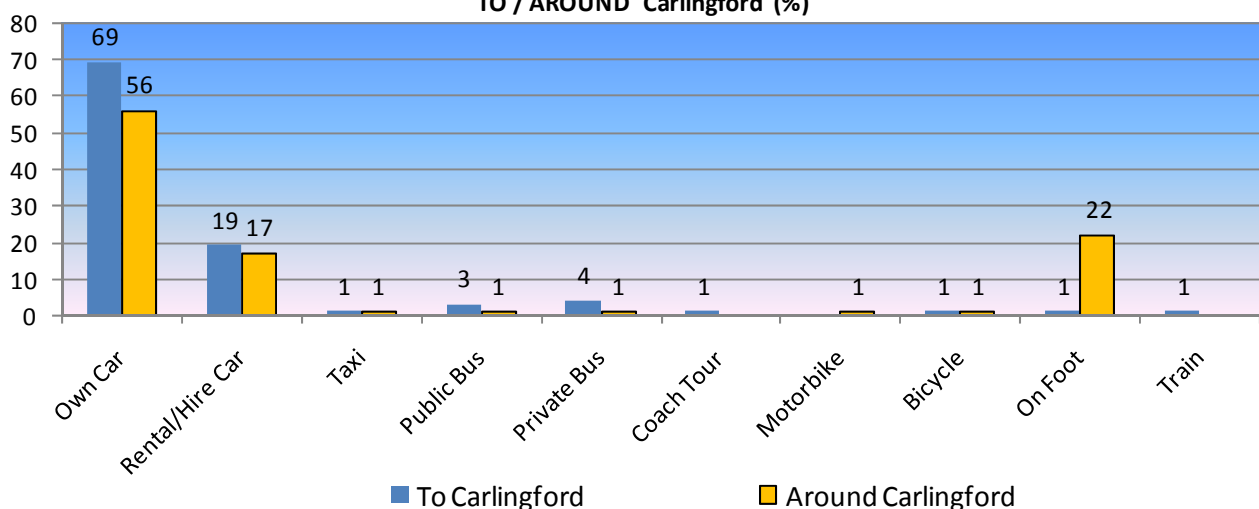
Public Transport: In response to an open-ended question, Figure 24 provides a summary of the specific reasons for not using public transport and shows that 34% did not avail of public transport since they were using their 'own' car or a rental car. A further 18% specifically indicated they preferred the flexibility / convenience of using a car - so they could determine their own journey while travelling around Ireland. 16% indicated the public transport on offer was not convenient to their needs highlighting they might use public transport if it was available. A further 23% indicated they did not need to use public transport.

Figure 24: Reasons for not using Public Transport

Reasons for not using Public Transport	%
Own /Rental Car	34
Prefer Flexibility to go as please	18
Public Transport not convenient	16
No Need	23
Other	9
Total	100

Visitor Travel Patterns

Routing Travel Patterns - Last Stop: Over a half of domestic visitors indicated they live in Dublin. This might impact on the finding of 38% travelling from their most recent stop in Dublin (See Figure 25). Carlingford's close proximity to Dublin & Belfast (main source markets) and also their related ports of access appear to be the main influence on travel pattern. A small number of visitors had travelled to Newgrange, Co Meath prior to visiting Carlingford.

Figure 25: Last stop before Carlingford & Cooley (%)**Figure 23: Main Mode of Transport TO / AROUND Carlingford (%)**

Routing Travel Patterns – Next Stop: Figure 26 shows that 34% of visitors were travelling to Dublin as their next stop, and after that a similar pattern exists to the 'last stop' data discussed previously. 33% were travelling to Northern Ireland next and 11% were travelling to 'Other Leinster counties', with a further 5% travelling within Co.

Transport Management

Louth.

