



**LEISURE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020**

Table of Recommendations

No	Item	Summary of key Recommendations
1.	Apologies	<i>Nil</i>
2.	Declarations of Interest	<i>Councillor Schenning</i>
3.	Minutes of Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 17 th November 2020	<i>Confirmed</i>
	For decision (Items 4-13 inclusive)	
4.	Tourism Events Recovery Plan	<i>Recommend that Council approve the proposals detailed in this report which allows for the replacement of the Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP) for one year only, with a Tourism Event Recovery Fund.</i>
5.	Carrick Dhu Touring Pitches	<i>Recommend that Council approve the advancement of Stage 1 of the Capital Works Process, to assess a long term solution for the touring pitches at Carrick Dhu Holiday and Leisure Park (scoping options, preferred solution,</i>

		feasibility and cost estimates).
6.	Portnahapple, Portstewart	Recommend that Council proceed with limited refurbishment of Portnahapple to allow safer access to the water. Subject to approval, an investment decision up to a maximum of £21,000 is required plus annual maintenance costs.
7.	Aghadowey Play Park	Recommend to Council that preferred Option 2 – New Play Park at Culcrow Primary School and car parking (LEAP Specification) at a cost of £100k is progressed to Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council.
8.	Cloughmills Pitch Project	Recommend that Council agree Option 2 – Full size Grass Pitch, modular changing and car parking at Main Street (site 2) is progressed to Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council.
9.	Larchfield Play Park	Recommend that Council approve the

		<p>proposal above for the repair and renewal of Larchfield Play Park, Kilrea at a total cost of £40k.</p> <p>Subject to a final Council decision, the proposal can be progressed to procurement and completed within 6 months</p>
10.	Enterprise Fund	<p>Recommend that Council agrees to utilise this additional resource to award Enterprise Fund grants to businesses 1-10 as noted above, totalling £80,334.93, to support recovery and growth</p>
11.	Digital Strategy	<p>Recommend that Council agree the key priorities as presented in the work undertaken by GreySky Consulting in developing a new Digital Strategy for the Borough</p>
12.	FFNI Contract	<p>Recommend that Council approves the award of the contract for both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 to Fibrus Networks Ltd to deliver full fibre broadband infrastructure as part of the FFNI consortium project</p>
13.	Portrush Harbour Public Realm	<p>Recommend to Council the approval of the progression of the Portrush. Harbour</p>

		Public Realm Scheme through Stage 1 of the Capital Works Project Management Process with the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT).
	For information (Items 14-16)	
		<i>Information</i>
14.	Rural Business Development Grant	<i>Information</i>
15.	DfC Anti-Poverty Funding Update	<i>Information</i>
16.	Inclusive Beach Project Portrush	<i>Information</i>
17.	Correspondence	<i>Note</i>
18.	Matters Reporting to the Partnership Panel	<i>Nil</i>
19.	Consultations	<i>Note</i>
	For confidential consideration (Item 20)	
20	Changing Places Limavady Tender Report	<i>Recommend that Council approve the award of contract in line with the recommendation from the Changing Places Tender Report at a cost of £46,350.</i>
21.	Any Other Relevant Business Notified in Accordance with Standing Order 12. (O)	<i>The Director of Leisure and Development agreed to pursue this in the New Year including engagement with land owners and National Trust in line with previous Council decision</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF
THE LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
IN CIVIC HEADQUARTERS AND VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE, ON
TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020 AT 7:00 PM**

In the Chair:	Councillor Nicholl (C)
Members Present:	Alderman Baird (R) Hillis (C) S McKillop (R) Councillors Anderson (C), Bateson (R), Callan (R), Holmes (C), McAuley (C), MA McKillop (R), Knight- McQuillan (R), McCaw (R), Schenning (R), Watton (C) Councillors Hunter (R) and Wilson (R)
Non Committee In Attendance:	
Officers Present:	R Baker, Director of Leisure and Development (C) W McCullough, Head of Sport & Wellbeing (R) P Thompson, Head of Tourism & Recreation (R) J Welsh, Head of Community & Culture (R) P Beattie, Head of Prosperity & Place (R) L Scullion, Community Development Manager (R) R Gillen, Coast and Countryside Manager (R) S McCartney, Holiday and Leisure Parks General Manager (R) K McMullan, Events Manager (R) J Beggs, SIB Project Officer (R) I Owens, Committee & Member Services Officer (C) N McGurk, Strategics Project Manager (R) A Lennox, Mobile Operations Officer (C) C Thompson, ICT Operations Officer (C)
In Attendance:	E Murphy, GreySky Consulting (R) Item 11 J Saunby, GreySky Consulting (R) Item 11 Press (3 no) (R) Public (1 no) (R)

Key: (C) Attended in the Chamber
(R) Attended Remotely

SUBSTITUTIONS Councillor McLaughlin substituted for Councillor C
CMcShane. Councillor McQuillan substituted for
Councillor Wallace and Alderman Robinson substituted
for Councillor McCorkell

1. APOLOGIES

Nil.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were recorded as follows:

Councillor Schenning in Item 15 – Anti-Poverty Funding Update. Councillor Schenning did not participate in the Item.

3. MINUTES OF LEISURE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2020

Summary minute, previously circulated.

AGREED – that the Minutes of the Leisure and Development Committee meeting held Tuesday 17th November 2020 are confirmed as a correct record.

4. TOURISM EVENTS RECOVERY FUND

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Tourism and Recreation.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to outline a proposed approach for supporting the Borough's established event organisers who have received funding from the Tourism Events Funding Programme (TEFP) in the last two financial years.

Background

The Council's Tourism and Recreation service, in conjunction with the Funding Unit, administer a Council financed funding programme to provide financial assistance to events taking place throughout the Borough. The fund targets tourism and recreation event organisers under two separate packages, the Large Events Fund and the Tourism Events Growth Fund.

The Impact of COVID 19 on the Tourism Event Funding Programme

Following Government direction, much of the event programme in Causeway Coast and Glens has been curtailed during 2020. All of the events organised and funded by the TEFP have been cancelled and the Council has cancelled all of its own managed events, with the exception of the delivery by virtual form of Halloween, Atlantic Sessions and Christmas festivities.

Consultation with the event organisers, who normally benefit from TEFP, has highlighted many concerns regarding the future sustainability and survival of the events from 2021 onwards. There is a recognition that for many a resumption of the 2019 approach for delivery may not be possible for 2021. There has also been consultation on the difficulty to deliver the outputs set out as part of the funding programme with regard to visitor numbers, overnight stays, economic return and target markets.

Many of the event organisers are concerned about financial sustainability particularly those who rely on several funding sources including sponsorship from the commercial sector. Sponsorship is likely to be significantly reduced, as well as other income streams such as ticketing, retail and corporate & hospitality expenditure.

In recognition of the potential damage to the range of events, delivered across the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area through the TEF, Officers have developed an alternative approach to delivery for 2021-22. This takes an adaptive and more flexible approach to the programme delivery for the incoming year and make allowances for the difficulties that event organisers have and are likely to experience.

Key features include:

A non-competitive approach to the application process.

A reduction in the economic outputs required at assessment.

Definition of core costs widened.

Application restricted to successful applicants within the past two years.

An increase in percentage funding on total project costs.

A single application process for both the previous Growth Fund and Large Events Fund applicants.

Government Guidance / Restrictions

COVID 19 related regulations, guidance and restrictions have been subject to many changes since March 2020.

A condition of funding through a Tourism Event Recovery Fund will be that Government regulations and special restrictions may apply. There is a reasonable expectation that such restrictions could impact and potentially cancel any event taking place in 2021/22.

To date Government has given guidance that relates to indoor and outdoor gatherings that are organised or operated for cultural, entertainment, recreational, outdoor sports, social, community, educational, work, legal, religious or political purposes. It has stipulated that the event or gathering must have a *recognised person* responsible for organising or operating that event or gathering (i.e. the applicant to the funding programme). The recognised person or organiser/applicant are responsible for carrying out risk assessments which meet the requirement of the Management of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000, and take all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the Coronavirus. The Government has yet to issue information or guidance on how event organisers can meet the above requirements where it relates to events or mass gatherings.

