



30 November 2023

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Development Committee to be held in The Chamber, Cookstown and by virtual means at Burn Road, Cookstown BT80 8DT on Thursday, 16 November 2023 at 19:00 to transact the business noted below.

A link to join the meeting through the Council's remote meeting platform will follow.

Yours faithfully

Adrian McCreesh
Chief Executive

AGENDA

OPEN BUSINESS

1. Notice of Recording
This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's You Tube site [Live Broadcast Link](#)
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
4. Chair's Business
5. Deputation - Outdoor Recreation NI - Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study

Matters for Decision

- | | | |
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| 6. | DfC Access & Inclusion Programme 2023/24 | 3 - 6 |
| 7. | Sperrins Outdoor Partnership | 7 - 66 |
| 8. | Partnership Proposal | 67 - 70 |
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| 10. | Consultation on Private Tenancies Act 2022: Section 8 and Section 10 | 105 - 134 |
| 11. | Regional and Minority Languages | 135 - 188 |
| 12. | Economic Development Report - OBFD | 189 - 550 |

Matters for Information

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| 13. | Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023 | 551 - 564 |
| 14. | Environmental Health Service Update | 565 - 610 |
| 15. | Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2022 | 611 - 676 |
| 16. | Mid Ulster Council Area Community Resuscitation Group Action Plan 2019 – 2023 | 677 - 704 |
| 17. | Economic Development Report - OBF1 | 705 - 714 |

Items restricted in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. The public will be asked to withdraw from the meeting at this point.

Matters for Decision

18. Tender for Play Park Facilities
19. Tender for Active Travel Project
20. SHHP Bellaghy Bawn Writers Residency Project
21. Connecting Pomeroy - Forest Building and Magical Forest Interim Governance Model
22. Development Report
23. Seamus Heaney HomePlace – Catering Contract
24. Economic Development Report - CBFD

Matters for Information

25. Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 12 October 2023

Report on	Update on Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Programme 2023/24
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Leigh Gilmore, Health and Wellbeing Manager

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 provide Members with an update on the 2023/24 Department for Communities (DfC) Access and Inclusion Funding Programme
1.2	To provide Members with the list of projects approved for funding by DfC.
1.3	To seek approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project where required.
1.4	To seek approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required.
2.0	Background
2.1	The DfC Access and Inclusion Capital Programme for 2023/24 is designed to improve access to and participation in arts and cultural activity and leisure and outdoor recreational activity by people with disabilities across Northern Ireland.
2.2	DfC invited Local Councils to apply for funding available through the programme prior to submission to the Department for Communities prior to final Departmental assessment.
2.3	The maximum funding available for each project is £30,000 with a minimum of 10% of overall costs per project being met by Council.
2.4	Council-owned culture & arts, leisure, parks and outdoor recreation and tourism projects were eligible to apply.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	DfC launched the grant programme on 22 August 2023 and required applications to be submitted by the deadline of 21 Sept 2023.
3.2	In total, 5 projects were submitted by Mid Ulster District Council to the DfC Access and Inclusion Capital Programme for 2023/24, with 4 projects successfully progressing and being deemed eligible and subsequently being allocated funding (total value of funding towards projects - £55,591.05)

3.3	<p>The 4 projects approved for funding are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool Pod installation for Dungannon Leisure Centre: funding offer £30,000.00 (total estimated value of project is £52,354.72) • Wet Gallery accessibility enhancement at Dungannon Leisure Centre: funding offer £8,919.00 (total estimated value of project is £9,910) • Accessibility enhancement at the pavilion at Cahore Playing Fields: funding offer £8,086.05 (total estimated value of project is £8,984.50) • Accessible Picnic Tables & Seating for various locations across district area: funding offer £8,586.00 (total estimated value of project is £9,540) <p>One application was rejected by the DfC moderation panel – this was for a proposal to develop further accessible access at Dungannon Leisure Centre – the DfC moderation panel has provided feedback and a possible alternate idea that could be considered for a future application.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: Projects submitted are required to provide matched funding of a minimum of 10%. The 10% match funding requirement can be met from within the existing budgets of applicant Services within Mid Ulster District Council.</p> <p>DfC total value of funding towards projects as listed in section 3.3: £55,591.05. Mid Ulster District Council estimated contribution: £25,198.17.</p> <p>Human: Staff time and staff resource allocated to delivering projects. This can be met from within existing resources within each of the Service teams responsible for delivering each project.</p> <p>Risk Management: All projects approved for funding by DfC, will be required to be completed by 31st March 2024.</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p>

	<p>The Purpose of the DfC Access and Inclusion funding programme 2023/24 is to provide funding to ensure that access to arts, culture, leisure, recreational and outdoor activities is equitable throughout all 11 local authority areas.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: Rural needs are considered as part of the planned activity undertaken by Council Services including Culture & Arts, Leisure, Parks Tourism and Property Services.</p> <p>Rural needs are also considered as part of the delivery of the DfC Access and Inclusion Programme 2023/24.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>Members are asked to note the update on the 2023/24 Department for Communities Access and Inclusion Funding Programme and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept the Letter of Offer from DfC for £55,591.05. • Approval to set up specific finance codes to incur expenditure for each project identified in section 3.3, where required. • Approval to utilise the approved Council framework contractors, where required, to deliver the projects identified in section 3.3 of this report • Approval to allocate the 10% Match funding for projects approved for funding by the Department for Communities through its 2023/24 Access and Inclusion Programme with funding to be met from within existing resources that will be responsible for the management and delivery of each project.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A

Report on	Sperrins Outdoor Partnership
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Martin Conlan, Recreation & Countryside Officer

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 Council approval to contribute £4,000 per year for 2-year period commencing April 2024 up to September 2026 to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins.
2.0	Background
2.1	Previously in October 2023, the Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes department updated the Development Committee on the Sperrins Partnership Project and advised that a further report on a request for additional funding contribution towards the Sperrins Outdoor Activity Development Officer in Years 3 and 4 will be brought back to a future committee for consideration (minute reference: D151/23).
2.2	The Sperrins Partnership Project is a joint collaboration between 4 councils; Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster District Council, who back in 2018 committed to equal financial contribution towards its delivery and have also funded the Sperrins Future Search initiative.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Council's Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan details that it is essential the Council works in partnership with its neighbouring Councils on projects such as developing walking trails in the Sperrins. Current provision is concentrated in several geographic areas and these are particularly important in determining the area's future outdoor recreation proposition namely; the area that falls within the Sperrins Area of Natural Beauty (AONB). A priority action within this Strategic plan is to develop short and medium distance walks across the northwest of the Council area linking into the wider Sperrins area, the mapping out of walking route and trails i.e. signage/waymarking, and has a budget ring-fenced towards this.

3.2	<p>Council is also a regional partner in the WalkNI Consortium. WalkNI.com is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI), a not-for-profit organisation with the vision to create ‘a more active and healthy society appreciating the outdoors.’ As a partner in the WalkNI Marketing Consortium, council benefits in a number of ways including WalkNI actively promoting several walkways and trails in the Sperrins / Mid Ulster Council area and a new mini website has also been developed for the Ulster Way which passes through the Sperrin AONB and Mid Ulster. This includes interactive mapping, suggested itineraries, trail updates and more. (walkni.com)</p> <p>The Outdoor Partnership (TOP)</p>
3.3	<p>The Sperrins Partnership in collaboration and with support from Sport NI and Partner Councils, secured funding through The Outdoor Partnership (TOP) to appoint an Outdoor Activity Development Officer for the Sperrins for a 4-year funded period. The Outdoor Partnership is an organisation based in Wales who work to support people across the UK to take up outdoor activities as a life-long pursuit. Their vision is: “Enhancing people’s lives through outdoor activity.” This means enhancing people’s physical and mental health, and wellbeing while improving the economic return and the social value of outdoor activity such as walking, cycling and adventure sports. The Outdoor Activity Development Officer role is to build capacity, identify training and education needs within outdoor sports and recreation in Sperrins Communities.</p>
3.4	<p>The Outdoor Partnership are the main employer and manage the project with input from Partner Councils. Other aims of the project include enabling communities through promoting sustainable use of the environment, enhancing partnership working through local delivery and improving coach and education and opportunities for volunteering. There is also scope to develop existing clubs and create new clubs identified through a needs analysis. The project is very much focused on grass roots and improving outdoor recreation from within communities. The Officer is currently focused on completing an audit across the region which will identify gaps and opportunities. This exercise is being carried out through effective communication with multiple stakeholders including Council Officials/ Community Groups and National Governing Bodies for sport. Projects are currently being identified across a range of sports and recreational activities.</p> <p>A financial contribution up to 31 March 2024 totalling £12,884.00 has been provided by the Sperrin Partnership budget, this was agreed by partner councils due to some underspend during the early stages of the project, mainly due to the pandemic. Consideration to financial contributions for years 3 and 4 is required. It is suggested that partner councils as a key partner, provide budget provision for these years to ensure the project can continue for its duration.</p> <p>Broken down, the financial contribution requested from each Partner Council is £4,000 in Year 3 and £4,000 in Year 4. The funding sought requires the agreement of all Partner Councils to contribute the additional funding. Such funding will allow for some programming costs to be included. The draft</p>

3.5	<p>Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is enclosed within the appendix for consideration.</p> <p>The Outdoor Partnership – Stakeholder Group</p> <p>Council’s Recreation and Countryside Officer will attend quarterly Sperrin’s Outdoor Partnership meetings and will liaise with the relevant stakeholders and projects relevant to the Officers remit as and when required.</p> <p>The stakeholder group composition includes nominated individuals (or organisations) that have signed the Memorandum of Understanding. Other organisations and individuals are able to attend meetings and participate in activities but will not be able to participate in decision making.</p> <p>The Outdoor Development Officer will report to the Stakeholder Group to cover at least the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of Actin Plan and activities for the following year 2. Progress against action plan 3. Budget monitoring
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: The Sperrins Partnership Project is presently funded by 4 Partner Councils at a total annual cost of c£88,000 (£22,000 per Council). Officers are currently looking at options to secure additional funding from external sources for relevant projects. Each Council has committed £22,000 to Sperrins Partnership for the current financial year. As reported by the Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes department via their report to the Development Committee in October 2023, a similar financial request from Sperrins Partnership will be brought to Committee for consideration early in the new 2024/25 financial year, subject to available budgets, to seek to extend the project (minute reference: D151/23). This funding contribution is via the Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes departmental revenue budget.</p> <p>The proposal outlined within this paper is to contribute £4,000.00 per year for 2-year period commencing April 2024 up to September 2026 to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins.</p> <p>Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.</p> <p>Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council policies and procedures.</p>

<p>4.2</p>	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Recommendation(s)</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p>To note the contents of the reports, permit the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and give approval for Mid Ulster District Council to make a contribution of £4,000.00 per year for 2-year period (April 2024 up to September 2026) to support continuation of The Outdoor Partnership Project in the Sperrins as outlined within this report and subject to confirmation of the reciprocal financial contribution of all partner councils.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
<p>6.1</p>	<p>Appendix A: Sperrins MOU Appendix B: Mid Ulster Future Search report</p>

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

“Opening Doors to the Outdoors”

This Agreement is made on:

BETWEEN

Y Bartneriaeth Awyr Agored/ The Outdoor Partnership (Company No 07705219: Charity No 1149280)
Plas Menai
The National Outdoor Centre
Caernarfon
LL551UE
(Herein after called the Client)

AND

The Sperrins Stakeholder Group made up of the signatories to this memorandum of understanding and any additional organisations who may join the group.

(Herein after called the Stakeholder Group)

Whereby

1. This Project is a people led community project which is delivered by local communities, enhancing people’s lives through outdoor activities across the Sperrins.
2. This memorandum of understanding is the basis on which the Stakeholder Group and the Client will work to deliver the outcomes.
3. The Client will provide support to The Outdoor Partnership in accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding.
4. The Stakeholder Group will establish and develop The Outdoor Partnership offer in the Sperrins area in accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding.

IN CONSIDERATION OF the matters described above and for the mutual benefits and obligations, the Client and the Stakeholder Group agree as follows:

OVERALL VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5. Both parties agree to adopt the vision and objectives set out by The Outdoor Partnership as described in the Outdoor Partnerships updated 10 year Strategy.
6. The Stakeholder Group agree to seek to deliver the following outcomes
 - Support and deliver a programme that supports the expressed needs of their communities
 - Establishment of The Outdoor Partnership in the Sperrins area.
 - To work with The Outdoor Partnership and other partners to seek additional resources and funding to achieve the outcomes set in the new 10 year strategy.

TERM OF AGREEMENT

7. The length of this agreement will be from the date of the agreement and will be reviewed annually.

REPRESENTATIVES

8. The Client will be represented by the Programme Manager and the Project Delivery Partner (RPT Consulting) who will manage this agreement on behalf of the client.
9. The Stakeholder Group will be represented by the appointed chair.
10. Observers and advisors who are not SHG members will be allowed to attend by invitation from the SHG.
11. SHG members can if required nominate substitutes to represent them, when unable to attend.

Meetings

12. The Client and Stakeholder Group will meet at least bi- annually to discuss and review performance and future activities.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMITMENTS

13. Support operational approaches to delivering programmes and seeking additional resources.
14. Sharing good practice with other areas of operation across the UK.
15. The Outdoor Partnership will develop a long-term sustainable plan for the Sperrins.
16. Provide the experience and expertise of TOP developed over 18 years.
17. Facilitate and lead knowledge sharing and learning between areas.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMITMENTS

18. To uphold and promote the ethos and values of TOP and the TOP brand.
19. To support the Sperrins Stake holder group.
20. Support the Development Officer to develop new activities and programmes to deliver on the sustainable outcomes set out in the strategic plan and assist in creating a network of partners to support.
21. Participate in knowledge sharing and learning with TOP and other areas
22. To provide advice, advocate and support on behalf of the SHG and any projects or programmes which it delivers.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

23. The SHG recognise and acknowledge the intellectual property rights of TOP brand, operational procedures, manuals, publicity, marketing material, software, social media use and will not use any of the material without the agreement of TOP.
24. No commercial gain will be made from the use of IPR without the agreement of TOP

HEALTH & SAFETY & INSURANCE

25. The Client is responsible (through the Programme Manager) for ensuring that the appropriate insurances are in place for any activities that are organised or commissioned.

MARKETING, BRANDING AND COMMUNICATION

26. Where appropriate the SHG is able to use TOP marketing and branding literature and media in accordance with the brand guidelines.



John Woods

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27th October 2017

The Sperrins: Reaching New Heights, Realising Our Potential



Future Search Conference Report



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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The Sperrins Future Search conference brought together a group of key stakeholders to create an action plan for the future of the Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) summed up in the words 'reaching new heights, realising our potential'.

The event was initiated by the four local councils responsible for the area with a view to enabling participants to agree a common mission, to take responsibility for action and to develop commitment to implementation. It took place over three days and involved 60 participants drawn from a wide range of stakeholder groups: community, land owners/farmers, government departments and

statutory agencies, tourism, heritage and environment, outdoor recreation, business and industry, elected representatives and young people.

The conference embarked upon a collective journey that developed over five sessions labelled Past, Present, Future, Common Ground, and Action. Each involved gathering information, sharing understandings in small groups, reports to the whole, and large group dialogues. Each session built on the previous one and the product was a number of common ground statements and an action plan.



Five Common Ground Statements

Example Actions

(Full action plans are in section 11)

1. Environment and Heritage:

The spirit, environment and heritage of the Sperrins is conserved, enhanced and responsibly managed so that those who live, work and visit can enjoy, celebrate and respect.

Review and feedback to Community Plan, Local Development Plan and other statutory plans.

Audit of existing Heritage and Environment resource.

Sperrins Day/Weekend: 'Spring in the Sperrins'. Annual event.

2. Infrastructure:

We provide safe and interesting networks for recreation that complement the environment. We are linked into the wider tourism offering in Ireland. We provide modern communications for the Sperrins.

Audit of infrastructure to establish baseline.

Define potential: greenways, routeways, access to transport.

Implement full marketing plan.

3. Brand and Tourism:

The Sperrins, spurs of rock, is a great natural, undiscovered and unspoilt destination that is recognised and cherished by others as it is by those who live and work here, and is steeped in history, rich in culture and with majestic views.

Definition: the area, essence, product.

Research: Essence of the Sperrins: - What is it? - Where is it? - What is the USP? - Why would people visit?

4. Community:

We are a community of people of varying needs and aspirations, fuelled by our passion to ensure a strong, vibrant, happy community with equal access to social, health, educational, cultural, economic and creative opportunities. We are the custodians who have lived, loved and worked the land for generations, past, present and future. The beauty of the Sperrins is reflected in the beauty of its people.

Four councils community planning and community services teams to meet and coordinate.

Gather community development groups together to enable networking, to discuss the way forward and to further develop.

5. Management Structures:

We are creating a management structure fit for purpose with the necessary resources, authority and expertise, taking forward our shared vision for the Sperrins to enhance an area of beauty we can live and work in.

Examine models of best practice of delivery/ structural mechanisms based on what works elsewhere.

Key messages

Emerging from the three days of discussion that crafted these five Common Ground Statements and the associated Action Plans are a number of key messages that help inform what the next steps should be.

Definition: There is uncertainty as to what is meant by 'the Sperrins' in terms of geographical area and therefore the scope of the conference. The discussions that took place suggest that there is a probable consensus around treating the AONB as the core while embracing the critical relationships between communities in the AONB and neighbouring larger settlements.

Place: Participants feel a very strong sense of 'place', of being connected to where they live and extending to a great love of that place. Their sense of identity is not necessarily embodied in the Sperrins as a whole but rather in their particular part of it. At the same time there is pride and enthusiasm for the past, present and future of the Sperrins.

Strategy: Critical to achieving the aspirations of this conference is a strategic approach to the Sperrins. Past efforts at managing the AONB have been piecemeal and often short lived. This conference is an important first step in the right direction.

Structure: A successful strategic approach requires the right partnership for the Sperrins comprising the necessary authority, resources, legitimacy and expertise. There is agreement that this must be an inclusive structure specifically designed for the task and should learn from best practice and other governance models elsewhere.

Leadership: Initially the four councils are expected to provide the necessary commitment and leadership to achieve the aspirations of the conference. Leadership must come from all sectors, however, in a collective effort to work in a connected way towards common goals. This is especially true given the lack of political direction from Stormont – a major theme throughout the conference.

Participation: There is an expectation that the participants in the Future Search event will be involved in developments that flow from it and that there will also be wider stakeholder and community participation.

Joined up: The importance of links with Community Plans, Local Development Plans and the draft Programme for Government, as well as existing policies and programmes was emphasised.

Audit: Participants want a clear picture of existing physical infrastructure and resources, community infrastructure, programmes, policy and governance.

Research: Most of the working groups identified the need for research ahead of implementing actions.

Connection: Sperrin communities have much in common with each other and there is a desire to strengthen connections within the AONB. Connection and relationships within communities is also important.

Conflict: While the Future Search process is predicated on consensus building it also recognises the need to make space for those things that are 'not agreed'. Although participants did not record a list of 'not agrees' it is clear that conflict and division are live issues: mining, quarrying and wind turbines were all mentioned. The passion behind such issues was also evident outside the conference on the first day.

More Than Tourism: It is clear that while participants see tourism as a critical and under-developed part of the local economy with great potential, their perception of the Sperrins is a more holistic one encompassing a range of economic and social opportunities. There is a strong focus on what supports the health and wellbeing of the local population and the environment they inhabit.

Appetite For Action: There is real enthusiasm from all participants, whether locally based or from external agencies, for following up on the conference and putting words into action.

Next steps

Suggested next steps are:

1. Each of the conference's five action planning groups (Environment & Heritage, Infrastructure, Brand & Tourism, Community and Management Structures) meets before the end of November 2017 to:

- a.** clarify the actions suggested in each action plan to ensure they are easily understood,
- b.** confirm what participants are ready and willing to do now within existing resources,
- c.** consider if any additional participants should be part of that action planning group.

2. Each of the four councils will take the lead on a common ground statement and host the

meeting in their area of the Sperrins. The councils' Future Search Planning Group (Chief Executives or nominated Director) will meet collectively with the Management Structures group.

3. Reconvene the Future Search Conference (including new members of the action planning groups) early in the New Year to launch the conference report, report back on thematic group action plans and learn from best practice elsewhere.

Conference narrative

Introduction

1. Background

The Sperrin Mountains are in Counties Tyrone and Derry/Londonderry within an area bounded by the towns of Strabane, Dungiven, Maghera, Magherafelt, Cookstown and Omagh. The Sperrins are the largest and least explored mountain range in Northern Ireland.

Originally designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1968, the Sperrins encompasses a largely mountainous area of great geological complexity with an abundance of natural tourism resources, such as lakes, rivers, valleys and forests. It provides an attractive destination for a wide range of outdoor activities and the area is rich in historic and archaeological heritage and folklore.

The Sperrins AONB occupies a total area of 1181km² broken down across the four

respective Councils (the boundary of the Sperrins AONB is shown at Annex A):

- * Derry City & Strabane District Council – 447km² (38%)
- * Fermanagh & Omagh District Council – 301km² (25%)
- * Mid Ulster District Council – 256km² (22%)
- * Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council – 177km² (15%)

The recent reform of local government has presented an opportunity for the new councils to lead and co-ordinate discussions with the various stakeholders with a view to realising the potential of the Sperrins while protecting and enhancing the natural heritage of the region. To this end the four councils decided to organise a Future Search Conference of Sperrins' stakeholders and this took place in Cookstown from the 27th to the 29th of September 2017.

Future Search Principles

- "Whole System" in the room
- "Whole elephant" as context for local action
- Focus on future and common ground - not past problems and conflicts
- Self-management and responsibility for action

2. What is Future Search?

Future Search is a unique planning method used world-wide by hundreds of communities and organizations. The method enables large diverse groups to validate a common mission to take responsibility for action and to develop commitment to implementation.

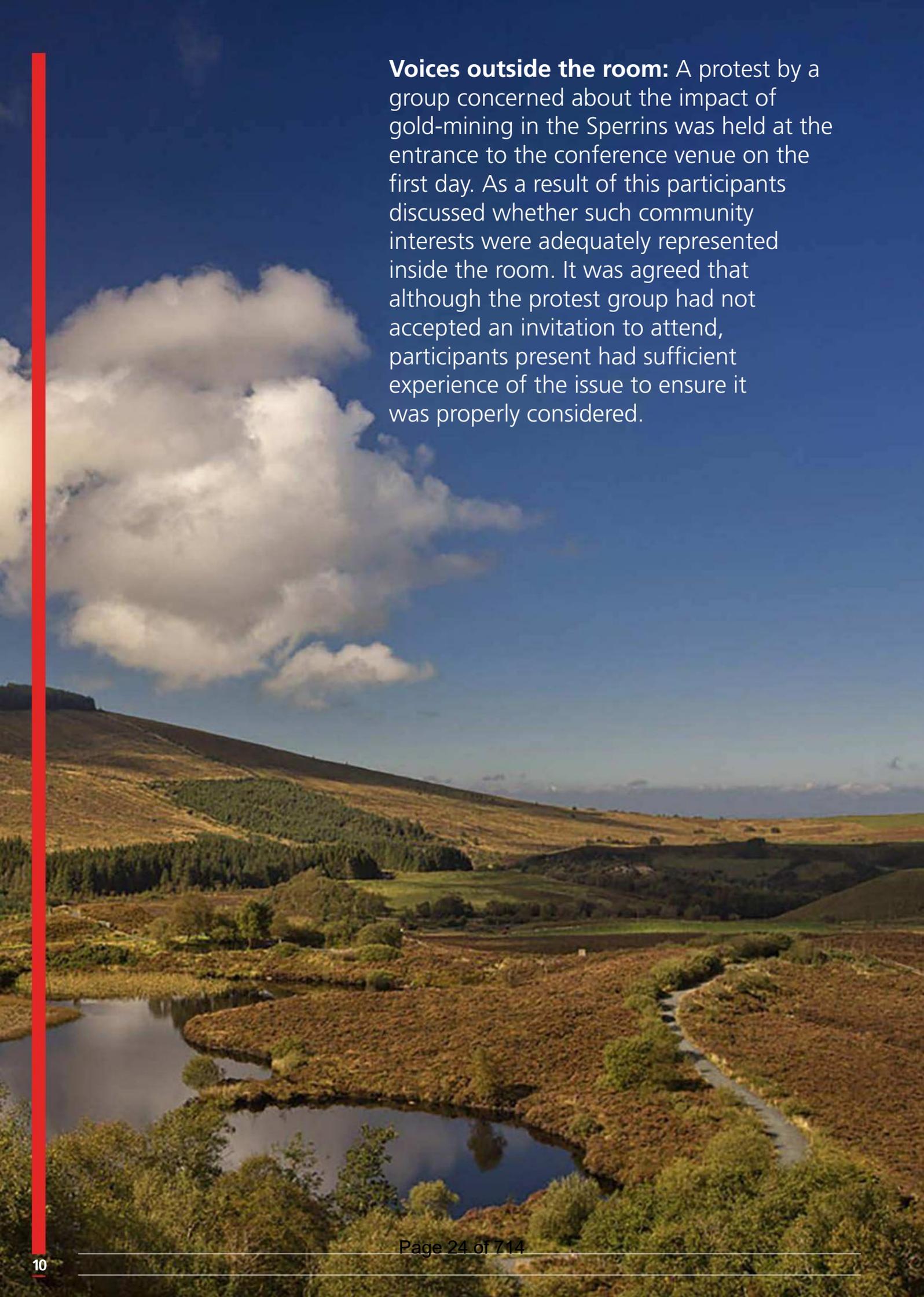
Typically Future Search involves 60 to 80 people meeting over three days and working in small groups as 'stakeholders' (shared perspectives), and in mixed groups that are a cross-section of the whole. Every person has a chance to speak and listen. This makes possible a shared picture based on the experience of all those present.

The meeting is also managed so that the entire group can be in dialogue when necessary. Future Search follows tested principles based on what it takes to enable people to act cooperatively without having to defend or sell

their own agendas or give up cherished values.

The first principle involves 'getting the whole system in the room' - meaning people with authority, resources, expertise, information and need. The second involves putting the focal issue in global perspective, helping each person to see a bigger picture than usual. The third requires seeking common ground and desirable futures, while treating problems and conflicts as information, not action items. The fourth asks people to manage their own small groups and take responsibility for acting on what they learn.⁽¹⁾

There are five sessions labelled Past, Present, Future, Common Ground, and Action. Each involves gathering information, sharing understandings in small groups, reports to the whole, and large group dialogues. Each session builds on the previous one and the product is an action plan and follow-up structure.

A scenic landscape of rolling hills and a winding river under a blue sky with white clouds. The foreground shows a river winding through a valley with green and brown vegetation. The middle ground features rolling hills with patches of forest and open fields. The background shows a clear blue sky with large, fluffy white clouds. A vertical red bar is on the left side of the page.

Voices outside the room: A protest by a group concerned about the impact of gold-mining in the Sperrins was held at the entrance to the conference venue on the first day. As a result of this participants discussed whether such community interests were adequately represented inside the room. It was agreed that although the protest group had not accepted an invitation to attend, participants present had sufficient experience of the issue to ensure it was properly considered.

Conference narrative

Introduction



3. Opening and introductions

The Sperrins Future Search Conference was opened by the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council and Chair of Mid Ulster District Council who then handed over to the conference facilitators, Sandra Janoff and Aiden McGinley (see Annex B for biographies), who explained the process, principles and task ahead. They emphasised that this event is about all aspects of life in the Sperrins, that all voices will be heard and that the list of participants had been drawn up with this in mind. Participants in the event fell into nine stakeholder groups:

- * Community
- * Land Owners/Farmers
- * Govt Departments & Statutory Agencies
- * Tourism
- * Heritage & Environment
- * Outdoor Recreation
- * Business & Industry
- * Elected Representatives
- * Young People

After participants had introduced themselves, the question 'Are we the right people to do this work?' was asked. It was noted that the Young People group had no members and it was explained that given the timing of the conference it had proved very difficult to secure participation from this group.⁽²⁾ A one-day conference focused on young people was suggested. It was noted that 'health and wellbeing' was not directly represented but a number of participants felt they were actively involved in that area. It was also noted that a substantial proportion of those present were people who live and work in the Sperrins.

Further explanation of the process included the task, agenda and conditions for success. The facilitators explained that although this is very much an action-orientated event, we need to exercise a little patience so that "action is based on an informed understanding of the reality." To that end, the conference split into groups and spent a bit of time exploring 'what the Sperrins means to me'.

Focus on the past

4. The story of who we are

The first exercise of the conference aimed to enable participants to understand the Sperrins in the broadest possible context and so they were asked to think about the past from four perspectives.

- a. Personal: Key experiences that have shaped your life.
- b. World: Events that have shaped our global society.
- c. Northern Ireland: Milestones and events in Northern Ireland.
- d. The Sperrins: Critical events and milestones in the Sperrins' history.

Participants thought these things through as individuals and then transferred their thoughts to timeline charts on the walls of the conference room. There was a timeline for each of the four perspectives and it was divided into four timeframes: pre 1987, 1987-97, 1998-2007 and 2008-now.

After a time the walls were covered with a mass of personal and public events at which point the conference divided into seven mixed groups to use the data to establish a framework for discussion.

Personal: The first group was asked to use the 'personal' time line to 'tell a story of who we are in this room' and examine the implications of this story for the work of the conference. They described themselves as individuals from diverse backgrounds in terms of age, religion and place, a resourceful people with a strong sense of community and open to sharing with each other and with others. A sense of place and pride in the area and its artistic and cultural heritage is an important part of that identity.

The implications are wide ranging and sometimes conflicting. They include constraints on development; the lifecycle, scale and spirit of the area; and a strong sense of identity

alongside rivalry between councils. A champion is needed and something to hook visitors in.

World events: The second group was asked to use the 'world events' time line to tell a story about how our global society has changed in the past decades and the implications of this for the work of the conference. This started with the ice-age and its impact on the landscape and then moving swiftly forward to the industrial revolution, emigration, world wars, the Common Market, peace building, the financial and economic crashes, immigration, Brexit and the Trump effect with the latter events having an as yet unknown impact. Alongside these historical events was the rapid development of technology and the emergence of the digital era.

Northern Ireland: Two further groups were asked to use the Northern Ireland time line to tell a story about the changes in the past decades and the implications of this for the work of the conference. Both groups took the Flight of the Earls as their starting point moving on through the Plantation of Ulster, the partition of Ireland, the civil rights movement (in its global context), and the troubles. They highlighted the impact of the EU, mechanisation and intensification in farming and forestry and depopulation of the area. Since 1987 there has been the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, devolution, the ability to legislate and the possibility of focusing on more 'normal' issues. There are now opportunities to think and act locally in a sustainable way that celebrates our environment. Investment is needed in tourism and in settlements and there is a need for stable government.

The Sperrins: Two groups were asked to use the Sperrins time line to tell a story of what has happened locally over the years and the implications of this for the work of the

conference. The time line began with the formation of the landscape we know today 600 million years ago, through evidence of early civilisation such as stone circles and the rich archaeological heritage of the area. This was followed by the emergence of agriculture, quarrying, small and medium industries, experience of flooding and erosion, the establishment of the AONB, the Folk Park and other links built with the USA, the start of tourism, depopulation, and the Rural College came and went. Conflict emerged between economic, social and environmental priorities e.g. gold mining, wind turbines and mineral abstraction. In the absence of a strategic approach to tourism or the AONB, development through community initiatives has had an important impact. All this implies the need for a more joined up and strategic approach.

All four time lines: The final group was asked to use all four time lines to tell a story of what has happened over the years and the implications of this for the work of the conference. This group painted a picture of rural diversity and of changing demographics. They detected that people want change based on new ideas, beliefs and structures. The digital community is stronger but connectivity is poor – both digitally and physically. There is great power to be found in community groups and in building community from the bottom up. We could start by connecting up all 55 development officers in the area. We should have confidence in what we have.

Plenary Discussion

We are not sure what exists in the Sperrins - what assets we actually have. We need to know more about what exists.

Is there a Sperrins identity? What are we selling to the outside world? There isn't much of a Sperrins identity. We are peripheral to different councils. Should we create an identity that doesn't exist? Should we follow the example of the Burren? What are we doing here today? Is it a tourism plan? Is it a community plan?

What is the common bond for the Sperrins? Where is the plan, where is the continuity? There is an elephant in the room somewhere.

We are here because the four councils sensed a need to react to concerns about what is going on in the Sperrins. This is the start of a conversation. We want to leave the Sperrins in good shape for the next generation. Part of the problem is that there has been no funding from government for the AONB because there is no management body. We need to harness the passion in this room and beyond – including the passion of the demonstrators here this morning.

Is the size part of the problem? Or is it an opportunity? We have a culture, landscape, and communities who have a strong identity but it is not necessarily a Sperrins identity. A good portion of the Sperrins was, and often is, known as Muintir Luinigh/Munterloney. The remoteness and quietness is special but we could share it with many others.

We agree that we have the right people in the room.



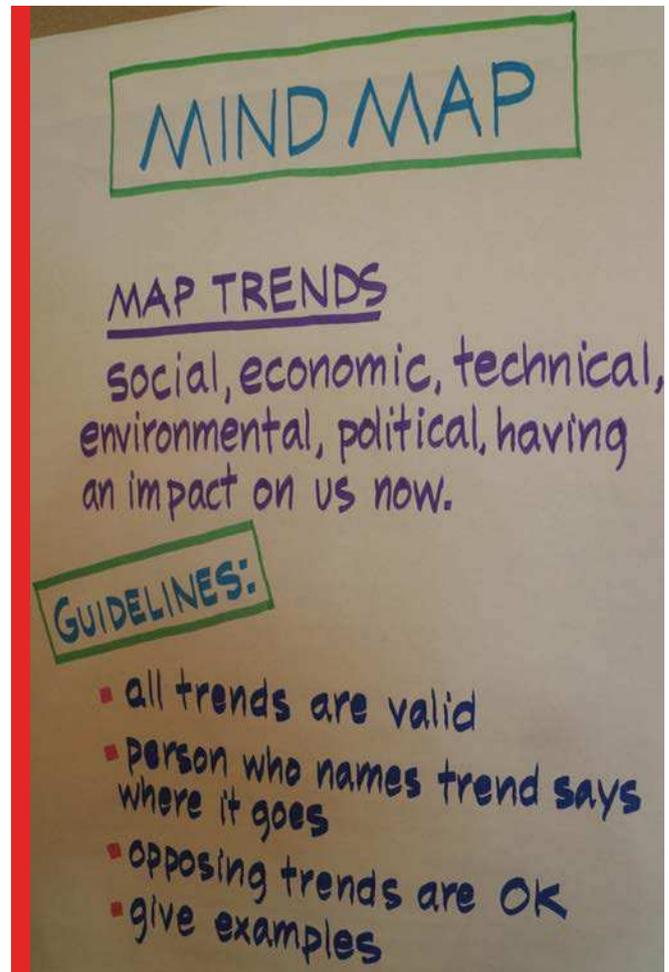
Focus on the present

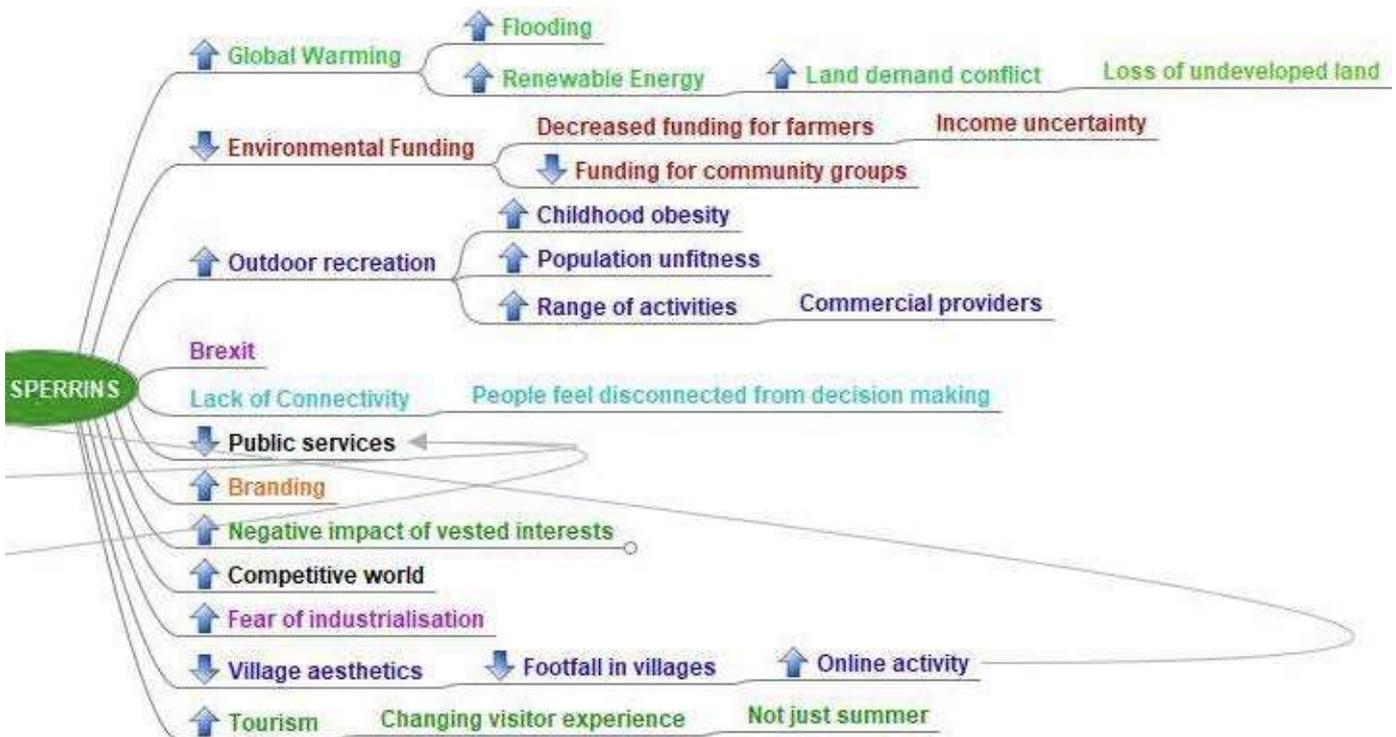
5. Trends affecting the Sperrins

The focus of the conference then shifted to the present day with an examination of the external trends affecting the Sperrins. The aim was to create a social, economic and technological context for dialogue that included everybody's perceptions of key trends.

A trend implies a direction of change: from more to less, less to more, greater to smaller, smaller to greater, and so on. The idea was to observe what is happening and defer judgment and analysis. This task was done as a single large group collectively creating a wall-sized mind map. A representation of the finished map is shown below.

Once the map was finished and after time to reflect, participants were each given a number of dots (different colours for each stakeholder group) and were asked to place the dots against the trends that they felt were the most important.







6. How trends affect what we do

The second day of the conference opened with reflection on the mind map created the previous afternoon. Participants used the distribution of coloured dots to identify clusters of top trends as follows:

- Infrastructure
- Tourism
- Environmental funding
- Global warming
- Awareness of mental health
- Lack of political direction
- Outdoor recreation
- Branding
- Community/Industrialisation

The conference then divided into its stakeholder groups. The purpose for the next stage was to find connections between key trends and learn what people are doing now and want to do in the future with respect to the Sperrins, bearing in mind that how trends are related leads to better decisions and solutions than dealing with each trend in isolation.

The task was to select three or four trends of greatest concern to the group, to draw a mind map to show how they are related, say what people (individually or as a group) are doing right now to anticipate or respond to these trends, and what new actions they want to take in the future.

Council officers: This group selected four trends: funding (down); lack of political direction (up); outdoor recreation and increased demand for access (up); demand for infrastructure (up).

The things being done right now include a more joined up approach through Community Planning and Local Development Strategies. Work on the ground includes a Culture and Heritage Strategic Framework, forest recreation



(councils and Forest Service working together) and angling (Loughs Agency and councils).

New actions for the future are an AONB Management and Action Plan; a new business leadership programme for the rural area; and increase local engagement and partnership working.

We have had experience of many disparate bodies operating over the years and we don't want more of the same. Our job is to maximise the product – commercial, public, private or community. We need to develop the recreational resource for both visitors and the local community.

We need to have an understanding of what the Sperrins are and then develop a strategic approach to the future of the Sperrins – that is what needs to come from this conference.

Elected representatives: Two key trends are the lack of political direction and lack of finance. Central government gives nothing to the west of the Bann. Another is depopulation: people make an area and we need more people living in the area which means allowing more building and better infrastructure.

A Sperrins brand is needed for tourism and outdoor recreation. Community Planning plays an important role and we need more greenways, festivals, and initiatives like the International Appalachian Trail.

A strategic approach and management plan is critical with the four councils establishing joint authority - adopting a similar approach to cross-council working used by building control.

Government departments and agencies:

The trends selected were lack of political direction, demand for outdoor recreation and demand for infrastructure.

Members of this group observed that Government departments and agencies seldom meet in the way that this conference has enabled. They need to improve on this. There is immense pressure on budgets leading to staff losses and requiring prioritisation of spending. If communities are not promoted to departments, they are neglected.

The draft Programme for Government uses the Outcomes Based Accountability approach and asks the question 'who is better off as a result of what has been done'. This alongside Community Planning could be a positive development. The future must be based on a management and action plan for the AONB with increased local engagement and more partnership working.

Business & industry: The first trend identified by this group was the lack of political direction. Business and industry have been encouraged to ask MLAs to lobby on their behalf but this can't be effective in the absence of government at Stormont.

The demand for infrastructure includes roads, broadband, sewage, flood defences and energy. There is a supply of local materials so infrastructure bodies should buy local and help create jobs. Energy firms are providing security in the form of jobs and skills and this helps to keep people in the area.

Growth in tourism can be achieved by promoting the industrial heritage of the Sperrins and accommodation in B&Bs etc. needs to be developed. The final trend is all about people: there is emigration and therefore skills shortages. We need apprenticeships and there is uncertainty for migrant workers due to Brexit. The challenge now is to continue to manage current and future industrialisation.

Youth: A key trend is the lack of political direction leading to lack of continuity, things not being joined up and stalled decisions. This leads, for example, to poor infrastructure and failure to tackle mental health issues. To capitalise on tourism as a trend we need to come together to invest for further development.

Current work includes Community Plans and the Year of Youth 2019. Activities have tended to be short term programmes with stop-start pattern. Lobbying is needed to secure long term development.

For the future we need long term commitment to a cohesive structure and resources for youth engagement and to create jobs for young people.

Outdoor recreation: This group selected the trends: infrastructure demand (up); tourism & outdoor recreation (up); political direction (down); and funding (down).

The AONB has no management plan, governance body or funding and this leads to a lack of protection from major infrastructure proposals. Visitors are important for the local economy and yet the Gortin Glen masterplan remains unimplemented and councils lack commitment. This means that in terms of what is happening right now, we are not fulfilling our responsibility for the AONB. In the future we must use our influence to protect and celebrate the Sperrins as an AONB.

Landowners: This group identified with many of the trends mentioned by the other groups. The lack of clarity regarding policies creating uncertainty is a major concern for this group. As landowners this is our business and our job is to protect the land but there is uncertainty about income as a result of this. We feel we are poor relations to the Mourne, the Antrim Plateau and Fermanagh Lakelands AONBs.

Global warming has a big impact - flooding has been devastating.

There are challenges for tourism regarding access to land/trespassing/liability and landowners are happy to engage with appropriate bodies. We need to engage with

all stakeholders to get the balance right and to help develop a product that will help Sperrins businesses. The health of families, livestock and land is so important to all who live in the Sperrins.

There is conflict over land use – energy, mining and mineral extraction and this needs to be dealt with by planners in a strategic manner.

Community: Coordinated tourism branding is needed and tourism and planning need to be linked and built on our heritage and history.

Large scale industrial development divides the community and it has a severe effect on the health and wellbeing of the Sperrins population e.g. concerns about the health impact of cyanide use in gold mining. Wind turbines don't exist in the Mourne AONB and therefore shouldn't be in the Sperrins either. At the same time services are diminishing through lack of funding and schools, essential to the community, are closing. The Sperrins include some of the worst wards in NI in terms of lack of services.

We need community involvement from the bottom up where there is a track record in addressing health and wellbeing. We also need council led initiatives and community capacity building.

Environment & heritage: The trends selected were political direction (down); global warming (up); funding (down); and outdoor recreation and tourism (up).

There is an overarching need for a strategic body (a trust) and management plan. A new group needs to be set up to deal with flooding and renewable energy – controversial issues in the AONB. Community led initiatives are the driving force locally yet funding is falling. We need to join up, replicate, and secure council commitment.

Local community lead initiatives and local businesses like the Jungle NI are the future of outdoor recreation and tourism and must be supported. Davagh Forest Trails are brilliant but need more investment.

There are real concerns about industrialisation – we need this but not on a large scale. We need to capitalise on what has already been carried out. More lobbying is needed and we should learn from best practices elsewhere – possibly the Belfast Hills and from Scotland.

Tourism: It takes all of us to deliver a tourism product. Although we have some good tourism products such as music, heritage and golf, we have no clear identity or brand for the Sperrins. This has been attempted in the past but hasn't been well done. On the funding trend, people need to take action and stop waiting for the politicians in Stormont or the councils.

The councils need to find a model of excellence for working together. They have often not worked well together in the past and that must not be repeated. The Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership has done good work.

Outdoor recreation is only part of the tourism product and we shouldn't be afraid to try something new.

Plenary discussion

This process is encouraging and elected representatives need to take responsibility and drive things forward. There is a commonality of issues and a strong will to work together with everyone pushing for a shared vision and a joint approach.

The AONB is what connects us but who will run with this? We should look at other AONB management bodies. This is an issue – how can it become an outcome?

There are common themes and issues emerging that should be tackled from the bottom up as part of the community. The common denominator is that no one organisation can provide the solution. The answer is a collective of bodies in this room and outside this room. Shared responsibility is needed.

Next year it will be 50 years since the Sperrins AONB was established but it has degraded over 50 years. We need to stop that now by ensuring everyone is involved.

Focus on the present

7. 'Prouds' and 'Sorries'

The purpose of this session was to enable participants to take responsibility for what they are doing and not doing. Working in stakeholder groups they brainstormed two lists based on the following questions:

- "What are you doing right now (individually or as a group) that you are proud of in your relationship to the Sperrins?"

- "What are you sorry about?"

The emphasis was on individuals/groups owning up to their own actions, not blaming or complaining about other people.

Each group selected their three "top prouds" and three "top sorries." These are shown in the table on next page.



Plenary discussion

We need to focus on the kind of strategic management structure we want. Past structures haven't worked. The human connection is important – government is comprised of humans. The Belfast Hills Partnership is a model worth looking at. We should ensure it is a flexible structure that everyone is bought into. There will be different mechanisms to achieve different things. To secure funding we must have an agreed way forward and the Councils can also work together and share services.

“Prouds”	“Sorries”
Community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of Broughderg Centre, archaeological tourism, landscape programme • NI's first greenfield festival • Raising awareness of language and cultural history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal sacrifice • We didn't get together sooner – missed opportunities • Didn't prevent contentious industrialisation proposals getting this far
Landowners/Farmers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with the soul of the area, appreciating its beauty and life force and sharing this with others • Contribution to the land and livestock and connection to the wellbeing of the area and its animals • Taking time to get to know the Sperrins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sorry: I can only do my best to 'protect' what I perceive to be precious • I haven't tried to understand people better – a closed mind • Haven't taken time to know the Sperrins better
Tourism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding the tourism product • Still here willing to talk after 25 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge of area • Working more coherently together • Not connecting with new audiences the way we would like to
Heritage & Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage • Community • To live here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We expected others to do more • Didn't value the Sperrins more until now • We have not promoted the Sperrins enough
Elected representatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This conference • Proactive in highlighting rural issues • Heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ignorance of Sperrins • Haven't realised a management plan • Outdoor recreation opportunities unrealised
Industry and business	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great companies providing employment and supporting communities • Innovation in engineering • Promoting and supporting tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnect between extraction industry and community • Mismanagement of farming impacts on the environment • Lack of investment
Outdoor recreation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing passion for the Sperrins • Doraville objection • Gortin Forest Park management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haven't been vocal enough • History Park in Gortin Glen closed • Don't visit here often enough
Council officers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new product • Developing best bespoke policy • Supporting community actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have not agreed 'Vision' • Local response to changing Sperrins/rural needs • Loyalty to invisible boundaries
Government departments and agencies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing funding • Supporting infrastructure • Capacity to promote globally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy • We can't provide long term commitments • We don't come together



Focus on the future

8. Desired Future Scenarios

The purpose of the next stage of the conference was to imagine a future that participants believed in and that they were willing to work towards. Working in mixed groups, participants were asked to “Put yourself thirteen years into the future. Today is 29 September 2030. Your dreams are now a reality. The Sperrins is an extraordinary resource where stakeholders feel a sense of ownership and belonging. We are living its potential and sharing responsibility.”

They were asked to describe a scenario in concrete terms using the following as prompts:

- Describe the Sperrins.
- Structures, policies and programmes that keep the dream alive.
- How stakeholders work in partnership.
- How we communicate and sustain the vision.
- Accomplishments through the years.
- Think back to 2017. Note the main roadblock you had to remove to clear the way to where you are now.

Scenarios were to be:

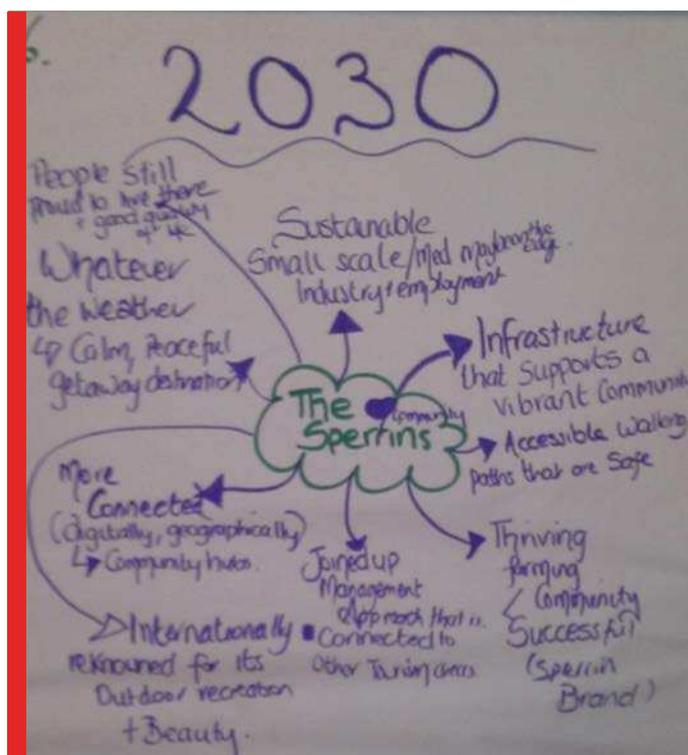
- Feasible – The technical know-how exists to implement it.
- Desirable – Society benefits from its implementation.
- Motivating – Participants are ready, willing and able to work to make it happen.

Group 1: Our vision is of an enhanced natural environment: waterfalls, heather, picnic tables, parking, cycle routes, better roads, camping, nightscape, dark sky structure, signage, shared community halls and even a mountainside rollercoaster.

There is a joint management plan with a committee structure that meets in the Sperrins comprising political representatives, councils, Tourism NI, heritage and landscape, funding bodies, community representatives and an AONB officer.

We have enhanced the natural heritage, improved health and wellbeing and there is civic ownership of the Sperrins and a heightened sense of pride from the people who live there. There are educational programmes, branding and promotional material, sustained communication, training, ambassadors and better protection and enforcement in the AONB. The Sperrins are promoted for all with fewer constraints.

The roadblocks we encountered were the lack of a joined up approach from government, land conflict and lack of funding.



Group 2: There is a wide range of accommodation and plenty to do in the Sperrins. The Jungle, the Ponderosa, the Shepherd's Rest, Davagh Forest, Gortin Glen, the Sperrins Fun Farm and the International Appalachian Trail are just some of the many thriving attractions. There is cooperation with the Roe Valley and guiding in different languages is available. There is cross-selling, good signage, Irish language promotion, music

Group 5: We live in an intact functioning ecosystem with the wild places of the Sperrins at its heart. It is a valued and protected resource. The AONB has reached its potential containing happy communities pursuing a huge range of activities such as an artisan food sector, cycle routes, walking routes, archaeology, farming, tourist accommodation, music, technology and both primary and secondary education. All this has provided new employment and opportunities. We have a well-developed tourism product with a clear identity that is recognised internationally. An enabling structure has been established. It includes multiple stakeholders and is a blend of government and community.

Our accomplishments have been to find a balance between 21st century living and the environment of the AONB; a balanced and growing economy; high value food products; and a £30 million investment in a national museum.

Along the way we faced the challenge of ensuring that development was compassionate to the environment and recognised residents' attachment to their local area. We had to develop a willingness to compromise and we overcame poor communications finding ways to engage positively with farmers, for example. Infrastructure development was a challenge that we met through proper planning processes.

Group 6: The people of the Sperrins are proud to live here and have a good quality of life. Whatever the weather, this is a calm and peaceful getaway destination that is internationally renowned for its outdoor

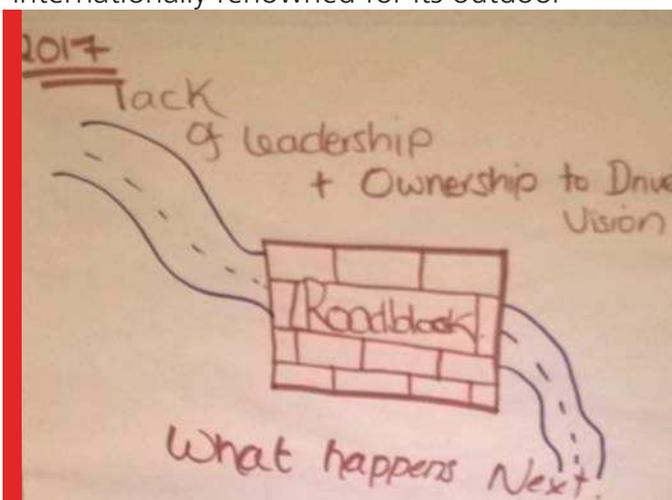
recreation and beauty and there is a joined up management approach that is connected to other tourism areas. We are more connected digitally and geographically through community hubs. There is sustainable, small scale industry and employment; infrastructure that supports a vibrant community; accessible walking paths that are safe; and we have a thriving farming community with a successful Sperrins brand.

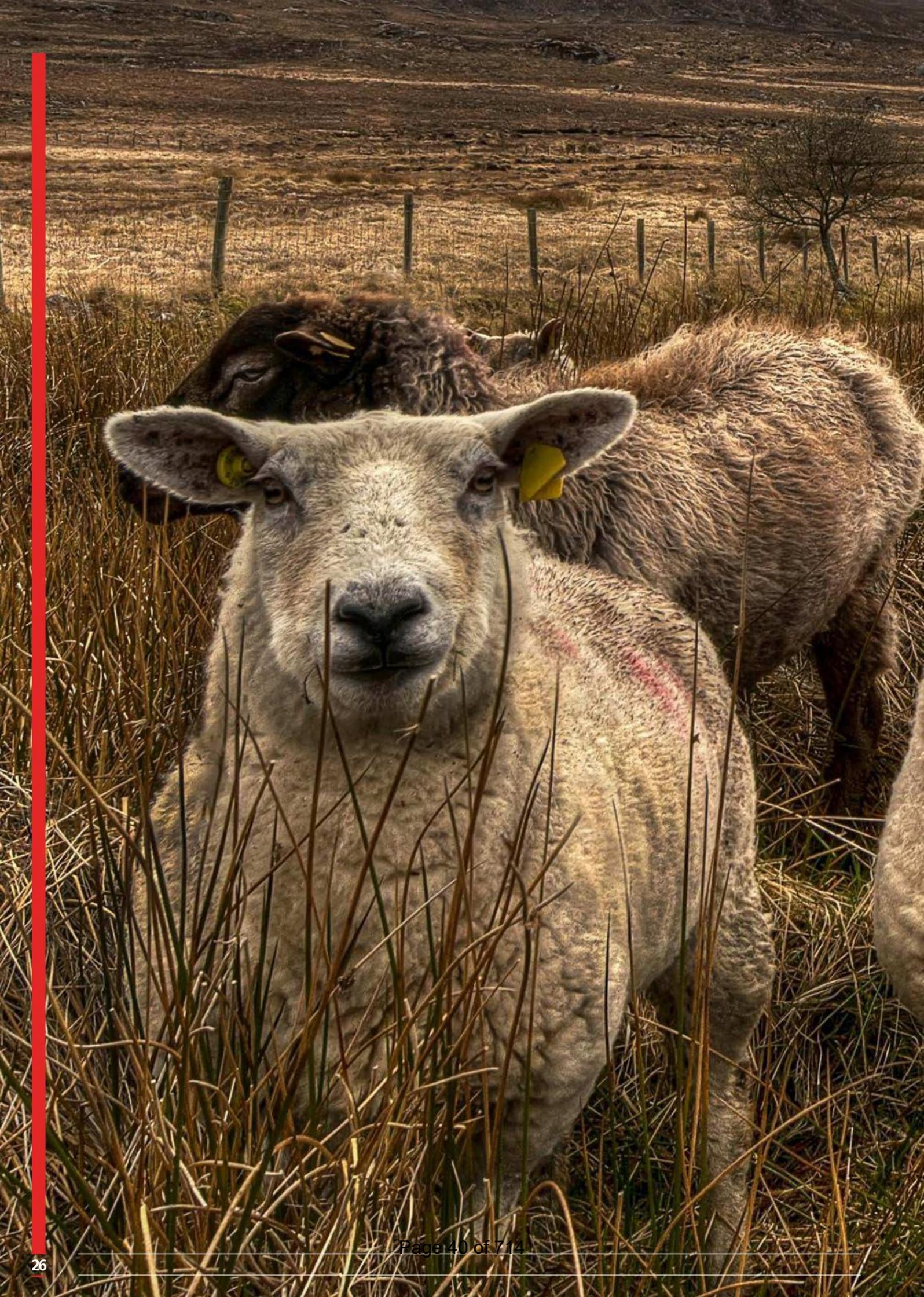
There is an appropriately funded, resourced and structured management plan/trust; integrated local and NI-wide strategies; a land use policy strategy (leading to overriding protection where needed); leadership and champions; joined up approach for all stakeholders; a Sperrins youth forum; an agri-food forum; communities supported with resources and finance to achieve healthy lives with wellbeing to the fore; and local business supports. This forum has been revisited to assess its effectiveness.

Partnership is achieved through the Sperrins Management Trust, which includes the community, landowners/farmers, heritage and environment, tourism, youth, elected representatives, industry and business, government departments/agencies, outdoor recreation and council officers.

The vision is communicated and sustained through the central hub created by the Sperrins Trust which has accountability for actions achieved and is built on openness and transparency, strong leadership, respect and mutual understanding, and inclusiveness. The Trust will capture all the great bottom up initiatives and has the right power to make the right changes.

We have accomplished an agreed vision, implemented by the Trust we have established, which is operational and effective. All this was done in the face of a lack of leadership and ownership to drive the vision in 2017.





Focus on the future

9. *Discovering Common Ground*

The next task for the conference was to establish those principles and key features desired by everyone present on which to build the future for the Sperrins. Three groups (randomly formed) prepared a list of common ground elements that reflected what they believed everyone present wanted. The list could include values, norms, structures, programmes and procedures. The groups organised and talked through the common ground, hearing and accepting differences as they arose. Where there was no consensus, it was open to the groups to have a list of 'not agrees'. The three groups then came together and organised the common ground elements under eight themes which were then consolidated into the following five clusters:

- i.** Integrity of the natural environment; Restoration of environment and built heritage; Protection & preservation where appropriate; Biosphere balance (landscape and people); Recognition.
- ii.** Infrastructure; Green access; Biosphere balance.
- iii.** Brand; Biosphere balance; Marketing brand identity; Tourism; Recognition; Communication.
- iv.** Vibrant communities; Recognition; Communication; Inclusion – everyone; Vibrant, happy, healthy, wealthy people and communities; Supporting vibrant sustainable communities (education, health, services etc);

Biosphere balance; Hope for future and current generations security (peace of mind, financial etc).

- v.** Management Structures; Partnerships; Leadership and management that is fully resourced; Common direction and shared vision; Communication; Strategy plan; Innovation; Inclusion; Equality; Responsibility; Accountability; Biosphere balance.

Arriving at a consensus on these points involved a discussion of what was meant by 'biosphere'. It emerged that those who had included the word perceived it as a holistic principle that recognised the interdependence of everything in the Sperrins (people, plants, animals, landscape, water etc) in a self-regulating system. This principle was challenged as being incompatible with human development and leading to a mindset that had led to the depopulation of the Sperrins through regulation that restricted home building and other development. This view held that without people, the Sperrins were an irrelevance.

The group agreed that there was an inherent tension between 'the person as number one' and 'person as part of the whole' but accepted that both are true and the challenge is to manage the tension. To reflect this the term 'biosphere' was amended to read 'biosphere balance'.





Focus on the future

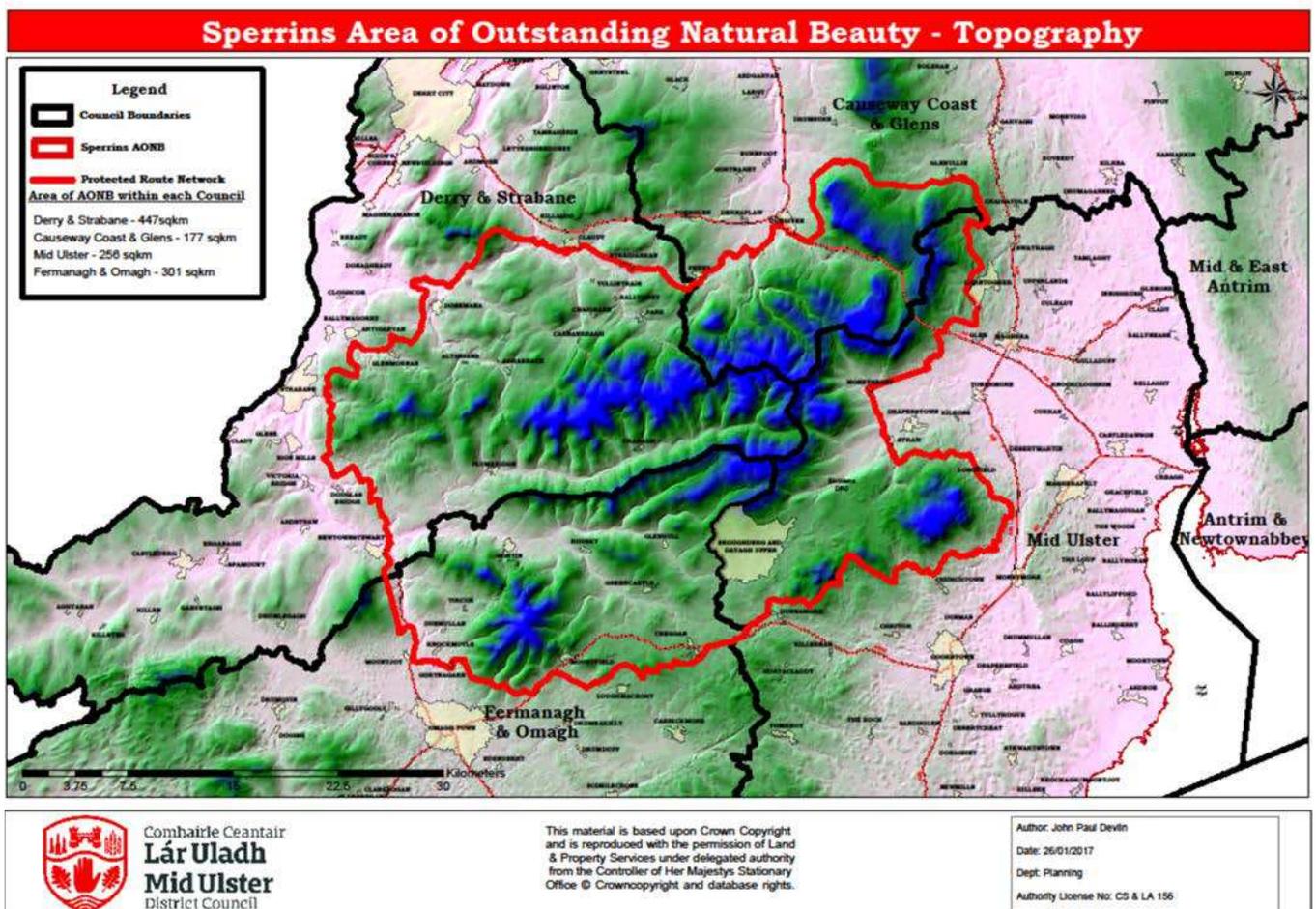
10. Creating Common Ground Statements

On Day 3 the conference reconvened and five self-selecting groups (one for each common ground theme) were tasked with writing a few sentences describing the group's common ground vision. The statement was to be something every person present would agree with and that would be understood by stakeholders who were not present.

The plenary discussion that followed the crafting of the statements focused on what geographical area is included in the term 'The Sperrins'. Definitions varied from the AONB to the much larger area covered by the Sperrins tourism initiative which extended from the border with Donegal in the west to the shores of Lough Neagh in the east. A consensus

emerged that the conference was essentially concerned with the AONB but in the context of the critical relationships between communities within the AONB and the larger settlements beyond. The Sperrins form a hinterland for towns such as Cookstown, Omagh and Dungiven while those towns form a 'reverse hinterland' for the smaller settlements within the AONB. Consideration of the Sperrins should therefore not be overly determined by a line on the map.

While everyone supported the statements, there was plea for recognition of just how difficult life can be for some communities in the face of unwanted development. "My life has been hell", said one participant.





The following five Common Ground Statements were agreed.

Five Common Ground Statements

1. Environment and Heritage:

The spirit, environment and heritage of the Sperrins is conserved, enhanced and responsibly managed so that those who live, work and visit can enjoy, celebrate and respect.

2. Infrastructure:

We provide safe and interesting networks for recreation that complement the environment. We are linked into the wider tourism offering in Ireland. We provide modern communications for the Sperrins.

3. Brand and Tourism:

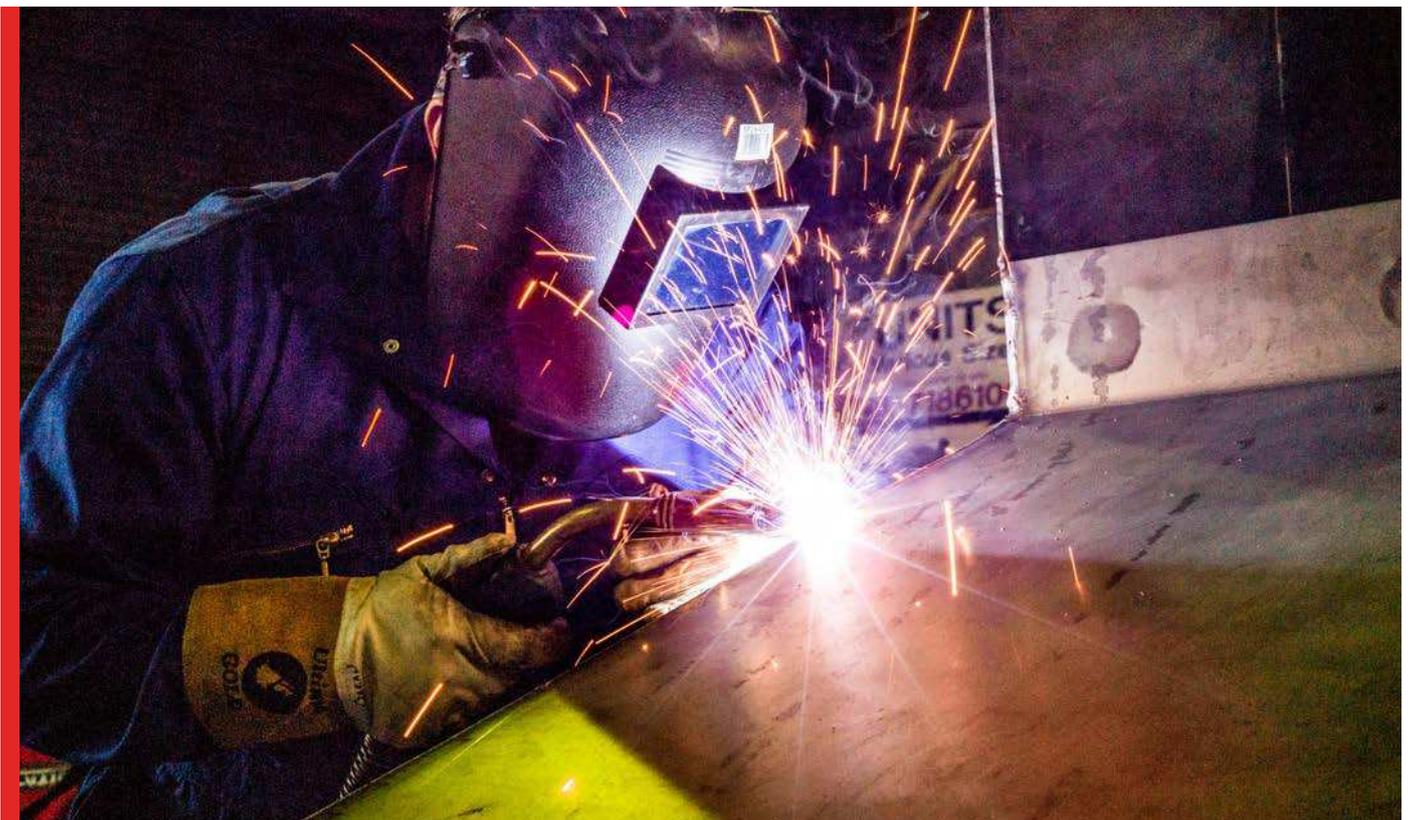
The Sperrins, spurs of rock, is a great natural, undiscovered and unspoilt destination that is recognised and cherished by others as it is by those who live and work here, and is steeped in history, rich in culture and with majestic views.

4. Community:

We are a community of people of varying needs and aspirations, fuelled by our passion to ensure a strong, vibrant, happy community with equal access to social, health, educational, cultural, economic and creative opportunities. We are the custodians who have lived loved and worked the land for generations, past, present and future. The beauty of the Sperrins is reflected in the beauty of its people.

5. Management Structures:

We are creating a management structure fit for purpose with the necessary resources, authority and expertise, taking forward our shared vision for the Sperrins to enhance an area of beauty we can live and work in.



Focus on the past

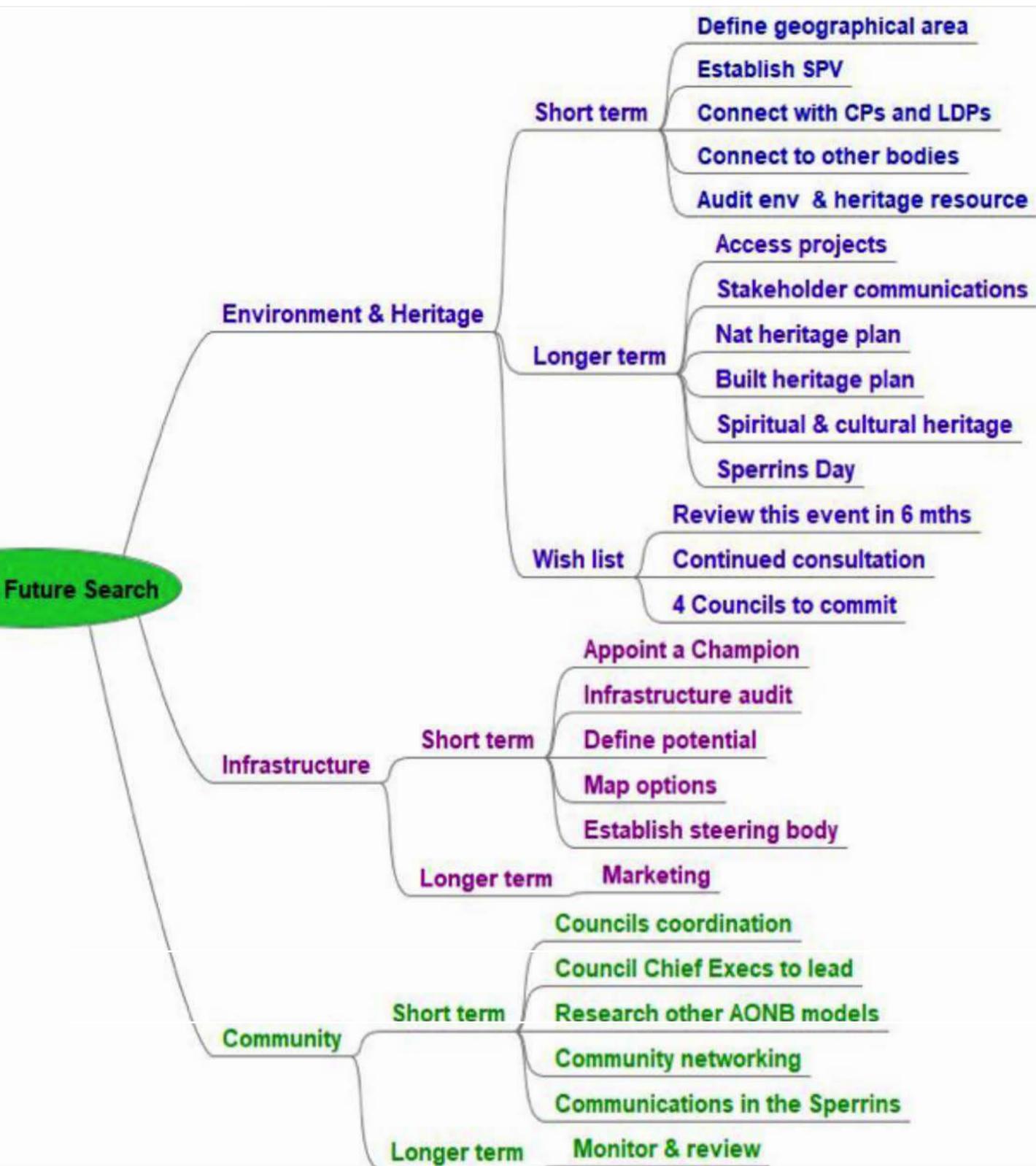
11. Action Planning

The final task for the conference was to decide on action steps, steps that participants were ready, willing and able to take that will work towards the common ground agenda. Each group set out a number of short term and longer term actions including, where possible,

how success will be measured, what help is needed, timeframes and people responsible.

These are summarised in the Mind Map below and are set out in more detail as Five Action Plans.





Focus on the future



Environment and Heritage Action Plan

1. Environment and Heritage: The spirit, environment and heritage of the Sperrins is conserved, enhanced and responsibly managed so that those who live, work and visit can enjoy, celebrate and respect.

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
1.Short Term				
Effective information sharing, consultation and communication between F.S. working groups to deliver a co-ordinated and consistent approach to activity planning and delivery and to maximise use of resources. (E&H working group to ensure it helps inform strategic planning and activity). A co-ordinated/overarching website focussing on all aspects of life in the Sperrins.				
<p>1.1 Do we have the right people: Review current composition of E&H working group to address gaps in expertise and knowledge.</p>	<p>1.1.1 Secure Central Government resources for the Sperrins as per other AONBs.</p> <p>1.1.2 Secure Historic Environment Division HED (Department for Communities DFC) & Northern Ireland Environment Agency NIEA, (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs DAERA) involvement as a Sperrins Champion (NIEA /HED attendance at E&H Working Group meetings and roles and responsibilities defined)</p> <p>1.1.3 Ensure participation of any missing key stakeholders and decision makers.</p> <p>1.1.4 Ensure participation of Youth/Young Sector</p>		12 months	New Trust
<p>1.2. Audit of formally designated Built Heritage and Natural Environment resources to include SPA's, GAA clubs, the Grand Loyal Orders and community groups etc.</p> <p>Also outdoor recreation sites from ORNI work on development of Sperrins Outdoor Recreation Action Plan</p>	<p>1.2.1 All existing data collated. Data to include our industrial heritage and continued success at an international level within key sectors e.g. engineering.</p> <p>1.2.2 Tourism NI , Outdoor Recreation NI joined with Council databases</p> <p>1.2.3 Data accessible to public</p>	<p>Audit also being suggested by T&B Working Group (Co-ordinated approach required between E&H Thematic Group and T&B Thematic Group when producing respective audits)</p> <p>Four Councils Environmental and Planning services</p> <p>Four council's Local Development Plan teams</p> <p>Sport NI - Outdoor Recreation sites</p> <p>HED - DFC</p> <p>NIEA Officers (DAERA)</p>	12 months	<p>FODC to facilitate (using existing electronic framework).</p> <p>T&B Thematic group responsible for the communication of data.</p>
<p>1.3 Cultural heritage captured and made accessible</p>	<p>1.3.1 Online platform for capturing and promoting intangible cultural and spiritual heritage in place.</p> <p>1.3.2 Select a suitable intangible cultural heritage good practice and definition model.</p>	<p>Other models including UNESCO; PRONI; National Museums of Ireland; Scope for study, events etc. to be funded or promoted under European Year of Cultural Heritage.</p>	12 months	New Trust Community Working Group

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
1.4 Co-ordinated promotion of Sperrins events and activities all year round	1.4.1 Calendar of events published for the entire area	T&B Thematic Group	Ongoing	MUDC to facilitate preparation of Calendar.
	1.4.2 September designated and promoted as "Sperrins Month" by all.	Four Councils, Tourism bodies, event organisers, Sporting Clubs etc.	6 months	Four Councils
	1.4.3 Delivery of a large scale "Sperrins " 2019 event- Small scale community events are a failsafe for lack of innovation	Special consideration needed for activity events taking place in the natural environment – www.outdooreventplanning.com (useful tool currently used by Mourne & Ring of Gullion)		Community groups Event Organisers
	1.4.4 Delivery of a heritage gala day inclusive of the local population			
1.5 Develop common approach to planning policy for Sperrins across four Council areas. Legal standing position of AONB to be reviewed and communicated.	1.5.1 Four Local Development Plan (LDP) Policies synchronised for Sperrins.	Four LDP Teams National Outdoor Recreation Forum	2 years	Four Councils - facilitated by LDP Teams Co-ordination Group
	1.5.2 Consideration of a buffer zone for AONB with regard to planning strategy.	Recreation planning refer to Northern Ireland Outdoor Recreation Action Plan - www.sportni.net/sportni/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Our-Great-Outdoors.pdf		
	1.5.3 Oversight role re AONB policy including environmental protection and enforcement			
1.6 Contribute to creation of the Sperrins Trust and Sperrins Management Plan ensuring the Trust belongs to all stakeholders	1.6.1 Management Structure Group development of Trust proposal.	NIEA provision of details of Management structures in other AONBs	12 months	Four Councils to facilitate setting up of Trust owned by all stakeholders All stakeholders to participate and support
	1.6.2 Approval by four councils.	Signposting by E&H Thematic Group to other models - for Management Group to consider	Ongoing	
	1.6.3 Heritage and Environment representatives involved in new Trust structure	Irish Uplands Forum - Upland Community Study published 2016 www.irishuplandsforum.org		
1.7 Review and feedback to Community Plan, Local Development Plan and other statutory plans	1.7.1 Contributions made	Four Councils	2 years	All stakeholders
	1.7.2 Plans reflect issues relevant to Sperrins	All Stakeholders		
1.8 New Sperrins Trust co-ordinates with other similar bodies for mutual benefit.	1.8.1 Collaboration for Policy influence	Other AONB Bodies and similar bodies	Ongoing	New Trust
	1.8.2 Learning from other bodies	Regional Government Four Councils		
	1.8.3 Sperrins specific issues discussed and decisions reached.			

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
1.9.1 Explore the possibility of having greenways and improve access routes	Greenways explored and available where applicable	Local Hillwalking Groups	2 years	Infrastructure Thematic Group
1.9.2 Access routes	Access routes	Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership Pilot Mountain Access project		Hillwalking Groups
2. Longer term				
2.1 A vibrant and inviting environment created for all to enjoy	2.1.1 Resources available		3-5 years	E&H Thematic Group lead Infrastructure
	2.1.2 Number of visitors and users			
	2.1.3 Health and wellbeing			
2.2 Effective communication strategy established between key/all stakeholders including tourists and visitors	2.2.1 More harmony	Four councils	2+ years	New Trust
	2.2.2 Better working relationships	Regional Government Stakeholders		
	2.2.3 Increasing interest			
2.3 Positives are celebrated	2.3.1 News articles	Four councils	1-2 years	New Trust
	2.3.2 No of positive events	Stakeholders		
2.4 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Plan	2.4.1 Protection Policy created	Four Council Bio diversity Officers NIEA officers	3-5 years	New Trust
2.5 Built and Industrial Heritage Plan To include our industrial heritage and continued success at an international level within key sectors	2.5.1 Protection Policy created	Four Councils HED officers Council Heritage Officer Local farmers Industry – Construction, Engineering	3-5 years	New Trust
2.6 Environmental Management Plan	2.6.1 Protection Policy created	Four Councils NIEA Officers	3 – 5 years	New Trust

Wish list: we want

- Review of this event in six months' time and regularly after that including the four councils led by Mid Ulster so we can see what has come out of this, what has happened, what is the action plan, who is responsible for what, how we can help make sure that this happens.
- Continued consultation on when and how a working group is formed and who it represents.
- We will update the organisations and groups that we represent on what has happened at this event and on progress going forward.
- Councils and others visit and connect with the area.
- What is the agreement/commitment from councils on driving this forward?

Infrastructure Action Plan

2. Infrastructure: We provide safe and interesting networks for recreation that complement the environment. We are linked into the wider tourism offering in Ireland. We provide modern communications for the Sperrins.

Preamble: We expect councils to continue to provide the best services and linkages. We want to provide the linkages between ourselves within the Sperrins.

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
2.1 Appoint a Champion	Identified Champion			
2.2 Audit of infrastructure to establish baseline	Baseline established	Landowners Communities Councils Translink Other transport providers Dept for Infrastructure Tourism Industry Local business Funding bodies Telecoms providers	1 year	Champion Steering Group Stakeholders
2.3 Define potential: greenways, routeways, access to transport	Agreed priorities and programmes			
2.4 Appraisal to establish realistic options				
2.6 Appalachian Trail as first hit				
2.6 Establish steering body	Steering body in place			
Longer term				
2.7 Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use/Visitors • Increased expenditure • Regeneration/sustainability • 100% communications • Recognise infrastructure on Google Maps with local tourism businesses • Develop offer in hubs – each unique 	Trails in place with facilities Marketed Visitor numbers Bedspace/pitches Business starts and numbers Profile of visitors' expenditure	As above but more needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals: surveyors, architects accountants etc • Service providers: cafes, hotels, pubs, campsites, guides, maintainers, constructors, builders • More people providing work for our children's future 	Progressive increase in income over next 13 years to 2030	



Brand and Tourism Action Plan

3.Brand and Tourism: The Sperrins, spurs of rock, is a great natural, undiscovered and unspoilt destination that is recognised and cherished by others as it is by those who live and work here, and is steeped in history, rich in culture and with majestic views.

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
3.1 Identify where major resources are coming from and how they will be utilised to design, develop and implement the strategies/ action plans developed	Strategic plan / structure required AONB Management Plan as part of wider strategic plan and to gain more recognition/ funding for protection Management body in place Sperrins officer(s)/ guardian(s) appointed and given resources Funding sources identified & applied for	Management Group Tourism NI NIEA Environment & heritage Thematic Group	Urgent - 3-6 months	Management Group Tourism NI NIEA 4 Councils
3.2 Definition: "The Sperrins" area	Agreement reached – The AONB and neighbouring settlements (gateway towns) to be included	/	/	Tourism and Branding Group
3.3 Short term initiatives: - GIS Map of Sperrins Area and current "products"	Map developed	4 Councils – Excel sheet of current products within defined area to be sent to George Bradshaw with Postcodes Co-ordinated approach with other thematic groups eg. environment and heritage to produce one map with the various layers included	End of February	FODC GIS team Staff from 4 Councils
3.4 Definition: the essence and the product: • What is it? • Where is it? • What is the USP? Why would people visit? Current perceptions of the Sperrins?	Audit of what constitutes the Sperrins is required	Wider Stakeholders Collaborate with other Thematic groups for an Audit	3 months	4 Councils Future Search Stakeholders Tourism NI
3.5 Short term initiatives: - Local fam trips	Take staff from VIC's and people on F.S. groups out on tour of Sperrins – let them see what there is to offer Then in the longer term move to a wider audience for FAM trips – media, tour operators, industry professionals	Local stakeholders	6 months	4 Councils
3.6 Short term initiatives: - Event celebrating 50 years of the AONB	Develop a combined 50year celebration of original AONB declaration for September across the Sperrins region that showcases the natural richness and promotes the area, tying in with established/ ongoing community & council events and to encourage more positive action within the AONB than the previous 50years	Tourism NI All Four councils- come together for events NIEA	6 months 2018 -Ongoing organisation, date for event – September 2018	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI Wider Stakeholders

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
3.7 Short term initiatives: - What's on guide / Events Calendar	incorporate current events across all four councils and local community groups etc into a what's on guide/ Events calendar specific to the Sperrins Area, and for the 50th anniversary celebration of the AONB (month of September) produce a special guide incorporating these events	4 Councils VIC and Tourism Staff Tourism NI	Ongoing - 2018	4 Councils Tourism NI
3.8 Research: internal and external – looking at the perceptions of people in relations to the Sperrins, both local and wider audience	Report delivered – Research/ Stats required for informing policy/plans	Tourism NI	12 months and ongoing	Tourism NI Management Structure
3.9 Development of visitor experience plan – Consider development of a wider strategic plan for the Sperrins Area which incorporates V.E. Plan	Output and outcome measures – Strategic Plan developed	4 councils	18 months and ongoing	Sperrins Management Body primarily Future Search Stakeholders / Brand & Tourism group
3.10 Creation of unified Branding/ Logo/ Straplines etc	Identifiable brand that pulls together the identity of the Sperrins and its products/communities	Management Group 4 Councils Tourism NI Other Stakeholders and FS Thematic Groups	1 – 2 years	Tourism & Branding Group
Longer term				
3.11 Brand development: use visitor experience plan to develop current products; expand to new product offerings	Further development of area and additional literature and offerings	Councils Tourism NI Tourism Ireland	2+ years	Sperrins management structure Councils etc
3.12 Trial new initiatives/pilots	KPIs: 2020 – own stand at Holidays world with Sperrins branding and literature, website and social media up and running	4 Councils Tourism NI	2+ years	4 Councils Tourism NI
3.13 Consultation/engagement process	Tactical forward thinking	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI	2+ years	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI
3.14 Brand awareness: marketing/ communications campaigns; tactical plans, use of branding on own social media pages and website development	Building relationships Trade buy-in developed	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI	2+ years	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI
3.15 Flagship events: "Undiscovered" international event	Visitor numbers	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI	2020	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI
3.16 Schools and Youth outreach programme	Pride, more awareness through upcoming generations and across NI	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI EA	2019/20	4 Councils NIEA Tourism NI

Community Action Plan

4. Community: We are a community of people of varying needs and aspirations, fuelled by our passion to ensure a strong, vibrant, healthy, happy community with equal access to social, health, educational, cultural, economic and creative benefits and opportunities. We are the custodians who have lived, loved and worked the land for generations, past, present and future. The beauty of the Sperrins is reflected in the beauty of its people.

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
4.1 Four councils' community planning and community services teams to meet to facilitate and coordinate	A completed scoping study in consultation with stakeholders of emerging cooperative opportunities to include e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Plans • Rural Development Programme • Peace IV • HLF • Local Development Plans • Tourism initiatives E.G. International Appalachian Trail etc. • Co-operative initiatives • Existing community plan partnership structures • Contentious live issues • No. of potential cooperation projects identified 	Council Officers	3- 6 months (The Community Working Group recommends quarterly progress reviews)	The Management Working Group will determine the structures required to facilitate, monitor and measure the future delivery of actions identified by the working groups.

Additional Information / Member Feedback

- Subject to approval, Community Planning and Community Services/Support teams from councils to meet. Review the partnership structures of each Community Plan.
- The different Council Community Plans may be at varying stages of development (DCSDC /FODC have completed theirs) and the level of focus may differ also between councils (DCSDC has launched its overarching strategic community plan for the district but is also currently developing additional DEA focussed local plans – one of these local plans covers the part of the Sperrins in the DCSDC area). Planners from all four councils are already meeting in relation to the alignment of the Local Development Plans in regard to the Sperrins.
- The scoping study should give a clear picture of existing physical infrastructure and resources, community infrastructure, programmes, policy and governance as well as links with CP, LDP, PfG and other relevant policies and governance related issues including new deprivation indices.

4.2 This conference to be on the agenda of the next meeting of the four Council Chief Executives in order to move things forward (and subsequent meetings where key decisions are required in moving forward key actions)	Item on Chief Executive Officer (CEO) meeting agenda	Council Officers	3- 6 months	CEOs
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Additional Information / Member Feedback

- Chief Executive/ Director approval (from each council) to be sought for the allocation of adequate staff, administrative support and finances from council Community Support resources for the delivery of agreed Future Search initiatives.
- Identification of additional sources of funding and support to facilitate successful delivery
- Consideration should be given to equality of funding/resource opportunity funding between rural and urban areas

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
<p>4.3 Research: We want a fresh approach based on our needs, but we also need to know about existing models for other AONBs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating best practice research on AONB and other equivalent landscape partnership type models on a range of relevant issues. Link with Landscapes for Life (the national association for AONBs) • Sharing of information /resources /services on current research • Undertake research on models of evaluating the programme • Service provision audit of the Sperrins to facilitate the development of a service provision plan 	<p>Other AONBs - Landscapes for Life</p> <p>Other partnership models</p>	0-9 months	Council Directors and associated staff teams

Additional Information / Member Feedback

- Build upon research already undertaken- including European sources. Link with Landscapes for Life (the national association for AONBs) and explore how other AONBs work, taking account of the unique population and community base in each one
- Cross reference against other AONB models , equivalent landscape partnership type models and LEADER project models outside of NI, and extract best practice from each in relation to design; delivery; pitfalls; structure; funding; community engagement; environmental impacts; environmental management versus environmental protection concepts; the issues associated with National Park designation; landscape heritage management; new ways of doing things etc. Look at other models like the Belfast Hills Working Partnership or the Connswater Community Greenway as an example of community engagement driven partnership. The importance of local communities leading actions was strongly emphasised.
- Policy research on all relevant policies affecting the Sperrins including liaising with DAERA (LEADER), DfC, HLF among others
- The group agreed that it would be important to look at and map the baseline of service provision e.g. banks, schools etc... in the Sperrin's. This audit should include the identification of existing essential services and gaps in provision of these essential services; It should also review the "status" of services so as to identify – for example- any which are at risk /under threat of closure; and look at changes in the local and wider environment which are likely to impact on service provision. Such an audit would help identify priority actions and allow forward planning in relation to essential service and wider service provision.



What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
<p>4.4 Gather community development groups together to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss and plan the way forward • Facilitate networking and capacity building and to share learning • Develop sustainable community organisations and build in succession planning. • Facilitate community engagement with others e.g. business and industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to create a database of groups for the Sperrins (taking account of data protection) 	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action	0-9 Months	Community Services Teams
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull together community stakeholders to seek their views on the concept of “a stronger together approach” and how communities are best engaged moving forward and how they can be investment ready in regard to emerging opportunities 	Rural Community Network	0-9 Months	Communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine other ways of gathering information from communities- Walk and Talk events; mini Sperrins Future Search with a community focussed theme; Gather on the Go events 	Local networks like Fermanagh Rural Community Network, Omagh Forum for Rural Assocs, Omagh Focus, Cookstown & Western Shores Area Network, Dennett Interchange, Rural Area Partnership in Derry, Glenelly Dev Trust, Rural North West, Villages Together		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of information /resources /services e.g. develop an engagement plan for a range of different groups across the area including young people and other Section 75 (Of The NI Act 1998) groups 	Community Services - Village Plans Council Equality Officer and Youth Officers where available	0-9 Months	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a “Sperrins Community Summit ” as part of the wider delivery of the Sperrins’ September Month 	Derry City & Strabane District Council youth officer agreed to assist – ask EA youth officer to also assist	0-9 Months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a bespoke session with young people in order to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ascertain if and how they represent their voices in any structure moving forward – - get the next generation engaged; to enable succession planning; and build a bank of new emerging leaders 		0-6 Months		

Additional Information / Member Feedback

- The sharing of information /resources /services e.g. to transcend council boundaries (e.g. recycling facilities). Examine new ways of engaging with communities – walk and talk events, mini FS events for communities
- Need to create a new database of all interested groups across a range of genres and interests and ensure S75 coverage. Data protection issues need to be considered when developing a database of groups for the project moving forward
- Needs to include young people / nine key groups listed under S75. Need to think about timings for the engagement of different groups
- Ensure geographical representation and balance across all sectors within the structure of working groups/structures. Need to look at who is missing from the working group /any future delivery structure– Rural Community Network , local groups from Derry and Strabane and Mid Ulster Councils , youth groups , people with a disability and older people are potentially missing. Community Services and Good Relations officers could also assist with this.

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
4.6 Strategy development with strong community input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design, co-delivery and co-production should all be a core part of the strategy development and delivery process. Conference to take forward • Strategy implementation • Success is proof-e.g. Community buy in; builds real communities; reduces polarisation; reduces conflict; integrates communities; community input/views are listened to and valued. • Puts people first – community at the heart and ensure youth are engaged 	Council Community Planning teams Planners	6-15 months +	Directors External Support

Additional Information / Member Feedback

- Needs to put people first
- Needs to aim to deliver the right services – services which will develop /produce vibrant communities
- Needs to deliver on local issues
- Co design element required - e.g. Education Authority input
- Needs to include young people / nine key groups listed under Section 75
- Need to take account of objections and issues that people do not currently agree on
- Need to ensure a monitoring and evaluation and outcomes based approach is also included

4.7 Review/monitor what has been achieved/delivered and that we are still loyal to our vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake research on models of evaluating the programme • Dedicated officer support • Develop an OBA approach for the plan. Agree outcomes, results and indicators 	Community planner University support	6-15 months + in line with strategy	Community planners External support
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Additional Information / Member Feedback

- Need to ensure a link with community planning outcomes and Programme for Government emerging outcomes



Management Action Plans

5. Management Structures: We are creating a management structure fit for purpose with the necessary resources, authority and expertise and taking forward our shared vision for the Sperrins to enhance an area of beauty we can live and work in.

What	Measure	Help from	Due Date	Responsible
Short Term				
5.1 Planning group from Councils to get together, digest the outputs from this conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite feedback from conference • Present draft report at a reconvened conference in January 	Review meeting organised for Jan 2018	4 Councils Thematic Groups	11 Jan 2018	Council Officers
5.2 Directory of current activity in the Sperrins and support systems. 5.3 Collate information on current activity in the Sperrins from public and private sources	Directory of current activity and calendar of coordinated events	Council Community Plans Tourism Initiatives Sperrins Landscape Partnership Outdoor Recreation Forum Ancient Heart of Ulster LP	Ongoing	5 Thematic Groups Councils
5.4 Build datasets to support future planning May need reworded and discussion on 11/01/2018	All existing data collated	5 Thematic Groups Sporting organisations Community Groups Stakeholders		2 Levels – Local Government and Central Government
5.5 Look at models of best practice and suggest some delivery/structural mechanisms	Implement a best practice model	Councils	Mar 18	Management Thematic Group
5.6 Ask everyone to cross-sell based on new relationships 5.7 Promote cross boundary working	Establish Sperrins brand, develop a communications strategy	Councils Statutory Thematic groups Stakeholders	Ongoing	Tourism & Branding
5.8 Review and feed into Community Planning process, Local Development Plans and align with draft Programme for Government	Contributions made Plans reflect issues relevant to Sperrins	4 Councils Statutory Partners	2 years	4 Councils Statutory Partners
Medium term				
5.9 Establish Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and partnership comprising community, council and statutory representative. Structure to follow strategy				

Annex A: Facilitators' Biographies

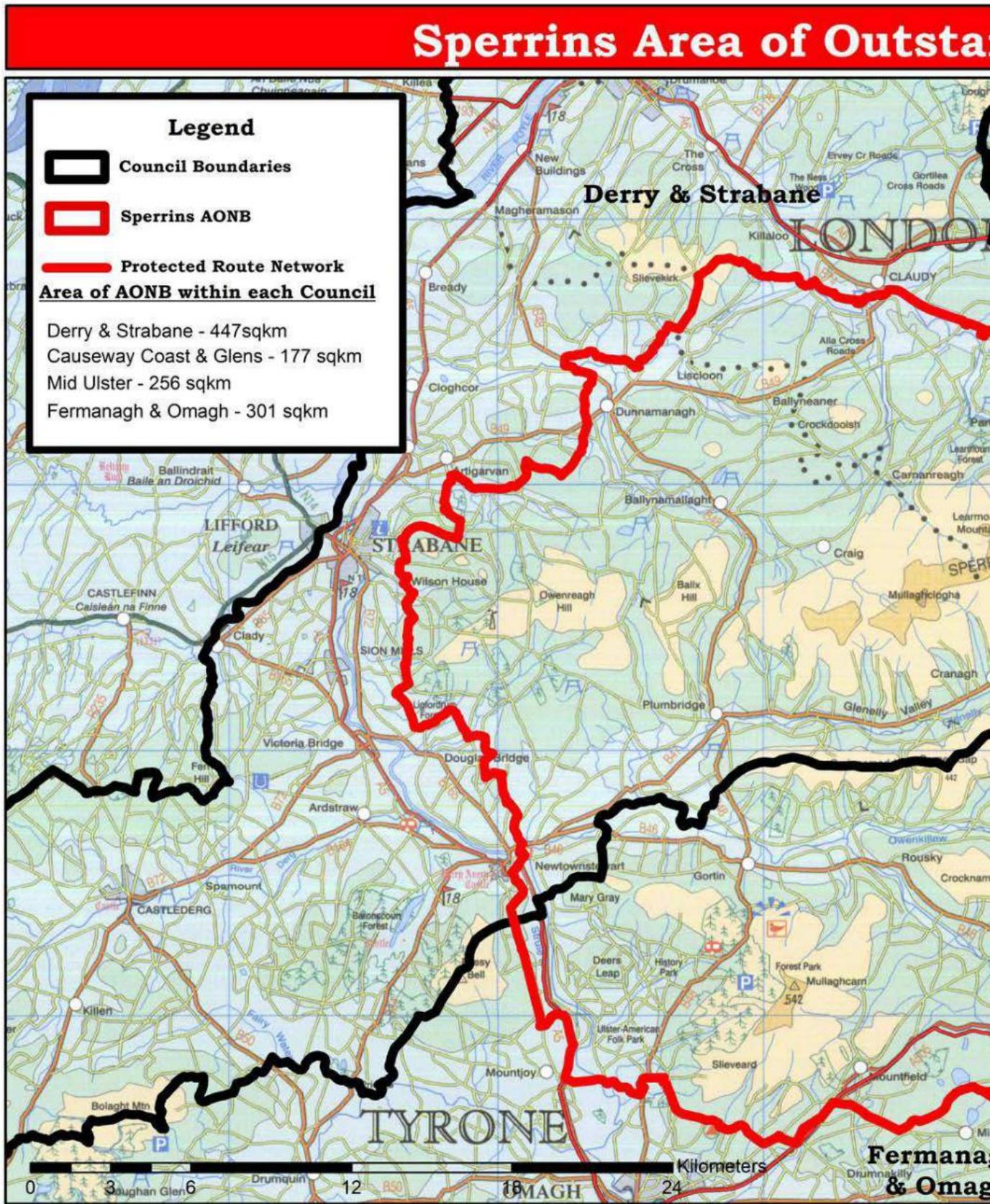


Aideen McGinley is Chair of Galway 2020 European City of Culture and a Trustee of the Carnegie UK Trust. She was National Trustee for Northern Ireland on the BBC Trust from 2012-2017. She has 37 years local and central government experience in Northern Ireland being the first woman CEO in local government and subsequently the first woman Permanent Secretary in central government when she took up post, on devolution, to create the first Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and then moved to the Department of Employment and Learning where she was responsible for further and higher education, employment and skills. Reflecting her interest in regeneration she too took up a secondment in 2009 as CEO of ILEX, the Urban Regeneration Company for Derry-Londonderry, where she was instrumental in developing the £400m 10-year regeneration plan, building the symbolic Peace Bridge and successfully securing the inaugural UK City of Culture 2013 title for the city. Aideen has a particular interest in, and experience of, whole systems thinking and effective stakeholder engagement and successfully embedding the outcomes in policy and practice across a range of issues and sectors. These include Culture and Creativity, Urban and Rural Regeneration, Social Entrepreneurship, Women and Leadership Development. She has been involved in a variety of roles both professional and voluntary in the non-profit sector which, coupled with her private and extensive public sector experience and her ability to create integrated policy and delivery on the ground, has been recognised in her award of an OBE in the Queens millennium honours list and a honorary degree from the University of Ulster. Aideen is an associate of Future Search Associates, Co-Chair of the Carnegie UK Trust initiative on the measurement of wellbeing in Northern Ireland and a jury member for the selection of the UK City of Culture 2017.



Sandra Janoff, PhD co-developed the principle-based methodology called Future Search, a process used world-wide to get the "whole system" focusing on the future and creating values-based action strategies. She is an international consultant and works with global corporations and communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, India, North & South America, Australia and New Zealand. Sandra's humanitarian work includes: UNICEF-sponsored initiatives such as: Finding a Future for the Children of South Sudan during the North/South Sudanese civil war. This resulted in a second Future Search in South Sudan to demobilize child soldiers. Over 13,000 children were released and sent back to their homes. A Future Search in South Sudan in 2013 created solutions for abandoned children in Juba. In a UNICEF initiative, Preventing Violence Against Children in Schools in Uganda, she worked with stakeholders on all levels, from ministerial to district schools, to address the issues of corporal punishment and other violent acts against children and to implement a nation-owned mandate for zero tolerance. Sandra's work with integrated economic development in NI includes Future Searches in County Fermanagh, Derry-Londonderry, Strabane, Coleraine and Lough Neagh. Sandra is Principal of Future Search Associates and Director of Future Search Network (FSN) which won the Global Work Award and the Sharing the Wealth Award. She is co-author of Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground (Berrett-Koehler, 3rd ed, 2010), Don't Just Do Something, Stand There! Ten Principles for Leading Meetings that Matter (Berrett-Koehler, 2007) and Lead More, Control Less: 8 Advanced Leadership Skills that Overturn Convention (Berrett-Koehler, 2015). Sandra was just honoured with the Organizational Development Network's 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Annex B:



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
 District Council

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Annex C:

The Sperrins 2030

Landowners; Farmers; Tourism; Heritage and Environment; Government Departments; Council Reps; Business; Industry; Youth and Community.

Have all worked tirelessly over the last thirteen years to establish unity.

The Sperrins has a strong place in our hearts;
Its natural beauty, birds, bees and fauna
A rural land, full of heritage and history;
Why we are so passionate about it, is no longer a mystery!

Sandra and Aideen's Future Search event in 2017 has given us the tools and encouraged us to work together to build a future for our youth;
A shared desire that brought us here today is definitive proof.

From darkness and confusion;
We have risen to a place of sustainable conclusion.
A joint vision, blood, sweat and tears;
Has helped us to preserve the Sperrins for many many years.

Susan Doherty © 2017

Annex D:

Glossary of Abbreviations

- AONB** - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- AONV** – Area of Outstanding Natural Vitality
- CCG** - Causeway Coast & Glens
- CEO** - Chief Executive Officer
- CP** - Community Planning
- COM** - Community Thematic Group
- DfC** - Department for Community
- DAERA** - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
- DCSDC** - Derry City & Strabane District Council
- DEA** - District Electoral Area
- E&H** - Environment & Heritage Thematic Group
- EU** – European Union
- FODC** - Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- FS** - Future Search
- GIS**– Geographic Information System
- HLF** - Heritage Lottery Fund
- HED** - Historic Environment Division
- KPI** – Key Performance Indicator
- LEADER** - Liaison Entre Actions Development de l’Economie Rurale
- LDP** - Local Development Planning
- MLA** – Members of the Legislative Assembly
- MUDC** - Mid Ulster District Council
- NI** - Northern Ireland
- NIEA** - Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- OBA** - Outcome Based Accountability
- ORNI** - Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland
- PfG** – Programme for Government
- PRONI** - Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
- S75** - Section 75
- SPA** - Special Protection Area
- SPV** – Special Purpose Vehicle
- T&B** - Tourism & Branding Thematic Group – T&B
- UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- USP** – Unique Selling Point
- VEP** – Visitor Experience Plan
- VIC** – Visitor Information Centre

Report on	Partnership Proposal
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Sean Cavlin, Leisure Services Development Manager

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 update Members on a proposal received from St Patrick's College Maghera for a partnership to be developed.
2.0	Background
2.1	Following a request made by St Patricks College Maghera to assess potential for Maghera Leisure Centre to be included in a potential partnership between the Council and College, a number of meetings have taken place between council officers and school reps.
2.2	The school would regularly book and pay for facilities at Maghera Leisure Centre and Council would also engage with the school for use of their land (ie. for Halloween event/fireworks display, overflow car parking on occasions, etc).
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Current hire charges per hour for each of the relevant facility areas are as follows: <i>(as per Councils current agreed scale of charges as approved via Development Committee in February 2023 – note the school is already eligible for concession pricing at 50% discount)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Hall - £20.80 per hour (£10.40 concession) • 3G Full Pitch - £30 per hour (£15.50 concession) • 3G – 1/3 Pitch - £6.80 per hour (£3.40 concession)
3.2	The schools recent historical annual invoices would be in the region of £1,800 per year based on previous usage. The schools dependency on facilities at Maghera Leisure Centre tend to reduce during the spring, summer, and autumn terms (in the more favourable weather conditions) – ie. these are generally periods when the school utilise their own grass pitch on a priority basis rather than the facilities at the leisure centre.