Rating of Transport Mangement: Visitors were asked to rate a range of transport issues. Figure 27 shows that rating of Walking Access was the highest positively rated transport issue with 87% rating it as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

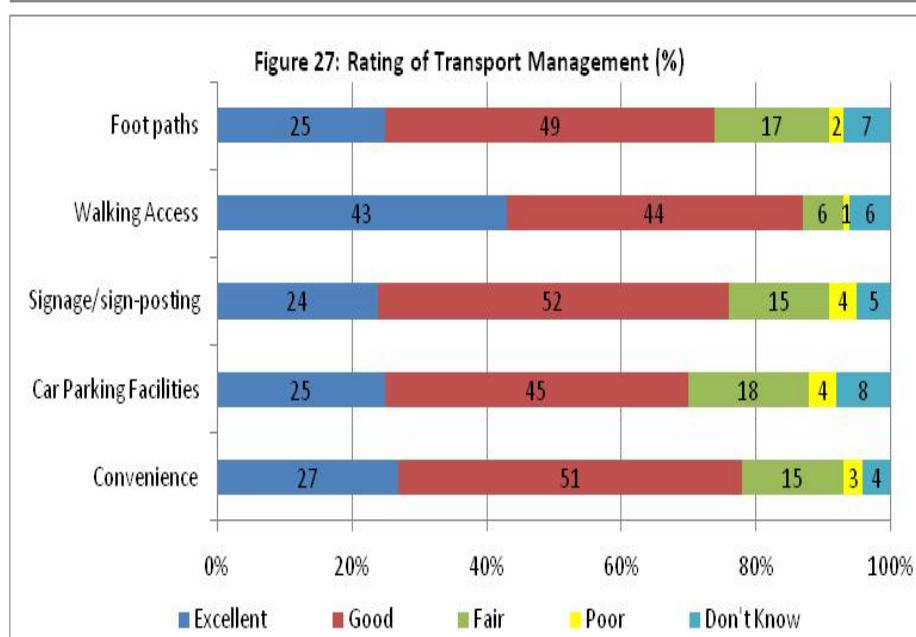
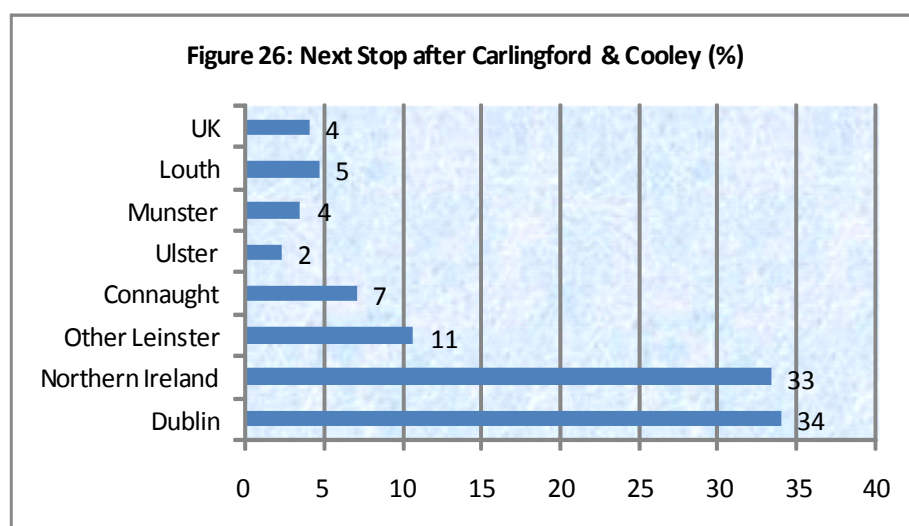
76% rated signage/sign posting as either 'Excellent' or 'Good', while 15% rated it as 'Fair'. Visitors provided specific comments relating to signage in the area, and are summarised at the end of this report