The assessment process on any event planning to take place next year would normally include a section on health and safety that would detail risk assessments etc. At this time Council Officers have no Government guidance

on how to assess whether or not an event organiser meets the requirement of the Management of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000 and take all reasonable measures to limit the transmission of the Coronavirus. This issue needs to be addressed prior to approval of funding for any events taking place in 2021/22.

Consultation

The Tourism Events Team has met with the previous successful applicants from the last two years of the TEF. They have recorded details of scenario planning for 2021/22 and assessed the viability of running an event and the resources needed. This was a useful exercise and has helped to form the design of the recovery fund.

After analysis of the consultation, Officers believe that there are two key scenarios that are likely to take place in 2021/22:

Events planned to be delivered either in full or with reduced programming. Events postponed for 2021/22 and plans made for the following year 2022/23. With both these scenarios there is likely to be associated costs. With events not happening in 2021/22, organisers will still have core fixed costs. These may include communications, administration, insurance, equipment, costs of premises and consultancy costs that relate to health and safety in a COVID 19 environment. With events that are taking place in a full or reduced form, the above costs apply, with additional programming costs as well. The enduring COVID 19 pandemic has meant that many event organisers remain uncertain as to what they are able to deliver in 2021/22.

Tourism Event Recovery Fund

Overview of Fund

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to supporting existing event organisers who in the past two years have benefited from TEF funding and have been significantly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. The purpose of the programme is to support successful TEF applicants to assist with core running costs for those event organisers who wish to 'moth ball' their event for one year, or to assist organisers who wish to run their event in full or in a reduced format in 2021/22.

Only event organisers previously funded through TEF in the last two financial years (2019/20 and/or 2020/21) can apply. The Tourism Event Recovery Fund is for one year only (2021/22) after which it is anticipated that the TEF will be reinstated as per its previous format.

Funding Parameters

The lower event budget range set out in the previous Tourism Events Growth Fund and the Large Tourism and Recreation Events Fund no longer applies (this allows for small levels of expenditure to take place if appropriate). The maximum grant award is £100,000.

Visitor Numbers

The need to demonstrate that the event attracts visitor numbers has been removed (previously the Growth and Large Funds required 1000 and 5000 visitors respectively).

Number of Days

Applicants must demonstrate that the event still takes place over a minimum of 2 days although these are no longer required to be consecutive.

Economic Benefit

No requirement to demonstrate return on investment. (In previous years a 5:1 return for the Large Tourism Event Fund and 3:1 return for the Growth Fund on Council funding was expected).

Levels of Award

Up to 75% of total project costs can be offered (previous levels were up to 50%).

Marketing and Communication

Events will be expected to ensure that any marketing or communications showcase the Causeway Coast and Glens as a destination for visitors. This applies to the domestic market only.

What Can Be Funded

Eligible costs include:

Insurance; Programming Costs including virtual; Venue Hire; Performance/Artist Fees; Transport; Equipment Hire/Purchase; Consultancy Costs (that relate to health and safety planning in respect to COVID19); Advertising/Communications; Premises/Rent; PPE and social distancing equipment; Administration (stationery, postage etc); Utilities.

Officers do not recommend staff costs being deemed as eligible under this fund. (To date and up until March 2021 the Government Furlough scheme has provided financial assistance for salaries and wages).

Application Process

Each of the 15 successful applicants from the last two years will be given an application pack with guidance notes. They will be asked to attend a mandatory workshop with Council Officers to determine whether or not their event is likely to take place in some form during 2021/22 or whether it requires to be 'moth balled' for this period. A decision will be required prior to the end of January 2021 and arising out of this organisers will be given choice to either complete:

Option 1 – Application to seek financial assistance to cover core costs for an event that will not run.

Option 2 – Application to seek financial assistance to cover eligible costs for events that can run either in full or in a reduced format.

The application process will then be a single stage with a reduced number of questions from previous years.

Option 1 Applicants will be asked for information on financial sustainability for 2021/22 and plans for 2022/23.

Option 2 – Applicants will be asked for information on event management plans and financial sustainability for 2021/22.

Application Questions (Option 1) for events that will not run in 2021/22:

Applicants will be asked to respond to questions on the following:

Event Position for 2021 / 2022 including reason(s) for cancellation decision.

Event Budgetary position (sponsorship / funding etc).

Details of request for Council support - Breakdown of Core Fixed Costs.

Details of how Council funding on fixed core costs will assist with event sustainability and skills retention within the organisation for 2021 / 2022.

Details of how Council funding for 2021 / 2022 will assist with planning for event delivery for 2022 (eg. Early Development of Marketing Campaign, Event Development).

Application Questions (Option 2) for events that will take place in 2021/22:

Applicants will be asked to respond to questions on the following:

Event Position for 2021 / 2022 including reasons (s) for wishing to proceed.

Event Budgetary position (sponsorship / funding etc).

Outline Proposal of the various event delivery options (scenario planning) including costs and grant request associated with each (in line with Covid-19 restrictions).

Details of how Council funding will assist with event delivery, sustainability and skills retention within the organisation for 2021 / 2022.

Details of how the event would support local artists and suppliers in their Covid-19 recovery.

Details of how the event will promote a quality visitor experience and be promoted to the domestic market.

Details of how Council funding for 2021 / 2022 will assist with planning for event delivery for 2022.

The proposal for the Tourism Event Recovery Fund reduces the parameters and outputs required from the previous years' Tourism Event Funding

Programme, reducing the time and information requirements on applicants. It provides an accessible and straightforward way of benefiting from financial

assistance and advice from Council to sustain events that may take place in 2021/22 or be deferred 2022/23.

Summary

Council understands that our much valued external event organisers need support in order to recover from and develop post Covid 19 Pandemic.

Consequently and subject to Council agreement:

The established events in the Borough will be financially supported in 2021 whether the events proceeds or not (subject to cost verification).

Eligible costs are no longer restricted to the cost of the event, but are widened to include the costs associated with the organisation.

Up to 75% of total project costs can be offered (previous levels were up to 50%). The process is non-competitive. The maximum grant award is £100,000. In order to budget for the increased grant awards for the 2021/22 financial period, the necessity for a £400k 'pot' is required.

Based upon the extraordinary circumstances created by Covid 19 pandemic, it is not possible to create a 3 year arrangement whilst the uncertainty associated with the mass gathering of people prevails.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee approves the proposals detailed in this report which allows for the replacement of the Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP) for one year only, with a Tourism Event Recovery Fund.

Councillor McKillop sought clarity regarding the increase in budget from £237,000 - £400,000 and referred to the advice by the Auditors recently to be prudent with spending.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation felt that the circumstances going into 2021 were unprecedented and it may be more difficult for applicants to seek alternative funding so implored Council to be as supportive as possible.

Councillor Schenning felt it would be difficult for groups to anticipate in February what grant they may wish to apply for and sought clarity that if Option 2 would not work for a group if they could refer to Option 1.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation confirmed that communications with organisations were ongoing and that officers were giving direction to aid decision making.

Councillor Watton felt it was too premature to consider planning events for 2021 at this time.

The Head of Tourism and Recreation explained that organisations need to make preparations well in advance and that officers would have a flexible adaptable approach to all applications and would work closely with organisers. He reiterated that there was an opportunity to change and review as the year progresses and situations evolve. Head of Tourism and Recreation suggested

that from March/April circumstances could improve and at this stage it was wise to plan for best case scenario and to allow for flexibility if and when it is required.

At the request of Councillor Holmes the Head of Tourism and Leisure confirmed that the funding unit would apply the same rigor and scrutiny to avoid any mis-appropriation of funding.

Councillor Callan asked if £400,000 was a buffer or would all of the budgeted amount be made available. The Head of Tourism and Recreation said at this stage it was unclear if additional funding would become available from other sources thus the £400,000 budget. The Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that the increase in funding would be built into budget and that all applications would be subject to the normal verification process.

Councillor Callan reminded members that next year could face challenges as confirmed by the audit report findings.

Proposed by Councillor Callan
Seconded by Councillor Holmes and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approval the proposals detailed in this report which allows for the replacement of the Tourism Event Funding Programme (TEFP) for one year only, with a Tourism Event Recovery Fund.

5. CARRICK DHU TOURING PITCHES

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Tourism and Recreation.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Elected Members approval to scope / plan infrastructure improvements for the touring caravan pitches at Carrick Dhu Holiday and Leisure Park, Portrush and to complete Stage 1 of the Capital Works (outline design, feasibility and cost estimate).