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>The school have therefore asked for the below times to be included within a usage agreement for facilities at Maghera Leisure Centre that would see a fixed annual fee be agreed in which the school would pay council and therefore the council could benefit from use of school facilities and land where required as part of the agreement (eg. for Halloween event/fireworks display, overflow car parking, use of school hall for activities/events in the wider Maghera area if the leisure centre is unavailable,etc).</p> <p><u>Main Hall</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday: 12.15pm – 3.00pm • Tuesday: 11.15am – 4.00pm • Thursday: 11.30am – 4.00pm • Friday: 12.15pm – 4.00pm <p><u>3G Pitch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday to Friday: 9.00am – 5.00pm <p>The times listed above are generally the “down times” within Maghera Leisure Centre – ie. these slots are rarely booked by anyone else apart from the school themselves. Should this partnership approach proceed, it would be the intention that Maghera Leisure Centre could still facilitate other 3rd party bookings provided there’s communication and agreement between both parties (this is most likely for one off booking only rather than recurring bookings).</p> <p>Therefore, taking this into account along with the reciprocal benefits Council can achieve for use of school land and facilities where reasonably required, it would be suggested that an annual fee of around £1,000 could be a reasonable fixed annual fee – it is proposed that this is trailed for a period of 12 months initially and reviewed for effectiveness should it be beneficial to continue on beyond the initial trial period with annual reviews thereafter.</p> <p>It would be proposed that council should still retain the position that should any significant one-off booking or where a full price recurring booking may have the potential to take place, that Council engage with the school where relevant to look at alternative provision where possible.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: A proposed £1,000 per annum fixed fee payable to Council by the school – no fees/expenditure to be incurred by council for any hire charges towards any reasonable use of any school land/facilities – note any costs associated with staffing for any set up/break down requirements would be additional and mutually agreed.</p> <p>Human: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> <p>Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council Policies and Procedures.</p>

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>To note the contents of this report and to give consideration to to St Patricks College Maghera proposal and give agreement for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partnership agreement between the school and council with an annual fee of £1,000 payable to Council • Partnership to be trialled for a period of 12 months initially and reviewed for effectiveness should it be beneficial to continue on beyond the initial trial period with annual reviews thereafter
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A

Report on	Consultation on Creating a Smokefree Generation and Tackling Youth Vaping
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager

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	For Members to agree the draft response to the Department of Health and Social Care Open Consultation: <i>Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views</i>
2.0	Background
2.1	Smoking is the single most entirely preventable cause of ill health, disability, and death in the UK. It is responsible for around 80,000 deaths a year, including about 2,200 deaths per year in Northern Ireland (as reported by the Northern Ireland Department of Health's tobacco control information).
2.2	Smoking causes harm throughout people's lives, not only for the smoker but for those around them. It is a major risk factor for poor maternal and infant outcomes, significantly increasing the chance of stillbirth and can trigger asthma in children. Smoking causes around 1 in 4 of all UK cancer deaths and is responsible for the great majority of lung cancer cases. Smoking is also a major cause of premature heart disease, stroke and heart failure, and increases the risk of dementia in the elderly. Additionally, smokers lose an average of 10 years of life expectancy, or around 1 year for every 4 smoking years. As a result, smoking puts significant pressure on the NHS.
2.3	On 4 October 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published a command paper Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation setting out proposed action to protect future generations from the harms of smoking by creating the first smokefree generation, which devolved administrations are now seeking to consult on. The command paper also sets out measures to deal with youth vaping.
2.4	To understand the impacts on businesses and on people, the DHSC's open consultation is seeking views from a wide range of stakeholders, namely: -

2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the public - from young people, parents, carers, and teachers • the retail sector and the independent vaping industry • local authorities across the UK • clinicians and medical professionals • public health stakeholders and academic experts • employers and trade unions <p>Following completion of the open consultation exercise, the Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider the responses and identify appropriate measures to be taken in relation to a smokefree generation.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Following publication of the command paper “<i>Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation</i>”, the Department of Health and Social Care’s subsequent open consultation poses questions in three areas for which new legislation would be needed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating a smokefree generation: on smoking, the case for change is clear and devolved administrations are consulting on the smokefree generation policy and its scope to inform future legislation. 2. Tackling youth vaping: while there is also significant evidence for action to tackle youth vaping, within each proposal the devolved administrations are consulting on several options to ensure we take the most appropriate and impactful steps. 3. Enforcement: the consultation also asks questions on the proposal to introduce new powers for local authorities in England and Wales to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation of tobacco products and vapes. <p>3.2 The Office for National Statistics’ Adult smoking habits in the UK 2022 reported that 6.4 million people in the UK were current smokers. This equates to 14% of people in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>3.3 According to the <u>Northern Ireland Young person behaviour and attitudes survey 2022</u>, 21.3% of 11 to 16 year olds in Northern Ireland reported having ever used an e-cigarette.</p> <p>3.4 Due to nicotine content and the unknown long-term harms, vaping carries risks to health and lifelong addiction for children. The health advice is clear: young people and people who have never smoked should not vape.</p> <p>3.5 The consultation considers several proposals on youth vaping including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restricting flavours • regulating point of sale displays • regulating packaging and presentation • considering restricting the supply and sale of disposable vapes • whether regulations should extend to non-nicotine vapes • taking action on the affordability of vapes <p>The command paper also focused on new measures to ensure the law is enforced.</p>
3.6	The challenge for any action proposed by the DHSC's is to ensure that a balance is reached between having the greatest impact on youth vaping whilst ensuring that vapes continue to support adult smokers to quit.
3.7	In Northern Ireland, the outcome of this consultation will inform decisions of incoming ministers and the Northern Ireland Executive, or in the absence of ministers, those decisions that can be taken under <i>the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2022</i> . This applies to all proposals in the consultation document.
3.8	All responses to the consultation must be submitted prior to the closing date on 6th December 2023. Members are therefore asked to review and agree the draft MUDC submission which can be found in Appendix A, which consists of a copy of the relevant questions and suggested response.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None anticipated at this juncture. The Public Health agency currently 100% fund Tobacco Control Officers in Council.
	Human: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Risk Management: None anticipated at this juncture.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this reports and agree the content of Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the DHSC's open consultation on 'Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views'

6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A – Draft response to consultation on “ <i>Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views</i> ”

APPENDIX 1

Open consultation

Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views

Published 12 October 2023

Summary

Background

Smoking is the single most entirely preventable cause of ill health, disability, and death in the UK. It is responsible for around 80,000 deaths a year, including about:

- 64,000 deaths per year in England (as reported by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in [Local tobacco control profiles](#))
- 8,300 deaths per year in Scotland (as reported by the [Scottish Public Health Observatory's information on smoking attributable deaths](#))
- 5,600 deaths per year in Wales (as reported by the [Public Health Wales Smoking in Wales report](#))
- 2,200 deaths per year in Northern Ireland (as reported by the [Northern Ireland Department of Health's tobacco control information](#))

No other consumer product kills up to two-thirds of its users. The Office for National Statistics' [Adult smoking habits in the UK 2022](#) reported that 6.4 million people in the UK were current smokers. This was 12.9% of people in the UK, and:

- 12.7% in England
- 14.1% in Wales
- 14.0% in Northern Ireland
- 13.9% in Scotland

Smoking causes harm throughout people's lives, not only for the smoker but for those around them. It is a major risk factor for poor maternal and infant outcomes, significantly increasing the chance of stillbirth and can trigger asthma in children. Smoking causes around 1 in 4 of all UK cancer deaths and is responsible for the great majority of lung cancer cases. Smoking is also a major cause of premature heart disease, stroke and heart failure, and increases the risk of dementia in the elderly. Smokers lose an average of 10 years of life expectancy, or around 1 year for every 4 smoking years.

As a result, smoking puts significant pressure on the NHS. In England, almost every minute of every day someone is admitted to hospital because of smoking, and up to 75,000 GP appointments could be attributed to smoking each month - equivalent to over 100 appointments every hour.

That is why, on 4 October 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published a command paper [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#) setting out proposed action to protect future generations from the harms of smoking by creating the first smokefree generation, which the UK Government and devolved administrations are now seeking to consult on.

Devolved administrations is a collective term for the executive bodies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales: the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government.

The command paper also set out measures to crack down on youth vaping. The Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) report [Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain](#) shows that the number of children using vapes has tripled in the past 3 years and a staggering 20.5% of children in Great Britain had tried vaping in 2023. According to the [Northern Ireland Young persons behaviour and attitudes survey 2022](#), 21.3% of 11 to 16 year olds in Northern Ireland reported having ever used an e-cigarette.

Due to nicotine content and the unknown long-term harms, vaping carries risks to health and lifelong addiction for children. The health advice is clear: young people and people who have never smoked should not vape.

The UK Government and devolved administrations have a duty to protect our children from the potential harms associated with underage vaping, while their lungs and brains are still developing. So, the UK Government and devolved administrations are consulting on several proposals on youth vaping including:

- restricting flavours
- regulating point of sale displays
- regulating packaging and presentation
- considering restricting the supply and sale of disposable vapes
- whether regulations should extend to non-nicotine vapes
- taking action on the affordability of vapes

These will need to balance having the biggest impact on youth vaping with ensuring vapes continue to support adult smokers to quit.

The command paper also focused on new measures to ensure the law is enforced. Underage and illicit sales of tobacco, and more recently vapes, are undermining the work of the UK Government and devolved administrations to regulate the industry and protect public health. In England and Wales, the government is seeking to introduce new powers for local authorities to issue fixed penalty notices (on the spot

finer) to clamp down on those irresponsibly selling tobacco products and vapes to underage people.

Consultation overview

The consultation asks questions in 3 areas for which new legislation would be needed:

1. Creating a smokefree generation: on smoking, the case for change is clear and the UK Government and devolved administrations are consulting on the smokefree generation policy and its scope to inform future legislation.
2. Tackling youth vaping: while there is also significant evidence for action to tackle youth vaping, within each proposal the UK Government and devolved administrations are consulting on several options to ensure we take the most appropriate and impactful steps, building on England's [analysis of the youth vaping call for evidence](#).
3. Enforcement: the consultation also asks questions on the proposal to introduce new powers for local authorities in England and Wales to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation of tobacco products and vapes.

The UK Government and devolved administrations would like to understand the impacts on businesses and on people, and if there are any impacts on groups with protected characteristics (see [Discrimination: your rights](#)). We want to hear from:

- the public - from young people, parents, carers and teachers
- the retail sector and the independent vaping industry
- local authorities across the UK
- clinicians and medical professionals
- public health stakeholders and academic experts
- employers and trade unions

The UK Government and devolved administrations would like to receive as much detail as possible under each of the themes of the consultation. For each multiple choice question, you will be able to provide additional information and evidence to support your answer through free text boxes.

The UK Government and devolved administrations will only make any decisions on these proposed measures after fully considering:

- the consultation responses we receive
- the evidence provided in those responses
- a further review of the international evidence base

Following this, impact assessments will be published.

The UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government intend to bring forward legislation as soon as possible. In Northern Ireland, the outcome of this consultation will inform decisions of incoming ministers and the Northern Ireland Executive, or in the absence of ministers, those decisions that can be taken under the [Northern Ireland \(Executive Formation etc\) Act 2022](#). This applies to all proposals in the consultation document.

Territorial extent

Health policy is a devolved matter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. DHSC in England, the Directorate for Population Health in Scotland, the Health and Social Services Group in Wales and the Department of Health in Northern Ireland are each responsible for improving public health. This includes reducing tobacco use by implementing comprehensive tobacco control strategies and minimising the health risks of youth vaping.

Environmental policy, like health policy, is a devolved matter. DHSC, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the devolved administrations will work together to agree a policy across the 4 nations on restricting disposable vapes and other appropriate measures.

While the legislative proposals in the command paper [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#) set out an approach for England only, governments across the UK are now consulting to understand whether they should take action in the areas outlined in the paper. So, with agreement with the devolved administrations, DHSC is leading this consultation UK-wide.

Tobacco industry declaration

The UK is a party to the [World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#) and so has an obligation to protect the development of public health policy from the vested interests of the tobacco industry.

To meet this obligation, we ask all respondents to disclose whether they have any direct or indirect links to, or receive funding from, the tobacco industry.

Legislating to create a smokefree generation

There is no more addictive product that is legally sold in our shops than tobacco. Three-quarters of smokers would never have started if they had the choice again.

As outlined in the command paper [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), we want to stop the start of addiction, as it is much easier to never start smoking than to have to quit. The UK Government, Scotland and Wales will bring forward legislation making it an offence to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.

The law will stop children turning 14 this year or younger from ever legally being sold tobacco products. In effect, raising the smoking age by a year each year until it applies to the whole population. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to a smokefree generation following this consultation.

Policy summary

This policy will make it an offence for anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 to be sold tobacco products (and in Scotland, also an offence for anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 to purchase tobacco products).

This follows a similar approach to New Zealand who became the first country in the world to introduce a restriction on the sale of tobacco to anyone born after a specified date, as part of its [Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan](#). The New Zealand legislation makes it an offence to sell smoked tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009, to first take effect in January 2027.

The UK Government, Scotland and Wales will also make it an offence for anyone at or over the legal age to purchase tobacco products on behalf of someone born on or after 1 January 2009 ('proxy purchasing'). The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider appropriate measures relating to a smokefree generation following this consultation.

Products in scope of the new legislation will mirror the current scope of age of sale legislation for tobacco products. This includes a wider range of products (see 'Product scope' below) than the New Zealand legislation, which only included smoked tobacco. However, New Zealand is taking forward other measures which the UK Government is not proposing, including through a licensing scheme to significantly reduce the number of retail outlets that can sell tobacco and through new limits to reduce the nicotine strength of cigarettes.

Product scope

In England and Wales, the current age of sale restriction is imposed under the [Children and Young Persons Act 1933](#). The age of sale restriction applies to tobacco products and cigarette papers.

In Scotland, the age of sale restrictions are set out Part 1 of the [Tobacco and Primary Medical Services \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). Those restrictions apply to tobacco products and cigarette papers, which are defined in section 35 of that act.

In Northern Ireland, the age of sale restrictions for tobacco are set out in the [Health and Personal Social Services \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1978](#) and through subsequent amendments.

We propose that all tobacco products, cigarette papers and herbal smoking products would be subject to the proposed age of sale.

Products that would be in scope of the change include:

- cigarettes
- cigarette papers
- hand rolled tobacco
- cigars
- cigarillos
- pipe tobacco
- waterpipe tobacco products (for example shisha)
- chewing tobacco
- heated tobacco
- nasal tobacco (snuff)
- herbal smoking products

All other products such as vapes and nicotine replacement therapies would be out of scope for the smokefree generation proposal because they do not contain tobacco and are often used as a quit aid for those who smoke.

Age of sale statements

In England and Wales, the [Children and Young Persons \(Protection from Tobacco\) Act 1991](#) requires retailers selling tobacco to display a notice in a prominent position at the point of sale stating that “it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18”.

In Scotland, this requirement is contained in the [Tobacco and Primary Medical Services \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#).

In Northern Ireland, this requirement is contained in the [Children and Young Persons \(Protection from Tobacco\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1991](#).

In light of this, the UK Government, Scotland, and Wales propose that display statements will need to be changed and required to read “it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009”.

The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to age of sale statements following this consultation.

Prohibiting anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 from ever being sold tobacco products (and also from purchasing tobacco products, in Scotland) will impact children who are turning 14 or younger in 2023. Setting this date will mean the change in the law would come into effect in 3 to 4 years' time from January 2027, when this group of children turns 18.

Open consultation

Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views

Published 12 October 2023

Question

Do you agree or disagree that the age of sale for tobacco products should be changed so that anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 will never be legally sold (and also in Scotland, never legally purchase) tobacco products?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that the age of sale for tobacco products should be changed to prevent people born on/ after the 1st January 2009 from purchasing tobacco.

There has been overwhelming evidence that the use of tobacco products causes illness and premature deaths with a high cost to the economy as well as the personal impact. Despite increasing restrictions such as advertising bans, display bans, age restrictions, health warnings and graphic images on packaging, 17% of the adult population in NI continue to smoke and underage sales continue to be difficult to police. The introduction of a lifetime ban on selling to our future populations will effectively reduce the availability of tobacco and prevent a new generation from starting to smoke and will have a positive impact upon their health. This is an essential step in creating a tobacco free society.

Proxy sales refer to a person at or over the legal age of sale purchasing a product on behalf of someone under the legal age of sale. Proxy sales are prohibited under existing tobacco age of sale legislation. In this context, prohibiting proxy sales would mean that anyone born before 1 January 2009 would be prohibited from purchasing tobacco products on behalf of anyone born on or after 1 January 2009.

Question

Do you think that proxy sales should also be prohibited?

- Yes

- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that the current provision prohibiting proxy sales should be extended to mean that anyone born before 1st January 2009 should be prohibited from purchasing tobacco products on behalf of anyone born on or after 1st January 2009. In doing this it is hoped that fewer children will start smoking as they will be unable to easily obtain cigarettes.

Failure to introduce a ban on proxy sales would completely dilute the impact of any lifetime ban legislation. Whilst this type of law is often difficult in practice to enforce it has been used to good effect in other legislation and acts as a deterrent.

The following products would be in scope of the new legislation:

- cigarettes
- cigarette papers
- hand rolled tobacco
- cigars
- cigarillos
- pipe tobacco
- waterpipe tobacco products (for example, shisha)
- chewing tobacco
- heated tobacco
- nasal tobacco (snuff)
- herbal smoking products

This mirrors the current scope of age of sale legislation in England and Wales. Existing age of sale requirements in Scotland currently cover products consisting wholly or partly of tobacco and which are intended to be smoked, sniffed, sucked or chewed. Insofar as the products listed would not be within the scope of the existing restrictions, it is proposed that the scope of the Scottish legislation be expanded to include them.

Question

Do you agree or disagree that all tobacco products, cigarette papers and herbal smoking products should be covered in the new legislation?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that the new legislation should include all tobacco products, cigarette papers and herbal smoking products. Inhaling or smoking any product can be a gateway to smoking cigarettes and nicotine addiction. This will also assist in removing ambiguity when it comes to the enforcement of the various products on the market.

It is currently a legal requirement for retail premises to display the following statement 'it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under 18'. This requirement would need to be changed to align with the new age of sale.

Question

Do you agree or disagree that warning notices in retail premises will need to be changed to read 'it is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009' when the law comes into effect?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that warning notices in retail premises should be amended to reflect the legislative requirements. This will ensure that customers are clearly informed and will act a reminder for staff at the point of sale.

We also believe it would be beneficial to include the prohibition on proxy sales on the warning notice.

Tackling the rise in youth vaping

Vapes are an effective tool for adult smokers to quit, especially when combined with expert support. Ensuring vapes can continue to be made available to current adult smokers is vital to supporting current smokers to quit. However, vaping is not recommended for children, or indeed non-smokers, and carries risk of future harm and addiction. The number of children vaping has risen sharply over the past few years. In England, we carried out a [youth vaping call for evidence](#) and received a variety of suggested measures to reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to children.

The [Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016](#) sets product standards for nicotine vapes including restrictions on maximum nicotine strength, refill bottle and tank size limits, packaging and advertising (including prohibiting advertising on television and radio) in the UK.

In 2022, the Scottish Government consulted on proposals to make regulations under existing powers in the [Health \(Tobacco, Nicotine etc. and Care\) \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) to restrict the advertising and promotion of nicotine vapour products (nicotine vapour products include both nicotine and non-nicotine vapes). The proposals included restrictions on advertising, brand-sharing in products and services, free distribution and nominal pricing and sponsorship.

In Wales, the [Public Health \(Wales\) Act 2017](#) introduced regulatory making powers to introduce a national register of retailers of tobacco and nicotine products. In Northern Ireland, the [Health \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#) provides a power to ban vape sales from vending machines.

As outlined in the command paper [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), it is important to consult on a set of proposals to reduce youth vaping, ensuring we get the balance right between protecting children and supporting adult smokers to quit. The proposals being consulted on include:

- restricting vape flavours
- regulating vape packaging and product presentation
- regulating point of sale displays
- restricting the supply and sale of disposable vapes
- exploring further restrictions for non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine consumer products such as nicotine pouches
- action on the affordability of vapes, exploring a new duty on vapes

The 'Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation' paper also set out an existing plan to legislate in order to close the loophole in our laws which allows industry to give free samples of nicotine and non-nicotine vapes (and other nicotine products) to under 18s, as well as to introduce an age restriction for non-nicotine vapes. These would apply to England and Wales only, but we will explore the possibility of inclusion of the other devolved administrations in such provisions where appropriate.

Restricting vape flavours

Evidence on vape flavours

Research shows that children are attracted to the fruit and sweet flavours of vapes, both in their taste and smell, as well as how they are described. Restricting flavours has the potential to significantly reduce youth vaping.

In Great Britain, the ASH 2023 report [Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain](#) shows that the most frequently used vape flavouring for children is ‘fruit flavour’, with 60% of current children using them. Seventeen per cent of children who vape choose sweet flavours such as chocolate or candy.

However, [research by London South Bank University](#) has found that there is evidence that flavoured vaping products can assist adults to quit smoking. So, any restriction on flavours needs to be carefully balanced with ensuring vapes continue to be available and accessible to support adults to quit smoking.

This is why the UK Government, Scotland and Wales are considering the options for how vape flavours and descriptions could be restricted in legislation. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to flavours following this consultation.

More information on the range of flavours and types of devices is available in Annex 1: vape types and flavours.

Options for how we can restrict vape flavours

Option 1: limiting how the vape is described.

Vape flavours can be restricted by the way they are described. For example, New Zealand has done this by mandating vape flavour descriptions, in their [Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Amendment Regulations 2023](#), to a specified list that includes generic flavour names such as ‘tobacco’ or ‘berry’. This means that vapes could be called ‘blueberry’, but not ‘blueberry muffin’ for example.

Option 2: limiting the ingredients in vapes.

Vape flavours can be restricted by only permitting certain ingredients to be used in the product. In the Netherlands, for example, there is a specified list of ingredients that can be used in vapes, which are those that produce a ‘tobacco’ taste and pose almost no health harm.

Option 3: limiting the characterising flavours (the taste and smell) of vapes.

The characterising flavours of vapes (the way a vape smells or tastes to a consumer) can be restricted. In 2020, when menthol flavoured cigarettes were banned in the UK, they were restricted based on the characterising flavour of menthol. Finland, for example, has restricted all characterising flavours for vapes, apart from the flavour of tobacco.

Options for which flavours vapes should be limited to

As well as consulting on how the UK Government and devolved administrations should restrict vape flavours, we are also asking which flavours vapes should be limited to. We are considering restricting flavours to one of the following options:

- Option A: flavours limited to tobacco only
- Option B: flavours limited to tobacco, mint and menthol only
- Option C: flavours limited to tobacco, mint, menthol and fruits only

We will also consider regulating non-nicotine vapes in the same way.

Question

Do you agree or disagree that the UK Government and devolved administrations should restrict vape flavours?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that vape flavours should be restricted for a number of reasons. If vapes are being used as an aid to quit smoking, then they should be limited to tobacco flavour and made as unattractive as possible to discourage new users.

It is important to minimise the attractiveness and appeal of such products to users, particularly young people. Fruit, mint and menthol smells and tastes are much more appealing than tobacco – by restricting flavours to tobacco only, the appeal is significantly reduced. In addition, restricting flavours will assist in regulating the safety of vapes on the market and allow consistent enforcement.

Question

Which option or options do you think would be the most effective way for the UK Government and devolved administrations to implement restrictions on flavours?
(You may select more than one answer)

- Option 1: limiting how the vape is described
- Option 2: limiting the ingredients in vapes
- Option 3: limiting the characterising flavours (the taste and smell) of vapes
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council is of the opinion that all of the above measures should be implemented. Evidence is showing that more young people are trying vapes than cigarettes and are likely to do so regardless of parental behaviours, therefore strong measures are needed to reduce the appeal of vapes.

The vast variety of vapes on the market poses challenges for our product safety team in ensuring that what is available is both compliant and safe for use.

Question

Which option do you think would be the most effective way for the UK Government and devolved administrations to restrict vape flavours to children and young people?

- Option A: flavours limited to tobacco only
- Option B: flavours limited to tobacco, mint and menthol only
- Option C: flavours limited to tobacco, mint, menthol and fruits only

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

As previously stated, Mid Ulster District Council believes it is essential that vapes are made completely unappealing to children and young people. By ensuring they are restricted to tobacco flavour only, they are more likely to be used as a smoking cessation aid rather than a recreational pastime. Whilst research is indicating that flavoured vapes have more appeal for adults using them in an attempt to quit smoking, this is offset by the evidence that young people are more attracted to fruit and sweet flavoured vapes.

The priority must be to prevent more people taking up the habit rather than weakening legislation on the basis that flavoured vapes are a preferred smoking cessation aid. Restricting flavours will make vapes unattractive and prevent uptake and avoid future addiction in young people.

Question

Do you think there are any alternative flavour options the UK Government and devolved administrations should consider?

- Yes
- **No**
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Flavours should be as unattractive as possible to children and young people to prevent uptake and avoid future addiction.

Question

Do you think non-nicotine e-liquid, for example shortfills, should also be included in restrictions on vape flavours?

- **Yes**
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that the non-nicotine e-liquids should be included in the restrictions on vape flavours. There is evidence to suggest that vaping without nicotine may still cause harm to health and this could act as a gateway for users starting vaping nicotine e-liquids.

In addition, as they can be mixed with nicotine containing e-liquids, this could provide a loophole for users to make their own flavoured e-liquids.

Regulating point of sale displays

Unlike tobacco products, vapes are currently allowed to be displayed at the point of sale. Children can see and handle vapes in retail outlets where they are often displayed alongside confectionery and on accessible shelves. The ASH report [Public support for government action on tobacco](#) found that 74% of adults in England support the prohibiting of point of sale promotion of vapes.

The UK Government and devolved administrations want to limit the exposure of children to vapes and keep them out of sight and reach of children. However, it is important not to inhibit people who currently smoke from accessing vapes as a quit aid, so they must remain visible enough.

Specialist vape shops are retail outlets that specialise in the sale of vaping products. The UK Government and devolved administrations want to consider if they should be an exception to any restrictions, as they usually have a wider selection of devices and products available. Also, some shops have staff trained by the [National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training](#), to offer more tailored advice for smokers wanting to quit. The UK Government and devolved administrations are keen to hear responses on this and we have included a specific question on this.

The UK Government, Scotland and Wales will also consider regulating non-nicotine vapes and non-nicotine e-liquids in the same way. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to non-nicotine vapes, following consultation. There is the opportunity to provide your opinions and evidence about this in the section on non-nicotine vapes.

There are 2 options for regulating point of sale displays of vapes:

- Option 1: vapes must be kept behind the counter and cannot be on display, like tobacco products
- Option 2: vapes must be kept behind the counter but can be on display

Question

Which option do you think would be the most effective way to restrict vapes to children and young people?

- Option 1: vapes must be kept behind the counter and cannot be on display, like tobacco products
- Option 2: vapes must be kept behind the counter but can be on display

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that in order to prevent people from starting to vape and to assist those wishing to quit vaping, all vapes, vape devices, e-liquids and associated products must be kept behind the counter and not on display. Evidence has shown that marketing of tobacco products encourages young people to smoke, and the point of sale display restrictions have been successfully implemented by retailers for cigarettes and could easily be extended to vapes.

In addition, Mid Ulster District Council believes that a registration scheme for retailers selling vapes should be introduced. This could be similar to the current register for retailers of tobacco products in Northern Ireland, through the Tobacco Register NI, that includes similar sanctions. This would provide councils with a comprehensive list of retailers who sell vapes without the excessive cost or

administrative burden for both businesses and councils that a licensing scheme would likely introduce.

We believe that mandatory age identification checks should be introduced, and the acceptable forms of ID be specified in the new legislation.

In addition, vending machines supplying all vapes should be prohibited to prevent access to young people. We are aware vending machines supplying vapes for sale exist at a range of premises across N. Ireland. This would ensure vapes are brought in line with the prohibition of cigarette vending machines in Northern Ireland.

Question

Do you think exemptions should be made for specialist vape shops?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council **do not** agree that exemptions should be made for specialist vape shops. Unlike specialist tobacco retailers, which are rare, there are a large number/proliferation of specialist vape shops.

Whilst exemptions to the display ban regulations exist for specialist tobacco shops and wholesalers, it is known that vapes are currently of particular appeal to children and young people. The relaxation of any display ban regulations relies on a secure entry system to the premises to ensure that those underage are not admitted to the shop in the first place. There are concerns that there would not be the same controls in place in specialist vape shops, many of which currently occupy prominent high street locations.

Question

If you disagree with regulating point of sale displays, what alternative measures do you think the UK Government and devolved administrations should consider?

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that additional measures should be included, along with point of sale restrictions. Registration of premises selling vapes should mirror the current register for retailers of tobacco products in Northern Ireland, through the Tobacco Register NI. This would provide councils with a comprehensive list of retailers who sell vapes without the excessive cost or administrative burden for both businesses and councils that a licensing scheme would likely introduce.

Regulating vape packaging and product presentation

The [youth vaping call for evidence](#) in England showed that children are attracted to vapes through brightly coloured products and packaging and child friendly images such as cartoons. They are designed to appeal to children, and this must stop.

[Research on vape packaging published by the JAMA Network](#) has shown that standardised vape packaging with reduced brand imagery can decrease the appeal to young people who have not previously smoked or vaped, without reducing the appeal of vapes to adult smokers.

Options for regulating vape packaging

The UK Government, Scotland and Wales are considering further regulating the packaging of vapes. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to regulating vape packaging following this consultation. We want to ensure that no part of the vape device, nor its packaging, is targeted at children. This includes:

- any unit packet (first wrap or container of an item)
- any container pack (the portable device in which a material is stored, transported, disposed of or handled)
- the presentation of the vape device

There are several possible options for how packaging and presentation of vapes can be restricted.

Option 1: prohibiting the use of cartoons, characters, animals, inanimate objects and other child friendly imagery, on both the vape packaging and vape device. This would still allow for colouring and tailored brand design.

Option 2: prohibiting the use of all imagery and colouring on both the vape packaging and vape device. This would still allow for branding, such as logos and names.

Option 3: prohibiting the use of all imagery and colouring and branding for both the vape packaging and vape device. This is equivalent to the standardised packaging rules on tobacco.

Question

Which option do you think would be the most effective way for the UK Government and devolved administrations to restrict the way vapes can be packaged and presented to reduce youth vaping?

- Option 1: prohibiting the use of cartoons, characters, animals, inanimate objects, and other child friendly imagery, on both the vape packaging and vape device. This would still allow for colouring and tailored brand design
- Option 2: prohibiting the use of all imagery and colouring on both the vape packaging and vape device but still allow branding such as logos and names
- **Option 3: prohibiting the use of all imagery and colouring and branding (standardised packaging) for both the vape packaging and vape device**

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that standardised packaging for both the device and packaging of vapes should be introduced. This has been successfully introduced for tobacco and will reduce the appeal to young people and for those trying to quit vaping.

Standardised packaging would also assist Councils in achieving uniform enforcement.

Question

If you disagree with regulating vape packaging, what alternative measures do you think the UK Government and devolved administrations should consider?

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Restricting the supply and sale of disposable vaping products

The use of disposable vaping products (sometimes referred to as single-use vapes) has increased substantially in recent years. Disposable vapes are products that are not rechargeable, that are not refillable or that are neither rechargeable nor refillable. In contrast, a reusable vape is a product which can be recharged and fully refilled an unlimited number of times by the user. Products can contain vape liquid with or without nicotine.

There is growing concern over the environmental impacts of disposable vapes given their lithium batteries and hard to recycle components and the increasing frequency in which these products are littered or thrown in the bin. Recent [research on vape disposal by YouGov commissioned by Material Focus](#) found that almost 5 million disposable vapes are either littered or thrown away in general waste every week.

There are measures already in place to ensure responsible production and disposal of waste electrical and electronic items through the [Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013](#) (WEEE) and obligations under the [Waste Batteries and Accumulators Regulations 2009](#). However, evidence suggests compliance with these obligations is low, given the recent surge of businesses supplying disposable vapes. Both the WEEE and batteries regulations are being reviewed, with consultations planned.

In 2023, the Scottish Government commissioned Zero Waste Scotland to examine the environmental impact of single-use vapes and consider options to tackle the issue. Environmental impacts highlighted by Zero Waste Scotland's [Environmental impact of single-use e-cigarettes](#) review include:

- the impact of littering
- fire risks associated with unsafe disposal of their contents, including lithium batteries and chemicals
- greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption generated in their manufacture

There is also evidence of a significant and widespread increase in the use of disposable vapes by children. ASH's [Use of e-cigarettes among young people in Great Britain](#) survey found that 69% of vape users aged 11 to 17 mainly used disposable vapes in 2023. Northern Ireland's [Young person's behaviour and attitude survey 2022](#) shows that 85.7% of 11 to 16 year olds in Northern Ireland who currently use e-cigarettes reported that they used disposables.

There are a range of policy options to tackle the environmental impact of single-use vapes, including improved product design, increasing access to responsible disposal options, public communication campaigns, as well as potential restrictions on single-use vapes.

The UK Government, Scotland and Wales are considering restrictions on the sale and supply of disposable vaping products (including non-nicotine vapes), including prohibiting the sale of these products, due to the environmental impacts of disposable vapes. Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to disposable vapes following this consultation.

The approach to the enforcement of any restrictions would be a matter for individual nations, with civil sanctions such as fixed penalty notices being the preferred enforcement mechanism where appropriate.

Question

Do you agree or disagree that there should be restrictions on the sale and supply of disposable vapes?

That is, those that are not rechargeable, not refillable or that are neither rechargeable nor refillable.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council agrees that the sale and supply of disposable vapes should be prohibited. Disposable vapes are particularly used by children and young people due to their accessibility, ease of use and cost.

In addition, Mid Ulster District Council believes these vapes should be described as 'single use' rather than disposable, as they are designed as one unit, which means the batteries can't be easily separated from the plastic shell and other materials. This makes them difficult and expensive to recycle.

Question

Do you agree or disagree that restrictions on disposable vapes should take the form of prohibiting their sale and supply?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that disposable vapes should be prohibited from being sold and supplied. There are alternative types of vapes available for those using vaping as a tool to quit smoking. The vast majority of young people and children who vape use disposable vapes due to their accessibility, ease of use and low cost.

Banning disposable vapes completely would be the most effective longer term environmental solution as well as removing the most popular type of vape for young people from the supply chain.

Question

Are there any other types of product or descriptions of products that you think should be included in these restrictions?

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes it is crucial that any restriction should be clearly defined to include any novel and innovative products, including rechargeable disposables and limits should be placed on the amount of nicotine sold per pack.

Question

Do you agree or disagree that an implementation period for restrictions on disposable vapes should be no less than 6 months after the law is introduced?

- Agree
- **Disagree**
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that the implementation period for restrictions on disposable vapes should be no greater than 6 months after the law is introduced. We believe that 6 months is a reasonable time period for businesses to sell through existing stock.

Question

Are there other measures that would be required, alongside restrictions on supply and sale of disposable vapes, to ensure the policy is effective in improving environmental outcomes?

All disposable vapes should be banned and for those remaining on the market consideration should be given to implementing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for Vapes and associated funding. This would then place responsibility for the end-of-life management of vape devices on manufacturers, encouraging them to design products with recycling in mind.

Safe storage at collection points and onward transportation to final end destinations should be given greater consideration.

Communications on disposal and recycling of Vapes should be clearer and readily available.

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine consumer products

Non-nicotine vapes

Non-nicotine vapes (or nicotine-free vapes) are covered by the [General Products Safety Regulations \(GPSR\) 2005](#) in the UK.

Like nicotine vapes, they can come in liquid form to be used in a device or already contained as a liquid in a device. There are 3 categories of these types of non-nicotine vapes:

- shortfill and longfill vapes
- disposable (single-use) vapes
- alternative non-nicotine vapes

Alternative non-nicotine vapes are often advertised as wellness vapes. They are not currently subject to the same age restrictions or product standards as nicotine-containing vapes and there are some calls for non-nicotine vapes to be regulated in the same way as nicotine vapes.

There is evidence that children are accessing these products and the UK Government and devolved administrations want to prevent potential future health harms from non-nicotine vapes. Scotland has already introduced age of sale requirements for non-nicotine vapes.

So, the UK Government and the Welsh Government will seek to introduce legislation to prohibit the sale of non-nicotine vapes to under 18s as a first step to protect children from accessing and using these vapes. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland will consider measures relating to non-nicotine vapes to under 18s following this consultation.

The UK Government and devolved administrations are also interested in views on whether we should also impose further restrictions on non-nicotine vapes that we have outlined in this consultation for nicotine vapes.

Other nicotine consumer products

There are other consumer nicotine products in the UK market such as nicotine pouches. They are not regulated under the [Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016](#) but by GPSR. There are no mandated age of sale restrictions in

the UK, but the UK Government, Northern Ireland and Wales have regulatory making powers to mandate these.

[Recent research on tobacco-free nicotine pouch use in Great Britain](#) suggests that although nicotine pouch use is low among adults (0.26% or 1 in 400 users in Great Britain), it is more popular with younger and middle-aged men who also use other nicotine products and have a history of smoking. Northern Ireland's [Young person's behaviour and attitudes survey 2022](#) shows that 4.8% of year 11 and year 12 pupils reported ever having used nicotine pouches in 2022.

Question

Do you have any evidence that the UK Government and devolved administrations should consider related to the harms or use of non-nicotine vapes?

- Yes
- **No**
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Question

Do you think the UK Government and devolved administrations should regulate non-nicotine vapes under a similar regulatory framework as nicotine vapes?

- **Yes**
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that non-nicotine vapes should be restricted in the same way as those containing nicotine. The long term health effects of vaping are currently unknown, and they could act as gateway for users switching to nicotine containing vapes or even smoking cigarettes.

Ensuring that new restrictions are similar will also assist retailers in complying and enforcement officers in ensuring consistency.

Question

Do you have any evidence that the UK Government and devolved administrations should consider on the harms or use of other consumer nicotine products such as nicotine pouches?

- Yes
- **No**
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Question

Do you think the UK Government and devolved administrations should regulate other consumer nicotine products such as nicotine pouches under a similar regulatory framework as nicotine vapes?

- **Yes**
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Nicotine is highly addictive and as such all products should be regulated in the same way to prevent addiction and users moving onto other more harmful products.

Affordability

Price difference between vaping and smoking

There is currently a significant difference in price between vapes and tobacco products, in part because vapes are only subject to VAT, whereas tobacco has VAT and duty (at least a £7.87 duty on a packet of 20 cigarettes). Smoking is 3 times more expensive than vaping, and it is estimated that the average smoker in England could save around £670 per year from switching to vaping. This price differential is important, as it can encourage smokers to switch from cigarettes to vapes.

However, this also means that vapes are more readily accessible to young people and other non-smokers, especially disposable and refillable devices.

Cost of vapes

Disposable vapes are considerably cheaper to buy than other vape products. The most popular disposable vape among young people in 2022 was the Elf Bar, which costs around £5, compared to a reusable Elf Bar which costs around £8. Mod or tank devices vary in price, but are in the region of £40 to £50, with additional costs for the e-liquid.

Table 1: average cost of vapes across different product categories

Product category	Unit cost (average)
Disposable	£6
Reusable: pre-filled pod kits	£12
Reusable: vape kits (refillable cartridges)	£40

Duty and taxes on vapes

Fifteen European countries including Germany and Italy have introduced a national tax on vapes and Canada has introduced a vaping duty. American research on the intended and unintended effects of e-cigarette taxes on youth tobacco use shows that taxes on vapes are associated with reductions in vaping, but at the potential risk of increasing youth smoking.

The effect of increasing the prices of vapes

The majority of respondents in DHSC's [youth vaping call for evidence](#) (64%) said price increases would reduce the demand for vapes. Thirty-six per cent of respondents said vapes are affordable and within the average child's buying power and that price has a significant impact on the appeal of vapes, with a further 22% stating that disposable vapes specifically are affordable.

A quarter of respondents thought there was a risk that price increases may have a negative impact on smoking cessation progress, given the use of vapes as an aid to quit smoking. Eleven per cent of respondents stated that the price differential between vapes and cigarettes increased the appeal of vaping.

Policy considerations

This consultation covers a range of measures to reduce the appeal and availability of vapes to children. To support this agenda, the UK Government thinks that there is a strong case to take action on affordability and so is exploring options, including a new duty on vapes as other countries have done, while ensuring that there is a significant differential between duty on vapes and duty on tobacco products.

Question

Do you think that an increase in the price of vapes would reduce the number of young people who vape?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

Mid Ulster District Council believes that if the price of vapes was increased particularly disposables, this would help reduce the number of young people who vape, as it would be less affordable. Furthermore, we strongly suggest that there should be a restriction on vape price promotions by retailers

Enforcement

A strong approach to enforcement is vital if the smokefree generation and youth vaping policy is to have real impact. Underage and illicit sale of tobacco, and more recently vapes, is undermining work to regulate the industry and protect public health.

In [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), additional steps were set out to clamp down on those illegally selling tobacco products and vapes to underage people and to prevent illicit products from being sold.

One of these measures is introducing new powers for local authorities to issue fixed penalty notices to enforce age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes in England and Wales.

In Scotland, local authorities already have powers to issue fixed penalty notices to retailers and individuals who commit an offence under the [Tobacco and Primary Medical Services \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#). In Northern Ireland, there is local enforcement through the [Tobacco Retailers Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2014](#). It is proposed that the existing enforcement regime would continue to apply to age of sale restrictions.

Introducing on the spot fines for underage sales

Local authorities take a proportionate approach to enforce age of sale restrictions on tobacco products and vapes, that reflects the level of offence committed. For example, in England, penalties can be escalated, starting with a warning through to a maximum fine of £2,500. In the case of the most serious or repeat offences, local authorities can apply for a court order to prevent the offending retailer from opening for a period of time.

The current penalty regime requires local authorities to prosecute the individual or business in question and for the individual or business in question to be convicted in a magistrates' court. Trading standards officers say this time-consuming court procedure limits their ability to issue fines and is a significant gap in their operational capabilities.

Question

Do you think that fixed penalty notices should be issued for breaches of age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes?

Powers to issue fixed penalty notices would provide an alternative means for local authorities to enforce age of sale legislation for tobacco products and vapes in addition to existing penalties.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

In Northern Ireland, we have the option of a Fixed Penalty Notice for the sale of tobacco products and vapes. This has been an efficient and effective way of dealing with people who sell to children.

Question

What level of fixed penalty notice should be given for an underage tobacco sale?

- £100
- £200
- Other

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

In Northern Ireland, we currently have a £250 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for selling both tobacco products and vapes to children.

Mid Ulster District Council believes that the fixed penalty amount should be £250, and we recommend a sliding scale for FPNs, with the amount increasing for repeat offenders. In addition, we support the introduction of an offence for non-payment of an FPN.

Question

What level of fixed penalty notice should be given for an underage vape sale?

- £100
- £200
- Other

Please explain your answer and provide evidence or your opinion to support further development of our approach. (maximum 300 words)

In Northern Ireland, we currently have a £250 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for selling both tobacco products and vapes to children.

Mid Ulster District Council believes that the fixed penalty amount should be £250, and we recommend a sliding scale for FPNs with the amount increasing for repeat offenders. In addition, we support the introduction of an offence for non-payment of a FPN.



How to respond

This consultation seeks feedback on the proposed measures, to inform future legislation. On youth vaping, there are a number of options proposed, to ensure the UK Government and devolved administrations take the most appropriate and impactful steps, building on existing evidence.

The consultation closes on 6 December 2023 at 11:59pm and you can respond via our [online survey](#).

Report on	Consultation on Private Tenancies Act 2022: Section 8 and Section 10
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager

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	For members to agree a response to the Department for Communities' consultation on the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022, ' <i>Section 8 - Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms</i> ' and ' <i>Section 10 - Electrical Safety Standards</i> '
2.0	Background
2.1	The Environmental Health Service has a role in the regulation of the private rented sector through the Council's statutory duties under the <i>Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006</i> (as amended by the Private Tenancies Act and Housing Amendment Acts) as well as through statutory nuisance investigations.
2.2	Council is also the enforcing authority for provisions to regulate landlord registration, security of tenancy deposits and licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO).
2.3	In July 2022, information was presented to Members on the introduction of the <i>Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022</i> (minute reference: D121/22).
2.4	A further update was provided to Members in February 2023 (minute reference: D028/23) with respect to the implementation of Section 1 – 6 of <i>the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022</i> which came into effect on the 1 st April 2023.
2.5	The introduction of the <i>Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 Act</i> brought about amendments to The Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006, the main legislative framework for the regulation of private rented sector housing.
2.6	The overarching objectives of the Private Tenancies Act are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make the private rented sector a safer and more secure housing option for a wider range of households. • to ensure better regulation of the sector; and • to offer greater protection to private renters.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Not all requirements of the <i>Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022</i> (i.e., the Act) were implemented in April 2023. The creation of further regulations is required to bring the remainder of the Act into effect. This is the case for Sections 8 and 10 pertaining to smoke heat and carbon monoxide alarms and electrical safety.</p>
3.2	<p>The Department for Communities (DfC) has therefore launched two consultations on the out-workings of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 in shaping the technical regulations relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 8 – Smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms. https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/the-fire-smoke-and-carbon-monoxide-alarms-northern • Section 10 – Electrical Safety Standards https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfc/electrical-safety-standards-northern-ireland-202x
3.3	<p>The purpose of the consultations is to assess whether the regulations deliver a sound legislative framework (in context of boundaries in the 2022 Act) to improve health and safety standards in private rented properties, and that the accompanying Guidance Notes are easy to follow and provide the necessary information for all stakeholder groups.</p>
3.4	<p>Section 8 – Smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms.</p> <p>The proposed <i>Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms Regulations (NI)</i> in Appendix 1 set the standards for the number and type of smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms to be installed in private rented properties and aim to reduce the risk of fire related incidents.</p> <p>It is anticipated these Regulations will come into operation early next year and will apply to all private tenancies. There will be a lead in time of 2 months for landlords to comply.</p> <p>The associated guidance notes that are proposed to accompany section 8 can be found in Appendix 2.</p> <p>It will be an offence for a private landlord to fail to comply with the duty to keep in repair and proper working order sufficient appliances for detecting smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide.</p>
3.5	<p>Section 10 – Electrical Safety Standards</p> <p>The proposed <i>Electrical Safety Standards Regulations (NI)</i> as set out in Appendix 3 aim to reduce the risks of death and injury due to electrical faults in private rental properties.</p>

<p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p>	<p>The regulations introduce the requirement for electrical safety standards to be met during the period the property is let and electrical inspections will be required to be completed by a qualified electrician at least every 5 years.</p> <p>The landlord must provide proof the testing has been carried out and if a repair/further investigation is required it must be completed within a specific timescale.</p> <p>It will be an offence for the landlord not to comply with their duties.</p> <p>There is no indication of an implementation date yet. Once commenced, it is anticipated there will be a lead in time of 12 months for all tenancies to comply.</p> <p>The proposed guidance to accompany section 10 can be found in Appendix 4.</p> <p>Enforcement</p> <p>The Act creates new offences for which the Council will have powers to issue fixed penalty notices. The fixed penalty payable in respect of an offence is an amount determined by the Council, being an amount not exceeding one-fifth of the maximum fine payable on summary conviction of that offence, which is a maximum of £500 for smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarm offence and £1000 for electrical safety offence.</p> <p>Members will be provided with a further update prior to implementation of the new legislative powers to agree fixed penalty levels.</p> <p>All responses to the Department for Communities' consultation on section 8 and 10 of the Act, must be submitted via their online survey mechanism before 6th December 2023. Members are therefore asked to review and agree the draft MUDC submission which can be found within the appendix, which consists of a copy of the relevant questions and suggested response.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial: The introduction of the Private Tenancies Act provides Councils with new enforcement powers to deal with tenancy issues in the private rented sector. This will increase the duties and demands on the Councils enforcement resource which has already experienced an increase demand on housing and statutory nuisance services over recent years, coupled with competing priorities on the Environmental Health Service.</p> <p>The Department for Communities is aware of Council's concerns in terms of resources, however there is no financial support available currently to assist Councils with these additional powers. The Council in its response to the consultation has requested the ability to charge for enforcement action with</p>

	<p>regards to electrical safety like that contained in Part II of the Private Tenancies (NI) Order.</p> <p>The fixed penalty regime introduced for the new offences may provide some income, but it will not cover any additional staffing and administrative resources required. Setting the fixed penalty to the maximum amounts is a key consideration in the absence of any financial support to implement this important legislation.</p>
	Human: See above
	Risk Management: None anticipated at this juncture
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: The Department has published Regulatory Impact Assessments, which can be viewed at:</p> <p>https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/communities/dfc-consultation-section8-smoke-heat-carbon-monoxide-alarms-private-tenancies-ni-reg-impact-assessment.pdf</p> <p>https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/communities/dfc-consultation-section10-electrical-safety-standards-private-tenancies-ni-reg-impact-assessment.pdf</p>
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this reports and agree the content of Mid Ulster District Council's draft response to the technical matters of the Department for Communities' consultations on Sections 8 and 10 of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022 as set out in Appendices 5 and 6.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A – Proposed Guidance Notes on Section 8 'Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms
6.2	Appendix B - Proposed Guidance notes on Section 10 on 'Electrical Safety Standards'
6.3	Appendix C - Response to the Department for Communities' consultation on Section 8 of the <i>Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022</i>
6.4	Appendix D - Response to Department for Communities' consultation on Section 10 of the <i>Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Act 2022</i>



Guidance notes for The Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These guidance notes have been produced to clarify what is required under the Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.
- 1.2 The Regulations became law on TBC which means all private rented properties must comply and have the appropriate smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms in place.

2. Purpose of Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- 2.1 According to national fire statistics fires in properties that have alarms in place continue to:
 - be discovered more rapidly (less than 5 minutes) after ignition; and
 - be associated with lower fatal casualty rates.
- 2.2 The installation of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms are intended to reduce the risk of fire and the consequent loss of life, injury, and damage to property. That is why this new legal requirement was introduced under Section 8 of the Private Tenancies Act (NI) 2022.

3. Landlords' responsibilities

- 3.1 These regulations introduce a responsibility on a landlord to install and keep in proper working order sufficient alarms for detecting smoke, heat and carbon monoxide within any property that they rent out to tenants. Alarms need to provide sufficient warning of potential danger. Additionally, any alarm within the property must be repaired or replaced once a landlord has been informed it has become faulty. Section 6 of this guidance details the number, type and location requirements that need to be applied.

- 3.2 A landlord needs to ensure that any alarm units (smoke, heat & carbon monoxide) that are bought/installed are marked/referenced as being British Standard compliant. If any alarms are being hardwired into the main electrical installation that work will need to be undertaken by a qualified electrician.
- 3.3 The landlord is responsible for the alarms within their property and must ensure they are fully functional. The landlord should confirm the tenant is satisfied all alarms are in working order on the commencement of any tenancy. A formal record should be kept of when alarms are installed or replaced. It is recommended to keep a record and associate with further information you hold on your rental property. A copy should also be placed within any information pack located in the property for the tenant's information. All tenants should be advised they need to regularly test the alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions, and to report any faults to the landlord.
- 3.4 If the alarms are due to be replaced, or a fault occurs, the landlords must take remedial action. Failure to comply may be a breach of their duty under these Regulations and an offence may have been committed. A landlord must check the tenant's availability to get access to a property to do repairs and maintenance work.
- 3.5 If a situation does occur in respect of access to the property landlords should attempt to understand why tenants cannot or will not provide access and work with them to find a solution. If access is continually denied landlords should write to their tenants to explain that it is a legal requirement to install the alarms and that it is for the tenant's own safety. Landlords should provide the tenant with a minimum of 24-hour notice for the need to access the property arranging a time to visit that is convenient for the tenant. The landlord should keep a written record of access attempts to provide to the local council in case of any challenge in respect of compliance.

4. Tenants' responsibilities

- 4.1 If tenants find that their alarms are not in working order during the tenancy, they need to report this to the relevant landlord or acting agent. Landlords will be responsible for repairing or replacing any faulty alarms. However, a landlord must be notified that a fault has occurred. (A landlord is not under a duty to carry out works unless he has actual knowledge of the fault).
- 4.2 Tenants should refer to the notes section of their tenancy information notice, their tenancy agreement, or any specific tenancy information pack provided by the landlord for any detail on testing and checking alarms.
- 4.3 Additionally it is a tenant's responsibility to take proper care of the alarms and make good any damage wilfully or negligently caused by themselves, or by any person/persons lawfully living in or lawfully visiting the premises.

- 4.4 As it is a legal requirement on the landlord to install alarms for the tenants' own safety, tenants should ensure that any required access to the property to do repairs, maintenance work and install alarms can be accommodated at a mutually agreeable time.

5. Testing alarms to check they are in working order

- 5.1 Testing of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms does not require specialist skills or knowledge and is straightforward to do. Landlords should consider providing tenants with a demonstration and/or instructions to support understanding of how, and when, to test alarms to make sure they are in working order. Tenants should be advised of the expiry dates of the alarms located within the property and a warned not to tamper with the alarm units.
- 5.2 Landlords should advise tenants to test the alarms once per week by pressing the test button. If they can't reach, ask a family member or neighbour to help, or use a broom handle. It is the tenant's responsibility to undertake regular testing of the alarms and draw any faults to the landlord's attention. All relevant information should be included within any information pack located in the property for the tenant's information.

6. Requirement for alarms and installation

- 6.1 A landlord must have within the property a minimum of:

- ✓ 1 smoke alarm installed in:
 - the room which is most frequently used by the occupants for general daytime living purposes (normally the living room/lounge), and
 - in every circulation space.
- ✓ 1 heat alarm installed in every kitchen.
- ✓ 1 carbon monoxide alarm installed in any room or circulation space of the property which contains a fixed combustion appliance other than a gas cooker.

- 6.2 In connection with the standards on the required number of alarms outlined in the Regulations, it is recognised that layout and design of a property may determine that:

- if an area is open plan, one smoke alarm can cover the whole room provided it can be located where it is no more than 7.5 metres from any point in the room, except where the open plan area contains a kitchen area in which case the alarm fitted should be a heat alarm;

- if an alarm is more than 7.5 meters from any point in the room then another alarm must be installed:
 - where the proximity of an open fireplace would make a smoke alarm impracticable a heat alarm may be fitted.
- 6.3 **Smoke alarms** (*mains wired, battery, or a combination of both*) must be installed on the ceiling and be interlinked. That means if one smoke alarm detects an incident all other alarms in the vicinity of that first alarm's signal will also raise an audible alert.
- 6.4 **Carbon monoxide alarms** (*mains wired or battery*) can be either ceiling or wall mounted see section 8.11 for further clarification. If the alarm is battery operated it must have a sealed battery for the duration of its lifespan.
- 6.5 If using battery smoke alarms, they must be sealed tamper-proof units and have long-life batteries. You may be able to fit these alarms yourself as they do not need to be fitted by a qualified electrician. Batteries last for the duration of its operational lifespan, which may be up to 10 years, however be aware sensors can degrade over time.
- 6.6 Mains wired alarms (smoke, heat or carbon monoxide) must be fitted by a qualified electrician.
- 6.7 Mains wired alarms may be subject to building control approval, for further information please check the following link: [Building Control NI \(buildingcontrol-ni.com\)](http://buildingcontrol-ni.com). It will be the responsibility of a qualified electrician to install mains wired alarms in compliance with current building regulation standards.
- 6.8 Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service provide free Home Fire Safety Checks to people at risk. This includes a visit to the property to provide advice on how to stay safe from fire. To apply for a home fire safety check and get additional advice, please visit the NIFRS website at: www.nifrs.org

7. Specialised alarms

- 7.1 Landlords should make an informed decision and choose the best alarms for their properties and tenants, with due regard for their tenants' circumstances. For example, specialist smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms that alert by vibration or flashing lights (as opposed to by sound alerts) may be required for tenants who are deaf or hard of hearing.

8. Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- 8.1 Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas, produced when carbon-based fuel, such as coal, wood, oil, or natural gas, is burnt without enough oxygen. You cannot

see, smell, or taste it but it can injure and kill quickly. Not only is CO responsible for many deaths and poisonings each year, but many people are also likely to be affected by CO without realising it. [Carbon monoxide | Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland \(hseni.gov.uk\)](https://www.hseni.gov.uk)

- 8.2 Alarms are essential in providing perhaps the only warning an occupier will have of the presence of CO, which is a 'silent killer' and almost every fatality results from the lack of early warning to its presence.
- 8.3 Combustion appliances such as boilers, fires (including open fires), heaters and stoves fuelled by solid fuel, oil or gas all have the potential to cause CO poisoning if they are poorly installed or commissioned, inadequately maintained, or incorrectly used. Inadequate ventilation or a lack of the correct maintenance of appliances, flues and chimneys are the main causes of CO poisoning. Poisonous CO gas is produced when fuel does not burn properly. Incidents of poisoning can also occur through deterioration of the structure of the flue or chimney.
- 8.4 The installation of carbon monoxide alarms is intended to reduce the risk of CO poisoning and the consequent loss of life and serious injury. These Regulations match the existing Regulations required for new build properties. Private landlords must ensure that all the properties they let to tenants include carbon monoxide alarms, if appropriate, regardless of when the tenancy started and what previous requirements have already been met.
- 8.5 Tenants have a right to refer any landlord not complying with the installation of carbon monoxide alarms or any other element of non-compliance within the regulations to the environmental health department of their local council.
- 8.6 In order to alert occupants to the presence of levels of CO gas which may be harmful to people, private landlords must ensure that carbon monoxide alarms are installed in all dwellings they rent to tenants where there is:
 - A fixed combustion appliance (excluding an appliance used solely for cooking) in the dwelling.
 - A fixed combustion appliance in an inter-connected space, for example an integral garage.
 - A combustion appliance necessarily located in a bathroom (advice would be to locate it elsewhere) – the CO detector should be sited outside the room as close to the appliance as possible but allowing for the effect humid air might have on the detector when the bathroom door is open.
- 8.7 A carbon monoxide alarm is not required in an attached out-building or garage where there is no inter-connection with the house for example a connecting door. To be clear, if there is no way that CO could reasonably be expected to find a path into the house there is no need for a detector.

- 8.8 Carbon monoxide alarms need to be powered by a battery designed to operate for the working life of the detector. The detector should incorporate a warning device to alert the users when its working life is due to expire and should be replaced before the expiry date. However, hard wired mains operated carbon monoxide alarms (fixed wiring) may be used as an alternative, provided they are fitted with a sensor failure warning device. Carbon monoxide alarms whether hard-wired or battery must be British Standard compliant.
- 8.9 Section 6 of this guidance specifies that there must be a carbon monoxide alarm installed in any room of the property which contains a fixed combustion appliance other than a gas cooker. That is the minimum standard, however a carbon monoxide alarm may also be installed in a bedroom or any room where a flue passes through to provide extra protection if considered necessary.
- 8.10 Unless otherwise indicated by the manufacturer, carbon monoxide alarms should be sited as follows:
- Ceiling mounted and positioned at least 300mm from any wall (unless otherwise indicated by the manufacturer).
 - Wall mounted and positioned at least 150 mm below the ceiling and higher than any door or window in the room (unless otherwise indicated by the manufacturer).
 - If the combustion appliance (primarily boiler) is located within a small space, usually a cupboard, the alarm should be sited outside the space/cupboard with the appropriate distance between appliance and alarm of between one and three meters.
 - If the combustion appliance (primarily boiler) is located in an attic, the detector should ideally be sited between one and three meters from the appliance in the attic and another interlinked detector sited outside the attic near the attic hatch. Where this is not possible, a detector sited outside the attic as near the attic hatch as possible is acceptable.
- 8.11 A carbon monoxide alarm should **not** be sited:
- In an enclosed space (for example in a cupboard or behind a curtain).
 - Where it can be obstructed (for example by furniture).
 - Directly above a sink.
 - Next to a door or window.
 - Next to an extractor fan.
 - Next to an air vent or similar ventilation opening.
 - In an area where the temperature may drop below -10 °C or exceed 40° unless the detector is designed to do so.
 - Where dirt and dust may block the sensor.
 - In a damp and humid location.
 - In the immediate vicinity of a cooking appliances.

- 8.12 Landlords should be mindful that the provision of carbon monoxide alarms should not be regarded as a substitute for the correct installation and regular servicing of all combustion appliances.

Although not part of these Regulations further information relating to Gas Safety can be found via the following link: [Gas safety and carbon monoxide | nidirect](#)

9. Enforcement

- 9.1 If a landlord fails to comply with the duty to keep in repair and proper working order sufficient appliances for detecting smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide in a private tenancy, this will be an offence under Article 68(1) of the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 and, the appropriate district council may institute legal proceedings.

10. Fines/Penalties

- 10.1 An offence under Article 68(1) of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 on conviction will attract a fine not exceeding level 4 on the Department of Justice standard scale.
- 10.2 If the local council believes that an offence has been committed the authorised council officer, may offer the landlord the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction, by the payment of a fixed penalty fine which will not exceed one-fifth of the maximum fine payable on conviction of that offence.



Guidance notes for The Electrical Safety Standards for Private Tenancies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Communities is committed to making sure that private rented homes are safe, secure places to live and raise families. The majority of landlords are pro-active when it comes to ensuring the safety of their tenants and make a welcome contribution to the housing market. But a minority fail to do so, putting their tenants in danger as a result.
- 1.2 The Regulations require landlords to have the electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested by a qualified person at an interval of at least every 5 years.
- 1.3 This means that all landlords now must do what good landlords are already doing: making sure the electrical installations in their rented properties are safe.
- 1.4 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) continue to be covered under the HMO Licensing Scheme; see the following link for further information.
<https://www.gov.uk/house-in-multiple-occupation-northern-ireland>

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Regulations came into force on [TBC] and to ensure private rented properties meet the required Electrical Safety Standard. This forms part of the Department's wider work to improve safety in all residential premises. Which means that:
 - The electrical wiring, sockets, consumer units (fuse boxes) and other fixed electrical parts in rented homes must be inspected and tested every 5 years, or more often than this if the qualified person undertaking the inspection thinks that is necessary.

- Throughout the time a tenant is living at the property, electrical safety standards must be met.
- The landlord must give the tenant a copy of the report detailing the condition of the property's electrical installation. If requested the report must also be provided to the appropriate district council.

3. What do these Regulations mean for Landlords?

3.1 Landlords of privately rented accommodation must:

- Ensure all electrical installations in their rented properties are inspected and tested by a qualified person at least every 5 years. The qualified person will ensure national standards for electrical safety are met. These are set out in the [18th edition of the 'Wiring Regulations'](#), which are published as British Standard 7671.
- Obtain a report from the qualified person conducting the inspection and test which gives the results and sets a date for the next inspection and test.
- Supply a copy of this report to the existing tenant within 28 days of the inspection and test.
- Supply a copy of this report to a new tenant before they occupy the premises.
- Supply a copy of this report to any prospective tenant within 28 days of receiving a request for the report.
- Supply the appropriate district council with a copy of this report within 7 days of receiving a written request for a copy.
- Retain a copy of the report to give to the inspector and tester who will undertake the next inspection and test.
- Where the report shows that further investigative or remedial work is necessary, complete this work within 28 days or any shorter period if specified as necessary in the report.
- Supply written confirmation of the completion of the further investigative or remedial works from the electrician to the tenant (and the appropriate district council within 28 days of completion of the works if linked to previous council intervention).

3.2 The landlord will need to liaise and agree with the tenant a suitable time and date for the electrical safety inspection to be completed. Additionally, if remedial work is identified from the inspection a suitable time and date must also be agreed with the tenant to have that work completed.

4. What do these Regulations mean for Tenants?

4.1 Landlords must keep the electrical installations in their rented properties safe and in working order and most landlords already do this. These Regulations mean landlords must now have the electrical installation checked at least every 5 years by a properly qualified person. The electrical Installation must be safe, and a landlord must give a tenant proof of this.

4.2 Tenants should:

- ✓ Check they have been provided with a copy of the latest electrical safety inspection report.
- ✓ Report any electrical problems, or potential problems, that occur in between the 5-year inspection period to the landlord so that remedial action can be taken.
- ✓ Allow access to the property for the electrical safety inspection to be completed by the qualified person, and if necessary, allow further access for remedial work to be completed.

Points to Note

4.3 A tenant:

- ✓ Is not required to pay for or contribute towards the cost of the electrical safety inspection.
- ✓ Has the right to contact the appropriate local district council to seek intervention if it is evident that no action has been taken in respect of faults detailed on the last electrical safety inspection report, or no action has been taken in respect of a notified potential new problem.
- ✓ Should be aware that if a landlord cannot carry out an inspection because they do not have right of access to all or part of the property, or lack any other necessary right, the landlord is not in breach of their duties in relation to the regulations if they have taken reasonable steps to acquire that right.
- ✓ Can ask the qualified person completing the inspection for appropriate ID upon arrival.
- ✓ Should note that the landlord is not responsible for the electrical safety of any appliances that belong to the tenant and have been brought into the rental property by the tenant. That is the tenant's responsibility.

5. What will the Electrical Safety Inspection involve?

- 5.1 It is the landlord's responsibility to make sure that the person undertaking the inspection is appropriately qualified and skilled. A qualified person has been defined in the Regulations as being *"a person competent to undertake the inspection and testing required under regulation 3(1) and any further investigative or remedial work in accordance with electrical safety standards."*
- 5.2 The 'fixed' electrical parts of the property, like the wiring, the socket-outlets (plug sockets), the light fittings and the consumer unit (or fuse box) will be inspected. This will include permanently connected equipment such as showers and extractors.

The inspection will find out if:

- Any of the electrical installations are overloaded.
- There are any potential electric shock risks and fire hazards.
- There is any defective electrical work.
- There is a lack of earthing or bonding – these are 2 ways of preventing electrical shocks that are built into electrical installations.

(The Regulations do not cover the inspection of plug-in electrical appliances like cookers, fridges, televisions etc, only the fixed electrical installations.)

- 5.3 The qualified person at the end of the inspection will produce a report, usually an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). (See Annex A). This report details the condition of the electrical installations and any remedial works or further investigations which may be needed.
- 5.4 The inspection report will use the following classification codes to indicate where a landlord must undertake remedial work.
- **Code 1 (C1): Danger present. Risk of injury.** The electrical inspector may make any C1 hazards safe before leaving the property.
 - **Code 2 (C2): Potentially dangerous.**
 - **Further Investigation (FI): Further investigation required without delay.**
 - **Code 3 (C3): Improvement recommended.** Further remedial work is **not** required for the report to be deemed satisfactory.

6. What happens after the inspection?

- 6.1 The report (usually an EICR) will show whether the electrical installation is safe for continued use. In practice, if the report does not require investigative or remedial work, the landlord will not be required to carry out any further work. A copy of that report needs to be given by the landlord to the tenant within 28 days and no further action will be taken.
- 6.2 If the report contains a code C1, C2 or FI, then your landlord must ensure that further investigative or remedial work is carried out by a qualified person within 28 days, or less if specified in the report. The C3 classification code does not indicate remedial work is required, but only that improvement is recommended. Landlords don't have to make the improvement, but it would improve the safety of the installation if they did.
- 6.3 If further necessary investigative or remedial work identified by the report is not undertaken by the landlord, the appropriate district council can be contacted by the tenant to determine if further action should be taken.

7. What happens if an electrical fault occurs between a 5-year inspection point?

- 7.1 If a landlord is notified of an installation electrical fault occurring between the 5-year inspection point, the landlord is responsible under Regulation 3, to ensure the fault is investigated and remedial action taken to meet the required safety standards.
- 7.2 However depending on the type of fault reported the electrical installation may need checked by a qualified person, and if necessary, remedial work undertaken (for example minor works, or a fuse box replaced or rewired). If remedial work is needed then any report provided by the qualified person should be appended to the previous inspection report as detailed in Section 6 above, as evidence that the electrical safety standards have been met. (Annex A provides further clarification.)

8. What happens if a Landlord does not comply with the Regulations?

- 8.1 If the appropriate district council believes a landlord is in breach of one or more of their duties set out in the Regulations, they must serve a remedial notice on the landlord requiring them to take action within 28 days.

8.2 Landlords will have 21 days to make any written representations and appeal to the district council against the remedial notice. If representations are made the remedial notice is suspended until the district council considers those. The district council must inform the landlord of their decision within 7 days.

8.3 District councils may, with the consent of the tenant, arrange to carry out remedial work in the following circumstances:

- If a landlord does not comply with a remedial notice.
- If the electrical safety inspection report indicates that urgent remedial action is required, and the landlord has not carried this out within the period specified in the report.

The district council can recover the costs incurred.

8.4 Before arranging remedial action following non-compliance with a remedial notice, the district council must give the landlord notice that they are going to do work.

Right of appeal

8.5 Landlords have recourse to have an appeal heard in court against:

- A decision that the district council will undertake the remedial action. [An appeal must be made within 28 days from the day on which a remedial notice is served.]
- A demand for the recovery of costs made by the district council following remedial action.
- The decision to take urgent remedial action by district council. [An appeal must be made within 28 days from the day on which the work started.]

9. What is the consequence of non-compliance?

9.1 A landlord who fails to comply with any of the duties under the regulations will be guilty of an offence. The appropriate district council shall bring the prosecution of the offence and on conviction the landlord will be liable to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the Department of Justice standard scale.

9.2 Alternatively, where an authorised officer of an appropriate district council believes that an offence has been committed the authorised officer, may offer the landlord the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction, by the payment of a fixed penalty. The fixed penalty is an amount determined

by the council, and will not exceed one-fifth of the maximum fine payable on conviction of that offence.

Do I need an EICR, EIC, or MEIWC Report?

1. Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR)

In the majority of cases the 5 yearly inspections will generate the completion of an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). The EICR must be completed by a qualified person as defined within the Regulations.

The EICR must cover the following installations for the supply of electricity; electrical fittings, including –

- ✓ the consumer unit(s)
- ✓ switches
- ✓ socket outlets
- ✓ light fittings,
- ✓ any visible wiring, and
- ✓ any areas where electrical equipment may be installed, (for example lofts with supplies to renewable energy sources), and

visual inspection of fixed electrical equipment, including –

- ✓ fixed electrical heating equipment e.g. storage or panel heaters,
- ✓ electric showers and over/under-sink water heaters
- ✓ boilers and other heat producing equipment, and
- ✓ hard-wired smoke and fire detectors.

The person carrying out the inspection must complete and clearly set out on the EICR –

- the date of the inspection;
- the full address of the house inspected;
- the name and address of the landlord or their agent;
- the name and address of the person carrying out the inspection;
- evidence that person completing the inspection report is a qualified electrician as defined at Annex A;
- a description of each installation, fixture and fitting inspected, and its location in the house, and
- any defect identified.

Any electrical installation, fixtures, fittings, or equipment which fails to pass electrical safety inspection must be replaced or repaired.

The qualified person completing the EICR will use the following classifications codes to indicate where a landlord must undertake remedial work.

- **Code 1 (C1):** *Danger present. Risk of injury.* The qualified person may make any C1 hazards safe before leaving the property.
- **Code 2 (C2):** *Potentially dangerous.*
- **Further Investigation (FI):** *Further investigation* required without delay.
- **Code 3 (C3):** *Improvement recommended.* Further remedial work is not required for the report to be deemed satisfactory.

If the codes C1 or C2 are identified on the report, then remedial work will be required. The report will state the installation is unsatisfactory for continued use. If the qualified person identifies that further investigative work is required (FI), the landlord must also ensure this is carried out for the tenant's safety.

The C3 classification code does not indicate remedial work is required, only that improvement is recommended. Landlords don't have to make the improvement, but it would improve the safety and efficiency of the installation if they did.

An EICR will recommend any remedial action required to ensure that the electrical installation is in a satisfactory condition for continued service, but any remedial work which is undertaken must be recorded separately on a Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate (MEIWC).

If remedial work includes replacement of a fuse box (known in the electrical industry as a consumer unit) an Electrical Installation Certificate (EIC) should be provided.

2. **Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate (MEIWC)**

The MEIWC is used for any remedial work identified on the EICR, as evidence that the faults have been fixed. It is used when there needs to be additions and alterations to an electrical installation that do not extend to the provision of a new circuit. Examples include the addition of socket, outlets or lighting points to an existing circuit, the relocation of a light switch etc.

If a replacement of a fuse board is necessary an Electrical Installation certificate (EIC) is required.

3. **Electrical installation Certificate (EIC)**

An EIC is provided for new build properties and for properties that have been fully rewired. It may also be required for an alteration or addition to the

electrical installation – like the installation of a new circuit and the replacement of the fuse box or consumer unit.

After 5 years this will be replaced by an EICR.

A landlord who has an EIC for a property can provide this in place of an EICR to show compliance with the Regulations provided that the date of next inspection indicated on the certificate has not elapsed.

4. Provision of EICR, MEIWR & EIC Reports on Request

A copy of all the relevant reports and certificates (EICR, MEIWR or EIC) must be provided to the tenant within 28 days from the electrical safety inspection.

Follow up paperwork to confirm that any remedial C1, C2 or FI faults have been actioned needs to be appended to the associated report within 28 days from the faults being rectified.

If a district council official requests a copy of any relevant report and certificate (EICR, MEIWC, or EIC), landlords must supply a copy within 7 days of receiving the request.

5. What if a landlord already has a report?

If a landlord has had an inspection carried out before the Regulations come into force and they have complied with all relevant requirements, the next test will not be due until 5 years have passed from the date of the report, or less if the report specifies a shorter period.

Useful Information

1. Definition

Qualified person: defined in the Regulations, as a person who possesses the appropriate practical skills to the nature of the electrical work to be undertaken. This would include adequate education, training and being able to perceive risks and avoid hazards which electricity can create. Please note the qualified person should be registered with a recognised electrical trade body.

2. How to select a qualified person

Guidance has been produced by the electrical safety industry that covers how landlords can choose a qualified and competent electrician and tester. this includes but is not limited to:

- [Electrical Safety Roundtable](#)
- [Are You on the RCPE Register? - Professional Electrician \(professional-electrician.com\)](http://www.professional-electrician.com)

3. Further Informaiton

Electrical Safety First

The registered charity Electrical Safety First, have provided advice and guidance, useful for landlords and tenants to aid understanding of the electrical installation condition reporting process and classification codes applied to faults:

- [Layout 1 \(electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk\)](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk)
- Further practical guidance on classification codes: [bpg4-1.pdf \(electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk\)](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/bpg4-1.pdf)

Trustmark Scheme

Backed by the government, ensures that traders who sign up are fully qualified to do electrical work and they also provide a complaints procedure: [TrustMark - Government Endorsed Scheme For Work Done Around Your Home](#)

4. **Recommended Good Practice – PAT Testing**

The 5-yearly electrical safety check only covers the electrical wiring installation within the property and the inspection of any hard-wired

appliances. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) covers moveable appliances that have a cable and a plug.

These Regulations do not require landlords to undertake PAT within the 5-yearly safety check. PAT does not have specific frequency requirements and instead it is therefore recommended that landlords give consideration to having PAT testing of electrical equipment within their rented property carried out as good practice based upon factors such as location, frequency of use, and types of appliances.

If thought beneficial a PAT test can either be carried out by a qualified person as defined in Annex A, or alternatively by a person that has completed a PAT testing accredited course/training.

Any appliance which fails to pass a Portable Appliance Test should be replaced or repaired immediately, for further guidance see the following link: [PAT \(Portable appliance testing\) - HSE's](#)

Appliance Recalls or Safety Alerts

Landlords and Tenants should keep alert to any product recall notices or safety alerts relating to the models of appliances installed within the property. A significant number of recalls for electrical appliances occur due to a risk of catching fire or causing electrocution. It is good practice to register products at the address of the landlord to ensure that recall paperwork is actioned. Alternatively, landlords can check a free list of products that have recently been recalled by manufacturers which is provided by Electrical Safety First and is available free online at:

[Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**Consultation on Private Tenancies Act 2022
Section 8 Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Alarms**

Summary

The Regulations relating to Section 8 pertain to the installation of sufficient smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms and aim to reduce the risk of fire related incidents in private rented properties.

Section 4: District Council Environmental Health Officers

The Regulations and Guidance Notes have been attached to the consultation for reference.

1. Did you find the regulations/guidance notes easy to follow with regard to Council enforcement responsibilities?

X Yes

2. Is the information regarding the enforcement process correct?

X Yes

If you answered NO to this question, please explain below what was incorrect.

The Council largely agree the enforcement process is correct and makes the following comments:

- In the absence of provision to issue a notice requiring the landlord to carry out works to repair or provide alarms, the enforcement process commences with the decision to prosecute for the offence under Article 11B(4) or offer discharge of liability of conviction by payment of fixed penalty notice, maximum £500. The Council highlight we will have regard to the General Enforcement Policy in determining the most appropriate course of action.
- With reference to Regulation 4(3), there appears to be typing error. i.e. Landlords must install sufficient alarms as specified in accordance with regulation (1) and (2). Should read regulation 4(1) and 4(2)
- With reference to Guidance point 9.1 and 10.1, there appears to be technical error. The offence is created under 11B(4) of the PTO and not Art 68 (1) which relates to the prosecution of offences including that created under Article 11B(4) for failing to comply with duties under 11B(1)

3. Do you think we have got the landlord and tenant responsibilities right in the Regulations/Guidance?

X Yes

If you have answered NO to this question, please comment below on anything that we have missed or got wrong.

Council largely agrees with the responsibilities for each party and acknowledges it is the tenant responsibility to test to ensure in proper working order and report to the landlord.

However, we seek further clarification and guidance regarding Article 11D of the PTO: Landlord's duties: private tenancy of part of a building, i.e., where a dwelling-house let under a private tenancy consists of a part of a building, the duties imposed on the landlord by Article 11B may require the landlord to position appliances in a part or parts of the building not comprised in the tenancy.

Given there are many incidents of fires in blocks of flats and high-rise buildings with potentially serious consequences, Council seeks clarity either within the regulations and/or guidance in relation to position, numbers, types of alarms required for common parts of buildings and the enforcement process.

4. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on in respect of the introduction of these new Regulations/Guidance Notes?

X Yes

If you have answered YES, please comment below.

- With reference to Guidance point 8.9, the Council seeks further clarification regarding the extra protections considered necessary for flue transferring through bedrooms. It is suggested an example of the circumstances would be appropriate.
- Council highlights the provision of sufficient alarms and the specification of interlinked alarms in private rented properties will be a significant change for landlords. It is acknowledged the specification deviates from the current building control requirement which is to be 'hard wired' however Council agrees the requirement to provide smoke and heat alarms interlinked either hard wired or battery sealed or combination of both is a significant step forward to reduce the risk of fire related incidents.
- It is also highlighted the NIFRS current scheme of installing smoke alarms may not be compliant with the requirements and therefore unable to provide service to the private rented sector.
- The introduction of the Private Tenancies Act provides Councils with new enforcement powers to deal with tenancy issues in the private rented sector. This has increased the duties and demands on the Councils enforcement resource which has already experienced an increase demand on housing and statutory nuisance services over recent years, coupled with competing priorities on other duties with the Environmental Health Department. The Council reiterates the concerns in terms of resources in the absence of no financial support available to assist Councils with these additional powers.
- The Council agrees the regulations should not apply to HMO properties as they are already well regulated. The Department has made to clear the regulations will also not apply to single lets. The Council is not aware of any specific legislation/guidance in relation to single lets and require clarification on how private tenancies provided as emergency housing accommodation by NIHE intend to be regulated. It is our view single lets should be afforded the same protections and safeguards as private rented and social tenants and avoid creating a two-tier system.

**Consultation on Private Tenancies Act 2022
Section 10 Electrical Safety Standards**

Summary

The Regulations for Section 10 introduce certified 5-yearly checks of a private rented property's hard-wired electrical installation by a qualified electrician.

Section 4: District Council Environmental Health Officers

The Regulations and Guidance Notes have been attached to the consultation for reference.

1. Did you find the regulations/guidance notes, which explain the enforcement process, easy to follow?

X Yes

Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the mandatory requirement to ensure periodic electrical safety checks in private rental properties conducted by suitably qualified professionals, as currently there is no such legal requirement. This is in contrast with regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) properties and private rented sector in other jurisdictions.

Council largely agrees the regulation and guidance clearly sets out the enforcement process and makes the following comments:

- Council considers the regulations clearly set out the duties of private landlords to ensure electrical safety standards are met and set an interval of periodic testing every 5 years by a qualified person, with the first inspection to take place before tenancy commences or by 1st January 2025 if existing tenancy.

The guidance clearly states the electrical standards to be met are set out in the 18th Edition of the Wiring Regulations.

- With regards to Regulation 3(4) and 3(5), Council is of the opinion, upon completion of further investigative or remedial works, this should necessitate a duty to provide a copy of the final 'report' i.e., Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate (MEIWC) to the tenant and council, as opposed to 'written confirmation'. A **report** (MEIWC) would clearly demonstrate the specific works completed and provide assurances the electrical installation is safe. For example, in the past officers have experienced receipt of scant written notes deeming electricians are safe and meet the standards without evidence to demonstrate the required investigation has been carried out or nature of repairs completed.
- Council considers clarification is required in the guidance with regards to the service of a remedial notice. Regulation 4(1) details the council must serve a remedial notice where there are reasonable grounds to believe the landlord failed to comply with *one or more duties under Regulation 3(1)(a)(b)(c), 3(4), 3(5), 3(6)*. Omitting the duties set out in Regulation 3(3). In contrast the language used in the Guidance, point 8.1, states "*if council believes a landlord is in breach of one or more of their duties set out in the Regulations, they must serve notice.*"

The guidance should be consistent with the requirements of the regulations. We think the duties contained in Regulation 3(3) should be included, like other duties specified in Regulation 4(1). This would provide an option to serve a remedial notice, for example,

requiring the landlord to supply of copy of report to tenant within 28 days. This would be in addition to the option of prosecution and offering a fixed penalty notice for the offence failing to comply with duty under Regulation 3.

- It is Mid Ulster District Council's view that the requirement to suspend the remedial notice upon written representation from landlord to allow the council to consider for 7 days and then allow a further 21 days from the date notice upheld, allows for the potential for the process to be delayed, and perhaps could be used to the advantage of the landlord to stall the process, at the detriment of the occupants.

2. Do you agree the process outlined within the Regulations and Guidance is in line with what you currently progress under the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 in respect of enforcement action?

X No

If you have answered NO to this question, it would be appreciated if you could comment below on what should be amended.

Mid Ulster District Council is already heavily involved in the regulation of the private sector under the legislative framework of the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006 (PTO). Officers have considered the proposed enforcement processes in comparison to those within the PTO:

- Under Part III of the Order, the district council may serve a Notice of Unfitness (NOU) or a Notice of Disrepair (NOD) on the 'owner', defined as *the person who for the time being receives or is entitled to receive the rent of the dwelling-house or building, whether on his own account or as agent or trustee for any other person.*

In contrast, The Electrical Safety Regulations place the duty on the 'landlord' and remedial notice to be served on the same. There is no definition of 'landlord' in the regulations or the guidance therefore it is assumed it will be the same as that defined in the Private Tenancies (NI) Order 2006, i.e. "*the landlord*" as includes any person from time to time deriving title under the original landlord and also includes, in relation to any dwelling-house, any person other than the tenant who is, or but for Part III of the Rent Order would be, entitled to possession of the dwelling-house;

It is the Council's view that the guidance and/or the regulations should provide clarity on the definition of the landlord for the purpose of enforcement.

- Under Article 26 of the PTO, council will have the ability to charge for expenses incurred in respect of service of NOU and NOD.

The expenses are those incurred in–

- (a) determining whether to serve the notice,
- (b) identifying the works to be specified in the notice, and
- (c) serving the notice.

It is expected there will be cases that officers will be required to seek the expert advice of a qualified electrician to determine whether to serve a remedial notice and specify the works required. This will be at a cost to the ratepayer. It is the Council's view the regulations should make provision for the ability to charge for enforcement action, similar to that associated with the service of notices under Part III of the Private Tenancies Order.

- Under Article 27 of PTO there is the provision of powers of entry to persons authorised by council, having given the appropriate notice to the occupier and the owner, for the purpose of survey and examination and for carrying out work in default as required by NOU or NOD. Article 28 also provides an offence for obstruction of an officer under Part III. This differs to Regulation 6, in that there is no power of entry for authorised persons for works in default/urgent works which may be carried out by the council. The council may only carry out works with consent given by the tenant. It is our view; some vulnerable tenants may not consent fearing retaliation eviction by the landlord.
- It is clear within Regulation 5(3) if the landlord is prevented from entering the dwelling by the tenant/s, the landlord will not be considered to have failed to have taken all reasonable steps to comply with the notice solely by reason of a failure to bring legal proceedings to secure entry.

The Council seek clarification on whether Article 12(2) of the PTO is applicable for landlords attempting to secure entry to the dwelling for the purpose of electrical repairs. And if so, the guidance should clearly state if the landlord is expected to utilise this provision to demonstrate reasonable steps have been taken to gain entry to carry out repairs specified in any remedial notice.

- Council wishes to highlight there are difficulties encountered following prosecution of offences alongside the continuation of the offence. The regulations differ to the PTO in that there is no process for further prosecution of continuing offence. It is our view this should be included in the regulations to avoid protracted process of serving another remedial notice and going through the entire process again.

3. Do you think there is a step missing that could help you with the Enforcement process (if permissible for us to work in under the powers in the primary legislation)?

X Yes

If you have answered YES to this question, please detail below so we can give that consideration.

Within the regulations provisions to deal with urgent works are:

- the discretionary power for council to arrange to carry out works
- prosecute the landlord for failing to comply with duties, or
- offer discharge of liability to conviction by the payment of Fixed Penalty Notice, maximum £1000

The Council considers it beneficial to make provision to allow councils to require the landlord arrange urgent inspection/testing in the intervening period of testing and to obtain and supply report to the council, thereafter, following the enforcement process.

It is our view the onus should always be on the landlord to ensure and demonstrate the electrical safety standards are met and installation is safe.

4. If the council has reasonable grounds to serve a remedial notice the tenant should receive a copy as per Regulation 4(4). Do you believe the tenant needs to get a copy of the remedial notice at this stage?

x Yes

This is consistent with service of Notice of Unfitness and Notice of Disrepair under Part III of the PTO

5. Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on in respect of the introduction of these new Regulations/Guidance Notes?

X Yes

If you have answered YES, please comment below.

- With reference to Regulation 3(3) & 3(4), Mid Ulster District Council wishes to acknowledge the demands placed on the industry to produce reports in a timely manner and to carry out remedial works within the specified 28days. The Department should carefully consider if the specified time periods are practically achievable or what other measures can be taken across other Departments to ensure sufficient trained and qualified persons are available to carry out regular testing and provision of reports.
- It is acknowledged the necessity of an appropriate lead-in period for all existing tenancies to obtain first inspection. In our view one year is considered reasonable.
- The additional duties placed upon landlords will require appropriate communication by the Department to landlords, agents, and tenants.
- Council agrees that the regulations should not apply to HMO properties as they are already well regulated. The Department has made to clear the regulations will also not apply to single lets. The Council is not aware of any specific legislation/guidance in relation to single lets and require clarification on how private tenancies provided as emergency housing accommodation by NIHE intend to be regulated. It is our view single lets should be afforded the same protections and safeguards as private rented and social tenants and avoid creating a two-tier system.
- Council seeks clarification and guidance how the regulations apply to common parts of buildings, outside flats etc.
- To avoid any misinterpretation, Council suggests the guidance should be clear that an ECIR is the minimum standard required and expected.
- The introduction of the Private Tenancies Act provides Councils with new enforcement powers to deal with tenancy issues in the private rented sector. This has increased the duties and demands on the Councils enforcement resource which has already experienced an increase demand on housing and statutory nuisance services over recent years, coupled with competing priorities on other duties with the Environmental Health Department. The Council reiterates the concerns in terms of resources in the absence of no financial support available to assist Councils with these additional powers.
- Council requests the Department provide or arrange for the training of council officers prior to the commencement of the regulations.

Report on	Regional and Minority Languages
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development
Contact Officers	Catherine Fox Arts Development Manager

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

1	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update Members on the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish Language Policy Review • Irish Language Plan 2023 - 27 • Irish Language Signage Plan • Irish Language Working Group • Ulster Scots Language and Culture
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Irish Language Policy Review June 2023 Council's obligations in respect of the Irish Language arise from commitments the UK Government made when the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (The Charter) was signed and ratified. It is designed to protect and promote regional and minority language as a threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage.</p> <p>The Council Irish Language Policy sets out and guides the Council's Irish language Plan. The plan also explains the relative and imperative legislative commitments underpinning its policies such as The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Belfast Agreement (1998).</p> <p>The main aim of the Policy is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To take resolute and positive actions that will aspire to promote, enhance and protect the Irish language within the Council and Mid Ulster District. <p>The following are the main objectives emanating from the legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage the use of Irish in both speech and writing within the District and Council. • To promote a range of initiatives that will reduce intolerance and promote understanding of the Irish language across the District and within the Council. • To preserve townland names through the use of appropriate signage.

- To recognise and celebrate the Irish language within the broader context of linguistic and cultural diversity across the District and Council.
- To create a framework where Irish can flourish and be shared by all who wish to use it;
- To protect and support the development and learning of Irish;
- To promote wider understanding of the background to the Irish language
- To maintain and develop links between groups using Irish with other groups using Irish and/or Ulster Scots.
- To increase the number of those who can access Irish medium education;
- To increase the number of those that use public services through the Irish language; and,
- To increase access to Irish language media.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for the Irish Language Policy

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the Policy, a four-year plan, has been developed and is reviewed, evaluated and updated accordingly. Please refer to 2.2 in the report.

As part of the Irish Language Policy, the following monitoring requirements were identified –

In the longer term, and further to the consultation responses, the Council commits to taking the following monitoring actions on an annual basis:

- *to assess demand for Irish language services elsewhere, eg DCAL, and to modify the policy as appropriate;*
- *to consider the impact of the policy on the profile of job applicants by community background;*
- *to monitor uptake of Irish language services and to obtain qualitative feedback on benefits that people perceive and/or complaints registered;*
- *to monitor any decrease in the usage of Council facilities by the Protestant / Unionist community in response to the introduction of the policy;*
- *to gather and analyse feedback from staff on the policy on an annual basis.*

A review carried out in June 2023 on each of the requirements is summarised in **Appendix 2**.

2.2 **Irish Language Plan 2023 – 2027**

As part of the Irish Language Policy, Council delivers an Irish Language Plan to promote the Policy, this is a four-year plan, which is accompanied by annual budget.

The first Plan was for the period 2016 - 20.

An updated Plan has been developed for 2023 – 2027, through consultation with key stakeholders and agencies, community partners, and members of the Irish Language Working Group in November 2022. A copy of the Plan is attached in **Appendix 3**.

<p>2.3</p> <p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p>	<p>Irish Language Signage</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council is currently rolling out a bilingual signage programme that includes road name signage. Council applies the policy when considering applications for dual language signage expressing the name of the street in a language other than English, to both existing and new streets.</p> <p>As part of Council signage plan, bi-lingual information and directional signage is being provided across Council assets. To date, external bi-lingual information and directional signage has been installed across Councils facilities and locations. An updated procurement exercise is being undertaken to develop a complete bilingual signage roll out programme across assets, which is expected to be delivered by 2025.</p> <p>Irish Language Working Group</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council previously resolved to establish a Language Working Group to assist with policy development and to support the implementation of Mid Ulster District Council’s Irish Language and Ulster Scots language policies and associated work.</p> <p>The Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group provides oversight and guidance with regards to the stated Guiding Principles, which include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development and implementation of relevant language plans for the Mid Ulster Council area and how it will promote the development and promotion of Regional and Minority languages. • Publications • Publicity • Correspondence • Presentations / Public Speaking / Events • Staff, Administrative Practices and budget • Visibility of Languages <p>Please see a copy of the minutes of the Working Group at Appendix 4.</p> <p>Ulster Scots Language and Culture</p> <p>Ulster Scots cultural activity continues to be embedded within The Hill of The O’Neill and Ranfurly House, and Burnavon Arts programmes in partnership with community development. Officers are meeting with the Ulster Scots Network and Ulster Scots to plan further partnership working. An update report will be brought to a further meeting of the Committee.</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>As per annual budget.</p> <p>Human:</p>

	NA
	Risk Management: NA
3.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: As per EQIA
	Rural Needs Implications: NA
4	Recommendations
4.1	Members are recommended to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Note the update report (ii) Approve the Irish Language Plan 2023-2027.
5	List of Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Irish Language Policy Appendix 2 – Irish Language Policy Review Appendix 3 – Irish Language Plan 2023 - 2027 Appendix 4 – Irish Language Working Group Minutes

Beartas Gaeilge Irish Language Policy

Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster District Council



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council



Beartas Gaeilge

Irish Language Policy

Clár Ábhair

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Intreoir

Reachtaíocht agus Treoir Ábhartha

An Chairt Eorpach um Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh

Sna críocha ina úsáidtear teangacha dá leithéid agus ag brath ar chúinsí gach teanga, éilíonn an Chairt Eorpach um Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh (Cuid 2 – a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge agus an Ultais), ar Pháirtithe a bpolasaithe a bhunú ar:

- An gá le gníomh diongbháilte a dhéanamh chun teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh a chur chun cinn le hiad a chosaint; agus
- Úsáid teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh sa scríobh nó sa chaint sa saol príobháideach agus poiblí a éascú agus/nó a spreagadh.

Mionsonraíonn Cuid 3 Alt 10 go háirithe dualgais na Comhairle mar seo:

Laistigh de cheantar Riaracháin an Stáit ina gcosnaíonn líon na gcónaitheoirí ar úsáideoirí teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh iad na beartais a shainítear thíos agus ag brath ar chúinsí gach teanga, gabhann na Páirtithe orthu, de réir mar atá deo indéanta go réasúnta:

- Féachaint chuige gur féidir le húsáideoirí teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh iarratais scríofa nó béil a chur isteach sna teangacha seo;
- Ligean do na húdaráis riaracháin cáipéisí a dhréachtú i dteanga réigiúnach nó mionlaigh;
- Maidir leis na húdaráis áitiúla nó réigiúnacha a bhfuil líon na n-úsáideoirí teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh ard go leor leis na beartais thíos a chosaint, gabhann na Páirtithe orthu an méid thíos a cheadú nó a spreagadh:
- An fhéidearthacht gur féidir le húsáideoirí teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh iarratais scríofa nó béil a chur isteach sna teangacha seo;
- Úsáid teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh ag údaráis áitiúla sna tionóil s'acu, gan teanga oifigiúil an stáit a eisiáimh áfach.
- Úsáid nó glacadh, i gcomhair leis an leagan den ainm sa teanga oifigiúil, leis na foirmeacha cearta de logainmneacha sna teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh.

I dtaca leis na seirbhísí poiblí a sholáthraíonn an t-údarás riaracháin nó aon duine eile a ghníomhaíonn ar a son, gabhann na Páirtithe orthu, laistigh de na críocha ina úsáidtear na teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh, de réir cúinsí gach teanga agus chomh fada agus atá seo indéanta go réasúnta:

Introduction

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Part 2 – applies to Irish Language and Ulster Scots), within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, requires Parties to base their policies on:

- The need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them; and
- Facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages in speech and writing in private and public life.

In particular, Part 3 Article 10 details the Council's obligations as follows:

Within the Administrative district of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible to:

- Ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications in these languages;
- Allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language;
- In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:
- The possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;
- The use by local authorities of regional or minority languages in debates in their assemblies, without excluding, however the use of the official language of the state;
- The use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s) of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

With regard to public services provided by the administrative authority or other persons acting on their behalf, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which regional or minority languages are used, in accordance with the situation of each language and as far as this is reasonably possible, to:



Aithníonn Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh gur sochaí ilchultúrtha agus ilteangach

- Ligean d'úsáideoirí na teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh iarratas a chur isteach sna teangacha seo.

Agus aird ar na forálacha thuas ar ghlac siad leo a chur i bhfeidhm, gabhann na Páirtithe orthu ceann amháin nó níos mó de na beartais thíos a dhéanamh:

- Aistriúchán nó ateangaireacht de réir mar is gá.
- Gabhann na Páirtithe orthu úsáid nó glacadh le sloinnte sna teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh ar iarratas ó na daoine sin a mbaineann sé leo.

Maidir le imeachtaí cultúrtha agus áiseanna, mionsonraíonn Alt 12 den Chairt Eorpach dualgais na Comhairle féachaint chuige agus iad ag eagrú nó ag tacú le himeachtaí cultúrtha, go ndéanann siad soláthar cuí chun eolas agus úsáid teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh agus cultúr a chur san áireamh sna tograí a dtosaíonn siad nó a dtacaíonn siad leo.

In Airteagal 12 tá sonraí ann faoi na hoibleagáidí seo a leanas:-

Maidir le gníomhaíochtaí agus acmhainní cultúrtha, go háirithe leabharlanna, leabharlanna físe, ionaid chultúrtha, iarsmalanna, cartlanna, acadaimh, amharclanna agus pictiúrlanna chomh maith le saothar liteartha agus léiriúcháin scannáin, foirmeacha dúchasacha den chultúr, féilte agus na tionscadail chultúrtha, lena n-áirítear inter alia úsáid teicneolaíochtaí nua - geallann na Páirtithe, sna réimsí ina mbaintear úsáid as teangacha den chineál seo agus ag brath ar chumas na n-údarás, ar chumhacht nó ar ról na n-údarás poiblí sa ghort seo, geallann siad:

- Go dtacóidh siad le gach dóigh ina gcuirtear teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionteangacha chun tosaigh agus le gach tionscnamh a bhaineann leo agus go gcothóidh siad dóigheanna éagsúla rochtana ar shaothair a chuirtear ar fáil sna teangacha seo;

- Allow users of regional or minority languages to submit a request in these languages.

With a view to putting into effect the above provisions accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:

- Translation or interpretation as may be required.
- The Parties undertake to allow the use or adoption of family names in the regional or minority languages, at the request of those concerned.

With regard to cultural activities and facilities, Article 12 of the European Charter also details the Council's obligations to ensure that when organising or supporting cultural activities, they make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of regional or minority languages and cultures in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing.

Article 12 details the following obligations:-

With regard to cultural activities and facilities, especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas as well as literary work and film productions, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the cultural industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

- To encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages;

- go gcinnteoidh siad go nglacann na forais atá freagrach as gníomhaíochta cultúrtha de chineálacha áirithe san áireamh mar is ceart eolas ar agus úsáid teangacha réigiúnacha agus mionteangacha agus cultúr sna gealltanais a dtugann siad fúthu nó a dtacaíonn siad leo;
- go gcuirfear bearta chun tosaigh lena chinntiú go mbíonn an fhoireann chuí ag na forais atá freagrach as gníomhaíochtaí cultúrtha a eagrú nó a thacú agus go mbíonn máistreacht iomlán acu ar an teanga réigiúnach nó ar an mhionteanga atá i gceist chomh maith le máistreacht ar theanga(cha) an chuid eile den phobal;
- go spreagfar rannpháirtíocht dhíreach ag ionadaithe na n-úsáideoirí teanga réigiúnaí nó mionteanga trí acmhainní a sholáthar agus trí ghníomhaíochtaí cultúrtha a phleanáil.

Moltar, in Airteagal 14 Transfrontier Exchanges, go gcothóidh an Chomhairle teagmháil idir úsáideoirí Gaeilge ar bhonn trasteorann “le leas teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionteangacha, le comhoibriú trasteorann a éascú agus/nó a chur chun cinn, go háirithe idir údaráis réigiúnacha nó áitiúla ina mbaintear úsáid as an teanga chéanna ar an bhealach chéanna nó ar bhealach cosúil leis”

Tá an Chairt Eorpach bunaithe ar choincheap neamh-idirdhealaithe, is é sin, nach ndéantar idirdhealú ar lucht na mórtheanga trí ghníomhaíochtaí a chur i bhfeidhm atá ann leis na mionteangacha dúchasacha a chosaint agus a chur chun tosaigh.

“Tugann na Páirtithe faoi, mura bhfuil sé déanta acu cheana féin, deireadh a chur le aon idirdhealú, eisiamh, bhac nó tosaíocht a dhéanamh maidir le húsáid teanga réigiúnaí nó mionteanga nó iarracht ar bith chun cothabháil ná forbairt na teanga a chur i mbaol nó a dhíspreagadh. Más amhlaidh go gcuirtear bearta faoi leith i bhfeidhm atá i bhfách le teangacha réigiúnacha nó mionlaigh agus atá dírithe ar chomhionannas a chur chun tosaigh idir úsáideoirí na dteangacha seo agus an chuid eile den phobal nó a thugann san áireamh na dálaí faoi leith a bhaineann leo ní hionann sin agus a rá gur gníomh idirdhealaithe é sin in aghaidh úsáideoirí atá in úsáid níos minice”.

- to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities of various kinds make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of regional or minority languages and cultures in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing;
- to promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of the regional or minority language concerned as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population;
- to encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of a given regional or minority language in providing facilities and planning cultural activities.

Article 14, Transfrontier Exchanges encourages the Council to foster contacts between users of Irish on a cross border basis “for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form”.

The European Charter is based on a concept of non-discrimination, that is, the majority language group is not discriminated against by the implementation of actions designed to promote and protect the minority indigenous languages.

“The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages”.





Tá an Ghaeilge mar chuid lárnach d'oidhreacht teangeolaíochta, chultúrtha agus stairiúil an cheantair seo.

Comhaontú Bhéal Feirste (1998)

De réir Chomhaontú Bhéal Feirste (1998) sa mhír: 'Cearta, Coimircí agus Comhionannas Deiseanna: Saincheisteanna Eacnamaíochta, Sóisialta agus Cultúir (Pointe 4)' tugtar aitheantas don Ghaeilge, go háirithe más cuí agus más mian le daoine amhlaidh:

- Gníomh diongbháilte chun an teanga a chur chun cinn;
- Úsáid na teanga a éascú agus a spreagadh sa chaint agus i scríbhneoireacht sa saol príobháideach agus sa saol poiblí mar a mbeidh éileamh cuí ann;
- Iarracht chun deireadh a chur, más féidir é, le srianta a chuirfeadh nó a d'óibreodh in aghaidh chothú nó fhorbairt na teanga;
- Foráil maidir le hidirchaidreamh le pobal na Gaeilge, agus a gcuid tuairimí a léiriú d'údarás phoiblí agus gearáin a imscrúdú;
- Dualgas reachtúil a chur ar an Roinn Oideachais chun oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge aspreagadh agus a éascú de réir na socruithe láithreacha don oideachas comhtháite;
- An scóip atá ann chun Teilfís na Gaeilge a chur ar fáil ar bhonn níos forleithne i dTuaisceart Éireann a scrúdú, mar ábhar práinne, in éineacht le húdarás iomchuí na Breataine agus i gcomhar le húdarás chraolacháin na hÉireann;
- Bealaí níos éifeachtaí a lorg chun spreagadh agus tacú airgeadais a thabhairt do léiriú scannán agus clár teilifíse trí Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann; agus,
- Na páirtithe a spreagadh chun teacht ar chomhaontú go leanfaidh Tionól nua den tiomantas sin ar shlí a chuirfidh san áireamh mianta agus fógaireachtaí an phobail.

The Belfast Agreement (1998)

The Belfast Agreement (1998) under section 'Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity: Economic, Social and Cultural Issues (Point 4)' gives recognition to the Irish language, in particular where appropriate and where people so desire it to:

- Take resolute action to promote the language;
- Facilitate and encourage the use of Irish in speech and writing, in private and public life where there is appropriate demand;
- Seek to remove, where possible, restrictions which would discourage or work against the maintenance or development of the language;
- Make provision for liaising with the Irish language community, representing their views to public authorities and investigating complaints;
- Place a statutory duty on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate Irish medium education in line with current provision for integrated education;
- Explore urgently with the relevant British authorities, and in cooperation with the Irish Broadcasting authorities, the scope for achieving more wide spread availability of Teilifís na Gaeilge in Northern Ireland;
- Seek more efficient ways to encourage and provide financial support for Irish language film and television production in Northern Ireland; and,
- Encourage the parties to secure agreement that this commitment will be sustained by the new Assembly in a way which takes account of the desires and sensitivities of the community.

Acht Thuaisceart Éireann (Comhaontú Chill Rímhinn) 2006

De réir an Achta seo tá dualgas ar Fheidhmeannas Thuaisceart Éireann tabhairt faoin straitéis leis an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn agus a chosaint.

An Chairt Eorpach um Chearta Daonna Chomhairligh Coimisiún um Chearta an Duine Thuaisceart Éireann, maidir le cearta daonna de, go bhfuil sé doiligh fáthanna dlíthiúla nó inghlactha ar bith a thuiscint a mbainfeadh fostóir, nó ar bhonn níos ginearálta, foras poiblí, úsáid astu chun gan tacú le cur chun cinn mionteanga.

Ar cheisteanna níos leithe, tharraing an Coimisiún aird nach bhfuil aon “cheart...” má bhaineann páirtí eile leas as ceart. Prionsabal ginearálta is ea seo ar shaoirse tuairimíochta (Airteagal 10 ECHR) ar féidir a léamh i gcomhar le hAirteagal 14 ECHR ar neamh-idirdealú ar fhoras a bhaineann le teanga.

Chomhairligh an Coimisiún gur ceart dosháraithe é teanga réigiúnach nó mionteanga a úsáid sa saol príobháideach agus sa saol poiblí agus go gcloíonn sé leis na prionsabail atá i gCúnannt Idirnáisiúnta na Náisiún Aontaithe ar Chearta Sibhialta agus Polaitiúla (ICCPR), agus go bhfuil sé de réir Choinbhinsiún Chomhairle na hEorpa um Chearta Daonna agus Shaoirsí Bunúsacha a chosaint.

Thug an Coimisiún le fios sa deireadh nach ionann mionteanga a aithint agus cearta na ndaoine sin nach n-úsáideann an teanga sin a shárú.

Cáipéis Chomhairliúcháin RCEF 2012 - Straitéis Dréachta le Forbairt na Gaeilge a Chosaint agus a Fheabhsú

I mí Iúil 2012 d’fhoilsigh RCEF cáipéis chomhairliúcháin ina bhfuil moltaí le haghaidh straitéise le forbairt na Gaeilge a chosaint agus a fheabhsú, agus mhair an tréimhse chomhairliúcháin tréimhse 20 seachtain, ón Chéadaoin 11 Iúil go dtí an Mháirt 27 Samhain 2012. Níl torthaí an chomhairliúcháin seo ar fáil go fóill.

Leagtar amach sa cháipéis chomhairliúcháin roinnt príomhaidhmeanna na straitéise dréachta ar an Ghaeilge:

- Creat a chruthú inar féidir leis an Ghaeilge bláthú agus a bheith in úsáid ag gach duine ar mian leo sin;
- Forbairt agus foghlaim na Gaeilge a chosaint agus tacaíocht a thabhairt dó seo; agus
- Tuiscint níos leithne ar an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn.

Northern Ireland (St Andrew’s Agreement) Act 2006

This Act places a duty on the Northern Ireland Executive to adopt a strategy for the enhancement and protection of the Irish language.

European Charter on Human Rights
The NI Human Rights Commission has advised that, from a human rights perspective, it is difficult to see any legitimate grounds for objecting to a minority language being promoted by an employer or, more generally, a public body.

On broader issues, the Commission has drawn attention to the fact that there is no “right to be offended” by another party exercising a right. This is a general principle of freedom of expression (ECHR Article 10) which can be read in conjunction with ECHR Article 14 on non-discrimination on grounds that include language.

The Commission has advised that the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right conforming to the principles embodied in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and according to the spirit of the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The Commission has concluded that official acknowledgement of a minority language cannot constitute a violation of the rights of those who do not use that language.

DCAL Consultative Document 2012 - Draft Strategy for Protecting and Enhancing the Development of the Irish Language

In July 2012 DCAL published a consultative document containing proposals for a strategy for protecting and enhancing the development of the Irish language, with a consultation period lasting for 20 weeks, from Wednesday 11 July until Tuesday 27 November 2012. The results of the consultation are not yet available.

The consultative document sets out a number of key aims of the draft Irish language strategy:

- To create a framework where Irish can flourish and be shared by all who wish to use it;
- To protect and support the development and learning of Irish; and
- To promote wider understanding of the background to the Irish language.

Tá na cuspóirí seo a leanas sa straitéis dréachta:

- Líon na ndaoine a bhfuil rochtain acu ar an Ghaeloideachas a mhéadú;
- Líon na ndaoine a bhaineann úsáid as seirbhísí poiblí trí Ghaeilge a mhéadú;
- Rochtain ar na meáin chumarsáide Ghaeilge a mhéadú.