Car Parking Facilities were rated

Rating of Transport Used

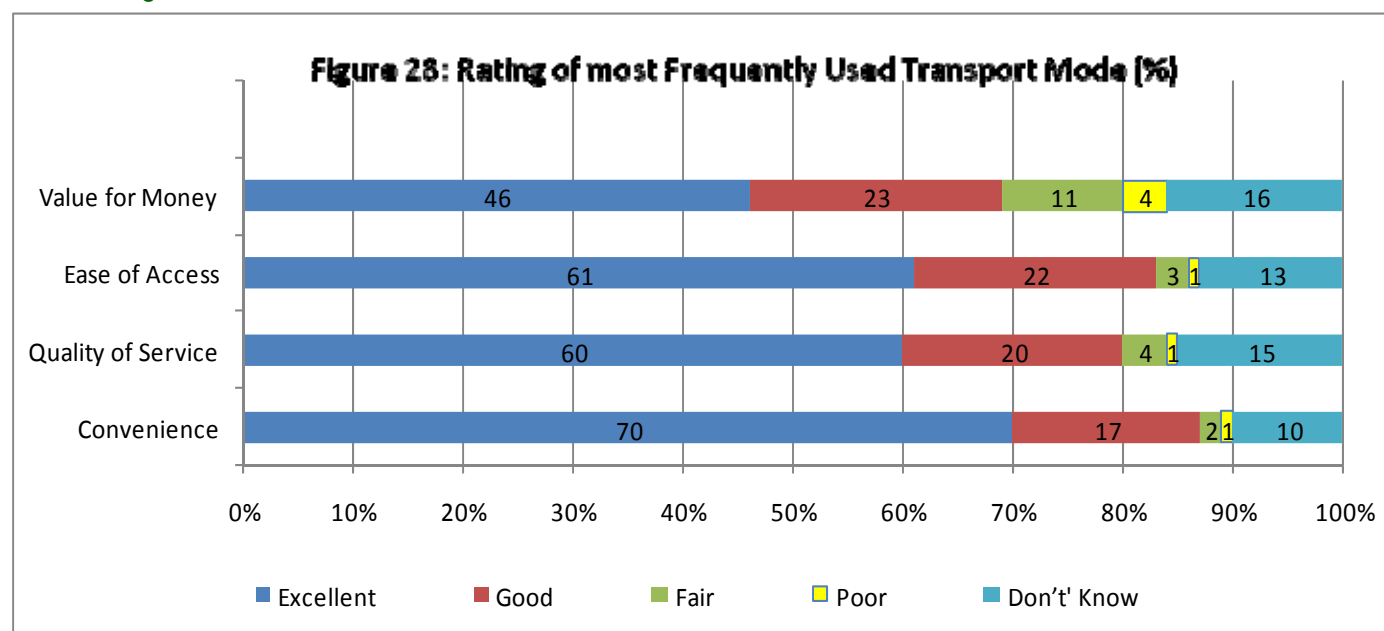
'Excellent' or 'Good' by 70% of visitors.

Rating of Transport Used: Respondents were asked to rate the type of transport they had used most often in relation to a number of areas. Figure 28 shows that rating of 'Convenience' was highest with 87% rating it as 'Excellent' or



'Good'. This is possibly reflective of use of own / rented car or those who travelled 'on foot'. Rating of 'Value for Money' was lowest but 69% still

rated this as 'Excellent' or 'Good'. 83% rated 'Ease of Access' as either 'Excellent' or 'Good' and 80%



Visitor Spend

rated 'Quality of Service' as either 'Excellent' or 'Good'.

In order to accurately outline the average daily spend per person, it is important to take into account a number of factors. **Figure 29** shows the 'most frequently amount paid' per individual expenditure item of B&B, Room, Food, Drink, Shopping, Entertainment, Transport, Miscellaneous and Total Daily spend. The is the amount most commonly mentioned by respondents (and removes outliers). The average figure relates to the average amount spent on each individual item. The majority of those who indicated they were on a package holiday / organised tour were unable to provide daily spend on accommodation, transport and in some cases food and thus their expenditure has been omitted from the analysis. However, tour groups appear to account for a small portion of business to Carlingford.

Bed & Breakfast: The most frequently daily spend on B&B was €45 per person per day. The minimum and maximum spend were €12 and €100 respectively - this being reflective of the range of accommodation that visitors used from self catering to a four star hotel. Some respondents were day-trippers, while others were staying in a second home or with friends/relatives and thus did not spend any money on accommodation.

Room only: The most frequent daily spend on Room Only was €35, while the average was €34.97 per person per day. The minimum and maximum amounts were €10 and €75 respectively

Food: The most frequent daily spend on Food was €30 per person per day. The maximum spend was €200 while some visitors indicated that their food was included in their package and thus were unable to separate out this cost. From other elements of the survey, it is clear that Carlingford is considered a very good place to dine out.