Background

Council operates 6 Holiday and Leisure Parks (HALP's) with one of the largest Parks, Carrick Dhu, being sited on the outskirts of Portrush. The site has 392 static pitches, touring sites and 20 camping sites. The touring pitches are located at the eastern side of the Park and are served by a modern utility/toilet block and each of the pitches are supplied with electrical power, water and individual drainage facilities. These pitches have the requirement to accommodate touring caravans, motorhomes and awnings, and to facilitate this mixture there is a requirement to peg into the ground (primarily for awnings). To allow this, each pitch was originally made up of a form of gridded matting that allowed coverage with top soil and is sown with grass.

Over the last few years the touring pitches have suffered from degradation of the surface, the compacting of soil and the loss of turf. Water ponding has occurred in localised areas and has led to management issues particularly after poor weather.

Interim Measures

In 2018 after complaints from users, attempts were made to repair the grass areas that were badly affected. Despite efforts to repair the pitches they continued to deteriorate and the decision was taken to remove the grass areas at each of the designated pitches and replace it with a hardcore type gravel and dust surface. This has provided a temporary, albeit unattractive solution for the Park and has been in place since the start of the 2019 season.

Proposals

Council Officers intend to investigate and assess potential solutions to provide a long term, hardwearing surface to allow touring vans with awnings to use the touring pitches at Carrick Dhu. To achieve this Officers will work with the Infrastructure team through Stage 1 of the Capital Works Process, identifying the issues and scoping proposals for interventions, develop solutions and detail costings.

After completion of Stage 1, Officers will report back to Elected Members and advise on options regarding a long-term solution for the pitches at Carrick Dhu.

Recommendation

The Leisure and Development Committee is asked to approve the advancement of Stage 1 of the Capital Works Process, to assess a long term solution for the touring pitches at Carrick Dhu Holiday and Leisure Park (scoping options, preferred solution, feasibility and cost estimates).

Proposed by Councillor McAuley
Seconded by Councillor McCaw and

AGREED – to recommend that Council approve the advancement of Stage 1 of the Capital Works Process, to assess a long term solution for the touring pitches at Carrick Dhu Holiday and Leisure Park (scoping options, preferred solution, feasibility and cost estimates).

6. PORTNAHAPPLE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by The Head of Tourism and Recreation.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present on possible interventions to make safe access to the Portnahapple sea bathing facility in Portstewart. Elected

Members are asked to consider the proposal and decide on whether or not to make an investment decision to refurbish.

Background

Portnahapple inlet, adjacent to the cliff path in Portstewart, has been a popular bathing location since the mid-20th century. Access and egress to the water was from the cliff path via concrete steps and a path leading to ladders and diving boards (Photo A – Annex A). Over the years these were constantly attacked and severely damaged by coastal storms. Eventually this infrastructure was removed due to concerns over safety and ongoing remedial costs. Since its removal a number of people over the years have commented on the loss of facility for cold water bathers and the diving fraternity. The site is still used informally by the public despite the removal of the infrastructure.

Proposal

The Tourism and Recreation's Coast and Countryside team have liaised with Council's Estates team and looked at necessary investment at the site. To provide safe access/egress it is necessary to replace the 'missing' concrete path which will lead to a ladder at the water's edge (Photos B-D Annex A). It is not intended to replace the diving boards. Given the potential for storm damage the ladder and rail have been designed to be removed during the winter months (Nov – Feb inclusive) to reduce ongoing maintenance costs. In effect this will be a seasonal facility. The rail will be identical to the current stainless steel handrail used along the cliff path.

Consultations with the Planning Office and DAERA have confirmed that replacing this infrastructure does not require planning approval or a marine licence. The terms of the lease with Crown Estates will not prevent these repair works.

The initial capital cost for this work will be in the region of £21,000 based on indicative costs for the removable stainless steel ladder and safety rail, reinforced concrete path and labour. The proposal is not currently on Council's Capital works program.

The proposed ladder, to be situated at the water's edge, is approximately 30m from the cliff path. The reinstatement of this facility will clearly be seen as a provision of access to the water for use by the public. By doing so the Council could therefore be liable for potential claims arising from, for example slips, trips or falls. Discussions with Council insurers has therefore dictated the need for a suitable pedestrian surface with handrail to connect the cliff path to the ladder to ensure safety of those crossing the rocks. The rock surface is slippery much of the year due to algae and seaweed growth.

Maintenance Implications

The facility will require regular inspection and cleaning to remove algae which will cost approximately £750 per year. Given the history of this and similar

facilities, Council will need to allow for annual maintenance repair costs. These repair costs are difficult to quantify and will be dictated by any storm damage. Council should be prepared for costs ranging from £2K to £3K for ladder/handrail repairs up to the full cost of replacement in any given year.

Recommendation

It is recommended that The Leisure and Development Committee is asked to consider the proposal for limited refurbishment of Portnahapple to allow safer access to the water. Subject to approval, an investment decision up to a maximum of £21,000 is required plus annual maintenance costs.

Alderman Hillis and Councillor McCaw said this was a popular activity and that it was important to improve safety for users and encourage others, including tourists to enjoy Portnahapple.

Proposed by Alderman Hillis
Seconded by Councillor McCaw and

AGREED to recommend that Council proceed with limited refurbishment of Portnahapple to allow safer access to the water. Subject to approval, an investment decision up to a maximum of £21,000 is required plus annual maintenance costs.

7. AGHADOWEY PLAY PARK

Report, previously circulated, was presented by The Head of Sport and Well-Being.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the paper is to update Members on progress to date with the development of a Play Park in Aghadowey and request Stage 1 approval of the Outline Business Case and permission to proceed to Stage 2 of Council's four step capital approval process.

Background

In 2017 Council agreed to prioritise a list of 10 capital projects. The 7th ranked project was Aghadowey Play Park. In compliance with Stage 1 of the Council's capital approval process the next stage is the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC).

Concurrent with this capital planning process, Council commissioned Playboard NI to undertake a Play Strategy for the Borough. This work was completed in 2018 with the research and analysis informing the Needs & Demand Assessment for this project.

The OBC has been developed on the basis of an extensive consultation process resourced by the Council and undertaken by Playboard NI. The

consultation process set out to establish, at a local level, if need and demand existed through extensive consultation with young people, parent/carers and the wider public.

The appraisal process, carried out in line with the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE, 2009) sets out to confirm:
That need and demand exists for a play area in Aghadowey;
The location, nature and scale of development; and
The overall benefits and value for money from any investment proposed.
The OBC has been prepared by Strategic Investment Board and included as Annexe A (previously circulated).

Need and Demand Assessment

The following conclusions are drawn from the needs and demand assessment:

There is a need for a fixed play area in Aghadowey that meets the requirements of a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP);
The existing play parks in Bann DEA have been rated Low to Upper Mid in terms of Play Value and need ongoing monitoring and maintenance to meet local need in those neighbourhoods;

Local and extensive consultation facilitated through Playboard NI with 126 respondents indicates that the majority (74%) of people are supportive of a new play area;

Indicative usage levels of existing play areas from those consulted were high, although this was highly contingent on the play park offering, with 94% of people suggesting at least weekly usage (c.200 children and young people residing in the catchment area and pupils attending Culcrow Primary School);
The identification of potential land options to meet the identified need and demand have also been consulted upon and are considered further in Section 5 of the OBC – Option identification and shortlisting;

Displacement and additionality from any new play park developed has also been assessed with no displacement concerns identified and the potential for substantial additionality (wider benefits) to be realised; and
In summary, there is a case in terms of both facility need and demand for a new play park to address the play needs in the rural catchment area of Aghadowey.

Objectives

The following objectives are identified for the project over the first five years:
To develop a play park that achieves the upper-mid standard of 'Play Value' as independently audited by Playboard NI (play value of 481-600);

To actively promote and monitor general usage of play park by local schools, playgroups and children using in the area; and
To ensure that the capital project is well managed and delivered on time, to budget and high quality standards.