I measc na réimsí gnímh, tá:

1. Oideachas
2. Seachadadh na Teanga sa Teaghlach - Idirghabh hál luath
3. Riarachán, Seirbhísí agus Cúrsaí Pobail
4. Na Meáin Chumarsáide agus Teicneolaíocht
5. Reachtaíocht agus Stádas na Teanga
6. An Saol Eacnamaíochta

Faoin cheannteideal riaracháin, luaitear sa straitéis dréachta go saineúil gur chóir go ndéanfadh údarás áitiúla an méid seo a leanas:

- Polasaithe agus pleananna Gaeilge a ullmhú agus oifigigh Ghaeilge a cheapadh nuair is gá;
- Soláthar seirbhísí trí Ghaeilge a mhéadú;
- Áiseanna a chur ar fáil le húsáid na Gaeilge a éascú i gcruinnithe comhairle/coistí nó cur leis na háiseanna seo;
- Sa chás go ndéantar comhcheangal, faoin Athbhreithniú ar Riarachán Poiblí, idir údarás áitiúil a chuireann seirbhísí ar fáil trí Ghaeilge agus a bhfuil beartas Gaeilge aige agus údarás eile nach fíor an méid sin ina leith, ní mór don údarás áitiúil a chinntiú nach dtiocfaidh maolú ar bith ar na seirbhísí Gaeilge.
- Leagan Gaeilge nó dátheangach de gach foil seachán, doiciméad oifigiúil agus foirm a chur ar fáil de réir chur chuige na Straitéise seo agus na Cairte Eorpaí um Theangacha Réigiúna cha nó Mionlaigh.
- Caomhnú ceart logainmneacha Gaeilge agus comharthaíocht a éascú agus ainmniú forbraíochtaí nua tithíochta ar bhealach a léiríonn an oidhreacht áitiúil ná náisiúnta a éascú fosta; agus
- Turasóireacht agus tionscnaimh chultúrtha trí Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn.

Meastar sa straitéis dréachta go gcuirfidh Foras na Gaeilge tacaíocht ar fáil d'údarás áitiúla chun tionscnaimh phleanála teanga a fhorbairt. Meastar fosta go n-ullmhófar Bille Gaeilge agus go gcuirfear faoi bhráid an Tionóil é chomh luath agus is féidir.

The draft strategy has the following objectives:

- To increase the number of those who can access Irish medium education;
- To increase the number of those that use public services through the Irish language; and,
- To increase access to Irish language media.

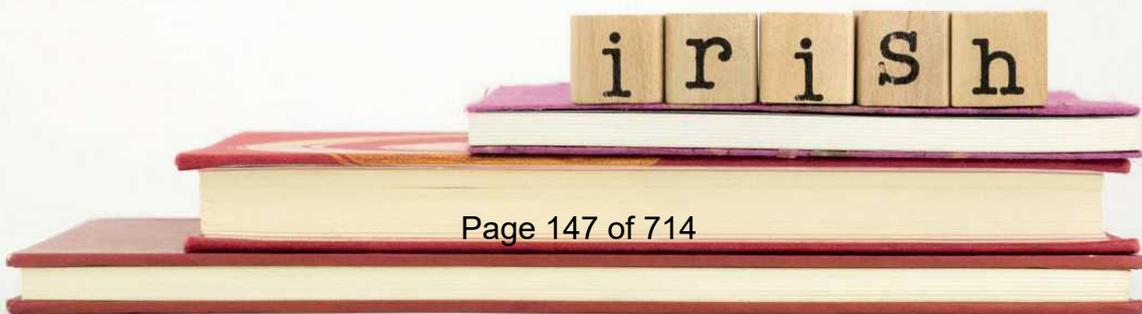
Key areas for action include:

1. Education
2. Family Transmission of the Language – Early Intervention
3. Administration, Services and Community
4. Media and Technology
5. Legislation and the Status of the Language
6. Economic Life

Under the administration heading, the draft strategy specifically states that local authorities should:

- Adopt Irish language policies and plans and appoint Irish language officers where needed;
- Maximise the provision of services through Irish;
- Expand/initiate facilities for the use of Irish in their council / committee meetings;
- Guard against any diminution of services provided through the Irish language as a result of those authorities with Irish language policies and services being merged under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) with those authorities that do not;
- Provide an Irish or bilingual version of all publications, official documents and forms in line with the approach of this Strategy and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- Facilitate the proper preservation and signposting of Irish place-names and the naming of new housing developments to reflect local or national heritage; and
- Encourage tourism and cultural initiatives through Irish.

The draft strategy envisages Foras na Gaeilge providing support to local authorities to develop language planning initiatives. It also envisages that an Irish Language Bill will be prepared and presented to the Assembly at the earliest possible time.



Aidhm agus Cuspóirí Beartais

Aithníonn Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh gur sochaí ilchultúrtha agus ilteangach í seo agus go bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar chuid lárnach d'oidhreacht teangeolaíochta, chultúrtha agus stairiúil an cheantair seo.

Is í an Ghaeilge príomhtheanga oifigiúil Phoblacht na hÉireann agus thug Rialtas na RA stádas mionteanga di i dTuaisceart Éireann í i Márta 2000. Rinneadh teanga oifigiúil oibre de chuid an Aontais Eorpaigh den Ghaeilge ar an 1 Eanáir 2007.

Léiríonn Daonáireamh 2011 go bhfuil eolas áirithe ar an Ghaeilge ag 22,984 (17.4%) as 132,025 de phobal an cheantair. Bhí 8,063 (6.1%) de mhuintir an cheantair in ann Gaeilge a labhairt, a léamh, a scríobh agus a thuiscint. Chuige sin aithníonn an Chomhairle gur féidir le cur chun cinn gníomhach na Gaeilge, chomh maith le freastal a dhéanamh ar riachtanais phobail Ghaeilge atá ag fás, gur féidir leis cur le cultúr saibhir teanga an cheantair agus go gcuirfidh sé le tarraingt an cheantair mar sprioc turasóireachta. Déanfaidh an beartas seo úsáid na teanga a éascú agus a spreagadh sa chaint agus i scríbhneoireacht sa saol príobháideach agus sa saol poiblí.

Aidhm an Bheartais

Agus í ag feidhmiú de réir mheon na Cairte Eorpaí um Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh, agus aird chuí á tabhairt aici ar an stádas a thugtar don Ghaeilge sa Chairt sin, tá sé mar aidhm ag Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh gníomhú go diongbháilte agus go dearfach chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn, a fheabhsú agus a chosaint i sa Chomhairle agus sa Cheantar.

Cuspóirí an Bheartais

- Labhairt agus scríobh na Gaeilge a spreagadh sa Cheantar agus sa Chomhairle.
- Réimse tionscnamh a chur chun cinn a laghdóidh éadulaingt agus a chuirfidh chun cinn tuiscint ar an Ghaeilge sa Cheantar agus sa Chomhairle.
- Ainmneacha na mbailte fearainn a chaomhnú tríd an chomharthaíocht chuí a úsáid.
- An Ghaeilge a aithint agus a cheiliúradh i gcomhthéacs leathan den éagsúlacht teangeolaíochta agus chultúrtha sa Cheantar agus sa Chomhairle.
- Naisc a choinneáil agus a fhorbairt idir ghrúpaí a úsáideann an Ghaeilge le grúpaí eile a úsáideann an Ghaeilge agus/nó Ultais.

Policy Aim and Objectives

Mid Ulster District Council recognises that we live in a multi-cultural and multi lingual society and that the Irish language is an integral part of the linguistic, cultural and historical heritage of this area.

Irish is the first official language of the Republic of Ireland and was accorded minority language status in Northern Ireland by the UK Government in March 2000. Irish was made an official working language of the European Union on 1st January 2007.

The 2011 Census indicates that 22,984 people (17.4%) out of a district population of 132,025 have some knowledge of Irish. In particular 8,063 (6.1%) people could speak, read, write and understand Irish. As such the Council recognises that the proactive promotion of Irish, as well as catering for the needs of its growing Irish speaking population, can enhance the rich linguistic culture of the area and add to the appeal of the area as a tourist destination. This policy will facilitate and encourage the use of Irish in speech and writing, in private and public life.

Policy Aim

Operating within the spirit of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and having due regard to the status afforded to Irish within that Charter, Mid Ulster District Council aims to take resolute and positive actions that will aspire to promote, enhance and protect the Irish language within the Council and District.

Policy Objectives

- To encourage the use of Irish in both speech and writing within the District and Council.
- To promote a range of initiatives that will reduce intolerance and promote understanding of the Irish language across the District and within the Council.
- To preserve townland names through the use of appropriate signage.
- To recognise and celebrate the Irish language within the broader context of linguistic and cultural diversity across the District and Council.
- To maintain and develop links between groups using Irish with other groups using Irish and/or Ulster Scots.



Tá Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh tiomanta don Ghaeilge a chosaint agus a spreagadh.

Prionsabail Threoracha an Bheartais

Tá Beartas Gaeilge Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh bunaithe ar na riachtanais i gCuid II agus III den Chairt Eorpach um Theangacha Réigiúnacha nó Mionlaigh. Tugtar le fios sa bheartas roinnt prionsabal treoracha ónar féidir leis an Chomhairle réimse de ghníomhaíochtaí dearfacha a chur i bhfeidhm chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn, a fheabhsú agus a chosaint chomh maith le labhairt agus scríobh na Gaeilge a spreagadh sa saol príobháideach agus sa saol poiblí. Tá bearta faoi leith a bhaineann le cur chun feidhme na bprionsabal treorach uile in Aguisín 1.

Prionsabal Treorach 1: Tacaíocht don Ghaeilge

Tá Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh tiomanta don Ghaeilge a chosaint agus a spreagadh. Aithníonn an Chomhairle gur léiriú í an Ghaeilge ar shuibhreas cultúrtha agus gur gá don Chomhairle an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn chun í a chosaint agus a neartú.

Chuir seo:

- Ullmhóidh an Chomhairle plan do cheantar Chomhairle Lár Uladh faoin dóigh a gcuirfear agus a bhforbrófar an Ghaeilge sa cheantar. Aithneofar sa phlean deiseanna chun an Ghaeilge a fhorbairt agus a fhoghlaim; agus
- Spreagfaidh an Chomhairle, tríd an phlean seo a chur i bhfeidhm, tuiscint níos fearr ar oidhreacht choitianta na Gaeilge. Aithneofar ann fosta an dóigh ar féidir leis an Ghaeilge cur le sochaí bheoga i Lár Uladh.

Policy Guiding Principles

The Mid Ulster District Council Irish Language Policy is based on the requirements of Parts II and III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The policy presents a number of guiding principles from which the Council will implement a range of positive actions to promote, enhance and protect the Irish language whilst encouraging its use in speech and writing in private and public life. Specific measures for implementation relating to each guiding principle are included in Appendix 1.

Guiding Principle 1: Support for the Irish Language

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to the protection and encouragement of the Irish Language. The Council recognises that the Irish language is an expression of cultural wealth and there is a need for the Council to promote Irish in order to help safeguard and strengthen it.

To this end:

- The Council will prepare a plan for the Mid Ulster Council area on how it will promote the development and promotion of the Irish language. The development plan will identify opportunities to promote and learn the language; and
- The Council, through implementation of the plan, will encourage better understanding of the shared linguistic heritage of Irish. It will also recognise the contribution that the Irish Language can make to the vibrant society within Mid Ulster.

Prionsabal Treorach 2: Foilseacháin

Beidh féiniúlacht chorparáideach na Comhairle i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge cé go mbeidh an Béarla go fóill ina mhodh cumarsáide go himheánach. Éascófar fostaithe ar mian leo teagmháil a dhéanamh lena chéile i nGaeilge. Maidir le foilseacháin na Comhairle, beidh sé mar bheartas againn Gaeilgeoirí a éascú ionas gur féidir leo teagmháil ó bhéal agus scríofa a dhéanamh leis an Chomhairle trí mheán na Gaeilge. Beidh Gaeilge, nuair is cuí, i ngach ábhar scríofa/clóite atá foilsithe ag Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh agus a bhaineann leis an phobal.

Chuipe seo:

- Cuirfear príomhcháipéisí corparáideacha, msh. Plean Corparáideach, Tuarascáil Bhliantúil ar fáil i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge;
- Beidh dearadh / foilsiú ábhair sa Ghaeilge ar chomhchaighdeán leis an ábhar céanna i mBéarla; agus
- Ba chóir go mbeadh litríocht agus foirmeacha na Comhairle ar fáil don phobal i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge nuair is cuí, de réir riachtanais agus áiseanna.

Prionsabal Treorach 3: Poiblíocht

Spreagfaidh agus tacóidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh le saothar raidió, Teilifíse agus físeáin a chraolann i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge.

Chuipe seo:

- Tógfaidh an Chomhairle seo caidrimh leis na meáin Ghaeilge; agus
- Nuair is féidir é agus nuair is cuí, beidh Béarla agus Gaeilge i saothar na meán a dtugann Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh faoi.

Prionsabal Treorach 4: Comhfhreagras

Cinntoidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh go mbeidh úsáideoirí Gaeilge in ann comhfhreagras ó bhéal nó scríofa a dhéanamh i nGaeilge. Freagróidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh i rogha teanga an fhaighteora, nuair a bhíonn an rogha sin ar eolas.

To this end:

- Is féidir le húsáideoirí Gaeilge comhfhreagras ó bhéal nó scríofa a dhéanamh i nGaeilge chuig Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh;
- Tabharfar freagra i nGaeilge ar chomhfhreagras ar bith a fhaightear i nGaeilge; agus
- Beidh aistriúchán nó ateargairacht ar fáil do gach ball foirne de réir mar is gá.

Guiding Principle 2: Publications

The Council's corporate identity will be English and Irish although English will remain the language of communication internally. Employees wishing to communicate with each other in Irish will be facilitated. With regard to Council publications, our policy will facilitate Irish speakers to communicate with the Council orally and in written format through the medium of Irish. All written / printed materials produced by Mid Ulster District Council for public consumption will include Irish where appropriate.

To this end:

- Key corporate documents e.g. Corporate Plan, Annual Report will be made available in English and Irish format;
- Design / publishing of material in the Irish language will be of an equal standard with the same material in English; and
- Council literature and forms should be available to the public in English and Irish format where appropriate, according to need and as resources allow.

Guiding Principle 3: Publicity

Mid Ulster District Council will encourage and support radio, TV and video work that broadcast in English and Irish format.

To this end:

- The Council will build relationships with the Irish language media; and
- Where possible and appropriate, media work carried out by Mid Ulster District Council will contain English and Irish elements.

Guiding Principle 4: Correspondence

Mid Ulster District Council will ensure that users of Irish may submit oral or written communications in Irish. Mid Ulster District Council will correspond in the chosen language of the recipient, where this choice is known.

To this end:

- Users of Irish may submit oral or written correspondence in Irish to Mid Ulster District Council;
- Any correspondence received in Irish will be responded to in Irish; and
- Translation or interpretation will be available to all staff as may be required.

Prionsabal Treorach 5: **Cur i láthair / Óráidíocht Phoiblí / Ócáidí**

Cinntoidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh agus pleanáil á déanamh ar chur i láthair, ar ócáidí agus ar fhéilte go gcuirtear san áireamh eolas agus úsáid theanga agus chultúr na Gaeilge.

Chuir seo, déanfaidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh an méid seo a leanas:

- Beidh méadú ann in úsáid na Gaeilge i gcur i láthair;
- Cuirfear ar fáil seirbhísí aistriúcháin chomhuaineacha nuair a iarrtar iad; agus
- Nuair is cuí, cuirfear teanga agus cultúr na Gaeilge san áireamh in imeachtaí, i bhféilte agus i gceiliúradh sibhialta.

Prionsabal Treorach 6: **Cleachtais Foirne agus Riaracháin**

Cuirfidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh oiliúint ar oifigigh na Comhairle maidir le sonraí an bheartais seo ionas go mbeidh siad in ann freagra cuí a thabhairt ar fhiosrúcháin i nGaeilge. Spreagfar baill foirne chun úsáid a bhaint as cibé méid Gaeilge atá acu. Ní bheidh sé riachtanach bheith líofa sa Ghaeilge le haghaidh poist ar bith nach mbeadh gá le cainteoir líofa Gaeilge ann.

Chuir seo, déanfaidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh an méid seo a leanas:

- Cuirfear oiliúint agus treoir chuí ar fáil d'fhoireann;
- Cuirfear seirbhísí aistriúcháin ar fáil do bhaill foirne; agus
- Cuirfear leaganacha Gaeilge do cháipéisíocht inmheánach do bhaill foirne nuair a iarrtar iad.

Guiding Principle 5: **Presentations / Public Speaking / Events**

Mid Ulster District Council will ensure that in planning its presentations, events and festivals that appropriate allowance is made for incorporating the knowledge and use of the Irish language and culture.

To this end Mid Ulster District Council will:

- Use increasing amounts of Irish in presentations;
- Provide simultaneous translation services on request; and
- Where appropriate, incorporate the Irish language and culture within events, festivals and civic celebrations.

Guiding Principle 6: **Staff and Administrative Practices**

Mid Ulster District Council will train Council officers in the detail of this policy so that they will be able to respond appropriately to enquiries in Irish. Staff will be encouraged to use what Irish they have. Fluency in Irish will not be a requirement for any position that would not ordinarily justify the appointment of an Irish speaker.

To this end Mid Ulster District Council will:

- Offer appropriate training and guidance to staff;
- Provide translation services to staff; and
- Provide Irish versions of internal documentation for use by staff on request.



Prionsabal Treorach 7: Infheictheacht na Gaeilge

Méadóidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh infheictheacht na Gaeilge agus cothóidh bealaí éagsúla le rochtain a fháil ar an teanga mar chuid den ghnáthshaol.

Chuirge seo, déanfaidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh an méid seo a leanas:

- Ceapfaidh féiniúlacht chorpóraideach le go mbeidh an Ghaeilge le feiceáil ar an chaighdeán agus ar an stádas céanna leis an Bhéarla;
- Ceapfaidh plean céimnithe feidhmithe le comharthaíocht i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge a thógáil go himheánach agus go seachtrach ar gach sealúchas de chuid Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh;
- Clár comharthaíochta i lonnaíochtaí a chur i bhfeidhm nuair a iarrtar é; agus
- Clár comharthaíocht sráide Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge a choinneáil.

Guiding Principle 7: Visibility of Irish

Mid Ulster District Council will enhance the visibility of Irish and foster different means of accessing the language as part of everyday life.

To this end Mid Ulster District Council will:

- Devise a corporate identity to include Irish reproduced in the same quality and presentational standards and status as English;
- Devise a phased implementation plan for the erection of English and Irish internal and external signage on all Mid Ulster District Council owned properties;
- Initiate a settlement signage programme on request; and
- Maintain an English and Irish street signage programme.

Aguisín 1

Bearta faoi Leith a bhaineann le cur chun feidhme na bPrionsabal Treorach

Appendix 1

Guiding Principles Specific Measures for Implementation

Aguisín 1 - **Bearta faoi Leith a bhaineann le cur chun feidhme na bPrionsabal Treorach**

Baineann fráma ama le Bliain 1 - Bliain 4 de chéad téarma Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh.

Prionsabal Treorach	Bearta le haghaidh Cur chun Feidhme	Amlíne
Tacaíocht don Ghaeilge	Plean a ullmhú agus a chur i bhfeidhm maidir le forbairt agus cur chun cinn na Gaeilge.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
Foilseacháin	Cuirfear Tuarascálacha Bliantúla agus Pleananna Corparáideacha ar fáil i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge.	Bliain 1 agus gach bliain
	Beidh formáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge ar láithreán Gréasáin Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh agus déanfar téacs na Gaeilge a uasdátú de réir an téacs Bhéarla nuair is féidir. Beidh na leathanaigh sin ar láithreán Gréasáin Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh ar a dtugtar an líon is mó cuairteanna, mar shampla príomhleathanaigh tosaigh, beidh siad ar fáil ar dtús i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge. Beidh ceannlínte na rannán dinimiciúil i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge, agus sa deireadh beidh an láithreán Gréasáin iomlán i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	De réir riachtanais agus áiseanna cuirfear foirmeacha ar fáil i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge.	Bliain 1
	Beidh an fhormáid le haghaidh ábhar i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge sa dá theanga, taobh lena chéile, agus an dá theanga ar an méid chéanna.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	De réir riachtanais agus áiseanna, ba chóir go mbeadh bileoga eolais, fógraín agus litríocht eile de chuid na Comhairle ar fáil don phobal i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge nuair is cuí. Moltar gur chóir go mbeadh gach litríocht den chineál seo i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge in áit a bheith curtha amach go leithleach i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Is féidir go mbeidh ábhar atá dírithe ar úsáideoirí Gaeilge amháin curtha amach i nGaeilge amháin.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Beidh ailt i nGaeilge i nuachtlitreacha / i bhfeasacháin, nuair is cuí.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Beidh dearadh / foilsíú ábhair sa Ghaeilge ar chomhchaidreamh leis an ábhar céanna i mBéarla.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
Poiblíocht	Bunófar caidrimh leis na meáin Ghaeilge agus coinneofar iad le preasráitis á n-eisiúint i nGaeilge agus i mBéarla nuair is cuí.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Nuair is féidir é agus nuair is cuí, beidh Béarla agus Gaeilge i saothar raidió, teilifíse agus físeáin a dtugann baill de Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh. Ní chuirfear as an áireamh fostaithe ó shaothar raidió, teilifíse agus físeáin toisc nach bhfuil eolas acu ar an Ghaeilge.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
Comhfhreagras	I gcomhfhreagras scríofa i bhformáid Bhéarla agus Ghaeilge, beidh an dá theanga taobh le chéile, leis an leagan Gaeilge ar thaobh na láimhe clé agus an leagan Béarla ar thaobh na láimhe deise, nó mura féidir seo a dhéanamh, an Ghaeilge a chur os cionn an leagain Bhéarla.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Beidh ceannchló agus lógó na heagraíochta i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Tabharfar freagra i nGaeilge ar chomhfhreagras ar bith a fhaightear i nGaeilge.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Nuair a bhíonn comhfhreagras á dhéanamh, freagróidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh i rogha teanga an fhaighteora, nuair a bhíonn an rogha sin ar eolas.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Cuirfear oiliúint ar gach ball foirne i ngach roinn sa Chód Cuirtéise don Ghaeilge ina mbeidh foráil ann chomh maith d'fhostaithe na Comhairle nach bhfuil Gaeilge acu ach a mbíonn teagmháil acu le ball den phobal ar mian leis cumarsáid a dhéanamh i nGaeilge. Cuirfear sonraí teagmhála do bhaill foirne a bhfuil Gaeilge acu ionas go mbeidh linn de chainteoirí líofa ann le fiosrúcháin ón phobal a láimhseáil.	Bliain 1
	Beidh aistriúchán nó ateangaireacht ar fáil do gach ball foirne de réir mar is gá.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4

Appendix 1 – Guiding Principles Specific Measures for Implementation

Timeframe relates to Year 1 – Year 4 of the first term of the Mid Ulster District Council.

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
Support for the Irish language	Prepare and implement plan on the development and promotion of the Irish language.	Year 1 – Year 4
Publications	Annual Reports and Corporate Plans will be made available in English and Irish format.	Year 1 and annually
	Mid Ulster District Council's website will include an English and Irish format with the Irish language text updated in line with the English text where possible. Those pages on Mid Ulster District Council's website receiving most user traffic, for example main front pages, will be available initially in English and Irish format. Headings of dynamic sections will also be of English and Irish format, while eventually the entire web site will be English and Irish.	Year 1 – Year 4
	According to needs and as resources allow forms will be produced in English and Irish format.	Year 1
	The format for English and Irish materials will be Irish and English, side-by-side, with both languages of equal size.	Year 1 – Year 4
	According to need and as resources allow, information leaflets, flyers and other Council literature should be available to the public in English and Irish format where appropriate. It is recommended that all such literature should be English and Irish as opposed to being separately produced, in Irish and in English.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Material aimed exclusively at users of Irish may be produced in Irish only.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Newsletters / bulletins will contain articles in Irish, where appropriate.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Design/ publishing of material in the Irish language will be of an equal standard with the same material in English.	Year 1 – Year 4
Publicity	Relationships with the Irish language media will be established and maintained with press releases being issued in Irish and in English where appropriate.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Where possible and appropriate, radio, T.V. and video work carried out by members of Mid Ulster District Council will contain significant English and Irish elements. Employees will not be excluded from radio, T.V. and video work because of a lack of knowledge of the Irish language.	Year 1 – Year 4
Correspondence	In written communications of English and Irish format, both languages will be placed side-by-side, with the Irish version on the left and the English on the right, or if this is not practicable, by placing the Irish version above the English.	Year 1 – Year 4
	The letterhead and logo of the organisation will be English and Irish.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Any correspondence received in Irish will be responded to in Irish.	Year 1 – Year 4
	When initiating correspondence, Mid Ulster District Council will correspond in the chosen language of the recipient, where this choice is known.	Year 1 – Year 4
	All staff within each department will be trained in the Courtesy Code for Irish which will also make provision for courtesy to employees of the Council who do not speak Irish but come in contact with a member of the public who wishes to communicate in Irish. Contact details for Irish speaking staff will be made known so that a pool of fluent speakers is available to handle enquiries from the public.	Year 1
	Translation or interpretation will be available to all staff as may be required.	Year 1 – Year 4

Aguisín 1 - Bearta faoi Leith a bhaineann le cur chun feidhme na bPrionsabal Treorach

Baineann fráma ama le Bliain 1 - Bliain 4 de chéad téarma Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh.

Prionsabal Treorach	Bearta le haghaidh Cur chun Feidhme	Amlíne
Cur i láthair / Óráidíocht Phoiblí / Ócáidí	Beidh sé mar aidhm ag ionadaithe de chuid Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh, iad siúd atá compordach leis, tuilleadh Gaeilge a úsáid agus cur i láthair á dhéanamh acu. Cuirfear chun cinn úsáid na Gaeilge ag ócáidí foirmiúla mar ghnáthchleachtas.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Beidh cur i láthair ar PowerPoint nó ar choráis eile i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge nuair is cuí. Nuair a bhíonn cur i láthair i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge le déanamh, cuirfear ar fáil seirbhísí aistriúcháin chomhuaineacha d'fhostaithe nach bhfuil Gaeilge ar bith acu.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Nuair a bheartaítear ócáidí poiblí ar mhórskála cuirfear córais aistriúcháin chomhuaineacha ar fáil nuair a iarrtar iad.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Cinntoidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh agus pleanáil á déanamh ar fhéilte/cheiliúradh sibhialta go gcuirtear san áireamh eolas agus úsáid theanga agus chultúr na Gaeilge.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
Cleachtais Foirne agus Riaracháin	Cuirfear treoracha ar fáil d'fháilteoirí agus do theieafónaithe ionas go mbeidh siad in ann freagra cuí a thabhairt ar fhiosrúcháin i nGaeilge.	Bliain 1
	Cuirfear leaganacha Gaeilge do cháipéisíocht inmheánach do bhaill foirne nuair a iarrtar iad, msh. foirmeacha ordaithe, duilíní pá, bileoga ama, srl. Cuirfear ar fáil seirbhísí aistriúcháin chomhuaineacha d'fhostaithe nach bhfuil Gaeilge ar bith acu ach a mbíonn orthu cáipéisíocht inmheánach i nGaeilge a phróiseáil. Cinntoidh foireann riaracháin go mbíonn an fhoireann ar fad eolach ar an ordú aicinn Ghaeilge (Alt Gr+ gutha) ar gach ríomhaire.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Cuirfear ar fáil seirbhísí aistriúcháin, ceartúcháin agus profléitheoireachta do gach ball foirne agus déanfar cáilíocht solathróirí na seirbhísí seo a dhearbhú.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Beidh ranganna Gaeilge ar leibhéal áirithe ar fáil mar chuid de chlár oiliúna inseirbhíse d'fhoireann ar mian leo leas a bhaint as.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Spreagfar baill foirne chun úsáid a bhaint as cibé méid Gaeilge atá acu. Tacófar le lóin neamhfhoirmiúla ina labhraítear Gaeilge, ranganna Gaeilge, srl a eagrú in am na bhfostaithe féin ach a thionólfaidh Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh, agus le cuidiú ó ghrúpaí seachtracha/daoine aonair nuair a bhíonn gá leis.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Aithníonn Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh an tábhacht a bhaineann le suíomhanna nó poist a aithint ina bhfuil úsáid na Gaeilge mar chuid riachtanach den phost. Ní bheidh sé riachtanach bheith líofa sa Ghaeilge le haghaidh poist ar bith nach mbeadh gá le cainteoir líofa Gaeilge ann.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
Infheictheacht na Gaeilge	Ceapfaidh plean céimnithe feidhmithe le comharthaíocht i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge a thógáil go himmheánach agus go seachtrach ar gach sealúchas de chuid Chomhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh chomh maith le brandáil agus lógónna;	Céimnithe
	Bainfear feidhm as cur chuige Béarla agus Gaeilge a úsáid maidir le comharthaíocht nuair is cuí.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Coinneofar seirbhís innéacs aistriúcháin sráidainmneacha agus idirchaidrimh i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge le cónaitheoirí.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4
	Cuirfear tús le clár comharthaíochta lonnaíochta i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge nuair a iarrtar iad.	Bliain 1 - Bliain 4

Appendix 1 – Guiding Principles Specific Measures for Implementation

Timeframe relates to Year 1 – Year 4 of the first term of the Mid Ulster District Council.

Guiding Principle	Measures for Implementation	Timeline
Presentations / Public Speaking / Events	Representatives of Mid Ulster District Council, who are comfortable to do so, will aim to use increasing amounts of Irish in their presentations. Standard practice of using Irish at formal occasions and public meetings will be actively promoted.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Visual presentation on PowerPoint or other systems will be English and Irish where appropriate. When English and Irish presentations need to be made, simultaneous translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of the Irish language.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Where large-scale public events are planned, simultaneous translation systems will be made available on request	Year 1 – Year 4
	Mid Ulster District Council will ensure that festivals/ civic celebrations which the Council organises or supports make appropriate allowance for incorporating the knowledge and use of the Irish language and culture.	Year 1 – Year 4
Staff and Administrative Practices	Guidance will be offered to receptionists and telephonists so that they will be able to respond appropriately to enquiries in Irish.	Year 1
	Irish versions of all internal documentation will be made available for use by staff on request e.g. order forms, pay slips, time sheets etc. Translation services will be made available to employees who have no knowledge of the Irish language but who are required to process internal documentation that is in Irish. Administrative staff will ensure that all staff can access the Irish language accent command (Alt Gr+vowel) on all computers.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Translation, correction and proof-reading services will be made available to all staff and external providers of these services will be quality-assured.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Irish classes at different levels will be available as part of an in-service training programme for staff who wish to avail of it.	Year 1 – Year 4
	All staff will be encouraged to use what Irish they have. Encouragement will be given to the establishment of informal Irish speaking lunches, conversation classes etc. in employees' own time to be convened by Mid Ulster District Council, with the assistance of external groups/individuals when required.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Mid Ulster District Council recognises the importance of identifying situations or posts in which the use of Irish is an essential duty of the job. Fluency in the Irish language will not be a requirement for any position that would not ordinarily justify the appointment of an Irish speaker.	Year 1 – Year 4
Visibility of Irish	An implementation plan will be devised for branding, logos and the erection of English and Irish internal and external signage on all Mid Ulster Council owned properties including buildings and offices.	Phased
	An approach using English and Irish will be taken to advertising where appropriate.	Year 1 – Year 4
	Council's street signage programme of English and Irish, resident-liaison and street-name translation index service will be maintained.	Year 1 – Year 4
	An English and Irish settlement signage programme will be initiated on request.	Year 1 – Year 4

Department of Business & Communities
Arts and Cultural Services
Mid Ulster District Council

Call 03000 132 132
www.midulstercouncil.org

Appendix 2 Irish Language Policy Review

1. To assess demand for Irish language services elsewhere, eg DCAL, and to modify the policy as appropriate;

Council Officers carried out a review on Irish language services and provision in other Council areas and government departments to consider the impact and to assess demand for Irish language services. Consultation was held with Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Derry Strabane District Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council as well as Líoifa.

Officers were provided with statistics and information which clearly demonstrate that there is a good demand for Irish language services. As part of this information we were provided with a list of Irish language primary school and secondary schools, Irish language groups with and without an Irish Language Development Officer as well as a summary of the Irish language activity of the responder.

Encouraged by this feedback the Irish Language Development Officers collated statistics from Straitéis Gaeilge/Irish Language Strategy 2023-27, outlined below: The District currently has a diverse and growing Irish language community including:

- 7 naíonraí or early years centres
- 6 gaelscoileanna or Irish-medium primary schools
- 1 secondary school in the southern part of the Council area; Scoil Iosáef, which provides Irish-medium immersion education for the south of the district.
- In the north of the Council area children currently travel outside the district receive immersion education, Gaelcholáiste Dhoire in Dungiven.
- Ulster University provides a locally based diploma course which serves as a foundation year for their Irish Studies degree course
- 2 Cultúrlann/language centres at Carn Tóchair near Maghera and Ballinascreen
- Adult language services delivered through our arts and heritage centres.
- 11 community venues providing regular Irish language services
- 4 area-based language officers funded by Foras na Gaeilge in Coalisland, Magherafelt/Ballinascreen and Carn Tóchair
- 'Gaeilge Lár Uladh', designated Irish language Facebook page for Mid Ulster District Council currently as of 21/06/23 has 1.3k likes and 1.5k followers.

2. To consider the impact of the policy on the profile of job applicants by community background;

There is no information available to state if the policy has had any impact on community background.

The Council is required to keep under review and develop policies and practices that support equal opportunities in accordance with the various employment equality codes of practice. The Council as a registered concern is required to complete an Article 55 Review Report which includes an assessment of fair participation. There are a range of factors which will help to determine the relevant labour market pool to assist making this assessment including e.g., rates of pay, method of notifying job vacancies, specific qualifications, or specialized abilities,

travelling conditions, availability of alternative employment. An employer is required to deal positively with any factors which have the effect of restricting the potential applicant pool for any type of job or work location.

There is currently no available data in respect of the impact of Council's Irish Language Policy on the profile of job applicants by community background. Section 75 of NI Act 1998 requires Council as a public authority to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, between men and women, between persons with a disability and persons without and between persons with dependents and persons without. There are restrictions on the processing of special category personal data e.g., religious belief in respect of GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. See the below hyperlink to conditions for processing special category personal data in respect of employment obligations.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/schedule/1/enacted>

District Profile

2011 Census

63.77% of the population were brought up in the Catholic religion and 33.46% belong or were brought up in a Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) religion. Other religions comprised 690 (0.5%) and None 3,153 (2.28%) of the population.

2021 Census

64.74% of the population were brought up in the Catholic religion and 30.23% belong or were brought up in a Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related) religion. Other religions comprised 1,012 (0.67%) and None 6,561 (4.37%) of the population.

Equality Commission Annual Staff Return

2016

Employees - The Annual Staff Return for Mid Ulster District Council was 307 (45.9%) of Protestant Religion, 362 (54.1%) of Catholic religion and other religion/none was 28. Total staff return was 697.

Appointees – In 2016 there were 33 appointees of which 11 were of Protestant Religion, 21 were of Catholic religion and 1 were of other religion/none.

2021

Employees - The Annual Staff Return for Mid Ulster District Council was 330 (40.5%) of Protestant Religion and 484 (59.5%) of Catholic religion and other religion/none was 46. Total staff return was 860.

Appointees – In 2021 there were 43 appointees of which 13 were of Protestant Religion, 24 were of Catholic religion and 6 were of other religion/none.

3. To monitor uptake of Irish language services and to obtain qualitative feedback on benefits that people perceive and/or complaints registered;

No complaint had been received to date in relation to the Irish Language Policy.

However, there is a current Equality/GR complaint in with ECNI against the Council's Dual Language Street Signage Policy. It initially wasn't investigated because it was outside the 12mth timescale but the complainant has appealed this decision and we should know in June if ECNI decide to investigate or not. The basis of the complaint is that Irish Language street signage has negatively impacted on Good Relations in the complainant's area.

4. To monitor any decrease in the usage of Council facilities by the Protestant / Unionist community in response to the introduction of the policy;

A review was completed and whilst community background is not held of Council service users, there has been growth (taking account of Covid) in our leisure facilities.

5. To gather and analyse feedback from staff on the policy on an annual basis.

The Council process for policy engagement was used. The policy is brought to the Council Policy Engagement Forum with the Union and then issued to Council employees for comment.

No comments were received.



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair Lár Uladh
Plean na Gaeilge

2023-2027

Mid-Ulster District Council
Irish Language Plan

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1. Introduction

Mid Ulster District Council recognises the Irish language as an integral part of the heritage, identity and cultural life of the District. We have a strong, vibrant, growing Irish Language community living, working, visiting and socialising in the area.

The Council remains committed to the objectives set out in its Bilingualism Policy and have put in place the necessary structures to ensure that the Irish language and Irish language community has a sustainable future.

Building upon our Irish Language Policy adopted in 2015 and associated Irish Language Plan 2015-2019, an updated Plan for the period 2023-2027 has been developed, building on previous work and experiences. Council will continue to:

- increase the use of Irish language within its services;
- facilitate the use of the Irish language when communicating with the public and relevant stakeholders; and
- support and encourage the promotion and development of the Irish language across the Council area.

Irish is the first official language of the Republic of Ireland and was accorded minority language status in Northern Ireland by the UK Government in March 2000. Irish was made an official working language of the European Union on 1st January 2007. As of November 2022, an **Identity and Languages Bill (Northern Ireland)** is being enacted by the UK Government to provide official recognition of the status of the Irish language in Northern Ireland by—

- (a) providing for the appointment of an Irish Language Commissioner,
- (b) providing for the development of standards of best practice relating to the use of the Irish language by public authorities, and
- (c) requiring public authorities to have due regard to such standards.

It is envisaged that Local Councils will be at the top of the scale regarding the category and scope of “best practice standard” issued. This expectation should direct current policy formation.

NI Executive's Irish Language Strategy

The Department for Communities is leading on the development of the Executive's Irish Language Strategy. The Language Strategies Team within Culture Division is taking this work forward. In March 2022 the Department of Communities published an Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) Report regarding recommendations for the Irish language strategy. That report included provisions relating to local authorities, legislation, public services, community development and other themes relevant to this Strategy. The EAP can be read in full here: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/irish-language-strategy-expert-advisory-panel-recommendation-report>

There is a commitment under New Decade New Approach to adopt the key principals and practice of citizen and community engagement to co-design and co-production of the development and delivery of the strategy.

There is also a statutory commitment to developing the strategy under Section 28D of the NI Act 1998.

Background

According to the 2021 Census, Mid-Ulster has the highest percentage of Irish speakers of any local government district in the North of Ireland.

The 2011 Census indicated that 22,984 people (17.4%) out of a district population of 132,025 have some knowledge of Irish. In particular, 8,063 (6.1%) people could speak, read, write and understand Irish.

The 2021 Census now indicates that 29,397 people (20.4%) out of a district population of 144,036 have some knowledge of Irish. 9,544 (6.63%) people could speak, read, write and understand Irish. These increases indicate that Council and other partners including our community partners have had an impact to date and there is a need for further development.

In the previous 2011 Census, 5 Super Output Areas (SOA) in Mid Ulster ranked in the top 10 SOAs (out of 890) for fluency in Irish – Lower Glenshane 2 33.19%, Washing Bay 31.62%, Swatragh 1 31.31%, Swatragh 2 30.56%, Coalisland North 29.44%).

Indeed nine other Mid Ulster SOAs are in the top 100, Draperstown, Dunnamore, Coalisland South, Lower Glenshane 1, Pomeroy, Derrytrasna, Coalisland West and Newmills, Donaghmore, and Maghera. The updated statistics on a local level are not yet available for the 2021 Census but given the work of Council and the Irish language community across the District it is anticipated these areas would remain the most active; with the successful implementation of Council's previous Action Plan however, other areas are becoming increasingly involved in the promotion of the Irish language.

The District currently has a diverse and growing Irish language community including;

- 7 naíonraí or early years centres
- 6 gaelscoileanna or Irish-medium primary schools
- 1 secondary school in the southern part of the Council area; Scoil Iosáef, which provides Irish-medium immersion education for the south of the district.
- In the north of the Council area children currently travel outside the district receive immersion education, Gaelcholáiste Dhoire in Dungiven.
- Ulster University provides a locally-based diploma course which serves as a foundation year for their Irish Studies degree course
- 2 Cultúrlann/language centres at Carn Tóchair near Maghera and Ballinascreen
- Adult language services delivered through our arts and heritage centres.
- 11 community venues providing regular Irish language services
- 4 area-based language officers funded by Foras na Gaeilge in Coalisland, Magherafelt/Ballinascreen and Carn Tóchair

‘Líonra Charn Tóchair’ – a new Gaeltacht in Mid Ulster

A “Líonra” (Network) can be understood as a proto-Gaeltacht. A Gaeltacht is an area where Irish is traditionally spoken and in use as a vernacular language, or language of the home. While not a traditional Gaeltacht area, an area designated as a Líonra exhibits growth in the use of the indigenous language and the potential for Irish to be re-instated as the vernacular.

Due to the progress they had made in reviving Irish as a spoken language, in February 2018, Foras na Gaeilge announced that five areas - The Gaeltacht Quarter in West Belfast, Loughrea, **Carn Tóchair in the Mid Ulster area**, Ennis and the Dublin suburb of Clondalkin Village - were to be designated as the first Líonraí Gaeilge (Irish language networks), subject to the committees in the networks co-formulating and

adopting approved Irish language plans. The three areas in the Republic of Ireland are officially recognised under Acht na Gaeltachta 2012 legislation, where the 2 northern “Líonraí Gaeilge” are officially recognised by the cross-border statutory body Foras na Gaeilge.

Foras na Gaeilge has said that in the future they expect to also designate other areas outside the Gaeltacht as Líonraí Gaeilge. Three groups in Mid Ulster are in line for future consideration under this Líonra designation – **Cairde Uí Néill** in Coalisland, **Glór na Speiríní** in Ballinascreen and **Glór Mhachaire Fíolta** in Magherafelt.

Given this the Council recognises that the proactive promotion of Irish, as well as catering for the needs of its growing Irish speaking population, can enhance the rich linguistic culture of the area and increase the identified societal benefits of bilingualism in terms of health, educational attainment, community cohesion and increased cultural awareness and diversity. Council’s actions in this regard will also support and enhance strategies for the protection and promotion of Irish on the Island.

2. The strategic framework – mission, vision and values

Mid Ulster Community Plan, a ten year vision for the District, seeks to ‘have a greater value and respect for diversity’ and in meeting this outcome will –
Promote and protect regional minority languages and culture.

Council’s mission is twofold:

- Internally - To mainstream the use of Irish Language in the internal administration of Council, and in its dealings with other public bodies and the community.
- Externally - To promote equality of opportunity for the Irish Language - address barriers of access to information and services, promote the development of the Irish Language, and to give leadership in meeting the evidenced needs of existing and emerging Irish language communities within the District.

Our Council’s vision for the Irish Language is:

To establish a sustainable environment which supports and enables the **promotion, use and development** of the Irish language in public, personal,

economic and community life. In pursuing our mission, we will be guided by the six values outlined within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24:

Citizen and customer-focused

Designing and delivering our services in response to and around the needs of our customers and within our resources.

Respect -Treating each other, our customers and our stakeholders in the same considerate way that we wish to be treated ourselves.

Excellence -Striving to excel in every aspect of our work, being accountable for and delivering the best, value for money services.

Trustworthy -Working for our communities in a spirit of friendliness and openness by delivering fair, transparent, equitable and ethical services to all customers.

Innovative -New and better ways of doing what we do.

Inclusive -Creating a culture which values, supports and celebrates diversity to the benefit of the organisation and the people we serve.

3. Strategic objectives

The two strategic objectives of the Irish Language Plan 2023-2027 are as follows:

Strategic Objective 1: To facilitate and enable the development, and promotion of the Irish Language within Mid-Ulster District Council and the District.

Strategic Objective 2: To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and investment in the development and promotion of the Irish language within the District.

4. The delivery framework

The actions complement the Council's Corporate Plan, Community Plan and Irish Language Policy to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of the Irish language in the Council area through:

- Progressively realising greater access to information and services;
- Increasing Irish language community capacity, civic engagement and participation, and encouraging partnership-working;

- Improving sustainability and viability of the Irish language community sector; and,
- Developing connectivity between Irish language communities and the Statutory and Voluntary sectors;
- Developing Irish speaking areas across the District in partnership with Foras na Gaeilge
- Appropriate budget allocation, monitoring, evaluation and review.

The actions also complement the Council's Community Plan to make Mid-Ulster a welcoming place where our people are content, healthy and safe; educated and skilled; where our economy is thriving; our environment and heritage sustained; and where our public services excel. Actioned within the Community Plan is the desire to "Promote and protect regional minority languages and cultures".

5. Structure and governance

Council's Irish Language Section is responsible for implementation of the Irish Language Plan. The Section which sits within Arts, is within the overall Development Department and aligns with community development, good relations, cultural development.

The Council's Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group has a member advisory role in considering and discussing the implementation of the Irish Language Plan. The Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group does not have decision-making powers, it makes recommendations only.

Recommendations arising are reported to the Council's Development Committee for consideration.

6. Monitoring and review

The Irish Language Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure actions and the associated budget remain relevant and appropriate.

Six-monthly reports on progress will be prepared for consideration by the Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group.

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Action Plan

Strategic objective 1	To facilitate and enable the development, and promotion of the Irish Language within Mid-Ulster District Council and the District.			
Positive action	Performance measure	Outcome	Responsibility	Time
1.1 Internal Irish language Services to Council	Translation & interpretation – is provided on request for public or MUDC member who wants to do business in Irish (including Council meetings)	Core Irish Language service delivered	MUDC Irish Language Officers	Ongoing
	Links with DfC's Central Irish Language Hub			Ongoing
	MUDC Irish Language officers provide Advice & support to Irish language community both pro-actively and on request.	Advice and support provided as required in timely fashion (Irish language positively promoted and addressing perceptions)	MUDC Irish Language Officers	Ongoing
	Code of Courtesy in place for Reception staff at all Council venues (use of personal names, face-to-face communication, telephone calls, correspondence, enquiries). Front of house staff with an ability in Irish display that through a badge (Fáinne / Tá Gaeilge agam)	Code of Courtesy available in all MUDC venues with appropriate training for staff	MUDC Irish Language Officers	2 workshops annually

	<p>or a sign on the reception desks (Úsáid Gaeilge anseo) as appropriate.</p>	<p>Irish language capacity increased in MUDC front end staff</p>		
		<p>Irish language capacity increased in MUDC front end staff</p>	<p>MUDC Irish Language Officers</p>	<p>2 workshops annually</p>
		<p>Training on the Irish Language & Policy is provided to staff/ members to include concept of 'active offer'</p>	<p>MUDC Irish Language Officers</p>	<p>1 workshop annually</p>
		<p>An Irish Language Professional Development pathway for employees and Irish Language Skills training is offered to council staff</p>		

<p>1.2 Bilingual Signage Programme</p>	<p>Carry out research, raise awareness and deliver service re: Street/Road and housing development naming on request</p> <p>All Council buildings and facilities to display bilingual signage in English and Irish</p> <p>Maintain Gateway signage in Irish Instigate a bilingual settlement signage programme</p>	<p>Provision of Irish language versions of signage- Council facilities, roads, streets, settlements, gateways provided as requested</p> <p>Bilingual signage in English and Irish displayed on/in all MUDC buildings and facilities</p> <p>Increased awareness of the cultural importance of Irish placenames</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers/ Building Control Technical Services</p> <p>Irish Language Officers/ Building Control Technical Services</p> <p>Irish Language Officers/ Building Control Technical Services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.3 Seachtain na Gaeilge festival</p>	<p>Irish Language Week programme (Seachtain na Gaeilge) to align with MUDC Arts Festival</p>	<p>Range of related Irish language events provided across the MUDC area</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers / relevant Arts Festival staff</p>	<p>March on annual basis</p>

	<p>Partner with other Council services, community and partners to maximize investment.</p> <p>Provide support and funding to community groups to organise events in local community areas</p>	<p>Range of related Irish language events provided across the MUDC area</p> <p>Range of related Irish language events provided across the MUDC area</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers</p> <p>Irish Language Officers</p>	
1.4 Review of Irish Language Policy in line with new legislation	Review and amend MUDC Irish Language Policy to bring in line with legislative changes	MUDC Irish language policy is aligned to legislation as required	Irish Language Officers	Following introduction of relevant legislation
1.5 Language Screening of Corporate Policies	Screen Council corporate policies against Mid Ulster's Irish language policy to ensure complementarity and pro-active support regarding the promotion of the Irish language	MUDC corporate policies aligned to Irish language policy and relevant legislation	Irish Language Officers	August 2023

<p>1.6 Promotion of Irish language through heritage</p>	<p>Irish language to be promoted as appropriate through heritage as part of a wider heritage offer in Mid Ulster e.g. Visits/tours of relevant sites, research and promotion of Sperrins Irish material, Hill of The O'Neill, The Cineál Eoghain Way, O'Neill tour etc</p>	<p>Indigenous Irish language, culture and history included as integral part of broader tourism promotion in MUDC area</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers/ Education Officers/ Tourism Officers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.7 Irish promotion through programmes of Council: Arts, culture, community development, good relations.</p>	<p>MUDC to develop a programme of events with partner services, and other external partners e.g. local cultural facilities, libraries and community organisations.</p>	<p>Promotion and development of Irish language across the MUDC District improved through internal partnerships</p>	<p>Irish language officers/ Good Relations & Culture Arts Community Development</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
<p>1.8 Bilingual Corporate Communication website and social media platforms</p>	<p>Functioning bilingual website and social media platforms to be developed. MUDC website to offer an immediate access to information and services in Irish language as choice at the home page. Community messaging on social media to be provided bilingually in Irish and English as appropriate.</p>	<p>Pro-active access to MUDC information and services in Irish available.</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers Communication s Team IT Team</p>	<p>March 2024</p>

	Bilingual promotion of key heritage sites – OM Dark Skies, Tullaghoge Fort, HOTON			
1.9 Irish Language partnerships with key agencies	Working partnerships to be established and/or continued and improved with relevant Irish language groups/organisation e.g. Foras na Gaeilge Conradh na Gaeilge Glór na nGael Cumann na bhFiann Gael-Linn Oireachtas na Gaeilge Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Irish language services across the MUDC District Enhanced and improved	Irish Language Officers	Ongoing
1.10 Research and statistical analysis of Irish Language infrastructure	Research available on Irish Language provision in Mid Ulster to be carried out through: updated census figures published 'language profile' of local provision on Council website and associated media	Knowledge of Irish language community infrastructure enhanced	Irish Language Officers	Ongoing
Strategic objective 2	To effectively engage with the Irish Language Community to strengthen community capacity, encourage collaboration, co-operation and investment in the development and promotion of the Irish language within the District.			
Positive action	Performance measure	Outcome	Responsibility	Time
2.1 Facilitate development of Fóram Lár-Uladh (Mid-Ulster Irish	Forum meetings to be organised and facilitated. (Meetings will be thematic and focus on areas of interest to the community – e.g. external funding cooperation with CLG)	Increased community engagement Increased sustainability	Irish Language Officers	Ongoing annually

Language Forum)		of Irish language community organisations Collaboration in promotion of Irish maximised		
2.2 Implementation of Irish Language Activities grant programme	Provide information and access to the community grant development programme	Irish Language community Irish language schemes initiated and funded by MUDC	Irish Language Officers	Feb-March Annually
2.3 Assist in the development of Foras na Gaeilge's Lónra programme in Mid Ulster *	Successful development of Lónra Charn Tóchair and subsequent extension of highest development level to other areas Development support for identified lower level Lónra zones in Coalisland and Ballinascreen/Magherafelt to achieve highest status	Continued development of Lónra Charn Tóchair Continued development of advanced Lónra status for Coalisland and Ballinascreen/Magherafelt	Irish Language Officers	Ongoing

<p>2.4 Regional and minority language Bursary Scheme</p>	<p>Regional and Minority Language Bursary Scheme to be provided – 90+ awards allocated Increased engagement with the language post bursary e.g. Monitor GCSE, A Level uptake</p>	<p>Promotion of the Irish language through language bursaries including Gaeltacht colleges, intensive courses Increased public awareness of scheme</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers</p>	<p>Feb-March Annually</p>
<p>2.5 Irish Language Diploma support scheme</p>	<p>Support and facilitation of the Irish Language diploma scheme (in collaboration with Ulster University) to be provided</p>	<p>To improve and increase capacity Irish Language skills in MUDC area through support for UU Irish Language third level diploma course Marketing and profile of scheme in local media</p>	<p>Irish Language Officers</p>	<p>Annually</p>

		and digital marketing.		
2.6 Partner on engagement and promotion of language opportunities with mainstream education and Irish Medium Education	<p>Develop partner primary schools for participation in primary language programme</p> <p>Support to Irish-medium education sector as required</p> <p>Include an education theme as part of Fóram Lár Uladh discussions</p> <p>Career guidance days x 2 to be provide for secondary schools - regarding GCSE choice Year 10 / A-Level Choice aimed at Year 12.</p>	<p>Primary language scheme delivered for schools in MUDC area</p> <p>Positive relationships established with education sector</p> <p>Increased uptake of Irish in formal qualifications in education</p>	Irish Language Officers /Education sector	Ongoing
2.7 Adult Education programme	Adult courses in Irish to be provided e.g. beginner, middle and advanced classes and conversation circles	Improved capacity in Irish Language skills in Mid Ulster	Irish Language Officers / Irish language groups / Community network	Ongoing
2.8 Irish Language Youth programme	<p>Irish Language Youth programme to be delivered– e.g.</p> <p>4+ annual summer schemes/youth clubs functioning</p>	Sustainability of Irish language for young people	Irish Language Officers	Ongoing

		to adulthood increased Increased collaboration - Fóram na nÓg /Irish language youth groups		
2.9 Development and promotion of Irish Language arts and heritage in community	Deliver advice for Irish language led community arts and heritage Support given to 3+ Irish language heritage or arts programmes annually	Increased community engagement with Irish language culture and heritage	Irish Language Officers /IL Officers in Carn Tóchair, Ballinascreen Coalisland	Ongoing
2.10 Development and promotion the Irish language and heritage as a tourism asset	Irish language heritage tourism offer around Ancient Clans theme developed/promoted Council to explore the possibility of Mid Ulster Gaeltacht areas as a tourism product– similar to Gaeltacht Quarter in Belfast	Increased visitor numbers	Irish Language Officers Irish language organisations Community network/IL Forum Tourism	Sept 2026
2.11 Facilitate the development of Irish Language Hubs in areas of notable community activity and which have	Irish Language arts, family-based language projects, youth-based language activity developed/promoted Council to actively promote the development of community hubs in Mid Ulster’s “Líonra” areas in Coalisland (Cairde Uí Néill),	Irish promoted as a community language Inter-generational transmission of Irish promoted	Irish Language Officers Irish language organisations Community network/IL Forum	Ongoing

been designated 'Líonra' areas by Foras na Gaeilge	Ballinascreen (Glór na Speiríní), and Magherafelt (Glór Mhachaire Fíolta)	Irish language arts promoted		

References

* **Líonra areas** are places where it may be possible to develop the Irish language to such an extent that it is in use daily as a community language in public and in the home. Foras na Gaeilge is now funding groups in such areas to enact this and calling such projects a 'Líonra' or network.

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Report of Regional and Minority Language Implementation Working Group of Mid Ulster Council held on Monday 6 November 2023 at 7.00pm in The Burnavon, Cookstown.

Attendees:

Members: Cllr John McNamee, Cllr Cora Corry, Cllr Sean McPeake, Cllr Deirdre Varsani

Officers: Catherine Fox, Déaglán Ó Doibhlin, Sean Anton Ó Conalláin

AGENDA	MATTERS AGREED	ACTIONS & RESPONSIBILITY
1.0	Apologies	
	Members: Cllr Ian Milne, Cllr Nuala McLernon, Cllr Christine McFlynn, Officers: Claire Linney	
2.0	Declarations of Interest	
	No declarations of interest submitted.	
3.0	Position of Chair/Vice Chair	
	Cllr John McNamee was elected to the chair, proposed by Cllr Cora Corry and seconded by Cllr Deirdre Varsani. Cllr Deirdre Varsani was elected to the vice-chair, proposed by Cllr Sean McPeake, and seconded by Cllr John McNamee.	
4.0	Minutes of previous meeting.	

	<p>A report of the minutes of the previous meeting was presented to the Working Group. It was noted that that Councillor Sean McPeake attended, minutes to be updated accordingly.</p> <p>Signage: Councillor McNamee sought an update regarding the installation of bilingual signage at Heaney Homeplace as members had previously been informed it was to be completed by March 2023. Catherine Fox stated that external signage at Homeplace has been installed but that installation of internal signage is still to be completed.</p>	Adjust minutes to reflect Cllr McPeake's attendance - CF
5.0	Irish Language Policy Review	
	<p>The Irish Language Policy Review were shared with the Working Group. C Fox outlined the context of the policy review and summarized the outcome of the completed review for members. The review showed a continuing high demand for Irish language services in the district necessitating ongoing delivery of an expanded Irish language programme. No adverse effects from the delivery of Irish language services were noted.</p> <p>Councillor McNamee asked if all Members were content with the Review and collective agreement from the Members was obtained.</p>	
6.0	4 Year Plan	
	<p>Déaglán Ó Doibhlin presented a synopsis of the draft 4 year Irish Language Plan 2023 – 27 to the group. The core focus of the plan is staying the same but the new plan has been tweaked based on lessons learned from what other council areas are doing – Newry, Mourne and Down in particular has a very comprehensive strategy – and reflecting the development of the Irish language community in Mid Ulster over the last eight years.</p> <p>The main emphasis remains directed at community development with the strategic vision being the development and maintenance of a living community language and focused on our local Irish language organisations such as An Carn, Cairde Uí Néill, Glór na Speiríní Glór Mhachaire Fíolta, Pobal an Ghleanna, Cairdeas Eoghain, our Irish language schools, adult learners and various other service providers. This work will be facilitated by our various grants programmes and officer led programmes including our Irish language activity grants, RML bursaries, Seachtain na Gaeilge and Dúchas Primary language Project.</p>	

	<p>Councillor McNamee emphasised the importance of the bursary programme to the local community. Difficulties relating to increased demand for Gaeltacht courses and the need to support a programme for business signage were discussed.</p> <p>Councillor Corry asked for information about Fóram Lár Uladh, the local community language forum</p> <p>Déaglán Ó Doibhlin stated that meetings had recently recommenced and that themed meetings would be held regularly with the next occurring during December focusing on ‘Youth and Teenage Opportunities with the Irish language’</p> <p>Councillor McPeake posed the question about signage for GAA clubs and Seán Antón Ó Conalláin recommended liaising with Glór na nGael.</p> <p>Councillor Varsani asked what the next stage is for the plan and will it be presented?</p> <p>Catherine Fox updated that following approval from the working group, a report alongside the draft plan will be taken to the Development Committee for approval before ratification at the next Council meeting.</p> <p>Cllr McNamee stated that it would be good to get Cairde Uí Néill and Glór na Speiríní to present to the Development Committee to showcase the extent of their work and proposed to invite them to the next meeting.</p> <p>The draft Strategy was proposed by Cllr Corry and seconded by Cllr McPeake.</p>	<p>Information on any funding through other organisations be forwarded to Members – DÓD</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Signage Programme Update</p>	
	<p>Road Name Signage Programme</p> <p>C Fox updated that in the period from 1st April 23 until the 1st November 23 a total of 113 road nameplates have been placed on order which included replacement and newly approved signage. The lead in times for the signs continue to be, on average around 8 – 10 weeks between when an order is placed until it is delivered.</p>	

	<p>In the period from 1st April 23 until the 1st November 23, there have 21 cases of vandalism reported to the PSNI following notification to the Council by elected members or members of the public. Costs of £2,920 have been incurred in the repair or replacement of signs that have been damaged in this period.</p> <p>Internal/External Bilingual Signage Programme</p> <p>C Fox reported that an increase in price request was received from the Contractors for the signage for Years 3 and 4 which exceeded the rate of inflation, which was not accepted by Officers.</p> <p>Following internal discussions with members of SMT and Chief Executive, a new tender exercise will need to be completed to encompass all signage – Boundary, Facility & Settlement. C Fox stated that the funding for the signage will now be sought from the Capital budget within Council. It is proposed to progress rolling out signage across the District in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary and Gateway Signage • Facility Signage- Internal/External • Settlement Signage <p>An audit of existing and required signs will be completed by Officers within the Technical Services Department. The list of facilities has been updated to include pitches, cemeteries, and the Council offices on Killymeal Road, Dungannon (old Breakthru Building). Cllr McNamee requested that all designs, list of facilities, settlement signs etc is presented to the working group before any installation is carried out.</p>	
8.0	Update from Irish Language Officer team	
	<p>Seán Antón Ó Conalláin provided an update from the Irish Language Officer team.</p> <p>Under RML Bursary scheme, 105 complete applications were received, two were withdrawn at an early stage and one was deemed ineligible due to receipt of a LÍOFA bursary from DfC. In total 102 students are being recommended for bursaries totalling £30,000. This is similar to 2022 when 100 bursaries were awarded. At present there are approximately 50 payments going through Finance to be paid with the rest being processed soon.</p>	

	<p>The Irish Language Officer Team are using the website Submit for the first time this year and very much praise and enjoy it's simplicity for access to data.</p> <p>Ógras Dhún Geanainn – Irish Language Youth Club, Pilot Scheme under direction of Fóram na n-Óg went well, 35 registered and promising for future development, thanks to Gaelscoil Aodha Rua for facilitating.</p> <p>Cairdeas Eoghain in Cookstown are now providing teenage summer camp provision which is welcomed due to the possibility of some pupils not getting placed on Gaeltacht Colleges this summer due to increased demand.</p> <p>The 'Dúchas' primary school language scheme was a great success last academic year with 20 participating schools taking part over 6 weeks culminating in Primary School Céilí during Seachtain na Gaeilge, Seán Antón hopes to run a similar scheme this year after Christmas with more focus on language and song and less on dance, with 10 participating schools to ease access for tutors.</p> <p>HOTON Irish language classes which were known as 'Bootcamps' have now had their marketing realigned to be known as 'Teanglann Chnoc Uí Néill' 'Irish Language Learning Hub'. 110 registered between 3 levels and Year 1 and 2 of Ulster University Diploma, some classes are being held in Dungannon Library to help facilitate such large numbers. An Irish language media company are recording a short piece regarding them next week.</p> <p>The Irish language diploma continues on Monday nights in The Burnavon from 6:00 – 9:00pm with steady numbers, we thank Ulster University for their ongoing support and cooperation.</p> <p>24 applications were received for Irish Language Activity Funding, total spend of £50,000 for a wide range of diverse programmes, a relevant document titled 'Report for Bursary and Activity Funding 23-24' was shared with Council in recent months.</p> <p>Irish language and bilingual tours of HOTON are now available upon request.</p> <p>Seachtain na Gaeilge 2024 will be marketed as part of the Mid Ulster Arts Festival.</p> <p>'Gaeilge Lár Uladh' Facebook page has an ever-increasing reach, thanks to Comms for sharing relevant posts to MUDC Corporate Facebook page.</p>	
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	<p>'Ár tDeanga Roinnte' is a series of workshops provided by Conradh na Gaeilge with those from the PUL community to help ease access to and learning of the Irish language. We as a Council hope to facilitate these workshops within the Council area, initial contact is being made at present.</p> <p>'Céad Míle Fáilte' is a series of workshops provided by Conradh na Gaeilge with those residents who have come from overseas to live here to help inform and educate them of the cultural significance of the Irish language including some basic lessons, it is hoped that this will help enhance and promote cultural cooperation throughout the District.</p> <p>Both Cairde Uí Néill and Glór na Speiríní are developing plans for Irish language centres in their districts, and officers are working with them to support them, and will keep members informed of any developments.</p>	
9.0	A.O.B.	
	<p>Councillor McNamee asked for views regarding the provision of bilingual content on the MUDC website. It was noted that it could be improved and that it was difficult to interact with website. Councillor McNamee proposed that officers discuss the potential for development and report back to the next meeting.</p> <p>Deáglán Ó Doibhlin congratulated Seán Antón Ó Conalláin for winning 'An Duais Speisialta' in the 'Agallamh Beirte' competition at Oireachtas na Gaeilge 2023.</p> <p>Councillor McNamee proposed that meeting for this group were held quarterly. Any additional meetings in between would be accommodated if required.</p>	Irish Language Officers
Meeting concluded at 8.35pm		

Reports of Working Groups: Finalised Reports of Working Groups should be forwarded to Democratic Services on committees@midulstercouncil.org with a cover report to be scheduled on the agenda of the next available relevant committee meeting

Report on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study 2. Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study 3. Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid 4. Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters
Date of Meeting	16 November 2023
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

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 provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study</p> <p>Tullaghoge Fort is a monument in State Care and is of significant importance to County Tyrone as 'The O'Neills' inauguration took place here in the 11th Century and was seen as a royal centre of power. Tullaghoge Fort embodies an enclosure of approx. 30 meters in diameter which is encircled by two banks with entry to the enclosed area gained via a causeway in the inner bank.</p> <p>Over the past 20 years considerable investment has developed the site to include car parking, access and interpretation and in turn increasing usage by locals and visitors.</p> <p>Through the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme, Mid Ulster District Council has collaborated with Leitrim County Council and successfully secured funding to investigate the feasibility of new access pathways around the site with interpretation.</p>

This cross-border collaboration provides an opportunity for Leitrim County Council to learn from Mid Ulster District Council in developing archaeological heritage and visitor facilities at a similar heritage site at Killahurk.

2.2 Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study

Sliabh Beagh is a special landscape with a wealth of natural and cultural assets which straddles the northern area of County Monaghan, County Fermanagh and primarily the Clogher Valley region in County Tyrone.

The three partner councils (Mid Ulster District Council, Monaghan County Council and Fermanagh & Omagh District Council) have demonstrated a commitment to collaboration and partnership by setting up the Sliabh Beagh Partnership Board which represents the interests of communities, businesses, and local authorities in the area. This Partnership, established in 2021 and facilitated by the local authorities, is working to advance shared projects that will benefit the entire Sliabh Beagh region.

2.3 Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid

In October 2021, the UK Government announced 'Multiply', a new programme to improve the functional numeracy skills of adults. 'Multiply' is a ringfenced element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and is part of government's Levelling Up agenda which supports high quality skills training and employment.

It is recognised that people who improve their numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment, have higher wages and better wellbeing. Following the announcement, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), undertook a brief scoping exercise locally, but no allocation was made from the UKSPF to Northern Ireland based providers.

DLUHC have approached the Department for the Economy (DfE) with a request to lead on developing and managing a portfolio of interventions, as part of the "Multiply" programme, with the following conditions: -

- all provision to be completed by March 2025;
- must be numeracy, or numeracy related training;
- only open to adults, over 18 years old; and
- up to level 2 or equivalent, with no qualification outcome required.
- funding for the numeracy element of larger co-funded schemes; and
- funding utilised for existing provision, with an element of re-badging.

To progress the Multiply Programme, DfE have engaged with the Department of Education (DE) and Department for Communities (DfC) in Northern Ireland, along with exploring what could be put in place in local colleges and universities.

A key element is around timescales with less than two years to design and deliver any interventions. DfE is keen to explore opportunities to work in partnership with

	<p>local government and have identified local Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) as an ideal vehicle and platform to deliver a Multiply programme in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>DLUHC specifically mentioned the following as areas they would be interested in supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional relevant maths modules embedded into other vocational courses. • innovative programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace. • new intensive and flexible courses targeted at people without Level 2 maths in Northern Ireland, leading to an equivalent qualification; and • courses aimed at people who can't apply for certain jobs because of lack of numeracy skills or to encourage people to upskill in order to access a certain job. <p>It is recognised that the local community and voluntary sector can support the delivery of Multiply in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>In GB, 'Multiply' has largely been delivered through local government, with councils bidding for allocations. In many instances this has replicated existing essential skills provision. A number of common elements have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the councils in England, Scotland and Wales have a "Multiply Officer" lead; • Delivery seems to be largely through local voluntary and community network; • Schemes including an adult focused fun maths class (with childcare on site), real life numeracy classes on things like nutrition, bills and helping children with homework, joint adult/children classes etc.; • Multiply in London offers 300+ courses in numeracy, at entry and essential level. <p>2.4 Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters</p> <p>Members were informed of the above consultation at Council in October 2023. The deadline for submission of a response is 24 November 2023.</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study</p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council and Leitrim County Council have partnered in a cross-border application to the Shared Island Fund and secured funding of €100,000 for a Ringforts Feasibility Study at Killahurk, Co Leitrim and at Tullaghoge Fort, Co Tyrone.</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to preserve, protect and transform the heritage of the Forts, research and increase awareness and understanding of the history the</p>

sites and examine the viability of introducing new pathways, carrying out consultation with stakeholders to ensure that statutory requirements are met. The Tullaghoge Fort element of the project was awarded €20,000. The feasibility study is now complete was presented to the Cookstown DEA members on 18 October 2023.

The feasibility study (**on Appendix 1**) includes the following –

- Enhances existing path network with Interpretation
- Expands path network within HED owned land
- Provides 'open access' within HED owned land
- Provides access to previously inaccessible sites of built heritage interest, such as, the recently discovered Great Hall

A Digital Layer of Interpretation

By using the existing MUDC app interface, introduces an additional layer of interpretation across the site on a Tullaghoge app. Within the fort the 'golden slipper' could be passed overhead, or, within the field, the soldiers could be attempting to destroy the site. The Great Hall will come alive with a **Light touch 'echo' of the Great Hall**. Creating anchor point for placement of 'AR' at the Great Hall site to hear the sounds of the whispers, arguments and celebrate at first hand. Raised beds 'set on' to the site of the Great Hall and replanted to differentiate from surrounding grassed areas and takes account the biodiversity at Tullaghoge Fort.

Elements of Surprise

Utilising existing end of life trees, place hidden 'guardians' – the Great Wolfhounds still watching over, for friend or foe.

All interventions to be 'set on' or 'fixed to' existing trees or wooden post fencing.

- Total project cost estimated at £197,015 + Vat
- Annual maintenance cost to Council estimated at £20,041.78
- Project is now at RIBA Stage 2.
- Possible funding sources; Shared Island / Heritage Lottery / Peace Plus

3.2 Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study

The Councils involved in the Sliabh Beagh Partnership (Monaghan County Council, Mid Ulster District Council and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council) partnered to submit a joint bid to the Shared Island Local Authority Development Scheme to carry out a feasibility study focusing on seven work packages (as noted below) to develop the Sliabh Beagh region as an Eco Tourism Destination.

The purpose of this project is to develop a number of inter-connected tourism and outdoor recreation initiatives to build upon the existing services and facilities in the region. Monaghan County Council acted as the Lead Partner and was awarded €145,475.

Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) were appointed as consultants to undertake the feasibility study (**Appendix 2**). This study focused on the following seven work packages within the Sliabh Beagh region;

1. Walking
2. Cycling
3. Equestrian
4. Signage / public art
5. Accommodation
6. Ancillary services
7. The Hero Attractor: Sliabh Beagh as a Multi-Activity Destination

An in-person public consultation event took place on 1 August 2023 at Sliabh Beagh Hotel, Knockatallon, coupled with an online survey, where a variety of stakeholders, including community groups, landowners, etc input their views to the process.

1 & 2 Walking and Cycling

A number of key themes were considered during the development stage, such as sustainability, connectivity, ecological considerations, trails as an attractor, trail standard and existing knowledge. As only 5km of new trails were costed in the project, following consultation it was agreed to use existing trails by way of upgrades and linkages for cost effectiveness.

Each section has been identified as an opportunity to enhance the accessibility and sustainability of the existing trail networks and therefore the overall outdoor recreation offering of the wider Sliabh Beagh area. Sections comprise of short linkages to link existing sections, upgrades of existing trails or forest roads that are in poor condition, sections of trail which improve the gradient and therefore accessibility. Trail networks will comprise a mixture of forest roads, public roads, new trails and existing trails.

A new build link at Favour Royal with existing trails will upgrade 1,299m of walking trails, suitable for walkers of all abilities and in an area of wildlife designation. A further combination of new and upgrading of existing trails within Favour Royal Forest, a long-established woodland, will add an additional 737m of trail.

Upgrading and installing a new link at Fardross Arc, within Fardross Forest will see development of a 714m trail. As part of the study ORNI were asked to design these trails to at least RIBA stage 2/3.

Following investigations and site visits at Lumfords Glen, Council was advised that civil engineer studies, ecological appraisals, concept drawings for five bridges, geotechnical investigations and topographical surveys are required for some of the walks but were out of the scope of works for this project.

ORNI have provided a breakdown of costs to bring Lumfords Glen to a shovel ready stage in order to apply for funding to complete the works as part of the Shared Island Capital Fund. The breakdown of costs is estimated at £24,875

+Vat. Lumfords Glen is not identified as a strategic priority site within current Outdoor or Tourism Strategies.

3. Equestrian

Development of 2,260m of new build trails at Fardross Forest will establish Fardross Equestrian Loop, the only equestrian trail within the Sliabh Beagh region, with parking facilities at Clogher Valley Horses Welcome. Walkers and cyclists will also benefit from Equestrian Loop at Fardross.

The trails will form a wider network to the Sliabh Beagh region and provide opportunities for large scale outdoor events, such as extending the Fermanagh Gravel Grinder further into Mid Ulster and Monaghan with potential of attracting hundreds if not thousands of international visitors to the region.

4. Signage / Public Art

The roll out of the Signage Strategy will begin by introducing Inner Gateway signs, informing the visitor 'you are here' e.g., St Patrick's Chair and Well'.

Welcome signs on the edge of towns will connect Sliabh Beagh to the wider communities and Outer Gateway signs, that will be optional, will connect Sliabh Beagh to even wider communities. Information points will be installed at key trail heads.

The signage will incorporate the image of Bith which was agreed within the Sliabh Beagh Master Plan in 2016. Three pieces of artwork will be created, based on the sustainable and circular economy principles linked to the natural and cultural heritage of the Sliabh Beagh area. The sculptures, placed in each of the three council areas, will reward the visitor for their exertion in finding them and will deliver the Bith story in three instalments. The sculptures will visually connect and interact with the landscape, be photogenic and shareable on social media and robust with minimum maintenance. The Mid Ulster Sculpture is proposed to be installed at Favour Royal.

5 & 6. Accommodation and Ancillary Services

Recommendations to carry out an audit of current accommodation and ancillary service provision, market demand and engagement with industry, as well as gap analysis.

7. The Hero Attractor: Sliabh Beagh as a Multi-Activity Destination

A detailed screening process identified this proposition as the one with the best potential for Sliabh Beagh. A multi-activity destination is considered:

- A destination that offers a wide variety of outdoor activities scattered across different locations, e.g., swimming, kayaking, walking, cycling, outdoor challenges, horse riding. Some activities will be free to access and others at a charge.
- Working with existing operators, infrastructure, and towns/villages in

the first instance before adding any additional activities and accommodation.

- Focus on a shared brand and vision for the area that towns/villages and operators can participate in.
- Opportunities to develop unique off-grid accommodation.

The longer-term projects to be developed as part of the Hero Attractor are infrastructure to support water access at key locations for wild swimming (potential to flex existing fishing pontoons adjacent to trails e.g., Lough Jenkin, Lough Natroey, Lough Eshbrick) and integrated indoor/outdoor wellness experiences to be developed.

3.3 Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid

The 'Multiply' Programme is a government-funded programme to help adults to improve their numeracy skills and boost their number confidence. The government wants to help people unlock new job opportunities or progress in work, get higher wages, improve their wellbeing, and take the next step to higher levels of training. It is also recognised that boosting numeracy abilities can also help with everyday tasks like bills and budgeting or helping children with homework. Improved numeracy also matters to businesses by helping boost productivity and improve employee retention.

In early summer, the Department for the Economy (DfE) was approached by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to submit a bid for a 'Multiply' programme in Northern Ireland through a mix of FE/HE and LMP delivery as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation. In June 2023, DfE officials attended a meeting of DfC's LMP Co-Design Group and provided an overview of Multiply and requested that LMPs deliver approximately £4M of the total £11.8m funding allocated to the Programme, with universities and colleges being allocated the remaining £7.8M.

Following a consultation on the emerging focus and types of 'Multiply' initiatives which local LMPs could potentially deliver, the 11 Councils submitted a collective outline proposal to DfE identifying interventions which could be co-ordinated and implemented through LMPs (**See Appendix 3**).

Correspondence has been ongoing with DfE throughout the summer and the Department submitted a bid to DLUHC on 4th October 2023. Once preliminary checks have been completed, the bid will be submitted to the DLUHC Minister for approval. In parallel, to ensure that the NI Multiply Programme is ready to commence delivery once approved, working groups will be established to discuss a coordinated approach to delivery and to determine roles and responsibilities for interventions. The Multiply Programme is considered to hold great promise in advancing critical maths skills and knowledge across various sectors of our society and a collaborative approach is essential to maximise the impact of these interventions and to avoid any unnecessary overlap or duplication of efforts.

Indicative Multiply Budget Allocation (Revenue)

The indicative budget allocation for each Council is between £350k and £400k. It is important to note that subject to a successful bid, funding must be spent in full by March 2025 and all 11 Councils agreed the need for a dedicated staff resource to deliver Multiply activity at a local level. Therefore, costings within the bid include a 'Multiply Officer' in each Council, who would be appointed on a fixed term contract to match the programme delivery timetable and within the available funding received. A separate report on this matter will be brought to the Council's Policy & Resources Committee.

If the funding bid is successful, DfE and DfC will hold discussions with each LMP to agree local plans and deliverables, but the overall Multiply Action Plan for NI will be maintained by DfE. The department have noted the tight timescale and one-off nature of the funding will require elements of the project approach to be simplified to prioritise delivery. It is anticipated that letters of offer would be issued to Councils in December 2023, with a view to delivering programme activity between January 2024 and March 2025.

The proposal to participate in the delivery of the NI Multiply Programme was submitted to the Mid Ulster LMP at its recent meeting on 14 September 2023. Following discussion, the LMP board agreed to participate in the delivery of the programme (subject to funding and council approval) to ensure residents of the district benefit from the support and opportunities that would be available.

Importantly, it is the view of the Departments that a successful funding bid to DLUHC would provide additional security to core funding of LMPs in 2024-25.

3.4 Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters

The aim of the Department's consultation (**See Appendix 4A**) is to seek and receive views from stakeholders from a range of sectors on elements of the proposed approach to activity across priority sectors of the Northern Ireland (NI) economy, focusing on innovative technologies and Unique Selling Points (USPs) within each.

Priority sectors were identified as Agri-Tech, Life & Health Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing, Materials & Engineering, Fintech / Financial Services, Software, Screen Industries and Low Carbon (including Green Hydrogen).

The planned approach to activity within each sector is viewed as a progressive and positive approach and this is reflected in the Council's draft response on **Appendix 4B**, which provides support for the outlined proposals, and references Council's specific key sectoral strengths.

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study Funded through Shared Island Fund at the value of €20,000.</p> <p>Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study Sliabh Beagh Feasibility study was funded through Shared Island Fund, an additional request to align Lumfords Glen to RIBA stage 3 has been made, this is estimated at £24,875 +Vat but currently no budget exists to fund this additional expenditure.</p> <p>Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid The new 'Multiply' programme will be fully funded by DLUHC and administered by DfE and DfC. A letter of offer in the region of £350k to £400k is expected in December 2023 for the delivery period January 2024 to March 2025.</p> <p>Human: Officer Time:</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <p>Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid The risk level is mitigated as Multiply programme activity would be 100% externally funded and includes the employment of a Multiply Officer via a contract post.</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid Officers are not aware of any equality or good relations implications at this time.</p> <p>Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters DFE have completed an Equality Screening exercise in relation to the proposals set out in the consultation document.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid: None anticipated at this juncture.</p> <p>Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy's Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters: No RNIA has been presented in conjunction with this consultation.</p>

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p> <p>5.1 Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study</p> <p>5.1.1 Approve the Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Report.</p> <p>5.1.2 Approve this scheme is added to Council's Capital Planning Framework as an emerging project; and pursue external funding opportunities to help develop a funding package to deliver the scheme.</p>
5.2	<p>5.2 Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Study</p> <p>5.2.1 Approve the content of the draft final version of the Sliabh Beagh Eco Tourism Feasibility Report. A final version will be brought to Committee at a later date for noting.</p> <p>5.2.2 Consider the additional studies and drawings required to bring the Lumfords Glen up to RIBA Stage 3, to maximise the potential for Shared Island Capital Funding at this site. If agreed, the Committee will be required to make a recommendation to the Policy & Resources Committee seeking a reserve release of £24,875 +Vat.</p>
5.3	<p>5.3 Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs): NI Multiply Programme Bid</p> <p>5.3.1 Subject to DLUHC approving the bid;</p> <p>(a) Approve Council's participation in the NI Multiply Programme.</p> <p>(b) Approve Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) as the delivery vehicle for the Multiply Programme in Mid Ulster.</p> <p>5.3.2 Subject to DLUHC approving the bid; approval is sought for delegated authority to be granted to the Chief Executive to;</p> <p>(a) Sign and return the letter of offer from the Department for the Economy when it is received. It is expected that the letter of offer will provide funding in the region of £350-£400k to cover the period January 2024 to March 2025. The types of initiatives/activity that Council will be expected to deliver are included in Appendix 3. A copy of the letter of offer and programme of activity will be submitted to the Committee when available.</p> <p>(b) Procure suitable organisations to deliver the agreed Programme of activity in adherence with Council policy and procedures to enable the Multiply Programme to commence as swiftly as possible.</p>

5.4	<p>Draft Consultation Response on the Department for the Economy’s Approach to 10x Technologies and Clusters</p> <p>Approve Council’s draft response for submission to the Department for the Economy regarding 10X Technologies and Clusters on Appendix 4B.</p>
6.0	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Feasibility Study</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Draft Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Outline of LMP ‘Multiply’ Programme Initiatives</p> <p>Appendix 4A - Dept for the Economy – Consultation Document re 10X Technologies & Clusters</p> <p>Appendix 4B - Draft Consultation Response to Dept for the Economy re 10X Technologies & Clusters</p>

Tullaghoge Fort Access and Interpretation Study

October 2023

Prepared by

Outdoor Recreation NI and Tandem Design

on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council



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1 Introduction

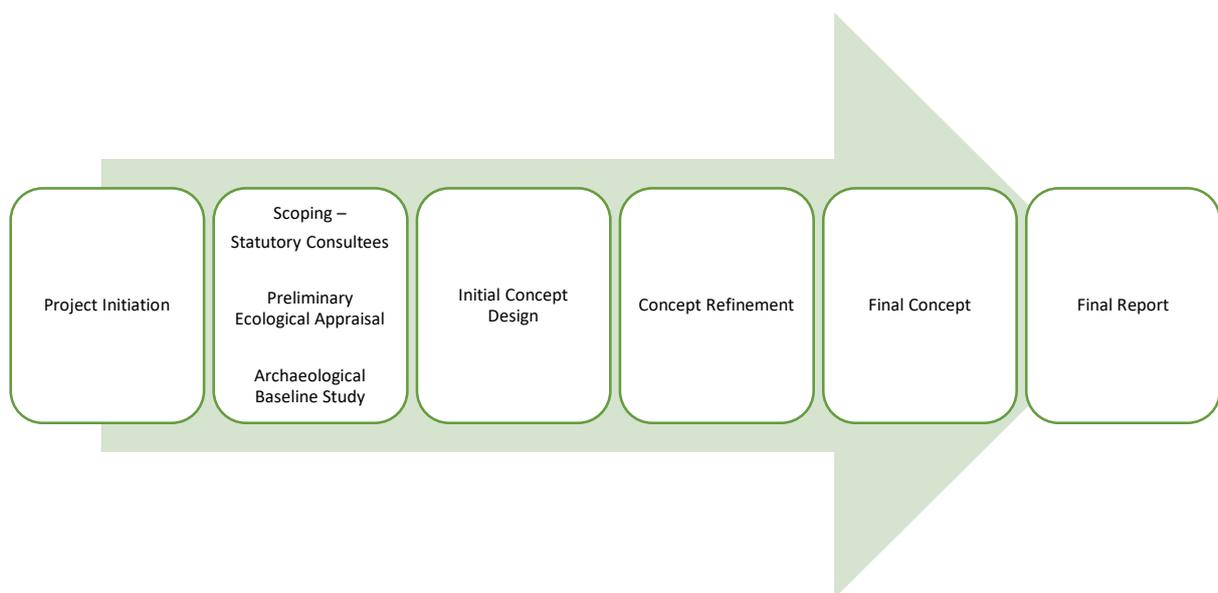
Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) have been appointed by Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) to undertake a feasibility study to investigate expansion of access at Tullaghoge Fort through the development of new pathways and to explore the development of new and innovative interpretation opportunities within the site.

This study -

- Examines the viability of introducing new pathways within the publicly owned land at Tullaghoge Fort, identifying potential trail developments and associated infrastructure etc.
- Assesses the interpretation options for the new pathway and investigates new innovative approaches to the interpretation of a recently discovered historic settlement at Tullaghoge.
- Required consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure that development of visitor infrastructure and interpretation met both local needs and statutory requirements.
- Provides recommendations and indicative costs for pathway options, interpretation options with rationale and supportive mapping.
- Provides project detail to RIBA stage 2 (concept design stage) and includes relevant investigative studies (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Archaeological Baseline Survey).

2 Methodology

The methodology below was followed with regards the access elements of the project. Tandem Design completed the interpretation elements of the project, please see Section 5 for further detail.



2.1 Scoping

There are several opportunities and constraints which could impact the design – these are as identified below:

Statutory Consultees

The key statutory consultee is the Department of Communities Historic Environment Division (DoC HED - owners of Tullaghoge Fort and surrounds). Representatives from HED State Care and Planning Development Teams were engaged with throughout the scoping and design process.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR)

ORNI engaged the service of David Smith (CIEEM Accredited Ecologist, Ulster Wildlife Trust) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. This included an assessment of the ecological features present, within the site and its surrounding area (the zone(s)) of influence in relation to the proposed trail. An overview of findings can be found in Section 3.3 and the full PEAR viewed in Appendix 1.

Archaeological Baseline Study

ORNI engaged the services of ‘Northern Archaeological Consultancy’ to undertake an Archaeological Baseline Survey with a focus on the proposed development site to highlight the specific archaeological potential of the route, potential physical impacts of proposed developments both in terms of access and interpretation interventions, any potential design constraints, and likely mitigation. An overview of findings can be found in Section 0 and the full report viewed in Appendix 2.

2.2 Initial Concept Design

Informed by previous knowledge of the site and additional fieldwork, ORNI used GIS mapping to develop the concept trail design. The concept trail design was supported by initial interpretation options as prepared by Tandem Design. These outputs were presented to MUDC and approval was received before proceeding to concept refinement.

2.3 Concept Refinement

Following feedback from the concept design and further consultation with HED regarding on-site opportunities, the concept design was refined to prepare high-level concept trail design. Please see Section 4 for design detail.

3 Site Description

3.1 Land Ownership and Management

Tullaghoge Fort itself is a scheduled monument within State Care, meaning it is owned and managed by DoC HED. The surrounding field parcels are also under the ownership of HED. A parcel of land that is located at the entrance to the car park from the Tullywiggan Road, is owned by MUDC. See Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 1 for an overview of land ownership and management details at Tullaghoge Fort.



Figure 1 Land ownership at Tullaghoge Fort

Land Parcel	Owned by	Managed by	Additional information
17	HED	MUDC	MUDC have a maintenance agreement with HED for the management of trails and related infrastructure within this land parcel. Grass mowing, hedge trimming and bin emptying are maintenance activities that MUDC undertake.
18B	HED	HED	Leased to local farmer on a 3-year grazing cycle. Current lease due to end March 2024.

19A	HED	HED	Leased to local farmer on a 3-year grazing cycle. Current lease due to end March 2024.
19B	HED	HED	Leased to local farmer on a 3-year grazing cycle. Current lease due to end March 2024.
19C	HED	MUDC	MUDC have a maintenance agreement with HED for the management of trails and related infrastructure within this land parcel.
19D	HED	HED	HED access lane to the fort.
20	HED	HED	Leased to local farmer on a 3-year grazing cycle. Current lease due to end March 2024.
Car park	HED/ MUDC	MUDC	Originally all owned by HED - MUDC bought additional lands for realignment of entrance to the site when previous works happened on site.

Table 1 Overview of land ownership and management at Tullaghoge Fort



Figure 2 Areas managed by MUDC through grass mowing

3.2 Current Use

The existing trail network can be seen in Figure 5. It consists of a meandering path leading gently uphill towards the fort itself. This path is 2m wide and consists of a fully bound surface that is suitable

for users of all abilities. Upon reaching the fort, the fully bound surface ends, and mown grass paths provide access to and around the fort (Figure 3). Two circular hedgerows are located on the outskirts of the fort. Open access on mown grass is available within the center of the fort, and a 2 m wide mown grass trail is provided between the two hedgerows. A mown grass surface is not classified as being suitable for users with limited mobility.

Public access to the rest of the site is not currently permitted or provided for. As discussed above, the remainder of the site is used for sheep grazing (Figure 4).

Trail and interpretive infrastructure on site includes a series of interpretation panels, sculptures, bins x2, seating and picnic areas plus basic waymarking. Field gates are also present throughout the site to provide access for maintenance vehicles as well as for agricultural access.

Within the car park there are 17 car parking spaces, two dedicated accessible parking spaces, plus a layby for use by groups or during organised events. Events have previously occurred on site that help interpret the history of the site, through storytelling and celebration.



Figure 3 Existing built trails on site and mown grass trails within the fort



Figure 4 Current land use within the site to the north, examples of current infrastructure

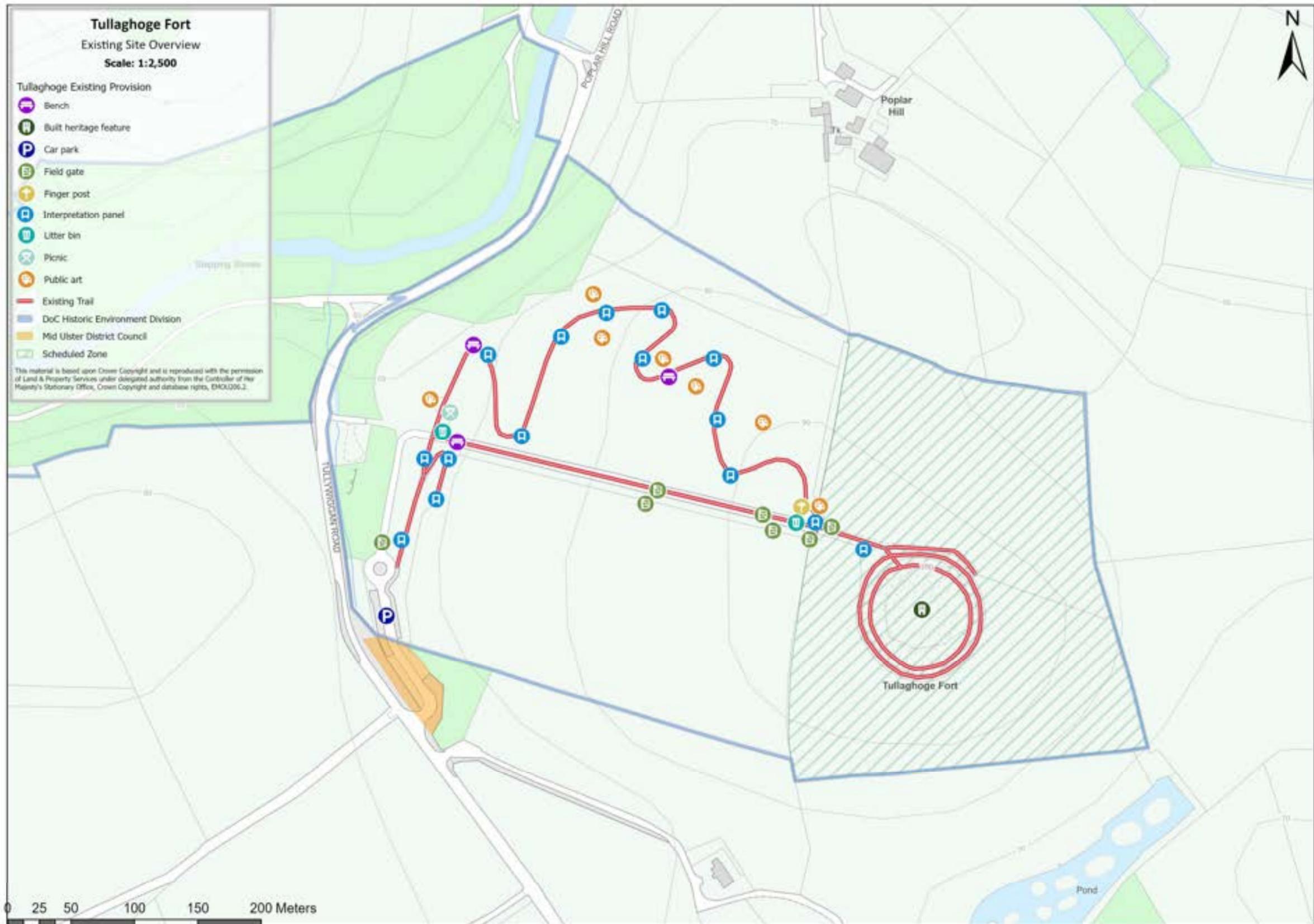


Figure 5 Existing Site Overview

3.3 Natural Heritage

Please see attached document 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report'.

3.4 Built Heritage

Please see attached document 'Archaeological Baseline Survey'.

4 Concept Trail Design

4.1 Rationale

The concept trail design was shaped by the ground conditions, topography, vegetation cover, points of interest and extent of land available for public access. Building on this, the detailed recommendations were heavily influenced by the existing and future management and maintenance requirements of the site, based on the needs of both key stakeholders, HED and MUDC. A summary of consultation with HED and their requirements for the site are as follows:

- HED are broadly supportive of plans for additional access and interpretation at Tullaghoge (within the confines of suitable development at a State Care and Scheduled Monument).
- They are enthused by the potential of animating the Great Hall, plus further exploration and interpretation regarding the 'seat'.
- HED confirmed that trimming the hedges in the immediate vicinity of the fort, fell under their remit.
- Figure 2 shows the land parcels owned by HED at Tullaghoge. Parcels 18, 19 and 20 are currently leased in a 3-year grazing cycle, due to end in March 2024.
- The lease would either be renewed (or not), in its entirety i.e. one parcel would not be excluded from a future grazing lease.
- If the lease were not to be renewed for grazing, it could potentially be leased for cropping. This would be a hay crop taken twice per year – the land has been grazed for many years resulting in a nutrient poor soil – good for grassland meadow establishment.
- The farmer who currently leases the land for grazing, has previously stated he would also lease it for cropping. If this farmer did not want to lease it for cropping, HED are unsure if there would be demand to lease the site for this purpose and may look to MUDC to help with harvesting the crop or finding a tenant. Further detail to be explored.
- HED are willing to enter into a maintenance agreement with MUDC to open up land parcels 18, 19 and 20, for a series of mown grass paths and associated interpretation infrastructure to increase public access around the site and to features of built heritage interest.
- Potential new grass paths within the site total 1601m, plus the existing path network (1898m bound surface to the fort and grass paths within the fort), which equals a total potential network of 3499m.

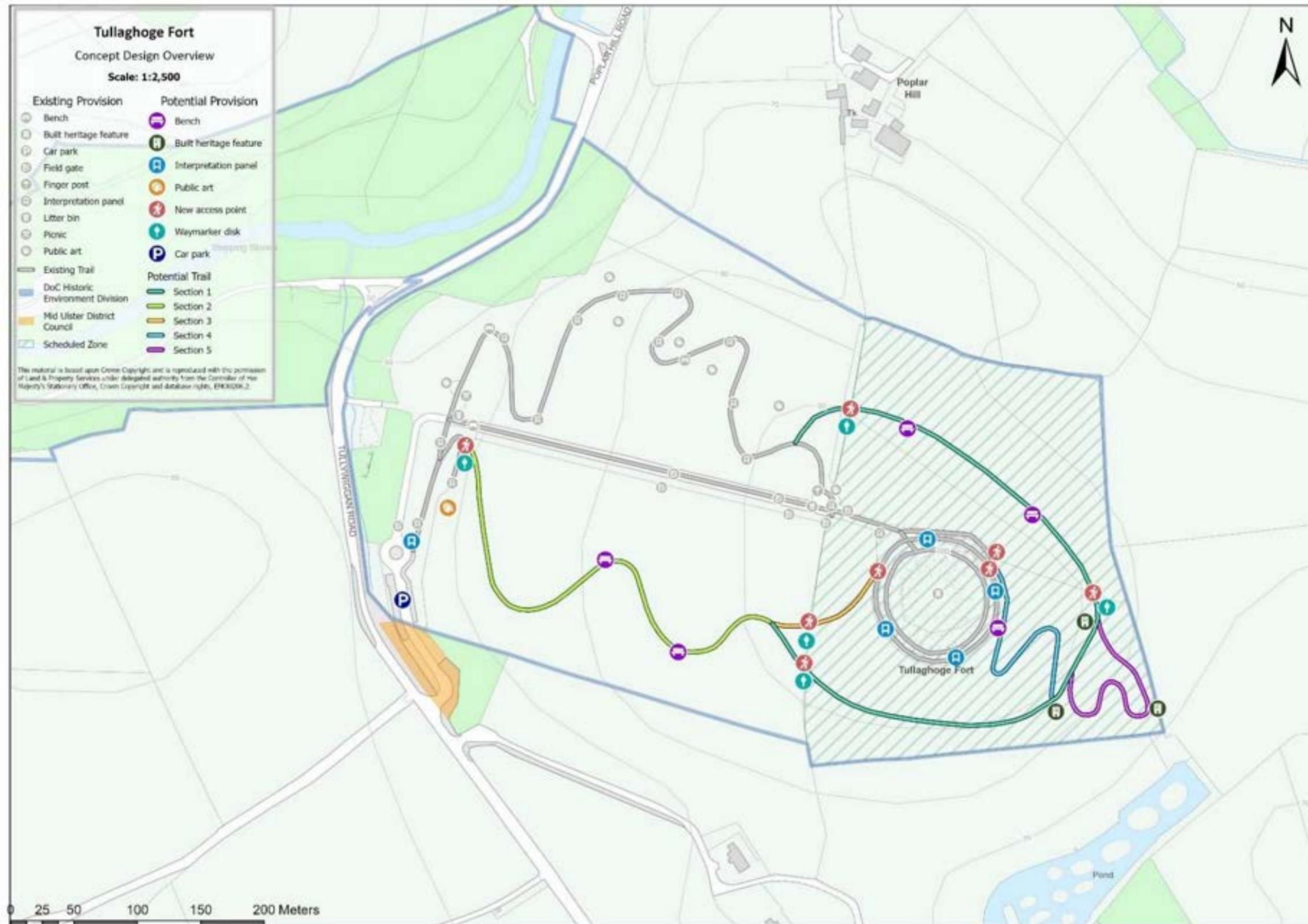


Figure 6 Map showing concept trail design detail

Section	Length (m)	Trail grade*	Trail type	Trail corridor description	Rationale	Works required	Infrastructure required
1	656	Category 4	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail following the 90m contour around the fort from the north to the west via the eastern side of the hill. Minimal gradients. No drainage issues.	To provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site, feature of built heritage interest and to provide unobstructed 360° views of the surrounding countryside.	Make 2x 2m wide opening in existing fencing and species poor defunct hedge running 1) north and 2) south from turning circle. Make 2m wide opening in fence line running east on eastern side of fort. Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence posts at openings. Bench x2 to be placed on top of ground (no in ground works). No gates required. No drainage requirements.
2	209	Category 4	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail travelling east from the fort to the site of the Great Hall and exit to the car park. It travels from the 90m contour to the 70m contour, resulting in a 23m drop in elevation over 200m. No drainage issues.	To provide access to the site of the 'Great Hall' directly from the fort, to provide the last trail section to achieve a looped walk and to provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site.	Make a 2m wide opening in fence line separating access trail to Great Hall to field parcel 19B. Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence post at opening. Bench x2 to be placed on top of ground (no in ground works). No gates required. No drainage requirements.
3	408	Category 4	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail linking fort to return leg of trail. Minimal gradients. No drainage issues.	To provide a linkage for those who wish to complete a circular loop on site, by travelling to the fort and back again, i.e those who do not wish to travel down or across the slope the east of the fort.	Make 2x 2m wide opening in fence line separating field parcels 19B and 20, and field parcel 20 and the fort itself. Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence posts at openings. No gates required. No drainage requirements.
4	105	Category 4	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail linking fort to Section 1 and on to Section 5. Steep gradients requiring several switch backs.	To provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site and for those who wish to visit the fort and then on to the three built heritage features on the eastern slope of the fort.	Make 2x 2m wide opening in fence line separating field parcels 19D and 20, and field parcel 20 and the fort itself (both on northeastern side of fort). Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence posts at openings. Bench x1 to be placed on top of ground (no in ground works). No gates required. No drainage requirements.

5	223	Category 4	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail providing access from Section 1 to Section 5. Steep gradients requiring several switch backs.	To provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site and for those who wish to visit the third built heritage feature on the eastern slope of the fort.	Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	None
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Table 2 Concept trail design overview

Section	Images
1	

2



3



4



5



Table 3 Images relating to concept design trail sections

5 Interpretation Options

Please see attached document 'Tullaghoge Fort - Interpretation experience extension'.

6 Estimated Costs

No.	Item	Description	Quantity	Rate	Cost	Incl. 10% contingency	Incl. 8.6% Inflation to 2024
Pre-construction							
1	Ecological works	See professional fees	1	0	£0	£0	£0
2	Archaeological works	See professional fees	1	0	£0	£0	£0
3	Interpretive Consultation and Design	Detailed consultation and design of all interpretive elements of project	1	25000	£25,000	£27,500	£29,865
Pre-Planning Sub-Total					£25,000	£27,500	£29,865
Capital Costs							
5	Access	New access points - contractor to make 6x 2m wide openings in existing fencelines, leave ground flat and reseeded if required.	1	1200	£1,200	£1,320	£1,434
6		Waymarker disks - design, production and supply	10	8	£80	£88	£96
7		Trailhead Panel - design, production and supply	1	1500	£1,500	£1,650	£1,792
8	Intepretation development **	Additional lecturns	2	3000	£6,000	£6,600	£7,168
9		Stone seats	2	10000	£20,000	£22,000	£23,892
10		Timber log seats	4	1000	£4,000	£4,400	£4,778
11		Wooden sculptures	5	1500	7500	8250	8959.5
12		Viewfinder/ Interpretation point	8	2000	16000	17600	19113.6
13		Great Hall - landscaping	1	15000	15000	16500	17919
14		AR Content Development	1	45000	45000	49500	53757
Capital Sub-Total					£116,280	£127,908	£138,908
Professional Fees							
	CPM Fee (9% of capital)			9% of capital	£10,465	£11,512	£12,762
	Ecological Clerk of Works	PEA completed at feasibility stage (1 year lifespan), work corridors to be surveyed at least one week prior to works starting, ECoW to review contractors method statement		N/A	£2,000	£2,200	£2,439
	Archaeological Clerk of Works	Archaeological Baseline Survey completed at feasibility stage,		N/A	£2,000	£2,200	£2,439
	Trail Design	RIBA Stage 3 design and detailed costings		5% of capital	£5,814	£6,395	£7,090
Professional Fees Sub-Total					£20,279	£22,307	£24,730
TOTAL*					£161,559	£177,715	£197,015
*costs provided are at a high level, are accurate at time of writing and do not allow for unpredictability in variations from time of report to undertaking capital works							
** Excludes hard landscaping, contractor prelims, groundworks							

Table 4 Estimated costs for access and interpretation proposals

Item	Detail	Existing (per annum)	Potential (per annum)
Grass cutting	1049m x 2m wide corridor = 2098m ² x 10p x 18 cuts per year	£3,776.40	
	1601m x 1.5m wide corridor = 2401.5m ² x 10p x 18 cuts per year		£4,322.70
Hedge cutting ¹	4no. operatives including equipment for to trim hedge x2 per year around the fort 16 hrs per year x £124.78 per hr	£1,996.48	
Bin emptying	£10 per hr x 0.5 x52wks	£260.00	
	Subtotal	£6,032.88	£4,322.70
	Total	£10,355.58	

Table 5 Maintenance costs for total trail network

¹ Note that HED confirmed that cutting hedges around the fort itself, fell under their remit

7 Next Steps

To take all recommendations forward, a suitably qualified consultant(s) should be appointed to oversee a three-stage process to deliver the recommendations on the ground.

Stage 1

- Obtain relevant landowner permissions, lease and maintenance agreements.
- Update ecological study if more than one year since it was completed.
- Appoint licensed Archeologist to:
 - Apply to HED for an 'Archaeological Excavation License'.
 - Apply to HED for 'Scheduled Monument Consent'.
 - Completion of a 'programme of works', submit to HED for assessment and approval.
- Commission and complete Interpretation Plan
- Detailed interpretation design
- If necessary, apply for funding.

Stage 2 - CPM (1)²

- Complete RIBA Stage 3 design and detailed costings.
- Complete technical design for Interpretation elements.
- Prepare tender documentation and oversee procurement (to include Archaeological Clerk of Works (ACoW)).

Stage 3 - CPM (2)³

- Administer the contract.
- Full project management of delivery on the ground.

² CPM – Consultant Project Manager Role, undertake the role of Principal Designer in accordance with the CDM NI 2016 Regulations.

³ CPM – Consultant Project Manager Role, undertake the role of Principal Designer in accordance with the CDM NI 2016 Regulations, including provision of a Health and Safety File on completion of works.

Appendix 1 – Trail Category Descriptions

Key trail attributes	Category 4 Walking Trail
Description	<p>Category Four Walking Trails have variable gradients and surfaces and may be found in a very wide variety of environments including more remote upland sites.</p> <p>These are trails where access is more restricted by issues such as gradients, trail surfaces and the nature and size of trail features. This means these trails may not be suitable for use by all user groups at the same time. Category Four Walking Trails are suitable for the following users only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians – mixed ability walkers and runners <p>Category Four Multi Use Trails are not suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-road cyclists • Equestrians – leisure and endurance riders • Those with limited mobility or impaired vision • Off road cyclists using bikes other than mountain bikes - not tag-alongs, trailers, child seats and stabilizers • Those with baby buggies • Novice equestrians
Width	Refer to Section information.
Surface	Very variable and uneven including loose material, rocks, mud, gravel, soil, roots, grass, and other vegetation. Surfaces may change suddenly and vary over short distances.
Gradients	Average gradients of 10%, maximum gradients should not exceed 20% for not more than 50m.
Lines of Sight	Minimum 15m
Trail Features	<p>These trails can feature unexpected and sudden level changes caused by steps, roots, rocks, ditches, drains and water bars of not more than 300mm in relation to pedestrian only trails.</p> <p>Trails should include obstructions to prevent use by other trail users as shown in photographs below.</p> <p>Turns of up to 180 degrees.</p> <p>Grade reversals of not less than 2.5m length and not more than 1.5m depth.</p> <p>Boardwalks not less than 600mm wide and not more than 1500mm high above ground level.</p> <p>Bridges should be not less than 1m wide and should have handrails throughout if more than 1500mm high above ground level.</p> <p>May feature encroaching vegetation and have limited clearance in relation to trees etc.</p>
Suitable for	Walkers only

Appendix 2 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Please see attached document 'Tullaghoge Fort - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report'.

