

Rural Development Programme Village Renewal Gortnaghey Walking Route	16th April 2019
To: Council For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting & enhancing our environment and our assets. Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	Generating economic and social returns without compromising the sustainability of our natural assets. Citizens will have access to our natural environments to help develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation
Cost: (If applicable)	Maximum estimated cost of £500 per annum for a period of 10 years

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to enter into Permissive Path Agreements with three landowners to facilitate the development of a traffic free walking route linking the settlement of Gortnaghey with the nearby sports grounds.

Background

The development of walking product in the Borough is a key objective for Tourism and Recreation to deliver on a quality outdoor recreation experience and to provide opportunities to improve the physical and mental well-being of local residents.

The provisions of The Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 allow Council to make use of Permissive Path Agreements as a means to secure quality recreational access to land. A permissive path is not a public right of way and can be provided on whatever terms and conditions, can operate under whatever limitations and can last for whatever period of time the council and landowner are willing to agree. Most agreements are for a period of 10 years. As part of the Permissive Path Agreement Council will undertake regular inspection, maintenance when required for the length of this trail and provide public liability cover for trail users.

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) Village Renewal Scheme has identified the need to link the existing parkland and trail at Gortnaghey Community Centre with a new trail at St Colm's GAC along Gortnaghey Road. The new trail at St Colm's will provide a lit walking track for winter evenings in this rural community. The trail at St Colm's is not the subject of the permissive path agreement.

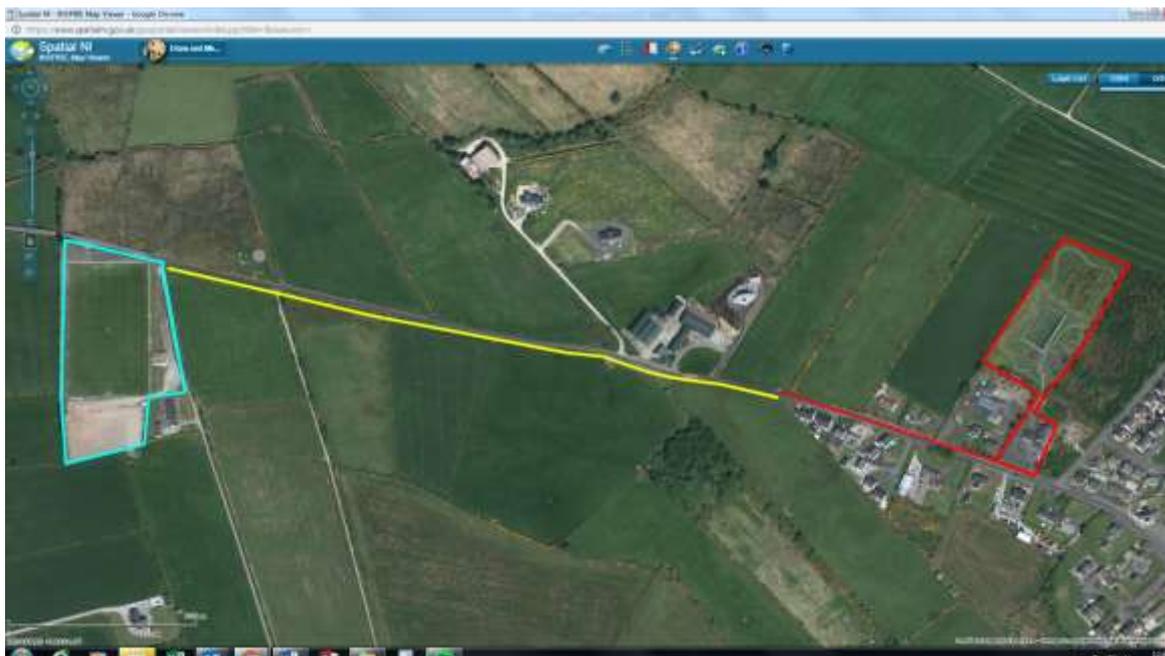
An opportunity has arisen through the RDP Village Renewal Scheme to fund the development of a safe link between the two facilities. Gortnaghey Community Association has consulted with local landowners with a view to facilitating a link trail along Gortnaghey Road for a distance of approximately 800 metres. This could be achieved through the use of Permissive Path Agreements.

Given the limited opportunity for safe recreational walking in this area, this development is seen as an important step in developing a community path network in the village which would seek to make further walking provision available. The aerial image below shows the proposed walking route marked in yellow.

Cost Implications

Council Officers have allocated a budget of £500 per annum to cover periodic inspections and maintenance when required for this section of the trail and provide public liability cover for trail users.

The £500 costs include an estimation of likely maintenance costs taking place for 1km stretches of public path every 5 years. This will be for very basic maintenance such as patching, bitmac where appropriate, or dusting quarry screed. It also allows a small increase to the Council's Public Liability Insurance Schedule for adding each of the walks and an amount for inclusion in the public path maintenance inspection regime carried out by the Estates Team.



Next Steps

Staff from the Tourism and Recreation Service have been working with the Rural Development Programme (RDP) team to facilitate this development. In order to progress this opportunity three new Permissive Path Agreements are required with landowners for a period of 10 years. This will not only secure access for an off road trail but would also present the opportunity to develop further walking trails as part of a community path network in a rural area.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve the development of three new Permissive Path Agreements at Gortnaghey for a period of 10 years. These agreements will be administered and managed by the Tourism and Recreation Service Coast and Countryside Unit.