Options Analysis

Given that Council does not own land in Aghadowey, the Capital Delivery Team undertook Site Appraisal to determine up to 4 potential third party sites suitable within the area:

Site 1 – Culcrow Primary School;

Site 2 – Shop and Post Office;

Site 3 – Clarehill Park; and

Site 4 – Brown Trout Golf and Country Inn.

On completion of the site assessment, the highest scoring site is: Culcrow Primary School with a score of 61, followed by Clarehill Park with a score of 57 and Shop and Post Office 55. It should be noted that when assessing Site 1 Culcrow Primary School, the criteria were assessed including the proposals from the Education Authority.

The long list of options considered the proposed site options above and potential variations in terms of scale, content, location and timing of project delivery, previously circulated.

On the basis that Culcrow Primary School is the only viable site option for development, initial site analysis was carried by Education Authority to include provision for a 500m² area for 5-7 pieces of equipment as illustrated below in the blue box adjacent to the new car park:

It should be noted that this proposal is subject to final assessment within the Business Case currently being developed by EA and it is anticipated that this will be completed in December 2020. It is also worth highlighting that the proposals will be subject to internal EA approvals together with DE approvals in relation to acquisition of additional lands, subject to statutory approvals and funding. The proposed community use facility will also be subject to agreements between EA and Council being in place.

Economic Appraisal & Preferred Option

In line with NIGEAE guidance, the full economic appraisal assessed costs, benefits and risks, previously circulated.

A table, previously circulated, summarised the results of the monetary, non-monetary and risk analyses:

Based on the OBC analysis, Option 2 – New Play Park and car parking at Culcrow Primary School (LEAP Specification) is the preferred option. The basis for this is outlined below:

Capital costs of £100k with no land acquisition costs allowing for full expenditure on play equipment and experience;

Opportunity for shared school and community use arrangements making better use of the new facility and sharing of recurrent costs through a new License Agreement;

Highest non-monetary benefits from sustained participation in play by the local rural community of Aghadowey; and

Lowest risk option reflecting the risk of the projects development at Culcrow Primary School and ability to address the needs and objectives.

Project Costs and Affordability

It should be noted that outline capital costs have not yet been prepared by the Capital Delivery Team. The infrastructure and works costs associated with the option are subject to discussion with Education Authority and estimated as:-

Hard Surfacing:	£40,000
Play Equipment	£50,000
Fencing and Furniture	£10,000

The Play Park elements above will be Council funded with the Education Authority's capital contribution in terms of site valuations and preliminary works is to be confirmed at Stage 2.

In terms of revenue funding, Council is committed to the annual forecasted subvention of £2k per annum (as detailed in Section 6.3 of the OBC) with financial arrangements to be developed at Stage 2 within a new License Agreement with the Education Authority.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the preferred option, Option 2 – New Play Park at Culcrow Primary School and car parking (LEAP Specification) at a cost of £100k is progressed to Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council.

Timeline subject to December Council meeting and ratification, acquisition of land and planning permission being sought by the Education Board.
Spring/Summer 2022 available

Councillor Holmes welcomed progression of this project.

Councillor Knight-McQuillan also welcomed the comments and Councillor McQuillan concurred with comments and agreed it was a good location and a good partnership between the Education Board and Council.

Alderman Baird asked if the future of the school was guaranteed.

The Head of Sport and Well-Being confirmed that all stakeholders considered the investment was secure at this time.

Proposed by Councillor Holmes
Seconded by Councillor McQuillan and

AGREED to recommend that preferred Option 2 – New Play Park at Culcrow Primary School and car parking (LEAP Specification) at a cost of £100k is progressed to Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council.

8. CLOUGHMILLS PITCH PROJECT

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Sport and Well-Being.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the paper is to update Members on progress to date with the development of the Cloughmills Sports Pitch Project and request Stage 1 approval of the Outline Business Case and permission to proceed to Stage 2 of Council's four step capital approval process.

Background

In 2017 Council agreed to prioritise a list of 10 capital projects. In compliance with stage one of the Council's four-stage capital project management process the next stage for each project was the development of an OBC. The second highest ranked project related to Cloughmills Sports Pitch Project. Concurrent with this capital planning process Council commissioned Otium Leisure Consultancy to undertake a Pitch Condition Survey and Strategy for the Borough. This work was completed in 2018 with the research and analysis informing the Needs and Demand Assessment for the project.

The OBC has been developed on the basis of an extensive consultation process resourced by the Council. The consultation process set out to establish, at a local level, if need and demand existed through extensive consultation with Cloughmills FC, other sports clubs in the area and wider community stakeholders.

The appraisal process, carried out in line with the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE, 2009) sets out to confirm:
That need and demand exists for pitch provision in Cloughmills ;
The location, nature and scale of development; and
The overall benefits and value for money from any investment proposed.
The OBC has been prepared by Strategic Investment Board and included as Annexe A (previously circulated)

Need and Demand Assessment

The following approach was used to determine need and demand for the project:

The following conclusions are drawn from the needs and demand assessment:

The Pitches Strategy highlights the limited provision of pitches in the south/south east of the Borough with Cloughmills FC currently playing at Drumbolcan Park (some 9 miles away) and Dunloy Recreation Grounds currently home to Dunloy FC;

The IFA's Strategic Plan makes clear reference to addressing the facility needs of Association Football and the new criteria for Intermediate Football; The socio-economic needs of the area indicate the catchment area to be deprived in terms of 'proximity to services' and rural deprivation; The lack of sporting and recreational facilities within Cloughmills village have been highlighted during various community consultations, particularly the impact this is having on young people because of the lack of activities and issues with rural transport.

Cloughmills FC have requested local pitch provision for both matches and training that will allow the Club to develop its membership base and introduce two new teams (a reserve team and underage mixed team):

The facility has the potential to be a 'community hub' to serve the various sporting clubs in the surrounding area, the primary schools, vintage clubs, June fair, community action team and possibly Super Cup NI matches in the village and therefore act as a catalyst for community cohesion and social wellbeing; and

A Sports Development and Community Recreation Plan can be developed further at Stage 2 following selection of a preferred development option.

Objectives

The following objectives are identified for the project over the first five years: Enhance Cloughmills FC's club development with increased club membership doubled from 60 to 120 over five years (depending on the preferred option). The club sees a great deal of potential in growing under-age membership and female membership. This will be achieved through the delivery of a Sports Development & Community Recreation Plan;

Develop a community outreach programme to promote a range of community activities (i.e., to people who are not club members). This will be achieved through the delivery of a Sports Development & Community Recreation Plan; Achieve better value for money from use of local Council pitch provision through increased income from community hire of facilities and reduced cost of traveling to and using other facilities for training and matches. It is

expected that the costs involved in hiring facilities will be reduced significantly by relocating activity to the project;

As a result of the above to increase and sustain participation in sport and physical activity therefore maximising the health and wellbeing benefits for the local community; and

To ensure that the capital project is well managed and delivered on time, to budget and high quality standards.

Options Analysis

The Capital Delivery Team completed a Feasibility Report in December 2018 to identify suitable sites and develop outline costings. The potential sites identified were highlighted in the aerial map, previously circulated:

Site 1 – Rear of Patton’s Bar.

Site 2 – Main Street.

Site 3 – Drumbare Road.

Site 4 – Main Street / Rear of Cloughmills Community Association.

The long list of options considered the proposed sites above and potential variations in terms of scale, content, location and timing of project delivery, table previously circulated.

The following options were progressed for full economic appraisal:

Option 1 – Do Nothing;

Option 2 – Full size Grass Pitch, modular changing and car parking at Main Street (site 2);

Option 3 – Full size Grass Pitch, synthetic training pitch (with floodlights), modular changing and car parking at Main Street (site 2);

Option 4 – Full size Grass Pitch, modular changing and car parking at Main Street/Rear of Cloughmills Community Association (site 4); and

Option 5 – Full size Grass Pitch, synthetic training pitch (with floodlights), modular changing and car parking at Main Street (rear Cloughmills Community Association - site 4).