Appendix 2 – Archaeological Baseline Study

Please see attached document 'Tullaghoge Fort - Archaeological Baseline Study'.

Ulster Wildlife



Report Title	Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report	
Site	Tullaghoge Fort	
Client	Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI)	
Date:	October 2023	
Report Reference:	UWT-RT-2023-25-02	Ulster Wildlife Trust McClelland House 10 Heron Rd Belfast Northern Ireland BT3 9LE Tel: 028 9045 4094 E-mail: david.smith@ulsterwildlife.org
Date Submitted:	October 2023	
Principal Contact:	David Smith	

REPORT VERIFICATION AND DECLARATION OF COMPLIANCE

This study has been undertaken in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 “Biodiversity, Code of practice for planning and development”.

Report Version	Date	Completed by:	Checked by:	Approved by:
Final	26/10/2023	David Smith BSc Ecology, MCIEEM	Dr Peter McEvoy MCIEEM Director of Land Use UWT	Jennifer Fulton Chief Executive UWT

The information which we have prepared is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management’s Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this report are the responsibility of Ulster Wildlife Trust. It should be noted that, whilst every effort is made to meet the client’s brief, no site investigation can ensure complete assessment or prediction of the natural environment.

Ulster Wildlife Trust accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

VALIDITY OF DATA

The findings of this study are valid for a period of 12 months from the date of survey. If works have not commenced by this date, it may be necessary to undertake an updated survey to allow any changes in the status of bats on site to be assessed, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Tullaghoge Fort is a large mound on the outskirts of Tullyhogue village near Cookstown, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland. which is an ancient ceremonial site where the Chiefs of the Clan O'Neill of Tyrone were inaugurated.

1.2 SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This PEAR:

- Provides baseline information on current habitats and ecological features;
- Identifies the presence or potential presence of any protected species or habitats and provides an appraisal of any potential effects the development may have on these;
- Identifies the proximity of any sites designated as being of nature conservation interest and provides an appraisal of any potential effects the development may have on these;
- Provide recommendations for habitat enhancement and species features; and,
- Consideration of options for net environmental gain / compensation.

In October 2023 the client (Outdoor Recreation NI) provided an amended proposed trail drawing (See Drawing: Tullaghoge Revised Existing and Potential Trails V2) and this updated report takes these additional access routes into consideration. The amended proposal reflected opportunities and recommendations received from Historic Environment Division (HED).

1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The site is located off the Sessiagh Rd to the north of Tullyhogue, County Tyrone (National Grid Reference: NV95101 34151).

The fort lies on top of a hill and is dominated by mature broadleaved trees with amenity grass and surrounded by two concentric rings of hedgerows. The landscape surrounding the fort is sheep grazed grassland with fences and hedgerows.

1.4 DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED

The conclusions and recommendations made in this report are based on information provided by ORNI regarding the scope of the project. Documentation made available by ORNI is listed in Table 1.1.

Document Name / Drawing Number	Author
Request for Quotation – PEAR	ORNI (2023)

Table 1.1: Documentation Provided by Client

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

A desk study search was undertaken by David Smith in August 2023 to collect ecological data with respect to the site and a surrounding buffer zone of 2 km.

A list of sources is given in Table 2.1 below.

Data Source	Information
NIEA Natural Environment Map Viewer (Online GIS tool)	Statutory designated site locations and citations
NI Planning Websites (Council Development Plans)	Non-statutory designated site locations and citations
NBN Atlas website https://nbnatlas.org/	Distribution of noteworthy species
Local Biodiversity Action Plans	Details of species and habitats listed on the LBAP

Table 2.1: Summary of Data Sources

The above information was reviewed by David Smith in March 2023 by reference to the:

- CEDaR at National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI)
- NBN Atlas

A search was made for information on statutory designated sites and non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary. A search was also made for records of noteworthy species within the same 2km area. Species included in the search parameters are:

- European Protected Species (listed on Schedules 2 and 4 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995;
- Nationally protected species under Schedules 5 and 8 of The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and the Wildlife & Natural Environment (WANE) Act 2011;
- Species listed as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable based on the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria 2001;
- Irish Red Data Book (RDB) species classed as critically endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) or Vulnerable (VU);
- Red-listed species in either Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (BOCCI) or the UK Birds of Conservation Concern (UK BOCC) lists;
- Nationally rare or nationally scarce species;
- Invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and the Wildlife & Natural Environment (WANE) Act 2011. It is an offence under Article 15 to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any species of plant and animal listed on Schedule 9 Part I and Part II of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended).
- Notable invertebrates; and
- Priority species under the local biodiversity action plan.

The data collected from the consultees is provided in Chapter 3. In compliance with the terms and conditions relating to its commercial use, the full desk study data is not provided within this report.

2.2 PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY

The walkover survey was conducted following the Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC, 2010) and the Institute of Environmental Assessment (IEA, 1995). Phase 1 Habitat Survey is a standard technique for classifying and mapping British habitats. The aim is to provide a record of habitats that are present on site. During the survey, the presence, or potential presence, of protected species was noted.

Whilst every effort is made to notify the client of any plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 present on site, it should be noted that this is not a specific survey for these species.

Data recorded during the field survey are discussed in Chapter 4.

3. DESK STUDY

The results from the desk study are provided in Sections 3.1 to 3.4.

3.1 DESIGNATED NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

3.1.1 Internationally Important Sites

There are no internationally designated sites within 2 km of the fort.

3.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

The Nationally designated sites are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Site	Grid Reference and distance from Site	Notes
Ballysudden ASSI	NV93230 34520 1.8 km to the west	The Carboniferous outcrop at Ballysudden exposes over 100m of strata in a continuous section. It is the best section of the late Visean rocks of the Armagh Group in Northern Ireland.

Table 3.1: Summary of Nationally Designated Sites

3.1.3 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

There are no non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the site boundary.

3.2 NORTHERN IRELAND PRIORITY HABITATS

Peatland Habitat: 1.6 km to the northeast of the fort.

Woodland Habitat: 360 m to the west of the fort.
360 m to the northwest of the fort.

3.3 EUROPEAN AND NATIONALLY PROTECTED SPECIES AND NORTHERN IRELAND PRIORITY SPECIES

3.3.1 Mammals

A summary of the Northern Ireland Priority Species (mammals), European Protected Species and Invasive Non-Native Species recorded on the NBN Atlas is to be found in Table 3.2.

Common name	Scientific name	Distance from site	Designations
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	200 m to the east	Bern Convention Appendix 3, GB Red List (VU), Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 6 and 7
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	450 m to the west	Europe Red List (NT), Global (NT), Habitats Directive Annex 2 and 4, Wildlife (NI) Order Part 1 Schedule 6 and 6A
Pine marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	550 m north of the site	Habitats Directive Annex 5, Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 5, 6, 6A and 7
Grey squirrel*	<i>Sciurus</i>	800 m north of the site	
Northern Ireland Priority Species are in bold			
*Invasive non-native species			

Table 3.2: Summary of mammal records within 2 km of the site

Badgers

There are two badger *Meles meles* records, one 890 m north and one 975 m west returned from CEDaR.

3.3.2 Birds

The relevant Northern Ireland Priority Species recorded within 2 km of the site are summarised in Table 3.3 below. All bird records associated with aquatic habitats have been omitted.

This included species protected under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985, UK Biodiversity Action Plan, the Convention on Migratory Species, Red data categories, the Bern Convention and the Birds Directive.

Common name	Scientific name	Designation
Lesser redpoll	<i>Acanthis cabaret</i>	BoCC5 Red
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	IUCN (VU), Birds Directive Annex 2.1 and 3
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>	IUCN (EN), BoCC5 Red
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	BoCC5 Red, Birds Directive Annex 1, Bern Convention Appendix 2, Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 1 Part 1
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	BoCC5 Red, Bern Convention Appendix 2
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Musciicapia striata</i>	ECCITES-A, IUCN (NT), BoCC5 Red, Bern Convention Appendix 2, Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 1 Part 1
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	BoCC5 Red
Tree Sparrow	<i>P. montanus</i>	IUCN (VU), BoCC5 Red, Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 1 Part 1
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	IUCN (VU), BoCC5 Red, Birds Directive Annex 2.2
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Bird-Red, BirdsDir-A2.2, NIPS, Scottish Biodiversity List, WACA-Sch1_part1
Mistle thrush	<i>T. philomelos</i>	IUCN (NT), BoCC5 Red, Birds Directive Annex 2.2
Fieldfare	<i>T. pilaris</i>	IUCN (CR), BoCC5 Red, Birds Directive Annex 2.2
Song thrush	<i>T. viscivorus</i>	IUCN (LC), BoCC5 Amber, Birds Directive 2.2
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	IUCN (LC), BoCC5 Green, Bern Convention Appendix 2, Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule A1, Schedule 1 Part 1
Northern Ireland Priority Species are in bold		

Table 3.3: Northern Ireland Priority Bird Species within 2km of the application site

3.3.3 Amphibians and Reptiles

There are no amphibia nor reptile records close to the site.

3.3.4 Invertebrates

The following invertebrates in Table 3.4 have been recorded within 2 km of the fort.

Common name	Scientific name	Designation	Distance from site
Marsh Pug	<i>Eupithecia pygmaeta</i>	Irish Red List (VU)	825 m NE from site
Bordered Pug	<i>E. succenturiata</i>	Irish Red List (VU)	825 m NE from site

Table 3.4: Northern Ireland Priority Bird Species within 2km of the application site

3.4 INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES

A list of the invasive non-native plants recorded within 500 m of the site is provided in Table 3.5 below.

Invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and the Wildlife & Natural Environment (WANE) Act 2011 are highlighted in bold.

Common name	Scientific name	Distance from site
Japanese knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>	425 m west of the site
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>	500 m north of the site

Table 3.5: Invasive Non-native Species

4. FIELD SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey are presented in the following sections. An annotated Phase 1 Habitat Survey Drawing (Drawing UWT-2023-25-01) is provided in Section 8. This drawing illustrates the location and extent of all habitat types recorded on site. Any notable features or features too small to map are detailed using target notes. Photographs taken during the field survey are provided.

The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was conducted on Wednesday 2nd August 2023 by David Smith (Ulster Wildlife Trust).

Weather conditions were recorded and are presented in Table 4.1.

Parameter	Conditions
Temperature (°C)	17
Cloud Cover (%)	100
Precipitation	Nil/Scattered showers
Wind Speed (Beaufort)	F2

Table 4.1: Weather Conditions During the Field Survey

4.2 CONSTRAINTS

There were no constraints to undertaking the survey of Tullaghoge Fort.

4.3 ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER SURVEY

During the ecological site survey the following habitats were found.

The main habitats present are:

Amenity grass (J1.2)	Scattered trees (A3.1)
Improved grass (B4)	Intact native species-poor hedge (J2.1.2)
Unimproved grassland (B2.1)	Intact native species-rich hedge with trees (J2.3.1)

Amenity grass

The route of the proposed footpath around the fort is currently amenity grass which is frequently cut (plates 1 and 2).

Within the ramparts the area is dominated by amenity grassland except for the steeper slopes of the ramparts.

The amenity grass includes within the sward, daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

Improved grassland

There is a proposed arm of the path which will run eastwards to the hedge at the bottom of the slope through sheep grazed improved grassland which includes scattered rush *Juncus* sp and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvensis* (Plates 3 and 4).

As noted in Section 1.2, additional trails are included and these will extend the trail network into adjacent sheep grazed fields to the north and west of the fort. These fields are of similar composition to the main field already included in the report.

Unimproved grassland

The banks of the ramparts are dominated by unmanaged grassland (Plate 5) with meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, black knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, dog violet *Viola canina* and wild strawberry *Fragaria vesca*.



Plate 1: Amenity grass at start point



Plate 2: Amenity grass in inner ramparts



Plate 3: Improved grassland at finish point



Plate 4: Improved grassland looking east



<p>Plate 5: Unimproved grassland on inner rampart</p>	<p>Plate 6: Mixed scattered trees</p>
 <p>Plate 7: Standing water (Target Note 1)</p>	 <p>Plate 8: Mammal Holes (Target Note 2)</p>
 <p>Plate 9: Hedges H1 and H2</p>	 <p>Plate 10: Hedges H1 and H2</p>
 <p>Plate 11: Hedge H3</p>	

Scattered Broadleaved Trees

The interior of the fort contains a range of mature trees including beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, sessile oak *Quercus petraea*, lime *Tilia* sp, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wild cherry *Prunus avium*.

The trees are generally in good condition except the ash many of which have broken branches, crevices and holes.

Intact Native Species-rich Hedge with Trees

Hedge H1: The inner hedge on the outer bank of the rampart is rich in woody species dominated by blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* with hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, elm *Ulmus* sp. dog rose *Rosa canina*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*. There are several trees with ash, sessile oak and wild cherry being the most frequent.

The ground flora includes nettles *Urtica dioica*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvestris* and herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*.

The hedge is 1.8 to 2.4 m high and thick and unmanaged.

Intact Native Species-poor Hedge

Hedge H2: The outer boundary of the fort is a frequently trimmed hedge dominated by hawthorn with guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus*, hazel, bramble and Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa*. The ground flora includes nettles, cleavers, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Cuckoo-pint *Arum maculatum* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*.

It is 2 m high and between 1.5 m to 1 m wide. It is getting thin at the base due to the frequent trimming at the same height. The hedge is fenced on the field side.

Defunct Native Species-poor Hedge

Hedge H3: The boundary of the field is an old derelict hedge with blackthorn, holly, elder, hawthorn and bramble. There are several ash and wild cherry trees. There is no ground flora as sheep graze to the base.

The two hedges which run in a north south direction to the west of the fort are in a similar condition to the above hedge but with long sections of intact hedge with numerous gaps where the sheep have walked through the hedge line in the past.

Target Notes

Following the site survey various features have been plotted as Target Notes and described in Table 4.2 below.

Target Notes	Notes
1	Flooded area (temporary standing water)
2	Mammal holes - rabbit

Table 4.2: Target Notes

4.4 SPECIES

4.4.1 Bats

There were several ivy-clad trees which are suitable to support roosting bats in the summer. Some of the trees also have crevices, holes and damage which could be used as roost sites.

4.4.2 Other Mammals

There were a couple of semi-collapsed entrance holes on the ramparts (Target Note TN2) but these were not large enough to be badgers. The presence of rabbits on site suggests these holes were part of an old warren.

4.4.3 Birds

Birds recorded during the surveys include robin *Erithacus rubecula*, blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, hedge sparrow *Prunella modularis* and woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*.

5. POTENTIAL IMPACTS FROM THE WORKS

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSALS

The works will involve the installation of:

- A Grass path between Hedges H1 and H2
- Removal of 2 m of species-poor hedge at Point A
- Installation of grass path within the improved grassland field
- Installation of additional grass paths to the southwest and northwest of the fort through improved grassland fields
- Removal of short sections of hedge to facilitate the additional paths.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

As the works are very low key, no detrimental impacts are anticipated during the construction phase.

5.2.1 Designated Nature Conservation Sites

The path works will not have a direct impact upon any local, national or internationally designated sites.

5.2.2 Habitats

The provision of a grass path will only directly impact the existing amenity grass and improved grassland habitats. These habitats are of only low ecological value and their modification would not be a significant detrimental impact.

A small section of species poor hedge will need to be removed to facilitate the construction of the original planned trail extension, but this will not be a significant detrimental impact.

Additional sections of hedge may have to be removed to facilitate the installation of the additional trails to the southwest and northwest of the fort but again this will not be a significant detrimental impact.

5.2.3 Species

Bats: There are several mature and semi-mature ivy clad trees which would be suitable to support a bat roost.

Whilst there will not be a direct impact on any trees there is a risk of disturbance from both the construction works and from public usage.

Badgers: No evidence of badgers (setts, tracks, hairs or latrines) was recorded from the site or within a 25 m buffer zone.

Nesting Birds: The hedges and trees are suitable to support nesting birds and during construction there is the potential to disturb nesting birds which may cause them to abandon their nests.

There is a small section of hedge (2 m) to be removed and there is a small risk of damage to any nests present.

Additional sections of hedge may have to be removed to facilitate the installation of the additional trails to the southwest and northwest of the fort and again nesting birds may be impacted.

5.2.4 Invasive Non-native Species (INNS)

No animals or plants listed on Schedule 9 Part I and Part II of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended) on 17th August 2011 as part of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 were found during the field survey. INNS are not a significant issue.

5.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS DURING OPERATIONAL PHASE

There are no additional impacts anticipated on the local wildlife.

6. PROPOSED ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION DURING CONSTRUCTION

6.1 POTENTIAL IMPACTS UPON HABITATS AND SPECIES

At present the main potential impact upon the wildlife interests of the site would be:

- Harm/disturbance to nesting birds, nestlings, eggs and nests
- Harm/disturbance to roosting bats
- Damage to trees including root systems

It should be reiterated the risk to wildlife is very small and although the measures below seem onerous they should be undertaken with a “light touch” and be proportional to the risks.

6.2 PRE-START ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS

A general ecological walkover survey of the site should be undertaken prior to works commencing and this will include a check for any badger setts which may have appeared.

6.3 GENERAL MITIGATION PROPOSALS

This will include the following:

- A simple Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) will be produced with the following framework:
 - Chapter 1 Introduction
 - Chapter 2 Description of the Scheme
 - Chapter 3 General Construction Information
 - Chapter 4 Environmental Management Framework, (including roles and responsibilities, checking, monitoring, auditing and corrective action)
 - Chapter 5 Communication and Training
 - Chapter 6 Incident/Emergency Response including an Ecological Emergency Plan and contact details for relevant organisations.
 - Chapter 7 Biodiversity Protection and Mitigation Plans (For individual species and sensitive habitats)
 - Chapter 8 Environmental Management Plans (Topics include, noise and vibration, water, soils, materials and waste management plans, people and communities).
 - Chapter 9 Ecological Mitigation of Construction Activities
- To manage the ecological issues an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) will be appointed. This will need to only be a part time/visiting role only.
- Any vegetation clearance which may be required should be undertaken outside of the peak nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August).
- Excavated material which contain non-native species will be removed to agreed locations within the site or to off-site.
- Works within the vicinity of trees with the potential to support bat roosts should be undertaken in April and/or the period between mid-September and mid -November to avoid the main maternity and hibernation periods.

6.4 PRE-START PHASE

During the tender process joint site visits between the tenderers, client and the proposed ECoW is to be undertaken to ensure:

Tender Stage

- The proposed tenderers are aware of the ecological constraints of the site.
- The proposed routes of the paths are clearly understood by the contractors and any access routes, storage areas/site compound locations can be discussed.

Pre-start Stage

Once the contractor has been selected the following should be undertaken:

- The proposed work corridors should be surveyed by the ECoW prior to works starting to ensure there have been no changes to the ecological interests. This survey should be undertaken at least one week prior to works starting.
- The root protection area of all retained mature trees will be clearly demarcated.
- The ECoW should review the proposed method statement from the contractor to ensure it does not compromise the ecological interests of the sites.

6.5 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Once works are due to start the ECoW shall:

- Produce and delivery of an ecological induction to all site operatives and sub-contractors.
- Ensure all sensitive ecological features are clearly demarcated prior to the start of works.

During the construction phase the ECoW will:

- Supervise works in sensitive areas or, at sensitive times.
- Provide information for the public regarding the works that are being undertaken and the protection / mitigation measures that are being implemented. The ECoW may also be required to directly engage with the public during the works.
- Monitor and audit the ecological protection measures during the construction.
- Attend progress meetings with client/contractor as appropriate.
- Undertake toolbox talks as required to cover specific issues/changes to works etc.
- Be responsible for overseeing the construction of any mitigation features required as part of the project, this can include habitat restoration / construction, the installation of specific structures for species mitigation, and construction of enhancements for example, ponds and hibernacula.

On completion of the works the ECoW shall:

- Produce a completion Report.
- Undertake any post completion monitoring required.

6.5.1 Prevention of Disturbance/Harm to Nesting Birds

All vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the nesting season generally regarded to be 1st March to 31st August.

Any vegetation clearance between the above dates should be subject to a pre-start nesting survey (within 48 hours) prior to works commencing. If a nesting bird is found, a suitable exclusion zone will be set up.

6.5.2 Prevention of Disturbance/Harm to Roosting Bats

The preference is for works should be carried out between September and November or April.

No new trails are being constructed, new trails will be demarcated by mowing a grass corridor and existing trails will continue to be maintained by mowing. Three small sections of hedgerow will be removed to facilitate access, vegetation will be removed to ground level and additional soil will be added and sown with grass seed i.e there will be no disturbance of the soil surface.

6.5.3 Prevention of Disturbance/Harm to Badgers

The route of the trails should be surveyed for badgers prior to construction and the proposed hedge crossing points should be located at least 25 m from any badger setts which may be present.

7. PROPOSED ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

Although the detrimental impacts upon the habitats are expected to be minimal there are opportunities for a range of ecological enhancements to be undertaken as part of the trail construction.

Hedge planting

A native species rich hedge should be planted on each boundary between Points C and D.

Creation of deadwood piles

The creation of piles of dead wood will provide sources of rotting wood ideal for woodboring insects and fungi.

Wildflower seed sowing

As part of the re-instatement work the margins of the trails will need to be sown with a suitable wildflower and grass mix.

In the open areas a suitable meadow mix should be sown.

Where the trail circumvents the fort the wildflower mix should be suited to shade and semi-shade conditions.

In areas away from the immediate trail margins any areas of bare soil should be sown with a suitable annual wildflower mix as this will be an abundant nectar and pollen for insects as well as providing a visual impact.

Install bird and bat boxes

There is scope to provide both bird and bat boxes on the mature trees around the fort.

8. DRAWINGS

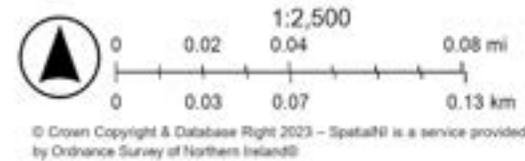
Drawing UWT-2023-25-01 Phase I Habitat Survey

Drawing Tullaghoge Revised Existing and Potential Trails V2





- Tullaghoge potential trail V2
- Tullaghoge existing trail



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ECOLOGICAL CLERK OF WORKS

A1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The main role of the ECoW is to ensure the works are undertaken in compliance with legislation, planning conditions and good practice by Client and Contractor.

The ECoW will provide guidance on any required DEARA-NI licence methodology & mitigation if necessary.

The ECoW will also ensure any mitigation proposed by the contractor is appropriate to the issue.

This will require the ECoW to undertake:

- Pre-construction checks with regards to targeted protected habitats and species.
- Regular checks regarding the works progress and feed back to contractor, project team and Client
- Complete relevant documentation on an ongoing basis.
- Input into meetings.
- Work with the project team to provide solutions to any issues that arise during construction.
- Oversee construction workers in sensitive areas.
- Implement and maintain any ecological exclusion zones.
- Provide information for the public regarding the works that are being undertaken and the protection / mitigation measures that are being implemented. The ECoW may also be required to directly engage with the public during the works.
- Manage and undertake any post-construction monitoring required.

A1.2 ECoW – Required Skills and Experience

The skills and experience required include:

- Qualified, chartered and experienced ecologist – CIEEM to at least associate level
- Minimum 1 year of relevant ECoW experience.
- Sound ecological knowledge of relevant habitats and species to the project.
- Good knowledge of and experience in applying NI nature conservation legislation and best practice.
- Independent professional and an ability to communicate.
- The ability to produce and deliver concise and relevant toolbox talks to contractors.
- Possess an understanding of the engineering / construction requirements and methodology of a scheme.
- The confidence and experience to direct contractors in their operations when required.
- Flexibility to changes in ways of working, adapting method and approach accordingly.
- Ongoing input into design and methodology as the scheme progresses.
- Ability to be practical and come up with solutions and advice where necessary.

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Biodiversity Strategy Proposals – Northern Ireland DoE Environment and Heritage Service.
- Habitats Online website
- Planning NI website – Sites of Local Conservation Interest
- http://www.daera.gov.uk/niea/protected_areas_
- http://www.daera.gov.uk/niea/ni_priority_habitats_sep_11.pdf
- http://www.daera.gov.uk/niea/northern_ireland_priority_species_list.pdf
- Schedules within The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
- Schedule 2 – The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)
- http://www.planningni.gov.uk/indx/policy/dev_plans/devplans_az.htm
- Biological records – <http://www.nmni.com/CEDaR/IRF>



Archaeological Baseline Survey

Project:

Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails

Planning Reference:

N/A

Author

Ross Bailey

Date

25th October 2023

Version

1

	Quality Management System		Reference:	7.03C
	DESKTOP REPORT		Issue:	08
	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BASELINE SURVEY AND WRITTEN SCHEME		Date:	23/02/2021
	OF INVESTIGATION		Authorised:	QMS Manager

Site Name:	Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails
Project Type:	Archaeological Baseline Survey
Planning Reference:	N/A
Commissioned by:	Outdoor NI
Author:	Ross Bailey
NAC reference:	23053

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES; HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DIVISION (DFC; HED) TEAMS WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS PROJECT:

Historic Monuments Planning Response Team HEDPlanning.General@communities-ni.gov.uk

Historic Monuments Licensing Team ExcavationsandReports@communities-ni.gov.uk

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Quality Assurance

Only NAC personnel can make alternations to this report, in order to adhere to our quality assurance guidance all revisions/alternation must be approved by a senior member of staff and will be recorded on this page:

Rev	Date	Details	Reason	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Doc No.
1	13.10.2023	Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails, County Antrim, Archaeological Baseline Assessment	To accompany planning application	Ross Bailey	Jonathan Barkley	Jonathan Barkley	DRAFT
2	23.10.2023	Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails, County Antrim, Archaeological Baseline Assessment	Amended with extra detail from client.	Ross Bailey	Jonathan Barkley	Jonathan Barkley	251023b

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Site Name:	Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails		
County:	Tyrone		
Planning Reference:	N/A		
Planning Condition Nos:	N/A		
ITM:	682327E, 874348N		
Irish Grid Ref:	Eastings:	282379	Northings: 374360
Records Reviewed	Yes	Comments	
A: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND			
i	NI Site & Monuments Record (NISMR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
ii	Industrial Heritage Record (IHR)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
iii	Register of Historic Parks, Gardens & Demesnes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
iv	Defence Heritage Record	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
v	Maritime Heritage Record	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Vi	Listed Buildings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
vii	Battle Sites	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
B: STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS – ARE ANY PRESENT:			
i	State Care Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
ii	Scheduled Monument Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
C: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR RELEVANT DESIGNATIONS & ZONINGS			
i	Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest (ASSI)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
ii	Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
D: REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
E: REVIEW OF CARTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
F: REVIEW OF AVAILABLE HISTORIC & MODERN AERIAL PHOTOS		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
G: FINDSPOT RECORDS AT ULSTER MUSEUM		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
H: HISTORIC RECORDS HELD AT PRONI		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
I: BIBLIOGRAPHIC REVIEW		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Walkover Survey undertaken & results included?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Assessment of Archaeological Potential?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Assessment of Archaeological Impacts?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Archaeological Mitigation Strategy required?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Summary of Recommended Mitigation Strategy:			
[to be confirmed when final details of proposals are confirmed]			
Additional Works Required:		-	

1 INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This Archaeological Baseline Survey was prepared in October of 2023 by Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, having been commissioned by Outdoor NI Ltd to give a baseline indication of expected archaeological impacts, and if/where required derive a recommended scheme of investigation/mitigation for these suitable to address either a BH3 evaluation request, or BH4 conditions, whichever may arise during the planning application.
- 1.2 All investigation/mitigation measures detailed in this report must be approved by the Department of Communities, Historic Environment Division (DfC: HED) and Mid and East Ulster Council for the specific purpose of BH3 evaluation or BH4 mitigation works, as may be requested by HED, and then executed after an archaeological excavation licence has been issued by HED.

AUTHOR

- 1.3 Ross Bailey is a senior desktop researcher, lithic specialist, archaeological surveyor, GIS technician, and site director with NAC Ltd. He has worked on hundreds of Archaeological Desktop Reports that span the public and private sector from large scale infrastructure to small scale single plot developments, undertaken dozens of site and building surveys, and been involved with numerous large and small scale excavations as both a site director and excavator. Ross is a Member of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland (MIAI).

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- 1.4 The aims of the assessment are to:
- i. Identify the nature and extent of any archaeological remains which may exist within the boundaries of the proposed development, via desk-based assessment and field visit, and any potential impacts to them from the proposed development.
 - ii. Develop a suitable scheme of physical testing and detection to allow accurate evaluation of, and mitigate potential impacts upon, any archaeological remains which may survive below the surface.
- 1.5 The objectives of this report are to establish the archaeological potential of the proposed development site through desktop assessment and recommend schemes of mitigation of identified impacts, which will:
- a. Reduce the risk of discovery of unexpected remains at the time of the client undertaking the proposed works;
 - b. Mitigate the impact of the proposed works by allowing for detailed excavation and recording or preservation in situ, as deemed appropriate by the client and HED, for any archaeological remains arising within the investigation site.

PREVIOUS STUDIES RELATING TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

- 1.6 A wide array of previous studies, from historical publications through geophysical survey, to small-scale excavation have addressed the proposed development site in the past. Where appropriate, these will be referenced in the current report.

2 STANDARDS & GUIDANCE

- 2.1 This assessment follows the guidelines of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6) Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage with particular reference to Built Heritage Sections 1 - 6¹ which set out policies for the protection and conservation of archaeological remains and features of the built heritage.

- 2.2 Department for Communities (DfC): Historic Environment Division (HED) are responsible for protecting, conserving and promoting the historic built environment. They keep an archive of historic monuments, buildings, twentieth century military structures, maritime and industrial sites, parks and gardens.

- 2.3 The legislative basis for the protection of the built environment in Northern Ireland is set out within the following:

- Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995;
- The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 and;
- The Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 Part A (Chapter 1) which sets out legislative provision for the protection of listed buildings, conservation areas and areas of special architectural or historic interest.

- 2.4 All archaeological works on this project have been undertaken in line with the following guidance:

- DfC: HED, Development and Archaeology, Guidance on Archaeological Works in the Planning Process (2019)
- DfC: HED, Guidance on Setting and the Historic Environment (2018);
- the Institute for Archaeologists of Ireland (IAI) Code of Conduct for Archaeological Assessment (IAI 2006);
- DfC: HED (formally NIEA) Excavation Standards Manual;
- Department of Environment (DOE), Historic Environment Division, Development and Archaeology (2004); and
- The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2, Cultural Heritage Assessment (Highways England, 2019).

- 2.5 These guidelines have informed the desktop assessment of the archaeological background of the site. Where specific scoping responses and guidance may be absent, professional judgement and an understanding of the requirements of HED have informed specific details of the assessment such as the extent of the assessment area and structure of this report.

¹ Planning Policy Statement 6 (Northern Ireland, 1999): Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/pps06.htm

- 2.6 All archaeological fieldwork arising from this report will be carried out in accordance with (where appropriate):
- (CIfA, 2020c) *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading, October 2020.
 - (CIfA, 2020d) *Standard and guidance for Archaeological Excavation*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading, October 2020.
 - (CIfA, 2020e) *Standard and guidance for Archaeological Field evaluation*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading, October 2020.
 - (CIfA, 2020f) *Standard and guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading, October 2020.
 - (CIfA, 2021) *Code of Conduct*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, October 2021.
 - Understanding Historic buildings – a guide to good practice prepared by English Heritage (2016)
 - Environmental Good Practice Guide for Archaeological Excavations, Version 4 (NIEA 2012)
 - DEM156/15 Management of Archaeological Investigations on Major Road Improvement Schemes (DEM, 2015)

PLANNING POLICY

- 2.7 In addition to PPS6, the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) also provides planning policy which is a material consideration in the determination of planning application in Northern Ireland.
- 2.8 Regional Development Strategy 2035 sets out guidance in relation to conservation, protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment (RG11).

STUDY AREAS

- 2.9 This baseline assessment is intended to highlight potential archaeological issues and inform potential HED requests for BH3 evaluations, or BH4 mitigation imposed during the planning process, or to allow easy expansion into a full archaeological impact assessment should such be requested during planning consultation. To this end, a study area of 1000m radius has been used for portions of the study pertaining to the surrounding NI Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR) and for potential settings impacts, and a smaller 500m study area for sites of later heritage (Industrial Heritage and Listed Buildings). These radii fit with standard acceptable study areas for assessments within urban core areas, evaluations and programmes of work, and are also sufficient for baseline studies of the wider archaeological context within urban areas.

RESOURCES

- 2.10 An examination of desktop resources was undertaken followed by a walk over survey of the area. These include:
- DfC: HED Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record (NISMR);
 - Sites and Monuments 'SM7' files for sites within or bordering the proposed site or likely to be impacted on by the proposals;
 - DfC: HED databases including industrial heritage, historic gardens, battle sites, defence heritage, excavations, and listed buildings;
 - Previous archaeological excavations within or adjacent to the site identified by searching the excavations.ie database;
 - Relevant Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the period 1830-1955;
 - Relevant online aerial photograph collections;
 - Ulster Museum finds databases;
 - Ordnance Survey Memoirs;
 - Drift and solid geology maps.

3 LOCATION AND PHYSICAL SETTING

LOCATION

- 3.1 The proposed development site is located in the fields surrounding the State Care monument of Tullaghoge Fort, (282515E, 374299N) (Figure 1, 2). The site lies a short distance to the east/southeast of the Killymoon River, lying to the east of the Tullywiggan Road, approximately 500m north of the historic core of Tullaghoge. The site lies in the townland of Ballymully Glebe (suggested origin perhaps *Ir. Baile Mullaigh 'farmstead of the summit'* (McKay, 2009)), in the parish of Desertcreat, and the barony of Dungannon Upper. The Placenames NI information also notes that "the mullach 'summit' referred to in the name must be the summit of the hill on which stands Tullaghoge Fort. The hill itself rises to over 300 feet. Tullaghoge Fort is a ringfort and was the royal abode of the O'Neill's until the fourteenth century and continued to be their inauguration site until the late 16th century" (*ibid*).

PHYSICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2 The proposed site lies on bedrock of the Rockdale Limestone Formation overlaid with glacial till. The site lies between the 70m and 100m OD contours which define the hill upon which Tullaghoge Fort sits, with the fort itself lying in and around the 100m OD contour.

DEVELOPMENT SITE AT PRESENT

- 3.3 The site was visited on 11th of October in fine weather (Plates 1-5). Access was made from the car park which lies c. 350m west-southwest of the monument. From the car park a tarmac path was followed northwards. A brief inspection of the 'ground echo of Great Hall' portion of the proposed development, looking both east from this path and by following an existing small path that led parallel southwards to

an information sign before terminating at a wire fence. This was otherwise not part of the proposed path route. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted and there was no surface sign of the corn drying kiln plotted nearby in the NISMR.

- 3.4 The southern half of the proposed paths was walked first, starting from the point closest to the carpark. The proposed path commences from here and would pass through the existing post and wire fence (there are small trees and shrubs intermittently here). The proposed route then heads approximately southeast through a large pasture field (grass was short with rushy areas), used for sheep grazing at the time of the visit. The field in the relevant area generally rose from west to east towards the monument and fell north to south towards a field boundary which has variable amounts of mature trees and hedge. The proposed tracks initially follow the contour of the lower slope then cut upslope northeast towards the first proposed seating point, then back south towards the next seating point, and then upslope to a fork where the track would split in two shortly before passing through the eastern boundary of the field and into the scheduled area around the monument. The boundary at the point where the two tracks would pass through consisted from north to south of an outer post and wire fence (barbed top), an earthen bank, hawthorns planted along its upslope face and a shallow ditch beyond. Intermittent large stones were noted on the outer edge of the ditch. A large stump of a mature tree exists close to where the northern if the two tracks would pass through. The northern spur of this proposed path heads north-east though rushy pasture which slopes down from east to west and terminates near a post and wire fence close to the monument.
- 3.5 The route of the southern of the pair of proposed tracks instead heads southeast briefly downslope then eastwards again, roughly following the contour of the lower slope. There were no obvious surface remains of the corn drying kiln placed here in the NISMR. A large boulder lay nearby. The proposed track then splits again to the southeast of the fort. One track weaves to the north then south then north again. Nothing was observed at the location of the proposed seating in this area. The proposed track then approaches the east side of the monument before reaching and perhaps crossing an existing post and wire fence before terminating. The other branch of the track has a loop detour to the extreme southeast corner lower slope of the field. The rest of the track heads along the slope (all through slightly rushy short-cropped pasture) past another large boulder to reach a post and wire fence. Close to where it would cross the fence there are some concrete/ 20th century brick/iron remains of some agricultural structure. This is identical on both sides of the fence. Thereafter the proposed path passes upslope to the northwest where views open up to the north where the field falls away and other hills rise beyond it. The final two proposed seat areas occupy the slopes here to the north of the fort. Nothing was observed on the pasture slope in this area. Finally, the path reaches the western boundary of the field. This consists of an area of brambles on the east side then a low bank with thorn trees on its face and a post and wire fence on the western side. The proposed path would then pass through an area of grass to reach an existing path to the west.

- 3.6 No previously unknown areas of archaeological potential were observed, only the fort itself, and the two boulders in the eastern portion of the site which are potential, though currently unprovable, candidates for the core or location of the inaugural chair of the O'Neills.

4 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposed development (Figure 3) consists of approximately 1.3km of mown walking trail looping through the fields surrounding Tullaghoge Fort, expanding the available pathways for visitors. It has been indicated that these paths will be non-invasive, and simply consist of trails of cutgrass through longer rewilded meadowland. All indicated signage/interpretation points are indicated as being fixed to existing fenceposts, seating, or trees, to avoid the need for invasive works.
- 4.2 A new lectern indicated on the edge of the fort itself, along with seating at various points around the existing and proposed trails and great Hall area. All seating is indicated as set on the surface of the ground to avoid the need for invasive works. A 'light touch ground echo' of the 'Great Hall' is proposed at the western end of the site, set into the area previously subjected to archaeological investigations to create an anchor point for a corresponding Augmented Reality. This is indicated as minimal physical works required, with raised beds set onto the site of the hall and replicated to differentiate it from the surrounding grasses.
- 4.3 Wooden sculptures are indicated as set on or fixed to existing trees or wooden post fencing, and carved end of life trees in-situ are raised as another proposed source for non-invasive woodcarvings.
- 4.4 In total the proposals consist of two additional lecterns, two stone seats, 4 timber log seats, 5 wooden sculptures, 8 viewfinders/interpretations points, and 2 areas of landscaping for the Great Hall. As detailed in the Fort Access and Interpretation Study, the sections of trail break down as follows:

Section	Length (m)	Trail type	Trail corridor description	Rationale	Works required	Infrastructure required
1	656	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail following the 90m contour around the fort from the north to the west via the eastern side of the hill. Minimal gradients. No drainage issues.	To provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site, feature of built heritage interest and to provide unobstructed 360° views of the surrounding countryside.	Make 2x 2m wide opening in existing fencing and species poor defunct hedge running 1) north and 2) south from turning circle. Make 2m wide opening in fence line running east on eastern side of fort. Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence posts at openings. Bench x2 to be placed on top of ground (no in ground works). No gates required. No drainage requirements.
2	209	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail travelling east from the fort to the site of the Great Hall and exit to the car park. It travels from the 90m	To provide access to the site of the 'Great Hall' directly from the fort, to provide the last trail section to achieve a looped	Make a 2m wide opening in fence line separating access trail to Great Hall to field parcel 19B. Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence post at opening. Bench x2 to be placed on top of ground (no in

			contour to the 70m contour, resulting in a 23m drop in elevation over 200m. No drainage issues.	walk and to provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site.	programme for grass mowing required.	ground works). No gates required. No drainage requirements.
3	408	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail linking fort to return leg of trail. Minimal gradients. No drainage issues.	To provide a linkage for those who wish to complete a circular loop on site, by travelling to the fort and back again, i.e those who do not wish to travel down or across the slope the east of the fort.	Make 2x 2m wide opening in fence line separating field parcels 19B and 20, and field parcel 20 and the fort itself. Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence posts at openings. No gates required. No drainage requirements.
4	105	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail linking fort to Section 1 and on to Section 5. Steep gradients requiring several switch backs.	To provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site and for those who wish to visit the fort and then on to the three built heritage features on the eastern slope of the fort.	Make 2x 2m wide opening in fence line separating field parcels 19D and 20, and field parcel 20 and the fort itself (both on northeastern side of fort). Leave openings flat and sow grass seed if required. Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	Waymarker disk to be placed on existing fence posts at openings. Bench x1 to be placed on top of ground (no in ground works). No gates required. No drainage requirements.
5	223	1.5m wide mown grass path	Trail providing access from Section 1 to Section 5. Steep gradients requiring several switch backs.	To provide access to previously inaccessible areas on site and for those who wish to visit the third built heritage feature on the eastern slope of the fort.	Annual maintenance programme for grass mowing required.	None

Table 1: Summary Detail of Trail Types and Required Works.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE SITE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The following history is not intended to be an in-depth critical analysis, but instead should be read as a short contextual background to the archaeological character of the proposed development site.
- 5.2 At the opening of Irish history in the 5th century, the Early Medieval era, the area of the proposed

development site lay within the territory of a group of tribes known as the Airghialla or 'hostage givers'. The development location seems to have been within the territory of the Ui Thuirtre tribe. The area later fell under the power of the Cenel Eoghan branch of the Ui Neill tribe. The Ui Neill were descendants of the legendary 'Niall of the Nine Hostages' (his hostages may have been kings of the nine petty kingdoms of the Airghialla). The Ui Neill's original Ulster territories were in the Donegal area. The Cenel Eoghan were descendants of a son of Niall called Eoghan and were located initially in the Inishowen (from Inis Eoghain or 'land of Owen') area of Donegal, with an early capital or royal site there at Ailech or Grianan Fort.

- 5.3 This Sept eventually expanded eastwards across what is now County Tyrone (from Tir Eoghan or 'Land of Eoghan'). The crowning of a Cenel Eoghan king at Tullaghoge near Cookstown in 937 AD shows that they had expanded across the Sperrins at this stage. They seem to have driven out the existing Airghialla tribe, the Ui Thuirtre during the 11th and 12th centuries. The 11th century 'Book of Rights' portrays the Tullaghoge branch of the Cenel Eoghan as the most important. This territory of the Cenel Eoghan was reflected in the rural deanery of Tullaghoge, which comprised that part of the Diocese of Armagh that lay in Tyrone and Londonderry. This territory included all three baronies of Dungannon and part of the neighbouring Loughinsholin and East Omagh baronies.
- 5.4 The status of this division of Tyrone as the king-producing territory of the Cenel Eoghan was complete by 1101AD when Grianan Fort, the original capital, was destroyed. Tullaghoge thereafter became the capital and royal inauguration site of the Cenel Eoghan.
- 5.5 The ruined church of Derryloran probably occupies the site of a pre-Norman church, 'Domnach Libuik' which was associated with St Luran, from whom the name Derryloran 'oak wood of Luran' was derived. The church is associated in later tradition with the events after the battle of Moira in 637, but the earliest certain record of a church here is in a calendar of saints, written about 800, which recorded that St Luran's festival was on the 29 October. This church, together with other churches in the area, was plundered by Ruaidri MacDunn Shleibhe, King of Ulster, in 1195. Derryloran was later listed as a parish church in the papal taxation of 1306 and from the late 14th century to the mid-16th century the names of many of its rectors and vicars are known, the most commonly recorded name being O'Connellan. The church that stands today is probably that recorded as 'almost finished' in the 1622 survey. This building contained re-used Medieval stone in its structure. Worship ceased in the church in 1822 and the remains of the building are now within state care.
- 5.6 In the later 12th century, after an invasion by the Connaught-based High King Rory O'Connor, the territory of Tullaghoge was split into northern and southern divisions at Slieve Gallion (given to the McLoughlin and O'Neill clans respectively). However, later in the 12th century, the territory was again unified under an O'Neill chief. The territory of Tullaghoge was the royal division of the Cenel Eoghan for the rest of the Medieval period, ruling over the other segments (barony-sized petty chiefdoms) of the Cenel Eoghain. The power centre of the O'Neills in the Medieval period shifted a short distance from Tullaghoge to Dungannon, where a royal castle, house and friary were located. There is little point in

discussing the political details of the area under the O'Neills, as this is not susceptible to archaeological analysis.

- 5.7 The inauguration stone of the O'Neills, the '*Leac na Ri*' or 'king's stone' was located at Tullaghoge. Tradition notes that this stone was blessed by St Patrick and by the 16th century it had been incorporated into a ceremonial chair. In 1602, when Mountjoy defeated the O'Neills, it was recorded that he broke up this stone chair to mark his victory. After that long war with Elizabeth I of England, political intrigues and the flight of the Irish chiefs overseas at the start of the 17th century, the area was earmarked for plantation by 'loyal British Protestant subjects'. At this time, before the plantation and despite the devastating war, there were still estimated to be c. 5000 adult males in the County of Tyrone. Various parts of Tyrone were granted to different people under differing terms. The precinct of Dungannon was granted to servitors (army veterans) and natives (Gaelic Irish). However, the northern part of Dungannon formed the precinct of Mountjoy, which was given over to Scottish undertakers. The land of Tullaghoge was within the precinct of Mountjoy. Approximately 1000 acres of this were granted to a Robert Lindsey, the son of Sir Thomas Lindesay, the Searcher General of Leith, in 1604. Pynnar's survey of 1619 states that at this period the land belonged to Mrs Lindsey, wife of the late Robert Lindsey. After a period of living at Tullaghoge village, the Lindsey's built Loughry House and made it their family home. It is well recorded that Dean Swift was a frequent visitor of the Lindsey's and is said to have written part of Gulliver's Travels at Loughry. The family remained proprietors of the estate until the late 19th century when Loughry House became the Ulster Dairy School.
- 5.8 Around the time of plantation, Allan Cook gained lease for year renewable under the see of Armagh, for land adjoining Tullaghoge, upon which the old town of Cookstown was built in 1609. A patent for markets was granted to Cook on the 3rd of August 1628, however during the course of the Rebellion in 1641 the town was completely destroyed by Royalist troops. Although its markets and fairs were resumed when peace was restored the village itself was deserted for more than a century. By the time of the Restoration in 1660, Cook's interest in the lands surrounding the old town was taken over by the Stewarts of Killymoon, themselves grantees in the plantation of 1609. William Stewart was interested in town planning and was much impressed by the broad thoroughfares being constructed in Dublin and was eager to build a town on a similarly grandiose scale.
- 5.9 Little is known about the specific townlands of Loughry and Rockhead, but much is known about the ownership of the land in the general area. Bodley's plantation maps, dated 1609 (T/1652/11 and 12), highlight the complexity of Mountjoy precinct. Hill notes that Mountjoy was included in 1609 as part of Dungannon, but Tullaghoge was not surveyed. The name Mountjoy stopped being used after 1620 and the land was included in Dungannon precinct. The modern townlands were not recorded on Bodley's maps. The Civil Survey of 1654 (T/371/F) records that a James Stewart, son of William and a Scottish Protestant, was proprietor of much of the townlands in Derryloran. Petty's Downe Survey of 1654-6 (T/2313/1/22) notes that much of the parish of Derryloran and surrounding lands were bishop's lands and it also notes 'Killmoone' as unforfeited. Both of these surveys name the individual townlands in the parish, but neither Loughry or Rockhead were recorded. This would suggest that the modern townland

names greatly differ from those in the 17th century. The Book of Survey and Distribution of 1661 (T/370/C) does not shed further light on the situation.

CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

- 5.10 A search was made at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland for all pre-OS maps of the area. The following maps were consulted but indicated little of use. A map of Ireland of 1567 by Goghe (MPF1.68) merely labelled the area as 'O'Nele', with Lough Neagh and Dungannon the closest reference points marked. A 1580 map of northeast Ulster with notes by Burghley (MPF1.90) showed the area of Tullaghoge west of Lough Neagh but did not mark it. A 1600 map of Lough Neagh and east Tyrone (T/1493/44) did not cover the area of the proposed development.
- 5.11 Boazio's 1602 map of Ulster (T/1669/3) showed Dungannon and Mountjoy fort. The general area was marked as 'Sr Arthur O'Neals Countrey'. There was also another fort marked to the north of Dungannon.
- 5.12 Barthelet's map of Dungannon Castle and Tullaghoge of 1602 (T/1244/11) (Figure 4) gives an oblique representation of these sites. This included a detailed drawing of the inaugural chair at Tullaghoge, which is thought to have been drawn before the chair was destroyed by Mountjoy. The chair appears to consist of a roughly square boulder, with three flat slabs of stone butted against it forming the sides and back, all sitting on what is illustrated as either a stone outcropping, or bare earth. Similarly, on the illustration of Tullaghoge Fort itself, the fort is depicted at the crest of a hill, with a large hall within, a smaller building adjacent to the larger, and two paths leading out of the fort. One is marked leading eastwards a short distance to the stone chair on the eastern slope, and one leading westwards and then southwards and away from the site. The Killymoon River is clearly marked to the northwest, with a small stone-built church sitting directly to the east of the hill of Tullaghoge and directly south of the river. Given the oblique birds-eye viewpoint, it is questionable how accurately this illustration can be taken, but it remains useful as a general indication of respective location and positioning of the early 17th century elements of the site.
- 5.13 The site was also depicted on an array of Barthelet's other maps, albeit in less detail:
- Barthelet's 1602 map of forts in the Lough Neagh area (T/1244/17) showed only Dungannon and 'Clanno', but did not extend quite as far west as Tullaghoge.
 - Barthelet's map of Ulster, dated 1602 (T/2543/1), showed the locations of Dungannon, Mountjoy fort and Tullaghoge, the latter of which was depicted as a large mound with a chair on top.
 - Barthelet's campaign map of southeast Ulster marks the hill of Tullogh-oge, although given the scale of the map, in corresponding less detail than his detailed illustration. It does however contain the annotation 'Tullogh-Oge on this hill were 4 stones in the manner of a chaire, wherein the Oneale this manie yeres have been made [...] The same now taken away by his Lege.'
- 5.14 All available later maps of the area simply marked the spot without giving any appreciable additional detail to add to interpretations, for example Norden's map of Ulster of 1610 (T/1493) was simply marked

'Tulogh Og' with a small hill. Bodley's map of the Barony of Dungannon of 1609 (T/1652/ 11 & 12) included the precinct of Mountjoy. However, Tullaghoge was not included in this survey.

- 5.15 The next useful detailed mapping of the site which was available was the 1st edition OS 6 inch map (Tyrone Sheet 38, 1833) (Figure 5) showed Tullaghoge Fort as a circular banked enclosure with internal ditch and tree planting in the centre, with a well-marked just outside the eastern limit. The fort at this period sat in a rectangular field which was bounded by farm lanes on the northern, southern, and western sides. The proposed walking trails overlie this field, and cross the northern and western lanes into adjacent fields. The southeastern loop of the trail also overlies a small building and yard, now obviously no longer extant.
- 5.16 The 2nd edition OS 6 inch map (Tyrone Sheet 38, 1854) was not available for the area; online coverage was absent for this mapsheet. The Griffiths Valuation maps, however, are based upon 2nd edition mapping, and so these were consulted. By the time of the 2nd edition, the east-west lane to the north of the fort had been removed, and the eastern half of the proposed development site amalgamated into a single field. Tullaghoge Fort itself was again mapped as a series of concentric circles denoting banks and ditches, and was also still clearly marked as planted with trees. The small building and yards in the southeastern corner of the proposed development site were no longer extant, the area appearing as blank field on this edition.
- 5.17 On the 3rd OS 6-inch map (Tyrone Sheet 38, 1906) (Figure 6) the southern branch of the lane which bisected the site north-south on the 1st and 2nd editions was no longer extant and simply marked as a field boundary. This aside no substantial changes were noted from the previous edition. The 4th edition mapped the site similarly to the 3rd, save with less defined hachuring in the interior of the fort. Barring the modern addition of the carpark and existing paths, these editions map the site largely as it stands today.

MAPPED ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE WITHIN/ADJACENT TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

- 5.18 Whilst the focus of the proposed development is obviously the State Care site of Tullaghoge Fort, the immediate area contains archaeological sites from a wide variety of periods (Figure 6, 7).
- 5.19 The earliest phase of Irish prehistory, the Mesolithic (8000-3750BC), is represented by a single Early Mesolithic flint cache (TYR038:056), located approximately 600m to the southeast on the opposite side of the Killymoon River, closer to the river. In general the Mesolithic is very poorly represented in Tyrone. Fish was one of the most important sources of food during this period before the introduction of agriculture when fishing, hunting and gathering were the staples of subsistence. Camps of this period leave no surface traces and are only noted when finds (usually flint tools) are unearthed through ploughing or excavation. The location of TYR038:056, beside the river but upslope on the higher, drier ground, is reminiscent of the similar setting of the Mount Sandel Mesolithic occupation site. The presence of the lithic assemblage suggests wider Mesolithic exploitation of the area. No details of the lithics were available on the Sites and Monuments Record, simply a brief summary of 'Early Mesolithic lithic assemblage - fine blades and bladelet cores.'

- 5.20 The earliest phase of Tullaghoge Fort (TYR036:016) itself has occasionally been raised as an Early Medieval bivallate rath, but the morphology of the site does not entirely support this as there is no evidence for an external ditch – topographical nor geophysical survey has uncovered any traces of an external ditch. Whilst this is not conclusive evidence of its absence, the surviving morphology of the banks and ditches more closely resembles a Neolithic henge although equally there is no corroborating evidence for this from the limited physical testing on site. Excavations in the area of the carpark at Tullaghoge uncovered artefactual evidence for Middle Neolithic occupation of the area, with an associated radiocarbon date of 3653-3524BC. Neolithic occupation of the site would support a possible henge interpretation of the monument, and would offer parallels with other sites such as the Maguire inauguration site at Cornashee which sits atop a potential prehistoric cairn.
- 5.21 Two cereal drying kilns are located within the fields containing the proposed development (TYR038:055, TYR038:060). These were uncovered during excavations to investigate anomalies on geophysical survey results from a series of surveys undertaken on Tullaghoge Fort and in the fields immediately around. Artefact and radiocarbon dating of these features indicates they belong to the Early Medieval period, dating to the early 7th and 8th-10th centuries AD respectively. These are obviously indicative of Early Medieval agricultural activity in the area around the site, but thus far there is no conclusive evidence as to whether this was related to any Early Medieval occupation within Tullaghoge Fort itself.
- 5.22 The date of the later kiln (AD722 – 965) partially overlaps with the first mention of Tullaghoge in the Annals of Ulster, when the site was the location of a peace agreement between the *Cenéi nÉogain* and the *Ulaid*. The site is mentioned again, described as being attacked in 1111 by the Ulaid in retribution for an attack on the *Ulaid* inauguration site at Crew Hill in Antrim in 1099. Whilst detail from the Annals can often be questionable in terms of specific dating, this at least corroborates the importance of the location in the tail end of the Early Medieval and into the Medieval period. The aforementioned field investigations at the site uncovered two oval features at the western end of the proposed development area, close to the carpark, dating to the 11th to 13th centuries AD, and interpreted as two small houses. Whilst these two small structures do not directly relate to any of the mentions in the Annals, the earliest portion of the date range does corroborate settlement related to Tullaghoge in and around the dates mentioned in the Annals.
- 5.23 The site is a focal point for the northern O'Neill from the thirteenth century until the Flight of the Earls when the site changes hands in the very early 17th century. It is first explicitly named as an inauguration site in 1432 in the Annals of Ulster with the raising of Eoghan Ó Neill as king at 'Tullach Oc'. Various late 16th to early 17th century depictions show or describe the site as the stone where the 'Oneale' is named, and show an inauguration ceremony, whilst Barthlett's illustrations (described above) from the early 17th century illustrate the site towards the end of the Nine Years War, and give the aforementioned description of the chair being removed. It is reported that this occurred during an attack by Mountjoy in 1602 which destroyed the seat, but detail is vague as to the extent of any other destruction on the site at the time. Whilst no investigations to date have uncovered evidence for the buildings illustrated within Tullaghoge by Barthlett, the general form does conform to the 'hall' uncovered in investigations in the area of the

new carpark at the western edge of the development site, in addition to the two small buildings dating to the 11th to 13th centuries, also uncovered a third building, 15m by 9m, which may have had a similar footprint to those illustrated by Barthlett.

- 5.24 The accompanying data for the Gazetteer of Historic Nucleated Urban Settlement gives a useful summary history of the later history of the site:

'Pre-Plantation the lands belonged to the O'Hagan family and the graveyard (TYR 038:014) to the west of the village is associated with this family. Members of the Lindsay family who were granted the land upon which the village is located in the 17th century were also buried in the graveyard. The land was granted to a Robert Lindsey in 1610 (Hill 1877, 288) and Pynner in 1619 noted that there was a bawn and timber house on the estate. The earthworks of the fort of Tullyhogue (TYR 038:016) being reused as the bawn. Although lessees and cottagers are noted there is no specific reference to a village (ibid.). By 1622, however the bawn and dwelling house were no longer in use with Mrs Lindsay described as living 'at the foot of the said hill (presumably referring to the fort of Tullyhogue] in a little thatched house (without any storey), the foundation whereof is stone and clay, some 6 foot high covered with thatch' (Treadwell 1964, 00).'

- 5.25 Whilst it is likely that the 'living at the foot of said hill in a little thatched house' most likely indicates the southern foot of the hill by the modern village of Tullaghoge, there is also the possibility that it was the western foot of the hill, which would possibly correlate to the 15m 'hall' structure, although that size perhaps stretches the definition of a little thatched cottage. From this point, however, the focus of the occupation in the area shifts to the village of Tullaghoge, and there is little discussed or described of archaeological pertinence until the lanes and buildings as described on the Ordnance Survey six-inch maps further develop the site.

REMAINING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

- 5.26 Fifteen archaeological monuments were recorded within the study area on the NISMR (Figure 6). Several of these have already been discussed above as within or proximate to the proposed development. The remainder are discussed below.
- 5.27 The earliest phase of Irish prehistory, the Mesolithic (8000-3750BC), is represented by a single Early Mesolithic flint cache (TYR038:056), as discussed above.
- 5.28 Within 1km of the proposed development site, the Neolithic (37500-2500BC) and Bronze Age (2500-600BC) are not represented by any certainly dated sites, although the State Care standing stone 800m to the northeast (TYR039:020) most likely dates to one of these periods. Additionally, the morphology of Tullaghoge Fort (TYR038:016) with its lack of external ditch may be closer to a modified hengiform enclosure, which would place the origin of the Fort in the Neolithic as a high status site. A little further afield lies the Neolithic megalithic 'court tomb' at Killymoon Demesne (TYR038:031), and a Bronze Age (2500-600BC) 'wedge tomb' at Loughry, known as the 'Giant's Grave' (TYR038:020). This latter site was

surrounded by the sites of urn burials, it is thought that this may have been the centre of a pre-historic cemetery. The Iron Age (c. 600BC-450AD) is not represented in the immediate area.

- 5.29 The Early Medieval period (c. 450-1150AD) is the most prolific era in terms of surviving archaeological sites in Ireland. By far the most common sites of the Early Medieval period in Ireland were ringforts. These were semi-defensive sites containing the (normally wood, wicker, turf or drystone walled) habitations of the wealthier of the secular land-owning classes of the period. These are also known as raths, forts or enclosures, and the stone walled examples are known as cashels. Few of these, however, are found within 1km of Tullaghoge Fort itself, with the possible enclosure at Donaghrisk (TYR 038:021) being a possible exception. Tullaghoge Fort, as discussed above, was also a site of activity in the Early Medieval period, as attested by the corn drying kilns, although the fort itself does not conform. No Early Medieval ecclesiastical sites lie within the 1km study area, although the holy well TYR038:015, may suggest the presence of one nearby even though it is more commonly linked to the possible Medieval friary.
- 5.30 The Medieval period (1150-1550AD) is represented by the Tullaghoge Fort itself (TYR038:016), two pre-19th century roads which may have origins in the medieval period (TYR038:058 and 059), and a possible medieval origin to graveyard TYR038:014; there are claims that a priory was founded here in the late 13th century by the O'Hagan family, but no sources or substantiation for this is given.
- 5.31 The Plantation period (1605-1690) is represented again by inauguration site at Tullaghoge (TYR038:016) and possible adjacent post-medieval terraces and earthworks (TYR038:061) and also the settlements of Tullaghoge (TYR029:054) and Grange (TYR039:069), along with an 19th century landscaped tree ring (TYR038:050).

NISMR No	Site Type	Period	Protection	Townland	Grid Ref
TYR038:014	Graveyard	Uncertain; c18th/c19th	-	Donaghrisk	H8207073970
TYR038:015	Holy well: Friar's Well	Uncertain	-	Donaghrisk	H8216074050
TYR038:016	Hilltop enclosure & inauguration site of the O'Neills: Tullaghoge Fort	Med/L. Med; E. Med.; Post-Med	State Care and Scheduled	Ballymully Glebe	H8250074300
TYR038:021	Enclosure	Uncertain	-	Donaghrisk	H8180074280
TYR038:038	A.P. Site - circular cropmark	Uncertain	-	Donaghrisk	H8204073750
TYR039:020	Standing Stone	Prehistoric	State Care and Scheduled	Grange	H8317074770
TYR038:050	Tree Ring	C18th/c19th	-	Loughry	H8188574776
TYR039:069	Historic Settlement Grange	Post-med	-	Grange	H8302775019
TYR038:054	Historic Settlement Tullyhogue	Post-med	-	Tullaghoge	H8257373788
TYR038:055	Remains of corn-drying kiln	E. Med.	-	Ballymully Glebe	H8212474388
TYR038:056	Early Mesolithic lithic assemblage - fine blades and bladelet cores.	Mesolithic	-	Ballymully Glebe	H8210874494
TYR038:058	Pre-19th century routeway - linking Tullaghoge Hill and Donaghrisk Priory	Med/ L. Med	-	Donaghrisk	H8231373889
TYR038:059	Pre-19th century routeway - linking Tullaghoge Hill and Donaghrisk Priory	Med/ L. Med	-	Ballymully Glebe	H8239374355

TYR038:060	Remains of corn-drying kiln	E. Med.	-	Ballymully Glebe	H8252174208
TYR038:061	Terraces and earthworks. Post-medieval landscaping?	Post-med	-	Ballymully Glebe	H8254374145

Table 2: Mapped NISMR sites within study area (500m)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE SITE

- 5.32 Several phases of archaeological investigations both in terms of physical excavations and geophysical surveys have taken place within the proposed development site, the pertinent results of these have been discussed above.

LATER HERITAGE WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

- 5.33 The study area contains three sites of Later Heritage (Figure 7); the largest is the easternmost limit of the woodlands at the periphery of the grounds of Loughry House (Historic Garden Register T-026) on the opposite side of the Killymoon River from the proposed development. Two sites of Industrial Heritage also lie in this area – IHR04856, the listed structure of Tullywiggan Bridge (also HB09/05/030 in the Listed Buildings register), and IHR04857:000:00 a beetling mill in ruins. These lie along the Killymoon River within or adjacent to the boundaries of the historic garden, and as sites linked directly with the river, are well removed from the proposed development.

Ref No	Type (Current/Former)	Period	Protection/Grade	Townland	Grid Ref
HB09/05/030 & IHR04856:000:00	Tullywiggan Bridge	1820-1839	Listed - B2	Loughry/Ballymully	H8220 7475
IHR04857:000:00	Beetling Mill (in ruins)	-	-	Loughry	H82177467
T-026	Loughry	-	Grade A	Loughry	H8140 7440

Table 3: Later Heritage within 500m Study Area.

SETTINGS BASELINE

- 5.34 As the proposed development consists of low lying/ground level paths and seating, long-range visibility is negligible for the wider landscape. Whilst the surrounding 1km contains several sites of higher status (Figure 8) including listed buildings, a State Care standing stone (TYR039:020) and obviously Tullaghoge Fort itself (TYR038:016), the nature of the proposals means that with the exception of Tullaghoge Fort itself, there will be little to no apparent visible change from these sites.

Ref No	Current/ Former Use	Period	Protection	Townland	Grid Ref	Visibility
TYR038:016	Hilltop enclosure & inauguration site of the O'Neills: Tullaghoge Fort	Med/L. Med; E. Med.; Post-Med	State Care and Scheduled	Ballymully Glebe	H8250074300	High
TYR039:020	Standing Stone	Prehistoric	State Care and Scheduled	Grange	H8317074770	None
HB09/05/006	House		B1	Cookstown	H8205 7375	None

Ref No	Current/ Former Use	Period	Protection	Townland	Grid Ref	Visibility
HB09/05/020 A	House including nineteenth century and 1908 extensions	1740 - 1759	B1	Cookstown	H8140 7440	None
HB09/05/020 C	Garden house	1820 - 1839	B2	Cookstown	H8142 7432	None
HB09/05/030	Bridge	1820 - 1839	B2	Cookstown	H8220 7475	None
HB09/05/033	Farm building	1860 - 1879	B2	Cookstown	H8261 7368	None

Table 4: Higher Status NISMR sites and Listed Building database sites within 500m Study Area.

6 POTENTIAL AND IMPACT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 6.1 The archaeological potential of the proposed development site is high; multiple phases of excavations and surveys within the area of Tullaghoge Fort have shown evidence for a complex multiperiod site, spanning from Mesolithic settlement along the Killymoon River, through Neolithic activity and the possibility of the Tullaghoge earthworks having their origin as a henge, through Early Medieval agricultural use evidenced by the corn drying kilns, through high status Medieval and Late Medieval use as an inauguration site and important meeting place with associated earthworks and settlement.
- 6.2 The previous excavations and surveys on the site make it clear that no portion of the fields around the fort itself can be considered completely devoid of archaeological potential.

PHYSICAL IMPACT

- 6.3 Almost all aspects of the proposed development are non-invasive and will not impact on the physical nature of the site – paths are to be simple mown grass trails, seating is to be set upon the ground rather than requiring any excavated footing, and any signage is to be affixed to elements already in place or in stone seating set upon the ground, rather than being freestanding and requiring posts or similar. The only portion of the works that may have any physical impact are the two portions where the proposed trails pass through the mature hedge lines running north and south through the site. The site visit, however, indicated that gaps exist in these and paths could cross with minimal works required. There does, however, remain a small chance that any necessary physical works to prepare these gaps to allow the trails to pass through may cause minor levels of impact on previously undiscovered archaeological remains. As these particular boundaries have their origins in lanes mapped in the early 19th century, there is potential for these to reflect boundaries and routes which were in existence in the 18th or earlier centuries as well.

IMPACT ON SETTINGS OF HERITAGE ASSETS

- 6.4 As detailed previously, given the low level and generally unobtrusive nature of the proposals, impacts on the settings of heritage assets are deemed to be non-existent outside the confines of the proposed development site. From Tullaghoge Fort itself, it is considered that the nature of the proposals – simple mown paths and rock/log seating – will be an effectively negligible change to the current setting quality.

The one exception to this would be the seating within the eastern half of the site. An important aspect of the setting at Tullaghoge is the relationship between the fort and the potential location of the '*Leac na Ri*' or 'king's stone'. The cartographic study has shown that period mapping appears to show this sitting to the east of the fort, potentially on a rocky outcrop. Previous studies have commented that the boulders in the fields to the east are potential candidates for the '*Leac na Ri*' or 'king's stone'. It is considered that in light of this, the introduction of simple 'convenient boulder' style stone seating in the eastern half of the site would detract from the natural boulders there and their potential status as candidates from the '*Leac na Ri*'.

7 SCOPE OF RECOMMENDED MITIGATION WORKS

SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT

- 7.1 It should be noted that a large portion of the proposed development site is Scheduled. All works within the scheduled area, whether deemed to have potential to cause impacts or not, must obtain Scheduled Monument Consent.

SCOPE

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION (PHYSICAL)

- 7.2 Due to the nature of the proposals, physical impacts are negligible. The only possible impacts identified are the portions where the proposed trails pass through mature field boundaries/fence lines requiring any groundworks or flattening. Targeting portions of the boundaries where natural gaps occur, where possible, would minimise disturbance. The archaeological monitoring and recording of any minor works requiring ground disturbance (i.e. any minor alterations to low field boundary banks or ditches) would further reduce even these small scale impacts.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION (SETTINGS)

- 7.3 As discussed, settings impacts should be predominantly neutral from the proposals, with potentially only design-stage mitigation required to ensure that the placement of any stone seating to the eastern half of the site does not detract from the existing boulders there with their potential links to the '*Leac na Ri*' and the Late Medieval critical setting of the monument.

8 GENERAL MITIGATION WORKS SPECIFICATION

- 8.1 Should the above project proceed through planning to a phase where archaeological fieldwork is required, whether at BH3 evaluation stage or to meet BH4 planning conditions, then the following general works specifications would apply to any required archaeological fieldwork and any following post-excavation analysis.

SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT

- 8.2 Scheduled Monument Consent is required for all works, whether they require archaeological monitoring or not, within the scheduled area.

APPOINTING THE LICENSED ARCHAEOLOGIST

- 8.3 The appointed archaeologist will need to obtain an excavation licence prior to carrying out any of the fieldwork discussed below. Licences must be applied for from the DfC: HED, and it can take many weeks to process the application. The appointee must be approved by the DfC: HED. An Archaeological Report detailing a mitigation strategy must be first approved by the DfC: HED, and then enclosed with the licence application form. The developer or their representative must fill out the DfC: HED pro-forma agreeing to facilitate and fund the necessary mitigation measures and forward it to the archaeological consultant for submission with the licence application; DfC: HED will not issue a licence unless the application is accompanied by this form.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOOD PRACTICE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS

- 8.4 All archaeological works on this project by NAC Ltd, and its staff, will be undertaken in line with the guidance contained within the NIEA Environmental Good Practice Guide for Archaeological Excavations document:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doi/env-good-practice-for-archaeological-excavations-3.pdf>

- 8.5 The client has been made aware of the following section of the DAERA-NI standing advice for pollution prevention for site works document. The client's attention is drawn to the following excerpt, and have their own environmental policies in place to account for this risk:

Good Practice Planning and Implementation

The construction phase of a proposal is one of the most high risk stages of a development during which pollution is likely to occur.

If a development is in close proximity to a watercourse additional care will need to be taken to prevent pollution. Any 'waterway' as defined by the Water (NI) Order 1999 will pose a constraint to a construction project. Consideration must be given at preliminary planning and design stages to ensure that impact on the receiving water environment during any testing, construction and operational phases are minimised.

The applicant and appointed contractors must identify all the relevant Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPG) and the replacement guidance series, Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs) that relate to their proposal and must adhere to the guidance contained within these (see Table 1 below).

The main risks to a waterway during the construction and operational phases are from oil, hydrocarbons, fuel, chemicals, paint, suspended solids, concrete, cement and grout.

Construction Method Statements

Works to be conducted in; near (within 10 metres) or liable to affect any waterway may require a construction method statement.

Generic method statements should be submitted along with the planning application although NIEA welcome full detail, if possible, at this stage. If an application is granted permission a full, detailed, site specific method

statement may then be required from the appointed contractor(s). This will need to be submitted for our agreement a minimum of eight weeks prior to works beginning onsite.

The method statement should detail all mitigation measures identified to prevent pollution of the water environment during the construction, operational and maintenance phase of the project.

Implementing and strictly adhering to an agreed method statement is important to minimise the impact of the proposal on the water environment.

Source: (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/DAERA%20%20Standing%20Advice%20-%20WTR%20-%20Pollution%20preventing%20guidance%20-%20November%202017.pdf>)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 8.6 A full risk assessment for the archaeological works will be prepared in advance of the work proceeding on site by NAC's Health & Safety officer. Copies of the risk assessment will be made available to the principal contractor and HED on request.
- 8.7 All electrical lines and services **must** be identified and marked before any trenching takes place so that an appropriate clear area can be kept.

MONITORING OF REQUIRED WORKS

- 8.8 All works to be subjected to archaeological monitoring must be performed under supervision of the licensed archaeologist licence, until either archaeological remains, the subsoil/bedrock surface or the maximum depth/extents required for construction is reached, whichever is encountered first. Depending on the nature of the works and HED agreement, the works may be carried out mechanically until archaeological remains are encountered, after which manual methods will be required.

AREA EXCAVATION WHEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL IS ENCOUNTERED DURING MONITORING

- 8.9 Where archaeological features are identified, HED may request excavation of the area to reveal the extent of the archaeological remains. Area excavation shall be set to a maximum limit of 10m beyond the last archaeological feature encountered, **or the edge of the invasive development**, whichever is reached first.
- 8.10 The archaeology must then be recorded at the surface level, ie. Drawn, photographed and accurately spatially located (see below).
- 8.11 At this stage HED may also request characterization of the archaeology, i.e. Manual excavation of a small number of features to identify their archaeological nature.
- 8.12 The above measures will not be undertaken without prior consent from the client and HED.

EXCAVATION TECHNIQUES

- 8.13 The mechanical excavation of works to be monitored must where possible be carried out using a digger with a smooth-edged bucket, under the direction and supervision of the licensed archaeologist. A

smooth-edged bucket leaves a clean surface on the subsoil, which is important as a smooth and clean surface greatly aids the archaeologist in identifying archaeological features. Bulldozers of any type or diggers with toothed buckets would not normally be archaeologically acceptable, as these would leave a ragged surface on which archaeological features could not be easily distinguished. A toothed bucket may **only** be used to break up hard surfaces, taking care to minimise disturbance to the soil horizon beneath. The underlying surface should then be given a clean scrape with a smooth-edged bucket before any further invasive work then continues with the smooth-edged bucket only.

PRESERVATION *IN-SITU*

- 8.14 Preservation *in-situ* is always the preferred option when archaeological material is found. An appropriate preservation and consolidation strategy must be adopted where possible where in-situ archaeological remains are uncovered.
- 8.15 It is anticipated that any preservation strategy will consist of the archaeological material being covered with a suitable geotextile and the investigation trench reinstated.
- 8.16 Prior to preservation and re-instatement, all in-situ identified archaeological material would need to be recorded using a scaled plan. The excavation area must be geospatially recorded to produce a digital scaled map tied into the Ordnance Survey and be fully grid referenced. Once this is complete the archaeological material can then be subject to preservation and re-instatement.

RECORDING AND EXCAVATION

- 8.17 If preservation in-situ is not to be undertaken for any uncovered remains for any reason, features discovered during monitoring or otherwise must be planned, sampled, recorded and written up. All archaeological works and structural recording will be carried out in accordance with the standards and guidance laid out in Section 2.
- HED currently policy indicates that 100% excavation should be considered for most features, however larger features (e.g. long ditches) and those features which have been identified as modern during initial examination may require a lesser degree of excavation and recording. Any changes to 100% excavation and recording will require prior approval from HED.
 - The discovery of possible treasure items (as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 and the Treasure (Designation) Order 2002) must be reported at once to the HED.
 - Any features of possible archaeological concern noted must be accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, summary scale drawings, and written descriptions.
 - Areas which contain archaeological features will be planned at 1:50, with individual features being planned at 1:20 where additional detail is required. Sections and profiles of each feature sampled will be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20, depending on the size of the feature. All plans, sections and profiles will be related to Ordnance Datum, in metres.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSONNEL

- 8.18 All of the archaeological measures outlined in this section must be carried out and/or directed by a licensed archaeologist. All archaeological work must be carried out by qualified archaeologists under the direction of the archaeological licence holder.

TIMING OF WORKS

- 8.19 When considering the timing of the works and future development, the client should allow for the possibility of required archaeological works to manually excavate and record, or arrange for preservation in-situ of, any material found during archaeological works. It is therefore advised that all archaeological work is carried out as far in advance of construction as possible.

COMPLETION OF ON-SITE WORKS

- 8.20 On-site works will be considered completed upon the following:
- i. All areas requiring archaeological pre-excavation/monitoring have been excavated;
 - ii. All widening around archaeological remains (where necessary) has been completed.
 - iii. All archaeological remains to be preserved in-situ have been planned, covered with suitable geotextile, and backfilled.
 - iv. All archaeological remains not to be preserved in-situ have been subjected to detailed excavation and recording to an extent agreed upon by HED.
 - v. Notification has been given by the appointed archaeologist to both the client and to HED, notifying them of the completion of on-site works.
- 8.21 The appointed archaeologist will, at this stage, produce a summary report of the results of the investigation for submission to the client and HED.

POST EXCAVATION ANALYSIS AND REPORT

- 8.22 In addition to funding the fieldwork, the client must also fund post-excavation analysis of the findings and the writing up of the findings by the licensed archaeologist. Funding may also be required for specialist archaeological services, such as radiocarbon dating, osteoarchaeology, etc., depending on the nature on any discoveries. These services are a basic requirement for the assessment of some types of evidence. The post-excavation process will be monitored by the client and DfC: HED.

DETAILS ON ARCHIVING STANDARDS

- 8.23 Archives will be created and stored in line with best practice as defined by the Archaeological Archives Forum of the Council for British Archaeology:
http://www.archaeologyuk.org/archives/Archives_Best_Practice.pdf
- 8.24 All materials (paper and artefactual) deriving from the works will be stored at a location to be agreed with DfC: HED.

PUBLICATIONS

- 8.25 Where significant archaeological material is encountered the results will be published as both academic and popular reports, at a level of detail appropriate to the works, and as agreed by the client and DfC: HED.

9 COPYRIGHT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 9.1 Please note that the entirety of this report, including any original drawings and photographs, remain the property of the author(s) and NAC Ltd. Any reproduction of the said report requires the written permission of NAC Ltd. Images and drawings supplied by third parties are acknowledged individually.

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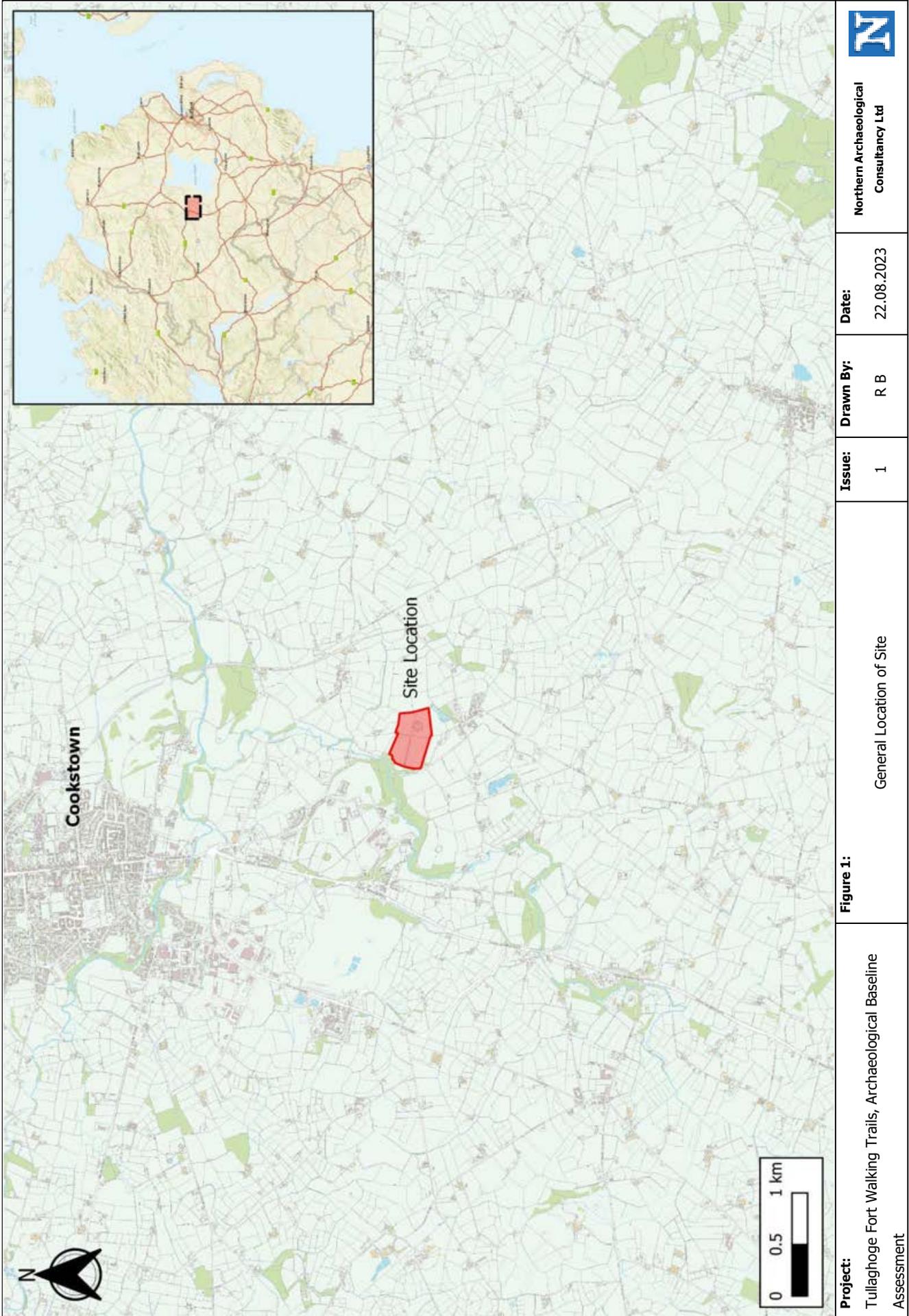
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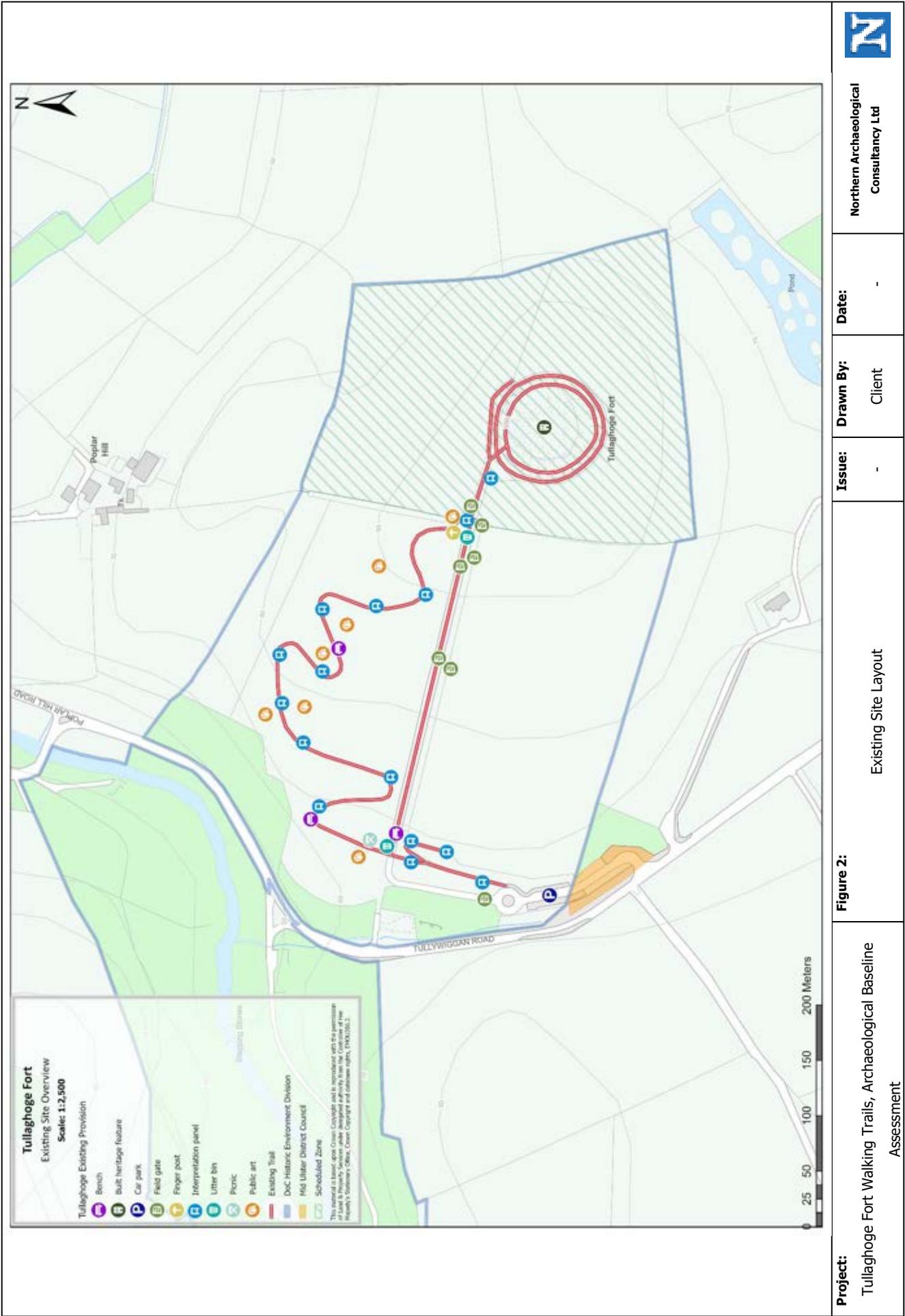
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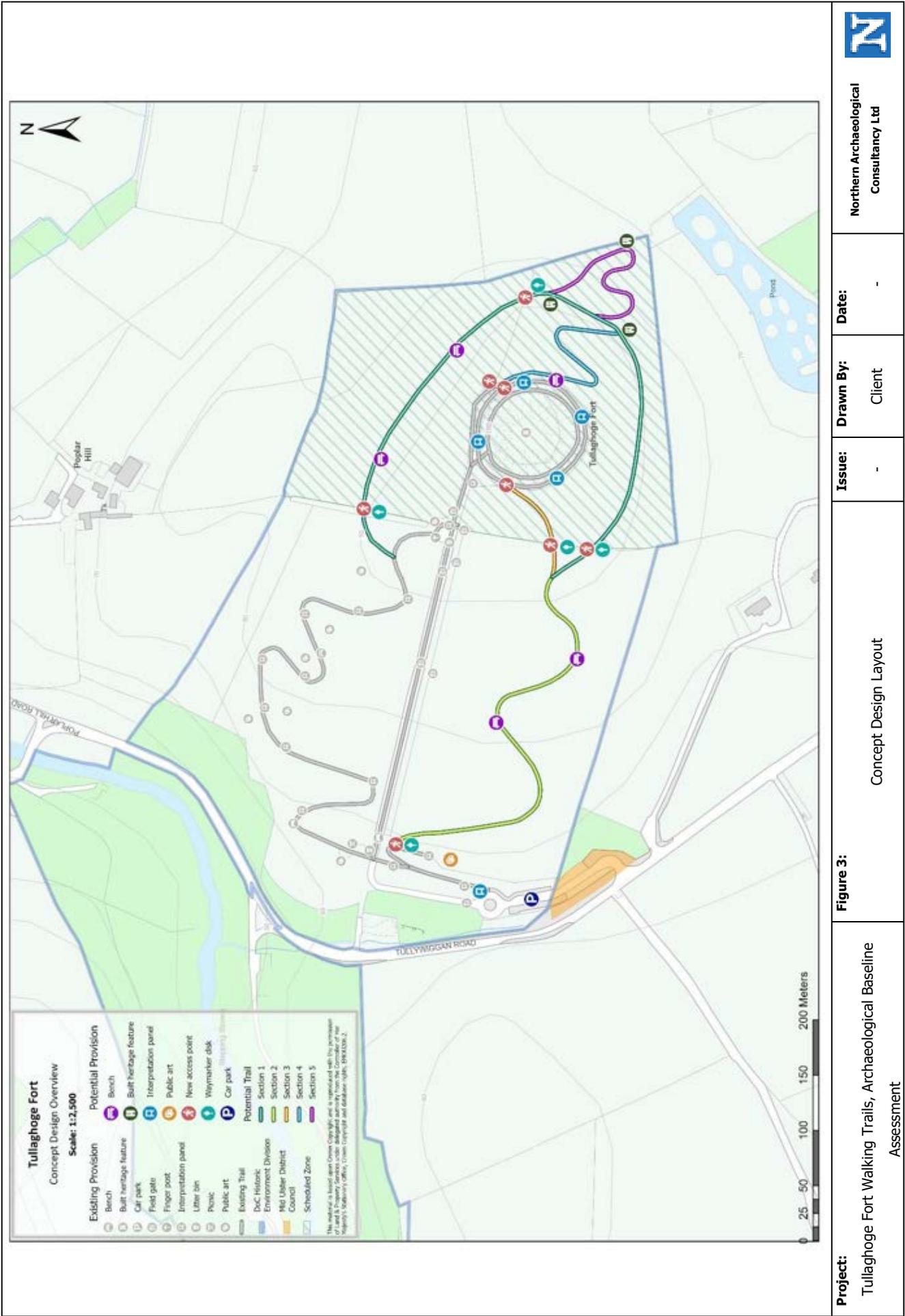
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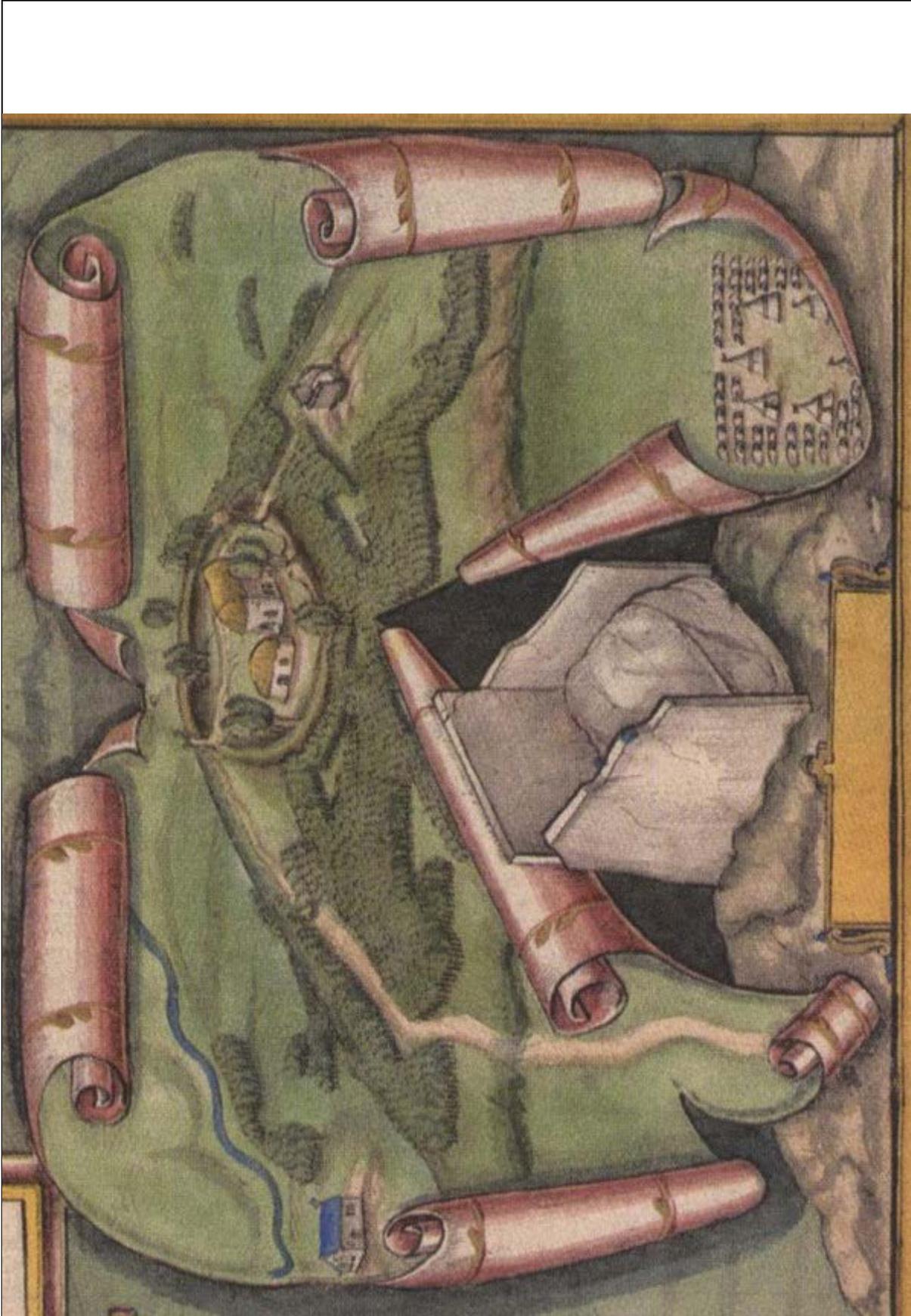
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APPENDIX 1: ILLUSTRATIONS

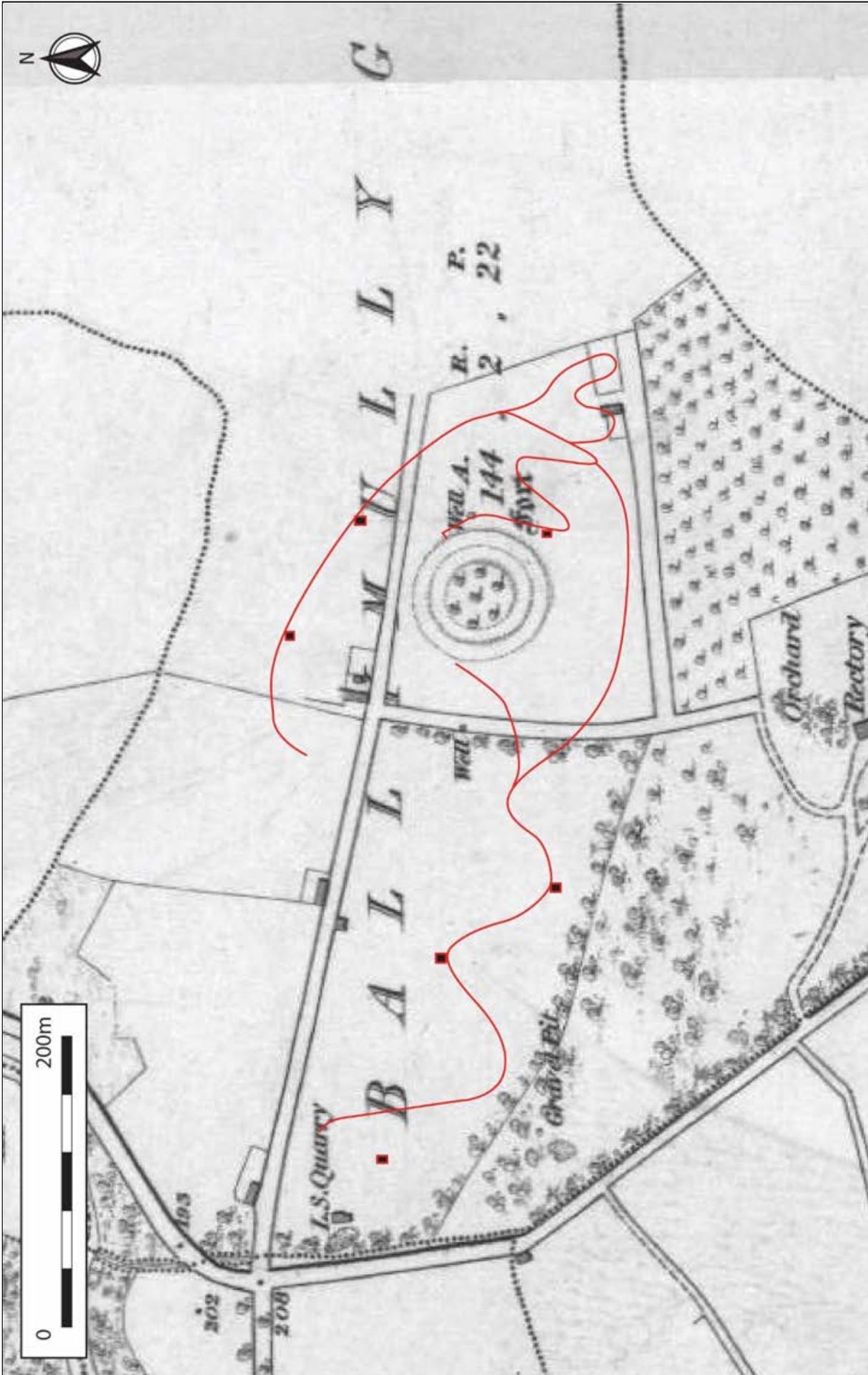




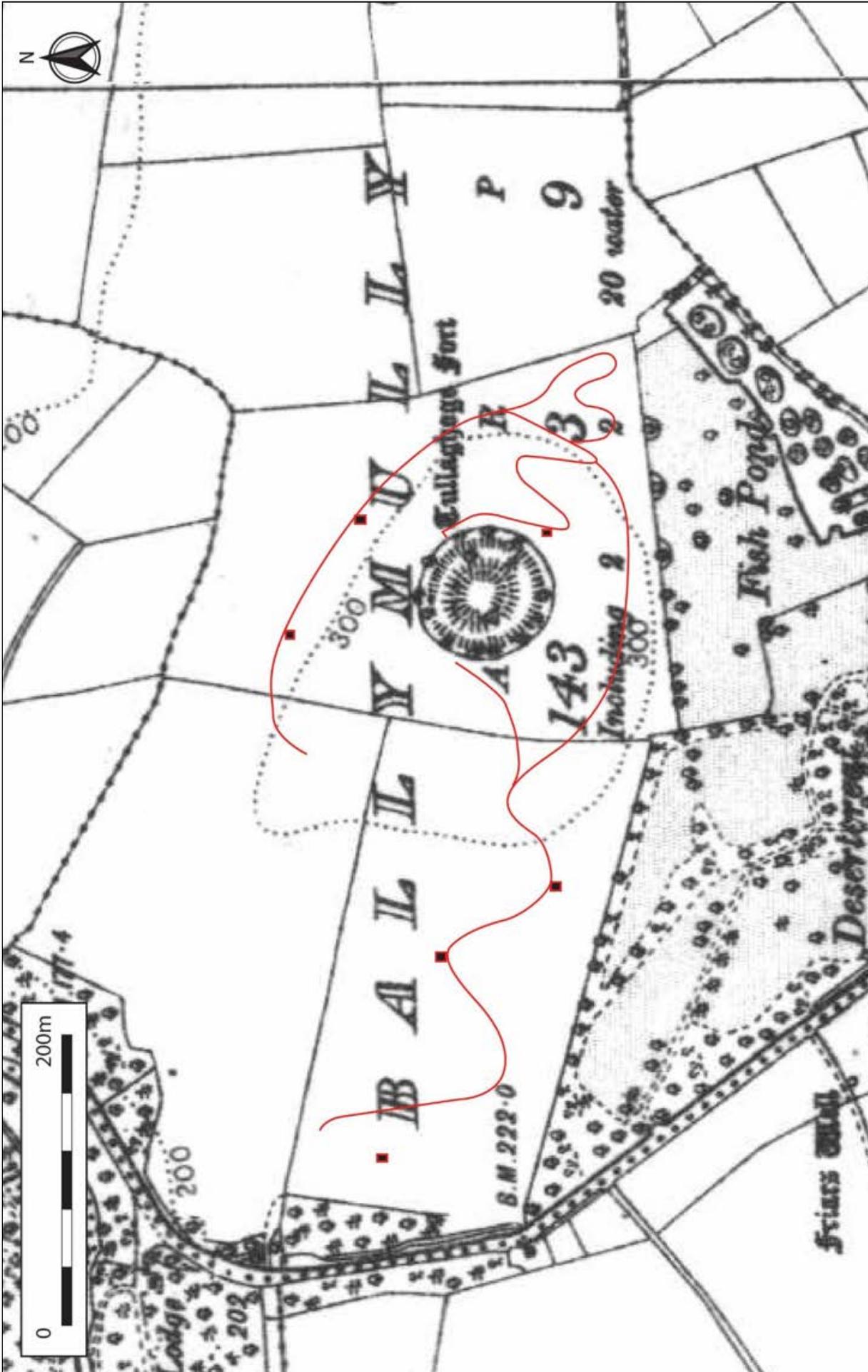




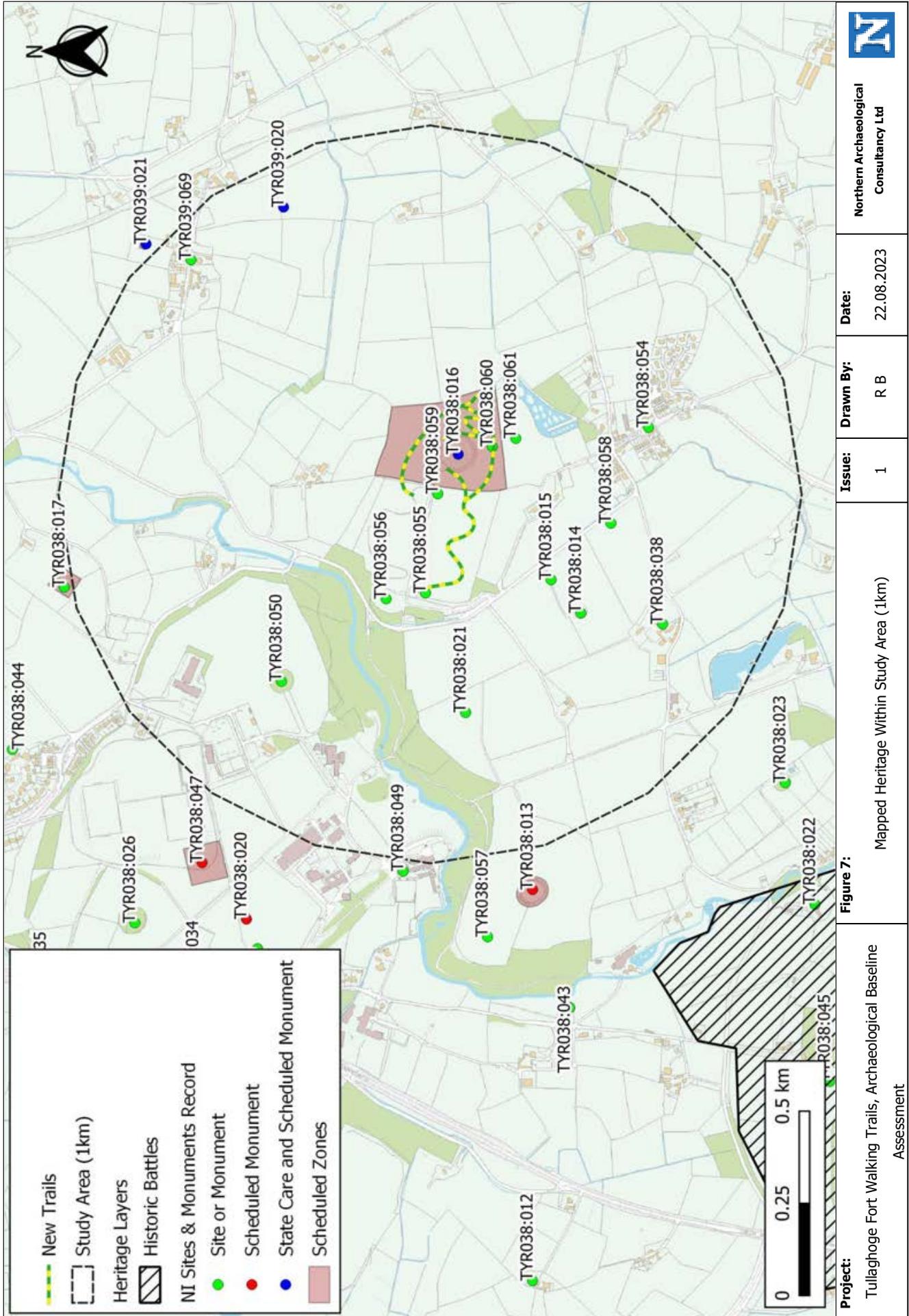
	Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd
Date:	22.08.2023
Drawn By:	R B
Issue:	1
Figure 4: Tullaghoge as illustrated by Barthlett 1602.	
Project: Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails, Archaeological Baseline Assessment	

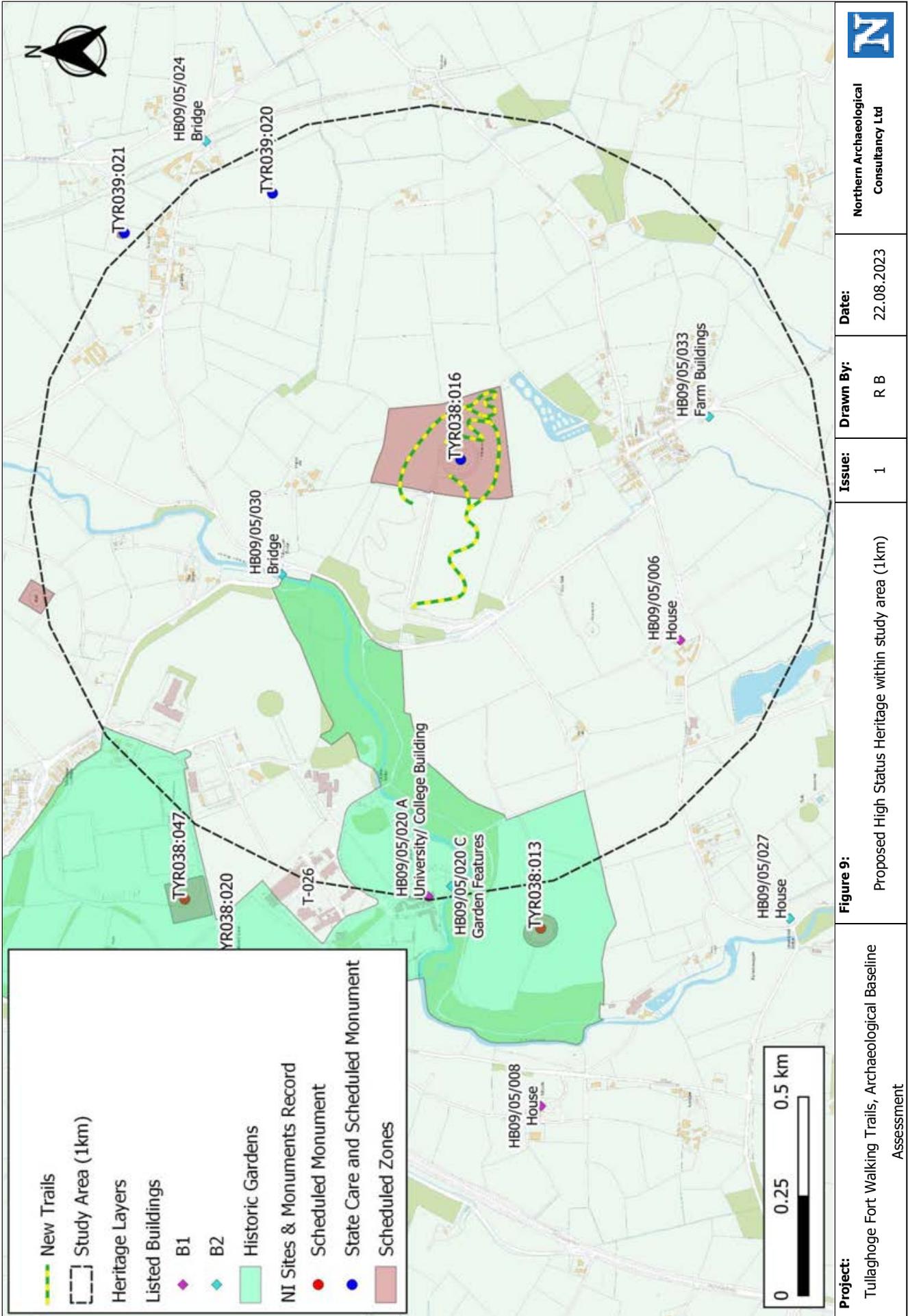


	Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd	Date: 22.08.2023	Drawn By: R B	Issue: 1	Figure 5: Proposed works on 1 st edition OS mapping	Project: Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails, Archaeological Baseline Assessment
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<p>Project: Tullaghoge Fort Walking Trails, Archaeological Baseline Assessment</p>	<p>Figure 6: Proposed works on 3rd edition OS mapping.</p>	<p>Issue: 1 Drawn By: R B Date: 22.08.2023</p>	<p>N Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd</p>
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APPENDIX 2: PLATES

Plate 1: End of existing gravel path /site of corn drying kiln looking south



Plate 2: View east-southeast across lower field beside carpark.



