

Report on	Moydamlaght Forest Project
Date of Meeting	Wednesday 8th December 2021
Reporting Officer	N Hill Head of Parks
Contact Officer	A Reid Parks & Countryside Development Officer

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Council approval to engage a suitably qualified ICT Team to carry out site scoping and survey works linked to the development and public access to Moydamlaght Forest.
2.0	Background
2.1	In 2014 Magherafelt District Council entered into a licence agreement with Forest Service NI (FSNI) for the development, operation, management and maintenance of trails and associated recreational facilities within Moydamlaght Forest. Over the years Council have been working closely with the local community to identify opportunities for recreation within the area.
2.2	In 2019 Council applied for & were successful in being awarded Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) funding to develop the car parking and general access in and around Moydamlaght Forest and the local Community Centre, Phase 1, these works are now completed. The long-term vision of this project is to link the community Centre within Moneyneena to the Forest.
2.3	Council plan to seek additional funding to create a feature bridge over the Altalacky River, and associated paths as part of Phase Two of the project, thereby providing the vital link between the village of Moneyneena and Moydamlaght Forest. Council are working with various landowners/stakeholders on this phase of the project, which is currently ongoing.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The new improvements works at Moydamlaght Forest include carpark and riverside path, trim-trail and play structures, way-marking and interpretation. The improvements at An Rath Dubh Centre include an access link pathway from behind the centre to the forest.
3.2	It is proposed to further extend the Riverside trail to exit the forest and enter into private land before crossing the river (via a bridge). At this point it will enter into the glen, owned by the Community group (An Rath Dubh) on the ascent up through

	the glen it will emerge to connect to the established path at the An Rath Dubh Centre.
3.3	In order to extend this path network and make this vital link to the Community Centre, Council need to employ suitably qualified personnel to carry out detailed site surveys.
3.4	The proposed forest project complements the current provision which the An Rath Dubh Centre offers. The Centre is a strong community base and provides many opportunities for family experiences. The forest sits just behind the community centre however due to the lack of a link to the Centre it is under-utilised as an outdoor recreation resource. It is envisaged by providing the vital link between the Centre and the forest that this would open it up. The creation of all-ability trails coupled with trail infrastructure investment would provide an opportunities for families, of all ages and abilities, to get out and explore the woodland. When completed this outdoor recreation resource will provide an opportunity for the local community, residents and visitors to partake in healthy outdoor pursuits which will not only increase their own physical and mental well-being but also increase the level of community cohesion and social inclusion within the area.
3.5	Consultation is on-going through the local community groups and various landowners. All have provided their support to the project.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: ICT Consultant approx £15,000 Budget identified under MUDC Capital Programme 2020-2024 as part of the Outdoor Recreation Strategy subject to Council approval of annual capital budget allocations.
	Human: Engagement of Technical Services Team to oversee ICT appointment Existing Parks staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.
	Risk Management: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members approval is sought to tender and procure the necessary ICT Team to carry out all associated site scoping and survey works on lands linked to the Moydamlaght Forest project at an estimated cost of £15,000. The budget is identified under MUDC Capital Programme 2020-2024 as part of the Outdoor Recreation Strategy subject to Council approval of annual capital budget allocations.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	<p>Appendix - Moydamlaght Forest Proposed Trail</p> <p>Appendix - D144/19 Development Minute - C172-19 Council Minute</p>