Economic Appraisal & Preferred Option

In line with NIGEAE guidance, the full economic appraisal assessed costs, benefits and risks, table previously circulated. A further table, previously circulated, summaries the results of the monetary, non-monetary and risk analyses:

Based on the preceding analysis, Option 2 – Full size Grass Pitch, modular changing and car parking at Main Street (site 2) is the preferred option. This option is very closely followed by Option 4 which should be retained as ‘fall-back’ option if there issues or delays with acquisition of the preferred site. The basis for this recommendation is outlined below:

Lower capital cost of £818k and therefore more affordable option within the Capital Programme;

Site acquisition future proofed for scope for further development on the site;

Lowest risk of the 'do something' options reflecting the risk of the projects development within the local community setting; and
High non-monetary benefits from regular and sustained participation in sport, particularly in terms of social cohesion and addressing rural needs within the local community.

An indicative site layout for the preferred option was previously circulated.

Project Costs and Affordability

A table, previously circulated, summarized the total project cost of £818,000. A further table, previously circulated, summarised the available Capital funding of 100% , subject to Stage 2 approval.

In terms of ongoing revenue funding, Council is committed to the annual forecasted subvention of £6,000 per annum (as detailed in Section's 6.3/6.4 of the OBC). It is noted that the financial arrangements with the club would need to be considered as part of a more formal community use agreement.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the preferred option, Option 2 – Full size Grass Pitch, modular changing and car parking at Main Street (site 2) is progressed to Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council.

Subject to Council decision on the preferred option, the indicative delivery timeframe to progress the preferred option to investment decision and completion dates are summarised as follows:

Stage 1: Outline Business Case for approval – January 2021;

Site Investigations and preliminary work on Land Acquisition – March 2021;

Detailed Design and Planning Application – October 2021;

Stage 2: Full Business Case for Investment Decision – November 2021;

Land Acquisition through Land & Property Committee – February 2022;

Stage 3: Appoint Contractor – March 2022;

Project construction (4 months) – July 2022; and

Stage 4: Project ready for use after 'growing in' period of one year – July 2023.

Proposed by Councillor McAuley

Seconded by Councillor McQuillan and

AGREED to recommend that Council agree Option 2 – Full size Grass Pitch, modular changing and car parking at Main Street (site 2) is progressed to

Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council.

Councillor McAuley thanked officer for the work undertaken with regard to this project. Councillor McLaughlin welcomed the development of this project.

9. LARCHFIELD PLAY PARK

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Sport and Well-Being.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the paper is to request Members approval for the repair and renewal of Larchfield Play Park.

Background - Play Strategy

The Play Investment Strategy establishes a strategic and operational framework within which decision making will be made as it relates to the provision and maintenance of fixed play areas and the future development of non-fixed approaches to meeting play need.

Central to the strategy is a recognition that play is one of the most, if not the most important activity that children and young people engage in as they grow and develop. The desire to play is a natural, fundamental part of children lives. By supporting active engagement in play through the childhood years this strategy seeks to support children's development in a number of key ways by:

Providing fun and enjoyable means of developing physical and mental health and wellbeing;

Supporting the development of social connections and friendships through social play opportunities;

Supporting intellectual growth and the development of practical skills through the provision of creative and more challenging play opportunities;

Supporting children to develop their personal resilience through play; and

Establishing a connection between children at play and the community in which they live.

In order to support the development of the strategy, Council commissioned PlayBoard NI to undertake a number of key pieces of work including:

The completion of a play value audit of all fixed play areas maintained by the Council to identify those offering limited play value and those requiring remedial action;

Completion of an evaluation of demographic and settlement patterns to identify potential gap areas that may require the development of fixed play provision; and

An assessment of underlying demographic demand for fixed play to identify potentially redundant fixed play areas.

Since the time of the Play Audit in 2018, Larchfield Play Park has been closed to the local community due to its poor condition and health and safety concerns. The Play Strategy makes a specific recommendation in relation to Larchfield Play Park as follows:

Recommendation 3.1: Enhance low value fixed play areas at Larchfield at a cost of c. £125k subject to review of developments within the wider Kilrea area.

Current Situation – Local Engagement

Kilrea is classified as an Intermediate Settlement by the NI Statistics and Research Agency. On Census day (2011) there were 2,724 people living in Kilrea. Of these:

23.27% were aged under 16 years and 14.5% were aged 60 and over;

50.77% of the population were male and 49.23% were female;

67.11% were from a Catholic background and 29.77% were from a Protestant background; and

6.46% of people aged 16–74 were unemployed.

Council staff recently undertook local community engagement with regard to the future of the Larchfield Play Park. The pressing need emerging from these discussions was that the play park should be opened as soon as possible to service the needs of young children and parents in the local area. The community are content to proceed with a repair and renewal of play equipment rather than a full enhancement of the fixed play park providing that health and safety concerns are addressed and the site is future proofed for further development.

Consequently, Council staff have developed a proposal for replacement of equipment, fencing, seating and activity panels suitable for use by younger children in the area.

Proposal for Repair and Renewal

An illustration of the proposed repair and renewal of Larchfield Play Park was previously circulated to members.

The indicative costings for new equipment, furnishings and wet pour have been estimated by Estates – Play Park Inspector, previously circulated:

Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the proposal above for the repair and renewal of Larchfield Play Park, Kilrea at a total cost of £40k.

Subject to a final Council decision, the proposal can be progressed to procurement and completed within 6 months.

Councillor McQuillan asked if consideration could be given to Lyttlesdale in Garvagh and the Director of Leisure and Development agreed to look into this. Councillor Anderson enquired about the top 10 priorities and The Dir confirmed that this project was not in this category

Proposed by Councillor Bateson
Seconded by Councillor McQuillan and

AGREED to recommend that Council approve the proposal above for the repair and renewal of Larchfield Play Park, Kilrea at a total cost of £40k. Subject to a final Council decision, the proposal can be progressed to procurement and completed within 6 months

10. ENTERPRISE FUND

Report, previously circulated, was presented by Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the level of applications and scoring panel decisions in respect of the Enterprise Fund 2020 – 2021.

Background

The Enterprise Fund seeks to help those recent start-up businesses that need assistance in taking the next step in their growth plan. The fund is aimed at supporting new businesses, with a track record of two years or less, to address barriers to growth via innovative approaches.

Grants of up to £10,000 are available.

2020-21 Fund

The fund opened on 2nd November 2020 and closed at noon on Friday 20th November 2020, with expenditure to be completed and claimed by 19th March 2021.

Initial criteria as follows:

All applicant businesses must be within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

All applicants must have completed the Business Start Programme – available through Causeway Enterprise Agency and Roe Valley Enterprises – within the last two years – or have a business plan from other sources completed within the last two years.

All applicants must have a bank (or other financial institution) account for the sole purpose of their business – i.e., separate from personal finances.

Pre-Application Support

Guidelines were made available to all interested businesses and included full details in respect of levels of award, exclusions and assessment and scoring processes. Named contacts were also provided to potential applicants wishing to discuss their idea pre-application.

The Enterprise Fund was publicised in all local papers and on Council's social media platforms prior to the call opening.

There were 76 enquiries to the fund, via telephone and email, by businesses wishing to discuss criteria and requirements. Full support was given to all potential applicants during the funding call.

Enterprise Fund Scoring

Of the 39 applications received at closing, 12 were deemed ineligible and the remaining 27 progressed to scoring panel held w/c 23rd November 2020.

Panel consisted of:

Business Development Manager.

Economic Development Officer.

Economic Development Officer.

12 businesses scored above the 65% threshold and are eligible for funding:

Recommendation

Underspend of circa £30,000 has been identified within other business support programmes that moved to virtual delivery in March 2020 and it is recommended that Council agrees to utilise this additional resource to award Enterprise Fund grants to businesses 1-10 as noted above, totalling £80,334.93, to support recovery and growth.

Members felt that some businesses were not aware of the category into which they were allocated in terms of funding applications and had insufficient knowledge of the percentage threshold.

The Head of Prosperity and Place explained that this fund was open to all sectors, including some which had been previously excluded and that advert had been widely available for all to access.

At the request of Alderman Baird, The Head of Service agreed to send her further information.

Proposed by Councillor Holmes

Seconded by Alderman Robinson and

AGREED to recommend that Council agrees to utilise this additional resource to award Enterprise Fund grants to businesses 1-10 as noted above, totalling £80,334.93, to support recovery and growth

11. DIGITAL STRATEGY

Report, previously circulated, was presented by Strategics Project Manager followed by powerpoint presentation from J Saunby and E Murphy from GreySky Consulting.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform and finalise the key priorities emerging from the new draft Digital Strategy (Annex A previously circulated).