Plate 3: View east from midpoint of southern field.



Plate 4: South-eastern field, looking north to eastern edge of Tullaghoge Fort.



Plate 5: Northern portion, looking west from just north of Tullaghoge Fort.

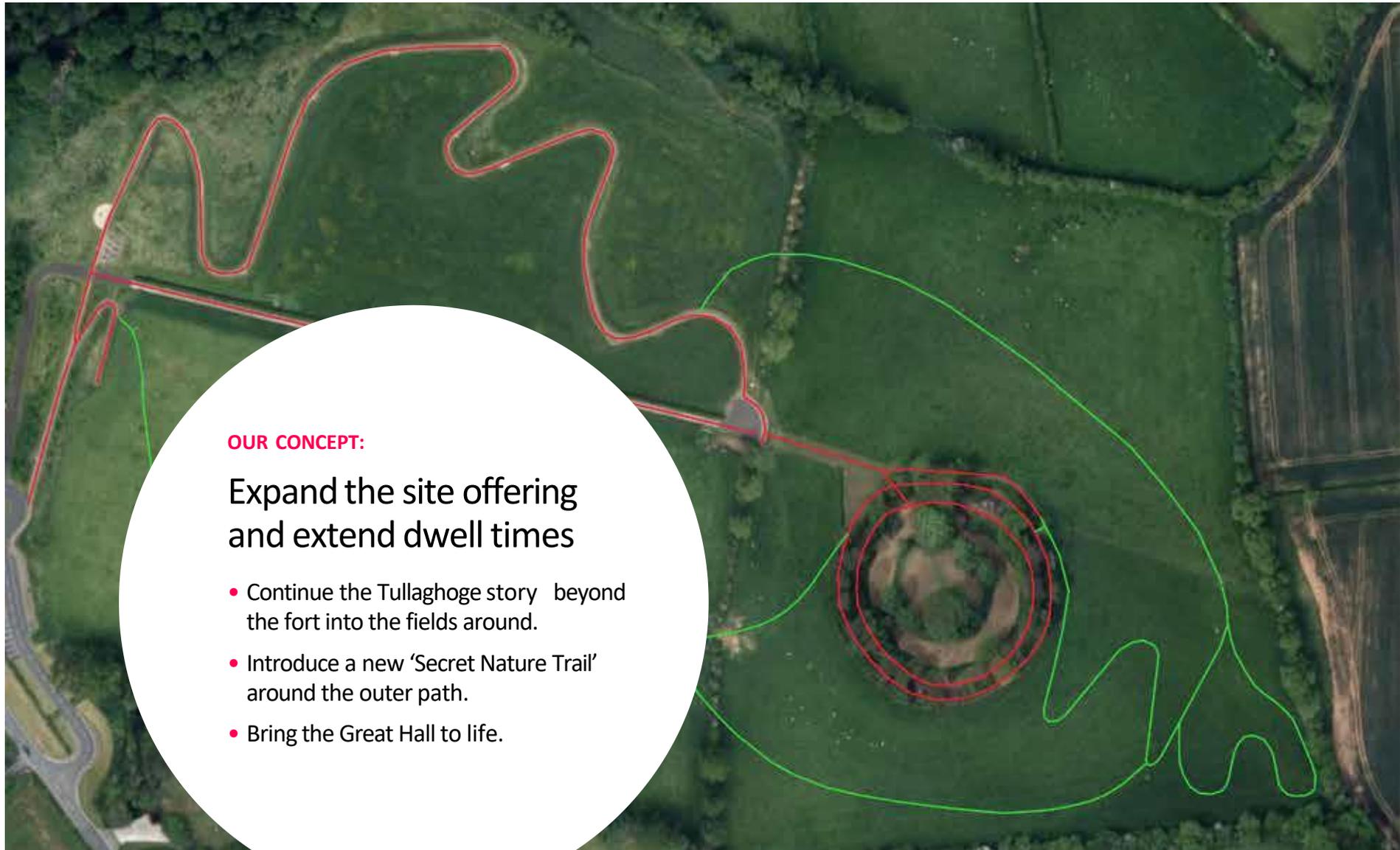
Mid Ulster District Council

Tullaghoge Fort

Interpretation experience extension

Issue 2 | 12 October 2023

Tandem



OUR CONCEPT:

**Expand the site offering
and extend dwell times**

- Continue the Tullaghoge story beyond the fort into the fields around.
- Introduce a new 'Secret Nature Trail' around the outer path.
- Bring the Great Hall to life.

INTERPRETATION VISION:

For over 500 years the O'Neill clan ruled Tyrone. Their legacy is rooted at Tullaghoge, but their influence was felt across Ireland.

Explore the ceremonial home of the O'Neill dynasty and feel immersed in a landscape steeped in history.

The interpretation at Tullaghoge will be extended to bring new stories to the fore. From the legends of the great stone(s), where O'Neill's were inaugurated, to the strategic and symbolic views that can be seen around the fort – these stories will invite visitors to see this place through the eyes of the O'Neill's.

The stories will also be expanded to include the landscape around the fort, and how it has changed over time. New mown paths and seating opportunities will invite visitors to sit and take in the views, and explore the biodiversity and wildlife.

Overall, the new interpretations proposals will enhance the visitor experience at Tullaghoge, increasing dwell time and providing a multi-faceted day out for visitors.



An awareness of current and target visitors to Tullaghoge Fort is important to understand how the current offering can be expanded and enhanced.

LOCAL VISITORS

Tullaghoge Fort receives a high level of local visitors, who use the site for walking and recreation.

DOMESTIC VISITORS

Recent tourism figures show a consistent rise in visitor numbers over the past ten years.

In 2014, visitor numbers were 8,000, and have increased to 10,800 in 2019. 2020 saw visitor numbers increase by 30% to 14,000. Colloquial reports confirm this increase due to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

NATIONAL VISITORS

Tullaghoge has the potential to be a stand-out visitor attraction in Mid-Ulster. A well-positioned visitor experience has the potential to attract higher numbers of national and international visitors to Tullaghoge.

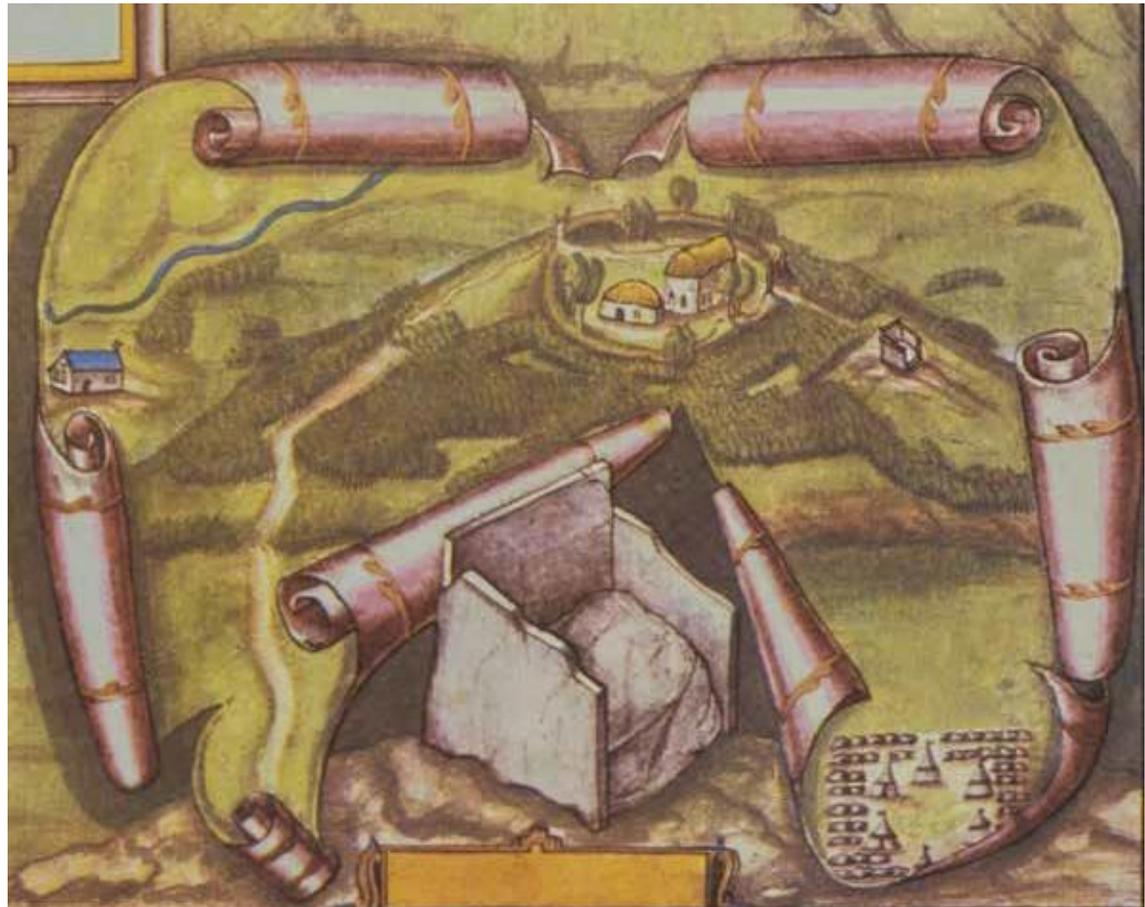


Continuing the story

‘On the hill around the fort there are three large rocks. Their presence on a site that otherwise has no stonewalls or even single boulders suggests they may have been deliberately brought to Tullaghoge at some time in the past.’

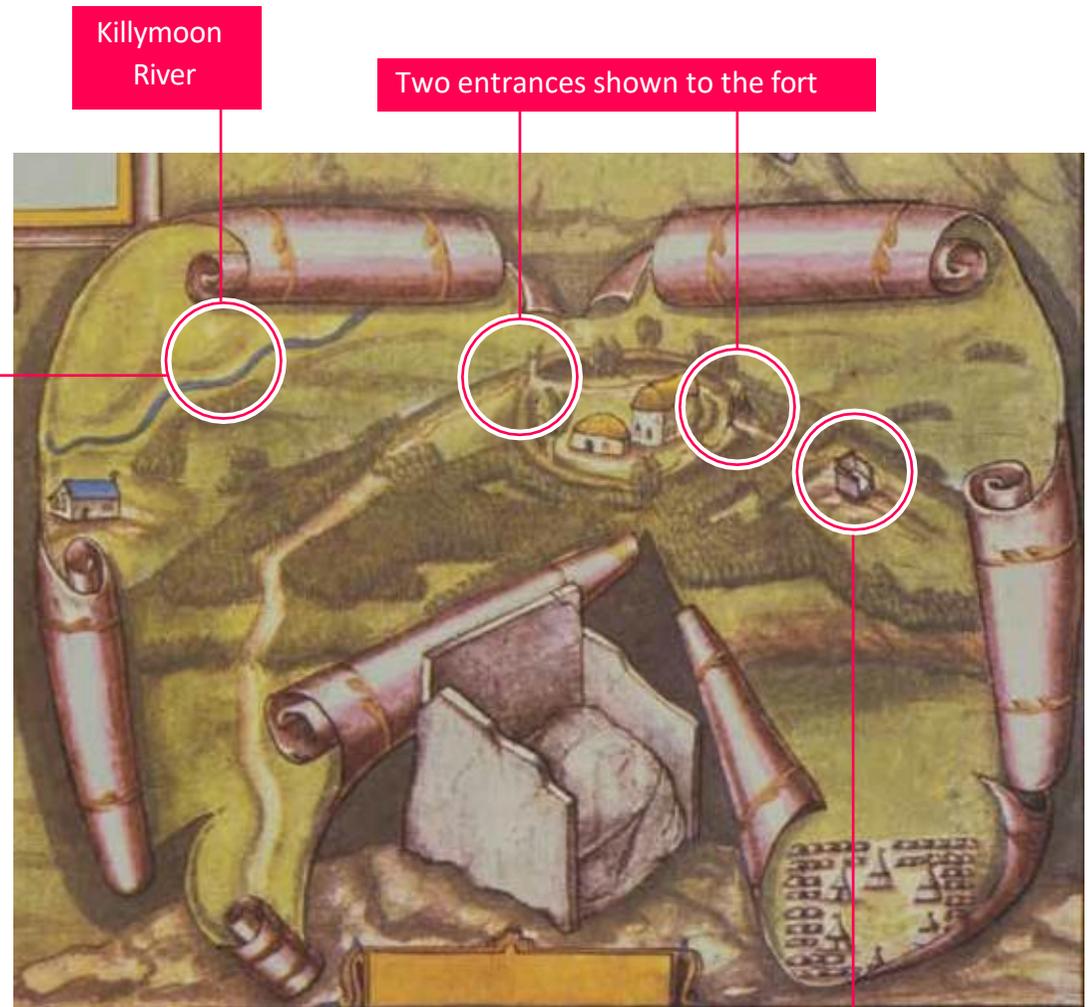
Summary statement following geological examination by Ian Enlander.

The three ‘stones’



Depiction of stone inauguration chair at Tullaghoge. Richard Bartlett, 1602.

Examining the Bartlett Map



Killymoon
River

Two entrances shown to the fort

'Seat' outside the fort facing east

Path extension



Three stones

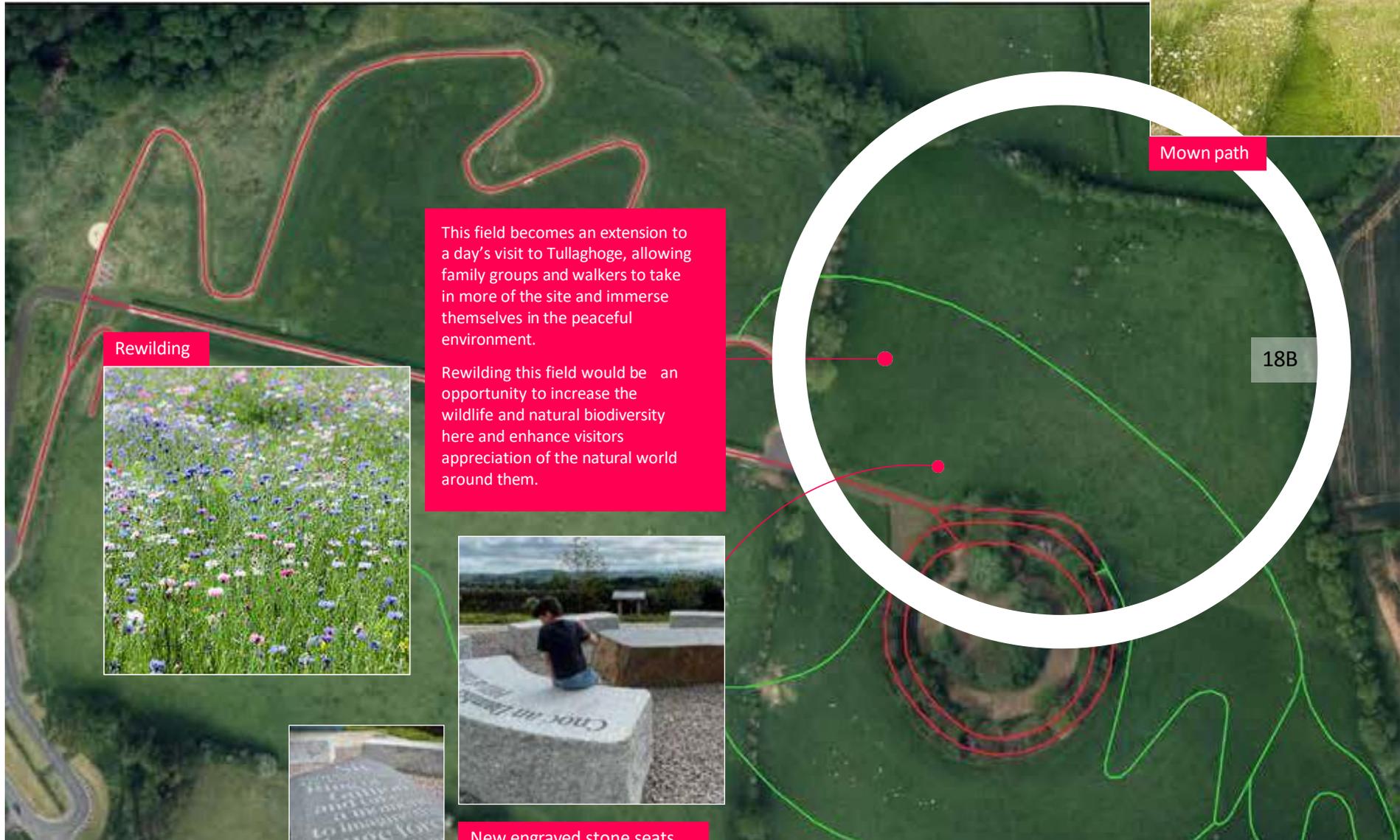


Path extension

A modest mown path through the eastern field brings the story of the Leac na Rí closer to visitors, as they situate themselves in the landscape and imagine the historic ceremonies that may have taken place here.



Mown path



Rewilding



This field becomes an extension to a day's visit to Tullaghoge, allowing family groups and walkers to take in more of the site and immerse themselves in the peaceful environment.

Rewilding this field would be an opportunity to increase the wildlife and natural biodiversity here and enhance visitors appreciation of the natural world around them.



New engraved stone seats



Proposed developments



Proposed developments



A digital layer of interpretation

Using the existing MUDC app interface, an additional layer of interpretation could be introduced across the site on a Tullaghoge app.

Within the fort the 'golden slipper' could be passed overhead or, within the field, the soldiers could be attempting to destroy this ceremonial site.

The destruction of the 'seat'

Continue the story

Indicative visuals only

AR experience

20

Biodiversity at Tullaghoge

Proposed developments



Proposed developments

The secret nature trail

Tell a new story

A secret nature corridor

In this 'biodiversity corridor', the existing posts may be reused to support new interventions that highlight the range of wildlife and plantlife around the fort.

The secret path

Page 310 of 714

Proposed developments

The secret nature trail

Tell a new story

Elements of surprise

Utilising existing end of life trees, place hidden 'guardians' – the Great Wolfhounds still watching over, for friend or foe.

All interventions to be 'set on' or 'fixed to' existing trees or wooden post fencing.

Carved end of life tree

Mini discovery points

What's growing here?

Who's living here?

Carved creatures and messages

The secret path

Carved end of life tree (Image showing a tree trunk with a red arrow pointing to a carved wolfhound figure on top)

Mini discovery points (Image showing wooden posts with carved text: "DON'T KNOW", "DON'T KNOW", "DON'T KNOW", "DON'T KNOW", "DON'T KNOW")

Mini discovery points (Image showing a circular stone carving with text: "EVER", "SOME", "FROM", "COSTA")

Carved creatures and messages (Image showing a carved wolfhound figure sitting on a tree stump)

The secret path (Image showing a person walking on a path through dense foliage)

The secret path (Image showing a path leading through a field towards a fort)

Proposed developments - Viewpoints

The secret nature trail

Tell a new story

The secret path

Viewpoint interventions

These interventions will be accompanied by viewpoints cut in the hedge — framing the surrounding areas that can be seen from the fort. From the Sperrins to the west, the Glens of Antrim and Slemish to north east and the Mournes to the south east, these views may have been both symbolic and strategic.

The Glens

The Sperrins

The Mournes

Dungannon

What would the O'Neill's have seen?

What would they not have seen?

The map features a central circular inset of the fort, a red line tracing a path, and green lines indicating viewpoints. Arrows point from labels to specific locations on the map. Inset photos show a person on a path, a landscape view, and a view through trees.

Proposed developments - Viewpoints

The secret nature trail

Tell a new story

The secret path

Viewpoints

Look into the distance

What would the O'Neill's have seen?

What would they not have seen?

Stimulate the senses

This block features a central aerial map of Tullaghoge Fort with several development points highlighted. A red line traces a path through the landscape, with a circular inset showing a closer view of a specific area. Various text boxes and arrows point to different features on the map. Surrounding the map are several photographs: a woman looking at a wooden signpost in a forest, a child using a wooden telescope, a child holding a large wooden horn, and a person walking on a path through dense foliage. A large landscape photo shows a view of the fort and surrounding fields under a cloudy sky.

The Great Hall

Proposed developments



Proposed developments



Continue the story

Bringing the Great Hall to life

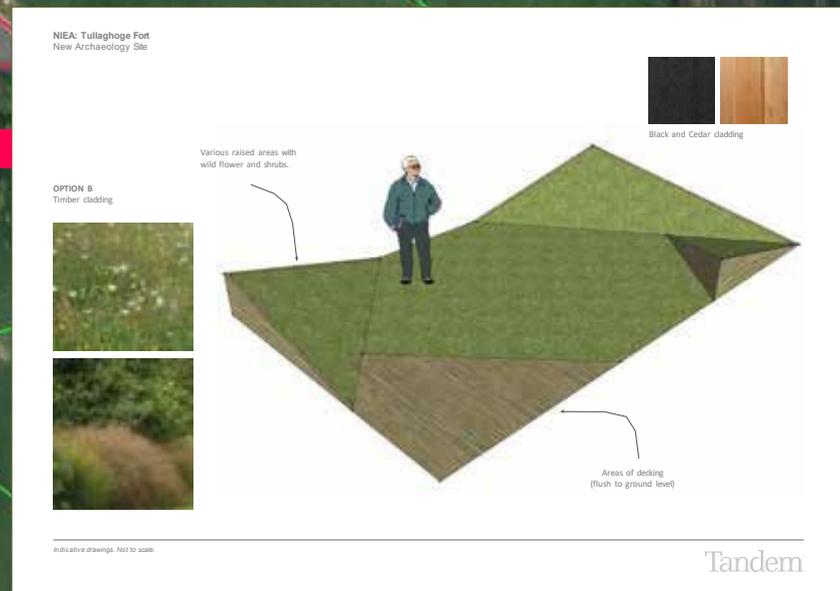
Low-impact interventions

Making the scale of the Great Hall tangible

Light touch 'echo' of the Great Hall

Raised beds 'set on' to the site of the Great Hall and replanted to differentiate from surrounding grassed areas. Creating anchor point for placement of 'AR' Great Hall and hear the sounds of the whispers, arguments and celebrations first hand.

Previous proposal



Proposed developments

Indicative background image only



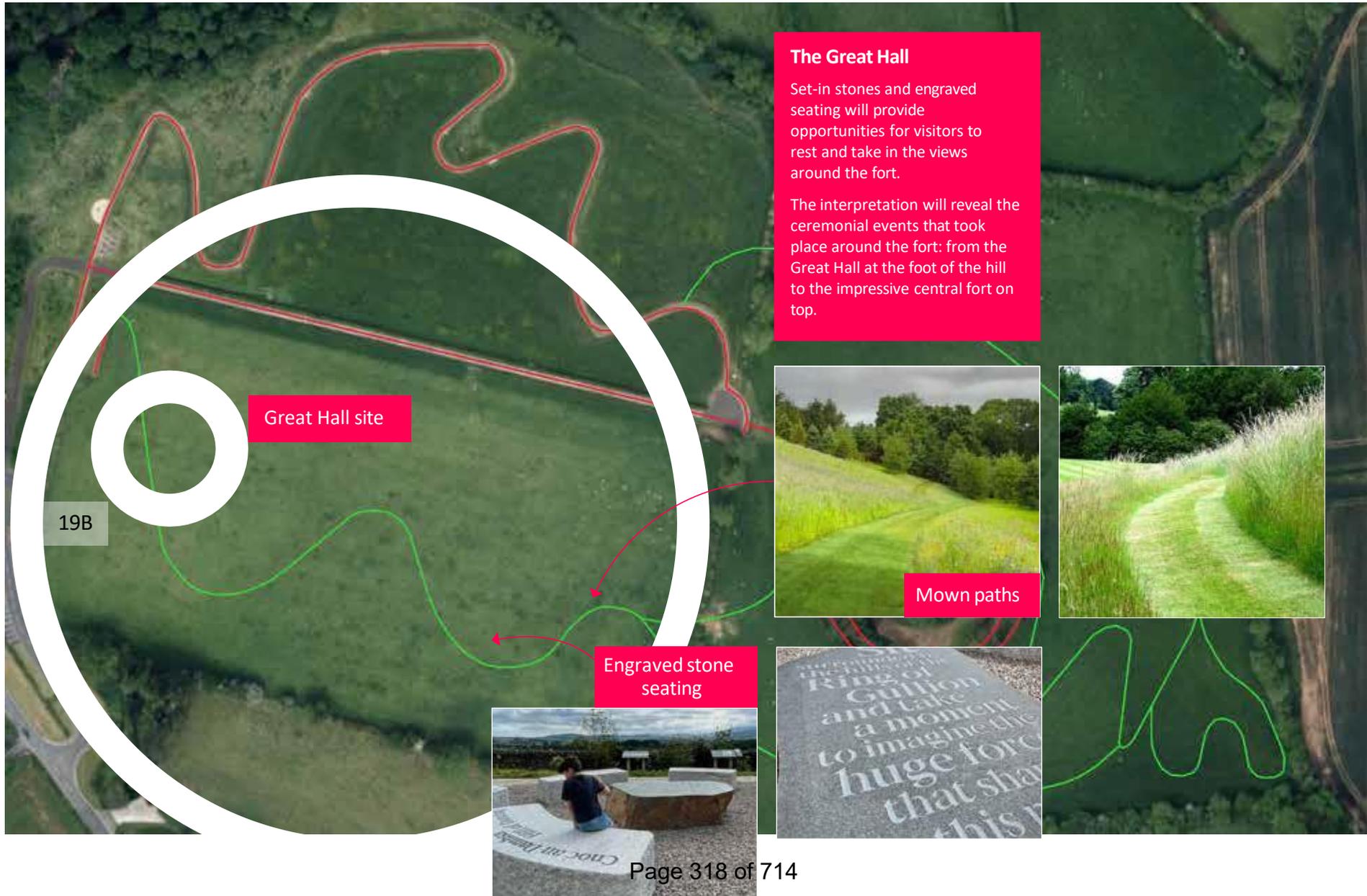
Augmented Reality reconstruction

A digital layer of interpretation

Using the existing MUDC app interface, an additional layer of interpretation could be introduced across the site on a Tullaghoge app.

A grand procession will be seen making its way up to the fort, whilst the Great Hall will be brought to life with celebrations following the inauguration ceremony.

Path extension



Overview

Dwell Times



High-level Cost Plan

	Qty	Budget Range
Additional Lecturn(s)	2	£4,000–6,000
Stone Seats	2	£15,000–25,000
Timber log seats	4	£3,000–4,500
Wooden Sculptures	5	£5,000–8,000
Viewfinders/ Interpretation Point	8	£14,000–20,000
Great Hall – Landscaping	2	£8,000–16,000
AR Content Development		£25,000–45,000
Interpretive Consultation and Design Professional fees		£15,000–25,000
Exclusions: planning, hard landscaping, contractor prelims, groundworks		

Next steps

-
- Interpretation Plan
-
- Detailed Design
-
- Technical Design
-
- Procurement
-

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Sliabh Beagh Ecotourism Feasibility Study

Work Packages 1, 2 and 3 RIBA / RIAI Stage 2 Concepts Report

DRAFT v1

November 2023

Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of
Monaghan County Council
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Mid Ulster District Council



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DRAFT

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was commissioned by Monaghan County, Mid Ulster District and Fermanagh and Omagh District Councils to determine the feasibility of developing the wider Sliabh Beagh area as an ecotourism destination. This included the identification of opportunities to enhance the existing recreation provision (walking, cycling and equestrian) to allow the area to be promoted as a multi-activity destination.

An extensive audit and gap analysis was carried out on the existing trail systems to identify opportunities to improve accessibility, connectivity, and sustainability. In total, 16.78km of recreation trails were developed to RIBA / RIAI Stage 2 (concept level) for work packages 1, 2 and 3 relating to walking, cycling and equestrian. This report outlines concept level recommendations for these opportunities in cognizance of all other work packages, client and partnership consultation, opportunities identified through extensive fieldwork and professional judgement. An online dashboard is available to view these proposals in more detail [Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com). Alternatively, a shapefile of the proposed lines is available from ORNI on request.

Council/County	Route Name	Requirements
MUDC	Favour Royal Link	New build and upgrade Large footbridge required
	Burkes Waterfall	New build and upgrade
	Fardross Equestrian Loop	New build
	Fardross Arc	New build and upgrade
	Browns Hill	New build and upgrade
	Lumfords Glen	New build Earthworks and infrastructure required
	Crockaclevan Lough	New build
FODC	Lough Navaddage	New build
	Lough Natroey	New build
	Two Loughs	New build
	Carnmore Viewpoint	New build and upgrade
	Doon Forest Loop	New build
	Tully Forest Loop	New build and upgrade
FODC/MUDC	Mullynavale Loop	Replacement stiles and waymarking only
FODC/MCC	Mullaghfad Antrawer Link	New build
MCC	Lough Antrawer	New build and upgrade Small footbridge required
	Sliabh Beagh Way	New build and upgrade
	Barratitoppy Link	New build and upgrade
	Lough Bradan Link	New build
	Penal Cross Link	New build and upgrade
	Eshgloghfin Link	New build
	Bragan Esh Link	New build
	Knockatallon Eshacrin Link	New build

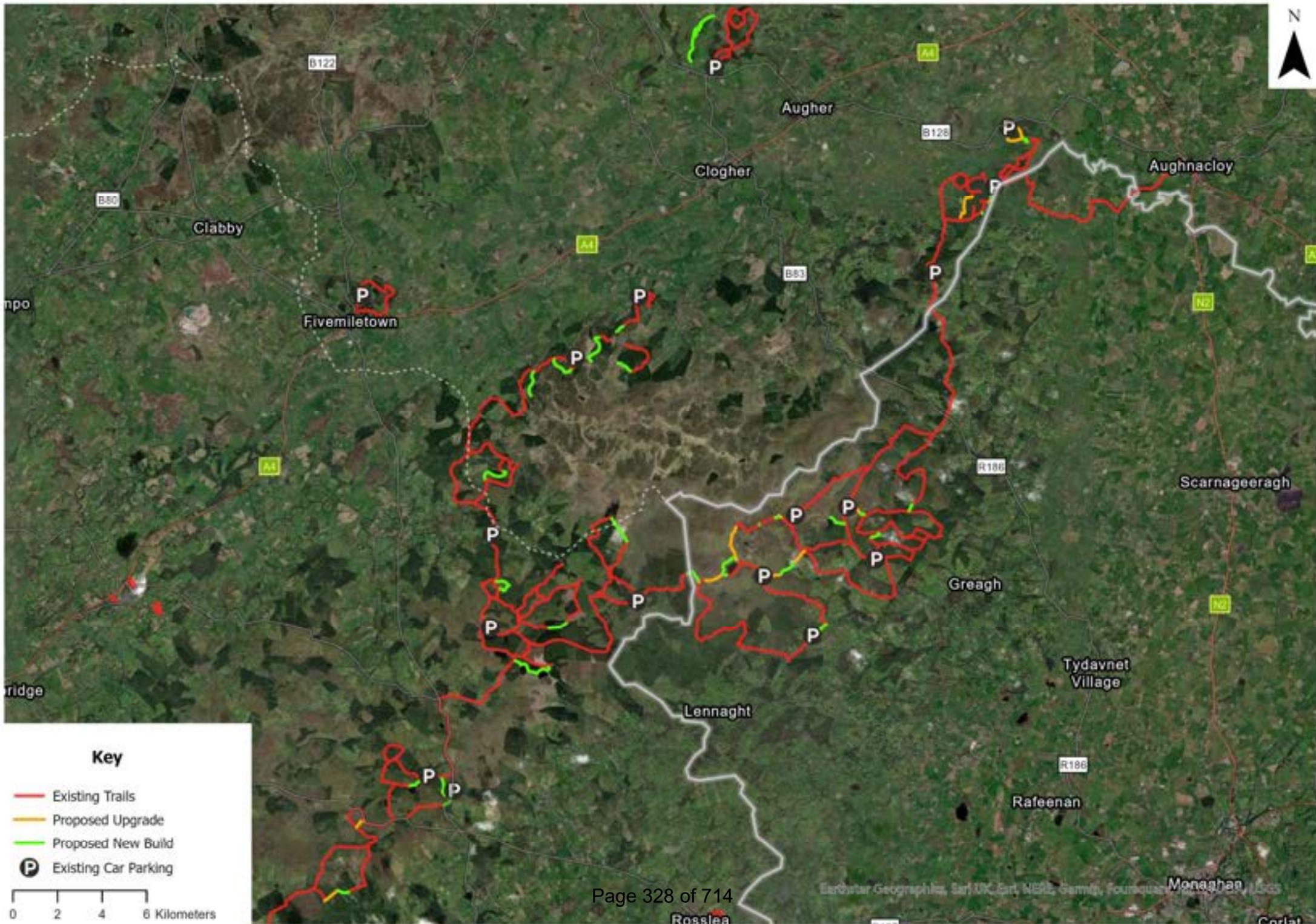


Figure 1: RIBA/RIAI Stage 2 proposed trails across the Sliabh Beagh region

2 Stage 2 Concepts

2.1 Favour Royal Link

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Favour Royal Forest
Description	Favour Royal Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with limited topography. The forest is segregated by the River Blackwater.
Landownership and Management	Favour Royal Forest is owned and managed by Forest Service NI (FSNI).
Access Points / Parking	<p>Favour Royal Forest can be accessed from two existing FSNI car parks. On the northern side of the forest there is a car park off the Favour Royal Road and on the southern side there is a car park off the Altadaven/Derrygorry Road.</p> <p>There are two informal pedestrian access points to the southern portion of the forest. One forms part of the Ulster Way through Derrygorry Forest and the other provides access from the Esker Road.</p> <p>It is proposed that these car parks are retained and upgraded as trailheads.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently one 1.3km loop walk through the forest on the northern side of the River Blackwater from Favour Royal car park, and a 2.8km loop walk through the forest on the southern side of the River Blackwater from Altadaven Road. These looped walks are currently segregated by the River Blackwater. Trailhead panels and waymarking exist at both car parks and the existing trail surface is compacted gravel.</p> <p>Installation of a pedestrian footbridge across the River Blackwater and 270m of new trail would provide connectivity between these existing looped walks and create a 5.4km network of walking trails which would significantly enhance the existing offering.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	<p>Cost of required pedestrian footbridge and planning permission.</p> <p>Flood risk due to proximity to the River Blackwater.</p>

	Proximity to a Local Wildlife Site on the northern bank of the River Blackwater within Favour Royal Forest.
Points of Interest	Within Favour Royal there is a wildflower meadow and deer lawn which can be accessed from the Favour Royal car park. South of the site along the Altnadaven Road is St Patrick's Chair and St Brigid's Well.
Rationale	<p>This section of new build and upgrade would link existing trails within Favour Royal Forest which are separated by the River Blackwater. This would extend the existing walking provision, creating longer looped walks within the forest, and provide connectivity between Favour Royal and Derrygorry Forests.</p> <p>This trail is proposed as a Category 2 multi-use trail suitable for pedestrians of mixed abilities including young children.</p>
Section Recommendations	<p>CH0-1300 upgrade of existing gravel walking trail (Category 2 multi-use trail)</p> <p>CH0-25 new build trail to footbridge (Category 2 multi-use trail)</p> <p>CH25-65 pedestrian footbridge across the River Blackwater</p> <p>CH65-310 new build trail through woodland (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p>
Infrastructure Recommendations	<p>2m wide pedestrian footbridge spanning the River Blackwater.</p> <p>Upgraded trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Favour Royal and Altadaven car parks with associated waymarking and trail furniture throughout Favour Royal Forest.</p>
Additional Studies	<p>Concept bridge design, cost estimate and planning permission.</p> <p>Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.</p>
Estimated Construction Costs	<p>1300m upgrade costing approximately £65,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>270m new build costing approximately £20,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000</p> <p>Concept bridge design inc. topographic survey and flood modelling £10,000 with capital costs up to approximately £500,000.</p>

Photographs



Figure 2: Upgrade of existing gravel walking trail



Figure 3: Pedestrian footbridge location across the River Blackwater



Figure 4: New build trail through woodland

2.2 Burkes Waterfall

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Favour Royal Forest
Description	Favour Royal Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with limited topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Favour Royal Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Favor Royal Forest can be accessed from the Altadaven Road with existing car parking provision just south of the Altadaven/Derrygorry Road.</p> <p>There is an informal pedestrian access point on the Altadaven Road on the western side of the forest with a small layby used for informal parking.</p> <p>It is proposed that this car park is retained and upgraded as a trailhead.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently a 2.7km linear walk with an additional 1.2km looped walk along existing forest roads. Sections of these walking routes form part of the Ulster Way. There are currently no trailhead panels or waymarking aside from the Ulster Way. The forest can be accessed through a kissing gate off the Altadaven Road, and the existing trail surface is compacted gravel.</p> <p>Installation of 410m of new build trail and 1520m upgrade would create a 5.4km walking loop. An additional 85m of new build trail would provide access to a point of interest, Burke's Waterfall which would significantly enhance the existing offering within the forest.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	Presence of long-established woodland i.e., planted conifer.
Points of Interest	There is a hidden waterfall within the southern portion of the forest which can be accessed via an informal desire line through the woodland.
Rationale	This section of new build trail would provide a longer loop walk option within the forest and provide formal access to Burkes Waterfall. This would enhance the existing linear walking route option and extend the offering within the forest. It would also improve connectivity to the existing car park off the

	Altadaven Road and reduce the quantity of road walking, enhancing the quality of the walk.
Section Recommendations	<p>CH0-85 new build trail following current desire line from existing forest road down to Burkes Waterfall (Category 4 walking trail)</p> <p>CH0-120 upgrade of existing gravel forest road (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>CH120-530 new build trail following desire line north to Altadaven/Derrygorry Road (Category 4 walking trail)</p> <p>CH0-1400 upgrade of existing gravel forest road to improve surface quality and drainage (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p>
Infrastructure Recommendations	<p>Viewing area with seating at Burkes Waterfall.</p> <p>Upgraded trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Altadaven car park with associated waymarking and trail furniture throughout.</p>
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	<p>1520m upgrade costing approximately £95,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>495m new build costing approximately £35,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £20,000</p>
Photographs	Provided within the MUDC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.



Figure 5: Proposed trails within Favour Royal Forest

2.3 Fardross Equestrian Loop

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Fardross Forest
Description	Fardross Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Fardross Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	Fardross Forest can be accessed from Fardross Road with existing car parking provision close to the junction of the Slatmore and Fardross Roads. There are several informal pedestrian access points where the existing forest roads enter the forest. It is proposed that a new trailhead facility is developed at Clogher Valley Horses Welcome for equestrian users.
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently no recreation provision within the proposed forest blocks within Fardross Forest. There are a series of existing linear forest roads and local quiet roads which combined with 2.5km of new build trail would provide a 12km network of equestrian trails within the forest.</p> <p>Existing access gates would need to be upgraded to enable unrestricted equestrian access using equestrian friendly gates as shown in Appendix B. The existing forest roads provide a suitable compact gravel trail for equestrian use, new build sections should be constructed to an equivalent standard.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	Sections of the proposed new build trail fall within Special Protection Area (SPA) designation as well as Priority Habitat – Peatland and a Local Wildlife Site – Little Golan.
Points of Interest	The viewpoint located at the top of the Fardross Road provides panoramic views of the Clogher Valley below.
Rationale	These sections of new build trails would link existing forest roads to form an equestrian loop suitable for the tourist market. The combination of existing forest roads and new build trails could provide 12km of equestrian trails accessed via low trafficked roads from proposed trailhead at Clogher Valley

	Horses Welcome with potential to extend this equestrian loop with a linear trail through Mullaghfad Forest for those looking a longer trek.
Section Recommendations	<p>Section 1: CH0-445 new build trail through existing forest (Cat 3 multi-use)</p> <p>Section 2: CH0-1475 new build trail through existing forest (Cat 3 multi-use)</p> <p>Section 3: CH0-300 upgrade existing farm access lane (Cat 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>Section 3: CH300-570 new build trail through existing forest (Cat 3 multi-use)</p>
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgraded trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Clogher Valley Horses Welcome with associated waymarking and trail furniture throughout, including suitable equestrian access gates.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	<p>2500m new build costing approximately £180,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £20,000</p>
Photographs	Provided within the MUDC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

2.4 Fardross Arc

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Mullaghfad Forest
Description	Mullaghfad Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Mullaghfad Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Mullaghfad Forest can be accessed from the Alderwood and Slatmore Roads. The Carelton Cycling Trail passes through the forest, with an interpretative panel and informal layby parking on the Slatmore Road. The forest can also be accessed informally from the Kell Road along a disused lane.</p> <p>It is proposed that this informal parking is developed into formal access and parking with trailhead information and interpretative signage.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	The Carelton Cycling Trail passes through the forest and the route was once part of the Ulster Way. There is a 4.3km linear gravel forest road through the forest with a 1.1km arc trail. However, this 1.1km section has since fallen into disrepair and the route is no longer signposted appropriately. It is proposed that this section is reinstated to create a 1.8km loop walk from the Slatmore Road. It is recommended that existing access gates are upgraded to enable unrestricted equestrian access and facilitate off-road cycling.
Constraints / Hazards	The existing trail is within an SPA and borders a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation. Mitigation measures may be required to ensure there is no negative impact on these designations.
Points of Interest	Panoramic views of Fermanagh, including Cuilcagh mountain.
Rationale	Reinstatement of the 1.1km section of trail which has fallen into disrepair would enhance the existing recreation opportunities within the forest by creating a short loop walk along the forest boundary, with uninterrupted views out onto the open mountain.

	Improved access points with unrestricted access would provide an extension to the proposed equestrian trails in the adjacent Fardross Forest and enable looped walking and cycling trails.
Section Recommendations	CH0-365 upgrade surface of existing forest road (Category 3 walking trail) CH365-790 new build trail on a moderate gradient (Category 3 walking trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Formal car parking and trail head panels and interpretative signage at the Slatmore Road entrance to the forest. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trails, including suitable access gates which provide unrestricted equestrian and cycling access.
Additional Studies	Car park design and planning permission. Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	365m upgrade costing approximately £20,000 (capital costs) 425m new build costing approximately £30,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the MUDC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

2.5 Browns Hill

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Mullaghfad Forest
Description	Mullaghfad Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Mullaghfad Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Mullaghfad Forest can be accessed from the Alderwood and Slatmore Roads. The Carelton Cycling Trail passes through the forest, with an interpretative panel and informal layby parking on the Slatmore Road. The forest can also be accessed informally from the Kell Road along a disused lane.</p> <p>It is proposed that this informal parking is developed into formal access and parking with trailhead information and interpretative signage.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>The Carelton Cycling Trail passes through the forest and the route was once part of the Ulster Way. There is a 4.3km linear gravel forest road through the forest with a 1.1km arc trail (refer to Fardross Arc, above).</p> <p>There is a 0.6km linear forest road spur heading south towards the open mountain. If developed sensitively, extending this spur by 0.2km up into the open mountain would provide a beautiful viewpoint with panoramic views of Fermanagh. This would provide a 2.2km linear walk from the Slatmore Road.</p> <p>There is also a disused gravel lane off the Kell Road which provides a 1.2km linear walk into the center of Mullaghfad Forest.</p> <p>It is recommended that existing access gates are upgraded to enable unrestricted equestrian access and facilitate off-road cycling.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	Extension of the forest road spur onto the open mountain would require new build trail within the SAC and SPA designations. Appropriate trail construction may involve a section of bog bridge to manage access and avoid impact to the sensitive habitat.

Points of Interest	The viewpoint located at the top of the forest road spur provides panoramic views of Fermanagh, including Cuilcagh mountain.
Rationale	<p>Formalising the desire line which extends beyond the existing forest road spur up into the open mountain provides an opportunity for walkers to access a panoramic viewpoint from Browns Hill. Any developments within this sensitive area need to be developed in consultation with NIEA to ensure the mitigations are appropriate and visitor management is employed.</p> <p>Improved access points with unrestricted access would provide an extension to the proposed equestrian trails in the adjacent Fardross Forest and enable looped walking and cycling trails.</p>
Section Recommendations	<p>CH0-225 existing forest road, no work required</p> <p>CH225-555 upgrade surface of existing forest road and improve drainage where required retaining natural character (Category 3 walking trail)</p> <p>CH555-770 new build trail on steep gradient (Category 4 walking trail)</p>
Infrastructure Recommendations	<p>Formal car parking and trail head panels and interpretative signage at the Slatmore Road entrance to the forest.</p> <p>Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trails, including suitable access gates which provide unrestricted equestrian and cycling access.</p>
Additional Studies	<p>Car park design and planning permission.</p> <p>Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.</p>
Estimated Construction Costs	<p>330m upgrade costing approximately £17,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>215m new build costing approximately £16,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000</p>

Photographs



Figure 6: Upgrade surface of existing forest road and improve drainage



Figure 7: New build trail required on steep terrain



Figure 8: Proposed trails within Fardross Forest

2.6 Lumfords Glen

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Knockmann Forest
Description	Knockmann Forest is a collection of woodlands with varying topography. The proposed sections are located along the sides of a river valley, Lumfords Glen, with steep exposed edges and river crossings.
Landownership and Management	Knockmann Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	Knockmann Forest can be accessed formally from Claremore Road at the northern and southern ends of the valley. A link should be created between Lumfords Glen and the existing trailhead at Knockmann Forest.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently a network of 5.7km of trails, predominantly using existing forest roads, within Knockmann Forest. The proposed 2.5km trail runs the length of Lumfords Glen on the east side, with a section of trail on the west side, to form a loop within the glen. The proposed trails would complement the existing trail network and visitor facilities at Knockmann which include car parking and changing places toilet facilities.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed trail runs along the east and west sides of the glen which has steep exposed edges and river crossings which will be a key constraint within the design, requiring engineering solutions to ensure a safe and robust trail.
Points of Interest	Lumfords Glen is a beautiful woodland setting with a steep sided valley, with a large waterfall at the northern end. In addition, there are several sites of interest locally including Knockmany Passage Tomb (Anya's Tomb), managed by the NIEA, which is located within Knockmann Forest.
Rationale	The addition of 2.5km of trail within Lumfords Glen would expand on the existing recreational offering at Knockmann Forest where there is existing visitor facilities and provide a unique trail within the area.
Section Recommendations	CH0-1750 new build trail along east side of river (Category 4 walking trail) CH0-750 new build trail along west side of river (Category 4 walking trail)

<p>Infrastructure Recommendations</p>	<p>Formal car parking, trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Knockmanny Forest. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail. It is recommended that an off-road link to Knockmanny Forest is explored as part of the detailed design.</p>
<p>Additional Studies</p>	<p>Feasibility study to determine appropriate engineering design solutions. Detailed design, including any additional surveys e.g., topographic, and environmental. Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.</p>
<p>Estimated Construction Costs</p>	<p>Design of engineering solutions by suitably qualified engineer to RIBA Stage 3 £25,000 (excluding additional studies which are estimated at £5,000-£7,000). 2500m new build trail cost approximately £180,000 plus engineering solutions such as steps, bridges, handrails etc. determined through design (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £20,000</p>
<p>Photographs</p>	<div> </div> <p><i>Figure 9: Existing desire lines on both sides of the river looking downstream at northern end</i></p>



Figure 10: Desire line on west side of river looking across showing steep exposed edge



Figure 11: Example of bridge and steep steps required at northern end on both sides of river



Figure 12: Example of bridge and steps required at southern end on both sides of river



Figure 13: Proposed trails at Lumfords Glen

2.7 Crockaclevan Lough

Council Area	MUDC
Location / Setting	Crocknagrally Forest
Description	Crocknagrally Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Crocknagrally Forest is predominantly owned and managed by FSNI. There is a private residence with access to Crockaclevan Lough within the centre of the forest.
Access Points / Parking	Crocknagrally Forest can be accessed formally from the Alderwood and Mullaghfad Roads. There are also several private farm lanes which link into the forest. A trailhead could be developed on the Alderwood Road.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently a 5.7km forest road loop trail through Crocknagrally Forest. The addition of a 0.85km section of new build trail would provide a shorter 3.1km loop walk taking in Crockaclevan Lough. It is recommended that existing access gates are upgraded to enable unrestricted equestrian access and facilitate off-road cycling.
Constraints / Hazards	There is a private residence with access to Crockaclevan Lough within the centre of the forest. There is a cabin and bird hide at the lake, ownership of which are unknown, angling rights held by Blessingbourne Estate.
Points of Interest	Crockaclevan Lough is a beautiful, remote, and tranquil location. Providing access and a short loop walk would significantly enhance the existing recreation offering within the forest.
Rationale	The addition of a 0.85km section of new build trail would provide a shorter 3.1km loop walk and the opportunity to extend the trail beyond the forest road onto singletrack alongside water, improving the user experience.
Section Recommendations	CH0-850 new build trail along southern side of lough, 15m back from edge of lough (Category 3 walking trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Formal car parking, trailhead panels and interpretative signage at the Alderwood Road entrance to the forest. Waymarking and trail furniture

	throughout the trails, including suitable access gates which provide unrestricted equestrian and cycling access.
Additional Studies	Car park design and planning permission. Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	850m new build costing approximately £61,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	 <p><i>Figure 14: New build trail 15m back from the edge of lough</i></p>

2.8 Lough Navaddage

Council Area	FODC
Location / Setting	Jenkin Forest
Description	Jenkin Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Jenkin Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Jenkin Forest can be accessed formally from Jenkin Road and informally from Mullaghfad and Eshnadarragh Roads.</p> <p>It is proposed that formal parking is developed at Jenkin Lough with trailhead information and interpretative signage.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently limited formal recreation provision within Jenkin Forest. There is however a short section of singletrack which forms a 3.8km loop trail from Jenkin Lough utilising existing forest roads.</p> <p>The addition of 0.75km of new build trail would create a 4.9km loop trail around Lough Navadge from the proposed trailhead.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within SPA designation.
Points of Interest	Jenkin Forest is forested upland environment containing several small loughs which provide a scenic, remote, and tranquil outdoor space.
Rationale	The addition of a 0.75km section of new build trail would provide an additional 4.9km loop around Lough Navadge from the proposed trailhead. Additional looped trails would significantly enhance the existing recreation offering within the forest and develop the forest as an activity hub. These small loops can be combined to create a series of longer multi-use trails.
Section Recommendations	CH0-750 new build trail around eastern side of lough, 15m back from edge of lough (Category 3 multi-use trail)

<p>Infrastructure Recommendations</p>	<p>Formalise car parking and install trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Jenkin Lough.</p> <p>Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail network, including suitable access gates which provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.</p>
<p>Additional Studies</p>	<p>Car park design and planning permission.</p> <p>Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.</p>
<p>Estimated Construction Costs</p>	<p>750m new build costing approximately £54,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000</p>
<p>Photographs</p>	<div> <p>The photograph shows a scenic view of Lough Navaddage, a small lake surrounded by lush greenery and trees. A blue line is drawn across the foreground and middle ground, starting from the left, moving towards the lake, and then curving around its right side. A blue arrow points to the right along the curve of the line, indicating the direction of the proposed trail. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.</p> </div> <p><i>Figure 15: Proposed new build trail around Lough Navaddage</i></p>

2.9 Lough Natroey

Council Area	FODC
Location / Setting	Jenkin Forest
Description	Jenkin Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Jenkin Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Jenkin Forest can be accessed formally from Jenkin Road and informally from Mullaghfad and Eshnadarragh Roads.</p> <p>It is proposed that formal parking is developed at Jenkin Lough with trailhead information and interpretative signage.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently limited formal recreation provision within Jenkin Forest. There is however a short section of singletrack which forms a 3.8km loop trail from Jenkin Lough utilising existing forest roads. The addition of 0.625km of new build trail would connect the existing forest roads leading to Lough Natroey to create a 7km loop trail around Lough Natroey from the proposed trailhead. It is recommended that existing access gates are upgraded to facilitate off-road cycling.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within SPA designation.
Points of Interest	Jenkin Forest is forested upland environment containing several small loughs which provide a scenic, remote, and tranquil outdoor space.
Rationale	The addition of a 0.625km section of new build trail would provide an additional 7km loop around Lough Natroey from the proposed trailhead. Additional looped trails would significantly enhance the existing recreation offering within the forest and develop the forest as an activity hub. These small loops can be combined to create a series of longer multi-use trails.
Section Recommendations	CH0-625 new build trail along southern edge (Category 3 multi-use trail)

Infrastructure Recommendations	Install trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Jenkin Lough. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail network, including suitable access gates which provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	625m new build costing approximately £45,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the FODC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

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2.10 Two Loughs

Council Area	FODC
Location / Setting	Jenkin Forest
Description	Jenkin Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Jenkin Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Jenkin Forest can be accessed formally from Jenkin Road and informally from Mullaghfad and Eshnadarragh Roads.</p> <p>It is proposed that formal parking is developed at Jenkin Lough with trailhead information and interpretative signage.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently limited formal recreation provision within Jenkin Forest. There is however a short section of singletrack which forms a 3.8km loop trail from Jenkin Lough utilising existing forest roads.</p> <p>The addition of 1.4km of new build trail would provide access to Lough Asladee and Lough Tawy and combined with existing forest roads and a section of singletrack, create a 5.6km loop trail from the proposed trailhead.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within SPA designation.
Points of Interest	Jenkin Forest is forested upland environment containing several small loughs which provide a scenic, remote, and tranquil outdoor space.
Rationale	The addition of a 1.4km section of new build trail would provide an additional 5.6km loop from the proposed trailhead connecting six small loughs. Additional looped trails would significantly enhance the existing recreation offering within the forest and develop the forest as an activity hub. These small loops can be combined to create a series of longer multi-use trails.
Section Recommendations	CH0-1400 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)

Infrastructure Recommendations	Install trailhead panels and interpretative signage at Jenkin Lough. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail network, including suitable access gates which provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	1400m new build costing approximately £100,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	<div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Figure 16: Proposed new build trail looking west</i></p> <div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Figure 17: Proposed new trail build looking east</i></p>

2.11 Mullynavale Loop

Council Area	FODC/MUDC
Location / Setting	Mullaghfad Forest
Description	Mullaghfad Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Mullaghfad Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Mullaghfad Forest can be accessed informally from Mullynavale Road. There is an existing car park off Mullynavale Road where the Sliabh Beagh Way exits the forest. It is proposed that this car park is developed with trailhead information and interpretative signage.</p> <p>Construction access can be gained using the existing forest access roads.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>There is currently no formal recreation provision within Mullaghfad Forest. The addition of 0.85km of trail combined with existing forest roads would create a 6.3km loop trail from the existing car park and proposed trailhead.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within SPA and Priority Habitat – Peatland designations.
Points of Interest	This loop trail would bring the user up into the upland environment and provide them with a view of Sliabh Beagh and the ‘3 County Hollow’.
Rationale	The addition of 0.85km of trail would create a 6.3km loop trail which would bring the user up into the upland environment and provide them with a view of Sliabh Beagh and the ‘3 County Hollow’. The development of access to the ‘3 County Hollow’ was deemed inappropriate due to the environmental sensitivities of the landscape.
Section Recommendations	No construction required, stiles and waymarking only.
Infrastructure Recommendations	Install trailhead panels and interpretative signage at the existing car park off Mullynavale Road. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail with

	viewpoint seating and interpretation at the highest point. Access gates within the forest should provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £20,000
Photographs	 <p><i>Figure 18: Proposed waymarked trail following fenceline on open hillside</i></p>  <p><i>Figure 19: Replacement stile required and waymarking</i></p>



Key

- Existing Trails
- Proposed New Build
- P** Existing Car Parking



Mapas, Microsoft

Figure 20: Proposed trails within Crocknagrally Forest, Jenkin Forest and Mullaghfad Forest

2.12 Carnmore Viewpoint

Council Area	FODC
Location / Setting	Carnmore Viewpoint
Description	Carnmore Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Carnmore Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	There is an existing car park off the Carnmore Road, it is proposed that this car park is developed with trailhead information and interpretative signage.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently an informal short loop walk from the existing car park to the viewpoint. The addition of 0.39km of new build trail could provide a short accessible loop walk around the viewpoint from the proposed trailhead.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within SPA and ASSI designations.
Points of Interest	This loop trail would provide an accessible walk with panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.
Rationale	The addition of new build and upgrade trail would create a short accessible loop trail with panoramic views.
Section Recommendations	CH0-390 new build gravel trail (Category 3 walking trail) CH0-640 upgrade existing gravel trail (Category 3 walking trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Install trailhead panels and interpretative signage at existing car park. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout with viewpoint seating.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	390m new build costing approximately £28,000 (capital costs) 640m upgrade costing approximately £32,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the FODC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

2.13 Doon Forest Loop

Council Area	FODC
Location / Setting	Doon Forest
Description	Doon Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Doon Forest is owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	Doon Forest can be accessed from the Carnmore, Drumshancorick and Corraghy Roads. There is an existing car park off the Carnmore Road at Carnmore viewpoint. It is proposed that this car park is developed with trailhead information and interpretative signage.
Trail System / Section Description	<p>The Ulster Way and Sliabh Beagh Way pass through Doon Forest and the forest roads are used informally for walking and cycling. There are angling stands at Lough Corry within Doon Forest.</p> <p>The addition of 1.975km of new build trail combined with existing forest roads and quiet country roads would create a series of loop trails of varying lengths from the proposed trailhead.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA designation.
Points of Interest	These loop trails would expand on the existing offering at Carnmore and provide a range of opportunities for walking and off-road cycling.
Rationale	The addition of 1.975km of new build trail would create a series of loops of up to 6.5km which would be suitable for walking. The sections of new build trail would provide access to Carnmore and Kimran Loughs which would complement the existing access to Lough Corry.
Section Recommendations	<p>Section 1: CH0-265 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>Section 2: CH0-1270 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>Section 3: CH0-440 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p>

Infrastructure Recommendations	Install trailhead panels and interpretative signage at the existing car park at Carnmore viewpoint. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail. Access gates should provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	1975m new build costing approximately £142,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £20,000
Photographs	Provided within the FODC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

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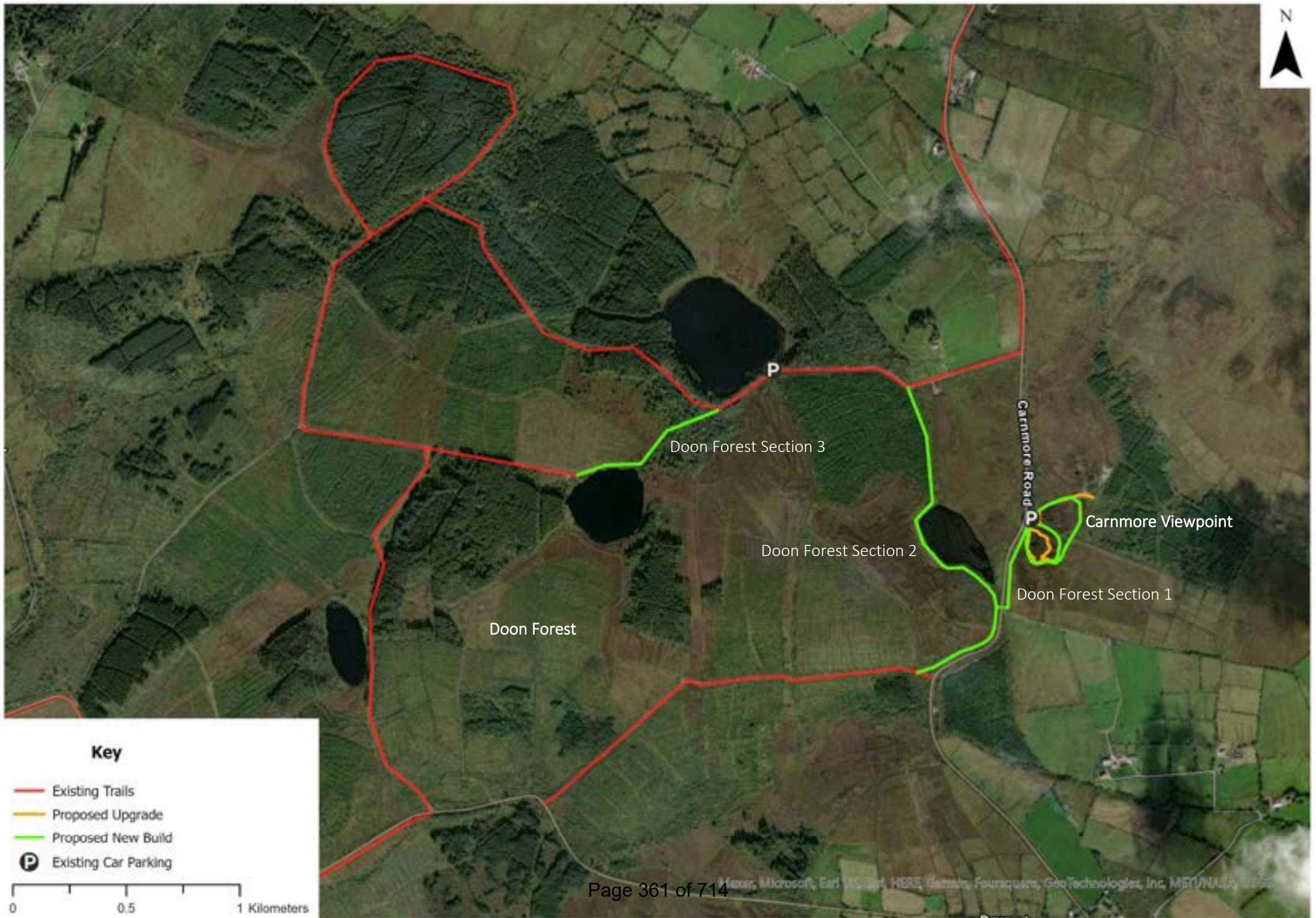


Figure 22: Proposed trails within Carnmore Forest and Doon Forest

2.14 Tully Forest Loop

Council Area	FODC
Location / Setting	Tully and Knocknalosset Forests
Description	Tully and Knocknalosset Forests consist mainly of coniferous forest blocks with varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Tully and Knocknalosset Forests are owned and managed by FSNI.
Access Points / Parking	<p>Tully and Knocknalosset Forests can be accessed from the Corraghy and Aghanglough Roads.</p> <p>The closest existing car park is approximately 4.5km away at Carnmore viewpoint. A new car park and trailhead would need to be established closer to Tully and Knocknalosset Forests to promote these forests for recreation.</p>
Trail System / Section Description	<p>The Ulster Way and Sliabh Beagh Way pass through Tully and Knocknalosset Forests and the forest roads are used informally for walking and cycling.</p> <p>The addition of 400m of new build trail and 700m of upgrade combined with existing forest roads and quiet country roads would create a series of loop trails of varying lengths and take a section of the Sliabh Beagh Way off-road.</p> <p>It is recommended that existing access gates are upgraded to facilitate off-road cycling.</p>
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA designation.
Points of Interest	Expands the forest road network and available recreation opportunities. Tully Forest can be accessed from Killyfole Lough using Mount Darby Road and Corflugh Forest.
Rationale	The addition of 400m of new build trail and 350m upgrade would create a loop trail within Tully and Knocknalosset Forests of up to 6.3km which would be suitable for walking and off-road cycling. Upgrading the existing 350m section of the old Ulster Way Route through Knocknalosset Forest would take a short section of the Sliabh Beagh Way off-road.

<p>Section</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>CH0-350 upgrade existing forest road (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>CH350-750 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>CH0-350 upgrade of old Ulster Way Route (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Establish a suitable location for a new car park and trailhead. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail. Access gates should provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.</p>
<p>Additional Studies</p>	<p>Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.</p>
<p>Estimated</p> <p>Construction Costs</p>	<p>400m new build costing approximately £36,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>700m upgrade costing approximately £45,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000</p>
<p>Photographs</p>	<div> </div> <p><i>Figure 23: Proposed new build trail through conifer plantation beyond existing forest road</i></p>

2.15 Mullaghfad Antrawer Link

Council Area	FODC/MCC
Location / Setting	Mullaghfad Forest and Eshbrack Bog
Description	Mullaghfad Forest consist mainly of coniferous forest blocks and Eshbrack Bog consists mainly of wet heath and upland blanket bog with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Mullaghfad Forest is owned and managed by FSNI and Eshbrack Bog is owned and managed by An Taisce.
Access Points / Parking	Mullaghfad Forest can be accessed from Mullynavale Road and Eshbrack Bog can be accessed from the L5030 Road. There is currently a car park where the Sliabh Beagh Way exits Mullaghfad Forest onto Mullynavale Road, and another at the top of the L5030 Road.
Trail System / Section Description	The Ulster Way and Sliabh Beagh Way travel along the northern side of Lough Antrawer, along an existing access road and then across the open hillside towards Mullaghfad Forest. The proposed new build trail will upgrade and further establish this link. It is recommended that existing access gates are upgraded to facilitate off-road cycling.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA and NHA designation.
Points of Interest	This established link connects Mullaghfad Forest to Eshbrack Bog and expands the recreation offering within the upland area whilst protecting and enhancing the biodiversity.
Rationale	The upgrade and installation of new build trail across this section of upland blanket bog would make this link accessible to more users including cyclists and help to protect the bog by establishing one trail and prevent trail braiding.
Section Recommendations	CH0-45 new build gravel trail north-south (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH45-445 new build boardwalk trail north-south (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH445-580 new build gravel trail north-south (Category 3 multi-use trail)

Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car parks outlined above to establish trailhead locations. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail. Access gates should provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	580m new build costing approximately £84,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the MCC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

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2.16 Lough Antrawer

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshbrack Bog
Description	Eshbrack Bog consists mainly of wet heath and upland blanket bog with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Eshbrack Bog is owned and managed by An Taisce.
Access Points / Parking	Eshbrack Bog can be accessed from the L5030 Road where there is currently a car park at Eshnaglogh / Barratitopy.
Trail System / Section Description	The Ulster Way and Sliabh Beagh Way travel along the northern side of Lough Antrawer. The proposed new build trail will upgrade and further establish this trail to make it accessible to more users.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA and NHA designation.
Points of Interest	This trail provides a looped walk around Lough Antrawer and provides access to the upland area whilst protecting and enhancing the biodiversity.
Rationale	The upgrade and installation of new build trail across this section of upland blanket bog would make this link accessible to more users and help to protect the bog by establishing one trail and prevent trail braiding.
Section Recommendations	CH0-530 upgrade existing access road west-east (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH530-570 new build gravel trail west-east (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH570-1275 new build bog bridge trail west-east (Category 3 walking trail) CH570-725 new build gravel trail west-east (Category 3 multi-use trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park at Eshnaglogh / Barratitopy to establish a trailhead. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail. Access gates should provide unrestricted off-road cycling access.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.

Estimated Construction Costs	<p>530m upgrade costing approximately £26,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>880m new build costing approximately £96,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>1no. wooden footbridge required £10,000 (capital costs)</p> <p>Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000</p>
Photographs	<p>Provided within the MCC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.</p>

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2.17 Sliabh Beagh Way

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshbrack Bog
Description	Eshbrack Bog consists mainly of wet heath and upland blanket bog with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Eshbrack Bog is owned and managed by An Taisce.
Access Points / Parking	Eshbrack Bog can be accessed from the L5030 and Eshnaglogh Roads. There is currently a car park at Eshnaglogh / Barratitoppy at the top of the L5030.
Trail System / Section Description	The Ulster Way and Sliabh Beagh Way cross the upland blanket bog between the Eshnaglogh Road and Lough Antrawer. The proposed new build trail will upgrade and further establish this trail to make it accessible to more users.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA and NHA designation.
Points of Interest	These trail upgrades will enhance access to the upland area whilst protecting and enhancing the biodiversity.
Rationale	The installation of new build bog bridge sections across the upland blanket bog would help to protect the bog by establishing one trail to prevent trail braiding and allow damaged parts of the bog to recover by removing footfall.
Section Recommendations	<p>CH0-1000 upgrade existing access road south-north (Cat 3 multi-use trail)</p> <p>CH1000-1165 new build bog bridge west-east (Category 3 walking trail)</p> <p>CH1785-1840 new build bog bridge west-east (Category 3 walking trail)</p> <p>CH2250-2410 new build bog bridge west-east (Category 3 walking trail)</p> <p>CH2410-2660 upgrade existing access road (Category 3 multi-use trail)</p>
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park at Eshnaglogh / Barratitoppy to establish a trailhead. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.

Estimated Construction Costs	1090m upgrade costing approximately £55,000 (capital costs) 380m new build costing approximately £54,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the MCC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

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2.18 Barratitoppy Link

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshbrack Bog / Eshnaglogh Forest
Description	Eshbrack Bog consists mainly of wet heath and upland blanket bog and Eshnaglogh Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Eshbrack Bog is owned and managed by An Taisce and Eshnaglogh Forest is owned and managed by Coillte.
Access Points / Parking	Eshbrack Bog can be accessed from the L5030 and Eshnaglogh Forest can be accessed from the Eshnaglogh Road. There is currently a car park at Eshnaglogh / Barratitoppy at the top of the L5030.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently an old farm lane which extends from the L5030 east to an abandoned farmhouse, and a forest access road which extends from the Eshnaglogh Road west to the start of the forest block. There is currently no link between the two disused access roads. The proposed new build trail will upgrade these existing disused access roads and establish a link between them.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA and partially within a NHA designation.
Points of Interest	This new build section of trail will provide a link between these existing disused access roads which can be used by a variety of users for recreation.
Rationale	The upgrade of existing disused access roads and installation of new build boardwalk and gravel trail will provide a link between the L5030 and Eshnaglogh Roads which can be used by a variety of recreation users including cyclists.
Section Recommendations	CH0-490 upgrade existing access road west-east (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH490-1090 new build trail west-east (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH1090-1520 upgrade existing access road west-east (Cat 3 multi-use trail)

Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park at Eshnaglogh / Barratitoppy to establish a trailhead. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	920m upgrade costing approximately £46,000 (capital costs) 600m new build costing approximately £88,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the MCC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

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2.19 Lough Bradan Link

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshbrack Bog
Description	Eshbrack Bog consists mainly of wet heath and upland blanket bog with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	This section of Eshbrack Bog is owned and managed by Coillte.
Access Points / Parking	Lough Bradan can be accessed from the L11356 Road with car parking nearby at the Penal Cross.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently no formal access to Lough Bradan. The proposed new build trail will provide a formal access.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA and partially within a NHA designation.
Points of Interest	This new build trail will facilitate access to Lough Bradan whilst protecting and enhancing the biodiversity.
Rationale	The installation of new build trail could help to protect the bog by establishing one trail to prevent trail braiding.
Section Recommendations	CH0-470 new build trail (Category 3 walking trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park at the Penal Cross to establish a trailhead. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	470m new build costing approximately £34,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000

Photographs



Figure 25: Proposed new build trail down to Lough Bradan



Figure 26: Proposed new build trail 15m back from the edge of Lough Bradan

2.20 Penal Cross Link

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshbrack Bog and Eshgloghfin Forest
Description	This section of Eshbrack Bog consists mainly of wet heath and cutover bog and Eshgloghfin Forest comprises mainly of coniferous forest blocks with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Landownership on this section of Eshbrack Bog is unknown. Eshgloghfin Forest is owned and managed by Coillte.
Access Points / Parking	The Penal Cross can be accessed from the L11356 Road with car parking at the highest vantage point above the Penal Cross.
Trail System / Section Description	Currently access down to the Penal Cross and promoted walking trails within Eshgloghfin Forest, proposed trail will provide formal link between these trails.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA designation.
Points of Interest	This new build trail will provide a link between existing promoted trails featuring the Penal Cross and Mass Rock.
Rationale	This new build trail will provide a link between existing promoted trails which will extend the overall recreation offering within the area.
Section Recommendations	CH0-100 upgrade existing access lane (Category 3 multi-use trail) CH100-300 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park at the Penal Cross to establish a trailhead. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	100m upgrade costing approximately £5,000 (capital costs) 200m new build costing approximately £15,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000
Photographs	Provided within the MCC RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report.

2.21 Eshgloghfin Link

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshgloghfin Forest
Description	Eshgloghfin Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Eshgloghfin Forest is owned and managed by Coillte.
Access Points / Parking	Eshgloghfin Forest can be accessed by the L10011 and L50501 Roads. There is currently car parking on the L10011 Road at the Esh Walk trailhead.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently a 9km promoted looped walk within Eshgloghfin Forest with an additional 400m walk following a small stream to 'Poll an Aifrin' the Mass Rock. The proposed new build trail would provide a link from the Mass Rock up onto the existing forest road above to create an additional loop walk.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA designation.
Points of Interest	This new build trail will provide a link between 'Poll an Aifrin' and the forest road above to create an additional loop walk.
Rationale	This new build trail will provide an additional promotable looped walk utilising the network of existing forest roads and the 'Poll an Aifrin' trail.
Section Recommendations	CH0-250 new build trail (Category 3 walking trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park and trailhead on the L10011 Road. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	250m new build costing approximately £18,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000

Photographs



Figure 27: Proposed extension of 'Poll an Aifrin' trail

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2.22 Bragan Esh Link

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Eshgloghfin Forest
Description	Eshgloghfin Forest consists mainly of coniferous forest blocks with moderately varying topography along the proposed sections.
Landownership and Management	Eshgloghfin Forest is owned and managed by Coillte.
Access Points / Parking	Eshgloghfin Forest can be accessed by the L10011 and L50501 Roads. There is currently car parking on the L10011 Road at the Esh Walk trailhead.
Trail System / Section Description	There is currently a 9km promoted looped walk within Eshgloghfin Forest. The proposed new build trail would provide a link into the northern forest block which would extend the overall recreation offering.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within a SPA designation.
Points of Interest	This new build trail will provide a link between two forest blocks which would extend the overall recreation offering within the area.
Rationale	This new build trail will provide an additional promotable looped walk utilising the northern forest block, L11353, L11354 and proposed Penal Cross link.
Section Recommendations	CH0-250 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing car park and trailhead on the L10011 Road. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	250m new build costing approximately £18,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000

Photographs



Figure 28: Proposed new built trail linking coniferous forest blocks

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2.23 Knockatallon Eshacrin Link

Council Area	MCC
Location / Setting	Land adjacent to the L1003 Road.
Description	Private farmland adjacent to a busy road.
Landownership and Management	Private land.
Access Points / Parking	Existing car parking and trailhead at Knockatallon Hotel.
Trail System / Section Description	There are currently a series of four promoted looped walks within the area referred to as the Knockatallon Looped Walks varying in length from 6-10km.
Constraints / Hazards	The proposed new build trail falls within private land.
Points of Interest	Knockatallon Looped Walks will provide a variety of walking opportunities of varying lengths within the Sliabh Beagh region.
Rationale	This section of new build trail would provide an off-road link from Knockatallon Hotel to the L5030 Road which would increase safety for all trail users.
Section Recommendations	CH0-375 new build trail (Category 3 multi-use trail)
Infrastructure Recommendations	Upgrade of existing trailhead at the Knockatallon Hotel. Waymarking and trail furniture throughout the trail.
Additional Studies	Detailed trail design, trail prescriptions and planning permission.
Estimated Construction Costs	375m new build costing approximately £27,000 (capital costs) Trail furniture and waymarking costing approximately £10,000

Photographs



Figure 29: Proposed new build trail along hedge line

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Figure 30: Proposed trails across Eshbrack Bog, Barratitoppy and Eshgloghfin Forest

3 Stage 3 Proposals

The scope of this project included the identification of opportunities to enhance the existing recreation provision (walking, cycling and equestrian) to allow the area to be promoted as a multi-activity destination. Following an extensive audit and gap analysis which was carried out on the existing trail system, a total of 16.78km of recreation trails were developed to RIBA / RIAI Stage 2 (concept level).

The rationale for how these trails were shortlisted is detailed below. The focus within this project has been to maximise the potential for development and promotion of walking loops, a long-distance cycling route, shorter cycling loops and equestrian trails by utilising existing trails and forest roads within public land where possible and improving connectivity through short new build sections. The region was considered holistically with a focus on maximising the multi-activity potential within the scope of the project; to progress priority walking and cycling trails up to a total of 5km to RIBA Stage 3 and prepare trail construction prescriptions. However, a total of 8.90km were shortlisted to progress to RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 (shovel ready) as these were seen as strategically important in creating a multi-activity destination across the three counties/council areas.

County/Council	Route Name	Trail Required	Stage 3	Rationale
MUDC	Favour Royal Link	270m new build 1300m upgrade Large footbridge	No	Design of footbridge would require flood modelling, flood risk assessment and a topographic survey which is outside of the scope of this study. Due to flood risk, an engineer has advised that longer ramps than usual would be required to access the bridge and that the bridge would need to be raised to a level that is 600mm above the Q100 water level, resulting in a potentially expensive bridge. New build trail is dependent on a footbridge to create a link between forest blocks. Due to the potential cost of the bridge it was determined that this option would not provide value for money to the client and therefore it was not selected to be progressed at this time.
	Burkes Waterfall	495m new build 1520m upgrade	Yes	Installation of 410m new build trail and 1520m upgrade would create a 5.4km walking loop. An additional 85m of new build trail would provide access to a point of interest, Burke's Waterfall, significantly enhancing the existing trail network.
	Fardross Equestrian Loop	2500m new build	Yes	Installation of 2500m new build trail combined with existing forest roads could provide 12km of equestrian trails accessed via low trafficked roads. This trail could begin at Clogher Valley Horses Welcome where there is potential for equestrian hire.
	Fardross Arc	425m new build 365m upgrade	Yes	Installation of 425m new build trail and 365m upgrade would reinstate an existing trail which has fallen into disrepair through lack of maintenance and create a short loop walk along the forest boundary with beautiful views across the open mountain.

	Browns Hill	215m new build 330m upgrade	No	Trail requires new build trail within SPA and SAC designations and is likely to have a negative impact on the surrounding habitat. Similar views can be gained from the Fardross Arc trail.
	Lumfords Glen	2500m new build Engineering design	No	Installation of 2500m new build trail through Lumfords Glen would provide a unique trail through the glen and extend the existing network at Knockmanny Forest. However, significant earthworks and infrastructure is required to make this trail safe which will require engineering design and additional studies which are outside of the scope of this study. It is recommended that a feasibility study and engineering design is developed for this trail which has significant potential and would complement the proposed network.
	Crockaclevan Lough	850m new build	No	Installation of 850m new build trail would provide an additional 3.1km loop walk within Crocknagrally Forest. However, due to the existing network of trails within Crocknagrally Forest, this trail was not selected for progression.
FODC	Lough Navaddage	750m new build	No	Installation of 750m new build trail would provide an additional 4.9km loop around Lough Navaddage from the proposed trailhead at Lough Jenkin. However, due to the existing network of trails within Jenkin Forest, this trail was not selected for progression.
	Lough Natroey	625m new build	Yes	Installation of 625m new build trail would provide an additional 7.0km loop around Lough Natroey from the proposed trailhead at Lough Jenkin. This short section of new build would significantly expand the network within Jenkin Forest and create a series of off-road cycling loops of varying distances.

	Two Loughs	1400m new build	No	Installation of 1400m new build trail would provide an additional 5.6km loop from the proposed trailhead at Lough Jenkin. However, due to the existing network of trails within Jenkin Forest, this trail was not selected for progression.
	Carnmore Viewpoint	390m new build 640m upgrade	Yes	Installation of 390m of new build trail and 640m upgrade would create a series of short loop walks with panoramic views to enhance the existing recreation offering.
	Doon Forest Loop	1975m new build	Yes	Installation of 1975m new build trail would create a series of loops of up to 6.5km which would be suitable for walking. The sections of new build trail would provide access to Carnmore and Kimran Loughs which would complement the existing access to Lough Corry.
	Tully Forest Loop	400m new build 700m upgrade	No	Installation of 400m new build trail would create a loop trail within Tully and Knocknalosset Forests of up to 6.3km which would be suitable for walking and off-road cycling. However, due to the landscape and potential within Doon Forest, Carnmore Viewpoint and Jenkin Forest, this trail was not selected for progression within this project.
FODC/ MUDC	Mullynavale Loop	Waymarking	N/A	No planning required as no new build trail recommended. Upgrade of existing stiles required and installation of waymarking and interpretive signage to create a 6.3km loop trail which would allow the visitor to experience the upland environment and provide them with a view of Sliabh Beagh and the '3 County Hollow' without impacting on the sensitivities of the landscape.

FODC/ MCC	Mullaghfad Antrawer Link	580m new build	Yes	Installation of 580m new build trail across this section of upland blanket bog would enhance the existing Sliabh Beagh Way and make this link accessible to more users including cyclists as well as help to protect the bog by establishing one trail to prevent trail braiding and allow the bog to recover by removing footfall.
MCC	Lough Antrawer	880m new build 530m upgrade Small footbridge	Yes	Installation of 880m new build trail across this section of upland blanket bog would enhance the existing Sliabh Beagh Way and make this link accessible to more walkers as well as help to protect the bog by establishing one trail to prevent trail braiding and allow the bog to recover by removing footfall.
	Sliabh Beagh Way	380m new build 1090m upgrade	Yes	Installation of 380m new build bog bridge sections along the existing Sliabh Beagh Way across the upland blanket bog would help to protect the bog by establishing one trail to prevent trail braiding and allow the bog to recover by removing footfall.
	Barratitoppy Link	600m new build 920m upgrade	Yes	Installation of 600m new build and 920m upgrade of existing disused access roads would provide a multi-use link between the L5030 and Eshnaglogh Roads, providing an alternative to the Sliabh Beagh Way across the upland blanket bog at this location for cyclists.
	Lough Bradán Link	470m new build	No	Installation of 470m new build trail would provide a linear trail to Lough Bradán. However, upgrades to the existing Sliabh Beagh Way and linkages were prioritised within MCC to maximise the potential trail network within the scope of the project.

Penal Cross Link	200m new build 100m upgrade	Yes	Installation of 200m new build and 100m upgrade would provide a link from the Penal Cross into Eshgloghfin Forest which currently has 9km of promoted trails, the Knockatalon Looped Walks, to expand the existing trail network.
Eshgloghfin Link	250m new build	No	Installation of 250m new build trail would extend the existing 'Poll an Aifrin' trail to connect it to an existing forest road. However, upgrades to the existing Sliabh Beagh Way and linkages were prioritised within MCC to maximise the potential trail network within the scope of the project.
Bragan Esh Link	250m new build	No	Installation of 250m new build trail would provide a connection between Eshgloghfin Forest and the L11353 Road. However, upgrades to the existing Sliabh Beagh Way and linkages were prioritised within MCC to maximise the potential trail network within the scope of the project.
Knockatallon Eshacrin Link	375m new build	No	Installation of 375m new build trail would provide an off-road connection between Knockatalon and L5030 Road Eshgloghfin Forest and the L11353 Road. However, upgrades to the existing Sliabh Beagh Way and linkages were prioritised within MCC to maximise the potential trail network within the scope of the project.

4 Appendices

4.1 Appendix A – Trail Category Descriptions

Key trail attributes	Category 2 Multi-Use Trail
Description	<p>These are trails that are accessible to a wide range of users and abilities but NOT ALL users due to issues relating to trail gradients, trail surfaces and trail features. Users include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians of mixed abilities including young children and some baby buggies • Cyclists of all abilities other than very young children or bikes with stabilizers or wheels less than 400mm • Category Two Multi Use Trails are not suitable for those of limited mobility or with impaired vision
Width	<p>Refer to Section Information.</p> <p>Optimal width 1.8m</p>
Surface	Consistent sealed surfaces and can include asphalt and compacted stone or gravel
Gradients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum average gradient - not more than 5% • Maximum absolute gradient - not more than 10% for more than 50m
Lines of Sight	Minimum 30m
Trail Features	<p>Small level changes of not more than 60mm deep and not less than 300mm width.</p> <p>Grade reversals of not less than 10m in length and not more than 1m depth. Bridges must be not less than 2m wide and must have handrails throughout</p> <p>Category Two Multi Use Trails should not include steps.</p>
Suitable for	All users

The photo below shows a Category 2 Multi-Use Trail. Note the wide flat trail with good lines of site.



Key trail attributes		Category 3 Multi-Use Trail
Description	<p>These are trails that are less accessible than both Category One and Category Two Multi Use Trails and are therefore more suited to specific users and activities. Category Three Multi Use Trails are suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians – walkers and runners of mixed but NOT ALL abilities. • Cyclists – cyclists of mixed abilities using off road mountain bikes only. • Equestrians – of all abilities. <p>Category Three trails are not suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those of limited mobility or impaired vision. • Those with a standard child’s pushchair. • Bikes with wheels less than 50mm, tag-alongs, trailers, or child carriers. 	
Width	<p>Refer to Section Information.</p> <p>Optimal width - 1.5m</p>	
Surface	<p>Variable but stable surfaces can be slightly uneven and include some loose material. Surfaces may include compacted stone and gravel, soil, grass, sand, and mud.</p>	
Gradients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum average gradient - not more than 8% • Maximum absolute gradient - not more than 15% for more than 300m 	
Lines of Sight	<p>Minimum 20m</p>	
Trail Features	<p>These trails can include level changes such as steps, roots, rocks, potholes, water bars and drains. Level changes must not exceed 150mm height in relation to pedestrian only trails and be not more than 50mm in relation to all other trails including cycling and equestrian trails.</p> <p>Grade reversals not less than 4m in length and not more than 1m depth.</p> <p>Timber boardwalks of not less than 1200mm width and not more than 300mm height above ground level.</p> <p>Bridges should be not less than 1200mm width with handrails throughout.</p>	
Suitable for	<p>All users</p>	
<p>Examples of Category Three trails may be found in country and forest parks but are less likely to be found in urban or semi-urban settings. The photo below is an example of a purpose-built Category Three Multi Use Trail within Castleward, County Down. In this case the trail has been designed for walkers and off-road cyclists. Note the limited clearance between the trees and the relatively flat trail surface.</p>		



Key trail attributes	
Category 4 Walking Trail	
Description	<p>Category Four Walking Trails have variable gradients and surfaces and may be found in a very wide variety of environments including more remote upland sites.</p> <p>These are trails where access is more restricted by issues such as gradients, trail surfaces and the nature and size of trail features. This means these trails may not be suitable for use by all user groups at the same time. Category Four Walking Trails are suitable for the following users only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians – mixed ability walkers and runners <p>Category Four Multi Use Trails are not suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-road cyclists • Equestrians – leisure and endurance riders • Those with limited mobility or impaired vision • Off road cyclists using bikes other than mountain bikes - not tag-alongs, trailers, child seats and stabilizers • Those with baby buggies • Novice equestrians
Width	<p>Refer to Section Information.</p> <p>Optimal width - Minimum 600mm wide Maximum 1.2m wide</p>
Surface	<p>Very variable and uneven including loose material, rocks, mud, gravel, soil, roots, grass, and other vegetation. Surfaces may change suddenly and vary over short distances.</p>
Gradients	<p>Average gradients of 10%, maximum gradients should not exceed 20% for not more than 50m.</p>
Lines of Sight	<p>Minimum 15m</p>
Trail Features	<p>These trails can feature unexpected and sudden level changes caused by steps, roots, rocks, ditches, drains and water bars of not more than 300mm in relation to pedestrian only trails.</p> <p>Trails should include obstructions to prevent use by other trail users as shown in photographs below.</p> <p>Turns of up to 180 degrees.</p> <p>Grade reversals of not less than 2.5m length and not more than 1.5m depth.</p> <p>Boardwalks not less than 600mm wide and not more than 1500mm high above ground level.</p> <p>Bridges should be not less than 1m wide and should have handrails throughout if more than 1500mm high above ground level.</p> <p>May feature encroaching vegetation and have limited clearance in relation to trees etc.</p>

Suitable for

Walkers only

The photographs below show examples of purpose-built Category Four Walking Trails. Note the narrow trail and the level changes as well as the uneven surfaces and obstacles.

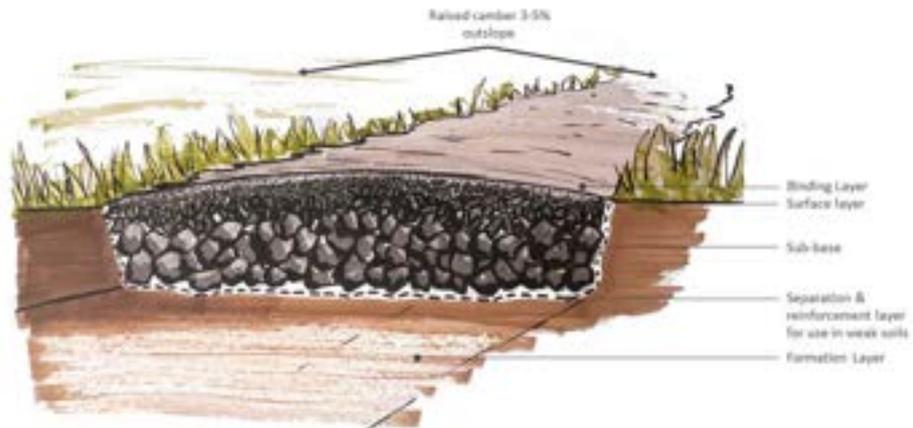


4.2 Appendix B – Infrastructure Specifications

Infrastructure Item	Detail
<p>Trailhead Information Panel</p> <p>To be supplied by client</p> <p>Installation only by contractor</p>	<p>For information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trailhead information panel - 980mm x 720mm in a hardwood frame. 5mm panels will be full colour, aluminium with scratch resistant enamel resin coating, UV, water and heat resistant (Dibond or Primadura or similar). - Each panel requires 2No. 100mm x 75mm x 1.75m support post and 2No. 75mm x 50mm x 475mm bearers in pressure treated UK-grown FSC oak. - In concrete foundations (to a depth of 700mm). <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>Waymarker posts</p> <p>To be supplied and installed by contractor.</p>	<p>For information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waymarker posts (not routed) at the junction of trails. - Pressure treated UK-grown FSC approved oak. - Dimensions 125mm x 125mm x 1400mm with pointed tops. - In concrete foundations. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>

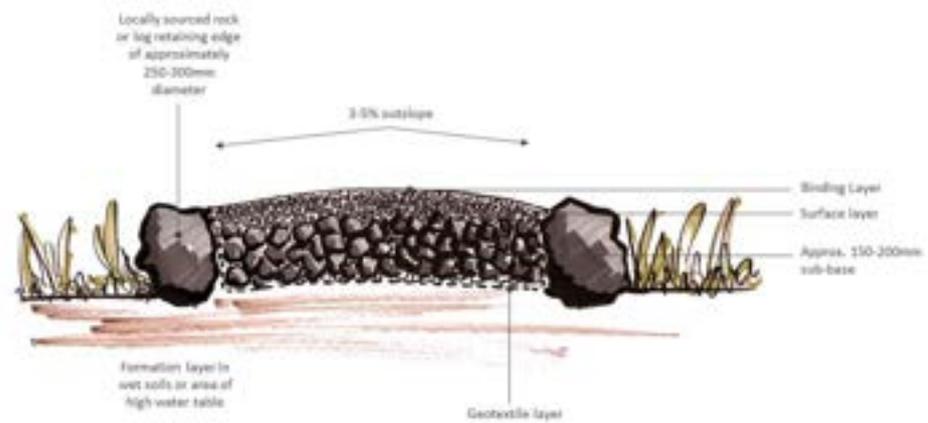
Typical raised
camber
formation

Trail formation & raised camber

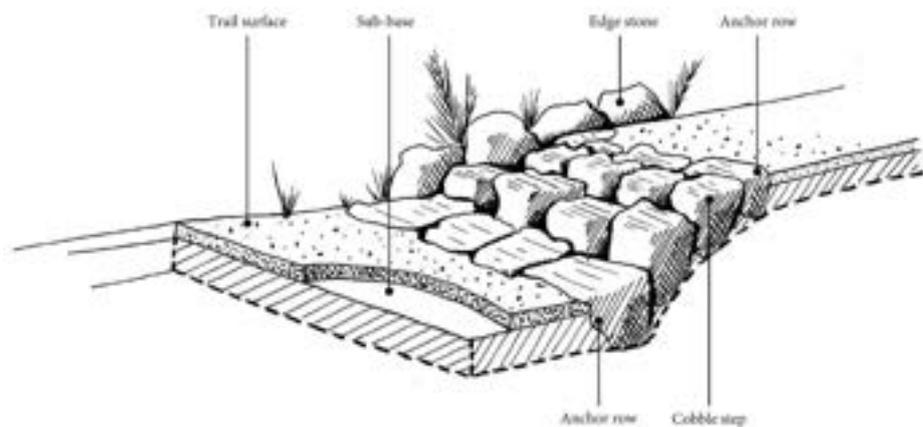


Typical Raised
causeway
formation

Raised causeway

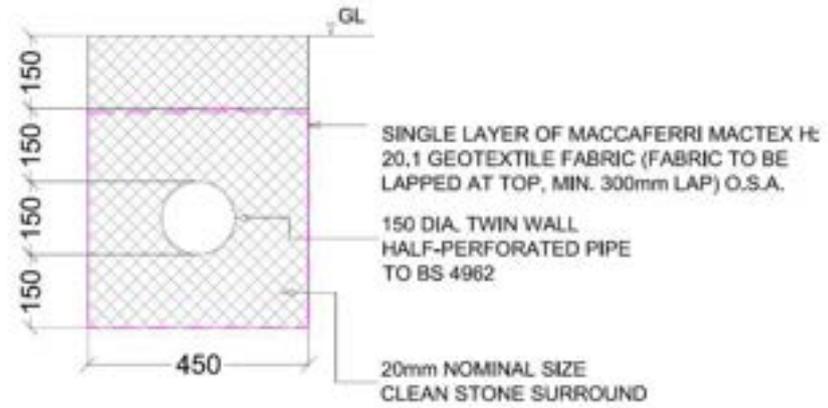


Typical stone
step formation



Typical
culvert/topside
ditch
construction
detail with
stone headwall

To be identified by contractor and agreed with client.



Typical culvert / topside ditch build up



Stone headwall example side view



Stone headwall example path view



Stone headwall example side view

Typical
footbridge
construction



Example stone
water bars



Example restrictive access gate to facilitate off-road cycling



Example restrictive access gate to facilitate equestrian use (including locking post)



Sliabh Beagh Ecotourism Feasibility Study

Work Packages 1, 2 and 3 RIBA Stage 3 Trail Prescriptions Report

Mid Ulster District Council Area

Draft v1

November 2023

Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of
Mid Ulster District Council



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1 INTRODUCTION

In 2023, Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was commissioned by Monaghan County, Mid Ulster District and Fermanagh and Omagh District Councils to determine the feasibility of developing the wider Sliabh Beagh area as an ecotourism destination. This included the identification of opportunities to enhance the existing recreation provision (walking, cycling and equestrian) to allow the area to be promoted as a multi-activity destination.

An extensive audit and gap analysis was carried out on the existing trail systems to identify opportunities to improve accessibility, connectivity, and sustainability. In total, 16.78km of new recreation trails were developed to RIBA / RIAI Stage 2 (concept level) – these are outlined within the document Work Packages 1, 2 and 3 – RIBA / RIAI Stage 2 Concepts Report. Of these, a total of 8.90km were shortlisted to progress to RIBA / RIAI Stage 3 (shovel ready). This report outlines construction prescriptions for those shortlisted trails and linkages within Mid Ulster District Council. These are summarized in the following table and overleaf in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

An online dashboard is available to view these proposals in more detail [Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study \(arcgis.com\)](#). Alternatively, a shapefile of the proposed lines is available from ORNI on request.

Council / County	Trail Name Forest Name	Section ID
Mid Ulster District Council	Burkes Waterfall Favour Royal Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 1 – 410m 1.5m wide gravel trail with steps Section 3 – 85m 1.5m wide gravel trail with steps
Mid Ulster District Council	Fardross Arc Fardross Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 2 – 425m 1.5m wide gravel trail
Mid Ulster District Council	Fardross Equestrian Fardross Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 1 – 1475m 2.5m wide gravel trail Section 2 – 300m 3.0m wide gravel trail Section 3 – 270m 2.5m wide gravel trail Section 4 – 445m 2.5m wide gravel trail

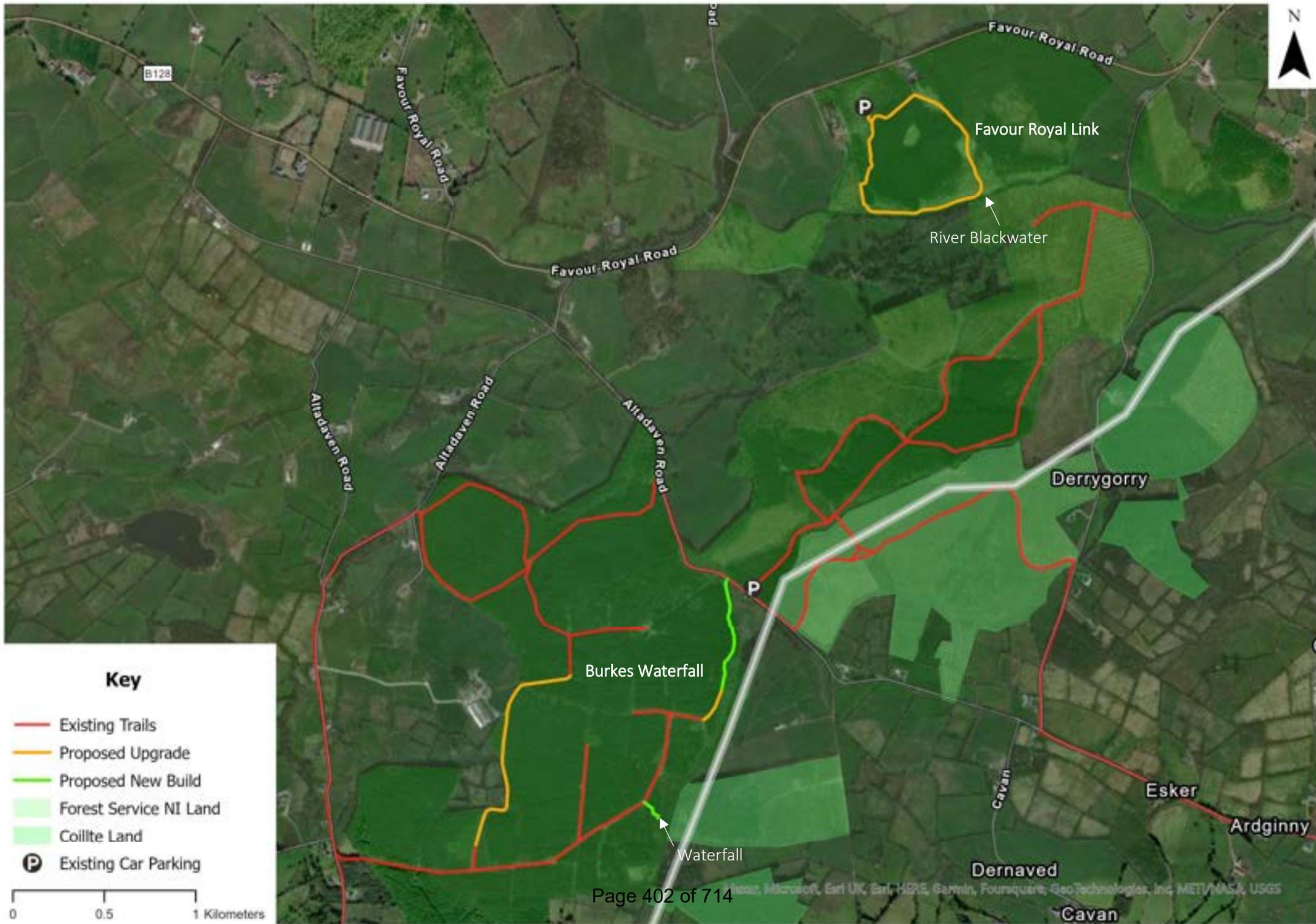
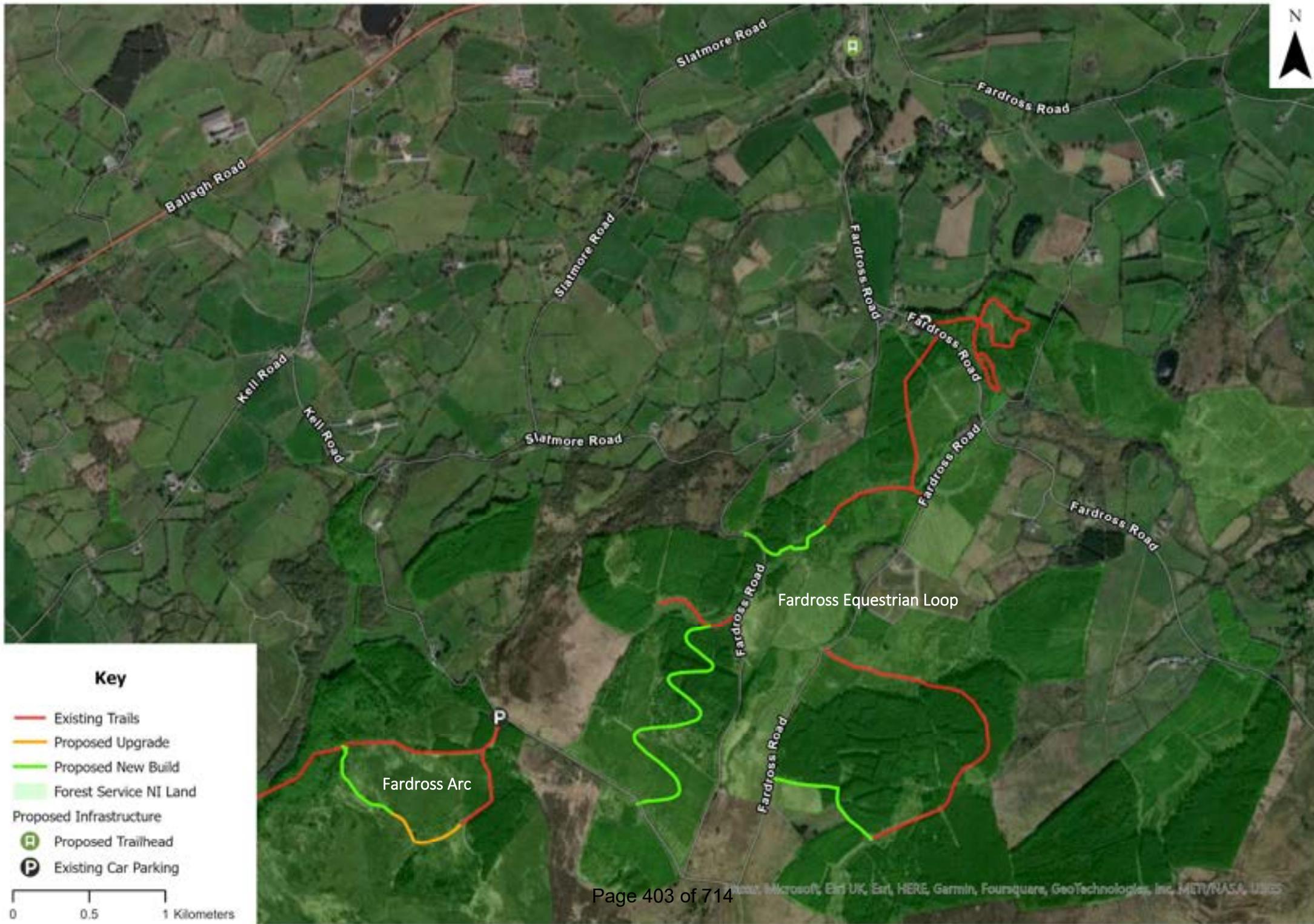


Figure 1: Favour Royal Forest Proposals Overview



Key

- Existing Trails
- Proposed Upgrade
- Proposed New Build
- Forest Service NI Land
- Proposed Infrastructure
- P Proposed Trailhead
- P Existing Car Parking

0 0.5 1 Kilometers

Figure 2: Fardross Forest Proposals Overview

1.1 Aim

The construction prescriptions outlined within this report are to be used to inform design and build contracts as progressed by the client Mid Ulster District Council.

1.2 General Construction Notes Summary

Appendix A summarises key construction notes relevant for all sections. Details relating to trail specifications (including trail category information) can be found in **Appendix B** with further guidance available within '*Principles and Standards for Trail Development in Northern Ireland*' (ORNI, 2013). Examples and specifications for trail surface and infrastructure items are outlined within specific trail section prescriptions with additional detail provided in **Appendix C**. The mitigation measures outlined in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) must be followed during throughout the construction process as detailed in **Appendix D**. Start and finish grid references for each section can be seen in **Appendix E**.

2 TRAIL PRESCRIPTIONS

Chapter 2 outlines the construction specifications for the proposed trail sections within Mid Ulster District Council, located in Favour Royal and Fardross Forests.

As the trails and linkages within this document are being progressed through Permitted Development, there is not specified planning application area (new build trails only). However, it would be prudent to consider a 10.0m wide corridor (centred on the proposed trail line) within which the new trail surface (up to 3.0m wide) and construction corridor are positioned. This allows sufficient room for the trail surface to be positioned appropriately, without adversely impacting any additional natural and/or built heritage features that may be identified during the developed design and construction phases. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that all conditions of outlined by the Planning Authority and Council relating to the Certificate of Lawfulness are met. Refer to drawings and documentation provided separately.

2.1 Favour Royal Loop

The following outlines the construction prescriptions for the proposed trail upgrade in Favour Royal Forest.

Section	Works Required	Trail Category	Trail Use	Trail Width	Approx. Length
1	Upgrade, compacted gravel with terram	2	Walking, Cycling	1.8m	1450m
	1x trailhead panel				
	5x wooden waymarker posts at trail junctions				
	20 x waymarker disks to be located on waymarker posts				

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Figure 3: Favour Royal Loop Section 1

Land Ownership: FSNI

Trail Grade: Category 2 (walking/cycling)

Total length: 1450m upgrade

Start / End Point: Favour Royal Forest car park

Trail Width: 1.8m¹

General description of trail section, ground conditions, topography, and vegetation cover:

Proposed section within Favour Royal Forest comprises minimal topography through a conifer plantation. The bedrock geology is sandstone with subordinate argillaceous rocks and limestone, overlain with glacial till and pockets of alluvium. No flood modelling information available for Favour Royal Forest. However, there is a flood risk potential from the River Blackwater which flows adjacent to the south side site.

