

Garvagh Mountain Bike Trails Progress (Capital Works Project to Develop a Mountain Bike Trail at Garvagh Forest)	11th October 2016
To: Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Prosperity, Health & Wellbeing & Cohesive Community Protecting and enhancing our environment and assets
Outcome	Improved recreational facilities
Lead Officers	Head of Tourism and Recreation Coast and Countryside Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	Capital £500,000

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to the complete the Stage 1 activities (Scoping, Feasibility & Outline Business Case - 1% of total project costs), in relation to a community outdoor recreation project within Garvagh Forest, incorporating 15km of shared use and cycling trails.

Background

As part of a commissioned agreement between Coleraine Borough Council and Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI), it was agreed that a feasibility assessment and outline design should be created for a Mountain Bike Trail, at Garvagh Forest.

An initial design concept has been developed featuring approximately 15 km of multi-use and cycling trails on a combination of new build single track and the existing forest road network. An enhancement of the existing walking product is included through the extension of walking trails by a further 5 km. In addition, it is proposed to locate the trailhead at the current car park off the Carhill Road and to extend this to accommodate additional car parking spaces. (See Annex A).

Estimated capital costs

At present estimated costs for the project are around £450,000 - £500,000.

The net Capital cost to Council is estimated be £150,000 with the balance of the project to be met by external funding. The Councils Capital Project Board has included the £150,000 under Stage 1 category.

Revenue running costs

Based upon the operating costs of existing facilities mountain bike facilities throughout Northern Ireland, it is estimated that annual running costs will be in the region of £15,000.

Funding Opportunities

Officers have identified that Sport NI is a possible avenue for funding this project under the Everybody Active 2020 Outdoor Spaces Programme. The Land Fill tax Fund may also be a possible source of match funding.

Forest Service agreements

In addition to planning / permitted development approval, for this project to proceed Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council will need to enter into a formal agreement with Forest Service to develop the trails, and various license and lease arrangements will have to be in place.

Additional requirements include planning consent for the car park extension and an ecological survey.

Benefits for the Local Community/Outdoor Recreation Offering

- Health and wellbeing – Creating a high quality facility enhancing local people's quality of life through enjoying the outdoors. Encouraging higher levels of physical activity. Clear evidence highlighting the very strong connection between health (physical, psychological and social) and green space. Providing a dedicated facility for existing local mountain bike enthusiasts.
- Tourism/outdoor recreation offering – Attractive facility for families and mountain bikers as part of a wider itinerary while visiting the area. This will be the first within the Council area.

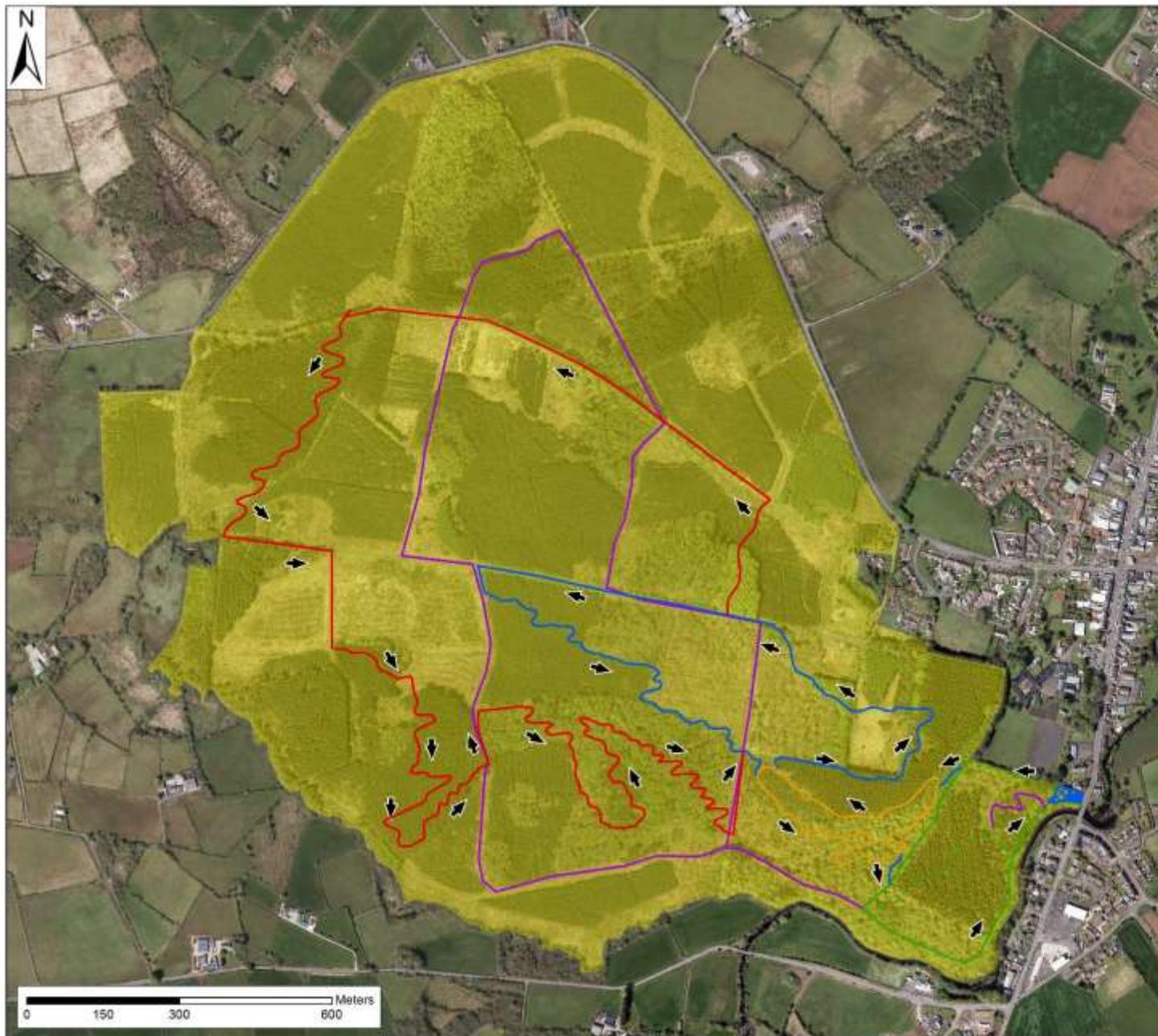
Timescales

Subject to Council approving the project beyond Stage 1, funding will be sought, allowing the project to proceed thereafter.

Recommendation

Members approval is sought to allow officers to complete the Stage 1 Outline Business Case activities (finalise the design, apply for funding and planning applications) for members consideration.

Annex A



Garvagh Forest

Proposed Area for License

1:7,000

Key	
--- (dashed green line)	Cat 2 - Multi-Use Trail (New Build)
— (solid green line)	Cat 2 - Multi-Use Trail
— (solid purple line)	Cat 3 - Multi-Use Trail
— (solid yellow line)	Cat 3 - Mtb Skills Loop
— (solid blue line)	Cat 3 - Blue Mtb Trail
— (solid red line)	Cat 4 - Red Mtb Trail
■ (yellow square)	Proposed Area for License
■ (blue square)	Existing Car Park
■ (blue checkered square)	Car Park Extension

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