Drink: The most frequent daily spend on Drink was €20 per person per day, while the average was €29.10. The maximum amount was

Figure 29: Average Daily Spend (Per Person)

Item of Expenditure	Most Frequent Spend	Average Spend
Bed & Breakfast	€45	€45.41
Room Only	€35	€34.97
Food	€30	€43.24
Drink	€20	€29.10
Shopping	€50	€41.42
Entertainment	€0	€20.96
Transport	€20	€20.61
Miscellaneous	€10	€17.40
Total Daily Spend	€100	€132.60

€200. These figures demonstrate that the pub/bar trade is a major beneficiary of the tourism industry.

Shopping: The average spend on shopping was €41.42 per person per day. The maximum stated amount was €250. *(Note of caution: some of this might have been spent nearby in Newry).*

Entertainment: The average spend on entertainment was €20.96 per person per day with a maximum of €160.

Transport: The average daily spend on Transport was €20.61 per person per day. Some visitors walked, and thus spent nothing on transport, while others were on a tour and all transport costs had previously been included in their package and thus are not included in this analysis. Transport costs include rent-a-car, petrol, public bus, trains & taxi fares.

Total: **Figure 29** shows that the average daily spend was €132.60 per person per day. This takes account of the minimum and maximum amounts of €6 and €615 respectively. It reflects the range of accommodation that visitors used, the various socio-economic groups from students to higher professionals & the level of

expenditure on individual items. Total daily expenditure includes some respondents who just gave a total amount spent per day & did not answer individual expenditure items.

As outlined previously 51% of

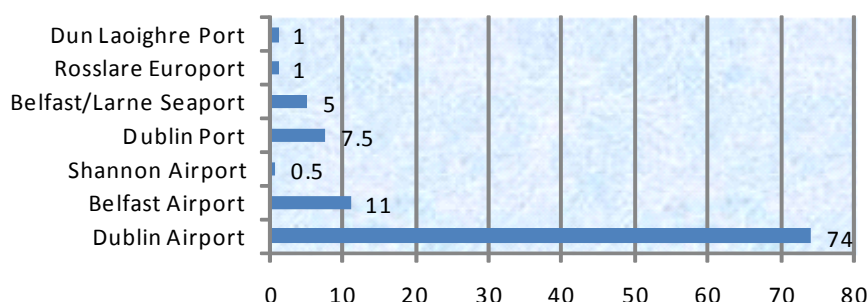
Arrival to Ireland

visitors to Carlingford & Cooley were from Ireland's main Overseas Markets such as Britain, Mainland Europe and North America. The following figures provide a profile of the respondent's travel patterns.

Original Port of Departure: Overseas visitors arrived from a broad range of ports. US airports included mainly New Jersey, Boston, JFK & San Francisco. British visitors mainly departed from the 4 main London airports along with Manchester, Brimingham, Edinburgh & Holyhead. Frankfurt-Hahn was the main airport mentioned by visitors from Europe.

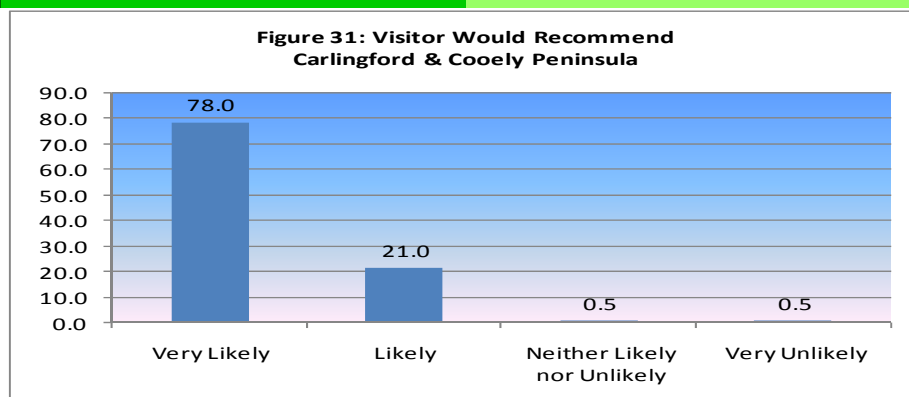
Port of Arrival into Ireland: Dublin Airport was the port of arrival for 74% of overseas visitors (**See Figure 30**). A further 12% arrived through through Belfast Airport. 14.5% arrived through various ports, mainly Dublin Port & Larne Port.