Trail Detail:

- **Trail construction technique:** Upgrade, compacted gravel trail with terram where required with raised camber (raised causeway profile through wet areas). To meet the Category 2 trail specification detailed in **Appendix B** as far as possible. May require widening in places.
- **Proposed trail formation and corridor clearance requirements:** Consistent, compacted gravel surfacing across full length. Clearance should be kept to a minimum where possible.
- **Drainage, structural and technical features required:**
Drainage works comprising culverts with stone headwalls and topside ditching as required to improve drainage – to be identified by contractor and agreed with client.
- **Infrastructure items:** Outlined in Section 2.1 table above. Specifications for which can found in Appendix C.

Constraints / Hazards:

Section 1 is not located within any ecologically designated areas and involves the widening and resurfacing of an existing trail.

¹ Existing trail surface and subbase will require widening at locations along the section to achieve desired width of 1.8m - contractor to establish through site visit.

Photographs:



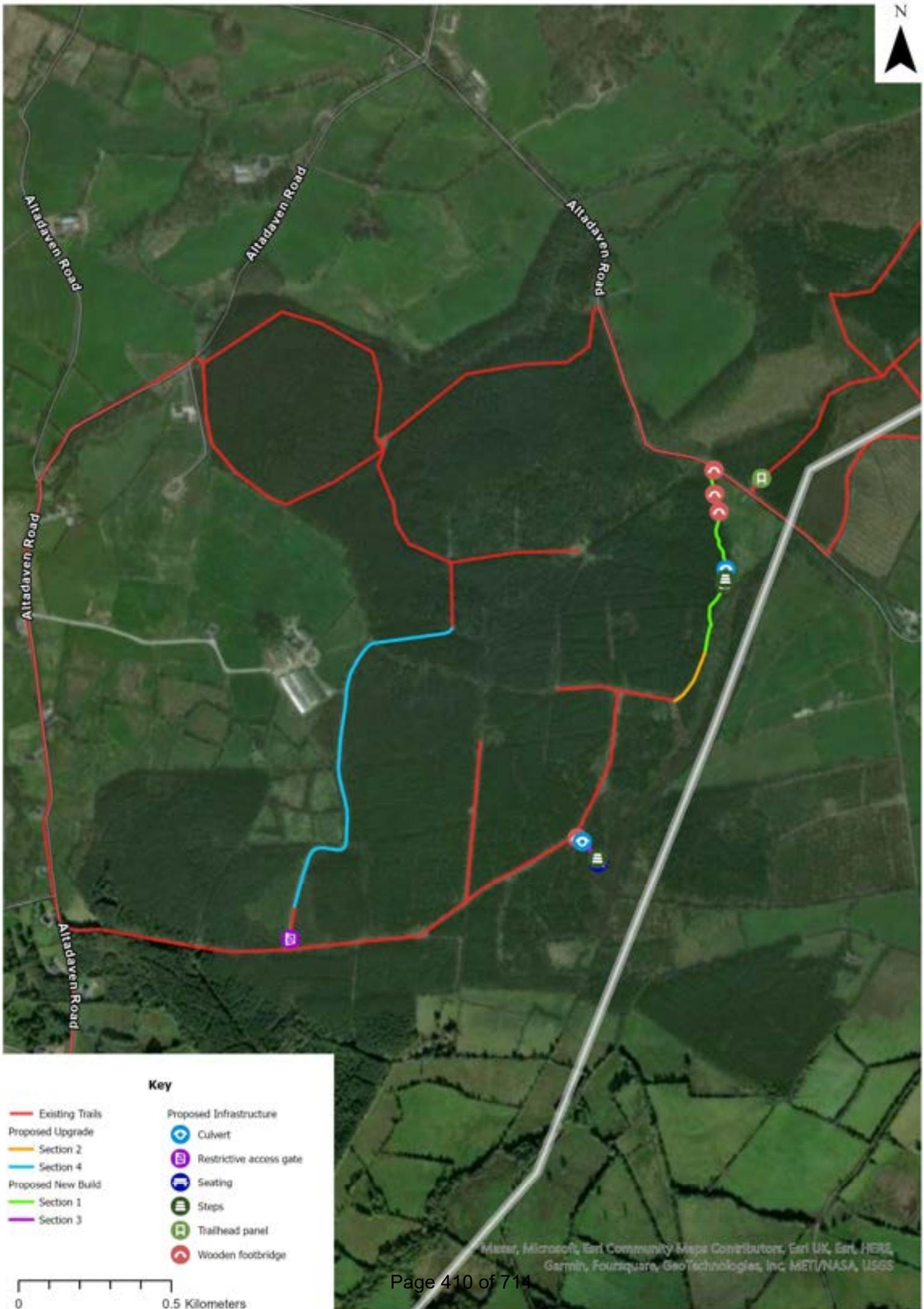
Figure 5: Favour Royal Section 1

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2.2 Burkes Waterfall

The following outlines the construction prescriptions for the proposed trail sections in Favour Royal Forest.

Section	Works Required	Trail Category	Trail Use	Trail Width	Approx. Length
1	New build, compacted gravel with terram and stone steps for 50m	4	Walking	1.5m	410m
	1x trailhead panel				
	3x wooden footbridges (1.5m wide, 2-5m span, with handrails and non-slip surface)				
2	Upgrade existing forest road, compacted gravel	4	Walking	1.5m	110m
3	New build, compacted gravel with terram and stone steps for 10m	4	Walking	1.5m	85m
	1x wooden footbridge (1.5m wide, 2-3m span, with handrails and non-slip surface)				
4	Upgrade existing forest road, compacted gravel with drainage as required	3	Walking, Cycling	2.5m	810m
	1x wooden restrictive access gate to facilitate off-road cycling and pedestrian access				
15x wooden waymarker posts at trail junctions					
60 x waymarker disks to be located on waymarker posts					



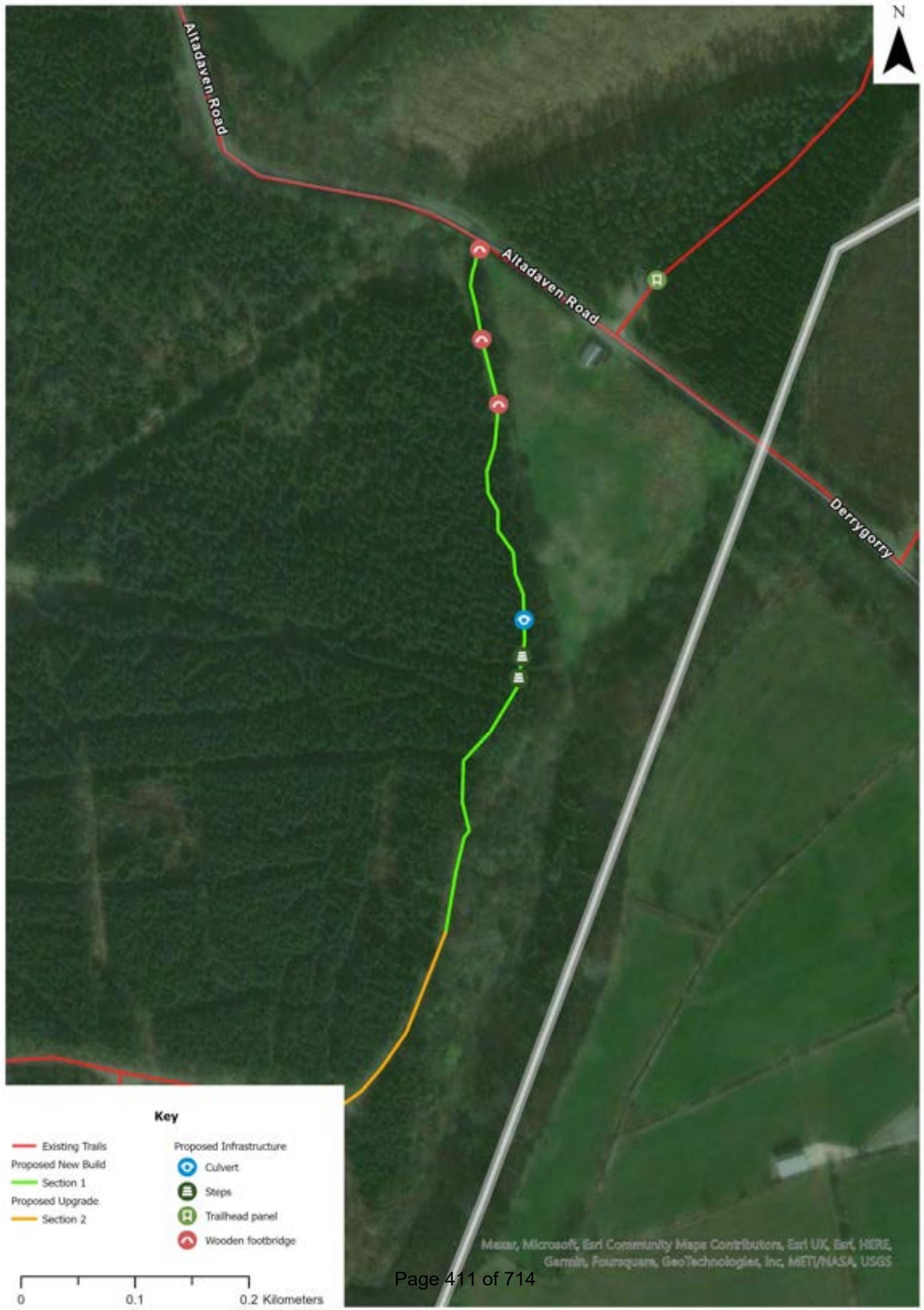
Key

- Existing Trails
 - Proposed Upgrade
 - Section 2
 - Section 4
 - Proposed New Build
 - Section 1
 - Section 3
- Proposed Infrastructure
 - ⓘ Culvert
 - ⓧ Restrictive access gate
 - 🪑 Seating
 - 🪜 Steps
 - 📍 Trailhead panel
 - 👣 Wooden footbridge

0 0.5 Kilometers

Mapbox, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

Figure 6: Burkes Waterfall Proposal



Key

— Existing Trails	Proposed Infrastructure
— Proposed New Build	⊕ Culvert
— Section 1	⊞ Steps
— Proposed Upgrade	⊞ Trailhead panel
— Section 2	⊞ Wooden footbridge

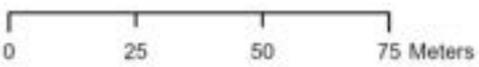
Maxar, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, MET/NASA, USGS

Figure 7: Burkes Waterfall Section 1



Key

- Existing Trails
 - Proposed New Build
 - Section 3
- Proposed Infrastructure
- Culvert
 - Seating
 - Steps
 - Wooden footbridge



Maxar, Microsoft, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FourSquare, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS

Figure 8: Burkes Waterfall Section 3

Land Ownership: FSNi

Trail Grade: Category 3/4 (multi-use/walking)

Total length: 495m new build and 920m upgrade

Start / End Point: Favour Royal/Derrygorry car park

Trail Width: 1.5-2.5m

General description of trail section, ground conditions, topography, and vegetation cover:

Proposed sections within Favour Royal Forest comprise of moderately undulating topography with steep sections through a conifer plantation. The bedrock geology is sandstone with subordinate argillaceous rocks and limestone, overlain with glacial till and pockets of alluvium.

No flood modelling information available for Favour Royal Forest. There are no significant adjacent water courses therefore flooding is not anticipated.

Trail Detail:

- **Trail construction technique:** Sections 1-3, new build and upgrade, compacted gravel trail with terram and stone steps where required with raised camber and raised causeway profile through wet areas. To meet the Category 4 trail specification detailed in **Appendix B** as far as possible. Section 4, upgrade of existing forest road, compacted gravel surface with drainage improvements as required. To meet the Category 3 trail specification detailed in **Appendix B** as far as possible.
- **Proposed trail formation and corridor clearance requirements:** Consistent, compacted gravel surfacing across full length. Will require clearance of scrub and felling of small trees to achieve new trail corridor. Clearance should be kept to a minimum where possible, especially Section 3 which should retain the 'natural' feel of the forest.
- **Drainage, structural and technical features required:**

Drainage works comprising culverts with stone headwalls and topside ditching as required to improve drainage, including but not limited to the following locations – to be identified by contractor and agreed with client.

 - Section 1 CH215 (north to south)
 - Section 3 CH18 (north to south)

Wooden pedestrian footbridges 1.5m wide spanning 2-5m required at approximately the following locations – to be identified by contractor and agreed with client.

 - Section 1 CH5, CH55, CH90 (north to south)
 - Section 3 CH5 (north to south)

Stone steps required at approximately the following locations – to be identified by contractor and agreed with client.

 - Section 1 CH240 (north to south)
 - Section 3 CH60 (north to south)

Existing FSNi gates throughout Favour Royal Forest should be modified to include wooden restrictive access gates to facilitate off-road cycling on existing forest roads.
- **Infrastructure items:** Specifications for which can found in Appendix C.

Constraints / Hazards:

Section 1 is located within a 'long established woodland'. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have been carried out and a copy of the reports are provided separately. A summary of the findings, including constraints, mitigations, and responsibilities is provided in **Appendix D**.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all identified constraints and mitigations are considered, and that all legal obligations are met throughout the design and build contract. This includes any Conditions of Planning which are binding and will be monitored by their respective statutory agencies. All works are to be supervised by a contractor appointed ECoW.

Photographs:



Figure 9: Burke's Waterfall Section 1



Figure 10: Burke's Waterfall Section 2



Figure 11: Burke's Waterfall Section 3



Figure 12: Burke's Waterfall Section 4



Figure 13: Section 1 CH5



Figure 14: Section 1 CH55



Figure 15: Section 1 CH90



Figure 16: Section 1 CH215



Figure 17: Section 1 CH240



Figure 18: Section 1 CH5



Figure 19: Section 3 CH60



Figure 20: Section 3 existing FSNI gate

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2.3 Fardross Arc

The following outlines the construction prescriptions for the proposed trail sections in Fardross Forest.

Section	Works Required	Trail Category	Trail Use	Trail Width	Approx. Length
1	Upgrade, compacted gravel	3	Walking	1.5m	365m
2	New build, compacted gravel with terram	3	Walking	1.5m	425m
	1x trailhead panel				
	1x wooden restrictive access gate to facilitate off-road cycling and pedestrian access				
	5x wooden waymarker posts at trail junctions				
20 x waymarker disks to be located on waymarker posts					

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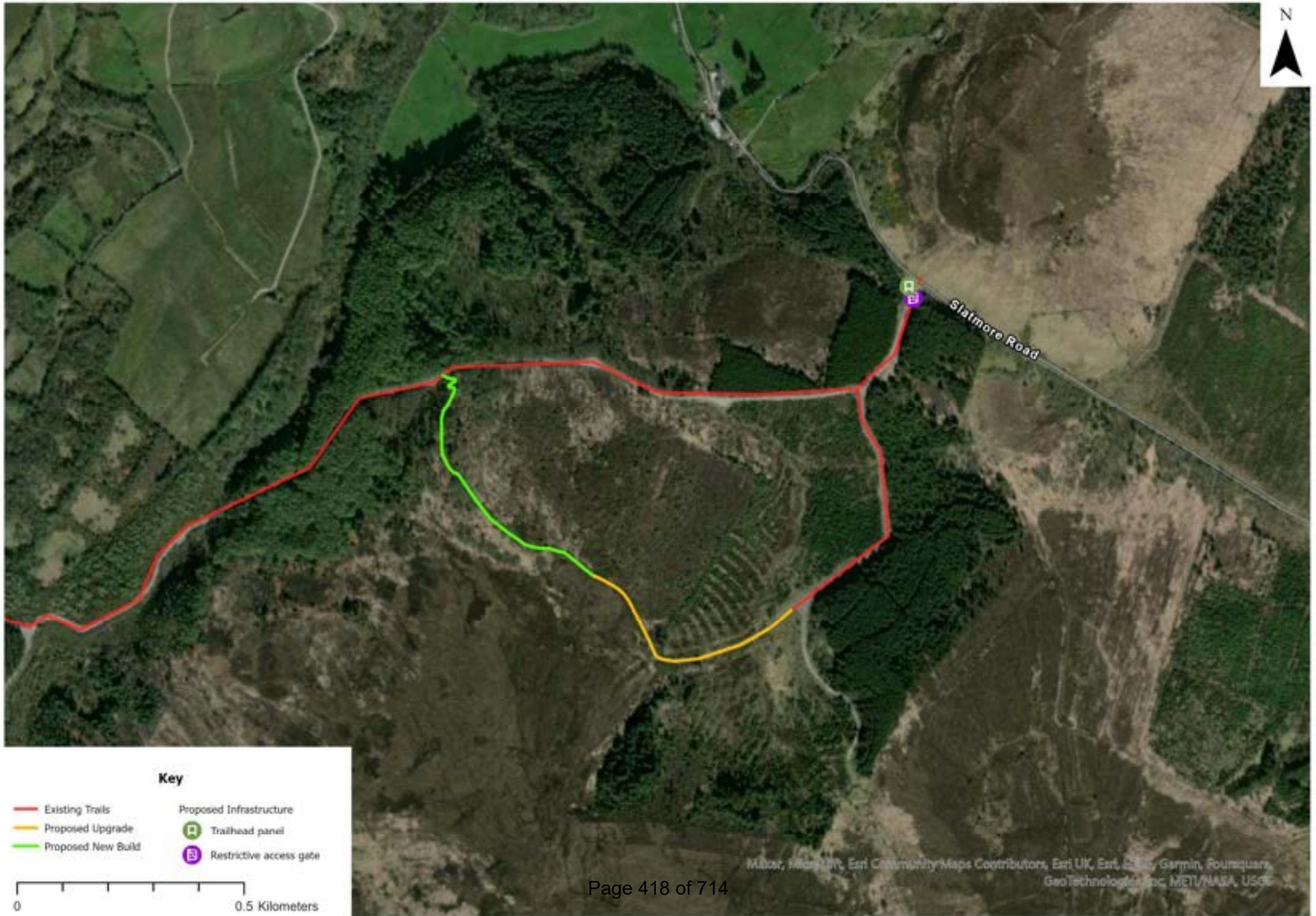


Figure 21: Fardross Walking Proposals

Land Ownership: FSNI

Trail Grade: Category 3 (walking)

Total length: 425m new build and 365m upgrade

Start / End Point: Slatmore Road proposed trailhead

Trail Width: 1.5m

General description of trail section, ground conditions, topography, and vegetation cover:

Proposed sections within Favour Royal Forest comprise of moderately undulating topography with a mixture of wet heath, wet grassland, bog woodland, conifer plantation, wet willow-alder-ash woodland, and upland blanket bog. The bedrock geology is sandstone with subordinate argillaceous rocks and limestone overlain with peat.

No flood modelling information available for Favour Royal Forest. As the proposed trail is within the upland environment there is unlikely to be a flood risk potential.

Trail Detail:

- **Trail construction technique:** New build and upgrade, compacted gravel trail with terram where required and raised camber and raised causeway profile through wet areas. To meet Category 3 trail specification detailed in **Appendix B** as far as possible.
- **Proposed trail formation and corridor clearance requirements:** Consistent, compacted gravel surfacing across full length. Will require clearance of scrub and felling of small trees to achieve new trail corridor.
- **Drainage, structural and technical features required:**
Drainage works comprising culverts with stone headwall and topside ditching as required to improve drainage – to be identified by contractor and agreed with client.
Existing FSNI gates throughout Fardross Forest should be modified to include wooden restrictive access gates to facilitate off-road cycling on existing forest roads.
- **Infrastructure items:** Specifications for which can found in **Appendix C**.

Constraints / Hazards:

Sections located within SPA and adjacent to ASSI and SAC. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have been carried out and a copy of the reports are provided separately. A summary of the findings, including constraints, mitigations, and responsibilities is provided in **Appendix D**.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all identified constraints and mitigations are considered, and that all legal obligations are met throughout the design and build contract. This includes any Conditions of Planning which are binding and will be monitored by their respective statutory agencies. All works are to be supervised by a contractor appointed ECoW.

Photographs:



Figure 22: Fardross Arc Section 1



Figure 23: Fardross Arc Section 2

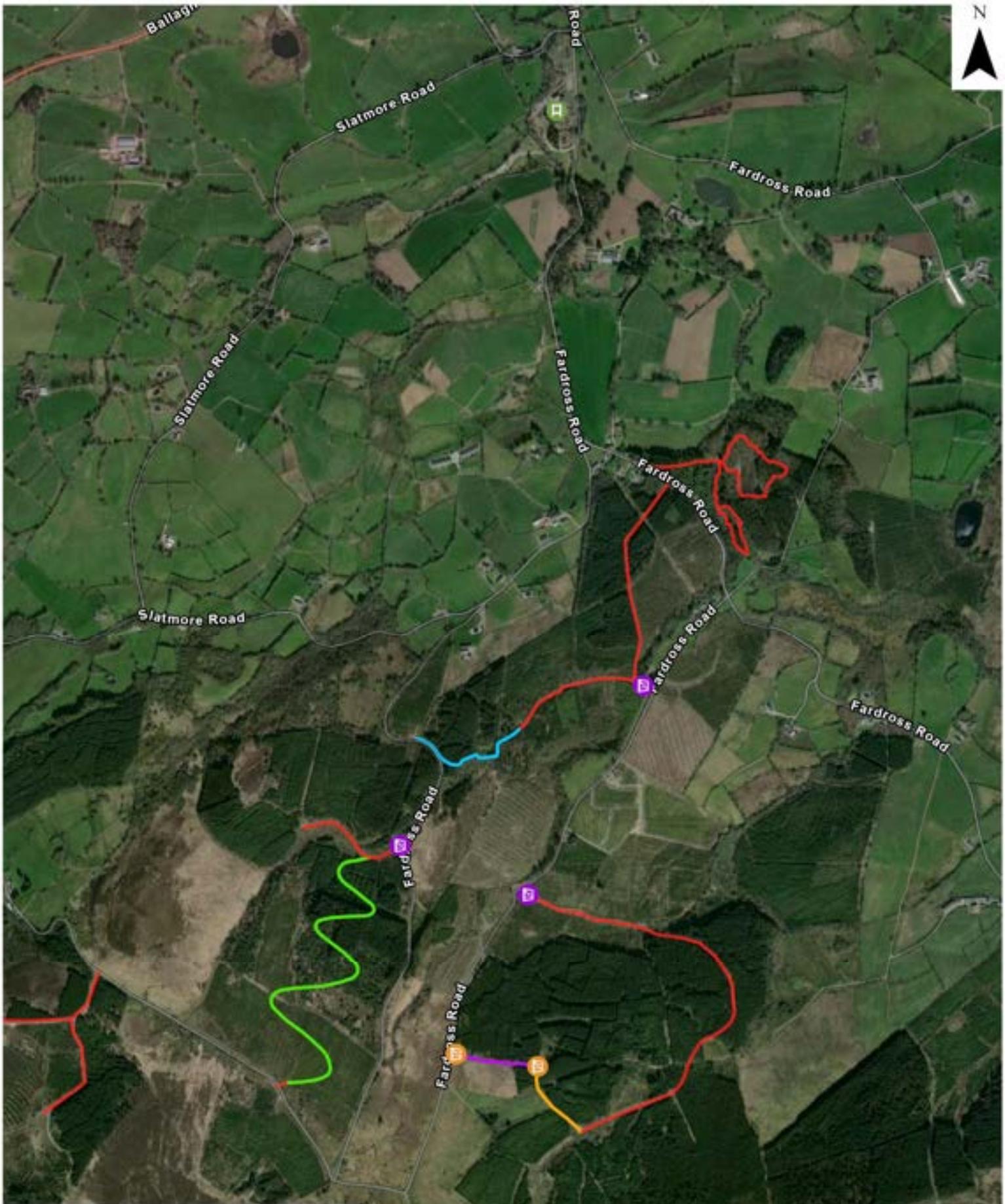


Figure 24: Favor Royal Forest existing FSNI gate and proposed trailhead

2.4 Fardross Equestrian

The following outlines the construction prescriptions for the proposed trail sections in Fardross Forest.

Section	Works Required	Trail Category	Trail Use	Trail Width	Approx. Length
1	New build, compacted gravel with terram	3	Equestrian, Walking	2.5m	1475m
2	New build, compacted gravel with terram	3	Equestrian, Walking	3.0m	300m
	Remove existing farm gate to provide equestrian access.				
	Install 300m stockproof fencing to segregate users from adjacent farmland.				
	Install farm gate into adjacent farmland segregated by new stockproof fencing.				
	Install farm gate at CH300 to segregate users from farm animals and private land.				
3	New build, compacted gravel with terram	3	Equestrian, Walking	2.5m	270m
4	New build, compacted gravel with terram	3	Equestrian, Walking	2.5m	450m
1x trailhead panel					
3x restrictive access gates to facilitate unrestricted equestrian access					
15x wooden waymarker posts at trail junctions					
60 x waymarker disks to be located on waymarker posts					



Key

Proposed New Build

- Section 1
- Section 2
- Section 3
- Section 4
- Existing Trails

Proposed Infrastructure

- Trailhead panel
- Farm gate
- Restrictive access gate



Mapas, Microsoft, Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, Fountaine, GeoTechnology, Inc, NAVTEQ, USA

Figure 25: Fardross Equestrian Proposals

Land Ownership: FSNI

Trail Grade: Category 3 (multi-use)

Total length: 2495m new build

Start / End Point: Clogher Valley Horses Welcome

Trail Width: 2.5-3.0m

General description of trail section, ground conditions, topography, and vegetation cover:

Proposed sections within Fardross Forest comprise of undulating topography with a mixture of conifer plantation, recently felled woodland, woodland flora, ash hazel woodland, mixed broadleaf woodland, wet grassland, wet heath, and upland blanket bog. The bedrock geology is sandstone with subordinate argillaceous rocks and limestone overlain with peat and diamicton till.

No flood modelling information available for Fardross Forest. As the proposed trail is within the upland environment there is unlikely to be a flood risk potential.

Trail Detail:

- **Trail construction technique:** New build, compacted gravel trail with terram where required and raised camber and raised causeway profile through wet areas. To meet Category 3 trail specification detailed in **Appendix B** as far as possible.
- **Proposed trail formation and corridor clearance requirements:** Consistent, compacted gravel surfacing across full length. Will require clearance of scrub and felling of small trees to achieve new trail corridor.
Existing FSNI gates throughout Fardross Forest should be modified or replaced as necessary to facilitate unrestricted equestrian use.
- **Drainage, structural and technical features required:**
Drainage works comprising culverts with stone headwall and topside ditching as required to improve drainage – to be identified by contractor and agreed with client.

Constraints / Hazards:

Sections 1-3 are located within a SPA. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have been carried out and a copy of the reports are provided separately. A summary of the findings, including constraints, mitigations, and responsibilities is provided in **Appendix D**.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all identified constraints and mitigations are considered, and that all legal obligations are met throughout the design and build contract. This includes any Conditions of Planning which are binding and will be monitored by their respective statutory agencies. All works are to be supervised by a contractor appointed ECoW.

Photographs:



Figure 26: Fardross Equestrian Section 1



Figure 27: Fardross Equestrian Section 2



Figure 28: Fardross Equestrian Section 3



Figure 29: Fardross Equestrian Section 4



Figure 30: Section 1 replace existing FSNI gate



Figure 31: Section 2 replace existing farm gate

3 Appendices

3.1 Appendix A – Construction Notes

The following table summarises the key construction notes relevant for all sections. CDM Regulations (NI) 2016 must be adhered to throughout the construction process.

Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All construction details and method statements to be agreed with client and landowner prior to construction. • Contractor must specify and satisfy themselves on requirements for construction of all sections following site visit(s). A site visit day is included within the tender period. • This prescription document provides outline design only to provide the basis for a ‘<i>design and build</i>’ contract. Designs are based on site walkovers and on digital mapping. No thorough site survey work has been carried out (including ground conditions) or detailed design of any section therefore all prescriptions are based on estimates and will require further, detailed design prior to commencing works. • All chainages are approximate and for guidance purposes only.
Health and Safety and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological constraints – including minimising impact to unplanted areas, ecologically sensitive habitats, or recently planted areas. All works to be carried out under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works appointed by the contractor. • Each site will remain live and accessible to the public throughout the build period (unless agreed with the client / landowner) therefore consideration to be given to retaining access for other users near the trail construction and materials loading areas. • Site security and health and safety fencing and signage to be installed as appropriate along trail corridors and at all access points to inform employees and visitors of specific hazards, health and safety requirements and prevent unauthorised access. • Plans indicating the location of underground or buried services (electricity, water etc.) are to be provided separately. It is the contractor’s responsibility to ensure all plans are up to date and identify the location of services within the works areas with third party suppliers and landowners. • Adequate pollution prevention measures must be implemented to prevent runoff of contaminated surface waters (silt, fuel etc.). • It is vital that each trail is accessed via the trail corridor during construction and that no additional haul routes are created without agreement with the landowner.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All access is subject to agreement with the client and landowner (FSNI, Coillte, An Taisce etc.) – no agreements are to be made between the contractor and third-party private landowners without client initiating. • Good lines of communication between the contractor and the client and FSNI should be maintained throughout the project. Access restrictions should be identified through access agreements with FSNI. • Safe public access must be always retained during the construction period unless agreed with the client / landowner. • Occasional access may be required for forestry operations. If this is required, the contractor will be notified and agreed access arrangements put in place.
Machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be kept to a functional minimum and to be agreed with the landowner and client for all sections in a method statement prior to construction. Machinery size to be kept to a functional minimum to avoid disturbance and clearance of vegetation beyond the trail corridor and to be suitable for ground conditions. • The contractor is responsible for the security of materials, stores, machinery etc. and should implement appropriate security measures.
Trail Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further information on trail categories is provided in Appendix B – trail widths within these prescriptions differ to those outlined within the categories. The trail widths outlined throughout the prescriptions should be met where possible (and subject to agreement with the client). • Trails should be constructed in a manner which takes account of landscape, land use and protected habitats and species to reduce visual and physical impact. • The trail surface and subbase must be compacted, consistent and stable throughout. May include compacted crushed stone and geotextile membrane as required. • Trails to be accessed along trail corridor only during construction. If additional access points other than the start and finish of each section are required along a section, these must be agreed with the client / landowner. Additional access points should be minimised to avoid unnecessary damage to the landscape. • Roots of trees must be protected. Subbase and surface to be hand finished around roots. High brush height – 2.5m. No trees to be felled or trimmed without agreement from the client / landowners. Where tree stability is an issue, client / landowner must be notified. • Making up of levels required to achieve specified trail gradients - levels should only be made up with suitable imported fill. All imported materials to be used along the trail tread only. • All spoil to be managed with consideration for backslope, drainage, proximity to trail tread and landscaping. Deposit spoils on uphill side or spread across remainder of site (to be agreed with client). • No loose material, blending of backslope, and demarcation and landscaping throughout. • Borrow pits must not be used, deposit spoils on uphill side or spread across remainder of site (to be agreed with client). • The trail corridor and access points should be reinstated to their original condition or better following construction.
Drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage requirements are the responsibility of the contractor. The drainage plan submitted as part of the tender process must be followed to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure suitable drainage is installed along the trail system.

3.2 Appendix B – Trail Category Descriptions

Key trail attributes	Category 2 Multi-Use Trail
Description	<p>These are trails that are accessible to a wide range of users and abilities but NOT ALL users due to issues relating to trail gradients, trail surfaces and trail features. Users include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians of mixed abilities including young children and some baby buggies • Cyclists of all abilities other than very young children or bikes with stabilizers or wheels less than 400mm • Category Two Multi Use Trails are not suitable for those of limited mobility or with impaired vision
Width	<p>Refer to Section Information.</p> <p>Optimal width 1.8m</p>
Surface	<p>Consistent sealed surfaces and can include asphalt and compacted stone or gravel</p>
Gradients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum average gradient - not more than 5% • Maximum absolute gradient - not more than 10% for more than 50m
Lines of Sight	<p>Minimum 30m</p>
Trail Features	<p>Small level changes of not more than 60mm deep and not less than 300mm width.</p> <p>Grade reversals of not less than 10m in length and not more than 1m depth. Bridges must be not less than 2m wide and must have handrails throughout</p> <p>Category Two Multi Use Trails should not include steps.</p>
Suitable for	<p>All users</p>

The photo below shows a Category 2 Multi-Use Trail. Note the wide flat trail with good lines of site.



Key trail attributes	Category 3 Walking/Multi-Use Trail
Description	<p>These are trails that are less accessible than both Category One and Category Two Multi Use Trails and are therefore more suited to specific users and activities. Category Three Multi Use Trails are suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians – walkers and runners of mixed but NOT ALL abilities. • Cyclists – cyclists of mixed abilities using off road mountain bikes only. • Equestrians – of all abilities. <p>Category Three trails are not suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those of limited mobility or impaired vision. • Those with a standard child’s pushchair. • Bikes with wheels less than 50mm, tag-alongs, trailers, or child carriers.
Width	<p>Refer to Section Information.</p> <p>Optimal width - 1.5m</p>
Surface	<p>Variable but stable surfaces can be slightly uneven and include some loose material. Surfaces may include compacted stone and gravel, soil, grass, sand, and mud.</p>
Gradients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum average gradient - not more than 8% • Maximum absolute gradient - not more than 15% for more than 300m
Lines of Sight	<p>Minimum 20m</p>
Trail Features	<p>These trails can include level changes such as steps, roots, rocks, potholes, water bars and drains. Level changes must not exceed 150mm height in relation to pedestrian only trails and be not more than 50mm in relation to all other trails including cycling and equestrian trails.</p> <p>Grade reversals not less than 4m in length and not more than 1m depth.</p> <p>Wooden boardwalks of not less than 1200mm width and not more than 300mm height above ground level.</p> <p>Bridges should be not less than 1200mm width with handrails throughout.</p>
Suitable for	<p>All users</p>
<p>Examples of Category Three trails may be found in country and forest parks but are less likely to be found in urban or semi-urban settings. The photo below is an example of a purpose-built Category Three Multi Use Trail within Castleward, County Down. In this case the trail has been designed for walkers and off-road cyclists. Note the limited clearance between the trees and the relatively flat trail surface.</p>	



Key trail attributes	Category 4 Walking Trail
Description	<p>Category Four Walking Trails have variable gradients and surfaces and may be found in a very wide variety of environments including more remote upland sites.</p> <p>These are trails where access is more restricted by issues such as gradients, trail surfaces and the nature and size of trail features. This means these trails may not be suitable for use by all user groups at the same time. Category Four Walking Trails are suitable for the following users only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrians – mixed ability walkers and runners <p>Category Four Multi Use Trails are not suitable for the following users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-road cyclists • Equestrians – leisure and endurance riders • Those with limited mobility or impaired vision • Off road cyclists using bikes other than mountain bikes - not tag-alongs, trailers, child seats and stabilizers • Those with baby buggies • Novice equestrians
Width	<p>Refer to Section Information.</p> <p>Optimal width - Minimum 600mm wide Maximum 1.2m wide</p>
Surface	<p>Very variable and uneven including loose material, rocks, mud, gravel, soil, roots, grass, and other vegetation. Surfaces may change suddenly and vary over short distances.</p>
Gradients	<p>Average gradients of 10%, maximum gradients should not exceed 20% for not more than 50m.</p>
Lines of Sight	<p>Minimum 15m</p>
Trail Features	<p>These trails can feature unexpected and sudden level changes caused by steps, roots, rocks, ditches, drains and water bars of not more than 300mm in relation to pedestrian only trails.</p> <p>Trails should include obstructions to prevent use by other trail users as shown in photographs below.</p> <p>Turns of up to 180 degrees.</p> <p>Grade reversals of not less than 2.5m length and not more than 1.5m depth.</p> <p>Boardwalks not less than 600mm wide and not more than 1500mm high above ground level.</p> <p>Bridges should be not less than 1m wide and should have handrails throughout if more than 1500mm high above ground level.</p> <p>May feature encroaching vegetation and have limited clearance in relation to trees etc.</p>

Suitable for

Walkers only

The photographs below show examples of purpose-built Category Four Walking Trails. Note the narrow trail and the level changes as well as the uneven surfaces and obstacles.

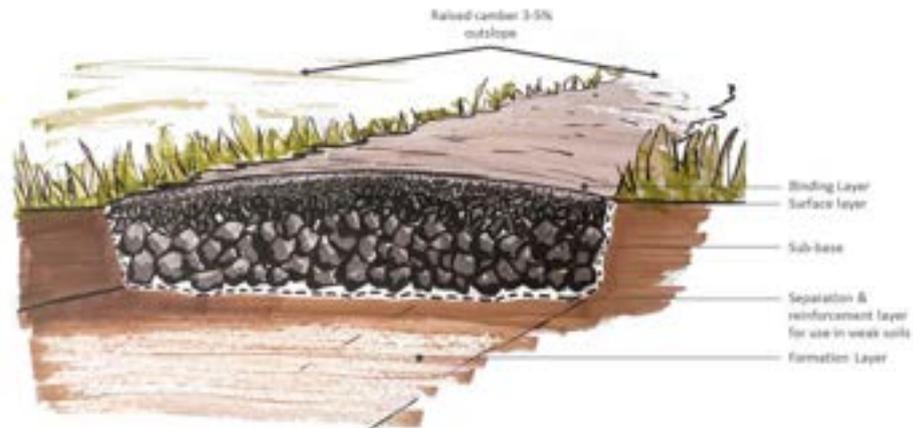


3.3 Appendix C – Infrastructure Specifications

Infrastructure Item	Detail
<p>Trailhead Information Panel</p> <p>To be supplied by client</p> <p>Installation only by contractor</p>	<p>For information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trailhead information panel - 980mm x 720mm in a hardwood frame. 5mm panels will be full colour, aluminium with scratch resistant enamel resin coating, UV, water and heat resistant (Dibond or Primadura or similar). - Each panel requires 2No. 100mm x 75mm x 1.75m support post and 2No. 75mm x 50mm x 475mm bearers in pressure treated UK-grown FSC oak. - In concrete foundations (to a depth of 700mm). <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
<p>Waymarker posts</p> <p>To be supplied and installed by contractor.</p>	<p>For information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waymarker posts (not routed) at the junction of trails. - Pressure treated UK-grown FSC approved oak. - Dimensions 125mm x 125mm x 1400mm with pointed tops. - In concrete foundations. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>

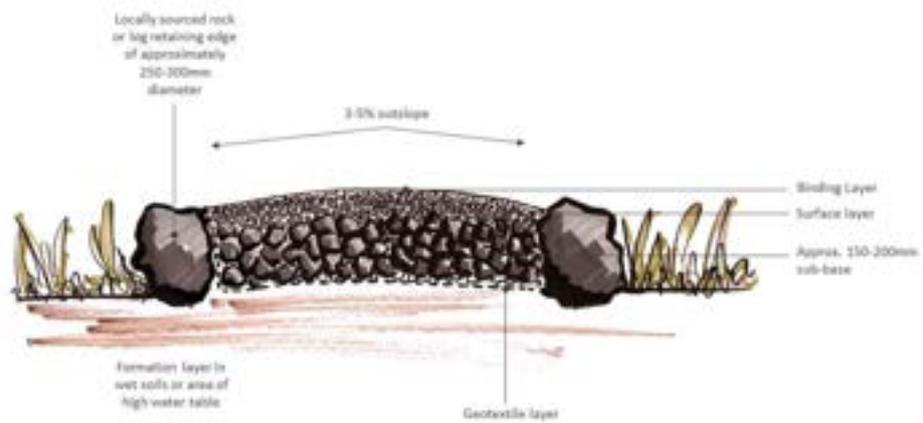
Typical raised
camber
formation

Trail formation & raised camber

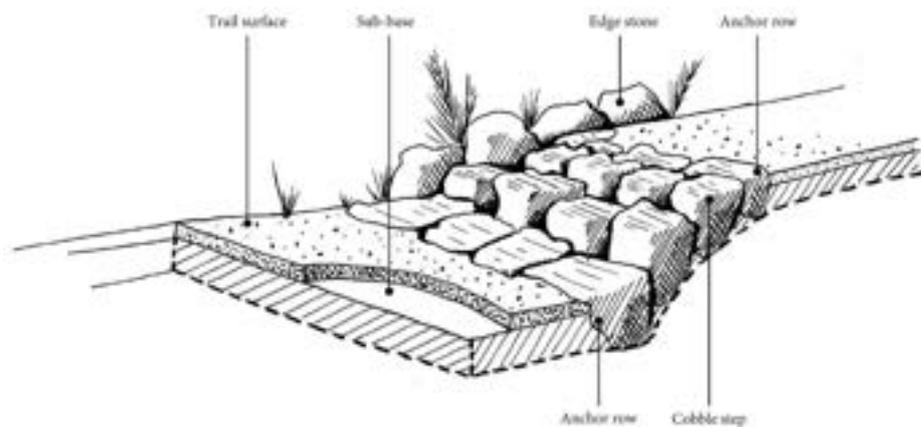


Typical Raised
causeway
formation

Raised causeway

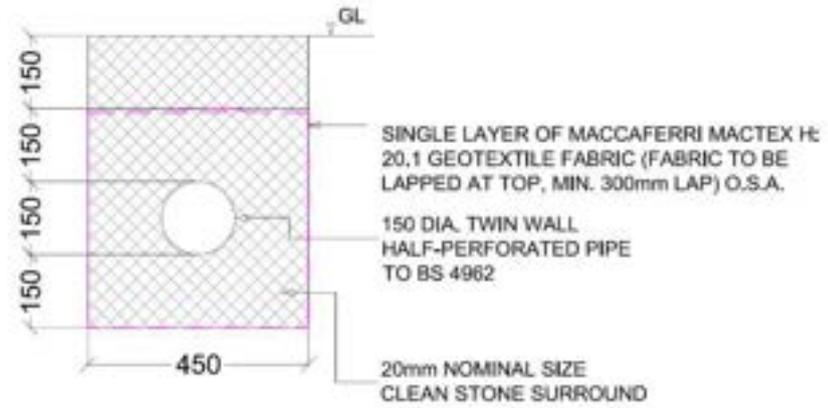


Typical stone
step formation



Typical
culvert/topside
ditch
construction
detail with
stone headwall

To be identified by contractor and agreed with client.



Typical culvert / topside ditch build up



Stone headwall example side view



Stone headwall example path view



Stone headwall example side view

Typical
footbridge
construction



Example stone
water bars



Example restrictive access gate to facilitate off-road cycling



Example restrictive access gate to facilitate equestrian use (including locking post)



Example stock proof fencing



Example farm gate (including locking post)



3.4 Appendix D – Ecological Information

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have been carried out to assess the conservation values of Favour Royal and Fardross Forests, the likely presence of rare or protected and notable species, and to identify any features, habitats or species that would constitute potential constraints to the development or give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites.

The PEA concludes that although some residual effects will arise from the proposed developments, the cumulative effects of mitigation, compensation and enhancement will have a neutral or positive overall effect on biodiversity. The proposed trails will introduce several changes across the habitats and the species which rely on them with predicted impacts on the surrounding ecology, but the impacts of increased footfall can be minimised to an extent through the usage of information signs and screening.

The Stage 2 HRA concludes that the development will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other relevant plans or programmes, and subject to securing the mitigation prescribed below in relation to the Hen Harrier, which largely relates to restrictions in working times and having a trained ornithologist on site as an Ecological of Works during construction. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Measures are outlined below to mitigate against significant impacts to species known (or assumed to) occur within the development footprint, as well as measures which could improve the overall conservation of the areas. It is important that the following measures are read in conjunction with the full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment Report.

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all identified constraints and mitigations are considered, and that all legal obligations are met throughout the design and build contract. This includes any Conditions of Planning which are binding and will be monitored by their respective statutory agencies. All works are to be supervised by a contractor appointed Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW).

3.4.1 Burkes Waterfall

	Possible Impacts	Mitigation and Construction Measures	Biodiversity Enhancements
Statutory Protected Sites	Proposed routes do not overlap with any protected sites.		Biodiversity signage describing the flora and fauna present on site and their benefits for biodiversity such as information on birds and wetland birds which could be erected at various points along the route to encourage an engagement with nature.
Flora	Potential habitat loss through the removal of existing vegetation and soil. This would directly destroy the habitat of any plants and animals that live in the area. The trail could degrade the existing habitat by introducing pollution, noise, and other disturbances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working corridor will be as small as possible. Working areas demarcated prior to the commencement of works. Fencing erected around hedgerows and trees to be retained to protect against accidental damage. No storage or dumping of materials will be carried out outside the working area. Habitats reinstated to conditions prior to works within working area where possible. 	A larger strip of conifers should be removed along the routes within conifer plantation and replaced with a 10-15 metre strip of broadleaf woodland to improve wildlife habitat and biodiversity.
Birds	Habitat not deemed optimal for roosting and nesting locations.	<p><i>Construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rank vegetation along proposed route removed outside of the breeding bird season (September to February inclusive). 	
Mammals	No evidence of mammal species was found during surveying. The trees inside the conifer plantation are young and not suitable for dens.	<p><i>Construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbance to trees (which could hold natal dens) between February to September to be avoided. <p><i>Operational measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signage containing visitor's code of conduct installed at all access/ egress points. 	

Invertebrates	<p>No protected invertebrates recorded or found during the surveys however wet grassland habitats may be suited to the likes of the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly which has European protected status. An extensive invertebrate survey was not carried out.</p>		
Amphibians	<p>The wetland habitat is highly suitable for frogs and newts and likely support populations that are of local importance (higher value). Specific surveys targeting the Common or Viviparous Lizard were not carried out.</p>	<p><i>Pre-construction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone walls (or other potential hibernacula sites) which may be impacted will be removed by hand during the active season (March through to September, inclusive) under the supervision of an ecologist, when they are less likely to be in use by torpid lizards. 	
Bats	<p>No potential bat roosting habitats were identified during the surveys, however, an expansive survey for bat roosts was not carried out. The removal of mature conifer trees which have the potential to host roosting bats may impact this species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree surgery undertaken between September and mid-November. • Trees to be removed will be appraised for the presence of cavities or for mature trees. • If cavities are identified, they will be checked / assessed by a suitably qualified, experienced, and licensed ecologist. • If bats or signs of bats are identified, works on the relevant tree will cease, the NIEA must be contacted and given time to advise. A licence to carry out such work may sometimes be necessary. 	<p>Addition of Bat boxes to encourage bats to roost in areas where few roosts are present.</p>

3.4.2 Fardross Arc

	Possible Impacts	Mitigation and Construction Measures	Biodiversity Enhancements
Statutory Protected Sites	Route overlaps with the Slieve Beagh Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA and is adjacent to a Slieve Beagh RAMSAR, Slieve Beagh ASSI and Slieve Beagh SAC.		Biodiversity signage describing the flora and fauna present on site and their benefits for biodiversity such as information on birds and wetland birds which could be erected at various points along the route to encourage an engagement with nature.
Flora	Potential habitat loss through the removal of existing vegetation and soil. This would directly destroy the habitat of any plants and animals that live in the area. The trail could degrade the existing habitat by introducing pollution, noise, and other disturbances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working corridor will be as small as possible. • Working areas demarcated prior to the commencement of works. • Fencing erected around hedgerows and trees to be retained to protect against accidental damage. • No storage or dumping of materials will be carried out outside the working area. • Habitats reinstated to conditions prior to works within working area where possible. 	<p>Opportunity for habitat restoration to upland blanket bog within the areas designated as recently felled woodland/wet heath and cutover bog habitat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of timber products and brash in recently felled woodland. • Blocking drainage by damming will help restore bog hydrology. • Removal of encroaching conifer seedlings/saplings.
Birds	Vantage Point surveys (outside breeding and nesting seasons) were carried out which identified 29 birds including the Hen Harrier at VP2 overlooking the Sliabh Beagh Bog (SAC, SPA,	<p><i>Construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rank vegetation along proposed route removed outside of the breeding bird season (September to February inclusive). • Landscaped screening comprising of an earth bank and hedging is proposed to ensure visual disturbance to Hen 	Bird watching hides could be constructed in some areas which would prevent significant disturbance but also give visitors the ability to watch Hen Harriers and Curlews and

	ASSI). No breeding or roosting surveys have been carried out to date.	Harrier and other ground nesting birds from users is minimised. In the interim (until hedging is suitably established), to provide adequate screening, a brushwood-type fencing will supplement.	to look out over the blanket bog.
Mammals	No evidence of mammal species was found during surveying.	<p><i>Pre-construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otter holt and natal den survey to be carried out prior to construction (within 3 months). <p><i>Construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to trees (which could hold natal dens) between February to September to be avoided. <p><i>Operational measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage containing visitor's code of conduct installed at all access/ egress points. 	Addition of Pine Martin and Red Squirrel boxes within study area.
Invertebrates	No protected invertebrates recorded or found during the surveys however wet grassland habitats may be suited to the likes of the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly which has European protected status. An extensive invertebrate survey was not carried out.		
Amphibians	The wetland habitat is highly suitable for frogs and newts and likely support populations that are of local importance (higher value). Specific surveys targeting the Common or Viviparous Lizard were not carried out.		
Bats	No potential bat roosting habitats were identified during	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree surgery undertaken between September and mid-November. 	

	<p>the surveys, however, an expansive survey for bat roosts was not carried out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trees to be removed will be appraised for the presence of cavities or for mature trees.• If cavities are identified, they will be checked / assessed by a suitably qualified, experienced, and licensed ecologist.• If bats or signs of bats are identified, works on the relevant tree will cease, the NIEA must be contacted and given time to advise. A licence to carry out such work may sometimes be necessary.	
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3.4.3 Fardross Equestrian

	Possible Impacts	Mitigation and Construction Measures	Biodiversity Enhancements
Statutory Protected Sites	Routes overlap with the Slieve Beagh Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA.		Biodiversity signage describing the flora and fauna present on site and their benefits for biodiversity such as information on birds and wetland birds which could be erected at various points along the route to encourage an engagement with nature.
Flora	Potential habitat loss through the removal of existing vegetation and soil. This would directly destroy the habitat of any plants and animals that live in the area. The trail could degrade the existing habitat by introducing pollution, noise, and other disturbances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working corridor will be as small as possible. • Working areas demarcated prior to the commencement of works. • Fencing erected around hedgerows and trees to be retained to protect against accidental damage. • No storage or dumping of materials will be carried out outside the working area. • Habitats reinstated to conditions prior to works within working area where possible. 	<p>Opportunity for habitat restoration to upland blanket bog within the areas designated as recently felled woodland/wet heath and cutover bog habitat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of timber products and brash in recently felled woodland. • Blocking drainage by damming will help restore bog hydrology. • Removal of encroaching conifer seedlings/saplings.
Birds	Vantage Point surveys (outside breeding and nesting seasons) were carried out which identified 29 birds.	<p><i>Construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rank vegetation along proposed route removed outside of the breeding bird season (September to February inclusive). 	

Mammals	Evidence of Red Squirrel, Pine Martin and Otter were noted within the area.	<p><i>Pre-construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otter holt and natal den survey to be carried out prior to construction (within 3 months). <p><i>Construction measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to trees (which could hold natal dens) between February to September to be avoided. <p><i>Operational measures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage containing visitor's code of conduct installed at all access/ egress points. 	Addition of Pine Martin and Red Squirrel boxes within study area.
Invertebrates	No protected invertebrates recorded or found during the surveys however wet grassland habitats may be suited to the likes of the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly which has European protected status. An extensive invertebrate survey was not carried out.		
Amphibians	The wetland habitat is highly suitable for frogs and newts and likely support populations that are of local importance (higher value). Specific surveys targeting the Common or Viviparous Lizard were not carried out.	<p><i>Pre-construction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stone walls (or other potential hibernacula sites) which may be impacted will be removed by hand during the active season (March through to September, inclusive) under the supervision of an ecologist, when they are less likely to be in use by torpid lizards. 	
Bats	No potential bat roosting habitats were identified during the surveys, however, an expansive survey for bat roosts was not carried out. The removal of mature conifer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree surgery undertaken between September and mid-November. • Trees to be removed will be appraised for the presence of cavities or for mature trees. 	

	trees which have the potential to host roosting bats may impact this species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If cavities are identified, they will be checked / assessed by a suitably qualified, experienced, and licensed ecologist.• If bats or signs of bats are identified, works on the relevant tree will cease, the NIEA must be contacted and given time to advise. A licence to carry out such work may sometimes be necessary.	
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3.5 Appendix E – Grid reference for start and finish point of each section

The following table gives the start and finish point grid reference for each proposed section of new build and upgrade. An online dashboard is available to view these proposals in more detail [Sliabh Beagh Feasibility Study \(arcgis.com\)](#). Alternatively, a shapefile of the proposed lines is available from ORNI on request.

Trail Name Forest Name	Section ID	Start Grid Reference	Finish Grid Reference
Favour Royal Loop	Section 1	H 61244 51481	H 61272 51579
Burkes Waterfall Favour Royal Forest	Section 1	H 61244 51481	H 61272 51579
	Section 2	H 61233 51427	H 61175 51334
	Section 3	H 60991 51073	H 61036 51022
	Section 4	H 60747 51467	H 60455 50930
Fardross Arc Fardross Forest	Section 1	H 50040 46896	H 50298 46856
	Section 2	H 49842 47152	H 50042 46898
Fardross Equestrian Fardross Forest	Section 1	H 51012 46957	H 51246 47623
	Section 2	H 51488 47046	H 51738 47009
	Section 3	H 51738 47009	H 51875 46825
	Section 4	H 51379 47975	H 51683 48009

Habitats Regulation Assessment

Slieve Beagh Eco-tourism project,
Mid-Ulster District Council



Date of Issue: October 2023
Issued by: Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants
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1. Introduction

Regulation 43 of the Habitats Regulations, which implement a requirement of the Habitats and Birds Directives, requires an appropriate assessment to be undertaken of plans and projects which are likely to have a significant effect on an international site in Northern Ireland, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This is known as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and provides for assessment of the implications of a land use plan for international sites in view of their conservation objectives. International sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). Ramsar sites are also subject to HRA as a matter of policy. It is accepted practice to also carry out HRA for International sites in adjoining countries where there is potential for a cross border effect.

1.2. Background information

Sliabh Beagh (also known as 'Slieve Beagh') is a 250-square-mile mountainous area straddling the national borders of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is known for its natural beauty and biodiversity, with rolling blanket bog, moorlands, expansive woodland, and tranquil lakes. The Sliabh Beagh Eco-tourism Feasibility Project is a cross-border initiative funded by the Shared Island programme to generate well-developed local authority projects that will be in a position to secure funding for the construction or implementation stages. This includes a number of proposed new build routes in Tyrone in the areas of Fardross Glen and Favour Royal Forest. The study aims to develop and implement sustainable tourism infrastructure that will protect and enhance the region's natural and cultural heritage.

2. Legislative and Procedural Context

2.1. Legislative background

2.1.1. The EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) establishes the requirement for an assessment of potential impacts upon Natura 2000 sites in Article 6(3) and 6(4): 'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'

2.1.1. Article 6(3).

2.1.3. The Habitats Directive was transposed into Northern Ireland legislation by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1995.

2.1.4. Regulation 17(1) of the Regulations relates the requirement for Appropriate Assessments (henceforth AAs) of projects potentially impacting Natura 2000 Sites: 'Where a proposed road

development., is.. likely to have a significant effect thereon either individually or in combination with other developments, the Minister for the Environment shall ensure that an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives is undertaken.'

- 2.1.5. Additionally, Article 18(1) of the Regulations states: 'Where an operation or activity is being carried out, or is proposed to be carried out, on any land that is not within... a European Site, and is liable to have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site concerned either alone or in combination with other operations or activities, the Minister shall ensure that an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives is undertaken.'
- 2.1.6. Article 43 of the Regulations specifies the need for an assessment of implications upon European Sites (Natura 2000 sites). It should be noted that Article 43(5) requires that: 'In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to Regulation 44, the authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site.'
- 2.1.7. Regulation 62(1) specifically relates the need for AAs to road schemes, stating: 'Regulations 43 and 44 (requirement to consider effect on European site) apply in relation to any plan or project by the Department to construct a new road or to improve, within the meaning of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, an existing road.'
- 2.1.8. The Habitats Directive was transposed into the Irish Republic's legislation by the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (as amended). Under Regulation 15, operations neither directly connected with nor necessary to the management of the site, but likely to have a significant effect on the site, either alone or in combination with other operations or activities, will be subject to an assessment of the implications upon Natura 2000 sites in view of those sites' conservation objectives.
- 2.1.9. Regulation 16 states that: 'Having regard to the conclusions of the assessment under Regulation 15 (1), the Minister may decide to give consent for the operation or activity only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site and, if the Minister considers it to be appropriate, having obtained the opinion of the general public.'
- 2.1.10. Following the EC Directive and the national regulations, if the outcomes of this screening process cannot demonstrate with objective evidence that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site, the second stage of AA should be recommended.

2.2. Natura 2000 and Ramsar Sites

- 2.2.1. Natura 2000 sites are Sites of European Community Importance and consist of SACs which are designated under European Directive (92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna, hereby referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', and SPAs, which are designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. Originally intended to protect sites of importance, especially as waterfowl habitat, the Convention has broadened its scope over the years to cover all aspects of wetland conservation and wise use, recognising wetlands as ecosystems that are extremely important for biodiversity conservation in general and for the well-being of human communities.

Although Ramsar sites are not legislated under European legislation, national planning policy (PPS2) recommends they should be afforded the same level of consideration and protection as Natura 2000 sites.

2.3. HRA Process

2.3.1. The purpose of a HRA under Article 6 is to assess the impacts of a project, in combination with the effects of other plans and projects, against the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and to ascertain whether that project would adversely affect the protection or integrity of such a site.

2.3.2. Guidance from the European Commission (EC, 2000 & 2001) and DMRB Volume 11 have been used in this preliminary assessment. A summary of the stages followed in this assessment is shown in Figure 2 in Appendix 2, DMRB Volume 11 Figure 4.2 Generic Screening Process for the Assessment of the Implications on European Sites. In summary, the HRA should include the following stages, the need for each being dependent upon the outcomes of the preceding stage:

- Stage 1 – Screening;
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment;
- Stage 3 – Assessment of alternative solutions;
- Stage 4 – Consideration of imperative reasons of overriding public interest;
- Stage 5 – Consideration of compensatory measures.

2.3.3. These stages form the context of this report with details of the procedure followed during the screening stage provided in Section 3 Screening Methodology.

2.3.4. Stage 1 of the process is intended to identify whether the project is 'likely to have a significant effect' upon a European site, referred to as 'screening'. If the screening process identifies the potential for significant adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites, stage two of the HRA needs to be completed. This considers any potential impacts in greater detail, including whether mitigation measures are required. If an adverse impact upon the site's integrity cannot be ruled out, then stage 3 will need to be undertaken to assess whether alternative solutions exist. If there are no alternatives having a lesser effect upon the Natura 2000 site/s in question, the project can only be implemented if there are 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest', as detailed in Article 6(4). In essence, the work at Stage 1 will determine whether further stages of the HRA process are required.

2.3.5. In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, a HRA is required when, in view of a European site's objectives, a project:

- is likely to have a significant effect on a European site in Great Britain (either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects); and
- is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site.

2.3.6. In addition, Regulation 48(5) of the Habitat Regulations places emphasis on competent authorities to only approve projects, in which impacts on a European site have been "ascertained". It is important that this precautionary principle is applied to any screening assessment. A case ruling (Waddenzee case C-127/02) stated that any plan or project not

directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site is to be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that it will have a significant effect on that site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects'.

2.3.7. Therefore, if sufficient information is not available or where there is an element of doubt and further research is needed, the HRA should proceed to Stage 2 of the assessment.

3. Screening Methodology

3.1. Context and Methodology

3.1.1. The legal parameters for a HRA are prescribed in Northern Irish law under the Habitats Regulations and Republic of Ireland's law under the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (as amended); however, there is no standardised method for conducting such an assessment. For the purposes of this report, guidance on the process provided by the DMRB Standard HD 44/09 and the European Commission documents (EC, 2000 & 2001) have been adhered to.

3.1.3. In summary the methodology includes the following tasks:

- determining if the project is directly connected with the management of the site;
- a description of the project including mitigation;
- the identification of relevant European sites that may be impacted upon;
- a description of relevant European sites including qualifying features, current condition and threats, and key ecosystem factors (conservation objectives);
- an identification of potential routes through which conservation objectives of relevant sites could be impacted upon; and
- where possible effects have been identified, a preliminary appraisal of the project upon the integrity and protection of those sites.

3.2. Conservation Objectives

3.2.1. The EC Habitats Directive clearly states that the purpose of conservation is the maintenance of biodiversity. This statement does not allow for any form of biodiversity loss, and has a presumption in favour of increasing the value and stock of biodiversity through implementation of applicable Regulations. The EC Guidance (2000) states that the Natura 2000 data form requires that:

3.2.2. All Annex I habitat types present on a site and all Annex II species occurring at the site should be mentioned in the appropriate place in the data form. This information forms the basis for a Member State establishing 'the site's conservation objectives'.

3.2.3. The conservation objectives are therefore normally associated with these Annex I & II species and habitats which form the reasons for the site's designation; the qualifying features and primary reasons for selection. Those relevant to this report are described in Section 5.

3.3. Assessment of the Likelihood of Significance of Event

3.3.1. The assessment of significance should be made in relation to the specific features and environmental conditions of the site concerned, taking particular account of its conservation objectives (EC 2000). There is no one measure of significance, but the EC guidance suggests the likelihood of changes to relevant indicators should be used to establish changes in these conservation objectives. For instance, the indicators of most relevance to the Lough Foyle Ramsar would be the quality and extent of habitats, species present and their population size and vegetation characteristics.

3.3.2. For the assessment of significance of potential impacts upon the conservation objectives of each site identified, the following should be considered:

- deterioration of habitats or the habitats of qualifying species;
- disturbance to qualifying species.
- to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
 - a) population of the species as a viable component of the site;
 - b) distribution of the species within the site;
 - c) distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;
 - d) structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species; and
 - e) no significant disturbance of the species.
- To ensure for the qualifying habitat that the following are maintained in the long term:
 - a) extent of the habitat on the site;
 - b) distribution of the habitat within the site;
 - c) structure and function of the habitat;
 - d) processes supporting the habitat;
 - e) distribution of typical species of the habitat;
 - f) viability of typical species as components of the habitat; and
 - g) no significant disturbance of typical species of the habitat.

3.3.3. In the context of development projects there is no mechanism in European law or domestic statute for the approval of a development that would result in a loss of European biodiversity interest.

3.4. Consultation and Analysis

3.4.1. For consultation, the following statutory bodies were approached for comment/screening opinion, and the information provided will be used to inform the assessment:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group & NIEA). The response received can be found in Appendix A.

3.4.2. The following non-statutory bodies were also consulted as to the content and results of the HRA process as they have a specialist knowledge of and interest in the species and habitats forming the subject of this assessment:

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB);
- Raptor Ireland Study Group.
- Ulster Wildlife Trust

4. Description of the project

The Sliabh Beagh Eco-Tourism Destination Feasibility Study seeks to identify opportunities to help develop the Sliabh Beagh area as an eco-tourism destination. It is Funded through the 'Shared Island' programme to deliver a series of cross-border local authority projects. As part of this project, a number of new build trails are proposed for development across Monaghan County, Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster District Council areas. This report will examine the new build route sections in Mid Ulster District Council area.

The project is within the Slieve Beagh – Mullaghfad - Lisnaskea SPA which comprises a single land unit extending between Slatbeg in the north-east and Coolnasillagh in the south-west and incorporating the Slieve Beagh massif, Mullaghfad Forest and Lisnaskea Forest. Slightly more than half the eastern boundary is formed by the border with the Republic of Ireland, and that side of the Sliabh Beagh Mountains encompasses the Republic of Ireland (RoI) Sliabh Beagh SPA. Other protected sites in close proximity to the new build routes include Sliabh Beagh SAC (NI) & Sliabh Beagh RAMSAR site.

5. Relevant European Site Descriptions

The geographical extent of the assessment extends beyond the boundaries of the project area. Following the methodology in Section 5, European sites of nature conservation importance that occur within the project boundary or those that are considered to be within the area of influence have been identified. This assessment was carried out using the source-pathway-receptor (SPR) approach, a standard tool in environmental assessment. The SPR concept in ecological impact assessment relates to the idea that for the risk of an impact to occur, a source is needed (e.g., a development site); an environmental receptor is present (e.g., a lake); and finally, there must be a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g., a watercourse linking the development site to the lake). Even though there might be a risk of an impact occurring, it does not necessarily mean that it will occur, and in the event that it does occur, it may not have significant effects on the receiving environment. Identification of a risk means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor. In this instance, the most relevant receptors are any relevant Natura 2000 sites with connectivity to the proposed works. These receptors were considered during the desktop study stage of this screening assessment in order to assess the potential for significant effects upon their Qualifying Interests (QIs) and COs.

Table 1: Relevant European Sites

Site Name	Designation	Qualifying features	Current Condition and Threats
Slieve Beagh – Mullaghfad – Lisnaskea UK9020302	SPA	The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting nationally important populations of the following species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i> 	10 breeding pairs are known to exist on the site (Conservation Objectives 2015). No significant decrease in breeding population against national trends. Threats include Reduction of habitat, expansion of forestry areas, forestry activities, disturbances to nests, predation and research activities such as ringing.
Slieve Beagh UK0016622	SAC	European priority interest(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanket bogs (for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom) • European Dry Heaths (for which the area is considered to support a significant presence.) • Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds (for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom)._ 	Both on-site and off-site activities can potentially affect SAC/ASSI features. The site’s Conservation Objectives (2010) list the following threats: peat cutting, burning, drainage, grazing, afforestation, nitrogen deposition, damaging recreational activities, fly-tipping, dumping of alum sludge, changes in surrounding land use and climate change.
Slieve Beagh	RAMSAR	The site qualifies under Criterion 1a of the Ramsar Convention by being a particularly good representative example of a blanket bog. It is one of the largest expanses of intact upland peatland in Northern Ireland. The extensive blanket bog, which covers most of the site, exhibits the full range of characteristic vegetation and structural features associated with this type of habitat.	**Similar to those listed above
Sieve Beagh	SPA (IRL)	[A082] Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Reduction in the extent and condition of heath and bog and associated habitats; reduction in the extent and condition of low intensity managed grasslands and associated habitats; Reduction in the extent and condition of hedgerows; Age structure of forest estate; and disturbance to breeding sites.

6. Receiving Environment

6.1. Habitats

A description of the habitats of significant ecological value that were observed within the immediate surroundings of the works area are listed below, with descriptions adapted from “A Guide to Habitats in Ireland” by Julie A. Fossitt, 2000.

Routes: Favour Royal Link & Burke’s Waterfall

Overlap with protected sites: None.

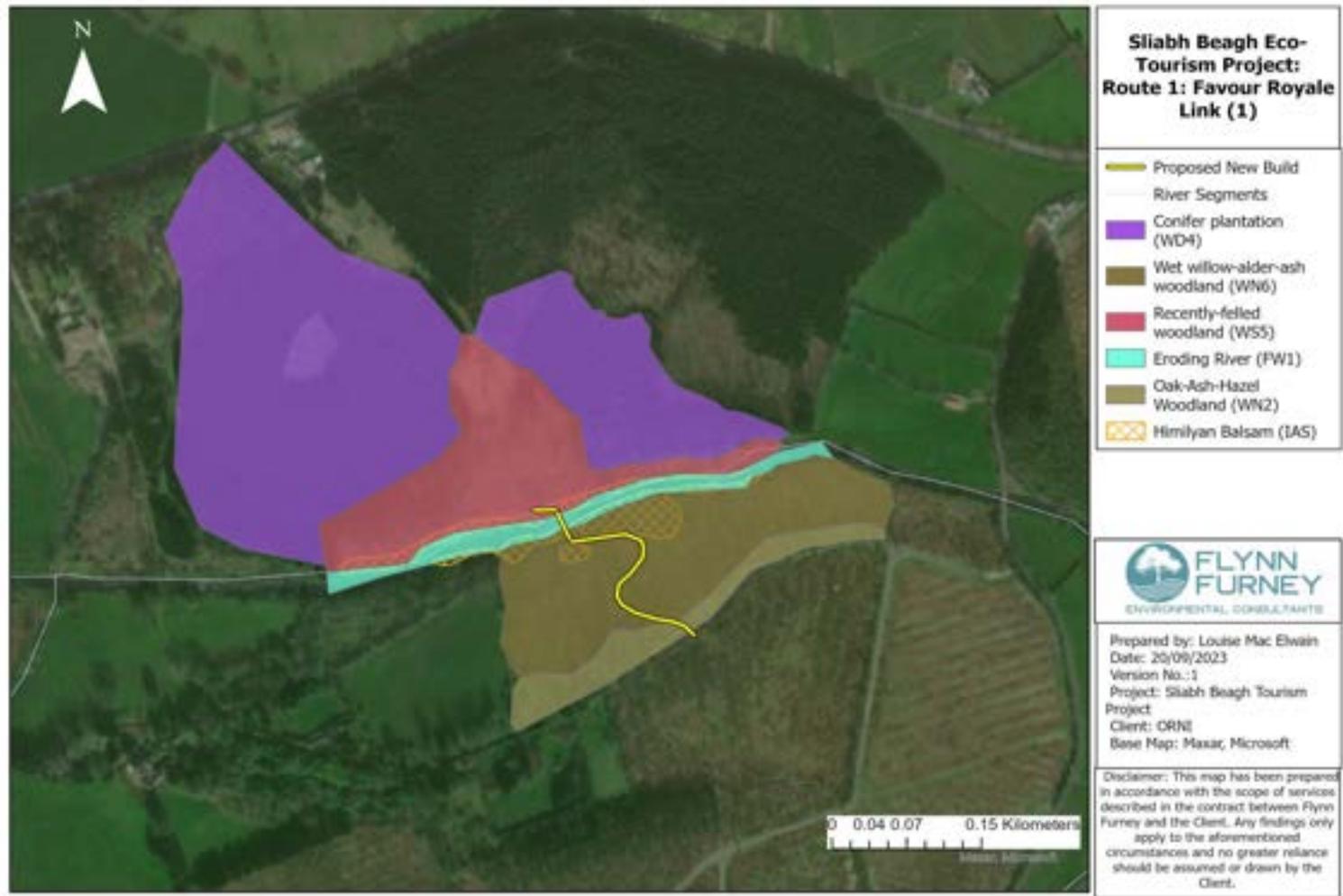


Figure 1: Habitat map in and around Favour Royale Link. .

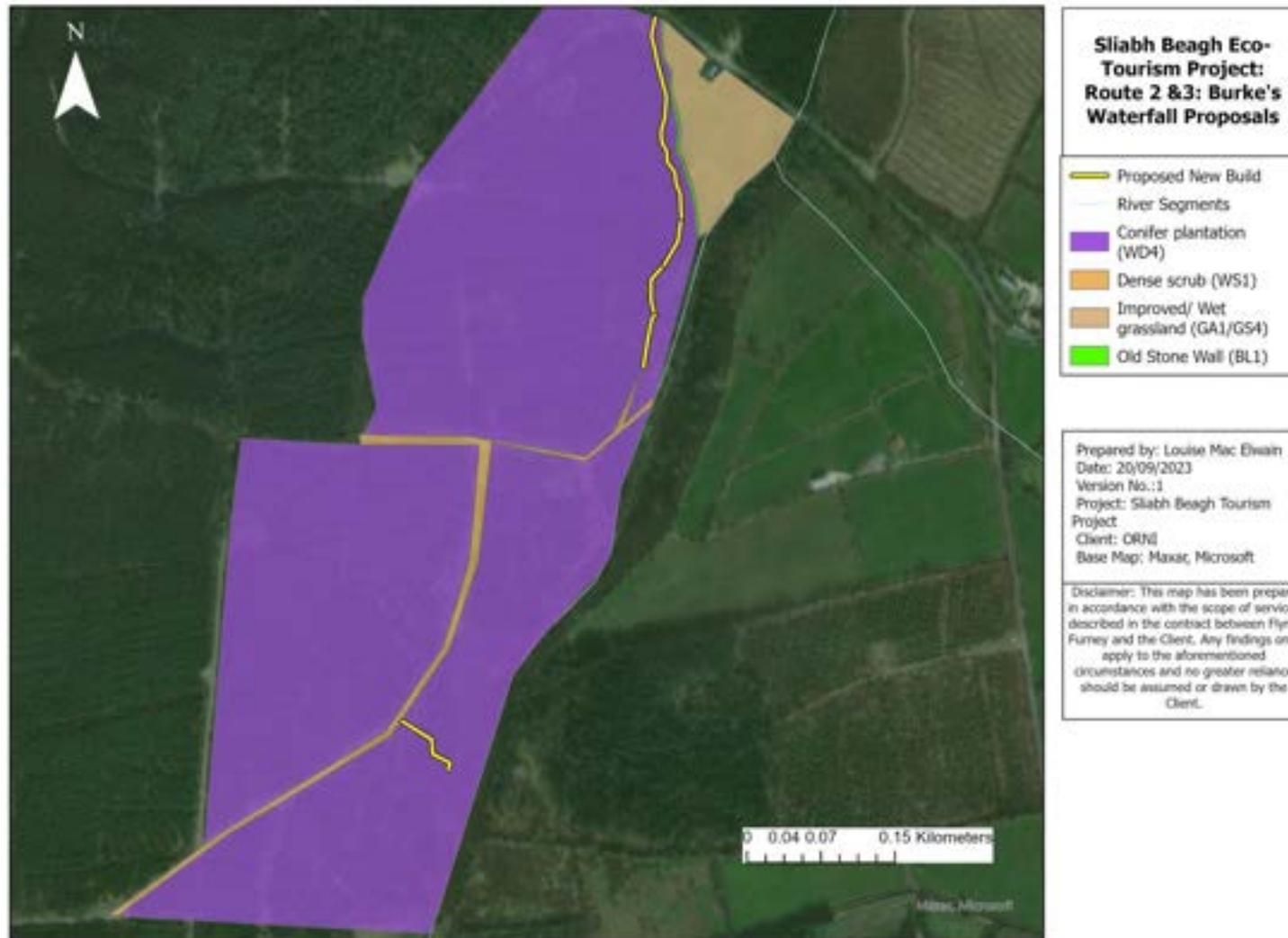


Figure 2: Habitat map of Favour Royal Forest.

Habitats present

Favour Royal Forest is mainly made up of coniferous forest blocks that lie close to the main Augher and Aughnacloy roads. The Ulster Way passes through this forest and there are several other waymarked trails. The proposed trail route passes through broadleaf woodland and crosses the River Blackwater. It also passes through sections of conifer forestry. Habitats are described below.

Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland (WN2): This woodland has a high percentage of Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and Hazel *Corylus avellana*, with interspersed Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Ivy *Hedera helix*. Ground flora consisted of Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Early Dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana*, Lords and Ladies *Arum maculatum*, Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana*, and ferns (*Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Asplenium scolopendrium*, *Athyrium filix-femina*).

Wet-Willow-Alder-Ash (WN6): This category denotes the damp woodland type on site which is dominated by Birch *Betula spp.*, with occasional Willow *Salix spp.* and Hazel *Corylus avellana*. Oak *Quercus spp.* can also be found, but is relatively rare. This represents a planted broadleaf woodland and trees are of uniform spacing and age. The ground flora is typical of a damp broadleaf woodland with abundant ferns (Broad Buckler-fern *Dryopteris dilatata*, Soft Shield-fern *Polystichum setiferum*, Hart's-tongue *Asplenium scolopendrium*), Remote sedge *Carex remota* and Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*. Other frequent herbs were Opposite-Leaved golden-saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*, Herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana* and Wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*.

Himalayan/Indian balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* was found in large stands nearer to the riverbank. Himalayan balsam is listed as an Invasive Alien Species of Union Concern in European legislation, and cannot be sold, exchanged, cultivated or released into the environment. Under Article 19 of Invasive Alien Species Regulation (1143/2014) Himalayan balsam has been identified as a Widely Spread Species in Northern Ireland and as such, management measures must be put in place to minimise its impacts. Current legislation states that this species must not be permitted to reproduce, be grown or cultivated; or released into the environment. The presence of *I. glandulifera* in the Blackwater Catchment is well documented. It was targeted through Action C10 of The IRD Duhallow LIFE Project (2015). However, its presence is still prolific on the stretch of the river within the study area.

Eroding upland river (FW1): The River Blackwater represents a large, deep, fast-flowing river. The bed is characterised by exposed bedrock and loose rock. Pebbles, gravel and coarse sand have accumulated in places, but finer sediments are rarely deposited due to the fast flow. It is deeply cut with high banks. Himalayan balsam is abundant along the bank stretches. A lack of deep rooting bank vegetation on the northern side of the river has resulted in bank erosion and collapse in places.

Conifer Plantation (WD4): These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed. This blocks

out much of the light reaching the ground and thus leads to a reduced diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce *Picea sitchensis* and Lodgepole Pines *Pinus contorta* were the main planted species.

Old stone wall (BL1): This old stone wall is important for wildlife. It supports a diverse flora with abundant lichens, mosses and ferns (*Asplenium trichomanes* and *A. ruta-muraria*). Other common components were Stonecrops *Sedum spp.*, Herb-robert *Geranium robertianum* and Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris*. Dry stone walls are great habitat for lizards and a variety of insects.

Improved/ wet grassland (GA1/GS4): This is grassland which has been reseeded for agriculture with an abundance of perennial Rye grass *Lolium spp.* and is species-poor. The presence of reed (*Juncus spp.*) indicates wetter soils in areas. However, the site is lacking the species diversity of a typical wet grassland.

Route: Fardross Arc

Overlap with protected sites: SPA NI, adjacent to ASSI & SAC NI

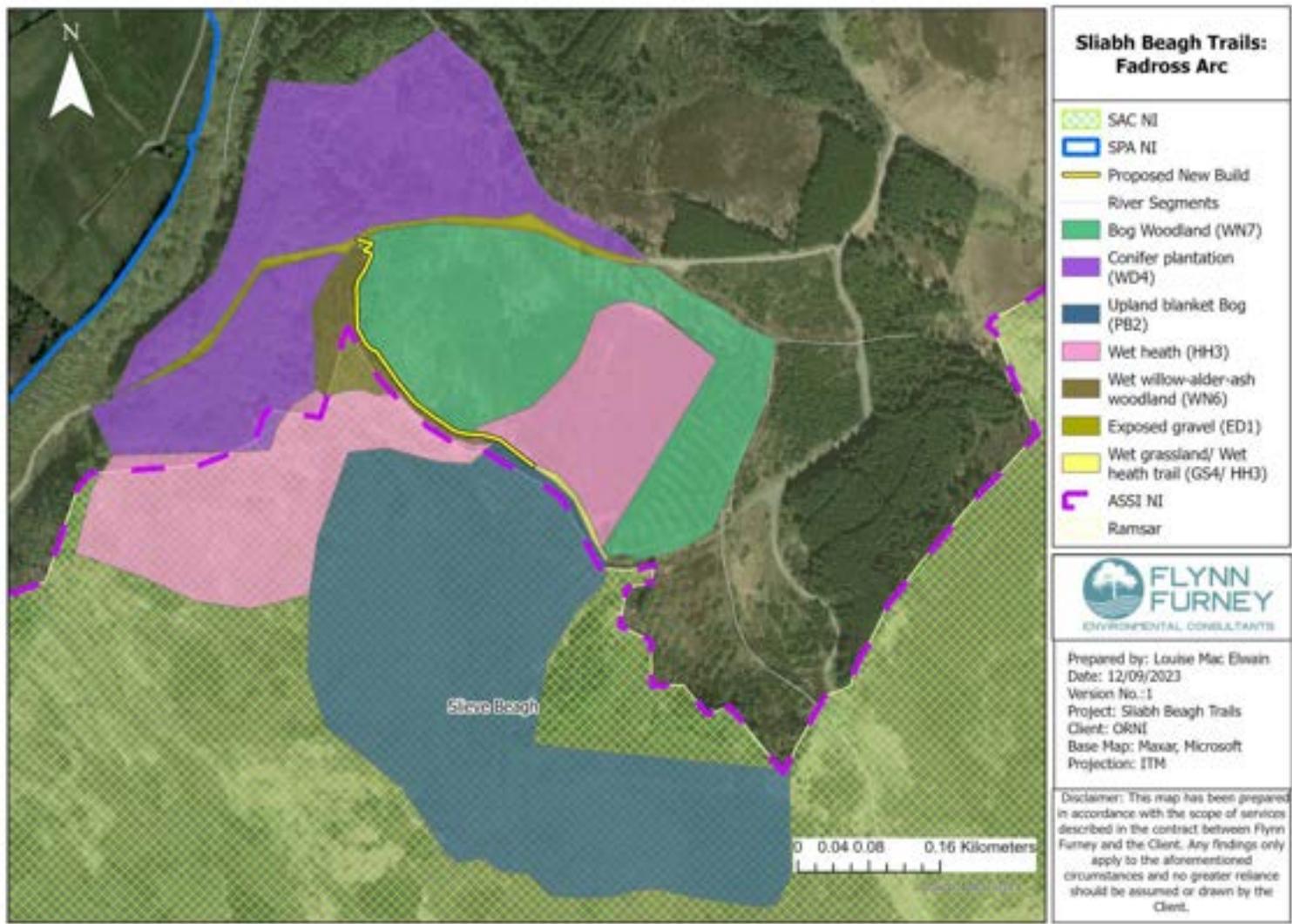


Figure 3: Habitat map of Fardross Arc.

Habitats

Wet grassland/ Wet heath trail (GS4/ HH3): The route trajectory follows a dirt trail which is currently being used and kept open by grazing cattle. Ground flora were mostly common of wet grasslands and contained Lesser spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, Wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris*, Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and patches of rushes such as *Juncus effusus* & *Juncus acutiflorus*. Some shrubs of Hazel *Corylus avellana* and *Salix aurita* have begun to colonise the path in places.



Figure 4: View of trail through Fadross glen arc.

The less trodden areas (fringes) of this path had similar make up to a wet heath habitat. These areas are dominated by Ling *Calluna vulgaris* & Cross-leaved *Erica teralix*. Other occasional species included Bell heather *Erica cinerea*, Heat Rush *Juncus squarrosus*, Devil's-Bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta* and Hard Fern *Blechnum spicant*. Some sections contained dense Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* stands.

Bog Woodland (WN7): The woodland on site has formed over cutover type peat which is well drained in the upper layers, likely developed within the last 40 years. Downy Birch *Betula pebescens* is the dominant species, with occasional Willow *Salix spp.* and Rowan *Sorbus acuparia*. Purple Moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and Bilberry *Pteridium aquilinum* are frequent.

Links with Annex 1: Annex 1 bog woodland refers to woodlands of intact raised bog. The woodland surveyed does not conform to this category.

Conifer Plantation (WD4): These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed, locking out much of the light reaching the ground and thus reducing the diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce *Picea sitchensis* and Lodgepole Pines *Pinus contorta* were the main planted species.

Wet willow-alder-ash woodland (WN6): This category of woodland is present in very wet areas that are dominated by Willow (*Salix spp.*) and Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). Ground flora is 'grassy' in appearance with carpets of Remote sedge *Carex remota* and Creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*. This vegetation composition and the damp soils present may be indicative of a peat flush.

Upland Blanket Bog (PB2): This habitat type is used for blanket bog which occurs 150 metres above sea level. These bogs are rain fed and their peat is acidic. The vegetation is characterised by the presence of ericoid shrubs and in particular Ling heather *Calluna vulgaris*, Crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* and Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. A dense layer of Sphagnum is present on the bryophyte layer, in addition to trailing Bog cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccos* and stands of Reindeer lichen *Cladonia spp.*

Occasional herbs such as Bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and tussocks of Hare's tail Cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* can be seen stretching across this bog.

Links with Annex 1 habitats: This blanket bog is still capable of peat formation and corresponds to the priority habitat **blanket bog 7130**.



Figure 5: View across the blanket bog from Fadross Glen Arc.

Wet heath (HH3): This category has been used for areas of cutover bog where the vegetation has recolonised to a sufficient extent to be included in this category. Peat has been extracted and depth reduced. It was mostly dominated by Purple Moor-grass *Molina caerulea* with occasional Ling Heather, Bilberry and Cross-leaved heather. Devil's-bit scabious, Tormentil and rushes such as Sharp-flowered rush and Heath rush were also present. Trees have begun to colonise the area with Birch and Sitka Spruce present on occasion.

Route: Fardross Equestrian Loop (1,2,3)

Overlap with protected sites: SPA NI

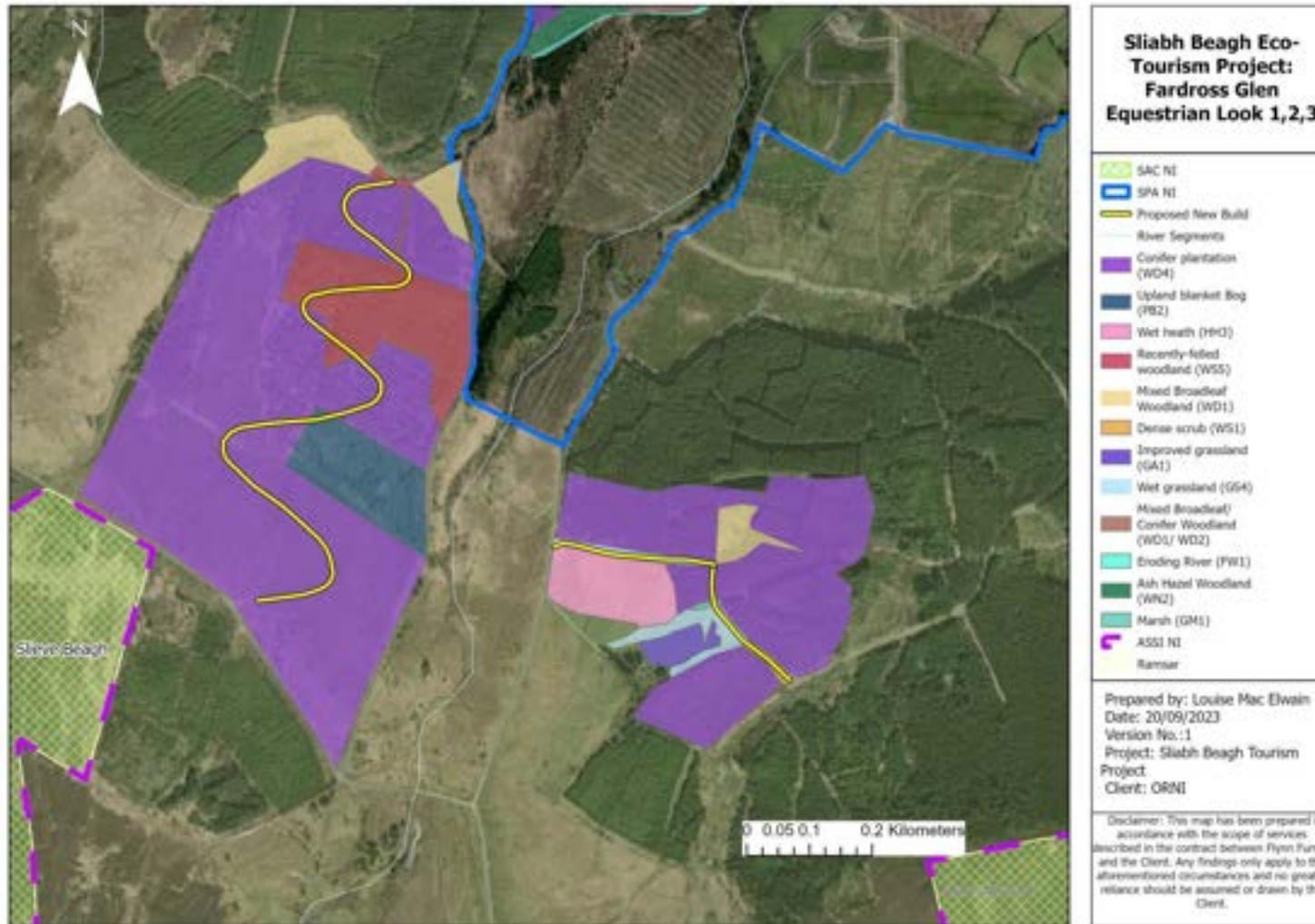


Figure 6: Fardross Glen Equestrian loop 1,2,3.

Habitats

Recently felled woodland (WS5): This designates areas of plantation that have been clear-felled but have not been replanted or converted to another land use. Common colonisers of open ground among the conifer tree stumps and brash (discarded woody material) include Rosebay Willowherb *Epilobium angustifolium*, Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea* and ferns. *Juncus conglomeratus* and *Juncus effusus* were frequent, with an occasional ground cover of moss (*Polytrichum spp.*). Sitka spruce saplings have begun to seed and colonise areas.

Conifer plantation (WD4): These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed, blocking out much of the light reaching the ground and thus leading to a reduced diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce *Picea sitchensis* and Lodgepole Pine *Pinus contorta* were the main planted species.

Upland Blanket Bog (PB2): The vegetation is characterised by the presence of ericoid shrubs and in particular Ling heather *Calluna vulgaris* and Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. A dense layer of Sphagnum is present on the bryophyte layer, along with stands of Reindeer lichen *Cladonia spp.*. Occasional Bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and Cross-leaved heather can be found. Devil's-bit scabious was present in patches nearer the road.

Wet grassland (GS4): Trail 17 runs down through an old forestry track which consists of wet grassland and colonising Gorse *Ulex europaeus* and Willow *Salix spp.*. Wet grassland species include Crested dogstail *Cynosurus cristatus*, Square stalked St. John's Wort *Hypericum tetrapterum*, Tormentil *Potentilla erecta*, Germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys* and Sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus*.

Another section of wet grassland is mapped at the edge of an agricultural field but has been improved and is not species rich. It contained a dense rush cover and was very wet at the time of surveying, grading into a small section of marsh.

Wet Heath (HH3): This habitat is found to the south of the trail. It was being grazed by cattle at the time of surveying. It is species-rich with abundant Ling Heather, Asphodel, Tormentil, Hard Rush and Sharp-flowered Rush. It also contained patches of Reindeer lichen (*Cladonia spp.*).

Route: Fardross Glen Equestrian Route 4.

Overlap with protected sites: SPA NI.

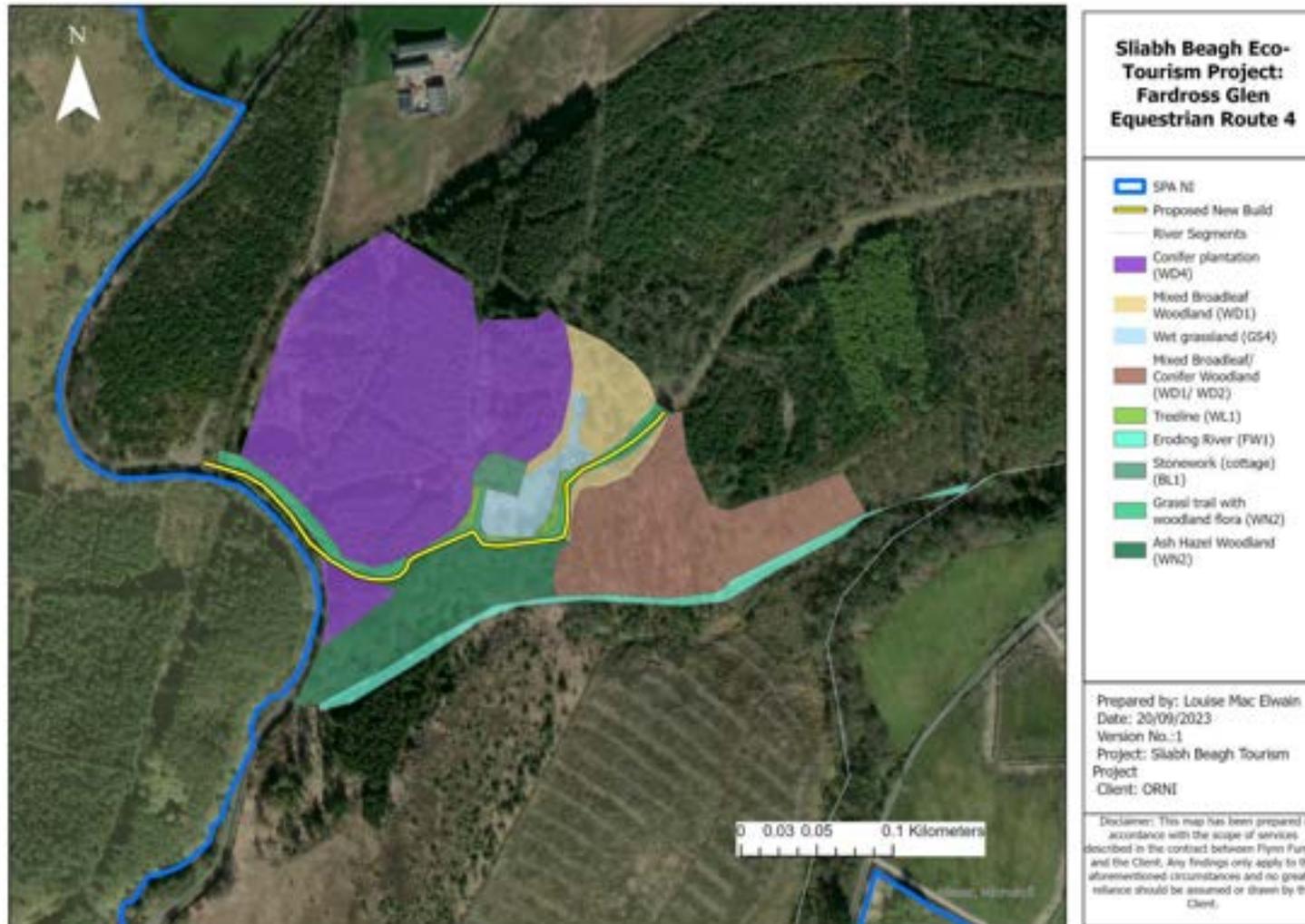


Figure 7: Fardross Glen Equestrian Route 4.

Habitats

This route follows an old right of way which passes through a mixed broadleaf woodland. There is a river running through the woodland which joins up the Fardross stream. An old stone wall runs the length of the old right of way and an old cottage is located around 30 metres north of the proposed route. A hunting tree stand with ladder was also located along the route.

Grass trail with woodland flora (WN2): This old right of way runs along a grass trail within a woodland. Ground flora were similar to that found in a native Ash-hazel woodland and included abundant Wood Sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* and Bent grasses *Agrostis spp.* Other abundant species include Ivy *Hedera helix*, Wood Anemone *Anemone nemorosa*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, Early Dog-violet *Viola reichenbachiana*, Lords and Ladies *Arum maculatum*, Wood Speedwell *Veronica montana*, and ferns (*Dryopteris filix-mas*, *Polystichum setiferum*, *Asplenium scolopendrium*, *Athyrium filix-femina*). Some Willow shrubs *Salix spp.* have begun to colonise the trail in places.



Figure 8: Fardross Glen Right of way

Conifer Woodland: These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed, blocking out much of the light reaching the ground and thus reducing the diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce *Picea sitchensis* and Lodgepole Pines *Pinus contorta* were the main planted species.

Ash Hazel Woodland (WN2): Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica* and Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* are the main tree species in the canopy. The shrub layer is composed of Hazel *Corylus avellana* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Other species such as Rowan *Sorbus acuparia* and Willow *Salix spp.* were occasional. Ground flora were similar to those as described above under the grassland trail.

Mixed Broadleaf/ Conifer Woodland (WD2): This is an area of woodland which has been recolonised with Pines, Willows and Birch. Ground flora includes Bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, Hard Fern *Blechnum spicant*, Great Wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica* and Velvet Bent *Agrostis canina*.

Wet grassland (GS4): This grassland contains frequent rushes *Juncus effusus* which become more abundant on the lower slopes. Grasses such as Perennial grasses *Lolium spp.* Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus geniculatus* are also present. Overall, the area was not overly species rich.

Old stonework (cottage) (BL1): This category represents an old stone cottage surrounded by a number of low stone walls. An old Sycamore (~160 years old) and Yew tree *Taxus bacatta* are also located next to the cottage.

Treeline (WL1): An old stone wall and treeline runs along the trail, providing nice habitat for an abundance of ferns and moss. A treeline has grown from the bank and old stone wall and contains a mix of Hawthorn and Holly, with occasional Rowan and Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*.

6.2. Birds

Hen Harrier Vantage Point (VP) surveys were carried out on the 6th of September 2023. The vantage points had been selected prior to the surveys during habitat assessments and the conditions were recorded for each vantage point before the surveys began. This included visibility, rain, wind and cloud conditions. The methodology that was used for the VP surveys was the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS) methodology. This methodology usually follows a transect but the methodology was adapted to use a vantage point instead. Each bird observation was recorded. The species of bird was recorded using the CBS bird species code list. The distance of each bird observed from the VP was recorded using Google Earth Pro, along with the direction of flight. Other bird species heard but not seen were also recorded. Each survey lasted two hours in total. Maps of the VP locations can be seen below. The BoCCI list is used to identify bird species that are at risk of extinction or that are in need of conservation action. The BoCCI 2020- 2026 list is a joint publication by BirdWatch Ireland and RSPB Northern Ireland, and it is based on the latest data on bird populations and trends.



Figure 6: Vantage Point locations

Results

The results of the survey are laid out in the table below:

Species Observed	Scientific Name	Description/ Activities	BOCCI Status	Sliabh Beagh SPA Codes	Location
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Circled in all directions (approx. 3)	Amber		VP1
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1

House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Singing in distance (not seen)	Amber		VP1
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Calling from willow trees	Green		VP1
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Two buzzards circling high in the sky as they hunt from south to west of VP1 (approx. 2)	Green		VP1
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Calling from willow trees	Green		VP2
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Singing in the distance	Red		VP2
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP2
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Flying above heath from west to east of VP2	Green		VP2
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Circling above heath (approx. 6)	Amber		VP2
Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Observed low flying/ hunting over heath from east to west of VP2	Amber	[A082]	VP2
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Calling in the distance	Green		VP3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Heard singing in the conifer plantation	Green		VP3
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Observed in flight above young conifers west to east of VP3 facing NW	Red		VP3
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Observed in flight above young conifers in all directions (approx. 11)	Amber		VP3
Wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Observed flying from tree to tree in the conifer plantation	Green		VP3
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Observed circling above young conifer plantation (approx. 7)	Amber		VP3
Long tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Heard singing in distance	Green		VP3
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Heard singing in distance	Green		VP3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Heard singing in distance	Green		VP3
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Observed flying between willow trees	Green		VP3
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Heard singing in distance	Amber		VP3
Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Heard singing in conifer plantation	Green		VP3
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Heard singing in willow	Green		VP3

Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Heard singing in willow	Green		VP3
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A Hen Harrier was observed at Vantage Point 2. Its flight path can be seen below.

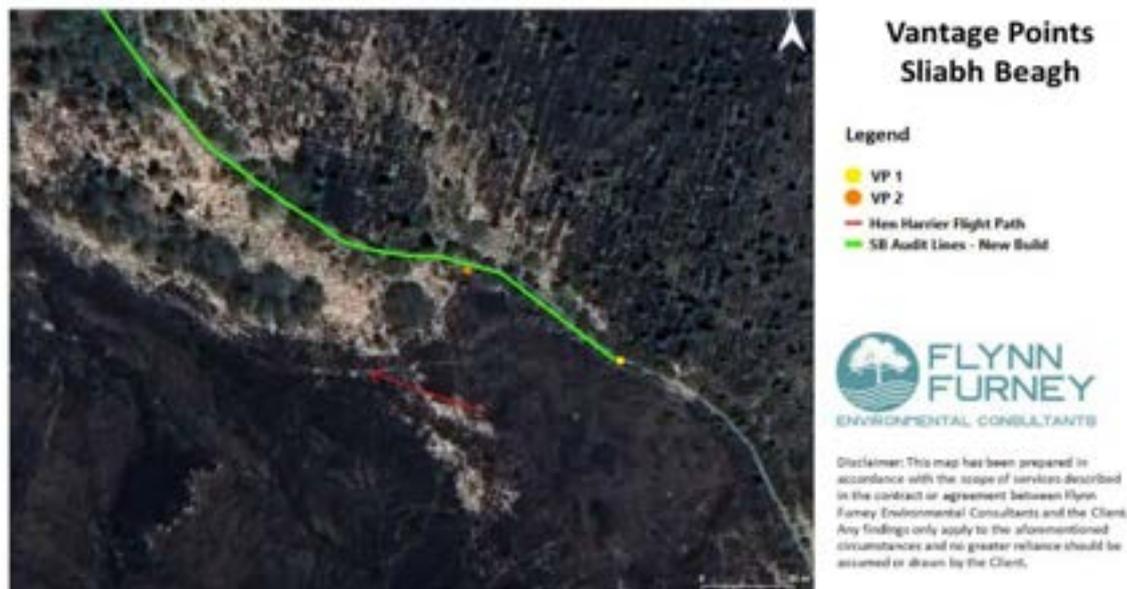


Figure 8: Hen Harrier flight path.

Discussion

Vantage point surveys carried out as part of this assessment can only give limited data. This is based on the fact that surveys were not carried out during the optimal period to determine Hen Harrier activity, and thus possible disturbance during breeding and nesting seasons. In addition, only one survey per site was conducted. There are several reasons why one vantage point bird survey is not sufficient to say which birds visit a site:

1. **Limited field of view:** A vantage point bird survey can only cover a limited area. This means that it is possible that some birds will be present at the site but not be visible from the vantage point.
2. **Bird movement:** Birds are constantly moving, so it is possible that some birds will fly over or through the site without being seen from the vantage point.
3. **Cryptic species:** Some bird species are very good at camouflaging themselves, making them difficult to see. These species may be present at the site but not be detected during a vantage point survey.
4. **Observer error:** Even experienced observers can miss birds. This is especially true in dense vegetation or in poor lighting conditions.

To get a more accurate picture of the bird species that visit a site, it is necessary to conduct multiple surveys from different vantage points and at different times of day and year. This will help to increase the chances of detecting all of the bird species and nesting/roosting areas that are present at the site.

However, during our survey, one Hen Harrier was observed at VP2. This vantage point overlooks optimum Hen Harrier habitat in Sliabh Beagh Bog (SAC & SPA). The large heather mats across upland blanket bog within the SAC are optimal habitat for Hen Harrier breeding and roosting.

Other habitats within the area were not deemed optimal for roosting and nesting locations.

7. Assessment of Potential Impacts

This section considers the impacts of the proposed project, as described in Section 4, upon the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 site, as identified in Section 5. This section identifies the potential impacts the project will have upon the designation criteria of the identified Ramsar, SAC and SPA sites.

Habitat loss

The proposed trail development could result in habitat loss through the removal of existing vegetation and soil. This would directly destroy the habitat of any plants and animals that live in the area. The trail could degrade the existing habitat by introducing pollution, noise, and other disturbances. Habitat degradation can make it less suitable for plants and animals to live in.

The proposed works do not lie inside the SAC or directly impact any annexed habitat which is associated with Sliabh Beagh SAC's conservation objectives. The same can be said for the RAMSAR and ASSI sites.

It can be concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not have a significant effect on any European site as a result of habitat loss and no scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

Pollution Events

There is a risk involved with any activity involving the use of machinery within, or in proximity to, freshwater habitats, that a pollution incident might arise and result in spills or leaks of polluting substances into the water. The risk of such pollution events occurring must be managed to ensure their likelihood is low, and that there are effective measures put in place in the event that they do occur, to prevent any wide reaching or short-term adverse effects.

As set out above, the proposed works will take place at locations which sometimes overlap with freshwater habitats, such as The River Blackwater. It is considered that given the nature of the proposals, which are small in scale and will not involve the use of large volumes of hydrocarbon fuels or other chemicals, that any potential pollution incidents arising as a result of the proposed development will be minor. No pools or lakes are found within proximity to the proposed route trails. Additionally, best practise will avoid any impacts to freshwater habitats.

It can be concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not have a significant effect on any European site as a result of water quality and habitat deterioration and no scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects.

Aerial Noise & Visual Disturbance

The Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* is a territorial, ground-nesting bird of prey that typically breeds in open upland bog and heather moorland, and their associated habitat. There is a worrying decline in Hen Harrier numbers in Northern Ireland, with a fall of 22% since 2010. Under the EU Birds Directive all member states are required to take measures to ensure the survival of Hen Harriers at favourable conservation status. Human activities in the vicinity of breeding birds can lead to increased rates of nest desertion (White & Thurow 1985), and reduced rates of site occupancy (Webber *et al.* 2013), territory establishment (Bötsch *et al.* 2017), breeding success (Balotari-Chiebao *et al.* 2016), and survival (Ruhlen *et al.* 2003). Hen Harriers are sensitive to disturbance, especially during the breeding season. Recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and dog walking can flush birds from their nests, which can lead to nest abandonment or predation.

A study by Caravaggi *et al.*, 2020 showed that recreational activities impact Hen Harrier nesting sites. Systematic reviews have demonstrated that recreational activities can negatively impact breeding birds (e.g. Steven *et al.* 2011; Larson *et al.* 2016) including above-ground foragers (Bötsch *et al.* 2017) and upland species such as Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricarius* (Finney *et al.* 2005). Thus, there exists the potential for disturbance of prospecting Hen Harriers early in the breeding season and/or foraging Hen Harriers once territories have been established. A review of hen harrier disturbance at nest sites suggests that disturbance can occur up to 500m from a nest site (Ruddock *et al.* 2007). Although no such distances have been suggested for disturbance at roost sites, it is known that human activities can cause abandonment of Hen Harrier roost sites (Clarke and Watson 1990).

Both the construction and the use of the proposed route and its users have the potential to cause disturbance to nesting or roosting Hen Harrier as the site is located adjacent to highly suitable habitat. Disturbance is a risk at the nest/roost site itself but also along the flight corridors used by Hen Harrier entering and exiting the roost site. Disturbance along flight corridors may alter Hen Harrier behaviour which may have secondary effects such as consequential energetic costs and roost and foraging habitat fragmentation. Disturbance resulting from the route may cause short-term displacement of roosting Hen Harrier, for example during times of high activity along the route. This displacement may be temporary and short-term where birds continue to use the roost site after the disturbance event. If birds are repeatedly exposed to disturbance events from recreational users, it may result in long-term displacement of Hen Harrier from the roost site.

In the absence of mitigation by design or otherwise, the presence of walkers and dogs along the route has the potential to cause disturbance and potentially either short-term or long-term displacement of winter roosting or summer breeding Hen Harrier. This may affect the conservation status of the species in relation to the relevant SSCO. Similarly, the laying of trails during sensitive seasons has the potential to cause disturbance if machinery is used and loud noises occur. Relevant SSCOs that may

be affected include numbers of individuals attending the roost/nest and disturbance at the nest/roost site.

The large heather mats across upland blanket bog within the SAC are optimal habitat for Hen Harrier breeding and roosting, specifically route 14 (Fardross Arc) which overlooks the SAC. A Hen Harrier was also identified in this area during vantage point surveys.

No breeding or roosting surveys have been carried out to date.

8. Stage 1 Screening Appraisal for Appropriate Assessment

Stage One Screening was completed in accordance with Section 2 of this report. The proposed project has been considered in the context of the European sites (their Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests and any Conservation Objectives which have been set). Pathways have been identified with connectivity to the proposed project using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

From the finding of the Screening, it is concluded that:

- the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site.
- the possibility of likely significant Water Quality and Habitat Deterioration effects can be discounted for without further evaluation and analysis, or the application of measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects of the potential project on European sites.
- The possibility for likely significant noise and visual disturbance effects could not be discounted at this stage.
- All other likely significant effects can be excluded.

