

Report on	Iniscarn Forest, DAERA - TRPSI Application
Date of Meeting	Thursday 7 th October 2021
Reporting Officer	Nigel Hill
Contact Officer	A H Reid

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek members approval for the development of Iniscarn forest and to update members on the application to DAERA for Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) funding to assist with the development of Iniscarn Forest.
1.2	To seek Members approval for match funding allocation from the Council's Outdoor Recreation capital budget.
2.0	Background
2.1	In 2015 legacy Magherafelt District Council entered into a licence agreement with FSNI over Iniscarn Forest.
2.2	This provides Council with the remit to develop and maintain all aspects of recreation within the site.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Iniscarn Forest provides an outdoor resource that has the potential for supporting the delivery of long-term health and well-being for residents across Northern Ireland and in particular the people of Mid Ulster District. The Council recognises that access to this green space and opportunities for enjoying the outdoors must be improved for all sections of the community especially those who do not have regular access to the outdoor environment.
3.2	The development of Iniscarn Forest project is a result of taking consideration of previous scoping exercises, research and studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Forest Recreation Audit, Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council, 2015, • Mid Ulster District Council Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan March 2020 and on-going community consultation.
3.3	This project seeks to provide a safe environment for taking part in outdoor recreation by upgrading the existing walking trails within the Forest, creating a new play area to include provision for all-ability play, providing picnic and rest benches along the walking trails, the creation of a carpark, the creation of an outdoor classroom and interpretation and way-marking. (Appendix)

3.4	In May 2021 an application for funding to help develop the site was lodged with DAERA for TRPSI funding.
3.5	Development Committee approved to progress this project in July 2021.(Appendix)
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Estimated total project cost: £275,000.00 Funding DAERA: £206,250.00 Council: £68,750.00 Council funding for the project would be allocated from the Outdoor Recreation Strategy capital allocation that has been approved by Council (£250k annually).
	Human: Current staff structure sufficient to deliver on outcomes
	Risk Management: Council staff and appointed ICT will manage and monitor the project aims and outcomes to ensure compliance to council policies and procedures and associated funders criteria throughout the delivery of the project.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council Policy and procedures
	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council Policy and procedures
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members approval is sought for Council match funding allocation of £68,750 subject to an agreed Letter of Offer from DEARA as part of the TRPSI funding allocation.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix – Proposed carpark & playpark layout. Appendix – Dev Committee C133/21 Minute