Figure 30: Port of Arrival into Ireland (%)



Satisfaction Levels

Overall Satisfaction: Respondents rated their visit to Carlingford & Cooley **8.95** out of a potential 10. The main reasons for their positive rating was due to their satisfaction with the people, the scenery, excellent accommodation, choice of restaurants & bars and the fact that they always enjoy their visit to the area indicated by a high level of repeat business. Poor weather & congestion appeared to be the main reasons for some dissatisfaction.



Recommendation : **Figure 31** shows that 99% of respondents are either likely or very likely to recommend Carlingford & Cooley to friends and relatives. Only one respondent in the entire survey stated that they were 'Very Unlikely' to recommend Carlingford & Cooley to friends and relatives.

What Visitors said about Carlingford & Cooley

The following is a sample of some of the comments provided by visitors:

- *Exquisite natural beauty, excellent hospitality, over and beyond expectations. Genuine local welcome.*
- *Wonderful local cuisine whether in a formal restaurant or pub - the best of what Ireland has to offer.*
- *A pleasure to come back to visit - A wonderful jewel - a quaint village; don't spoil it.*
- *Lovely authentic pubs with Irish music. Best B&B experience we've had in years!*
- *Beautiful scenery & friendly, warm, welcoming people. Great accommodation. Will definitely be back.*
- *Beautiful town with lovely scenery & historical buildings. Full of history.*
- *Relaxing place, not too busy & friendly atmosphere.*
- *First time in Ireland, it was excellent! Beautiful landscape, good food, nice people. Simply the best!*
- *Nice scenery, great heritage & great people... looped walks are excellent. We keep coming back!*
- *Picturesque setting - small & interesting village - a great release from busy city life - just what we needed.*
- *This is a magnificent town.... a must see. Great to be able to see North & South Ireland from this location.*
- *Easy access from M1. Great to see improved signage for walking & opening up little laneways*
- *A perfect escape for a peaceful, relaxing short break & only one hour away from home.*
- *Coming over the road from Ravensdale area to Omeath - Wonderful!*
- *Constantly changing view of the Lough was beautiful. Range of local seafood is outstanding.*
- *Cycling around, early morning walk to King John's Castle & harbour were the highlights.*
- *Looking at Mourne Mountains & Seafront at breakfast time was great.*
- *Destination is a secret. Not enough information for people to get here. Not previously aware of its heritage & beauty*
- *Carlingford came highly recommended to me. I can see why. This was one of our favourite stops so far.*
- *Carlingford is traditional, rather than brash or tactless and naturally friendly- please try to keep it this way.*
- *Continue to protect the uniqueness of this medieval town & its outstanding natural beauty.*

Opportunities for Development (as identified by Visitors)

Facilities: Extend opening hours of Tourist Information Office & pharmacies; Provide another ATM, Supermarket, more craft shops, bike rental shop, more reasonably priced restaurants, pub meals available after 8:30pm, access to King John's Castle & greater public access to Heritage Centre at weekends; develop more locally based leaflets (on walking trails, scenic drives, heritage/history of local area & walking route cards) & cater more for cyclists.

Infrastructure: Invest in more regular bus service from Dundalk to Carlingford and promote it more; provide more public toilets (improve cleanliness of existing ones); develop campsite; improve road surface and signage (e.g. to heritage sites, through Cooley mountains, to beaches from main road, signage for hill-walking from M1); develop more clearly marked walking trails; manage overflowing bins, clean up beach & remove ships wrecks from harbour; prohibit cars through town during festivals, enforce double yellow line parking rules and offer boat rides on Lough.

FINAL COMMENTS: Carlingford & the Cooley Peninsula's USPs are in the areas of Adventure Tourism, Walking, Heritage, Festival/ Events & Food and thus the area should focus on these key niche market segments, targeting in particular visitors living within a 90 minute radius as a first priority.

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