Having regard to the methodology employed and the findings of the Screening, it has been concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment of the implications of the proposed project on any European site is required for:

- Visual and Noise disturbance effects on the Hen Harrier populations at the Sliabh Beagh SPA (Republic of Ireland) and the Slieve Beagh – Mullaghfad – Lisnaskea SPA (Northern Ireland).

9 STAGE 2 APPRAISAL FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

9.1. Introduction

The assessment considers the potential for adverse effects that development of trails in Slieve Beagh could have on the integrity of any European site, with respect to its conservation objectives, structure and function. EC guidance (EC 2021) states that the integrity of a site involves its ecological functions and the decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on, and be limited to, the site's conservation objectives.

The potential effects have been assessed in the absence of any mitigation measures and also with reference to the precautionary principle.

9.2. Approach to Assessment

In line with the relevant guidance, this stage of the Appropriate Assessment consists of three main steps:

- **Impact Prediction:** where the likely impacts of the project are examined. A source-pathway-receptor model has been used to assess potential for impact;
- **Assessment of Effects:** where the effects of the project are assessed as to whether they have any adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites as defined by conservation objectives; and
- **Mitigation Measures:** where mitigation measures are identified to ameliorate any adverse effects on the integrity of any European Site.

9.3 Impact Prediction

The methodology for the assessment of impacts is derived from the Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 Sites (EC, 2021). When describing changes/activities and impacts on ecosystem structure and function, the types of impacts that are commonly presented include:

- Direct and indirect effects;
- Short and long-term effects;
- Construction, operational and decommissioning effects; and
- Isolated, interactive and cumulative (or 'in-combination') effects.

A 'source-pathway-receptor' approach has been applied for this assessment:

- The source relates to the principles and priorities outlined in the FAPP which have the potential to adversely impact European sites, e.g. emissions of pollutants to water.
- The pathway relates to how proposed development could potentially impact European sites, e.g. habitat loss/ fragmentation, disturbance to species, impacts to water quality.

The proposed project will not result in any significant land take or fragmentation of an internationally protected site. It lies within an SPA. It is not within an SAC, however, any protected habitats found on site, and protected under nearby Natura sites, could be impacted.

The hydrological connectivity of the site was previously discussed; however, no significant impacts would be expected given the scale of the project. No outdoor lighting is to be used on proposed trails, thus species disturbance from lighting is not expected.

The construction of these projects will involve the clearing of vegetation, which can have impacts on protected nesting bird species which utilise the site. However, under the Wildlife Act, all clearance works will have to be carried out outside of bird nesting season.

An increase in human activity is expected due to new access trails and increased connections to other recreational routes across the bog. An increase in dog walkers may also be expected. This may result in species disturbance.

Species disturbance during construction is likely if construction is carried out during breeding seasons or near to roosting areas for protected species.

The use of construction equipment and the resurfacing and construction of footpaths and pavements, construction of elevated boardwalks and provision of access through the sites, could result in the spread of invasive species, which could in turn spread to surrounding protected sites.

3. Ecological Assessment

3.1 Conservation objectives

The conservation objectives of the **NI SLIEVE BEAGH – MULLAGHFAD – LISNASKEA - SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA) UK9020302** are laid out below. Given that Hen Harrier is a mobile Qualifying Interest (QI) there is a possibility for construction to impede the conservation objectives of this site. The conservation objectives for the site are as follows:

1. To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species (Hen Harrier).
2. Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population.
3. To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species.
4. To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained.
5. To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species.
6. To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term:
 - Population of the species as a viable component of the site
 - Distribution of the species within the site
 - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species
 - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species.

The seven project routes are within the boundaries of Slieve Beagh SPA. The Conservation Objective for Slieve Beagh SPA is to 'To restore the favourable conservation condition of Hen Harrier in Slieve Beagh SPA, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

1. Population size
2. Productivity Rate
3. Spatial utilisation by breeding pairs
4. Extent and condition of heath bog and associated habitats
5. Extent and condition of low intensity managed grasslands and associated habitats.
6. Extent and condition of hedgerows
7. Age structure of forest
8. Disturbance to breeding sites.'

The Habitats Directive (EU, 1992) describes how favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being achieved when: "population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor likely to be

reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.”

3.2 Qualifying Features, sensitivities and predicted impacts

The importance of the Slieve Beagh protected sites under the Habitats Directive is defined by their qualifying features or interests. The qualifying features or interests of the sites are given in Table 1, along with the specific sensitivities/ main threats relevant to each feature and the predicted impacts of the proposed development. The environmental sensitivities for each site have been derived from the baseline assessments of conservation status carried out by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) as part of the report to the EU Commission on The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland, submitted in 2007.

Table 1: Annex 1 species and Environmental Sensitivities associated with Slieve Beagh- Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA.

Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives	Conservation objectives which may be impacted	Potential Impacts from Development
<p>Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Hen Harrier in Slieve Beagh SPA</p>	<p><u>Fledging success</u>: sufficient to maintain or enhance population.</p> <p><u>To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species</u> and</p> <p>To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population of the species as a viable component of the site - Distribution of the species within the site - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species. 	<p>The impact of any significant disturbance on the SPA's breeding population will ultimately be manifested in the targets which relate to population demographics (i.e. population size, productivity rate) and the spatial utilisation of the SPA by breeding pairs. Factors such as intensity, frequency, timing and duration of a potentially disturbing activity need to be taken into account to determine its significance on breeding Hen Harrier in the SPA. Hen Harrier may avoid the trail and the surrounding area due to the noise, disturbance, and visual impact of the construction. This could reduce the amount of habitat available to Hen Harrier and could make it more difficult for them to find food and mates. A review of Hen Harrier disturbance at nest sites suggests that disturbance can occur up to 500m from a nest site (Ruddock <i>et al.</i> 2007). Disturbance during construction may discourage flight activity or foraging in the vicinity of the Proposed Development which may negatively impact productivity rates.</p> <p>Disturbance to Hen Harrier roosts during the winter months may result in significant impacts. Hen Harriers rely on their roost sites to rest and recuperate. Disturbance at these sites can prevent them from getting the rest they need, which can lead to reduced energy reserves. This can make it more difficult for them to find food and raise their young. Disturbance can also cause stress in Hen Harriers. Stress can have a</p>

		<p>number of negative effects on their health, including reduced breeding success, increased susceptibility to disease, and even death. In some cases, Hen Harriers may abandon their roost sites if they are disturbed too much. This can force them to find new roost sites, which can be difficult and time-consuming.</p> <p>There may be an increased risk of predation as the trail could make it easier for predators (such as dogs) to access Hen Harrier nests and breeding territories.</p>
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Table 2: Annex 1 species and Environmental Sensitivities associated with Slieve Beagh SPA (RoI).

Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives	Conservation objectives which may be impacted	Potential Impacts from Development
<p>A082 Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i></p> <p>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Hen Harrier in Slieve Beagh SPA</p>	<p><u>Population size</u>: Maintain numbers at or above 3–4 confirmed breeding pairs.</p> <p><u>Productivity rate</u>: Maintain at least 1.0–1.4 fledged young per confirmed pair. If population size of the SPA is not favourable, then the upper end of this productivity rate range is to be met. In order for estimates to be sufficiently representative of the SPA, they need to be of sufficient sample size and ideally over multiple years in order to account for inter-annual variability.</p>	<p>The impact of any significant disturbance on the SPA's breeding population will ultimately be manifested in the targets which relate to population demographics (i.e. population size, productivity rate) and the spatial utilisation of the SPA by breeding pairs. Factors such as intensity, frequency, timing and duration of a potentially disturbing activity need to be taken into account to determine its significance on breeding Hen Harrier in the SPA. Hen Harrier may avoid the trail and the surrounding area due to the noise, disturbance, and visual impact of the construction. This could reduce the amount of habitat available to Hen Harrier and could make it more difficult for them to find food and mates. A review of Hen Harrier disturbance at nest sites suggests that disturbance can occur up to 500m from a nest site (Ruddock <i>et al.</i> 2007).</p>

	<p><u>Spatial utilisation by breeding pairs:</u> Optimal resilience depends on breeding pairs utilising the SPA to the maximum extent possible. The spatial distribution of breeding pairs is expressed by the proportion of the SPA being used by them. Breeding pairs predominantly use the area within 5km of their nest site or centre of territory, though they can travel further (e.g. Irwin <i>et al.</i>, 2012; Arroyo <i>et al.</i>, 2014). Thus, the core area used by confirmed pairs can be broadly and generically estimated by calculating the portion that lies within 5km of all recorded nest sites. Ideally, the breeding population should be well dispersed around the SPA.</p> <p><u>Disturbance to breeding sites:</u> Disturbance occurs at levels that do not significantly impact upon breeding Hen Harrier.</p>	<p>Disturbance during construction may discourage flight activity or foraging in the vicinity of the Proposed Development which may negatively impact productivity rates.</p> <p>Disturbance to Hen Harrier roosts during the winter months may result in significant impacts. Hen Harriers rely on their roost sites to rest and recuperate. Disturbance at these sites can prevent them from getting the rest they need, which can lead to reduced energy reserves. This can make it more difficult for them to find food and raise their young. Disturbance can also cause stress in Hen Harriers. Stress can have a number of negative effects on their health, including reduced breeding success, increased susceptibility to disease, and even death. In some cases, Hen Harriers may abandon their roost sites if they are disturbed too much. This can force them to find new roost sites, which can be difficult and time-consuming.</p> <p>There may be an increased risk of predation as the trail could make it easier for predators (such as dogs) to access Hen Harrier nests and breeding territories.</p>
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3.3. Potential Impacts

The proposed work involves the excavation of soil and transport and compaction of aggregates for pathway development. It will also involve the construction of boardwalks in some areas. Plant machinery will be used during construction, which will result in noise pollution in the area. Construction equipment, such as excavators and trucks, generate significant noise. Construction workers can also generate noise from talking, shouting, and using tools. Pile driving to support boardwalks can produce very loud noise, up to 120 decibels or more. These processes can negatively impact Hen Harrier for which both sites are designated.

Potential impacts have been identified during the AA screening process:

1. **Disturbance to breeding sites:** The impact of any significant disturbance on the SPA's breeding population will ultimately be manifested in the targets which relate to population demographics (i.e. population size, productivity rate) and the spatial utilisation of the SPA by breeding pairs. Factors such as intensity, frequency, timing and duration of a potentially disturbing activity need to be taken into account to determine its significance on breeding Hen Harrier in the SPA. Restrictions are needed to prevent significant impacts. A review of Hen Harrier disturbance at nest sites suggests that disturbance can occur up to 500m from a nest site (Ruddock *et al.* 2007).
2. **Spatial utilisation by breeding pairs:** Optimal resilience depends on breeding pairs utilising the SPA to the maximum extent possible. The spatial distribution of breeding pairs is expressed by the proportion of the SPA being used by them. Breeding pairs predominantly use the area within 5km of their nest site or centre of territory, though they can travel further (e.g. Irwin *et al.*, 2012; Arroyo *et al.*, 2014). Thus, the core area used by confirmed pairs can be broadly and generically estimated by calculating the portion that lies within 5km of all recorded nest sites. Ideally, the breeding population should be well dispersed around the SPA. Hen Harriers may avoid the trail and the surrounding area during construction due to the noise, disturbance, and visual impact of the construction. This could reduce the amount of habitat available to Hen Harrier and could make it more difficult for them to find food and mates.
3. **Disturbance to roosting sites:** Although Hen Harrier communal roosts are predominately used between dusk and dawn, they are known to be used infrequently during daylight hours. As such there is a possibility for disturbance during the construction and operation of the trail.
4. **Increased risk of predation:** there may be an increased risk of predation as the trail could make it easier for predators (such as dogs) to access Hen Harrier nests and breeding territories.

3.4 Consultation

For consultation, the following statutory bodies were approached for comment/screening opinion, and the information provided will be used to inform the assessment:

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group & NIEA). The response received can be found in Appendix A.

3.4.2. The following non-statutory bodies were also consulted as to the content and results of the HRA process as they have a specialist knowledge of and interest in the species and habitats forming the subject of this assessment:

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB);
- Raptor Ireland Study Group.
- Ulster Wildlife Trust

4. Schedule of Mitigation

Tables 1 & 2 examine the species and conservation objectives for which the SPAs have been given their designation. They consider whether impacts to any of these habitats or species are likely due to the proposed works.

4.1 Description of Possible Impacts

A description of potential impacts associated with this proposed development is given in Tables 1 & 2. The nature of the potential impacts is discussed below.

The Hen Harrier is a ground nesting bird adapted to open moorland and marginal grassland habitats. The traditional nesting habitat of Hen Harrier across Britain and Ireland has been predominantly Heather. Nest site selection for birds is chiefly associated with safety, shelter and proximity to food resources. Harriers will sometimes nest in rides (typically in heather) between plantation blocks or in lacunas within mature plantations where there is a suitable dense growth of mature heather or scrub (Ruddock *et al.*, 2012). Wilson *et al.* (2009) noted that Hen Harriers in Ireland show a preference for nesting in pre-thicket forest habitats.

Hen Harriers breed from April to June and given the heather dominated landscape surrounding the trail, impacts to foraging Hen Harriers during this season are possible. Observations of foraging behaviour (Madders, 2003a; O'Donoghue, 2012) and pellet analysis of breeding pairs, including those in forested landscapes, show that Hen Harriers also use open heath, scrub and farmland habitats for foraging during the breeding season (O'Donoghue, 2010). Although differences between surveys and analyses exist, it can be broadly stated for non-forested habitats within the Hen Harrier breeding range that heath bog, low intensity farmed grassland with well-established hedgerows and areas of scrub are the main habitats used by foraging Hen Harriers (Irwin *et al.*, 2012, O'Donoghue, 2012).

Construction during the nesting seasons could disturb birds at the nest. Disturbance during construction may discourage flight activity or foraging in the vicinity of the Proposed Development which may negatively impact productivity rates. The impact of any significant disturbance on the SPA's breeding population will ultimately be manifested in the targets which relate to population demographics (i.e. population size, productivity rate) and the spatial utilisation of the SPA by breeding pairs. Factors such as intensity, frequency, timing and duration of a potentially disturbing activity need to be taken into account to determine its significance on breeding Hen Harrier in the SPA.

Hen Harriers use communal roost sites during the winter months. These roosts can be located in a variety of habitats, such as reedbeds, heather moorland, and young coniferous plantations. Roost sites are important for Hen Harriers as they provide shelter from the elements and a safe place to rest. They generally roost in rank ground vegetation (Clarke and Watson 1997). In Ireland, suitable roosting habitat is typically restricted to dense vegetation, such as heather, dense rushes (*Juncus spp.*) or young commercially planted conifers. Although this species breeds in upland areas, wintering birds disperse widely and can frequently be found in lowland areas of the midlands of Ireland. As the project is aiming to be a Dark Skies initiative, there will be no lighting included with the trails. As such there is a very low possibility of walkers using trails between dawn and dusk, which are the hours when the most disturbance is predicted.

A study by Caravaggi *et al.*, 2020 showed that recreational activities impact Hen Harrier nesting sites. Systematic reviews have demonstrated that recreational activities can negatively impact breeding birds (e.g. Steven *et al.* 2011; Larson *et al.* 2016) including above-ground foragers (Bötsch *et al.* 2017) and upland species such as Golden Plovers *Pluvialis apricarius* (Finney *et al.* 2005). Thus, there exists the potential for disturbance of prospecting Hen Harriers early in the breeding season and/or foraging Hen Harriers once territories have been established. The proposed new build routes are in areas which already experience some level of disturbance. The building of the routes will result in a moderate increase in disturbance within the new build areas. The establishment of boardwalks can have positive impacts, preventing recreational users from walking cross-country and disturbing ground nesting birds. A review of Hen Harrier disturbance at nest sites suggests that disturbance can occur up to 500m from a nest site (Ruddock *et al.* 2007). Although no such distances have been suggested for disturbance at roost sites, it is known that human activities can cause abandonment of Hen Harrier roost sites (Clarke and Watson 1990).

The in-combination impacts are those that result from the combined effect of the proposed trail and other activities or developments in the area. In the case of a trail in an SPA, the in-combination impacts predicted are increased risk of predation as the trail could make it easier for predators to access Hen Harrier nests and breeding territories (e.g., dogs).

4.2 Mitigation

A review of the elements of the proposed works indicates that there is a potential for impacts to qualifying interests of the SPAs if appropriate mitigation measures are not undertaken. In the absence of mitigation through design or otherwise, there is a risk of the proposed routes resulting in

disturbance and displacement of Hen Harrier. Mitigation measures designed to ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive Article 6 requirements are given below. These will include restrictions on working periods, the addition of screening, and possible re-design of routes, some of which will be informed by further breeding and roosting surveys for Hen Harrier.

Table 3. Summary of Possible Impacts and Mitigation (Hen Harrier)

Potential Impact	Mitigation
Disturbance to nest sites and foraging grounds during breeding seasons.	<p>No works will be carried out during breeding season (April to mid-July) along route 14 (Fardross Glen Arc). This includes the clearance of vegetation and any plant in and around proposed new build trails.</p> <p>Breeding Hen Harrier surveys will be completed prior to the development of this trail. If there is the possibility of impact to breeding Hen Harrier due to trail construction, routes will be re-designed to prevent impacts.</p> <p>Bird hides and additional screening will be added to sections of the trail along the arc which overlook the SAC to reduce impacts during trail operation and optimum Hen Harrier nesting locations. These shall be designed in consultation with an ecologist and RSPB NI to ensure all impacts are minimised.</p>
Disturbance to roosting sites	<p>Any construction works, vehicular traffic, or other activity shall be confined to the period 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday along all routes.</p> <p>Construction along route 14 (Fardross Glen Arc) may potentially cause impacts to roosting Hen Harrier if nests are identified. Additionally, further surveys are needed to determine the proximity of roosting areas to the proposed route 15. These surveys will inform mitigation measures, which may include re-design or limitations on construction along the current route trajectory during the roosting season, if roosts are found to be too close to the project.</p>
Disturbance during other times	<p>The on-site Ecological Clerk of Works shall be a trained ornithologist who will regularly ensure no significant disturbance of Hen Harrier in the surrounding habitat. They will have the power to stop works if disturbance is predicted. This will allow the identification of any problems early on and to take corrective action.</p> <p>To reduce the level of disturbance to fauna, construction activities will be restricted to between 08:00 and 18:00.</p> <p>Construction areas will be cordoned off and workers will be briefed on the importance of not wandering outside designated zones. The movement of any plant will be controlled, ensuring that they will not encroach onto habitats beyond the proposed development footprint.</p> <p>All on-site construction workers will receive ToolBox talks on the sensitivities of Hen Harrier in the area.</p>

<p>Increased predation of nest sites by dogs</p>	<p>Signposts urging walkers to keep dogs on leads will help to mitigate any impacts to ground nesting birds. These signposts should not be limited to requests to keep dogs on leads and for users to stick to the trail, but should also contain information on the sensitivity of the area. They should detail the susceptibility of Hen Harrier and other ground nesting birds to disturbance, including information on seasons in which they are particularly vulnerable. Additionally, signposts which evoke a sense of stewardship and responsibility in trail users will help prevent impacts.</p> <p>Any information promoting the trails will contain paragraphs on the significance of the impact dogs can have on ground nesting birds in the area, including any online materials or associated websites.</p>
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5. Conclusion

This Stage 2 appraisal for HRA has considered the potential of the new trail development to give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites, within both Northern Ireland (UK National Sites) and the relevant areas of the Republic of Ireland (Natura 2000 Sites), with regard to their qualifying interests, associated conservation status and the overall site integrity, alone and in combination with other relevant plans and programmes.

In considering the potential for adverse effects, it has been noted that the proposed development would have impacts on qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation. To date no roosting or breeding surveys have been carried out for Hen Harrier. In light of this, and where necessary, a precautionary approach has been adopted in the Stage 2 appraisal to ensure that the measures proposed with respect to development of the trail, where necessary, have been adequately assessed.

As such, the development will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site, either alone or in combination with other relevant plans or programmes, and subject to securing the mitigation prescribed above, which largely relates to restrictions in working times and having a trained ornithologist on site as an Ecological of Works during construction.

In light of the conclusions of the assessment contained in this Stage 2 appraisal for HRA, the authors are of the view that the development alone, or in combination with other plans and programmes, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, subject to the appropriate implementation of the prescribed mitigation measures. Accordingly, and in light of the conclusions of the assessment contained here, the competent authority is enabled to ascertain that the development of the trails, alone or in combination with other relevant plans and programmes, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

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Appendix A: Consultation response

**Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group
& NIEA**



Your reference:
Our reference: AE1-23-6334

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Flynn Furney Environmental Consultants
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Planning Response Team
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16 October 2023

Telephone: 028 9058 9604
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Dear Sirs,

Slieve Beagh Tourism Project

I refer to your email of 18 September 2023 regarding the above and request for comments.

We are pleased to provide comments and advice on the key environmental considerations for the Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group within DAERA.

For your convenience we have provided our comments under the following topic heading:

- Natural Environment Division
- Water Management Unit

If you wish to discuss anything raised in our response, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Response Team using the contact details above.

Kind regards,

Planning Response Team

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.



Natural Environment Division

Date of NED response: 13 October 2023

NIEA Natural Environment Division (NED) acknowledge receipt of the notification from Flynn Furney who have been employed by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) on behalf of Monaghan County Council, Fermanagh and Omagh County Council and Mid Ulster District Council to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening as part of a wider feasibility study that aims to examine the impacts of establishing new routes at a number of locations on Slieve Beagh mountain.

The proposed routes are divided into 4 sections:

- Section 1 Favour Royal: 3 routes, all within Northern Ireland
 - Route 1 links up into the south of Favour Royal Site of Local Nature Conservation Interest (SLNCI) (woodland, grassland, heronry).
- Section 2 Eshbrack: 7 routes, none in Northern Ireland
- Section 3 Lough Corry/Carmore: 3 routes, all in Northern Ireland:
 - All within Slieve Beagh - Mullaghfad - Lisnaskea Special Protection Area (SPA), designated for Hen Harrier
 - Routes 11 & 12 link to Carmore Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), designated for Carboniferous stratigraphy
 - Route 13 links to the south of Lough Corry ASSI, designated for Oligotrophic lakes
- Section 4 Kill/Slatbeg/Fardross Mountain: 4 routes, all in Northern Ireland:
 - Routes 14, 15 & 17 within Slieve Beagh - Mullaghfad - Lisnaskea SPA, designated for Hen Harrier

NED consider it likely that the application site may contain species protected by the Habitats Directive or the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended).

Please note that this is a desk-based response.

Considerations

From a desktop assessment, using GIS and aerial photography, NED considers that there is a potential for protected/priority species and habitats to be impacted by the proposed development. NED would therefore recommend that the applicant completes a Biodiversity Checklist and Preliminary Ecological Assessment and submits these along with any ecological surveys identified as being required along with a subsequent application.

Mitigation Measures

NED considers that the proposal has the potential to result in environmental impacts on designated sites and other natural heritage interests. However, appropriate mitigation and ecological surveys can be incorporated into development works to negate for potentially significant impacts that may arise in respect of protected/priority species and habitats.

A description of the measures proposed to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects on the environment caused by the development must be included in an Environmental Statement. These measures can be summarised as:

- **Avoidance:** Priority should be given to avoiding negative impacts, especially those that could be significant. Consideration should be given to alternative strategies or locations, changes to the project design and layout, changes to methods and processes, changes to implementation plans and management practices including regulating the timing of activities.
- **Mitigation:** Opportunities should be sought, wherever possible, to reduce negative impacts on the environment, ideally to the point where they are no longer significant.
- **Compensation:** Where avoidance or mitigation of negative impacts is not practicable measures to compensate for impacts should be proposed.
- **Enhancement:** Opportunities should be sought in every new development to deliver net ecological gain rather than just limiting environmental damage. Enhancement measures may lead to an increase in the biodiversity of a site.

Mitigation measures should be incorporated into the design of a project from the outset and included on plans and drawings where appropriate. Mitigation which simply comprises a list of recommendations will generally not be acceptable.

Further guidance

NIEA have developed a range of standing advice and a biodiversity checklist that would assist with the consideration of potential impacts of planning proposals on natural heritage interests:

- The NI Biodiversity Checklist (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/biodiversity-checklist>) should be used to establish if any ecological surveys are required for a complete application
- NIEA Standing Advice can be found at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/standing-advice-development-land-may-affect-natural-heritage-interests>
- NED survey specifications and other planning related advice can be found at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/site-surveys>

In relation to this particular application, standing advice recommended for review would include:

- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Bats
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Otters
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Badgers
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – The Common Lizard
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Smooth Newt
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Wild Birds
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Priority Species
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Priority Habitats
- DAERA Standing Advice – NED – Invasive Alien Plant Species

NED recommends that all survey works comply with British Standard 42020:2013, which came into effect on 31 August 2013. The British Standard provides recommendations and guidance for those

Natural Environment Division

engaged in planning and development, whose work might affect or have implications for conservation, or the enhancement of biodiversity.

The DAERA website <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/> includes:

- Details of all regional, national and international designated sites in Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy
- Northern Ireland Habitat and Species Action Plans
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Landscape Character Areas
- Environmental Legislation

Information on the flora, fauna and geology of Northern Ireland can be obtained from the Habitas website: <http://www.habitas.org.uk/>

Site specific environmental data (e.g. species records) can be obtained from the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR). These can be accessed by contacting CEDaR, National Museums NI, 153 Bangor Road, Cultra, Holywood, BT18 0EU. Website: <https://www.nationalmuseumsni.org/cedar>. NED promotes the submission of biodiversity data to CEDaR, and recommends that species records generated as part of the EIA process are submitted to CEDaR.

Water Management Unit

Section Reference: WMU/PC/ 35593-1

Baseline

Water quality baseline information can be obtained from NIEA's online information request web viewer:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/information-requests>

Key environmental considerations

Refer to:

- DAERA Standing Advice Pre-Application Discussion Advice:

All DAERA Standing advice referred to in this response unless otherwise stated can be found at the following link www.daera-ni.gov.uk/water-environment-standingadvice

Environmental information required

At this stage of a development there is limited information about the circumstances, scope and nature of the project and therefore Water Management Unit can only provide 'general' advice.

Water Management Unit would direct the attention of the applicant / agent to all the Agency's DAERA Standing Advice guidance documents.

The following DAERA Standing Advice will be particularly relevant to this application:

- DAERA Standing Advice Pollution Prevention Guidance
- DAERA Standing Advice Discharges to the Water Environment

Further guidance

Water Management Unit would request that any future application clearly demonstrate the following:

- How foul sewage will be disposed of from any welfare facilities during the construction phase.
- How surface water will be disposed of both during the construction and operational phases.
- Clear details of any proposed works in, near or liable to affect a waterway* including whether or not it is culverted
- The application should clearly demonstrate compliance with all the relevant precepts contained in DAERA Standing Advice Pollution Prevention Guidance. Consideration should be given as to how it is proposed to prevent suspended solids / cement or grout / fuel entering the aquatic environment during the construction phase.

*The applicant should note the definition of a 'waterway' as defined under the NI Water Order:

"Waterway" includes any river, stream, watercourse, inland water (whether natural or artificial) or tidal waters and any channel or passage of whatever kind (whether natural or artificial) through which water flows

In this Order any reference to a waterway includes a reference to the channel or bed of a waterway which is for the time being dry.

The risks from certain activities to the aquatic environment are greater than others and all proposed mitigation must be proportionate and commensurate to that risk.

After scoping each of the proposal against all the relevant DAERA Standing advice should the applicant require specific advice then Water Management Unit will be happy to provide comment at that stage.

The applicant should be informed that it is an offence under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 to discharge or deposit, whether knowingly or otherwise, any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter so that it enters a waterway or water in any underground strata. Conviction of such an offence may incur a fine of up to £20,000 and / or three months imprisonment.

The applicant should ensure that measures are in place to prevent pollution of surface or groundwater as a result of the activities on site, both during construction and thereafter.



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Sliabh Beagh Eco-Tourism Project,
Mid-Ulster District Council

Version 2

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Reference number:	NA
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background & Scope

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report was prepared for the proposed development of the new build route sections of Sliabh Beagh in the Mid Ulster District Council area (MUDC). The proposed development is an element of the Sliabh Beagh Eco-Tourism Project, which aims to identify opportunities to help develop the Sliabh Beagh area as an eco-tourism destination. The report provides a summary of the ecological survey undertaken in August and September 2023 and several recommendations on reducing potential impacts upon the local ecology.

This PEA report serves as a general baseline of the current status of the local ecology and provides an outline that can inform the design phase of the project. An Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report, which assesses impacts upon European Protected Sites, has also been requested.

1.2. Site Context & Description

Sliabh Beagh is a 250-square-mile mountainous area straddling the national borders of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is known for its natural beauty and biodiversity, with rolling blanket bog, moorlands, expansive woodland, and tranquil lakes.

Some of the proposed project runs within the Slieve Beagh – Mullaghfad - Lisnaskea SPA which comprises a single land unit extending between Slatbeg in the north-east and Coolnasillagh in the south-west and incorporating the Slieve Beagh massif, Mullaghfad Forest and Lisnaskea Forest. Slightly more than half the eastern boundary is formed by the border with the Republic of Ireland which encompasses the Republic of Ireland (RoI) Sliabh Beagh SPA.

Other protected sites in close proximity to the new build routes include Sliabh Beagh SAC (NI) and Sliabh Beagh RAMSAR site.

1.3. Proposed Works

The potential development (PD) will consist of a total of six new build route sections across the MUDC area of Sliabh Beagh. These will be compacted aggregate paths.

2. Methodology

The process for this PEA is based on the CIEEM 2017 Guidance on the preparation of PEA reports.

2.1. Desk Based Studies

A desktop study was carried out to gain an understanding of the surrounding human and natural environments. This included a review of available data on the site and its immediate environs. The following sources of information were accessed:

- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) - up to date detail on conservation objectives for the Natura 2000 sites relevant to this assessment;
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) website - species recordings and distributions;
- The EPA Envision and Catchments websites - data watercourses in the vicinity of the Site;
- The Geological Survey of Ireland - data on groundwater flows.

This assessment was carried out using the source-pathway-receptor (SPR) approach, a standard tool in ecological impact assessment, which proposes the idea that for the risk of an impact to occur, a source is needed; an environmental receptor is present; and finally there must be a pathway between the source and the receptor. Even though there might be a risk of an impact occurring, it does not necessarily mean that it will occur, and in the event that it does occur, it may not have significant effects on the receiving environment. Identification of a risk means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor.

When it comes to species records from the NBDC, they are only an indication of the distribution of species, not a guarantee that one species is or is not present in a given area. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

2.2 Field Based Assessment

Field surveys were carried out on the 29th, 30th and 31st of August 2023. Baseline ecological conditions were assessed. Habitats were classified according to dominant plant species (Fossitt, 2000), (JNCC, 2010) with reference where applicable, to best practice guidance for habitat survey and mapping (Smith *et al.*, 2011) and the Census Catalogue of The Flora Of Ireland (Scannell & Synnott, 1987).

3. Desk Study Results

3.1. Statutory Protected Sites

Favour Royale Link

Areas where routes 1, 2 and 3 at Favour Royale Forest and the River Blackwater are proposed do not overlap with protected sites.

Fardross Arc

The area where route 14 at Fardross Glen Arc is planned, overlaps with the Slieve Beagh Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA and is adjacent to a Slieve Beagh RAMSAR, Slieve Beagh ASSI and Slieve Beagh SAC.

Fardross Glen Equestrian Loop (Sections 1,2 and 3)

The proposed area of routes 15 & 17 at Fardross Glen Forestry, overlaps with the Slieve Beagh Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA.

Fardross Glen Equestrian Loop (Section 4)

The proposed route 16 also overlaps with the Slieve Beagh Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA.

3.2. Surface And Groundwater

The nearest watercourse is the River Blackwater which is crossed by proposed trail route 1 at Favour Royal Forest. The River Blackwater represents a large, deep, fast flowing river. This watercourse contains valuable fisheries habitat and supports stocks of brown trout among other species. The WFD Ecological status of this waterbody is Good.

Groundwater is the water that soaks into the ground from rain, or is fed by underground springs, and is important for both any related aquatic habitats and as a supply of human drinking water and therefore needs to be protected. It is mainly protected by layers of subsoils, sands or peats, of varying depths. Therefore, knowing how easy it is for rainwater (which may contain pollutants) to soak down through the subsoils is important for assessing the potential for contamination.

The vulnerability category given to a site or an area is based on how easy it is for water which may contain pollutants to reach the groundwater. Subsoil depth, type and permeability data are combined to work out the groundwater vulnerability at any given location.

The local groundwater vulnerability varies across Sliabh Beagh. Predominantly the groundwater vulnerability is considered extreme, meaning that any pollution generated on the surface is very likely to percolate down into the groundwater, either remaining there or slowly making its way to the sea.

4. Field Survey Results

4.1. Habitats & Flora

Tables in this section describe the main habitat types present along the routes with their habitat codes (Fossitt 2000). Where relevant, links to European Annex I habitats (those for whom SACs are designated) are detailed.

4.1.2. Favour Royal Link and Burke's Waterfall

Favour Royal Forest is mainly made up of coniferous forest blocks that lie close to the main Augher and Aughnacloy roads. The Ulster Way passes through this forest and there are several other waymarked trails. The proposed trail route passes through broadleaf woodland and crosses the River Blackwater. It also passes through sections of dense conifer forestry. Habitats are described below.

Table 1: Natural and semi-natural habitats around/within Route 1,2 & 3.

Habitat	Code	Description
Oak-Ash-Hazel woodland	WN2	This woodland has a high percentage of Pedunculate Oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> . With interspersed Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> and Holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> and Ivy <i>Hedera helix</i> . Ground flora consisted of Wood Anemone <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> , Bluebell <i>Hyacinthoides non-scriptus</i> , Wood Avens <i>Geum urbanum</i> , Sanicle <i>Sanicula europaea</i> , Early Dog-violet <i>Viola reichenbachiana</i> , Lords and Ladies <i>Arum maculatum</i> , Wood Speedwell <i>Veronica montana</i> , and ferns (<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> , <i>Polystichum setiferum</i> , <i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> , <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> .)
Wet-Willow-Alder-Ash	WN6	This category denotes the damp woodland type on site which is dominated by Birch <i>Betula spp.</i> , with occasional Willow <i>Salix spp.</i> and Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> . Oak <i>Quercus spp.</i> can also be found rarely. This represents a planted broadleaf woodland and trees are of uniform spacing and age. The ground flora is typical of a damp broadleaf woodland with abundant ferns (Broad Buckler-fern <i>Dryopteris dilatate</i> , Soft Shield-fern <i>Polystichum setiferum</i> , Hart's-tongue <i>Asplenium scolopendrum</i>), Remote sedge <i>Carex remota</i> and Wood-sorrel <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> . Other frequent herbs were Opposite-Leaved golden-saxifrage <i>Chrysosplenium oppositifolium</i> , Herb-robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i> , Wood Avens <i>Geum urbanum</i> , Sanicle <i>Sanicula europaea</i> , Wood Speedwell <i>Veronica montana</i> and Wild angelica <i>Angelica sylvestris</i> .

		Himalayan/Indian balsam <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> was found in large stands nearer to the riverbed. Himalayan balsam is listed as an Invasive Alien Species of Union Concern in European legislation, and cannot be sold, exchanged, cultivated or released into the environment. Under Article 19 of Invasive Alien Species Regulation (1143/2014) Himalayan balsam has been identified as a Widely Spread Species in Northern Ireland and as such, management measures will be put in place to minimise its impacts. Current legislation states that this species must not be permitted to reproduce, grown or cultivated; or released into the environment. The presence of <i>I. glandulifera</i> in the Blackwater Catchment is well documented. It was targeted through Action C10 of The IRD Duhallow LIFE Project (2015). However, its presence is still prolific on the stretch of the river within the study area.
Eroding Upland River	FW1	The River Blackwater represents a large, deep, fast-flowing river. The bed is characterised by exposed bedrock and loose rock. Pebbles, gravel and coarse sand have accumulated in places, but finer sediments are rarely deposited due to the fast flow. It is deeply cut with high banks. Himalayan balsam is abundant along the bank stretches. A lack of deep rooting bank vegetation on the northern side of the river has resulted in bank erosion and collapse in places.
Conifer Plantation	WD4	These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed. This blocks out much of the light reaching the ground and leads to a reduced diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce <i>Picea sitchensis</i> and Lodgepole Pines <i>Pinus contorta</i> were the main planted species.
Old Stone Wall	BL1	This old stone wall is important for wildlife. It supports a diverse flora with abundant lichens, mosses and ferns (<i>Asplenium trichomanes</i> and <i>A. ruta-muraria</i>). Other common components are stonecrops <i>Sedum spp.</i> , Herb-robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i> and Navelwort <i>Umbilicus rupestris</i> . Dry stone walls are great habitat for lizards and a variety of insects.
Improved/Wet Grassland	GA1/ GS4	This is grassland which has been reseeded for agriculture with an abundance of perennial Rye grass <i>Lolium spp.</i> and is species poor. The presence of reed (<i>Juncus spp.</i>) indicates wetter soils in areas. However, the site lacks the species diversity of a typical wet grassland.

4.1.3. Fardross Arc

Table 2 lists and describes the main habitat types present at Fardross Arc along with their habitat codes (Fossitt 2000). Where relevant, links to European Annex I habitats (those for whom SACs are designated) are detailed.

Table 2: Natural and semi-natural habitats around within Route 14.

Habitat	Code	Description
Wet Grassland/ Wet heath trail	GS4/H H3	<p>The route trajectory follows a dirt trail which is currently being used and kept open by grazing cattle. Ground flora were mostly typical of wet grasslands and contained Lesser spearwort <i>Ranunculus flammula</i>, Tormentil <i>Potentilla erecta</i>, Wild angelica <i>Angelica sylvestris</i>, Creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> and patches of rushes such as <i>Juncus effusus</i> & <i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>. Some shrubs of Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> and <i>Salix aurita</i> have begun to colonise the path in places.</p> <p>The less trodden areas (fringes) of this path had similar make up to a wet heath habitat. Their areas are dominated by Ling heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> and Cross-leaved heather <i>Erica teralix</i>. Other occasional species included Bell heather <i>Erica cinerea</i>, Heat Rush <i>Juncus squarrosus</i>, Devils-Bit scabious <i>Succisa pratensis</i>, Tormentil <i>Potentilla erecta</i> and Hard Fern <i>Blechnum spicant</i>. Some sections contained dense Bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> stands.</p>
Bog Woodland	WN7	<p>The woodland on site has formed over cutover type peat which is well drained in the upper layers, likely developed within the last 40 years. Downy Birch <i>Betula pebescens</i> is the dominant species, with occasional Willow <i>Salix spp.</i> and Rowan <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>. Purple Moor Grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i> and Bilberry <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> are frequent.</p> <p>Links with Annex 1: Annex 1 bog woodland refers to woodlands of intact raised bog. The woodland surveyed does not conform to this category.</p>
Conifer Plantation	WD4	<p>These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed, blocking out much of the light reaching the ground and thus leadin to a reduced diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce <i>Picea sitchensis</i> and Lodgepole Pine <i>Pinus contorta</i> were the main planted species.</p>



Wet-Willow-Alder-Ash Woodland	WN6	<p>This category contributes to very wet areas that are dominated by Willow (<i>Salix spp.</i>) and Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>). Ground flora is 'grassy' in appearance with carpets of Remote sedge <i>Carex remota</i> and Creeping bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>. The vegetation composition and damp soils present may be indicative of a peat flush.</p>
Upland Blanket Bog	PB2	<p>This habitat type is used for blanket bog which occurs 150 metres above sea level. These bogs are rain fed and their peat is acidic. The vegetation is characterised by the presence of ericoid shrubs and in particular Ling heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i>, Crowberry <i>Empetrum nigrum</i> and Bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>. A dense layer of Sphagnum moss is present on the bryophyte layer, along with trailing Bog cranberry <i>Vaccinium oxycoccos</i> and stands of Reindeer lichen <i>Cladonia spp.</i>. Occasional herbs such as Bog asphodel <i>Narthecium ossifragum</i> and tussocks of Hare's tail Cottongrass <i>Eriophorum vaginatum</i> can be seen stretching across this bog.</p> <p>Links with Annex 1 habitats: This blanket bog is still capable of peat formation and corresponds to the priority habitat blanket bog 7130.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>

Wet Heath	HH3	This category has been used for areas of cutover bog where the vegetation has recolonised to a sufficient extent to be included in this category. Peat has been extracted and depth reduced. It was mostly dominated by Purple Moor Grass <i>Molina caerulea</i> with occasional Ling Heather, Bilberry and Cross-leaved heather. Devil's bit scabious, Tormentil and rushes such as Sharp-flowered rush and Heath rush were also present. Trees have begun to colonise the area, with Birch and Sitka Spruce present on occasion.
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4.1.4. Fardross Glen Equestrian Loop (sections 1,2 &3)

Table 3 lists and describes the main habitat types present at routes along the Fadoss Glen equestrian loop along with their habitat code (Fossitt 2000). Where relevant, links to European Annex I habitats (those for whom SACs are designated) are detailed.

Table 3: Natural and semi-natural habitats around/within route 15 & 17

Habitat	Code	Description
Recently Felled Woodland	WS5	This designates areas of plantation that have been clear-felled but have not been replanted or converted to another land use. Common colonisers of open ground among the conifer tree stumps and brash (discarded woody material) include Rosebay Willowherb <i>Epilobium angustifolium</i> , Foxglove <i>Digitalis purpurea</i> and ferns. <i>Juncus conglomeratus</i> and <i>Juncus effusus</i> were frequent with an occasional ground cover of moss (<i>Polytrichum spp.</i>). Sitka spruce saplings have begun to seed and colonise areas.
Upland Blanket Bog	PB2	The vegetation is characterised by the presence of ericoid shrubs, in particular Ling heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> and Bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> . A dense layer of Sphagnum is present on the bryophyte layer and stands of Reindeer lichen <i>Cladonia spp.</i> . Occasional Bog asphodel <i>Narthecium ossifragum</i> and Cross-leaved heather can be found. Devil's-bit scabious was present in patches nearer the road.

Wet Grassland	GS4	Trail 17 runs down an old forestry track which consists of wet grassland and colonising Gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> and Willow <i>Salix spp.</i> . Wet grassland species include Crested dog's-tail <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> , Square stalked St. John's Wort <i>Hypericum tetrapterum</i> , Tormentil <i>Potentilla erecta</i> , Germander speedwell <i>Veronica chamaedrys</i> and Sharp-flowered rush <i>Juncus acutiflorus</i> . Another section of wet grassland is mapped at the edge of an agricultural field but has been improved and is not species rich. It contained a dense rush cover and was very wet at the time of surveying, grading into a small section of marsh.
Conifer Plantation	WD4	These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed, locking out much of the light reaching the ground and thus leading to a reduced diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce <i>Picea sitchensis</i> and Lodgepole Pine <i>Pinus contorta</i> were the main planted species.
Wet Heath	HH3	This habitat is found to the south of the trail. It was being grazed by cattle at the time of surveying. It is species-rich with abundant Ling Heather, Asphodel, Tormentil, Hard Rush, Sharp-flowered. It also contained patches of Reindeer lichen (<i>Cladonia spp.</i>).

4.1.5. Fardross Glen Equestrian Loop (Section 4)

This route follows an old access lane which passes through a mixed broadleaf woodland. There is a river running through the woodland which joins up with the Fardross stream. An old stone wall runs the length of the old right of way and an old cottage is located around 30 metres north of the proposed route. A hunting tree stand and ladder was also located along the route.

Table 4 lists and describes the main habitat types present at route 16, at Fardross Glen Right of Way along with their habitat code (Fossitt 2000). Where relevant, links to European Annex I habitats (those for whom SACs are designated) are detailed.

Table 4: Natural and semi-natural habitats around/within Route 16.

Habitat	Code	Description

Grass Trail with Woodland Flora	WN2	<p>This old right of way runs along a grass trail within a woodland. Ground flora were similar to that found in a native Ash-Hazel woodland and included abundant Wood Sorrel <i>Oxalis acetosella</i>, Herb Robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i> and bent grasses <i>Agrostis spp.</i> Other abundant species include Hederia helix, Wood Anemone <i>Anemone nemorosa</i>, Wood Avens <i>Geum urbanum</i>, Sanicle <i>Sanicula europaea</i>, Early Dog-violet <i>Viola reichenbachiana</i>, Lords and Ladies <i>Arum maculatum</i>, Wood Speedwell <i>Veronica montana</i>, and a mix of ferns (<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>, <i>Polystichum setiferum</i>, <i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i>, <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>). Some Willow shrubs <i>Salix spp.</i> have begun to colonise the trail in places.</p>	
Conifer Woodland	WD3	<p>These are dense stands of planted conifers for timber production. Trees planted on boggy land are prone to being blown over and so have been densely packed, blocking out much of the light reaching the ground and thus leading to a reduced diversity of ground flora. Sitka Spruce <i>Picea sitchensis</i> and Lodgepole Pines <i>Pinus contorta</i> were the main planted species.</p>	
Ash Hazel Woodland	WN2	<p>Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>, Beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> and Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> are the main tree species in the canopy. The shrub layer is composed of Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> and Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>. Other species such as Rowan <i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> and Willow <i>Salix spp.</i> were occasional. Ground flora was similar to that as described above under the grassland trail.</p>	
Mixed Broadleaf/Conifer Woodland	WD2	<p>This is an area of woodland which has been recolonised with Pines, Willows and Birch. Ground flora includes Bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>, Hard Fern <i>Blechnum spicant</i>, Great Wood-rush <i>Luzula sylvatica</i> and Velvet Bent <i>Agrostis canina</i>.</p>	
Wet Grassland	GS4	<p>This grassland contains frequent rushes <i>Juncus effusus</i>, which become more abundant on the lower slopes. Grasses such as Perennial grasses <i>Lolium spp.</i>, Yorkshire-fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i>, Creeping Bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> and Marsh Foxtail <i>Alopecurus geniculatus</i> are also present. Overall, the area was not overly species rich.</p>	
Old Stonework (Cottage)	BL1	<p>This designates an old stone cottage surrounded by a number of low stone walls. An old Sycamore (~160 years old) and Yew tree <i>Taxus bacatta</i> are located next to the cottage.</p>	

Treeline	WL1	An old stone wall and treeline runs along the way, providing nice habitat for an abundance of ferns and moss. A treeline has grown from the bank and old stone wall and contains a mix of Hawthorn and Holly. Occasional Rowan and Crab apple <i>Malus sylvestris</i> also occur.
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4.2. Fauna

4.2.1. Amphibians & Lizards

Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* and their breeding places are designated a Northern Ireland Priority Species, and are protected by law. The wetland habitat on site is highly suitable for frogs and newts and likely support populations that are of local importance (higher value). The common lizard is protected by national legislation, under which it is an offence to: Kill or injure a lizard. Specific surveys targeting the Common or Viviparous Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara* – formerly *Lacerta vivipara*) were not carried out. Suitable habitat areas for this species were recorded. Dry stone walls provide significant habitat for lizards and impacts may occur during their dismantling.

4.2.2. Birds

Hen Harrier Vantage Point surveys were carried out on the 6th of September 2023 by Lauren Woods and Ellen Irwin. The vantage points had been selected prior to the surveys during habitat assessments and the conditions were recorded for each vantage point before the surveys began. This included visibility, rain, wind and cloud conditions. The methodology that was used for the VP surveys was the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS) methodology. This methodology usually follows a transect but the methodology was adapted to use a vantage point instead. Each bird observation was recorded. The species of bird was recorded using the CBS bird species code list. The distance of each bird observed from the vantage point was recorded using Google Earth Pro, along with the direction of flight. Other bird species heard but not seen were also recorded. Each survey lasted two hours in total. Maps of the Vantage Point locations can be seen below. The BoCCI list is used to identify bird species that are at risk of extinction or that are in need of conservation action. The BoCCI 2020-2026 list is a joint publication by BirdWatch Ireland and RSPB Northern Ireland, and it is based on the latest data on bird populations and trends.



Figure 1: Vantage Point locations

Results:

The results of the survey are laid out in the table below:

Table 5: Vantage Point survey results

species Observed	Scientific Name	Description/ Activities	BOCCI Status	Sliabh Beagh SPA Codes	Location
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Circled in all directions (approx. 3)	Amber		VP1
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
House martin	<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Singing in distance (not seen)	Amber		VP1
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Calling from willow trees	Green		VP1
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP1
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Two buzzards circling high in the sky as they hunt from south to west of VP1 (approx. 2)	Green		VP1
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Heard coming from among the heather	Amber		VP1
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Calling from willow trees	Green		VP2
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Singing in the distance	Red		VP2
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	Singing in willow trees	Green		VP2
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Flying above heath from west to east of VP2	Green		VP2
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Circling above heath (approx. 6)	Amber		VP2
Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Observed low flying/ hunting over heath from east to west of VP2	Amber	[A082]	VP2
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Calling in the distance	Green		VP3
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Heard singing in the conifer plantation	Green		VP3
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Observed in flight above young conifers west to east of VP3 facing NW	Red		VP3
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Observed in flight above young conifers in all directions (approx. 11)	Amber		VP3
Wood pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Observed flying from tree to tree in the conifer plantation	Green		VP3
Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Observed circling above young conifer plantation (approx. 7)	Amber		VP3
Long tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Heard singing in distance	Green		VP3
Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Heard singing in distance	Green		VP3

Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Heard singing in distance	Green		VP3
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Observed flying between willow trees	Green		VP3
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	Heard singing in the distance	Amber		VP3
Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i>	Heard singing in conifer plantation	Green		VP3
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Heard singing in willow	Green		VP3
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Heard singing in willow	Green		VP3

A Hen Harrier was observed at Vantage Point 2. Its flight path can be seen below.

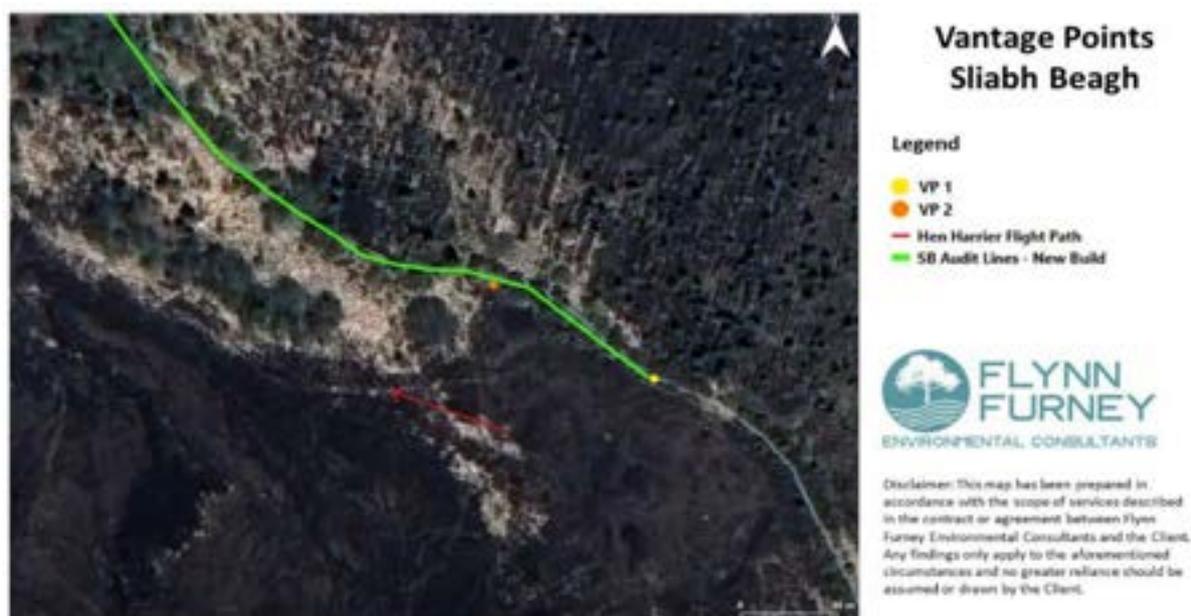


Figure 2: Flight path of observed Hen Harrier

Discussion

Vantage point surveys carried out as part of this assessment can only give limited data. This is based on the fact that surveys were not carried out during the optimal period to determine Hen Harrier disturbance (breeding and nesting seasons), and only one survey per site was conducted. There are several reasons why one vantage point bird survey is not sufficient to say which birds visit a site:

1. Limited field of view: A vantage point bird survey can only cover a limited area. This means that it is possible that some birds will be present at the site but are not visible from the vantage point.
2. Bird movement: Birds are constantly moving, so it is possible that some birds will fly over or through the site without being seen from the vantage point.
3. Cryptic species: Some bird species are very good at camouflaging themselves, making them difficult to see. These species may be present at the site but might not be detected during a vantage point survey.
4. Observer error: Even experienced observers can miss birds. This is especially true in dense vegetation or in poor lighting conditions.

To get a more accurate picture of the bird species that visit a site, it is necessary to conduct multiple surveys from different vantage points and at different times of the day and year. This will help to increase the chances of detecting all of the bird species that are present at the site.

One Hen Harrier was observed at VP2. This vantage point overlooks optimum Hen Harrier habitat in Sliabh Beagh Bog (SAC, SPA, ASSI). The large heather mats across the upland blanket bog within the SAC is optimal habitat for Hen Harrier breeding and roosting.

Other habitats within the area were not deemed optimal for roosting and nesting locations.

3.3.3. Mammals

Favour Royal Link and Burke's Waterfall

No evidence of mammal species was found during surveying. The trees inside the conifer plantation are young and not suitable for dens. Disturbance to dens is not expected.

Fardross Glen Equestrian Loop (1,2,3)

Pine martens and Red squirrels are known to be abundant in the area. Evidence of Red squirrel and Pine martin in the area was noted. Disturbance to dens during the breeding season would have negative impacts on local populations.

Fardross Glen Equestrian Loop (4)

Pine martens and Red squirrels are known to be abundant in the area. Evidence of Red squirrel and Pine martin in the area was noted. Disturbance to dens during the breeding season would have negative impacts on local populations.

Otters in Northern Ireland are a European Protected Species, and are protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations), which transposes the Habitats Directive. It is therefore an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill an Otter. It is also an offence to deliberately disturb an Otter in any way, or to disturb, damage or destroy an Otter's breeding site or resting place, unless a licence has been obtained.

A holt is a hole in the ground which is used by an Otter for sleeping and resting. The most common type of holt is a hole leading to a cavity under the roots of a bankside tree. However, Otters are very versatile and can also form holts in log piles or cavities in rocky banks or caves. Most holts are situated on the riverbank, but some can be up to 100 m away. Female otters use natal dens which can be up to 1km from a waterbody, to give birth to cubs. Woodland and scrub are particularly important habitats for natal dens, as they provide protection from disturbance.

Evidence of Otters was noted along this route which is just under 35 metres from the river. No nesting holts were identified in the vicinity. However, an extensive search of the wider area for otter holts was not carried out.

3.3.4. Invertebrates

Lepidoptera: Marsh Fritillary:

Dedicated surveys for Marsh Fritillary across the study area were not carried out. However, their foodplant (Devil's-bit scabious) was noted in small patches in some areas. Other suitable habitat was associated with areas where stone material has been brought into the site for the construction of tracks and access roads.

Although some of the areas of suitable habitat are small and fragmented, the species is known to be present in the area. However, no major impact is predicted to the population given the scale of the development.

Coleoptera and Hemiptera

Potamonectes griseostriatus and *Glaenocorisa propinqua* are two rare aquatic insects found in the highest lake of Slieve Beagh, Lough Sallagh, in Northern Ireland. They are found in acid oligotrophic lakes and pools, and is particularly sensitive to water quality.

Both species are rare and threatened, and they are listed as Northern Ireland Priority Species. They are threatened by a number of factors, including habitat loss and degradation, water pollution, and climate change.

Suitable habitat for these species (such as lakes and pools) was not identified in the development trail.

3.3.5 Bats

Removal of Foraging and Roosting Habitats:

Small sections of woodland habitat will be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed routes and associated developments, namely patches of conifer and broadleaved woodland. It is anticipated that bat species will continue to forage in these areas following the removal of woodland vegetation. Similarly, the removal of vegetation along the remainder of the routes is not anticipated to significantly reduce available prey species for bats on account of the small loss of habitat. The construction of the development will not significantly affect foraging bats.

The removal of mature conifer trees which have the potential to host roosting bats may impact this species.

No artificial lighting is proposed as part of this development. Therefore, no impacts from lighting are predicted.

5. Review of Possible Impacts

5.1. Flora

No impacts to any protected or significant habitat or species of flora is predicted from the development of the trail. Routes will result in the removal of some sections of vegetation which can be considered moderately species rich. However, it is not anticipated to significantly impact species-rich habitat in the area. The loss of floral species will result in only a minor reduction in food source for pollinators, and in turn minor reduction of feeding ground for bats and birds.

5.1.1. Invasive species

The use of construction equipment, machinery and wagons over the course of the project to resurface and construct footpaths and pavements, and to provide access through the sites, could result in the spread of invasive species present along route 1, near the River Blackwater. Himalayan balsam is listed as an Invasive Alien Species of Union Concern in European legislation, and cannot be sold, exchanged, cultivated or released into the environment. Under Article 19 of Invasive Alien Species Regulation

(1143/2014) Himalayan balsam has been identified as a Widely Spread Species in Northern Ireland and as such, management measures will be put in place to minimise its impacts. Current legislation states that this species must not be permitted to reproduce, be grown or cultivated; or released into the environment.

Pre-construction & During:

An invasive species management plan should be set in place to remove and treat all Himalayan balsam within at least a 3km radius of the site works.

Guidelines should be set out in the CEMP to ensure any residual balsam which may escape treatment is not spread during construction. This will involve the washing down of all machinery entering and leaving the site, and toolbox talks to ensure all on-site personnel are familiar with the species and its impacts.

- Best practice must also be implemented to prevent importation or any further invasive species during construction. To prevent the spread of invasive plant material on site, several biosecurity measures should be adopted.
- Any and all imported soil/rock/gravel will either be certified invasive-free, or the quarry of origin will be inspected for the presence of invasive species.
- Clean equipment “power wash” prior to moving onto and off from each route site – to prevent the import and export of plant materials & seeds.
- The ECoW is to be contacted with any questions on invasive species, environmental monitoring or any breaches to biosecurity.
- Any additional planting on site should be done in consultation with an ecologist to avoid unintentionally spreading IAS.

5.1.2. Aquatic habitats

The River Blackwater

This watercourse contains valuable fisheries habitat and supports stocks of brown trout among other species. The WFD Ecological status of this waterbody is Good. Any potential spills arising during the construction phase of the proposed route, e.g. during construction of watercourse crossings, could affect water quality in the downstream environment. However, it is likely to be short in duration (e.g. limited to a short period immediately after the pollution event), and minor in scale. Nonetheless, any effects of pollution would be significant at a local to county level, in light of the importance of the watercourses downstream of the proposed route.

During Construction:

The following measures will be adhered to in order to prevent pollutants and other deleterious materials entering the aquatic environment:

- Process waters, machine washings etc. will not be directly discharged to surface waters.
- In-stream works (e.g. construction of river crossings) will be undertaken between 1st July and 30th September inclusive so as to minimise any potential effects of works on migrating / breeding salmonids.
- Prior to any machinery working on site for any purpose, the working area will be marked out with wooden stakes and where deemed necessary, hazard tape will be erected to identify the working limits.

- Provision of measures to prevent the release of sediment during the construction work will be installed prior to the commencement of site clearance. Protective measures may include but are not limited to the use of silt fences and sedimentation mats.
- Provision of exclusion zones and barriers (sediment fences) between earthworks, stockpiles and temporary surfaces will be enacted to prevent sediment washing into the receiving water environment.
- Temporary construction surface drainage and sediment control measures will be in place before earthworks commence.
- If pouring of cementitious materials is required for the works adjacent to the watercourses, this will be carried out in dry weather only.
- Discharge water generated during placement of concrete will be removed off site for treatment and disposal.
- Pumped concrete will be monitored to ensure no accidental discharge. Mixer washings and excess concrete will not be discharged to surface water. Concrete washout areas will be located remote from any surface water drainage features to avoid accidental discharge to watercourses.

5.1.3. Broadleaf Woodland

The use of heavy machinery during the construction of the route has the potential to impact the area of Mixed Broadleaf woodland and may result in the removal of some trees.

Construction measures:

The working corridor in the woodland areas will be as small as possible, with activity concentrated on the existing path networks where possible. The working corridor will be demarcated in advance of all other works.

To avoid potential disturbance and degradation of habitats identified along the route, the following measures will be applied:

- All working areas will be demarcated prior to the commencement of proposed works to ensure works are confined to this area and do not sprawl into surrounding habitats;
- Fencing will be erected around hedgerows and trees to be retained to protect against accidental damage;
- No storage or dumping of materials will be carried out outside the working area unless otherwise specified in this document; and
- Where possible, following the completion of works, habitats within the working area will be reinstated to conditions which existed prior to the commencement of works.

5.2. Fauna

5.2.1. Bats

Removal of Foraging and Roosting Habitats

Small sections of woodland habitat will be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed routes and associated developments, namely patches of conifer and broadleaved woodland. It is anticipated that bat species will continue to forage in this area following the removal of woodland vegetation. Similarly, the removal of vegetation along the remainder of the route is not anticipated to significantly reduce available prey species for bats on account of the small loss of habitat. The construction of the development will not significantly affect foraging bats.

The removal of mature conifer trees which have the potential to host roosting bats may impact this species.

No artificial lighting is proposed as part of this development. Therefore, no impacts from lighting are predicted.

Pre-construction:

Tree surgery will be undertaken between September and mid-November, coinciding with the season when bats are unlikely to either be in torpor or raising young, and therefore at least risk of disturbance. Trees to be removed will be appraised for the presence of cavities or for mature trees (i.e. bat habitat suitability). If cavities are identified, they will be checked / assessed by a suitably qualified, experienced, and licensed ecologist for the presence of bats or signs of bats (emergence surveys may be required). If bats or signs of bats are identified, works on the relevant tree will cease, the NIEA must be contacted and given time to advise on whether or how it should be carried out. A licence to carry out such work may sometimes be necessary.

Other Mammals

Pine marten and Red squirrel are known to utilise Conifer plantations in the absence of sufficient stretches of broadleaf woodland. While no evidence of either species was found during surveying, they are known to be present in the forest. Disturbance to dens during the breeding season would have negative impacts on local populations.

Otters in Northern Ireland are a European Protected Species, and are protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations), which transposes the Habitats Directive. It is therefore an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill an Otter. It is also an offence to deliberately disturb an Otter in any way, or to disturb, damage or destroy an Otter's breeding site or resting place, unless a licence has been obtained.

A holt is a hole in the ground which is used by an Otter for sleeping and resting. The most common type of holt is a hole leading to a cavity under the roots of a bankside tree. However, Otters are very versatile and can also form holts in log piles or cavities in rocky banks or caves. Most holts are situated on the riverbank, but some can be up to 100m away. Female otters use natal dens which can be up to 1km from a waterbody, to give birth to cubs. Woodland and scrub are particularly important habitats for natal dens, as they provide protection from disturbance.

Evidence of Otters was noted along the Fardross Glen Equestrian Route. No nesting holts were identified in the vicinity however, and an extensive search was not carried out. Otters can make holts and form natal dens at any time of the year.

Pre-construction:

An Otter holt and natal den survey should be carried out prior to construction (within 3 months) to determine the presence or absence of holts.

- An Otter holt or couch* requires a 30m protection zone
- A natal den requires a 150m protection zone.

* A feature, roughly circular or oval in shape, about a metre in diameter, normally of grass, which is formed by an Otter resting up in the same grassy place over time.

Construction measures:

Pine Marten

Pine martens like woodland, preferably large-scale deciduous woodland, but they will also live in small pockets of deciduous woodland and are sometimes found in commercially managed coniferous plantations. Pine martens give birth to kits in March and April, which stay with the mother until August-September. During the period March to September, disturbance to trees (which could hold natal dens) should be avoided.

Red Squirrels

The breeding season for Red squirrels usually begins in January or February. After a gestation period of five to six weeks, the female gives birth. The young are born blind and naked, and are not fully weaned until approximately seven to ten weeks after birth. During the period February to August, disturbance to trees (which could hold natal dens) should be avoided.

Birds

Nesting season

In the absence of any mitigation measures, there is potential for disturbance and/or mortality of bird species arising from the removal of vegetation, including bramble, trees and shrubs, to facilitate access to and construction of the proposed development. Tree and shrub nesting species could be impacted, affecting breeding population. Such effects are relevant for the entire proposed routes. The effects of vegetation clearance, in the absence of mitigation and if it coincided with the breeding bird season, would be significant given the legal protections afforded to all birds and their nests. The scale of significance would likely be at a local level: the sum total of nesting habitat that will be removed will likely host only a portion of the total breeding bird fauna along the proposed route. The duration of effects from disturbance would likely be short-term, e.g., confined to one or two breeding seasons coinciding with the construction of the proposed route.

Construction measures:

Rank vegetation (e.g., hedgerows, treelines, tall grass, dense bramble, nettles etc) along the proposed route will be removed outside of the breeding bird season (e.g., between 1st September and 28th/29th February, inclusive). In exceptional circumstances, trees identified for removal or tree surgery, may need to be worked on within the breeding bird season. In such a scenario, the area of the proposed works will be checked in advance by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist for nesting birds. Where the presence of nesting birds cannot be ruled out, tree surgery will be postponed until the appropriate window when nesting has finished and when tree surgery is of low risk to roosting bats.

Ground nesting birds

The Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* is a territorial ground-nesting bird of prey that typically breeds in open upland bog and heather moorland, and their associated habitat. There is a worrying decline in Hen Harrier numbers in Northern Ireland, with a fall of 22% since 2010. Under the EU Birds Directive all member states are required to take measures to ensure the survival of Hen Harriers at favourable conservation status. Mitigation measures to protect Hen Harrier have been laid out in a separate HRA report.

Fardross Arc Route: The large heather mats across upland blanket bog within the SAC are optimal habitat for ground nesting birds. Hen Harrier was also identified in this area during vantage point

surveys. No surveys were carried out during the nesting season. No breeding or roosting surveys have been carried out to date.

Construction:

There is also the possibility of disturbance to foraging Hen Harrier and other birds along route 14. There is some natural visual screening along the section provided by shrubs and woodland, however the provision of additional landscaped screening comprising of an earth bank and hedging is proposed to ensure visual disturbance from route users is minimised. In the interim (until hedging is suitably established), to provide adequate screening, a brushwood-type fencing will supplement. Bird watching hides could be constructed in some areas which would prevent significant disturbance but also give visitors the ability to watch Hen Harriers and Curlews and to look out over the blanket bog.



Figure 3: Bird hides allow recreational users to view birds without disturbance.

These measures set out above will also help prevent disturbance to other ground nesting birds such as Golden Plover, Skylark & Red Grouse.

Merlin

Merlin, which is known as a ground-nesting bird, has been shown in recent studies to predominantly nest in trees with a strong preference for conifer plantations, in response to long-term degradation of moorland habitats and increased forest cover (Hardey *et al.* 2009, Lusby *et al.* 2017). In Ireland, afforestation has progressed at one of the fastest rates in the world (Forest Service 2013). Tree nesting is now the dominant nesting choice in Ireland. Moors and heathland are strongly selected as land-uses adjacent to nest sites. Most nests have been found to be located within 10 m of the forest edge, and in forests aged between 31 and 40 years. Merlin show positive selection for moors and heathland, peat bogs and natural grasslands within breeding territories.

Construction:

Tree surgery or felling within conifer forestry shall not take place between the 1st March to 31st August.

Amphibians and Reptiles

There is some suitable amphibian spawning habitat within the project footprint such as small pools and ditches. In the most simplistic terms, every drain or pool within the affected corridor width of the proposed route may be considered as an actual or potential breeding site for frogs/newts.

The Common Lizard and Common or Smooth Newt are specially protected species in Northern Ireland.

Generally, newts are more likely to be found in ponds (non-linear) than ditches (linear). The loss of habitat is small and will not affect the conservation condition of Smooth Newt at any geographical scale, and therefore the effects of this habitat loss are not likely to be significant.

Habitats are optimal for Common Lizard, but the scale of vegetation loss will not have significant impacts on these species. There may be some benefits as Lizards can often be seen using boardwalks as basking sites. The stone wall along route 2 is the best quality lizard habitat. Dry stone walls provide significant habitat for lizards and impacts may occur during their dismantling.

Pre-construction:

Stone walls (or other potential hibernacula sites) which may be impacted will be removed by hand during the active season (March through to September, inclusive) under the supervision of an ecologist, when they are less likely to be in use by torpid lizards.

6. Opportunities for Ecological Enhancement

Himalayan Balsam along the River Blackwater

While it is recommended that a 3km stretch of Himalayan balsam is treated as part of the project, this stretch could be extended to improve biodiversity in the area. There are many benefits to removing invasive Himalayan balsam along a river in Northern Ireland, including:

- Improved native biodiversity: Himalayan balsam outcompetes native plants for space, light, and nutrients, leading to a decline in plant diversity. Removing Himalayan balsam can help to restore native plant communities, which provide food and shelter for a wide range of wildlife.
- Reduced risk of erosion: Himalayan balsam has shallow roots, which do not bind soil as effectively as native plants. This can lead to increased erosion, particularly during winter floods. Removing Himalayan balsam can help to stabilise riverbanks and reduce the risk of erosion.
- Improved water quality: Himalayan balsam can reduce water quality by increasing sediment levels and shading out aquatic plants. Removing Himalayan balsam can help to improve water quality and create a more suitable habitat for fish and other aquatic life.
- Enhanced recreational value: Himalayan balsam can form dense stands that block access to riverbanks and make them less attractive for recreation. Removing Himalayan balsam can open up riverbanks and make them more accessible for people to enjoy.

In addition to these benefits, removing Himalayan balsam can also help to protect the unique biodiversity of Northern Ireland's rivers. Many of Northern Ireland's rivers are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) due to their important wildlife and habitats. Himalayan balsam is a major threat to these designated sites, so removing it can help to protect these important areas for future generations.

Preventing Erosion on the River Blackwater

The banks along the River Blackwater are eroding, causing them to collapse into the water. This has been compounded by the presence of Himalayan balsam which is the dominant plant species on the banks. This dies back in autumn, leaving the riverbanks devoid of vegetation and prone to excessive levels of erosion, especially during spates (that is, sudden floods in a river). This erosion significantly increases the level of silt getting into the river. Enforcing banks through a bioengineering approach provides a multitude of benefits for water quality and biodiversity. Brush matting is a technique used to protect riverbanks that are vulnerable to scouring when a river is in spate. Live willow rods are laid on the bank with their butts dug into a trench. The live willow rods are anchored to the bank with rods and

pegs. This has the effect of creating a barrier of willow, protecting the riverbank. Protection of the bank is further enhanced when the willow rods take root, binding the soil with their fibrous root system. New growth above ground will also protect the bank by absorbing the energy of fast-moving water.



Figure 1: Bioengineering in Delphi to rehabilitate an eroding riverbank. (Rivus.ie).

Bat Boxes in Favour Royal Forest

Bat Boxes are artificial roosts erected to encourage bats to roost in areas where few roosts are present. Bat boxes can be made from various materials from untreated timber to woodcrete (combination of sawdust and concrete). Each bat species requires different spaces to roost in. Therefore, bat boxes come in various shapes and sizes. The microclimate within a bat box is a very important factor. In general, bats prefer warm spaces in the summer for rearing young and cooler spaces in the winter for hibernation. The bat box should be draught-proof and made from a thermally stable material such as untreated wood, woodcrete, brick or stone.

The exterior nest box should be placed facing out onto open land, at least 4 meters off the ground, facing away from prevailing weather conditions (i.e. not south-west) and with clear flight lines to the nest box. Similar to the interior nest box, it should be situated in an area that is free from disturbance (e.g. a lot of human activity, machinery or sporadic loud noises). Bat boxes should be located as high as possible (at least 4m off the ground) in a sunny but well-sheltered area. Woodcrete boxes should be used outdoors as they last longer. An ecologist will advise and oversee the installation of nest boxes.

Pine Marten and Red Squirrel boxes

There is scope to add both Pine Martin and Red squirrel boxes within the study area. These species favour above-ground arboreal den sites to rest and breed in. Sheltered, elevated den sites are particularly crucial for meeting the needs of breeding females of both species and a scarcity of suitable sites may be a critical constraint upon Pine marten populations. Pine marten boxes have been found to be particularly effective (Cruise et al., 2016). The den boxes can be implemented as a habitat enhancement and conservation tool, particularly in commercial forests.

Restoration of Upland Blanket Bog

There is an opportunity for habitat restoration to upland blanket bog within the area designated as recently felled woodland along the Fardross Glen forestry routes. This requires not only the removal of timber products but also the removal or disposal of brash. This is so that preferred vegetation communities of favoured plant species can develop in appropriate conditions suitable for their

establishment. See Best Practice for removal: Webster & Duncan (2003) Brash Management on Habitat Restoration Sites.

Extensive drainage and fertiliser application have allowed Lodgepole pine and Sitka spruce to develop on this peat site. On unplanted areas and open rides some of the character of the former bog remains, which suggests that rehabilitation may be possible. Blocking drainage will help restore bog hydrology. A high water table is the key to restoring bogs and actions such as blocking the drains to raise the water table are likely to be necessary. Drains may need to be blocked by damming to reduce their effect on water levels in the peat. Blocking drains on peat sites is an accepted and common means of locally raising water tables. Dams can also help prevent or reduce erosion in ditches, particularly where they are large and/or deep. They also create areas of open water for colonisation by vegetation and invertebrates. Blocking drains has a marked effect on water levels within and immediately adjacent to the ditch. Circumstantial evidence also points to improvements in the overall wetness of a bog over a large area once major and minor drains are blocked.

Biodiversity Signage

An important aspect of biodiversity conservation is raising awareness of biodiversity, the benefits associated with it, and actions taken to manage biodiversity and increased resilience to climate change and other threats. This information can be integrated into biodiversity signage and support biodiversity conservation. Signs which describe the different flora and fauna present on site and their benefits for biodiversity (e.g. information on birds including the bird watching code of ethics, details on the Hen Harrier) could be erected at various points along the walk to encourage an engagement with nature.

Replacing Conifers in Favour Royal Forest with Native Trees

A larger strip of conifers should be removed along the routes within the conifer plantation in Favour Royal and replaced with a 10-15 metre strip of broadleaf woodland. Planting native trees as buffers along forestry roads has a number of benefits, including:

- Improved wildlife habitat: Native trees can provide food and shelter for a variety of wildlife species. This can help to improve biodiversity and create a more resilient ecosystem.
- Enhanced aesthetics: Native trees can create a more attractive and inviting landscape along the routes. This can encourage people to recreate in the area and can also help to support local businesses.

7. Conclusion

The Potential Development will introduce a number of changes across the habitats mentioned in this report and the species which rely on them. Minor impacts will occur on the surrounding ecology, the most notable of which will be increased disturbance due to increased footfall and human activity in the area. This increased footfall can be minimised to an extent through the usage of information signs and screening.

Mitigation measures, including mitigation measures through design, have been outlined in this report, which are intended to avoid, remove, and reduce significant effects on key ecological receptors (KERs) along the proposed routes. Following the implementation of these measures, residual effects remain for habitat loss with regard to KER habitats. Displacement of birds from the introduction of operational stage disturbance and displacement of birds during construction, loss of roosting habitat for Hen Harrier, and disturbance of during operation of the routes, have all been considered.

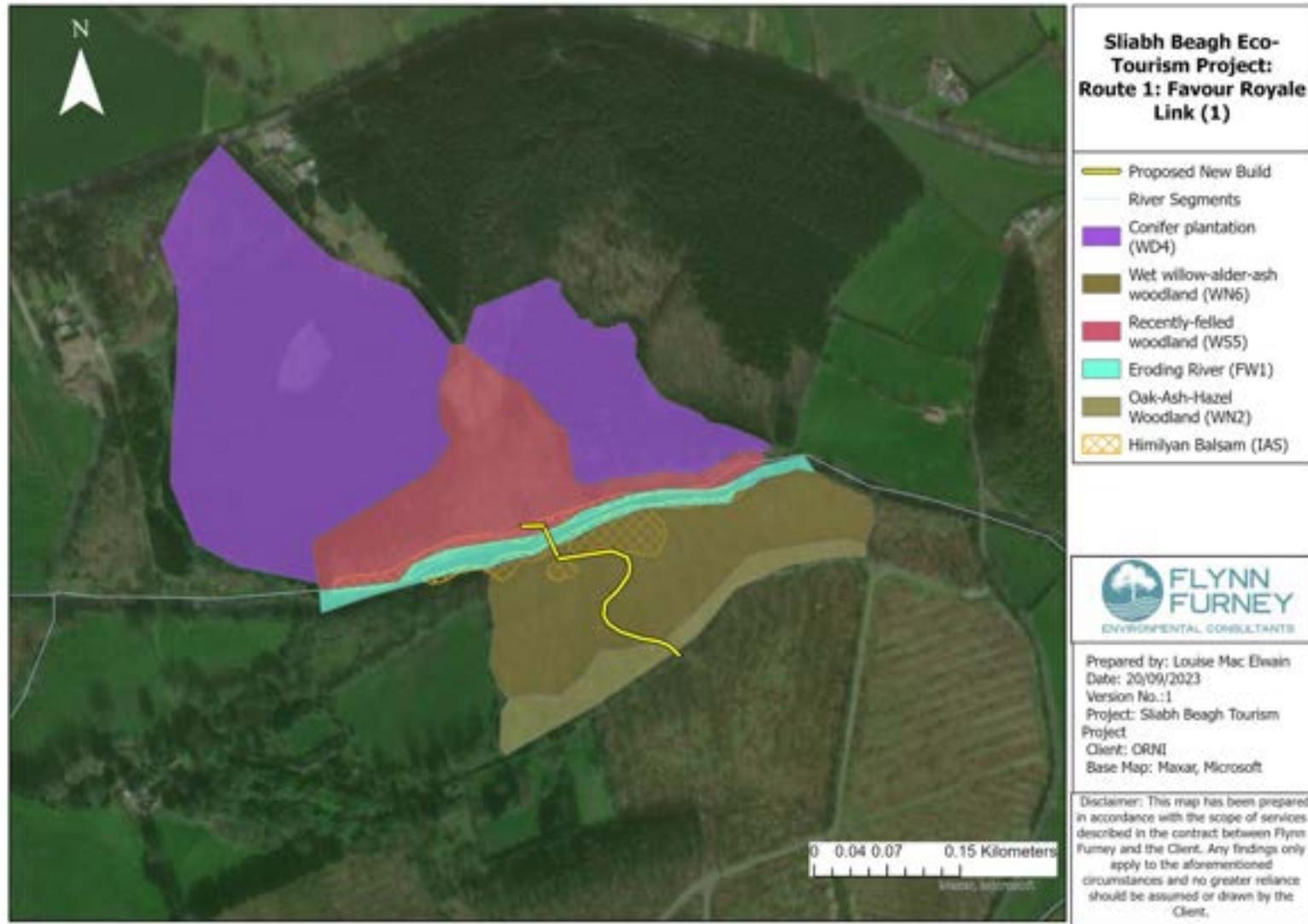
Measures have been included and set out in this report to mitigate against significant impacts to species known (or assumed to) occur within the development footprint. Additionally, measures which could improve the overall conservation of the site have also been laid out. It can therefore be concluded that although some residual effects will arise from the proposed route, the cumulative effects of mitigation, compensation and enhancement will have a neutral or positive overall effect on biodiversity.

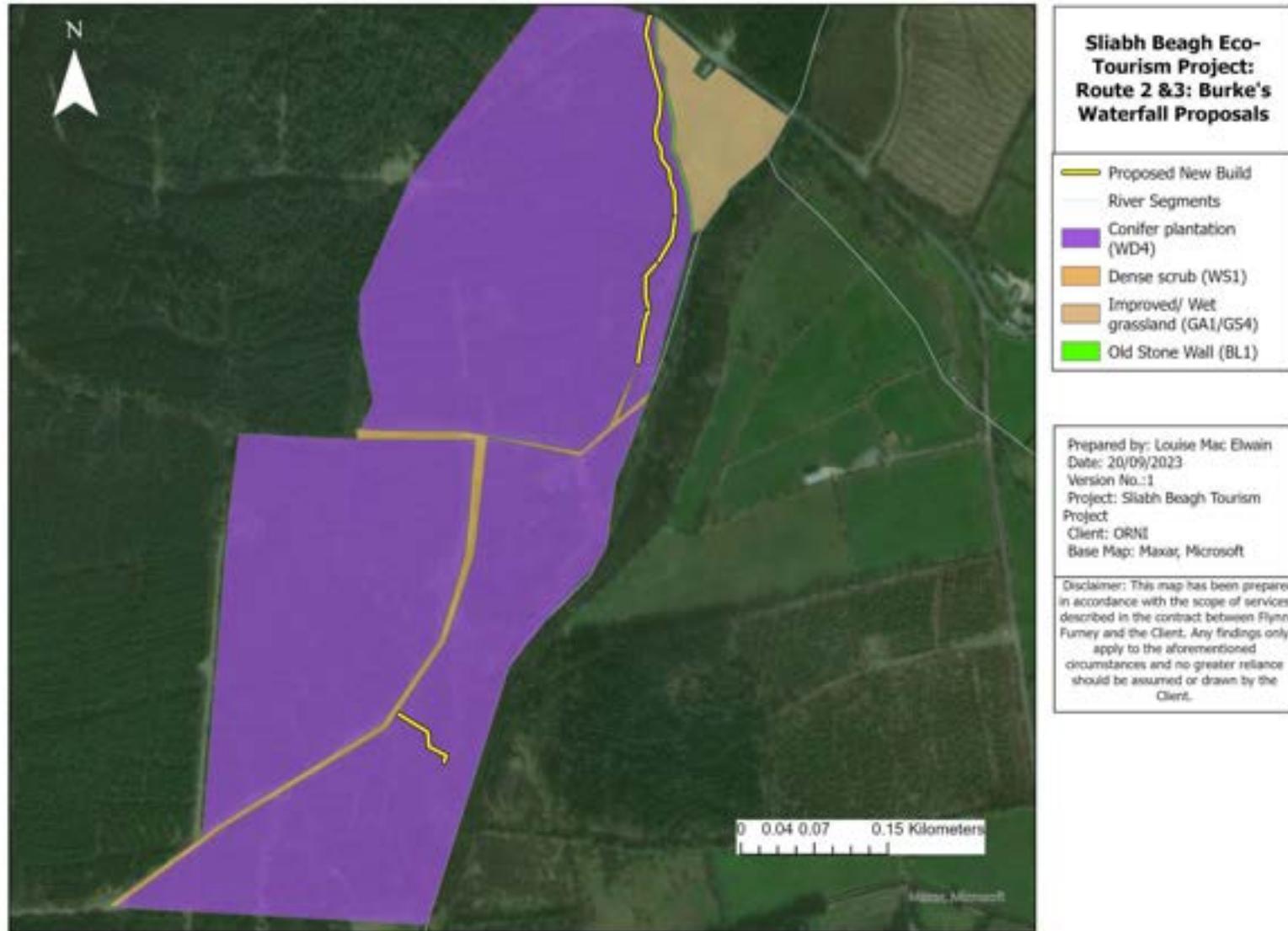
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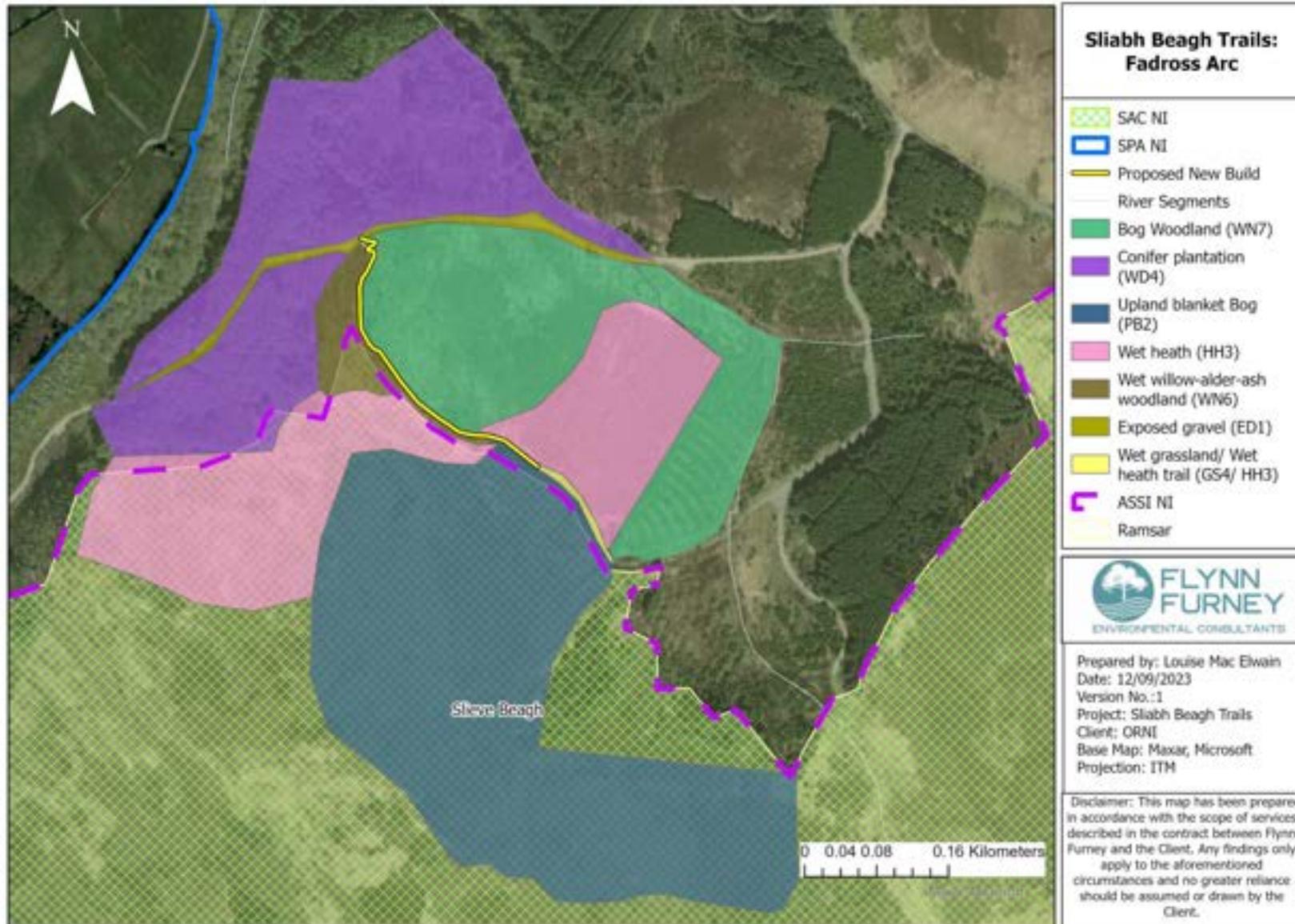
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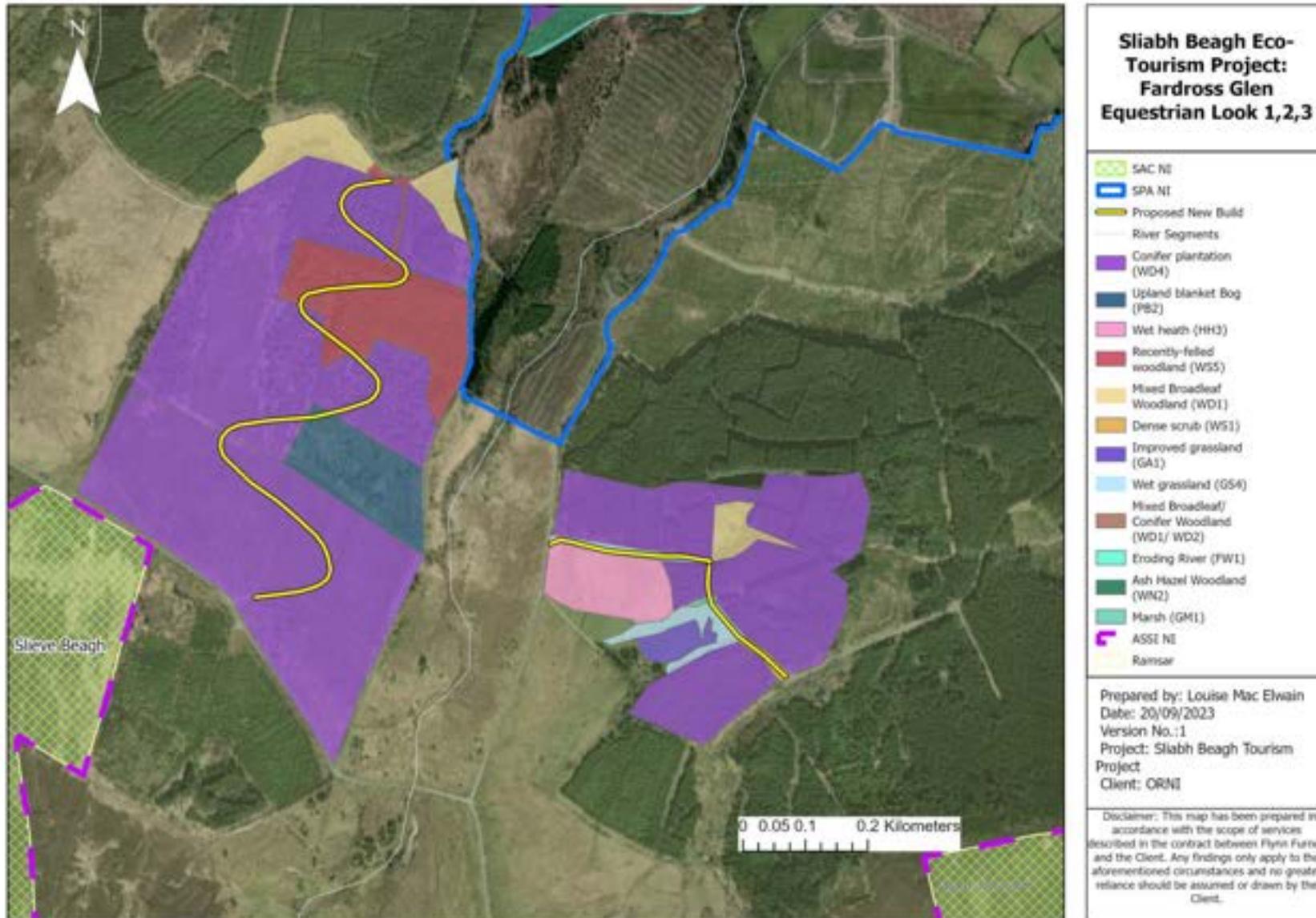
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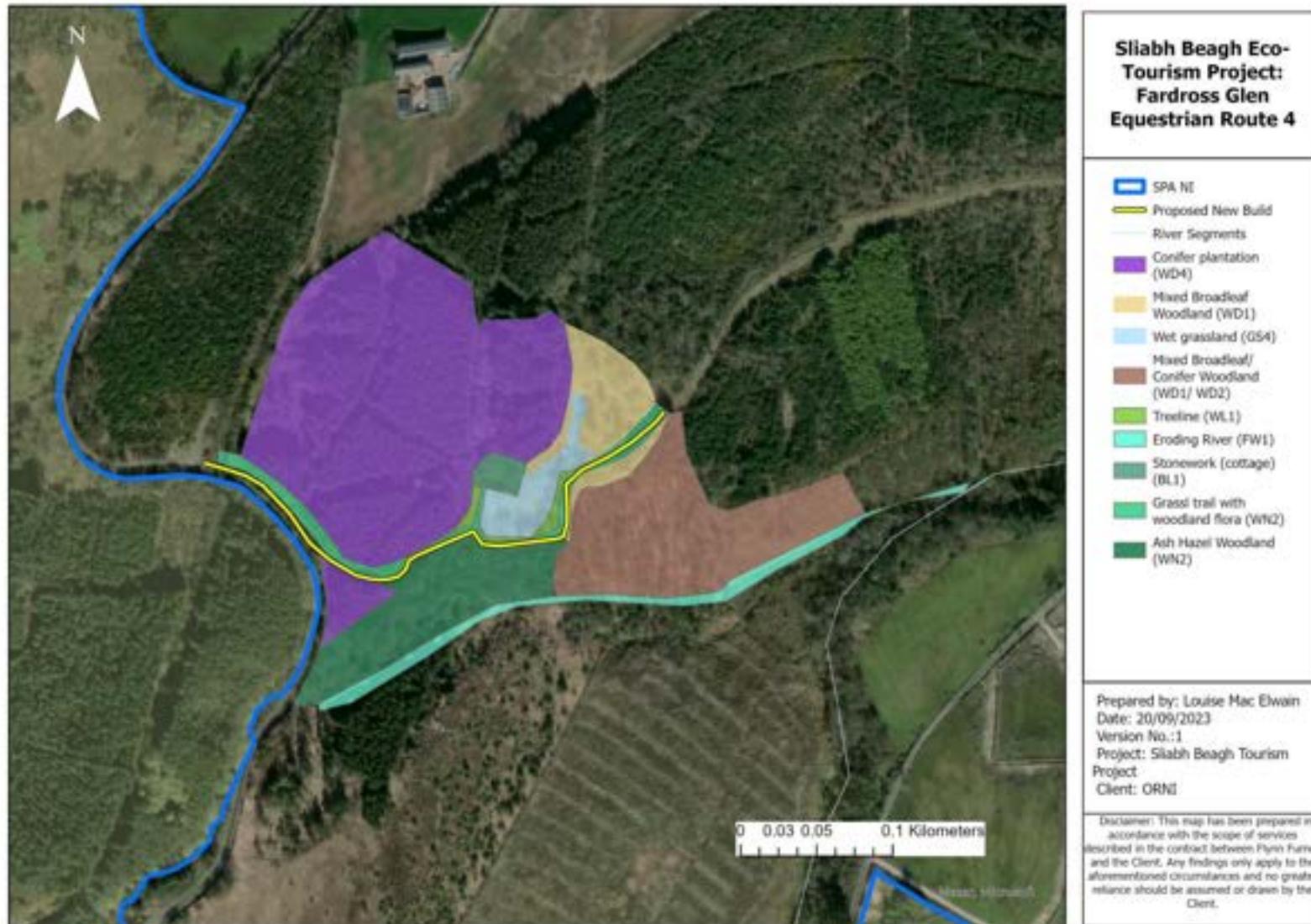
Appendix A: Habitat Maps











APPENDIX 3 - Potential LMP 'Multiply' Initiatives

MULTIPLY INITIATIVE	DETAILS OF DELIVERY
<p>Maths for speakers of other languages – for non English speakers, this award would provide a qualification or place individuals on pathway to improving numeracy and language skills.</p>	<p>Procurement required – delivery most likely via community-based organisations who already work with the migrant community.</p>
<p>Engaging Mature Learners - Making It Count – Target specifically over 40's, who have some of the lowest numeracy skills in Northern Ireland, with pastoral and additional support structures to complete informal training or to gain a numeracy related qualification.</p>	<p>Procurement required for accredited courses. Remaining delivery by Numeracy Champions</p> <p>Formal qualifications such as ICT, Excel, Book-keeping Soft skills via workshops such as pension advice, budgeting, nutrition, grant advice for farming community</p>
<p>Counting on you - Industry Upskilling – Numeracy classes in the workplace with additional support to gain a qualification or informal recognition of numeracy learning.</p>	<p>Procurement required for accredited courses. Remaining delivery by Numeracy Champions</p> <p>Primarily accredited courses to assist in upskilling/reskilling workforce particularly in IT skills – e.g. excel, advanced excel, SEO and digital marketing; and finance skills – e.g. Finance for non finance managers, Bookkeeping, Payroll, Provision of Level 1 or Level 2 numeracy where needed Workshops re workplace pensions, HMRC reporting requirements, accessing funding</p>
<p>Supporting previous offenders and those in prison system – Numeracy programme designed to support those in the prison system or former offenders, complementing and expanding on existing schemes.</p>	<p>N/A – Project by NIACRO covers all previous offenders within the Mid Ulster area under SPF funding. Any further activity would be duplication.</p>
<p>Numeracy Boot Camps – Short term numeracy learning through real life issues (nutrition, household finances, sport, pensions etc). Short courses, informal recognition, sign posting to formal qualifications.</p>	<p>Procurement required for Gamified Learning. Remaining delivery by Numeracy Champions</p> <p>Numeracy based Gamified Learning Project Soft skills workshops such as cookery, nutrition and meal planning; budgeting and household finances; energy detective; sport related numeracy</p>
<p>Bring your grown up – Numeracy programme through community and educational settings for children and parents to learn numeracy together.</p>	<p>Delivery by Numeracy Champion</p> <p>Soft skills programmes such as Homework Helper, Early Years play and coding and gaming</p>
<p>Multiply officers – to promote and engage with community groups and employers to</p>	<p>Recruitment of a multiply officer to deliver, co-ordinate and monitor all elements of the</p>

take advantage of existing and new numeracy provision.	multiply programme and engage with community groups across the district to maximise impact
Numeracy champions – Appoint, train and support numeracy champions across the community and voluntary sector, to lead on multiply schemes, managed through local government.	Procurement of 2 Numeracy Champions who can deliver various projects within the Multiply programme. Targeted at retired/semi-retired teachers, council workers, bank workers who could deliver on an hourly rate basis
Develop free numeracy materials - The Northern Ireland Universities are working with BBCNI to develop and promote a range of free numeracy provision, which would be tied in with the broad multiply offer. Additional material, and e-learning, developed through other schemes would be made available, and be sustainable post March 2025.	N/A – to be delivered by NI Universities.



CONSULTATION ON APPROACH TO 10X TECHNOLOGIES AND CLUSTERS



Foreword

The Department for Economy's 10X Economic Vision is unashamedly ambitious, aiming to support the development of a more innovative, sustainable and inclusive economy. Advancement of this vision comes at a time of significant economic challenge, acting as a focal point for Departmental activity as we work to realise the potential of the NI economy.



The consultation I am launching today sets out in more detail the 10X ambitions around focus and scale, providing greater detail on our plans for priority sectors of the economy as part of our Technologies and Clusters work. We hope to support activity within priority sectors by focusing our efforts on promising technologies and Unique Selling Points within each, and using this focus to drive benefits at scale for the wider economy. Through this, we seek to target activity to stimulate innovative, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, providing benefits for all of society.

To do this we require a partnership approach involving Government, business and academia, as well as wider civic society. As such, I am grateful for the level of input we have received to date for all our 10X activities. I welcome this collaborative spirit and I am keen to see this develop as we move forwards with our 10X agenda.

Finally, I am grateful to all respondents for their time and input into this current consultation, which will be used to develop and further refine our approach to Technologies and Clusters focused work. I look forward to hearing your views over the coming weeks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Brennan', written in a cursive style.

MIKE BRENNAN
Permanent Secretary
14th September 2023

Introduction

The 10X Economy Vision published in May 2021 highlighted the Department’s goal to focus on technologies and Unique Selling Points (USPs) within priority / high potential sectors. These are areas where Northern Ireland (NI) has established strengths, in research and/or industrial capability, and the potential to be globally competitive; if not already. This activity will reinforce our ongoing commitments to focusing on NI’s specialisms through the major investments of the City and Growth Deals (CGD) programme.

Technologies and USPs (including their application within and adoption across these sectors), the potential for scale impacts across the wider NI economy, and the development of clusters are all key components of the virtuous cycle of activity that we aim to build in NI. We see this focus being instrumental to drive forward progress towards a more innovative, inclusive and sustainable NI economy.

As such, the Department for the Economy (DfE) has established a 10X Technologies and Clusters workstream, with seven priority sectors identified within this:

- Agri-Tech
- Life and Health Sciences
- Advanced Manufacturing, Materials and Engineering
- Fintech / Financial Services
- Software
- Screen Industries
- Low Carbon (including Green Hydrogen)

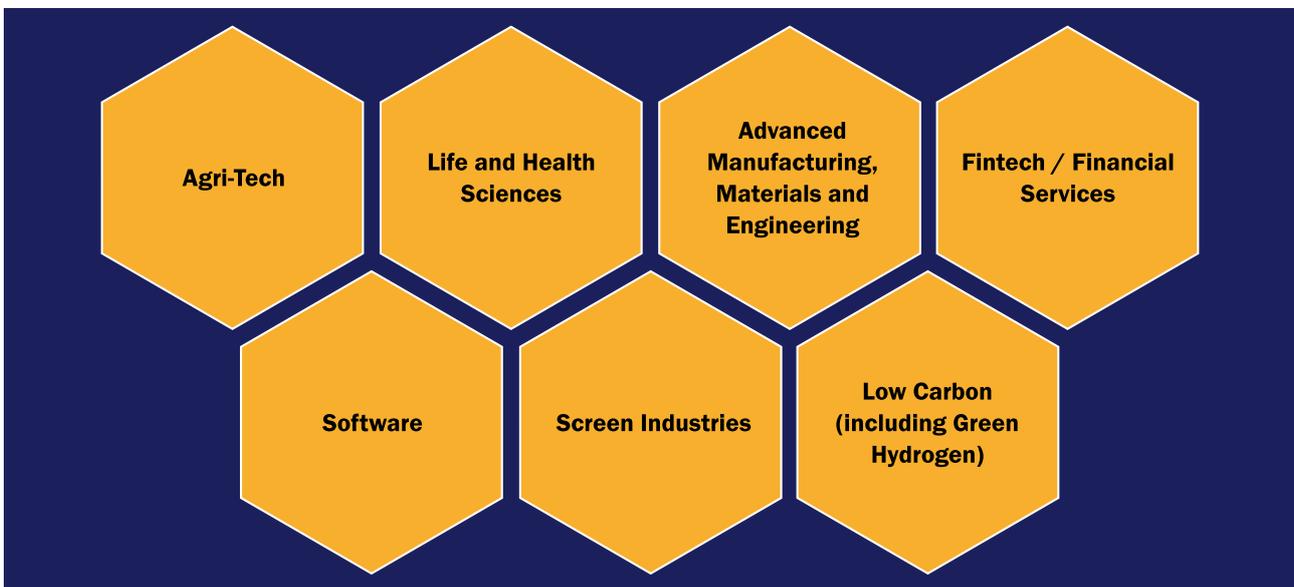


Figure 1: The seven identified priority sectors

Priority Sector	Description
Agri-Tech	The application of innovation and technologies to build competitive advantage and transition to Net Zero across the Agri-Food supply chain, including the farming and food processing sectors. Agri-Tech companies provide solutions (products and services) across sub-sectors including advanced materials and supply chain; agri-engineering; food processing; information and communications technology (ICT); life sciences; nutrition and animal feeds; and innovation in food and drink processing.
Life and Health Sciences	Life and Health Sciences covers a range of specialisms relating to the study of biological life, processes and the treatment of illness and disease. It has applicability to healthcare solutions, healthy living and the environment, including elements such as bio-technology, pharmaceuticals, precision medicine, medical technology, connected and digital health and healthcare solutions.
Advanced Manufacturing, Materials and Engineering	Advanced Manufacturing (as defined by the Matrix Panel) is “a family of activities that a) depend on the use and coordination of information, automation, computation, software, sensing, and networking, and/or b) make use of cutting-edge materials and emerging capabilities enabled by the physical and biological sciences, for example nanotechnology, chemistry, and biology. This involves both new ways to manufacture existing products, and especially the manufacture of new products emerging from new advanced technologies.”
Fintech / Financial Services	Services and technological solutions to the international financial services industry including banks, insurance companies, and asset management companies.
Software	The NI software sector includes software-intensive businesses, which are primarily developing software functionality, products and services for use by external or internal customers; with the wider NI ecosystem also including the people in software-related occupations in other industries.
Screen Industries	The NI Screen Industry consists of 3 primary sectors, Film, Television and Interactive. These can be further divided into 6 sub-sectors, Large-scale Production, Animation, Television Drama, Factual/Entertainment Television and Gaming. These sectors are supported by continued innovation in new screen technology and skills development that provide wider opportunities to the labour market.
Low Carbon (including Green Hydrogen)	The NI Energy Strategy sets out the pathway to Net Zero carbon and affordable energy by 2050. This includes a substantial opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and grow the green economy through hydrogen production, carbon capture, blending of the gas network, and world leading research and development.

Table 1: Brief description of each priority sector

In October 2022, the 10X Performance Management Framework consultation¹ provided some detail on how the concept of technologies and priority sectors / clusters links to wider 10X objectives, and asked a number of questions around the suitability of proposed outcome metrics.

Following this, the Technologies and Clusters workstream has focused on qualifying and quantifying the specific strengths of each priority sector, identifying key technologies and USPs for focused activity and the potential policy levers the Department could utilise to grow and scale these areas.

This consultation sets out the approach for three key areas:

- Identification and prioritisation of technologies and USPs where NI can be globally competitive, the growth of which can drive benefits at scale across the economy;
- An indication of the policy actions DfE and partners may use to drive the growth, uptake and scaling of these technologies and USPs; and
- How these technologies and USPs could be integrated into a future Sub-Regional Economic Plan.

We are seeking your views on the above areas to help inform and develop our current work.

¹ [10X Performance Management Framework | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

Priority NI Technologies and Unique Selling Points

Our approach to Technologies and Clusters focused work is based on the assertion that competitiveness starts with focus. Focusing on technologies and USPs where NI has a globally competitive edge and high growth potential, or the ability to secure this, will enable us to capitalise on opportunities presented by local and global trends; positioning NI at the forefront of development in these areas.

It is hoped that, when aligned with wider economic development policies, encouraging focused technological adoption and scaling up activity in these areas will diffuse success across the economy, thus widening societal benefit. The Sub-Regional Economic Plan (to be published in spring 2024) will set out targets for DfE and Invest NI to connect businesses at all levels to new ideas and technologies, while the City and Growth Deals will establish and enhance the necessary infrastructure with over £600m being invested in innovation and digital projects. The Place10X workstream will harness the USPs of Technologies and Clusters to establish sustainable, inclusive, and innovative local economic ecosystems.

Within each of the seven priority sectors, teams have undertaken work to identify and shortlist the key technologies and USPs that have the potential to meet 10X objectives. These are areas in which NI has, or has the potential to develop, research excellence, industry capability or the potential for widespread technology adoption.

The below table details the current shortlisted technologies and USPs for each priority sector. It should be noted that we will also be progressing activity to prioritise technologies which are enabling and crosscutting (i.e. have applicability within and across different priority sectors), including:

- Artificial intelligence
- Data capture / analytics
- Software applications
- Robotics/automation

Furthermore, it is also important to note that the wider 10X Vision places an emphasis on developing areas of future competitive advantage. As such, the technologies and USPs listed are not definitive and may be subject to future amendment to reflect the rapidly changing technological landscape in NI. The subsequent development of sector action plans will clearly articulate which technologies and USPs represent research excellence, industry capability or areas for potential adoption, and how activities will be targeted to that effect.

