

Mountsandel Blueprint for Development	11th October 2016
To: Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and enhancing our natural assets. Accelerating our economy and contributing to prosperity.
Outcome	Improved public realm, regeneration of the area. Development of visitor economy.
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation
Cost: (If applicable)	< £25,000 (for inclusion in the 2017/18 Revenue Budget)

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to undertake Stage 1 activities (Scoping, Feasibility & Outline Business Case - 1% of total project costs), in relation to the work currently ongoing to assess the potential future use of the Mountsandel woodland, and the surrounding public amenity on both banks of the River Bann.

Background

At the Leisure and Development meeting in November 2015, Council Officers presented an information item that outlined the work that had taken place on assessing the potential of the Mountsandel location, along with the surrounding amenity; and noted that officers wished to produce a document assessing the potential for development for the wider 'Mountsandel Experience' with a view to presenting this, with recommendations to Council.

Introduction

This document (attached in Members' papers) looks at the wider study area and assesses issues and potential options for development and promotion of the 'Mountsandel Experience', including the adjacent lands on the Western bank of the Lower Bann. It has been developed by Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council officers through a process of consultation with statutory bodies, the local interested community, the Coleraine Rotary Club and Professor Peter Woodman of University College Cork.

The 'Blueprint' document

The attached document relates to a study area that extends from the south-eastern corner of Mountsandel Wood in the south, to Sandelford Bridge in the north. It is bounded on the west by Castleroe Road, and on the east by the dense Mountsandel residential development. It includes Mountsandel Wood, the Anglo-Norman fort, the Mesolithic dig site and adjoining field, Somerset Riverside Park and The Cutts sluice gates and associated buildings.

Excavations in the 1970's showed that human activity here dates from 9,000 years ago and it is the location of the first known settlement site in Ireland. In addition to the Mesolithic site, the wider amenity features riverside access, a deciduous woodland walk and excellent

biodiversity. Linked by a weir dating to the early 1600s, much of the opposite side of the River Bann is in Council ownership creating a riverside park extending from the Waterways Ireland building to the town's Old Bridge.

Next steps

The Leisure and Development Committee members have been issued with a 'Blueprint' document on Mountsandel. A summary presentation will be presented to the Committee by Council officers.

Members' views are sought on further investigation requirements, if deemed appropriate, to assess costs and benefits of potential development of the area under the following strategic areas:

- Improved public realm, facilities and natural amenity for the citizens of the area.
- An educational resource for all.
- Development of our tourism infrastructure, visitor economy and the regeneration of the area.

Recommendation

Members approval is sought to allow officers to complete the Stage 1 Outline Business Case activities for members consideration.

Note: For those who receive reports electronically, the document Blueprint for Mountsandel is excessive in size to be emailed, however it can be viewed via the following dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6iw0qzkxfyw3ddj/AABAcx6hjXclCrp6V-tdsdLca?dl=0>