If agreed, there will be a final 8-week period for equality and other screenings and consultations, whereupon the strategy will be returned to Council for final ratification.

Background

Following Committee approval in June 2020, Council has been working on the development of a borough wide Digital Strategy. In a rapidly evolving digital landscape e.g. superfast broadband and 4G/5G it is critical that CC&G develops and evolves its current digital infrastructure to ensure it meets the needs of the Borough.

Although existing digital infrastructure in the Borough is relatively weak compared to other areas of the UK, other strategic developments are about to deliver significant change. The Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI) and Project Stratum have just started deployment within our Borough and will hopefully turn our area from one of the poorest connected areas in the UK, to one of the best connected in Europe.

Ensuring that people and businesses in Causeway Coast and Glens adapt to this change and make the most of the opportunity available to them is the critical challenge of the Digital Strategy.

The new draft Digital Strategy provides a clear vision within the digital sector to drive, accelerate and sustain economic and social development throughout the Borough. It will also help support any potential digital initiatives emerging as part of the Causeway Growth Deal.

The digital strategy was developed in parallel with, and is informed by, the new Economic Development Strategy for Causeway Coast and Glens and takes into account a range of digital strategies, initiatives and developments from the UK and beyond that establish the context for development in the Borough.

Consultation

The Digital Strategy has been developed with a range of external stakeholders, but obviously the level of engagement has been around

electronic and distanced means rather than with one to one consultation, meetings or focus groups.

The process of developing a new Digital Strategy began with a set of emerging digital barriers identified by local stakeholders. Responses and input included 45 consultations with key stakeholders including local digital businesses; schools; Government Departments and stakeholders on the Economic Advisory Group i.e. enterprise agencies, further and higher education, local chamber, Invest NI, Council staff and so on. Headline feedback from the stakeholder consultations was previously circulated.

Delivery

The current economic and social background to the development of the Digital Strategy is incredibly challenging and uncertain. The combination of COVID-19 and Brexit impacts all aspects of the economy and society – with little clarity over how severe the impact may be, or how long it will last.

However, against this unprecedented background of uncertainty, recent events have demonstrated clearly the critical importance of reliable high-bandwidth digital communications and applications, how essential it is that they are integrated throughout the economy and society, and how important it is that everyone has the skills to use them effectively.

The Digital Strategy specifically focuses on three key areas:

Digital Infrastructure – To ensure current and emerging digital technologies are available and accessible to all. Key actions were previously circulated.

Digital Sector (including businesses) – To support digital transformation of key economic sectors to ensure their sustainability and growth. Key actions were previously circulated.

Digital Skills – To establish a digital skills ecosystem for the Borough – both directly within the Borough, and as a conduit for skills regionally and beyond. Key actions were previously circulated.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members agree the key priorities as presented in the work undertaken by GreySky Consulting in developing a new Digital Strategy for the Borough, and that:

The strategy is released for final equality screening and consultation.
The Strategy proceeds with development in line with budget procedures for the new financial year.

Councillor McQuillan asked about the digital centre nearby and The Director agreed to provide the member with an update in this regards.

Councillor Nicholl welcomed this initiative and enquired about the process of consultation given the pandemic and the presenter confirmed that Covid did not restrict or negatively impact this process and involved one-to-one sessions and zoom focus groups. He confirmed that the consultation ends on 8th January 2021.

The Head of Prosperity and Place agreed to provide updated information on this matter on the portal for members.

Councillor McQuillan felt that there was no new information in the presentation and that he simply wished to see an improvement in broadband service.

The presenter confirmed that the broadband experienced in this locality is better than some areas of Europe and in comparison with other rural areas of the UK.

Councillor McQuillan asked about the digital centre nearby and The Director agreed to provide the member with an update.

Alderman Baird thanked the presenters and felt it was encouraging to see developments in fibre provision and asked about how areas in the borough were being prioritised. The presenter confirmed that the contract was for a 4 year period commencing Ballycastle and Ballymoney which are being progressed at an early stage and that within 3/4 years the borough could see 100% full fibre service.

Proposed by Alderman Baird
Seconded by Councillor McKillop and

AGREED to recommend that Council Members agree the key priorities as presented in the work undertaken by GreySky Consulting in developing a new Digital Strategy for the Borough' and that the strategy is released for final equality screening and consultation'; The Strategy proceeds with development in line with budget procedures for the new financial year.

12. FFNI CONTRACT

Report, previously circulated, was presented by The Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to award of the contract for both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 to Fibrus Networks Ltd to deliver full fibre broadband infrastructure as part of the FFNI consortium project.

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is part of a Full Fibre Network NI (FFNI) Consortium of 10 Councils led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMD) that is to receive funding of £15 million from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The funding will be used to install gigabit capable fibre 'direct to the premises' of Council owned buildings by September 2021 that will in turn increase the broadband infrastructure in the surrounding vicinity.

Within Causeway Coast and Glens, the project will generate significant economic benefits for businesses, in particular SMEs through increased connectivity which will provide improved business productivity, new innovation benefits, flexible working benefits as well as growth in new digital start-ups. The benefits to individual households will also be substantial and full fibre is expected to unlock considerable economic value through wider technological developments from future healthcare applications and smart city infrastructure.

Proposals

Within Causeway Coast and Glens, it is hoped to connect approximately 91 public sector buildings with Ultrafast 1000gb connections. Deadlines for project completion are March 2021 for Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) sites and September 2021 for FFNI sites. The project must be completed before this date or the Council and Consortium will lose out on the funding. Along with the Consortium Partners' sites, the Business Services Organisation (BSO) will use the grant funding to connect Health (Doctors' surgeries for example), Fire and Ambulance sites. Without the involvement of BSO, it is possible that Consortium Members would have too few sites to use all of the available funding, and the RGC funding bid would likely not have been viable. For the Council's geographical area, the funding is expected to deliver fibre connectivity to 56 of the Council's own sites, and 35 BSO sites (See Annex A).

FFNI Procurement

Two FFNI procurements have been conducted for the connectivity of these public sector sites: Tranche One (rural sites) and Tranche Two (urban sites). Published a week apart in late March and early April, the procurements created strong interest from suppliers. The Consortium received bids from a range of competitive suppliers, providing a good test of value for money. Fibrus Networks Limited were the preferred bidder for both Tranche One and Tranche Two.

On 25 August 2020 the DCMS formally assured the 'Ready to Contract' Checkpoint C for the LFFN and RGC projects, following evidence submitted by the FFNI consortium.

The Checkpoint C 'Ready to Contract' had previously been issued and reviewed as a draft to all legal and procurement members; and approved prior to procurement and DCMS Checkpoint C. Legal clauses have not been changed but the Fibrus Networks Limited solution (schedule 2) has been updated to reflect their bid.

Officers have been working with Fibrus Networks Limited to confirm the proposed interventions for each Tranche. Officers will determine the effect that the orders would have on the Council's own network plans and calculate the cost implications of the orders.

These delivery timescales are extremely challenging, and it is critical that implementation starts as soon as possible following approval. If there is any delay, then there is a strong risk that the timescale for delivery will become unachievable, and suppliers will not be willing to contract to deliver all or any of the Council's sites. In such a case, the funding will be lost, along with the significant benefits that the investment would have brought.

To mitigate this risk, the Council is asked to note the timescales and the risks of delay, and to set in place the mechanism to approve and execute contract award as quickly as possible.

There are no budget implications for Council at this time. Further reports will be presented to Council on implementation and outcomes as the project progresses.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves:

The award of the contract for both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 to Fibrus Networks Ltd to deliver full fibre broadband infrastructure as part of the FFNI consortium project

Proposed by Councillor Anderson
Seconded by Alderman Baird and

AGREED to recommend that Council approves:

The award of the contract for both Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 to Fibrus Networks Ltd to deliver full fibre broadband infrastructure as part of the FFNI consortium project

13. PORTRUSH HARBOUR PUBLIC REALM

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Elected Members approval to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) to prepare detailed designs and cost estimates, prepare an economic appraisal, carry out consultations, and prepare and submit a planning application for the redesign and refurbishment of the public realm on the Kerr Street side of the Harbour, Portrush. This work is the Stage 1 of the Capital Works Project Management Process and will take the project to full design and production of a full green book appraisal.

