

Title of Report:	Inclusive Beach, East Strand Portrush. Improving beach accessibility – in partnership with Mae Murray Foundation
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	15th December 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Health & Wellbeing & Cohesive Community
Outcome	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health Our natural assets will be carefully managed to generate economic and social returns without compromising their sustainability for future generations
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Approx £84,000 plus VAT Including £30,000 grant funding.
Included in Current Year Estimates	NO
Capital/Revenue	Capital
Code	
Staffing Costs	Seasonal staff required

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members' on the proposal to renovate the Water Sports Centre at East Strand to provide a dedicated 'Changing Places' facility that includes storage for accessible beach equipment sourced by the Mae Murray Foundation

In order to avail of funding from The Department for Communities Access and Inclusion programme and to meet deadlines for expenditures, the Mayor has agreed to both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Capital Works process (Business Case and Procurement), being presented to Council in January 2021 for an investment decision.

2.0 Background

In 2017 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, in partnership with Mae Murray Foundation, provided equipment and facilities at Benone Strand to allow for the roll out of the Inclusive Beach concept.

This was carried out in conjunction with funding from the Rural Development Programme through the Local Action Group.

The inclusive beach concept provides equipment for families to benefit from local beaches that are often inaccessible due to a lack of appropriate equipment and facilities for those with additional needs. The Mae Murray Foundation is a registered charity, set up and run by volunteers, established to allow people of all ages and abilities to take part in activities, experience the world and enjoy friendship together in an inclusive environment.

The Tourism and Recreation Service has continued to work with the Mae Murray Foundation and following the initial provision at Benone Strand, now wishes to progress with similar facilities at other suitable beaches throughout the Borough.

3.0 Proposals

Following consultation with the RNLI and the Mae Murray Foundation, East Strand Water Sports facility in Portrush has been identified an appropriate location for further development of the Inclusive Beach programme.

The Water Sports Centre which was built in 2006 has been selected based on existing facilities, recent improvements to the layout of the adjacent car park (with increased provision of accessible spaces), beach access and lifeguard provision. These factors combine to make an Inclusive Beach provision achievable.

4.0 Capital Works

Alterations to the East Strand Water Sports Centre are required to provide changing facilities that meet Changing Places standards and a store for accessible beach equipment with direct access to the seaward side of the building allowing this section of the building to be accessed separately.

The internal re-configuration will include;

- Demolition of existing solid walls which currently facilitates 2 no. storage areas and a 'Leaders Room'.
- Alterations to existing M&E infrastructure.
- Renovation of areas for storage of equipment.
- Complete installation of equipment associated with the required standard for Changing Places, ceiling hoists, electronic changing bench etc.
- The exterior will include new level access arrangements to suit new door entry points.

See **Annex A** for proposed works detail.

5.0 Project Cost

The Capital Project Team has assessed the existing building and provided initial design concepts. These works have been costed at £84,000 plus VAT for the work to the building and associated improvements to the surrounding area to facilitate wheelchair access to the promenade and beach.

6.0 Funding Opportunity

An application has been made through Council's Funding Unit to the Department for Communities for funding under the Access and Inclusion programme. The funding programme stipulates that the project must be completed prior to the end of March 2021 and therefore Council Officers are seeking approval to complete on Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Capital Project Works process simultaneously.

7.0 Benefits and Strategic Fit

This proposal will see a second beach added to the Inclusive Beach programme within the Council area, improving on the provision that exists at Benone Strand. It will create additional opportunities for outdoor recreation in an inclusive setting at a popular beach site adding to the visitor experience.

- It will contribute to and improve on Council's approach to beach management.
- It targets an underrepresented group and continues to set a bench mark for the standard of outdoor recreation provision.
- It contributes to elements of Council's strategic plan and Community Plan.

With a limited timespan to avail of funding and complete on the proposed project, with the Mayor's agreement, a tender report is being presented to the Full Council meeting in January to seek an investment decision.

8.0 Next Steps

Officers are completing the procurement process (which is not complete for this committee) to allow Council to consider the approval and the advancement of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Capital Works Process to provide a dedicated 'Changing Places' facility. East Strand Water Sports Centre.