Background

Following the completion of the Recreation Grounds Project, the Portrush Harbour Public Realm Scheme is the final part £17m Executive-endorsed Portrush Regeneration Programme.

Whilst the formal Portrush Regeneration Programme was closed in October 2019, it was understood that other regeneration projects, like the Recreation Grounds and the Harbour, would continue to be delivered under business as usual.

The proposed public realm works at the Harbour are therefore the final piece of a public realm jigsaw which began in the town in 2012. They serve to draw together previous projects and will conclude the public realm work in Portrush.

Rationale for Intervention

The purpose of this assignment is to enable Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council to appoint an integrated consultancy team (ICT) to prepare detailed designs and cost estimates, prepare an economic appraisal (with SIB support), carry out consultations, and prepare and submit a planning application for the redesign and refurbishment of the public realm on the Kerr Street side of the Harbour, Portrush. This proposed public realm scheme would join up a number of previous schemes completed in the town, all of which come together around the harbour area. At present, the area does not live up to the high standards of public realm seen across the rest of Portrush, yet it is the area that attracts the highest footfall.

This initial work is necessary to inform a funding decision, which will then allow the Department and Council to determine if it is feasible to move to the construction phase of the project.

The Department for Communities (DFC) Business Case Template to Engage Professional Services Including External Consultants is attached at Annex A, previously circulated.

Costs

This project is 100% funded by DfC and is the final part of the £17m Executive-endorsed Portrush Regeneration Programme.

Total Professional Services/External Consultancy Costs are estimated to be £133,659, which will also be funded by DfC.

Council's contribution to the project is the management of the ICT, with specialist and technical advice provided by the CPD Client Adviser.

Benefits

The Harbour occupies a strategic site on the western side of Portrush and represents a key element of the town's offering in terms of recreation and leisure, both for visitors and residents. The 2007 Masterplan refers to the Harbour area as the "Honeypot" given its high footfall and close proximity to a number of very popular restaurants.

There is a consensus that the overall look of the Kerr Street (i.e., the landward) side of the Harbour is poor, reflecting badly on Portrush as a destination.

The adjacent previous projects including the main environmental scheme, West Bay promenade and Station Square, all highlight the tired and run-down nature of the Harbour area.

The economic benefit of public realm regeneration has recently been evaluated to have a return of £2 for every £1 invested for the local economy.

Recommendation

It is recommended that The Leisure and Development Committee is asked to approve the progression of the Portrush Harbour Public Realm Scheme through Stage 1 of the Capital Works Project Management Process with the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT).

Proposed by Alderman Hillis

Seconded by Councillor Anderson and

AGREED to recommend the approval of the progression of the Portrush Harbour Public Realm Scheme through Stage 1 of the Capital Works Project Management Process with the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT).

Councillor Anderson suggested consideration should be given to work already undertaken including stains in and around bins and sought an update re provision of cleaning machinery. The Director agreed to provide an update for Councillor Anderson.

14. RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Prosperity and Place.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to update Members on the delivery of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme funded by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for the financial year 2020-2021. This scheme is separate from the Rural Development Programme.

Context

This grant is a continuation of last year's successful pilot scheme funded under DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI) the primary aims of which are:

Alleviate financial poverty by enhancing entrepreneurship and growth.

Alleviate financial poverty by supporting micro businesses in rural areas.

This grant scheme is being delivered by the 11 councils concurrently.

The 2019 pilot placed sustainability and growth as its core aims. In the intervening period, the COVID 19 pandemic has changed the landscape for all businesses, therefore councils have identified business recovery as the key theme within the current grant programme. This recognises that, for some, new business opportunities will emerge and for others, previous work practices will have to change to deliver enhanced safety for staff and customers. It is proposed that grant offered through this scheme will assist participating businesses in their recovery efforts by providing capital assistance for equipment and machinery for new business practices or growth plans, as well as internal and external adaptations in line with new government guidelines.

This scheme is not focused on job creation but on helping micro businesses emerge from lockdown and re-engage with staff who have been furloughed or temporarily laid off and helping the businesses survive and sustain.

Objectives (Causeway Coast and Glens)

To provide at least 12 micro (less than 10 employees) businesses in rural areas with a capital grant capped at £4,999, at a match funding rate of 50% from DAERA and a minimum 50% from participating businesses, up to a total project cost of £20,000, to enhance their sustainability and growth prospects.

To provide rural, micro businesses with capital support with the wider aim of supporting recovery and sustainability following the COVID 19 pandemic.

To seek to minimise poverty, social exclusion and inequality amongst those living in rural areas by supporting businesses to grow and develop.

To complement businesses within rural areas and to sustain their survival and in turn maintain rural communities.

To support rural businesses to maintain or increase pre-application staffing levels.

Outputs (NI Level)

Minimum of 168 rural micro businesses supported with capital grant to enhance sustainability and growth.

At least 168 indigenous micro, rural enterprises supported in their efforts to grow their businesses in their own locality.

Supporting rural businesses to apply for further programmes and funding.

Pre-Application Support

The grant was widely advertised in local press, DAERA website and on Council's social media channels.

Guidance notes were made available to all interested businesses and included full details in respect of level of award, exclusions and assessment

and scoring processes. Named contact was also provided to potential applicants wishing to discuss their idea pre-application. There was a high level of interest in the fund, totalling 289 telephone and email enquiries, by businesses wishing to discuss criteria and requirements. Full support was given to all potential applicants during the funding call.

Scoring

Of the 159 applications received at closing, 1 was re-directed to Mid and East Antrim Council and 1 to Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council for scoring, as the applicant businesses were located in wards within those Council areas. A further 28 were deemed ineligible and the remaining 129 progressed to scoring panel held over the period of a week in late September 2020. Panel consisted of:

Business Development Manager, Economic Development Officer, Economic Development Officer.

Successful scoring outcomes were previously circulated.

Due to the volume of applications to the scheme, DAERA's original offer of funding to Council of £62,000 was increased to £158,021.27, to enable funding of all 46 applicants who scored above the 65% threshold.

Councillor McQuillan raised issues regarding the apparent lack of opportunity to appeal or provide supplementary information to enhance application. The Head of Prosperity and Place agreed to contact Cllr McQuillan regarding this matter.

It was **AGREED** to note the contents of the report.

15. DfC ANTI-POVERTY FUNDING UPDATE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by Head of Community and Culture. An updated position was provided by the Head of Community & Culture in relation to section 4 of the report, regarding how additional funds from the Department were being delivered, for the Food & Essential Supplies Fund, Warm, Well & Connected Fund and the Volunteering Support Fund.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group, Action Plan and funding received from Department for Communities (DfC) to support the voluntary and community sector as it continues to recover and help citizens to get through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The Department for Communities has made 3 funds available to Councils to help respond to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Covid 19 Community Support Fund	
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Tranche 1	£80,700
Tranche 2	£126,227
Covid 19 Access to Food Fund	£63,113
Covid 19 Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund	£58,147

An information report was provided to Committee in September 2020 in relation to the first aspect of the funding package, namely the Covid 19 Community Fund 2nd tranche which has now been fully awarded.

A further information report was provided to Committee in November 2020 in relation to the Covid 19 Access to Food Fund and the Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund. The Leisure & Development Committee requested that this item remain on the agenda for regular updating to the Committee. An update was previously circulated.

Following the recent announcement by the NI Executive to allocate an additional £3.5m for Christmas/New Year food support to the Department for Communities, officers were contacted by Department officials on the 23rd November in relation to the provision of further funding to local authorities to support additional targeted interventions for food support at a local level. This will complement the work already undertaken to develop sustainable approaches to local food programmes and services.

The Department have recognised that high levels of demand for access to food prevail and that Covid 19 has exacerbated an already difficult situation for the most vulnerable households in the community. They have been asked to consider where government can address ongoing and new emerging needs presenting on the ground in terms of access to food.

Official have confirmed that DfC plan to resource some Christmas specific activity and reach out to citizens who face real financial challenges, highlighted by the economic impacts of COVID and underlined by the pressures that the Christmas season brings. Funded activities can span December 20 to March 2021.

The Department have indicated as part of their approach they would like to work with councils to fund a range of local initiatives which may include (subject to confirmation via MoU/contract), family/individual support packages, including food and seasonal items, cooked meal provision, companionship to older or vulnerable people living alone, support to safe spaces, offering somewhere safe to spend Christmas, and Christmas meals and activities. Eligible expenditure will be incurred between December 2020 and March 2021.

At the time of writing this report, specific and detailed criteria and levels of funding have yet to be released, however it is anticipated a Memorandum of Understanding will be issued to councils by week commencing 7th December. The challenge, for Council, will be to implement the programme within a timeframe to support activities in time for the Christmas period.

In addition, staff were subsequently contacted by the Department on 2nd December to confirm that an additional programme entitled 'Warm, Well and Connected', will provide funding through regional organisations and local community networks, and will also now include funding for councils to address fuel related poverty (however further details are expected week commencing 7th December). Councils have been informed that this funding should prioritise areas of deprivation as well responding to individual needs/circumstances of clients outside of these areas experiencing fuel poverty. This element of funding has been confirmed (in principle) as £42,707.52.

Officers will work with both Department officials and the Funding Unit to expedite the provision of eligible funding to the community & voluntary sector following receipt of written confirmation of details from the Department, but are developing the following working model:

Funding via open call to C&V sector groupings for a small grant programme tackling immediate food poverty, reflecting the final DfC criteria and set at the previous grant limit for the Covid 19 fund (up to £3,000) - total budget pending final award from DfC.

Direct funding to local borough wide established organisations which currently operate on a referral basis, including the four main food banks as well as organisations which deliver annual, established and recognised support campaigns to those experiencing food poverty. This element will also include the allocation from the Department to address fuel poverty under the 'Warm, Well and Connected Programme' which, as directed from DfC, must prioritise areas of deprivation as well responding to individual needs/circumstances of clients outside of these areas experiencing fuel poverty.

Alderman Baird referred to the enormous burden on the volunteers and the Head of Community and Culture confirmed that there was regular communication and support being provided to those in the voluntary sector, including support from the Food bank.

Alderman Baird enquired if there was a joined up approach with Community Planning and Community Development in terms of Steering Groups. The Head of Community and Culture confirmed that Council had a role in facilitating these groups and that representatives from health trusts, jobs and benefits and many others were amongst members, some of whom were involved in more than one steering group.

In terms of the application process for obtaining grants Alderman Baird felt that these need to be simplified. The Head of Community and Culture confirmed that the applications were quite straightforward only including the request, expected outcome and the desired amount.

It was **AGREED** to note the contents of the report.

16. INCLUSIVE BEACH PROJECT PORTRUSH

Report, previously circulated, was presented by The Head of Leisure and Tourism

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.

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.

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.

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 (previously circulated) for proposed works detail, previously circulated.

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.

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.

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.

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. Report, previously circulated, was presented by The Director of Leisure and Development who confirmed that with the Mayor's agreement a report was being brought to January Council meeting for approval due to the time limitations as part of the grants terms and conditions.

It was **AGREED** to note the contents of the report.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present correspondence for Members consideration.

17.1 Coronavirus Pandemic and the Impact on Further and Higher Education

Correspondence has been received Omagh and Fermanagh District Council regarding the immense strain the pandemic is placing students and is asking for Council's support in requesting a financial package for students from the NI Executive.

17.2 EU Successor Funding

Correspondence has been received from SOLACE on the research study carried out to explore the future of EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland. The Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the findings and sets out the recommendations for Northern Ireland. Full details can be found through the following link

<https://www.nilga.org/media/2171/241120-final-ni-spf-position-paper-24-november-2020.pdf>

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee considers the contents of these correspondence items.

It was **AGREED** to note the contents of the correspondence report

18. MATTERS REPORT TO THE PARTNERSHIP PANEL

There were no matters to report to the Partnership Panel.

19. CONSULTATIONS

Report, previously circulated, was presented by the Director of Leisure and Development.

Members were asked to note the following consultative documents (schedule previously circulated):-

Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 Codes of Practice

Department of Justice – Closing date - DoJ 1 February 2021

Home Office – Closing date 22 January 2021

Office of the Attorney General and Advocate General for Northern Ireland Act 2002 (POCA) – Closing date 22 January 2021.

It was **AGREED** to note the contents of the consultation schedule.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN COMMITTEE'

Proposed by Councillor Anderson

Seconded by Alderman Hillis

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move *'In Committee'*.

* **Members of the Press / Public left the meeting at 9.20 pm.**

* **The information contained in the following items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

20. CHANGING PLACES LIMAVADY TENDER REPORT

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by the Head of Sport and Well-Being.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the paper is to update Members on progress to date with the development of an Accessible Play Park in Limavady; and to request approval to proceed with the development of the associated Changing Places facility at a cost of £46,350 (as per the attached Tender Report at Annex A previously circulated).

Background

In October 2020 Council approved the Stage 1 – Outline Business Case (OBC) for the development an Accessible Play Park in Limavady at a total cost of £542k in line with the following recommendation:

It is recommended that the preferred option, Option 3 – New Accessible Play Park at Roe Mill (Comprehensive Specification), Changing Places and Parking is progressed to Stage 2, detailed design and full business case for a final investment decision to be taken by Council. For detail on the site plan layout and equipment schedule refer to Feasibility Study.

It is noted that Officers are in the process of redefining the existing site boundary at Roe Mill Playing Fields to address ongoing and potential anti-social behaviour. In order to progress the project without delay, a boundary fencing will be constructed on undisputed Council owned land. It is therefore recommended that Council approve the installation security fencing (265m of 2.4m high Palisade) and access gates at a cost of £27,450 which will be procured and expended prior to final investment decision on this project.

In addition to proceeding with the security fencing element, the OBC also included a funding opportunity with DfC's Access and Inclusion Programme to secure match funding of up to £30k towards the Changing Places facility. This funding application was successful and a letter of offer received for £28,270 on 21st October 2020 on the condition that the facility is completed with full expenditure by 31 March 2021.

Consequently, the Changing Places facility element of the overall project was progressed to Building Control Application and tendered separately to meet the funding deadlines (refer to attached Tender Report). The overall cost of the Changing Places facility has increased from the original estimate as a result of additional building control requirements and the inclusion of a store room for CCTV equipment.

The project is currently on track against the delivery timeframe summarised as follows:

Completion of Stage 1: Outline Business Case for approval – September 2020;
Consultation and Detailed Design – November 2020;
Procurement of Contractor – January 2021;
Completion of Stage 2: Full Business Case for investment decision – February 2021;
Appoint Contractor – March 2021;
Project construction completion (6 months) – August 2021.

Recommendation

Members are requested to approve the award of contract in line with the recommendation from the Changing Places Tender Report at a cost of £46,350.

As noted above, the overall contract for the development of the Accessible Play Park will be brought back to Committee in February 2021 for final Investment Decision.

Alderman Robinson sought clarity on the location of the work being undertaken which was provided by the Head of Sport and Well-Being. Members referred to issues regarding anti-social behaviour during renovation works.

The Head of Sport and Well-Being confirmed that fencing would be placed at the site and that although planning permission required for fence has yet to be acquired. Steering Group meeting planned and report back to committee in February including an update on security issues.

Proposed by Alderman Robinson
Seconded by Councillor McLaughlin and

AGREED to recommend that Council approve the award of contract in line with the recommendation from the Changing Places Tender Report at a cost of £46,350.

21. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS NOTIFIED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 12.(o)**

Addendum Report (Alderman Hillis), previously circulated:-

(i) In June 2019 Council discussed the Arrival Hub in Bushmills. May we have an update on progress please?

The Director of Leisure and Development confirmed that Council had agreed on arrival hub as the result of a Notice of Motion. Designs have been formed but scheme not progressed. A new development has since been passed as well as private investment and parking facilities.

The Director of Leisure and Development agreed to pursue this in the New Year including engagement with land owners and the National Trust in line with previous Council decision.

Alderman Baird referred to 'Bushmills' as the hub of the borough and felt that car parking issues continued to be an area of concern.

MOTION TO PROCEED 'IN PUBLIC'

Proposed by Councillor Anderson

Seconded by McQuillan

AGREED: to recommend that Committee move 'In Public

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 9.45pm.

The Chair wished those present Happy Christmas and a Peaceful 2021.

Chair

UNCONFIRMED