Priority Sector	Technology/USP
Agri-Tech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety, quality control, data and traceability • Food nutrition, product development and processing • Animal, crop and feedstock science / technology / genetic solutions • Environmental/sustainability • Innovative farm machinery
Life and Health Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnostics including biomarkers • Precision medicine, genomics and bioinformatics • Med-tech, digital and connected health with supporting software • Clinical trials and associated activity • Pharmaceuticals manufacturing and drug discovery/development
Advanced Manufacturing, Materials and Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nano technology and photonics • Aerospace • Materials processing and handling • Precision engineering • Off-site construction
Fintech / Financial Services Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cybersecurity • Artificial intelligence • Data science and engineering • Cloud
Screen Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crew skillset • Studio facilities (Belfast Harbour and Titanic) • Studio Ulster • Virtual production • Game development facilities • Editing suites • Animation studios
Low Carbon (including Green Hydrogen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green hydrogen economy including funding, production and storage • Carbon capture and usage • Sustainable aviation fuels • Advanced efuels • Research and development in alternative methods of hydrogen production, cryogenics, storage specialisms and green supply chains • Hydrogen blending

Table 2: Current shortlisted technologies and USPs for each priority sector

Key policy levers to drive growth, adoption and diffusion of priority areas

This section highlights the key themes of activity and policy levers which, based on our research and continued engagement with stakeholders, have been identified as important in supporting the development, adoption and scaling up of key technologies and USPs within and across all priority sectors.

In addition to considering activity to support the environment for the development, uptake and scale of technologies in a general sense, we recognise that each sector has its own characteristics and may require bespoke action. Therefore, DfE will use the information gathered through this consultation to develop specific action plans for the seven priority sectors in 2024. These will, in setting out outcome goals, seek to demonstrate how specific actions can drive technology and sector outcomes in support of the 10X aims of delivering a more innovative, inclusive and sustainable NI economy.

Note the purpose of this section and the table below is not to present detailed actions, but to give a sense of the actions DfE will consider to achieve our aims around technology and USPs in the priority sectors, which we will refine based on the response to this consultation and further stakeholder engagement.

It is important to note when reviewing the table below that DfE, within its remit, does not hold all of the potential policy levers needed to drive a step change in the environment for technology in NI. Partnership, including with industry, academia, civil society, across NI Departments, with local councils, UK Government and international partners, will be vital to drive the outcomes we are seeking, and we are already investing considerable effort in improving collaboration between key players in this area.

Policy Lever / Theme of Activity	Potential Focus of Work
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduates, postgraduate, PhD and apprenticeships in STEM fields: work with industry and higher/further education institutes to ensure that opportunities are focused on current deficits and technology growth areas. • Wraparound skills: ensure educational offerings available that focus on business, leadership/management/ productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship skills. • Inclusivity: work in partnership with existing schemes to address imbalances in employment numbers related to areas of deprivation, gender and disability. • Upskilling: work with industry and third level education institutes to ensure skills gaps are addressed in the existing workforce, where possible. • Alignment between skills requirements for Technologies and Clusters with City Deal priorities – ensuring these also support and deliver on skills needs for companies.
Innovation Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to ensure a clear commercialisation pathway through engagement across the sectors, offering information, advice and other necessary supports to startups and to innovation and R&D active businesses. • Investigate the potential for developing sectoral incubators/ accelerators for startups and spinouts. • Work to improve uptake of competitive funding streams. • Encouraging adoption and development of technologies within industry and along supply chains to increase productivity.
Regulatory Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish working groups to engage with UK government departments, highlighting regulatory issues impacting NI businesses, particularly with respect to the Windsor Framework. • Work to provide greater regulatory certainty and clarity for businesses. • Identify strategic regulatory opportunities for technology development in NI.

Policy Lever / Theme of Activity	Potential Focus of Work
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better utilise FDI as a strategic tool to build and enhance NI’s capability and capacity in our priority 10X sectors/clusters, through spill-over benefits. • Develop and promote strategic FDI propositions, aligned with strategies for priority sectors, to highlight the benefits to international investors of conducting business in NI.
Export Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the further internationalisation of our priority sectors / clusters through targeted export promotion activity, exposing our indigenous firms in these sectors to new ideas and a larger customer base. • Identify target international export markets for each of our priority sectors. • Identify market access barriers experienced by businesses in our priority sectors, and work with UK Government to address them through Free Trade Agreements and other means.
Sector Ecosystem / Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support collaboration between industry, academia, government and the public sector. • Align policies and interventions to support key technologies and USPs, and signpost businesses to existing support mechanisms within each priority sector. • Work to increase applications and number of successful bids to alternative funding schemes (e.g. wider UK government initiatives). • Support digitalisation by businesses.

Table 3: Likely policy levers and associated activity that may be used to support adoption and diffusion of priority areas

Sub-Regional Unique Selling Points

A further potential building block around the work on priority sectors is to consider the benefits in having a sub-regional dimension, aligning key 10X activities of the Department with the 10X related USPs and assets of a particular geographical area.

Taking the Mid Ulster region as an example, advanced manufacturing and Agri-Tech has a dominant presence. There may therefore be benefit in aligning key 10X activities to enhance and support the assets of this geographical region.

It should be noted that such an approach would not be exclusionary, nor necessarily based on pre-existing geographical areas such as local councils, but instead aims to encourage alignment and coherence with the wider 10X strategy of focusing on developing areas of existing strength across NI.

This may help avoid duplication of effort across sub-regions, or a situation where activity is focused in only a few key geographical areas when it has the capability to operate wider. This would also align with other elements of sub-regional policy, including City Deal investments.

A Sub-Regional Economic Plan is currently being developed to consider what this approach will look like. This work stream will be co-produced by DfE and Invest NI, building on research gathered in the Place10X Call for Evidence that closed in July 2023.

Consideration will be given as to what these sub-regions should look like, including cross-border dimensions, with a place-based lens used to ensure that local strengths are harnessed. Alignment of local and central government objectives with business, academia and third sector expertise will be vital. However, it is also important that areas are challenged as well as supported, to ensure that global impact is not diluted and instead maximised.

Responding to the Consultation

We would ask that you respond to the consultation using the online survey which can be accessed at the [Consultation on Approach to 10X Technologies and Clusters page on the nidirect website](#).

If you are unable to respond using the online consultation facility, you can email your response using the response template provided at the [DfE consultation page](#) to the following email address: dfc-10Xt&c-consultation@economy-ni.gov.uk

Before you submit a response, please read the Privacy Notice published alongside the consultation documents on the [DfE consultation page](#), which shows how we will use personal information as part of the processing of responses.

If you require documents to be provided in an alternative format, please contact the 10X Technologies and Clusters Consultation team by email: dfc-10Xt&c-consultation@economy-ni.gov.uk

Responses to this consultation are invited until 11.59pm on **Friday 24th November 2023**.

Next Steps

We will analyse the responses to this consultation and a summary Departmental response will be drafted and published.

Responses will help to develop and refine our current approach to 10X Technologies and Clusters related work, along with continued engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

Our next major milestone is the publication of finalised sector action plans in 2024, followed by delivery of these plans across 2024 and 2025.

23 November 2023



Mr Matthew Carson
Department for the Economy
10X Technologies and Clusters Workstream
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD

Email: dfc-10Xt&c-consultation@economy-ni.gov.uk

Dear Mr Carson,

Ref: Consultation on Approach to 10X Technologies and Clusters

Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the opportunity to provide comment upon the Department's plans to develop a 10X Technologies and Clusters approach in areas including: Agri-Tech, Life & Health Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing, Materials & Engineering, Fintech /Financial Services, Software, Screen Industries, Low Carbon (including Green Hydrogen).

Mid Ulster District Council fully supports the ambition proposed by the 10X Technologies and Clusters Consultation and looks forward to engaging with the Department for the Economy and Invest NI to progress the interventions and sub-regional opportunities arising from this work support our local key sectors and USPs. Councils must be instrumental in the planning and development of any future 'place-based approach' due to their pivotal role in their local economies and their unique insight into the specific issues and challenges faced by their communities.

MID ULSTER'S KEY SECTORAL STRENGTHS & CLUSTERS

The Mid Ulster District Council area represents a multicultural population of more than 150,000¹ across 1,714 km² (14% of the NI land mass) and is the fastest growing new Council area in Northern Ireland (its population is expected to grow to 165,000 by 2030). The area is within a 30-minute reach of Belfast (Dublin - 2 hours) and shares a land border with Republic of Ireland providing access to 450,000 people within a 50km radius.

Mid Ulster is recognised as one of the most entrepreneurial and enterprising regions in Northern Ireland. Its economy is private sector driven, boasting the largest business base outside the Belfast Metropolitan area with 9,430 VAT registered businesses. Over the last 5 years Mid Ulster had the fastest pace of employee job creation of any council area in NI growing at 13% (6,680 new jobs) compared to a total NI growth rate of 7%.

The region has higher productivity per head of population compared to the Northern Ireland average and a GVA² of £3.97bn (producing 8.1% of NI's economic output).

The Council area has strengths in key sectors (some of which are also in the seven noted in the Consultation) including Manufacturing & Engineering; Food and Agri Food; Construction; Retail, IT and Hospitality. Our businesses are the most export-intensive, accounting for 12% of NI's exports. Mid Ulster businesses embrace innovation, and the region has the largest uptake of Invest NI's Innovation Accreditation Awards outside of the Belfast region.

Mid Ulster has an international reputation for manufacturing excellence, hosting several of NI's leading advanced manufacturers, leading it to be recognised as the centre of manufacturing and engineering in Northern Ireland, where it accounts for 29% of the local economy (approx. 17,066 jobs), compared to 11% in NI. The sector

¹ Census Statistics 2021

² Office for National Statistics 2021

is estimated to deliver c£1.67bn GVA contribution to the local economy and over £710m in local wages, directly and indirectly. This world class cluster is of profound importance to the area's economy – especially in key specialisms such as the manufacture of mining and quarrying machinery, production of general and special purpose machinery etc., which have linkages and supply chain associations with the construction and food and agri-food sectors. For instance, the area boasts a world-class High Growth Cluster that manufactures more than 40% of the world's mobile crushing and screening equipment.

COUNCIL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The Council hopes that the use of the approach outlined in the Consultation ensures that the needs are met of specific sectors to thrive across NI, including within Mid Ulster District Council area. As such, the Council is supportive of the proposed approach for three key areas of the proposed 10X Technologies and Clusters as identified below and overleaf:

1. Identification and prioritisation of technologies and USPs where NI can be globally competitive, the growth of which can drive benefits at scale across the economy;
2. An indication of the policy actions DfE and partners may use to drive the growth, uptake and scaling of these technologies and USPs; and
3. How these technologies and USPs could be integrated into a future Sub-Regional Economic Plan.

Overall Mid Ulster District Council supports the aim of establishing clear and consistent support arrangements for the sectors identified in the consultation documentation. Specifically, the Council has also provided details relation to the following aspects of the consultation:

- USPs that are not listed within the consultation document
- Additional policies or activities that should be included
- Benefits for Economic growth and help meet 10X established objectives
- Technologies and USPs that would be particularly suited to a sub-regional approach

USPs that are not listed within the consultation document

In terms of the Agri-Tech sector, it is assumed that technologies to support the exploration of more efficient solutions for product storage *and* transportation are included under that of 'product development and processing', and/or 'environmental/sustainability'. This will be critical support to the sector to drive the reduction of waste and become more resource efficient and work towards net zero targets, in addition to the 10X requirements.

Additional policies or activities that should be included

The Council welcomes the ambition noted in the Consultation document for the forthcoming 'Sub-Regional Economic Plan', that the Department for the Economy and Invest NI *will connect businesses at all levels to new ideas and technologies* and with inclusivity as one of the guiding principles in delivery. While a focussed approach has been identified as a priority to drive the 10X Technologies and Clusters work, it is essential that future interventions to drive competitiveness incorporate measures to proactively engage with those businesses that require capacity building and financial support to enable them to take advantage of these opportunities.

We acknowledge that the wider 10X Vision places an emphasis on developing areas of future competitive advantage to drive NI's ability to compete globally. However, where at all possible, activities should be designed and progressed which offer creative solutions to supporting businesses, particularly micro and small, to stimulate broader engagement in innovation and adoption of new technologies. This could involve the development of facilitated clusters /networks (as referenced in the document), where businesses can engage with others to explore the competitive advantages offered by new technologies and potentially avail of opportunities to form supply chains.

Net zero targets present significant future economic challenges for businesses of all sectors and sizes and supporting their engagement with new technologies will be critical in helping them identify and adopt potential solutions.

Benefits for economic growth and help meet 10X established objectives

The Council fully supports the 10X Vision for NI to be competitive globally, and the need to drive benefits at scale. Delivery at regional level facilitates the dissemination of best practice, development of skills and cutting-edge technologies and may also identify the identification of potential supply chains and clustering which, in turn, could optimise benefits at scale and drive engagement on a global scale.

Aligned to this there would be scope for the development of a sub-regional focus on specific technologies and USPs within the context of a broader and holistic regional approach to ensure key learning is diffused across the region, optimising the economic impact. For example, the infrastructure of the City/Growth Deals will play a key enabling role in driving innovation and the adoption of new technologies to target sectors at a more sub-regional and local Council level.

In recent years Mid Ulster District Council has engaged with Invest NI's Collaborative Growth initiative to develop sub-regional clusters for two key Mid Ulster sectors – funding was secured to develop the award-winning MEGA Cluster (**M**anufacturing and **E**ngineering **G**rowth **A**dvancement') and Council is working with industry leaders from the Mid Ulster Construction sector to develop a similar cluster with support from Invest NI. Also as noted earlier, the area is home to a world-class High Growth Cluster that manufactures more than 40% of the world's mobile crushing and screening equipment.

The potential for a sub-regional dimension should also be further explored with the relevant key stakeholders, including drawing on the expertise of the local College Network, local sectoral bodies and Innovation Centres. We fully concur with the reference in the Consultation document; *'Taking the Mid Ulster region as an example, Advanced Manufacturing and Agri-Tech has a dominant present. There may be benefit in aligning key 10X activities to enhance and support the assets of this geographic region'*. It is vitally important that a place approach is adopted in aligning key 10X activities to enhance and support the existing assets and strengths of a region such as Mid Ulster. This approach would avoid duplication of effort and resources across sub-regions and ensure 'local' strengths are harnessed and maximised as part of a sustainable and innovative local economic ecosystem.

Council would also assert that such an approach should be a key plank of the sub-regional Economic Plan which is currently being developed by DfE and Invest NI.

Technologies and USPs do you think would be particularly suited to a sub-regional approach

The identification of technologies and USPs suited to a sub-regional dimension should be undertaken following the data gathered from this Consultation process. This should draw, as a minimum representation from key local and sub-regional stakeholders representing business, academia, the third sector and Local Government (including City/Growth Deal partnerships).

The Council would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise already in the Mid Ulster area. In addition, the Council request that this is kept central to and is reflected in the 10X Technologies and Clusters overall concept and the final implemented approach. The Council would also request that Mid Ulster is at the forefront of the emerging sub regional economic plan and future development of sector action plans.

Finally, the Council look forward to receiving the outworkings of this consultation and to engaging in any relevant partnership working to ensure that these proposals directly stimulate inclusive economic growth and productivity, that will have a positive impact across the District.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Dominic Molloy

Chairperson, Mid Ulster District Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Development Committee of Mid Ulster District Council held on Thursday 12 October 2023 in the Council Offices, Burn Road, Cookstown and by Virtual Means

Members Present

Councillor McNamee, Chair

Councillors Bell* Black (7.03 pm), W Buchanan, F Burton (7.05 pm)*, Clarke, Corry, Gildernew, McLernon, McQuade*, Milne*, Molloy* Monteith*, Quinn, Wilson

Officers in Attendance

Mr Black, Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P)

Mr Gordon, Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W)

Ms Linney, Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev)**

Ms McKeown, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP)**

Ms McCartney, Strategic Programme Development Manager (SPDM)

Mr John Kennedy, ICT Support

Mrs Grogan, Committee and Member Services Officer

* Denotes Members present in remote attendance

** Denotes Officers present by remote means

*** Denotes Others present by remote means

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm.

The Chair, Councillor McNamee welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the meeting through the Live Broadcast. Councillor McNamee in introducing the meeting detailed the operational arrangements for transacting the business of the committee in the chamber and by virtual means, by referring to Annex A to this minute.

D144/23 Notice of Recording

This meeting will be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast on the Council's YouTube site.

D145/23 Apologies

Councillor Forde.

D146/23 Declaration of Interests

The Chair, Councillor McNamee reminded Members of their responsibility with regard to declaration of interest.

Councillor Clarke declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Sperrins Partnership Update.

D147/23 Chair's Business

The Chair, Councillor McNamee advised that he had attended the Housing Forum meeting last week and it was brought to his attention that landlord registration would be transferred to Local Government in December 2024. The member advised that he had raised a few questions enquiring whether it had been through Council or not.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) stated that he was aware of ongoing conversations around the potential for the landlord registration scheme to transfer to local government from Department for Communities (DfC). The SD: C&P said that as far as he was aware that this has progressed to the stage where the department had formed a group to look at this and had recently written to SOLACE seeking a nomination to sit on that group, an appointment from SOLACE was agreed in September. The SD: C&P was not aware of the individual attending their first meeting yet but would link in with the appointee to seek an update and when further information is received this would be brought back for members consideration.

Councillor Molloy wished to raise a matter in relation to planning an event in Meadowbank, Magherafelt. The member advised that he had been approached by a member of the public seeking to run a charity event for children at Meadowbank as he works with seriously ill children and was advised by Council Officers that a certain type of licence needed to go through before this could be held. The member advised that this person wished to hold the event before Christmas and was more than willing to work with Officers and do whatever he can do to get it over the line. The member said that it would be helpful to provide any assistance possible to speed the process up.

The Assistant Director of Health, Leisure and Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) said that Officers were aware of the booking request and will keep engagement open with the group and follow up again tomorrow. In relation to specifics, the type of event is proposed to be held requires an entertainment licence but would look at all possible avenues to try and explore and expedite that to include working within all the relevant policies in place.

Councillor Black entered the meeting at 7.03 pm.

Matters for Decision

D148/23 Walking for All Project

The Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing (AD: HL&W) presented previously circulated report to update members on the proposal that Outdoor

Recreation NI (ORNI) is currently engaging with all local Councils. Their aim to apply to the Peace Plus funding programme for the placement of a “Walking for all Project Co-ordinator” to be based in the Mid Ulster area.

Councillor McLernon said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation and welcomed it as it was a great initiative and looked forward to seeing it rolled out.

Councillor Corry seconded the proposal as it was evident over this last number of years the great walking trails which were there throughout Mid Ulster including Davagh, Moydamlaght etc and goes to show how popular they have been and great to see an extension to this being recognised.

Councillor F Burton said that by reading through the report and thinking back to the night that Dfl were in attendance, our Chief Executive spoke very well in trying to ensure that any possibility with safer routes travel in which Council work with Dfl, would fit in very well with that. The member enquired from the AD: HL&W if this could be a possibility as she had a couple of places in which she may be able to try and push as she was aware of talk about rural areas but wanted to ensure the safety of people who were out walking on the road and the best way to link up people who live in rural areas who may not have safe access to walk into their village, church hall or sports facilities. The member felt that anything that Council could do to support this would be very welcome and she would be happy to come on board also.

The AD: HL&W advised that this was currently out for procurement for the appointment of the appropriate expertise to develop a district wide Active Travel Masterplan. He advised that the fundamental components of that would be to scope out all the possible routes and paths for this district area that may have the potential to lend itself from an Active Travel perspective in the future and working very closely with Dfl around that. He hoped that when procurement had run its course in the next number of weeks a paper can be brought back to committee for consideration and hoped to be in a position to move forward with the project.

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor Corry and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve ORNI request from Council to:

- 1) Formally support the project by being a named partner in the forthcoming application to Peace Plus
- 2) Agreeing in principle and subject to due diligence to act as the employing authority for the WFA Local Co-ordinator
- 3) Agreeing in principle and subject to due diligence to providing office space and administrative support as required throughout the length of the project
- 4) Proportionate office support throughout the project when required to assist the Co-ordinator

D149/23 Development Report

The Assistant Director of Development (AD: Dev) presented previously circulated report to update members and to seek approval for the following:

- Community Grants Rolling Programme
- Social Supermarket Concept, via the DfC Hardship Fund
- DfC Welfare Reform Support
- Cookstown Town Twinning
- Women's Night Safety Charter
- Seamus Heaney Homeplace Sandford Award
- Development Update

Councillor Gildernew said that she would be happy to propose the recommendation.

The member advised that however, in relation to the DfC hardship funding for foodbanks, she understood the need for foodbanks and funding for them but felt that we as a society should not be happy to let foodbanks become normality. We need the Executive restored to support workers and families through passing legislation to ban zero-hour contracts which make people's income insecure and uncertain. An incoming Executive should also be adequately funded to improve public services and provide better wages to public sector workers as well as power being devolved to set minimum wages rates. People in the North are being hit with increases in fuel, food, energy, mortgage repayments and heat. The cost-of-living crisis means that those on low pay or minimum wage are at risk of falling into debt and being unable to pay for basic essentials. Sinn Féin supports the 'Living Wage Foundations' call for a real living wage of £10.90 to be paid to workers as the minimum standard of pay.

Councillor McLernon seconded the recommendation. The member wished to comment in relation to the Women's Night Safety Charter and felt that anything that Mid Ulster District Council could do to provide safe spaces for women and promote safety for women should be done and would wholly support the signing of the Charter.

Proposed by Councillor Gildernew
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to –

- Agree the Community Grants Rolling Programme awards
- Agree the Social Supermarket funding application
- Agree the allocation the DfC Welfare Reform Support
- Agree the Cookstown Town Twinning support
- Agree to sign up to the Women's Nigh Safety Charter
- Agree to representation at the Seamus Heaney Homeplace Sandford Award
- Note the Development Update.

Councillor Quinn declared an interest in St. Vincent de Paul, Coalisland as they share part of Clonoe in which he is part of.

Councillor Quinn advised that Colette Campbell had put in for an individual sports award in October to attend an international event in Birmingham and was delighted to say that she was part of a successful act of Irish Ladies Bowls Team that won the British and Irish Championships at the weekend.

Councillor Monteith declared an interest in Mid Ulster Advice Service.

Councillor Monteith referred to page 9, where Water Service had appointed a contractor or consultant to deal with issues around the mast at the Hill of The O'Neill. He said that it was disappointing that this was only at this stage now as it was a good few months ago that commitment was made that this would be done. The member felt that the only people that was going to put any impetus or enthusiasm into this would be members themselves.

Councillor Monteith proposed that contact be made with Water Service again requesting that a meeting take place with the consultant at the earliest opportunity. The member said that his fear would be that this could run into 12 months after members felt was a reasonably positive meeting with Water Service and will eventually die with a lack of enthusiasm on their behalf.

Councillor Molloy seconded Councillor Monteith's proposal. The member said that he was present at the meeting with Water Service and disappointing to see it only slowly progressing. There is talk about redeveloping the Hill of The O'Neill and the black spot that was on top of it with the mast and any further work which can be achieved for the better would be welcomed.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) said that he appreciated and understood the frustrations in relation to how long it has taken to get to this stage with NI Water. The SD: C&P wished to reassure members that engagement with NI Water has been ongoing and a lot of backwards and forwards in relation to trying to agree the terms of reference and the scope of work which has thankfully been completed and the final costs being received. The commission of the contractor is a joint commission and jointly being paid by this Council and NI Water and we will be heavily involved and will members at the right juncture in relation to inputting into the study in advance of the final report.

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to keep the impetus on the matter and continue to engage with the Water Service to move this work forward at pace.

D150/23 Economic Development Report – OBFD

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report to update pm key activities as detailed below:

- **Lough Neagh Partnership (2023/24)**
- **Tourism Autumn/Winter Campaign 2023**
- **Donaghmore Historical Society – Letter of Support**
- **Social Enterprise NI: Membership Renewal 2023/24**
- **Dungannon Traders Association Proposal**

Proposed by Councillor McLernon
Seconded by Councillor Gildernew and

- **Lough Neagh Partnership (2023/24)**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to:

- Note content of report, including Lough Neagh Partnership's Progress Partnership's Report for 2022/23 (appendix 1) outlining actions completed against their 2022/23 Service Level Agreement Targets
- Approve Council funding of £22,000 to Lough Neagh Partnership for the 2023/2024 financial year and release funding, subject to Council being provided with the requisite documentation.
- Approve Council's Draft Service Level Agreement with Lough Neagh Partnership for the 2023/2024 financial year (appendix 2)

- **Tourism Autumn/Winter Campaign 2023**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the content and mediums proposed for the Mid Ulster Tourism Autumn/Winter Campaign 2023 and associated budget of £10,000.

- **Donaghmore Historical Society**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve that Council facilitates the request from Donaghmore Historical Society and provides the organisation with a letter of support to accompany their funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

- **Social Enterprise NI: Membership Renewal 2023/24**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve Council's membership renewal with Social Enterprise NI (SENI) for the year 2023/24 at a fee of £500.

- **Dungannon Traders Association Proposal**

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to approve the request from Dungannon Traders Association for a contribution of £2,500 towards Dungannon Jingle Ball Run event, which is proposed, will take place on Saturday 16 December 2023.

Councillor Gildernew referred to Jingle Ball Run event and advised that Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Club were involved last year which didn't seem to be the case this year and also Aodh Ruadh Ladies Football Club. The member enquired if this was a case of being missed and if so could they be included if they are willing to do so.

The AD: EDT&SP advised that this can be investigated with Dungannon Traders Association to check this out and advise the member.

D151/23 Sperrins Partnership Update

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) presented previously circulated report to provide members with an update on the Sperrins Partnership Project.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Clarke on being elected as new Chairman of Sperrin Partnership.

Councillor Clarke thanked the AD: EDT&SP for the good report and stated that this was a historic opportunity as Sperrins had been declared an AONB in 1968 which was 55 years ago and within the last 30 years he has been involved in the different stages to try and have a management plan brought into place and eventually this has been received. The member advised that we were the last and the earliest, but we were here now and will make a huge difference in delivering the key benefits of an AONB and would be delighted to accept the recommendations as outlined within the report.

Councillor Corry seconded the recommendations and would be happy to reiterate what Councillor Clarke alluded to as this was something that people have been waiting on for a long time and we all realise and see the potential for the beauty the Sperrins has to offer and great to see the final outcome.

Councillor Wilson advised that as a point of order that the Chair of Sperrins Partnership, Councillor Clarke should not be proposing the recommendations.

The Chair said that he seen no issue as a conflict of interest.

Councillor Corry said that she would be happy to propose the recommendations.

Proposed by Councillor Corry
Seconded by Councillor Quinn and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to:

- Note content of report.
- Approve in principle that Council continue to provide financial support to Sperrins Partnership when their financial request is made to Committee in the 2024/25 financial year, subject to Council budgets being confirmed for next year, and reciprocal financial contribution being made available from all Partner Councils. The financial request should be accompanied by a refreshed Partnership Agreement.

- Approve realignment of Sperrins Partnership financial requests to Partner Councils to mirror financial years (1 April – 31 March).
- Accept the terms and conditions of the DAERA Environment Fund Strategic Strand 2023 – 2028. Letter of Offer attached at Appendix 1.
- Support recruitment of an AONB Project Officer to assist with development of the Sperrin AONB Management Plan and Action Plan.
- Approve the suggested amendment to the current Sperrins Partnership Structure as set out on Appendix 2 and budget allocation to salary costs as detailed in the report.

Matters for Information

D152/23 Minutes of Development Committee held on 14 September 2023

Members noted Minutes of Development Committee held on 14 September 2023.

Councillor Quinn referred to D126/23 and said that he was aware that discussions had taken place regarding the Blackwater barmouth last month and was agreed that legal advice would be brought to the Environment Committee, which didn't happen but Council did receive the legal advice. The member stated that this time last year this Council did discuss options in relation to dredging and core sampling and was also aware of the committee going against paying for it but felt that that it had now come to the situation where ABC and ourselves are not willing to do it, that we take it upon ourselves to do it as it wasn't a lot of money. The member suggested that a report be brought back to environment or development in whichever committee it falls under, with costings of what is going ahead or what is proposed for the committee to look at and felt that this would be the best interest going forward. The member was aware of meetings taking place with ABC in relation to issue on the Blackwater and when meeting took place 2 years ago it was to have Maghery/Ferry Bridge looked at and repaired and all the land cleared away which was within ABC's gift. Discussions also took place regarding the jetty which was on the Maghery side and nothing on the Derrylaughan side and if people were trying to board the boats it can be quite a long journey from one side to the other especially by car, this had been discussed before and the people from the local community were basically asking why Maghery has got everything including more development and nothing on their side at all. From a historical point of view from the ferry going across the Blackwater going back generations and if a jetty was put there for people getting on and off is vitally important and hoped that this could possibly be raised at the next meeting with ABC Council in joint committee. The member was aware of other groups around Moy enquiring about a jetty also, but felt there was a lot of delaying, stalling, a lot of talk but there was a need to turn this into a result and would like to push to a result if not next month but certainly before the end of the year as there was a lot of toing and froing and people getting angry and felt it this was within Mid Ulster Council's gift to do the jetty or core samples then this should be progressed.

The Chair advised that Councillor McLernon had raised this issue at the last Development Committee meeting where it was decided that a report be brought back to Environment committee.

Councillor McLernon clarified that she had raised this issue at the last Development committee where it was agreed that a report be brought back to Environment committee as the issue is very important and as there was no mention of it in the Environment report, enquired if there was any update. The member reiterated what Councillor Quinn had stated and said that this goes along the whole Lough Shore and had huge potential to be opened up for tourism.

Councillor Molloy concurred with previous two speakers comments and advised that a feasibility study was presented in Autumn last year on the Blackwater and this was part of it for development of facilities on the Mid Ulster side of the river. The member said that whilst talking to local people there is a group prepared to do core samples at the barmouth regardless of whatever happens in the cut on the ABC side, a group prepared to carry out the testing of the soil samples and then up to ourselves along with ABC to get the action carried out in relation to the dredging. The member felt that this is the time to push this on and get it sorted as it was going on for far too long and if need be would propose if this was a funding issue, to look at power of general competence to get this over the line. The member advised that the facilities on the Mid Ulster side of the river were dire as Moy jetty was in a fairly bad state in comparison to provisions which were at Tamnamore and Maghery, it was a stark contrast to what we were providing on our side of the river. We have lots of groups using the river and want to use the facilities and felt there was a lot of work to be done. This Council has paid a significant amount of money for a feasibility study to be done and whilst looking through the paper for Lough Neagh Partnership (Item 2E in addendum) – *Development of Blackwater River providing technical advice associated with dredging*, which also states that there was a number of engagements regarding the Blackwater study and things moving on in the background and whilst he appreciated that, felt that this was going on too long as there is local anxiety around it on how long this was taking and Local Government and Central Government is seen now to be inactive and not delivering on what they should be delivering.

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved That it be recommended to Council to look at the Power of General Competence to get the issues relating to Blackwater over the line.

Councillor McQuade reiterated what Councillor Quinn alluded to regarding Moy and advised that when water levels rise which is quite frequent, the rescue and safety services cannot access the concrete quay which was vitally important. The member stated that this was not just Moy but the requirement to have them all upgraded and whatever help the relevant Councils can provide would be welcome as ABC was also in a bad state of repair and also needs upgraded. The member advised that this was the gateway to the Ulster Canal which was currently being worked upon and soon to be completed and we need to be up to scratch by the time this happens.

Councillor F Burton said members may recall matters which may be going on for a few years including Dredge Bridge in Caledon which was rusting in parts. The member advised that this was a bridge which was off a huge significant historical importance and a report brought to committee in the hope that funding would be

sourced and when we talk about the link between our Council and ABC enquired if there was any possibility where this could all be looked at in the round as we meet together as two neighbouring Councils. The member felt if this bridge was not looked about, it would soon be that there is no bridge of significant heritage and when report was brought by the Officers, it was clearly seen from that time the bridge is well rusted in different parts. The member recalled years ago in Bertie McMinn's era, it was himself that helped that this was not lost to the locality and right beside riverside walk and gateway into Mid Ulster from ABC area. The member enquired if there was any way that this could be brought all together into the round to ensure that all of these things are discussed as Councillors all need to push for improvements within their own patch which is the gateway into their own areas.

The Strategic Director of Communities & Place (SD: C&P) said to reiterate the message which was presented at the last meeting in that the Strategic Director of Environment has been seeking legal advice in relation to the River Blackwater. The SD: C&P stated that he understood members frustration here tonight in relation to how long this was taking, but felt it was very important that we review the legal advice and make sure we are clear before we make recommendation to committee. That being said members views will be fed back from this evening and see where we are in terms of how this can be moved forward.

In response to Councillor Burton's query regarding Dredge Bridge, Caledon, the SD: C&P advised that he was not aware of the background regarding this but would like to pick up a conversation offline and link in with Assistant Director of Property Services (AD: PS) on any work which has been done historically on that or how we can move that forward.

The Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes (AD: EDT&SP) said she wished to follow up on what SD: C&P said regarding Blackwater River and advised that Mid Ulster District Council had convened a meeting last week with Officers from Lough Neagh Partnership, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council; these being the Councils with the largest Lough Neagh shoreline and which contribute the greatest share of core funding towards Lough Neagh Partnership.

The AD: EDT&SP said that whilst Mid Ulster District Council has been clear in its support for Lough Neagh and the River Blackwater, it is a matter for each neighbouring Council to determine the emphasis and priority they place on such issues. She added that a joined up partnership approach is much needed so that Councils speak with one voice. In addition, she advised at the meeting with Council partners last week, it was agreed that Mid Ulster District Council would convene a further meeting with Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to discuss the dredging issues and advised that Lough Neagh Partnership would be invited also. The AD: EDT&SP indicated that there were at least 3 different types of surveys that needed to be undertaken prior to any potential dredging works taking place. She stated that Lough Neagh Partnership said they may be able to bid directly to DfI to obtain funding to undertake the surveys and would investigate this.

The AD: EDT&SP confirmed that a lot of work is taking place behind the scenes and advised the Strategic Director of Environment will bring a composite report to the Environment Committee to provide Members with an update on the project. This will include the advice received from Council's solicitor on the legal vires of Council undertaking the proposed dredging works, which Members had previously sought.

The Chair said that it was quite clear that there was an awful lot going on around the Lough and the urgent need for action and the sooner a meeting takes place around the table with these people the better.

Councillor Monteith advised that he had three items he wished to raise as follows:

- D126/23 - agreed last month that a standing item would be on the agenda for Environmental Health report and asked that this be up and running for next month.
- D131/23 - agreed last month that Council resume Railway Park/Ballysaggart Lough initiative which has yet to take place and asked that this be done as a matter of urgency as this was now coming up to 12 months from last DEA meeting.
- D134/23 – cost of free carparking and enquired if Officers had a chance to investigate this.

The Chair advised that D134/23 would be raised in Confidential Business.

The SD: C&P advised that we are live in relation to Railway Park, there are revised drawings in relation to that site visit and did appreciate that this had taken some time but hoped to review those as an Officer team some time next week, with a DEA meeting date being put into the diary.

In relation to Environmental Health report being included as a standing item on the Development Report, the SD: C&P advised that this report will be brought back on a regular basis regarding Environmental Health matters.

D153/23 Age Friendly Update

Members noted update on the event to mark Mid Ulster Loneliness Network 2nd birthday along with the formal launch the Mid Ulster Age Friendly Strategy and action plan. In addition, information is also provided on Positive Ageing month taking place during October.

D154/23 Sunbed Test Purchasing Exercise

Members noted update on the outcome of two sunbed test purchase exercises carried out on 3rd August and 24th August 2023 under the Sunbeds Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

D155/23 Economic Development Report – OBFI

Members noted previously circulated report which provided an update on key activities as detailed below:

- Christmas 2023 Town Activities
- ICBAN – Peace Plus Funding
- Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) Update
- Mid Ulster Enterprise Week 2023

The live broadcast ended at 7.42 pm.

Local Government (NI) Act 2014 – Confidential Business

Proposed by Councillor Molloy
Seconded by Councillor McLernon and

Resolved In accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public in accordance with Section 42, Part 1 Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 that Members of the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst members consider items D156/23 to D163/23.

Matters for Decision

- D156/23 Public Right of Way
- D157/23 SHHP Bellaghy Bawn Writers Residency Project
- D158/23 Cahore Playing Fields, Draperstown
- D159/23 Animal Welfare
- D160/23 Economic Development Report - Cbfd

Matters for Information

- D161/23 Confidential Minutes of Development Committee held on 14 September 2023
- D162/23 Update on New 11 Council NI Enterprise Support Service ('ESS')

D163/23 Duration of Meeting

The meeting commenced at 7pm and concluded at 8.25 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____

Annex A – Introductory Remarks from the Chairperson

Good evening and welcome to the Council's [Policy & Resources/Environment/Development] Committee in the Chamber, [Dungannon/Magherafelt] and virtually.

I specifically welcome the public watching us through the Live Broadcast. The Live Broadcast will run for the period of our Open Business but will end just before we move into Confidential Business. I let you know before this happens.

Just some housekeeping before we commence. Can I remind you:-

- If you have joined the meeting remotely please keep your audio on mute unless invited to speak and then turn it off when finished speaking
- Keep your video on at all times, unless you have bandwidth or internet connection issues, where you are advised to try turning your video off
- If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the meeting or on screen and keep raised until observed by an Officer or myself
- Should we need to take a vote this evening I will ask each member to confirm whether they are for or against the proposal or abstaining
- When invited to speak please introduce yourself by name to the meeting
- For any member attending remotely, if you declare an interest in an item, please turn off your video and keep your audio on mute for the duration of the item
- If referring to a specific report please reference the report, page or slide being referred to
- Lastly, I remind the public and press that taking photographs of proceedings or using any means to enable anyone not present to see or hear proceedings, or making a simultaneous oral report of the proceedings are not permitted

Thank you and we will now move to the first item on the agenda

Report on	Environmental Health Service Update
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager

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	At the meeting of the Development Committee in September 2023, Members resolved that a regular update on the work of Mid Ulster District Council's Environmental Health Service should be provided to committee. This report is the first in a series of reports to provide Members with an update on the work of the Environmental Health Service in October 2023.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Health, Leisure, and Wellbeing Department's 'Environmental Health Service' provides a statutory regulatory service on behalf of Mid Ulster District Council.
2.2	The Environmental Health Service provides a range of Environmental Health and licensing services across the Mid Ulster District Council area, together with an animal welfare function which is currently delivered by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council as part of a Service Level Agreement, administered on our behalf.
2.3	The MUDC Environmental Health team are also contracted to deliver a range of other regulatory services on behalf of third-party statutory agencies, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment of Category 3 and 4 fireworks displays and the inspection of premises storing / selling fireworks on behalf of the Department of Justice • The sampling of private drinking water and completion of associated drinking water risk assessments on behalf of the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland. • House Fitness inspections on behalf of Northern Ireland Housing Executive
2.4	The Environmental Health Service also works in partnership with a diverse range of stakeholders, both internal and external, in striving to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of those who live, work, and visit the Mid Ulster District Council area.

2.5	The Environmental Health Service is currently delivered by officers who work across three functional areas and who are supported by key Business Support Officers within the team.																														
2.6	Following the most recent reorganisation of directorates within Council it was necessary to realign the work streams within Environmental Health's functional teams to account for the change in internal structure – the new allocations / work streams now fall within the new functional groupings set out below:																														
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Safety, Consumer Safety and Tobacco Control • Health and Safety, Planning and Environment • Neighbourhoods and Licensing 																														
3.0	Main Report																														
3.1	<p>The Environmental Health Service update set out below provides a substantial reflection of the work undertaken by the team in the period between 1st October and 26th October 2023. The statistics within this report are indicative of the requests for service received by the Department within the specified period and these new demands are in addition to officers' ongoing work on existing caseloads.</p> <p>Food Safety, Consumer Safety and Tobacco Control</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Nature of Regulatory Work</th> <th>Number Undertaken</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Food hygiene inspections / visits</td> <td>67</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food standards inspections / visits</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food Samples taken for analysis</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food Hygiene requests for service / advice</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Food Standards requests for service / advice</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Response to Infectious Disease Notifications</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consumer Protection requests for service / advice</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consumer Protection inspections / visits</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consumer Protection Initiatives Undertaken - Inflatable Safety advice to 22 premises</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Smoke Free Inspections / Visits</td> <td>35</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Health and Safety, Planning and Environment</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Nature of Regulatory Work</th> <th>Number Undertaken</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Health and Safety Inspections / visits</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health and safety requests for service</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RIDDOR reports received</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Nature of Regulatory Work	Number Undertaken	Food hygiene inspections / visits	67	Food standards inspections / visits	42	Food Samples taken for analysis	25	Food Hygiene requests for service / advice	25	Food Standards requests for service / advice	8	Response to Infectious Disease Notifications	21	Consumer Protection requests for service / advice	4	Consumer Protection inspections / visits	2	Consumer Protection Initiatives Undertaken - Inflatable Safety advice to 22 premises	1	Smoke Free Inspections / Visits	35	Nature of Regulatory Work	Number Undertaken	Health and Safety Inspections / visits	27	Health and safety requests for service	23	RIDDOR reports received	0
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	Fireworks Inspections / Visits	4																						
	Planning Consultations received	31																						
	Planning Consultations completed	22																						
	PPC Inspections	3																						
	Environmental Protection requests for service	22																						
	Air Quality Diffusion Tubes changed over 28 sites	43																						
3.2	<p>Whilst no accidents or dangerous occurrences were notified within the reporting period, the health and safety team currently have 18 accident case files under investigation.</p> <p>Neighbourhoods and Licensing</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Nature of Regulatory Work</th> <th>Number Undertaken</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Public Health requests for service</td> <td>98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environmental Protection requests for service</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Private Tenancy requests for service</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing Requests for Service (non-dogs related)</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing inspections (non-dogs related)</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Complaints related to Dogs</td> <td>89</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stray dogs lifted</td> <td>39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigation into dog attacks on persons</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigation into dog attacks on livestock</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigation into dog attacks on other dogs</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Nature of Regulatory Work	Number Undertaken	Public Health requests for service	98	Environmental Protection requests for service	35	Private Tenancy requests for service	13	Licensing Requests for Service (non-dogs related)	20	Licensing inspections (non-dogs related)	3	Complaints related to Dogs	89	Stray dogs lifted	39	Investigation into dog attacks on persons	9	Investigation into dog attacks on livestock	2	Investigation into dog attacks on other dogs	3
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3.3	<p>On 16th October 2023 Members had the opportunity to attend an Environmental Health led workshop focussing on two areas of topical work, namely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Investigation of Odour Complaints under the Clean Neighbourhoods Legislation; and • The investigative process under the 1983 Dogs Order in the event of a Dog Attack <p>A copy of the information presented during the workshop is enclosed within the appendix.</p> <p>A further update on Councils Environmental Health Service will be brought to the Development Committee in January 2024.</p>																							
4.0	Other Considerations																							
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications																							
	Financial: None anticipated at this juncture.																							
	Human: None anticipated at this juncture.																							

	Risk Management: None anticipated at this juncture
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A – Presentation on the Investigation of Odour Complaints under the Clean Neighbourhoods Legislation. Appendix B – Presentation on Dog Control under the 1983 Dogs Order.



Agenda



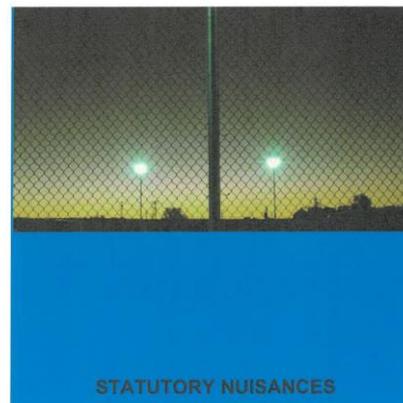
1. Statutory nuisance and the law
2. What is a Statutory Nuisance?
3. Odour Complaint Procedure.
4. Key Issues in determining a Statutory Nuisance.
5. Abatement Notices
6. Best Practical Means Defence.
7. Enforcement Challenges.

Statutory Nuisance Legislation



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Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011



Part 7 - Statutory Nuisances



63—(1) the following matters constitute “statutory nuisances”



(d) any dust, steam, smell or other effluvia arising on industrial, trade or business premises and being prejudicial to health or a nuisance;

Article 63(1)(d)



Only applies to industrial and trade or business premises.

It does not apply to private property.



Effluvia - not in common usage, but includes smell, although the term is wider than this. Suggests something being emitted.

Dictionary definition - *'a slight or invisible exhalation or vapour, especially one that is disagreeable or noxious'*.

Abatement Notices



If a district council is satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or recur, it must serve an abatement notice (subsection 65(1)).



This notice can require: - · abatement of a nuisance and the prevention of the recurrence of a nuisance

Restrictions



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- A District Council cannot take legal proceedings (although it may issue an Abatement Notice), without the Department's consent: *where*
- NIEA could take action under Article 4 of the Environment (NI) Order 2002, or the Industrial Pollution Control (NI) Order 1997.

What is a Statutory Nuisance?



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**Nuisance is not defined
in the 2011 Act**

**It can be regarded as
interference that
ordinary people would
consider unreasonable
with the personal
comfort or enjoyment or
amenity of neighbours or
the community.**

What Constitutes a Nuisance?



- **There is no clear objective definition as to what constitutes a nuisance.**
- **Can scale between mildly irritating and intolerable**
- **The determination of whether a nuisance exists is a matter of judgement.**
- **Determination is based upon the test of what ordinary; decent people would find unacceptable and unreasonable.**

Legal Opinion



In proving that a nuisance exists one would have to show that the smell is causing discomfort or inconvenience.



The inconvenience being suffered must be *“more than one of mere delicacy or fastidiousness”*.

It must *“materially” interfere with the ordinary comfort physically of human existence....”*

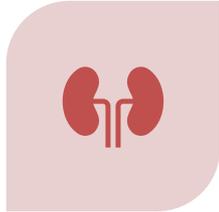


Odours will not constitute a nuisance within the meaning of the Act unless they are severe enough in nature to induce nausea or other symptoms.

Complaint Procedure - Odour



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ON RECEIPT OF COMPLAINT EHS NOTIFY OPERATOR OF PREMISES THAT COMPLAINT HAS BEEN RECEIVED REGARDING ODOUR.



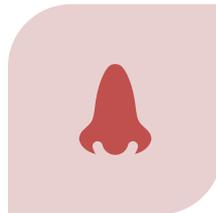
MONITORING SHEETS ARE SENT OUT TO COMPLAINANT TO COMPLETE OVER A SUITABLE PERIOD.



WHEN THESE SHEETS ARE RETURNED A PROGRAMME OF ODOUR MONITORING IS PLANNED .



MONITORING WILL TAKE PLACE OVER A PERIOD TO INDEPENDENTLY VERIFY THE ODOUR COMPLAINED OF



OFFICER'S JUDGEMENT BASED ON EXPERIENCE AND SMELL OBSERVED AT THE COMPLAINANT'S PROPERTY.



ASSESSMENT MADE TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT A STATUTORY NUISANCE EXISTS.

Determining Nuisance



8 key issues
when evaluating
whether a nuisance
exists:

1. Impact

2. Locality

3. Time

4. Frequency

5. Duration

6. Convention

7. Importance

8. Avoidability

Impact and Locality



Impact- Measures the impact of the alleged nuisance on the receptor.

In some instances, the impact can be supported by measurements (such as noise), but in the case of odour it will be the objective view of the Council.

Locality- Many odour and noise nuisances are due to the proximity of the receptor to a source that is generally out of character with the area.

Time and Frequency



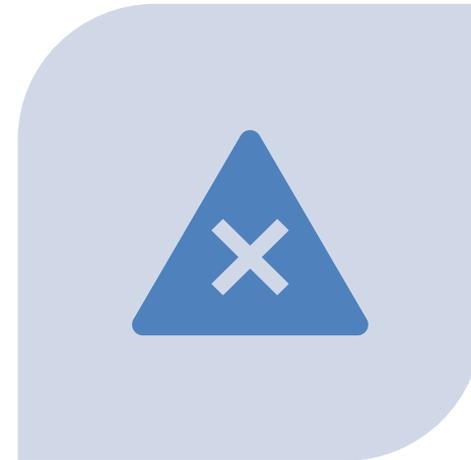
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TIME-

MANY NUISANCES HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT BECAUSE OF THE TIME AT WHICH A NUISANCE OCCURS.

ODOURS ARE OFTEN SUBJECTIVELY MORE ANNOYING DURING PERIODS WHEN MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE OUTDOORS.



FREQUENCY-

NUISANCES THAT OCCUR FREQUENTLY OR CONTINUOUSLY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE DETERMINED A NUISANCE (DEPENDING TO SOME DEGREE ON THE IMPACT).

Duration and Convention



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Duration- in general short-term events would be regarded differently to longer period or continuous impact.



Convention- this can be important in determining what a reasonable person would find objectionable.

E.g. some people may find the spreading of slurry offensive. However, if the practice is widespread and accepted Courts are unlikely to find a nuisance.

Importance and Avoidability



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IMPORTANCE-

THE IMPORTANCE TO A COMMUNITY IS OFTEN A KEY CONSIDERATION.



AVOIDABILITY-

EVEN THOUGH THE ACTIVITY MAY HAVE SOCIAL IMPORTANCE THERE SHOULD BE A BALANCE AS TO WHETHER REASONABLE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT.

Abatement Notices



If a district council is satisfied that a statutory nuisance exists, or is likely to occur or recur, it **must** serve an abatement notice (subsection 65(1)). This notice can require: -



abatement of a nuisance



prevention of the recurrence of a nuisance

Appeals (Subsection 65(8))



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A person served with an abatement notice may appeal against the notice to a court twenty-one days.



On hearing the appeal, the court may quash or vary the notice or dismiss the appeal.

“Best Practicable Means” Defence



The defence that ‘best practicable means’ were used to prevent the effects of a nuisance is available for prosecutions involving a breach of an abatement notice.



a) reasonably practicable having regard to local conditions and circumstances, the current state of technical knowledge and to the financial implications;



b) the means to be employed include the design, building, installation, maintenance and operation of plant and machinery, and buildings and structures;



(c) the test is to apply only so far as compatible with any duty imposed by law and safe working conditions

Enforcement Challenges



THERE IS NO WAY OF MEASURING ODOUR. IT IS SUBJECTIVE.



ODOUR IS OFTEN WEATHER DEPENDENT.



EHS ARE RELIANT ON THE COMPLETION OF MONITORING FORMS FROM COMPLAINANTS TO GIVE BACKGROUND EVIDENCE.



EHS WILL ALSO RELY ON COMPLAINANT'S STATEMENTS IN COURT.



IT IS A MATTER FOR THE COURTS TO DETERMINE WHETHER BPM APPLIES.



IT IS FOR THE PERSON RELYING ON THE DEFENCE TO ESTABLISH THAT BPM HAS BEEN USED.



WHERE COUNCIL CONSIDERS THAT A NUISANCE EXISTS, BUT BPM HAS BEEN USED, THERE IS STILL THE DUTY TO SERVE AN ABATEMENT NOTICE.



WHERE BPM IS BEING USED, COUNCIL MAY BE EXPOSED TO EXTENSIVE COSTS SHOULD A CASE GO TO APPEAL FOR NON-COMPLIANCE.

Dog Control



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The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983



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Regulation 3

If you own a dog it must have a licence.



A licensed and microchipped dog is much easier to reunite with its owner should it go missing.

Penalty for keeping dog without a licence



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17.—(1) Any person who—



Owens a dog but does not have a licence...



shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £200.

Penalty for a dog straying



22.—(1) Where any dog strays the keeper of the dog shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £200.

(2) The keeper of a dog shall not be convicted of an offence if he proves that at the time when the dog strayed it was in the charge of some other person whom he believed to be a fit and proper person to be in charge of the dog.

Definition of stray dog



A stray dog is one;

(a) which is off land owned by the keeper of the dog,

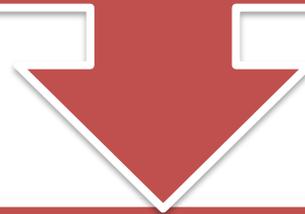
(ii) off other land on which it may be by permission of the owner; and

(b) which is unaccompanied by any person;

Seizure of stray dog



23.(1) An officer may seize any dog which is a stray dog.



(2) A dog seized as a stray dog may be taken to a dog pound and detained by the district council until its keeper has claimed it and paid all expenses incurred by reason of its detention.

What Council do with the dog



Where the keeper has not claimed the dog within 5 days or the keeper has not paid the due expenses:



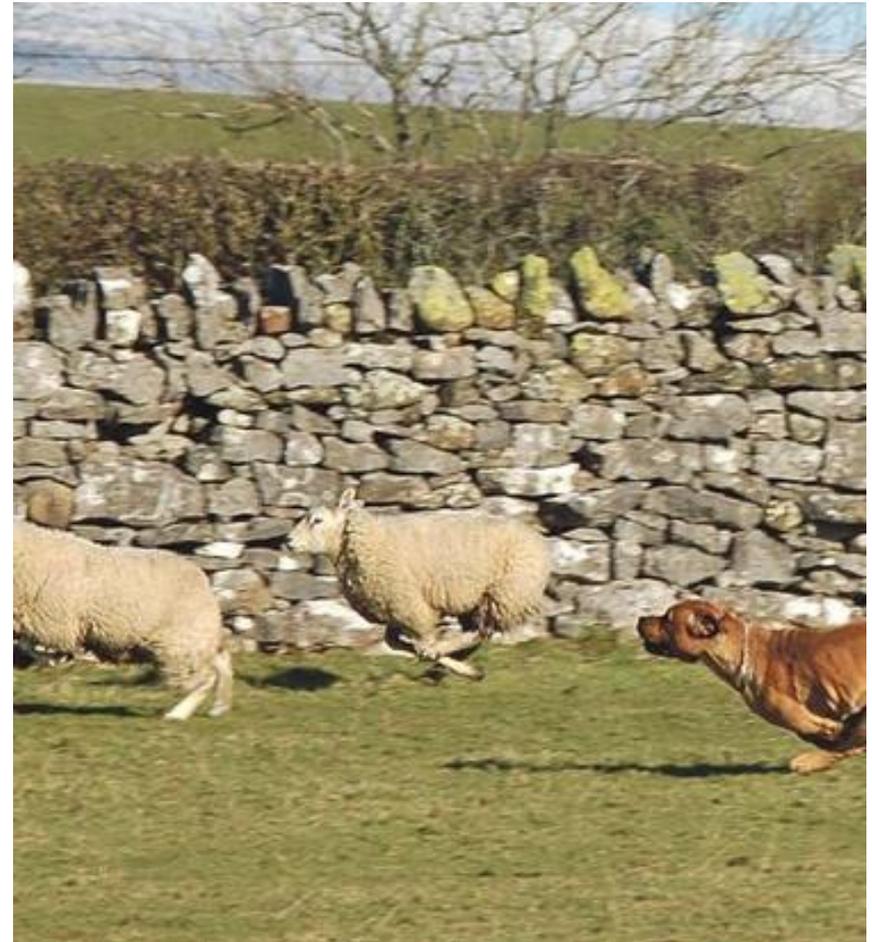
the Council may sell or destroy the dog in such a manner as to cause as little pain as possible.

Control of dogs on certain roads and on land.



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- **25.(1)** A keeper of a dog shall not permit that dog to be on any road or on any land where livestock are present and have a right to be there;
unless the dog is under control.
- Any person who contravenes the above shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to a fine not exceeding £200.



Defences



Article 25 shall not apply to a dog—

(a) on land owned or occupied by its keeper

(b) on other land with the owners permission

(c) while being used for tending sheep or cattle.

(d) while being used in a pack of hounds;

(e) while being used for police purposes;

Attacks on livestock and certain other animals



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28.(1) Any person who sets a dog on any livestock, or other animal is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 4 (£2500) on the standard scale.

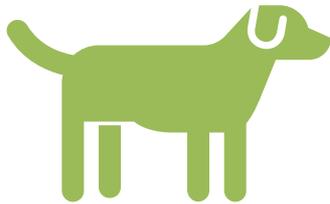


(2) If a dog worries livestock, or attacks and injures any other animal, the keeper of the dog is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 3 (£1000) on the standard scale.

Defence for livestock attack



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Article 28 does not apply to a dog while being used for police purposes.



A person is not guilty of an offence by reason of anything done by the dog if at the time the livestock or other animal is trespassing on any land.

Attacks on persons



29.—(1) Any person who sets a dog on any other person is guilty of an offence or, if the dog injures the person attacked, an aggravated offence under this paragraph.

(2) If a dog attacks any person, then the keeper of the dog is guilty of an offence or, if the dog injures the person attacked, an aggravated offence under this paragraph.

(3) A person guilty of an offence under paragraph (1) or (2) is liable on conviction to imprisonment or a fine not exceeding level 5 (£5000).

Defences



Article 29 does not apply to a dog while being used for police purposes.

A person is not guilty of an offence if the person set on or attacked is trespassing on land; and

(b) the dog is kept by, the occupier of that land; or

(ii) in the charge of a person authorised by the occupier to remove that person from that land.

Defences to legal proceedings for shooting dogs



30.—It is a defence to an action against a person to recover damages in respect of, and to any charge arising out of, the shooting of a dog for that person to prove—

(a) that the dog was worrying or was about to worry livestock and there were no other reasonable means of ending or preventing the worrying; or

(b) that the dog had been worrying livestock, had not left the vicinity and was not in the charge of any person and there were no practicable means of ascertaining to whom the dog belonged.

Defence to Article 30



Article 30 shall be deemed to have been satisfied if that person believed that it was satisfied and had reasonable ground for that belief.

Article 30 shall not confer a defence on any person unless he proves that—

(a) the livestock land was occupied by him or by any person under whose express or implied authority he was acting.

(b) within 48 hours notice of the shooting is given to the nearest police station.

Control Conditions



30A—(1) This Article applies where an officer has reasonable cause to believe that an offence has been committed in respect of a dog under—

(a) Article 22(1) (dog straying);

(b) Article 25(3) (control of dogs on certain roads or lands);

(c) Article 28(1) or (2) (dog attacking livestock or other animals)

(d) Article 29(1) or (2) (dog attacking person).



Control Conditions

30B—(1) The control conditions which may be imposed on a dog licence by a notice under Article 30A are—

(a) that the dog be securely fitted with a muzzle when in a public place;

(b) that the dog be kept under control when in a public place;

(c) that the dog (when not under control) be kept securely confined in a building, yard or other enclosure;

(d) that the dog be excluded from any place, or any type of place, specified in the notice;

(e) that the dog (if male) be neutered before the end of the period of 30 days from the date on which the notice takes effect;

(f) that the keeper, with the dog, attend and complete a specified course of training in the control of dogs before the end of the period of 6 months from the date on which the notice takes effect.

Contraventions of control conditions



30F—(1) If any control condition of a dog licence is contravened, the keeper of the dog is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 (£2500) on the standard scale.



(2) It is a defence for a person charged with an offence under this Article to show that he had taken all reasonable steps to prevent contravention of the control condition.

Power of court to order destruction of dogs



33. Where it appears to a court that a dog has attacked any person or has worried livestock, the court shall unless mitigating factors apply—

(a) make an order directing the dog to be destroyed; or

(b) make an order directing the dog to be destroyed unless such measures as are specified in the order are taken to prevent the dog being a danger to the public or to livestock.



- **33A.—(1)** Where a person is convicted of an offence under:
 - Article 25A (dog fighting) or
 - Article 29 (attack on person)the court may, in addition to any other penalty order that person to be disqualified, for such period as the court thinks fit, for keeping a dog.

Powers of officers



41.—(1) Where an officer has reasonable ground to believe that an offence under this Order is being committed, request the name and address of any person who is in charge of the dog

(b) seize any dog and detain it for physical examination by himself or by a veterinary surgeon where the officer considers examination by a veterinary surgeon to be necessary.

Report on	Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2022
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager

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 provide information on the recently published Drinking Water Quality Report for Northern Ireland 2023.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) recently published their 27 th annual report on Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland 2022 during September 2023. The Drinking Water Inspectorate's (DWI's) primary role is to protect public health through effective drinking water regulation.
2.2	<i>"Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland, 2022 – A report by the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland"</i> is attached at Appendix A.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	In Northern Ireland over 99% of the population receive their drinking water from Northern Ireland Water Limited (NI Water). The remainder is served by private water supplies.
3.2	The DWI's report provides an independent assessment of drinking water quality of both public and private supplies for the calendar year 2022.
3.3	Overall public drinking water quality for 2022 remained high with 99.91% compliance, a slight increase from 2021 (99.88%). Compliance at private water supplies was 99.02% a slight decrease from 2021 (99.19%).
3.4	Safe, clean drinking water is critical for our health and wellbeing, to support business and grow the economy. In December 2021, DWI agreed that there would be no consumer tap sampling required in early 2022 due to the restrictions imposed over the Omicron variant of COVID-19. A return to full consumer tap sampling occurred in March 2022.

3.5	Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) was the parameter with the lowest compliance in 2022, at 98.83%. THMs are a group of disinfection by-products that form when naturally occurring organic substances combine with chlorine, which is added to disinfect the water and make it safe to drink. Work is planned at a number of water treatment works to improve THM compliance.
3.6	DWI continues to work with all stakeholders to ensure the effective prioritisation of investment in drinking water quality in areas where there is greatest need.
3.7	Enforcement action is taken where necessary, and in 2022, there were four Notices in place requiring improvements at three water treatment works, none of which were within or impacted on the Mid Ulster District Council area. During 2022, NI Water continued construction on a major capital investment programme (£12m) to improve water quality at Derg WTW as required by DWI, to comply with the regulatory limit for the herbicide MCPA.
3.8	In addition to domestic properties, a range of commercial businesses, and public buildings such as food producers; hospitals and health care premises use private drinking water supplies. Notwithstanding some rescheduling of samples due to COVID-19 restrictions, private water supply monitoring returned to normal in 2022. 99.77% of scheduled sampling was completed to meet DWI's regulatory duty.
3.9	In the report DWI take the opportunity to recognise and thank council staff, for their contribution in achieving this target and for their ongoing work in the completion of risk assessments on behalf of DWI. This work is undertaken by officers within the Environmental Health Service in accordance with a Service Level Agreement with the Drinking Water Inspectorate.
3.10	Reports are available via the following website: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/drinking-water-quality-northern-ireland
3.11	Drinking water quality tables detailing non-compliance of individual water supply zones, by parameter are available via the following website: https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/drinking-water-quality-tables
3.12	Anyone can check the water quality in their area including hardness and dishwasher settings, by accessing the below website and entering in their full postcode: https://www.niwater.com/water-quality-results/
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Human: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Risk Management: None anticipated at this juncture.

4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Annual Report on Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland 2022

Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland, 2022

A Report by the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Drinking Water Quality in Northern Ireland, 2022

A Report by the Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland

**Published by Northern Ireland Environment Agency
September 2023**

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Foreword

I am pleased to present the 27th annual report on the quality of drinking water in Northern Ireland. The Drinking Water Inspectorate's (DWI's) primary role is to protect public health through effective drinking water regulation. This report provides an independent assessment of drinking water quality of both public and private supplies for the calendar year 2022.

In Northern Ireland over 99% of the population receive their drinking water from Northern Ireland Water Limited (NI Water). The remainder is served by private water supplies.

Overall public drinking water quality for 2022 remained high with 99.91% compliance, a slight increase from 2021 (99.88%). Compliance at private water supplies was 99.02% a slight decrease from 2021 (99.19%).

Safe, clean drinking water is critical for our health and wellbeing, to support business and grow the economy. In December 2021, DWI agreed that there would be no consumer tap sampling required in early 2022 due to the restrictions imposed over the Omicron variant of COVID-19. A return to full consumer tap sampling occurred in March 2022.

Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) was the parameter with the lowest compliance in 2022, at 98.83%. THMs are a group of disinfection by-products that form when naturally occurring organic substances combine with chlorine, which is added to disinfect the water and make it safe to drink. Work is planned at a number of water treatment works (WTWs) in NI Water's Price Control capital investment programmes (PC21 & PC27) to improve THM compliance.

DWI continues to work with all stakeholders on the PC21 process to ensure the effective prioritisation of investment in drinking water quality in areas where there is greatest need. In addition, work is underway for the PC21 Mid-Term review.

Enforcement action is taken where necessary, and in 2022, there were four Notices in place requiring improvements at three water treatment works. During 2022, NI Water continued construction on a major capital investment programme (£12m) to improve water quality at Derg WTW as required by DWI, to comply with the regulatory limit for the herbicide MCPA.

As well as domestic properties, commercial businesses, and public buildings such as food producers; hospitals and health care premises use private drinking water supplies. Notwithstanding some rescheduling of samples due to COVID-19 restrictions, private water supply monitoring returned to normal in 2022, and I am pleased to report that the 99.77% of scheduled sampling was completed to meet DWI's regulatory duty. I take this opportunity to recognise and thank council staff, for their contribution in achieving this target and for their ongoing work in the completion of risk assessments on behalf of DWI.

Looking ahead, challenges continue, as we strive to tackle climate change and work towards net zero. We will continue to work with stakeholders and engage with NI Water on innovative, low carbon treatment solutions, to ensure continued high quality drinking water for Northern Ireland.

I trust you will find this report a useful reference.



Colin Clements
Interim Chief Inspector of Drinking Water
September 2023

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Executive Summary

This is the 27th report in a series published by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), acting in our role as the drinking water quality regulator for both public and private water supplies.

The report provides an independent assessment of the quality of drinking water provided by NI Water Limited (NI Water). It also presents details of the quality of private water supplies for which we have a regulatory responsibility and undertake a monitoring programme.

COVID-19

The Omicron variant of COVID-19 had a small impact on the monitoring of the quality of drinking water supplies across Northern Ireland in the first three months of 2022. However, the full regulatory monitoring programme of public water supplies returned in March 2022. Private water supplies monitoring was completed for 99.77% of scheduled parameters in 2022.

Public Water Supplies

In 2022 the overall public drinking water compliance remained high at 99.91%, a slight increase from 2021 (99.88%). The 0.09% non-compliance relates to 88 tests that failed to meet the required standard. Compliance at consumers' taps, measured either directly or through surrogate zonal sampling, depending on COVID-19 restrictions, also remained high at 99.88%, again, an improvement on 2021 (99.82%). However, of the 43 regulatory parameters tested, nine did not achieve full compliance. Those parameters failing to meet full compliance were: Total Trihalomethanes, Lead, Iron, Nickel, Aluminium, Taste, Odour, *E. coli* and Coliform bacteria.

The parameter with the lowest reported compliance in 2022 was Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) at 98.83%. Compliance with the THMs standard is mainly related to the efficiency of the water treatment works, the condition of the distribution system and the residence time of the water in the distribution system.

Contraventions of microbiological parameters may indicate a failure in the treatment process or a breach in the integrity of the water supply system. A microbiological compliance figure at consumers' taps of 99.81% was reported in 2022, a slight decrease in compliance from the 99.82% in 2021. Coliform bacteria were detected in 22 samples and *E. coli* was also detected in one of those samples.

NI Water's investigation into contraventions must determine if they are due to the internal distribution systems within domestic dwellings. Where this is identified it must inform the owner with details of the failure and provide appropriate advice in relation to actions the owner may take to rectify the contravention and protect public health. The investigations, where appropriate, should also ensure consumers' internal plumbing is compliant with The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

NI Water reported two contraventions for 2022, due to the internal plumbing within domestic properties. These contraventions were for the lead parameter. The contraventions were investigated by NI Water and letters sent to the consumers advising them of the contraventions and offering appropriate advice to protect public health.

The total number of water quality events (Annex 2) that occurred in 2022 was higher than in 2021, with 48 events reported to us by NI Water. Of these, we categorised four as Serious, 24 as Significant, six as Minor and 14 as Not Significant.

Of the four Serious events, one related to discoloured water in the Kilrea area and associated consumer complaints. This was caused by a short-lived high flow in the ductile iron trunk main from Ballinrees WTW to Garvagh caused by an unknown third-party. The second involved damage to a water main and two sewers in the same location by a third-party contractor. Due to the contamination risk, and on the advice of PHA, a “Boil Water” notice was issued to the affected consumers. Subsequent isolation of the water main caused a loss of supply to consumers. The third Serious event involved elevated levels of aluminium and turbidity in the final water from Forked Bridge WTW following maintenance on a pumping main. The final Serious event was the interruption to supply due to the freeze/thaw which occurred in December requiring Alternative Water Supplies to be provided throughout Northern Ireland.

Eighteen of the 24 Significant events occurred at 13 water treatment works and were primarily related to difficulties with the treatment process or a lack of effective treatment. The other six Significant events occurred in the distribution network.

To enable us to evaluate consumer confidence in the quality of drinking water, we receive information relating to consumer concerns and complaints from NI Water. The total number of consumer contacts reported in 2022 was 5,733 compared to 7,305 in 2021, a decrease of 21.5%. However, 2021 was higher than normal and this figure is similar to the number of contacts in 2020. Of the complaints received by NI Water, 62.0% related to the visual appearance of the water, a decrease from 2021 (64.8%).

Where necessary, we take enforcement action (Annex 4), to secure remedial action within specified timeframes. One of the Notices issued by DWI led to a major capital investment at Derg WTW which was ongoing in 2022. The planned work, costing over £12 million, will also improve the removal of organics and improve the quality of the water supplied to over 40,000 people in the Tyrone area. NI Water also commenced work on treatment improvements at Ballinrees WTW to comply with the two Notices which we issued in 2020 in relation to the individual pesticide MCPA contraventions and taste and odour contraventions. During 2022, NI Water carried out pilot studies to identify the preferred treatment solution to deal with aluminium contraventions at Drumaroad WTW, also in response to a notice we issued in 2021.

Private Water Supplies

The same drinking water quality standards apply for private water supplies as for the public water supply. Although less than 1% of the population receives water from a private supply, many more are exposed to them through their use in both commercial activities and public buildings. A number of premises in Northern Ireland that have a private supply also have a mains supply. Private supplies are used as an alternative to, or in conjunction with the public supply for a range of activities including food processing, holiday accommodation, and public buildings, including hospitals and care homes. Over 80% of the private water supplies registered with DWI are classified as commercial or public supplies, a number of which are used for economic reasons.

During 2022 our private water supply sampling programme monitored 171 sites. Three new sites were registered, and four sites were removed as they were taken out of supply or no longer met the criteria for registration. Samples at private water supplies are collected by local councils' Environmental Health staff, acting on our behalf.

Overall compliance for 2022 is reported as 99.02%, a decrease from 99.19% reported for 2021. The regulatory requirements were not met on 117 occasions for 18 parameters, namely: Coliform bacteria, Enterococci, *E. coli*, *Clostridium perfringens*, Manganese, Sodium, Copper, Hydrogen ion (pH), Sulphate, Iron, Lead, Bromate, Nitrate, Colour, Aluminium, Turbidity, Individual pesticides (Clopyralid) and Radon.

Full compliance was achieved for 64% (109 sites) of the private water supplies tested in 2022. Of the 62 sites which did not comply with the regulatory standards, 45% (28 sites) contravened microbiological standards; 39% (24 sites) chemical standards; and 16% (10 sites) failed to comply with both microbiological and chemical standards.

The presence of micro-organisms in a private water supply is indicative of contamination of the water either at source or at some point within the distribution system. In particular, the detection of *E. coli* or enterococci bacteria specifically indicates faecal contamination of a water supply and can be a risk to public health. These faecal indicators were found to be present in 38 supplies during 2022: 18 small shared domestic supplies, three of which had disinfection treatment in place at the time of sampling; and 20 commercial / public supplies, 13 of which had disinfection treatment in place at the time of sampling.

Overall, the number of chemical contraventions remained stable at 50 in 2022, which is the same as 2021. Hydrogen ion (pH), Iron, Manganese and Sodium contraventions were the chemical parameters with the most contraventions in 2022.

Any contraventions at supplies, where the water is used as an ingredient in food production or as drinking water, and that are considered as a potential risk to human health, are reported to the Public Health Agency (PHA) for appropriate health advice. Where necessary, the Regulations contain a provision to issue Notices which can be used to restrict or prohibit the use of a supply.

Out of the 62 sites with contraventions identified in 2022, 60 were notified to PHA for advice: 41 microbiological and 19 chemical. As a consequence, restrictions on the use of the private water supply were put in place at 15 sites to protect public health.

We continue to work with owners and users of private water supplies and Environmental Health staff in local councils to ensure the risk assessment of private water supply sites is progressed to bring the remaining supplies into compliance. Priority is given to advancing improvements in water quality through provision of advice and guidance, agreeing action plans (particularly at the larger commercial / public sites) and promotion of drinking water safety plans for the ongoing management of these supplies. However, where necessary we may take formal action to secure compliance to ensure a safe, clean supply of drinking water from private supplies.

The DWI routinely provides advice and guidance to the owners / users of all private water supplies across Northern Ireland. However, currently limited information is available on the 1,200 plus single dwellings in Northern Ireland, mainly in rural and remote areas, served by a

private water supply. The [Single Well Application](#) which was launched in 2021, continues to be a valuable resource for these owners by identifying potential risks and identifying measures to improve their quality of water.

Looking Forward

The Department and NIEA's key priorities are Green Growth and Climate Change. The effects of human activity on the environment and the fresh water sources that are abstracted to produce our drinking water are becoming more evident. There are increasing pressures on the security of small private drinking water supplies with more extreme temperatures and the impacts of climate change. The need to secure the provision of a resilient public water supply into the future as well as the need to achieve net zero is driving the need for more innovative, lower carbon treatment solutions to be identified by NI Water. NI Water has set an ambitious target of attaining net zero by 2040.

As the drinking water quality regulator, we are committed to collaborating with all stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies and strategies to secure the future of a high quality, safe and sustainable supply of drinking water for Northern Ireland.

Section 1
Public Water Supplies

Part 1
Drinking Water Quality



Public Water Supplies 2022 Key Facts

Drinking Water Sources

Rivers & Loughs - **57.3%**

Impounding Reservoirs - **42.6%**

Boreholes - **0.1%**

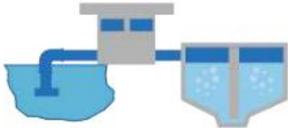


There are **27,086km** of drinking water distribution pipes.



Supply System

25 Water Treatment Works & **25** Supply Points



287 Service Reservoirs

55 Water Supply Zones



% Compliance



Consumer Tap 99.88%

Overall 99.91%

Overall Micro 99.91%

Lead 99.07%

Iron 99.15%

Nickel 99.54%

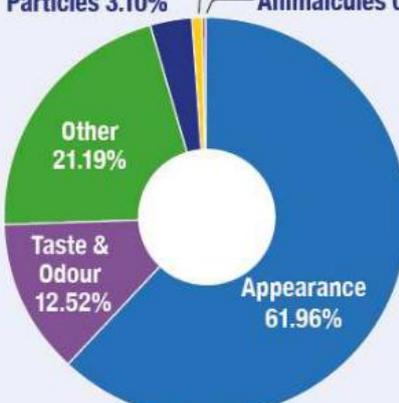
Total Trihalo-methanes 98.83%

Aluminium 99.80%

11 Public Building Contraventions



Consumer Complaints



Appearance 61.96%

Other 21.19%

Taste & Odour 12.52%

Particles 3.10%

Illness 0.89%

Animalcules 0.19%

Down 21.5% from 2021

Discoloured water was the main issue of concern

Actions

Audits	Enforcements	Events	Product Approvals	Regulatory Contraventions
5 technical audits of NI Water	4 Regulation 31 (4) Enforcement Notices ongoing	48 Water Quality Events assessed & categorised	88 Regulation 33 Product Approval letters issued	88 regulatory contraventions reviewed & assessed

Drinking Water Quality

NI Water is a government-owned company with sole responsibility for supplying and distributing public drinking water throughout Northern Ireland.

Drinking Water Quality Testing

During 2022, NI Water sampled drinking water across Northern Ireland to test for compliance with the standards in The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017. The regulations require sampling programmes to be in place to ensure that water quality is monitored at: water treatment works (WTWs); service reservoirs (SRs); supply points¹; and consumers' taps in water supply zones (WSZs). A summary of the number of sites that were in service in 2022 is shown in Table 1.1.

In 2022, 99,447 tests were carried out for a range of different parameters. A description of each parameter and its regulatory limit (or prescribed concentration or value [PCV]) is available on our [website](#).

Table 1.1: Number of sites in service in 2022

Sites	No. in service
Water treatment works	25
Service reservoirs	287
Supply points ¹	25
Water supply zones	55

Sampling and Analyses Frequencies

NI Water is required to meet specified sampling frequencies in demonstrating the wholesomeness of drinking water supplies. We undertake an assessment of these requirements throughout the water supply chain: at WTWs; SRs; and WSZs.

During 2022, out of the 99,447 tests carried out, we identified a shortfall of 113 individual tests. The shortfall mainly related to the analysis of samples taken at supply points or at consumers taps where there were quality control issues with the analysing laboratory or where samples arrived at the laboratory too late for analysis.

Overall Drinking Water Quality

Compliance with the quality standards is important as contraventions may indicate a failure in the treatment process or a breach in the integrity of the water supply system which could pose a potential risk to human health. It also ensures that water meets aesthetic standards and is acceptable to consumers.

Of the 99,447 tests we used to assess overall compliance, 88 (0.09%) contravened the regulatory standards compared to 111 (0.12%) from 95,661 tests in 2021. Table 1.2 provides further information on these contraventions. It should be noted that the sampling programme continued to be disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic at the start of 2022, however, any missed samples during this period were rescheduled to later in the year with no notable shortfall in sampling.

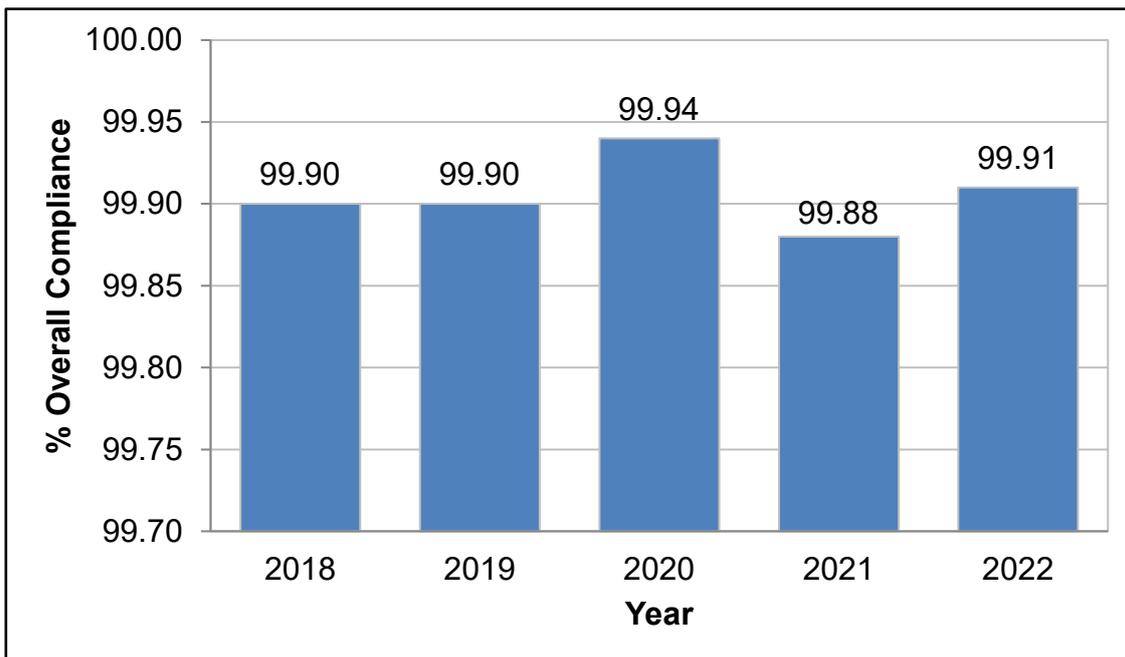
¹ a point, other than a consumer's tap, authorised for the taking of samples for compliance with the Regulations

Table 1.2: Overall Drinking Water Quality in 2022

	No. of Tests	No. of Tests not Meeting the Standards	% Compliance
Water Leaving Water Treatment Works (WTWs)			
<i>E. coli</i>	6428	0	
Coliform bacteria	6428	6	
Microbiological Total	12856	6	99.95
Nitrite	239	0	
Turbidity	6424	6	
Chemical Total	6663	6	99.91
Total (Microbiological and Chemical)	19519	12	99.94
Water in Service Reservoirs (SRs)			
<i>E. coli</i>	14886	1	
Coliform bacteria	14886	17	
Total (Microbiological)	29772	18	99.94
Water at Consumers' Taps or Supply Points (WSZs)			
<i>E. coli</i>	5568	1	
Coliform bacteria	5568	22	
Enterococci	432	0	
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	239	0	
Microbiological Total	11807	23	99.81
Zone Chemical Analysis	28768	35	
Supply Point Chemical Analysis	9581	0	
Chemical Total	38349	35	99.91
Total (Microbiological and Chemical)	50156	58	99.88
Overall Water Quality			
Overall Microbiological Quality	54435	47	99.91
Overall Chemical Quality	45012	41	99.91
Overall Drinking Water Quality	99447	88	99.91

The results confirm that overall drinking water quality in 2022, for the key parameters monitored at water treatment works, service reservoirs and consumers' taps remains high at 99.91%. This is a slight increase in overall compliance on last year (99.88%). Figure 1.1 illustrates the percentage compliance over the last five years.

Figure 1.1: Overall Drinking Water Quality, 2018 – 2022



Water Quality at Consumers’ Taps

To assess the quality of water that is being supplied to consumers, we assess results of regulatory samples taken by NI Water from consumers’ taps. Table 1.3 shows the percentage compliance for 34 of the Schedule 1 (directive and national) parameters and nine of the Schedule 2 (indicator) parameters. Drinking water quality compliance at consumers’ taps increased from 99.82% in 2021 to 99.88% in 2022.

Nine parameters did not achieve full compliance at consumers’ taps in 2022: Total Trihalomethanes, Lead, Iron, Nickel, Aluminium, Taste, Odour, *E. coli* and Coliform bacteria.

Table 1.3: Consumer Tap Compliance 2022

Parameter	No. of Samples	No. of Tests not Meeting the Standards	% Compliance
Schedule 1 (Directive and National parameters)			
Total Trihalomethanes	429	5	98.83
Lead	432	4	99.07
Iron	2003	17	99.15
Nickel	432	2	99.54
Aluminium	2003	4	99.80
Taste	1985	2	99.90
Odour	1986	1	99.95
<i>E. coli</i>	5568	1	99.98
1,2 dichloroethane	427	0	100.00
Antimony	432	0	100.00
Arsenic	432	0	100.00
Benzene	427	0	100.00
Benzo(a)pyrene	431	0	100.00
Boron	432	0	100.00
Bromate	432	0	100.00
Cadmium	432	0	100.00
Chromium	432	0	100.00
Colour	2004	0	100.00
Copper	432	0	100.00
Cyanide	239	0	100.00
Enterococci	432	0	100.00
Fluoride	432	0	100.00
Manganese	2003	0	100.00
Mercury	430	0	100.00
Nitrate	432	0	100.00
Nitrite	432	0	100.00
Other Pesticides	9041	0	100.00
PAH - Sum of four substances	431	0	100.00
Pesticides - Total Substances	239	0	100.00
Selenium	432	0	100.00
Sodium	432	0	100.00
Tetrachloroethene & Trichloroethene Sum	427	0	100.00
Tetrachloromethane	427	0	100.00
Turbidity	2003	0	100.00
Total (Schedule 1)	38983	36	99.91
Schedule 2 (Indicator parameters)			
Coliform bacteria	5568	22	99.60
Ammonium	432	0	100.00
Chloride	432	0	100.00
Clostridium perfringens	239	0	100.00
Conductivity	2004	0	100.00
Hydrogen Ion (pH)	2004	0	100.00
Indicative Dose	31	0	100.00
Sulphate	432	0	100.00
Tritium	31	0	100.00
Total (Schedule 2)	11173	22	99.80
Overall Total	50156	58	99.88

Chemical/Physical Quality

Trihalomethanes (THMs)

In 2022, there was a decrease in THMs compliance to 98.83% compared to 99.07% reported in 2021. Further discussion on THMs is contained in Part 2 of this section.

Lead

In 2022, lead compliance was 99.07% compared to 98.08% compliance in 2021. Fluctuations in lead compliance are related to lead having a lower sampling frequency compared to aluminium and iron. Compliance with the lead standard is still an issue in properties built before 1970 so it is important that NI Water continues to implement its lead strategy to effectively manage the risk to public health.

When a sample has contravened the lead standard and NI Water’s investigation finds the property’s service pipe contains lead; it notifies the consumer. It is the owner’s decision whether to replace their supply pipe and any other lead pipes within the property. Further information, including a customer advice leaflet on “Lead in Drinking Water” (Figure 1.2), can be found on NI Water’s [website](#).

The Regulations require NI Water to treat the water to reduce the risk of the concentration of lead being greater than 10 µg/l. NI Water has a Lead Strategy in place to deliver improved compliance for lead.

Looking at the overall trend in lead compliance in Figure 1.3, there had been a gradual trend upwards. However, there was a decrease in lead compliance in 2021, and notwithstanding the increase in compliance in 2022, a significant amount of work is still required to ensure compliance improves in the future.

Figure 1.2 Lead Leaflet

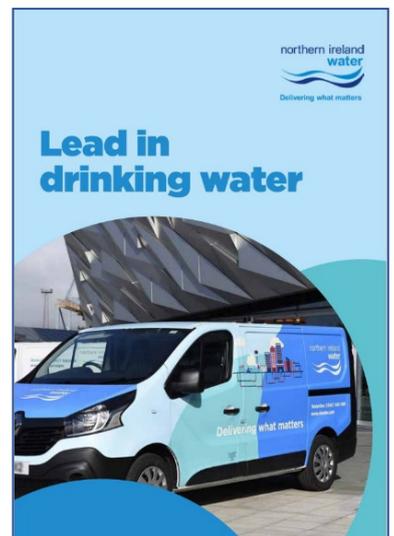
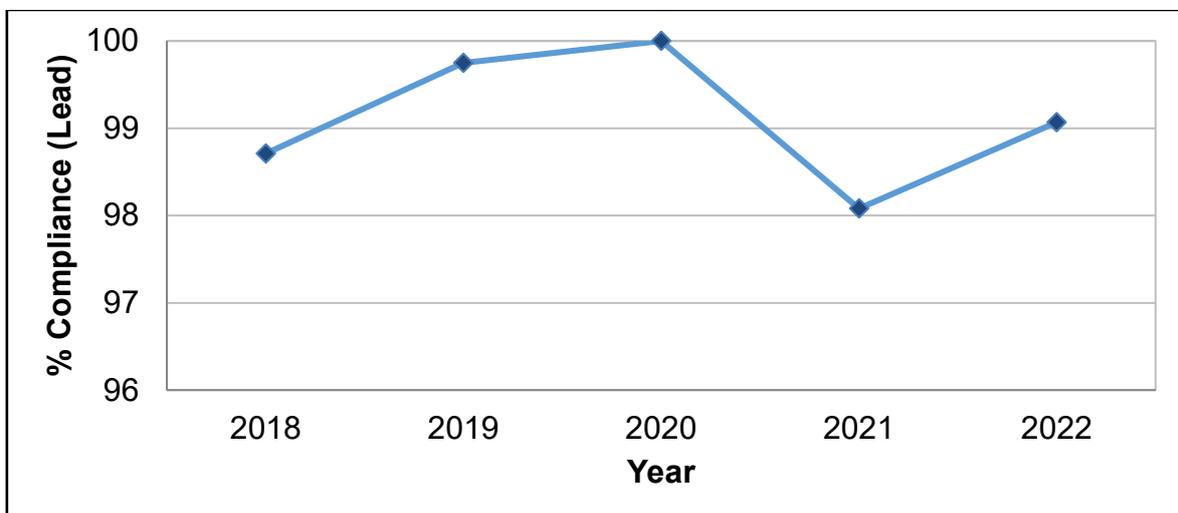


Figure 1.3: Percentage of Regulatory Tests Meeting the Lead Standard, 2018 – 2022



Iron

The regulatory standard for iron is set for aesthetic reasons as levels above this can give rise to discoloured water. Corrosion of iron water mains is the most common reason for contraventions.

In 2022, there was a slight decrease in iron compliance to 99.15% from the 99.35% achieved in 2021.

The contraventions of the standard were mostly due to the build-up, and subsequent disturbance, of deposits found within water mains. Where this is identified, there are a number of remedial measures which NI Water carry out. Figure 2.6 in Part 2 provides iron compliance figures for the last five years.

Nickel

In 2022, there was an increase in Nickel compliance to 99.54% compared to the 99.23% achieved in 2021. However, this difference may be related to the return to the regulatory sampling frequency at consumer taps in early 2022, as two nickel contraventions were reported in both 2021 and 2022.

Nickel may occur naturally in some ground waters but is rarely found in the mains water supply. Contraventions of the standard (20 µg/l) do occur occasionally, and the main source of nickel in drinking water is leaching from modern taps and other plumbing fittings.

Aluminium

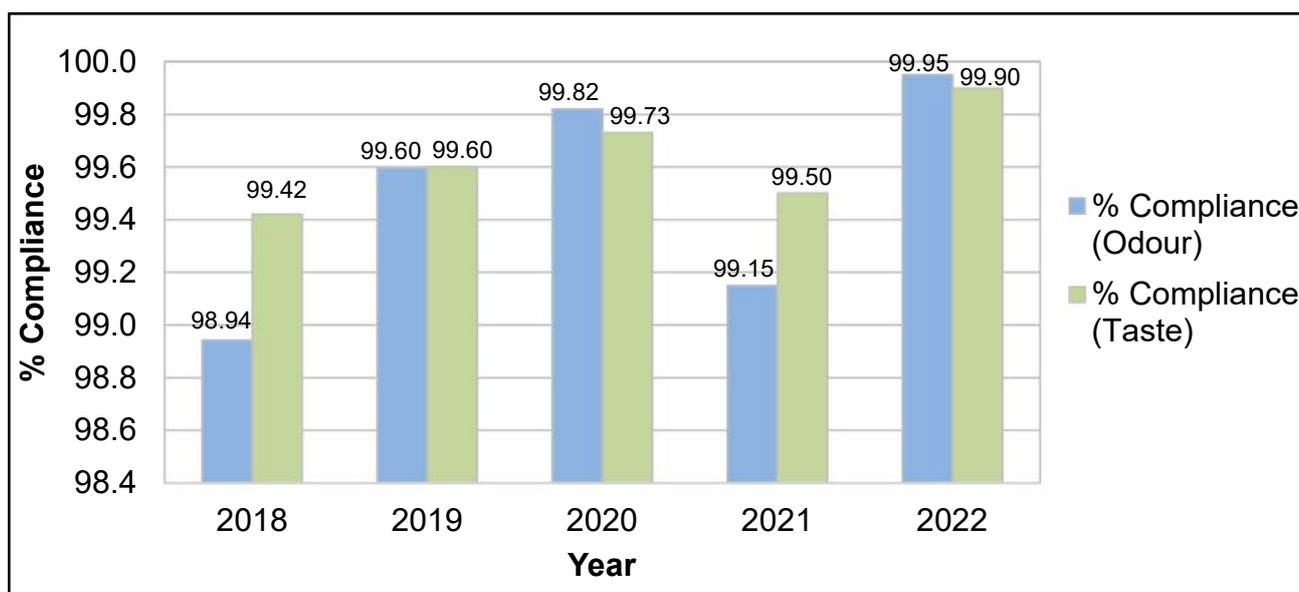
In 2022, the aluminium compliance improved to 99.80% compared to the 2021 figure of 99.65%. Further discussion on aluminium is contained in Part 2 of this section.

Odour & Taste

The regulatory requirement for odour and taste is “Acceptable to consumers and no abnormal change”. DWI has issued guidance to NI Water on the interpretation of this regulatory requirement.

In 2022, odour compliance was 99.95% and taste compliance 99.90%, an improvement on the 2021 compliance (odour compliance 99.15% and taste compliance 99.50%). Odour and taste compliance over the last five years is shown in Figure 1.4. There is further information on odour and taste in the “Consumer Contacts” section later in this part of the report.

Figure 1.4: Percentage of Regulatory Tests Meeting the Odour & Taste Standards, 2018 – 2022



Microbiological Quality

The overall safety of drinking water at consumers’ taps in 2022 is confirmed with a 99.81% microbiological compliance (Table 1.2 refers). This is a slight decrease in compliance from the 99.82% reported in 2021. There was one *E. coli* detected in a sample taken at a consumer tap in 2022, and coliform bacteria detected in 22 samples.

Clostridium perfringens were not found in any of the 239 samples taken in 2022 (100% compliance). This is an improvement compared to 2021 when they were found in one of the 236 samples taken (99.58% compliance).

Similarly, Enterococci were not detected in any of the 432 samples taken at consumers’ taps by NI Water (100% compliance), compared to being detected in one of the 432 samples taken in 2021 (99.77% compliance).

Domestic Dwellings Distribution Systems

NI Water’s investigation into contraventions must determine if they are due to the internal distribution systems within domestic dwellings. Where this is identified it must inform the owner with details of the failure and provide appropriate advice in relation to actions the owner may take to rectify the contravention and protect public health. The investigations, where appropriate, should also ensure consumers’ internal plumbing is compliant with The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

NI Water reported two contraventions for 2022, due to the internal plumbing within domestic properties. These contraventions were for the lead parameter. The contraventions were investigated by NI Water and letters sent to the consumers advising them of the contraventions and offering appropriate advice to protect public health.

Public Buildings Distribution Systems

At premises where water is made available to members of the public (such as schools, hospitals or restaurants) there were 872 samples taken during 2022. Of these, 11 samples contravened the Aluminium, Iron, Lead, Nickel, and Coliform bacteria standards.

NI Water must take appropriate action to rectify the failure where it is attributable to either the water supplied by it or is a contravention of the Water Fittings Regulations. For any other failures within such premises, we are required to follow-up with the owners under The Water Supply (Domestic Distribution Systems) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. In line with our enforcement policy, an advisory letter is initially issued. If we assess the failure as likely to recur, or if it constitutes a potential risk to human health, a notice may be served on the owner to undertake the necessary actions to protect public health and bring the supply back into compliance.

Consumer Contacts

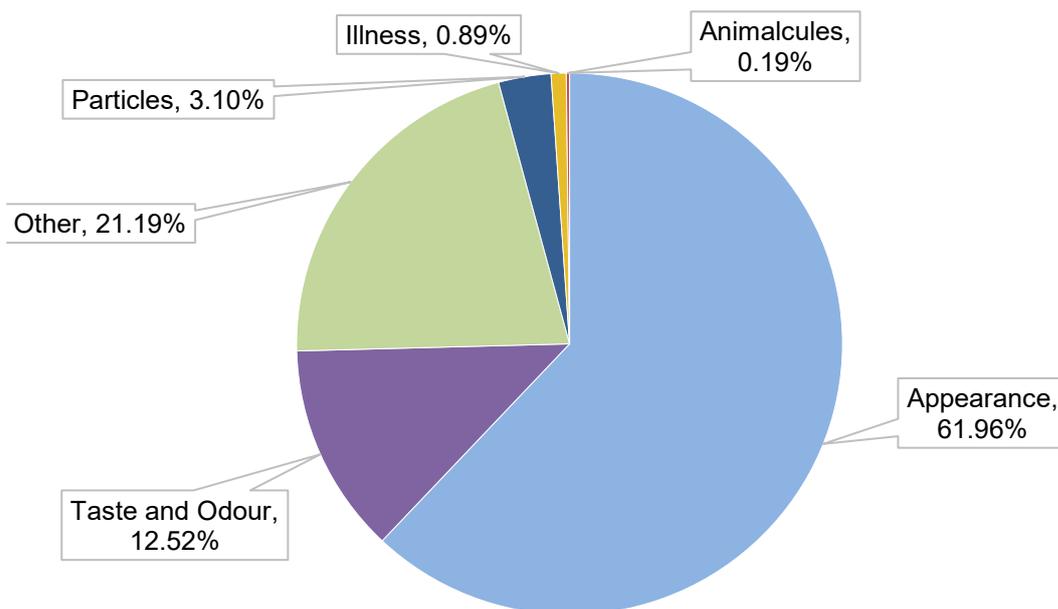
NI Water provides us with consumer contact information to help us assess consumers' satisfaction of their drinking water quality (Table 1.4 refers). The total number of consumer contacts reported in 2022 was 5,733 compared to 7,305 in 2021, a decrease of 1,572 (21.5%). We will continue to monitor the trends in consumer concerns.

Table 1.4: Water Quality Contacts received by NI Water in 2022

Contact Category	Contact Sub-Category	Number of Contacts
Appearance	Colour	2460
	General	43
	Hardness	11
	Stained Washing	3
	White - Air	643
	White - chalk	392
Taste and Odour	Chlorinous	312
	Earthy/Musty	108
	Other	232
	Petrol/Diesel	34
	TCP	32
Illness		51
Particles		178
Animalcules		11
Boil Water Notice		8
Other	Water Quality Concern - Campaigns	0
	Water Quality Concern - Incident Related	10
	Water Quality Concern - Lifestyle	1
	Water Quality Concern - Pets/Animals	3
	Water Quality Concern - Sample	629
	Water Quality Concern - Lead	561
	Water Quality (No Concern) Fluoride	0
	Water Quality (No Concern) Other Information	6
	Water Quality (No Concern) Water Hardness	0
	Water Quality (No Concern) Water Quality Report	5
TOTAL		5733

The highest percentage of contacts and concerns continued to relate to the appearance of drinking water, with 61.96% in 2022 (64.8% in 2021). This is illustrated in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: Consumer Contacts and Concerns received by NI Water in 2022



Appearance

Within the overall appearance categories there are a number of different sub-categories that are a cause of concern for consumers.

Colour

In 2022, as in every year, the majority of appearance concerns (69.3%) related to discoloured water. The most common cause of discoloured water concerns is an orange, brown or black discoloration caused by suspended particles of iron (orange/brown) and manganese (black).

Iron discoloration may occur through natural iron present in the raw water passing through inadequate treatment, from the treatment process, or from corrosion of cast-iron distribution mains. Manganese is naturally present in some raw waters and may not be fully removed if treatment is inadequate.

White Water

'White water' is mainly caused by air dissolved in the water, making it appear cloudy or milky white. It can be caused by internal plumbing, burst water mains or when NI Water has been carrying out maintenance work on pipes. Where air is the cause, the cloudy appearance will clear in a glass of water from the bottom up.

Another cause of white water may be chalk. Chalk has a white powdery appearance and is made up of natural minerals found in water which forms what is known as 'hardness'. A glass of water containing chalk will take up to an hour to clear from the top downwards, leaving fine white sediment in the bottom of the glass.

'White water' accounted for 29.1% of appearance concerns in 2022.

Taste and Odour

All water sources contain naturally occurring minerals. Water also contains dissolved gases, such as oxygen and carbon dioxide, which give tap water a characteristic taste. One substance, which is added to drinking water for disinfection, is chlorine, and this can give rise to consumer complaints (see next section on Chlorinous).

Other taste and odours should not be present in drinking water for aesthetic reasons e.g., TCP or earthy/musty, or for health reasons e.g., petrol/diesel.

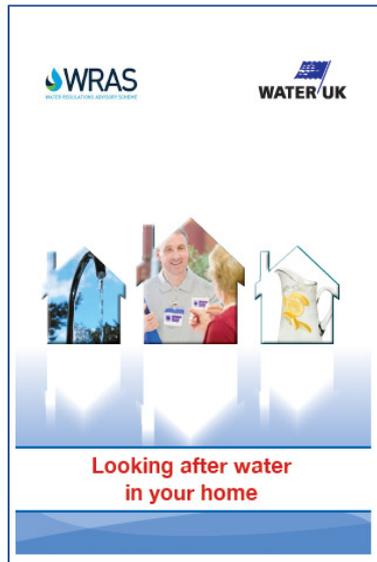
Taste and odour complaints accounted for 12.5% of the total consumer contacts in 2022 compared to 18.2% in 2021.

Chlorinous

Some individuals are more sensitive than others to the taste and odour of chlorine which is used to maintain hygienic conditions within the water supply network. In 2022, 43.5% of taste and odour consumer contacts were related to a chlorinous taste and odour in the water (55% in 2021). Although this is a slight decrease, NI Water should continue to investigate the reasons for taste and odour complaints related to a chlorinous taste and odour.

Consumer Advice

Figure 1.6: Looking after Water Your Home Guide

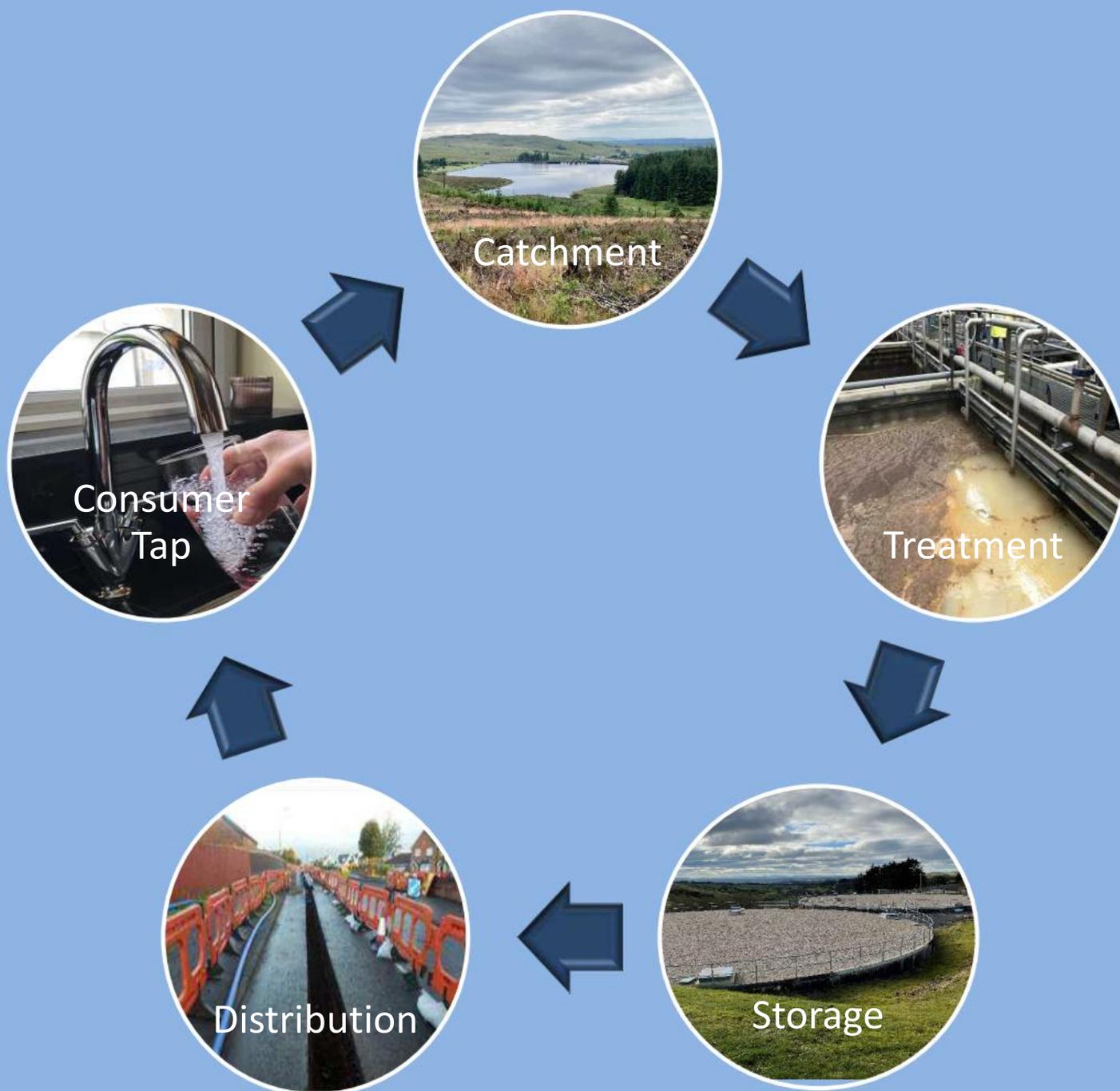


A useful consumer guide, (Figure 1.6) '[Looking after water in your home](#)', was produced by the water industry to help you maintain and enjoy the quality of tap water once it enters your home.

It contains a number of household tips, from how to reduce unwanted taste and odours and address appearance issues, to advice on water filters and storage tanks.

Section 1
Public Water Supplies

Part 2
The Drinking Water Cycle



Part 2

The Drinking Water Cycle

- Catchment: There was a decreased number of MCPA detections in 2022
- Treatment Process Control Parameters: THMs continue to have a lower level of compliance than aluminium in 2022
- Treatment Disinfection Parameters: There were six coliform bacteria contraventions in 2022 compared to two in 2021
- Events: There were four Serious and 24 Significant Events reported in 2022

This part of the report details our assessment of how NI Water manages the drinking water cycle, from the **catchment** to the **treatment** processes at Water Treatment Works (WTWs), through Service Reservoirs (SRs) and into the **distribution network** to supply **consumers**. It also summarises the risk management approach adopted by NI Water in ensuring that water supplies remain safe and wholesome throughout their journey to homes and businesses.

Catchments

NI Water mainly abstracts its raw water from 39 sources including rivers and loughs (57.3%), impounding reservoirs (42.6%), and boreholes which supply a small population on Rathlin Island and in Mid Ulster (0.1%).

A risk assessment of the catchment must be completed as part of the overall ‘source to tap’ approach. NI Water liaises with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and a range of other stakeholders through Water Catchment Partnerships to identify and put mitigations in place to manage risks within the catchment. The Catchment Management Plans developed by NI Water throughout PC15 are due to be implemented in PC21. Where catchment solutions alone are unable to reduce the risks sufficiently, NI Water must ensure that it has appropriate treatment processes in place.

As the potential list of contaminants within catchments is diverse, it must risk assess each catchment individually to determine the specific risks and identify appropriate mitigations to reduce or adequately control the risks. Where a risk is identified, NI Water must consider if water quality monitoring is required within the catchment and at its abstraction points.

This monitoring plays an important role in providing information on the risks within the catchment and for the operational management of WTWs to ensure treatment processes provide an effective barrier against the identified levels of contaminants.

Pesticides

During 2022, 38 individual pesticides were monitored by NI Water under its sampling programmes. There are two separate sampling programmes in place. The compliance programme is based on the set regulatory frequencies required to be monitored by NI Water for

assessing compliance. There is also the operational programme to identify potential risks and assist in the operation of its treatment processes.

Within the compliance programme there were 239 samples taken for pesticides giving a total of 9,041 individual determinations. In 2022, there was a shortfall 41 tests for 11 individual pesticides in five samples, from five different WTWs, due to quality control issues with the analytical laboratory. There were no regulatory contraventions reported for pesticides in 2022.

Where contraventions arise, DWI may require NI Water to implement enhanced operational sampling to monitor an ongoing risk. During 2022, within the operational programme, NI Water reported six MCPA contraventions. Four of these were at Derg WTW, where enhanced monitoring is ongoing, and DWI has a Notice in place requiring NI Water to install treatment to achieve compliance with the regulatory limit for MCPA in the final water. One of the six contraventions was recorded at Belleek WTW and one at Glenhordial WTW. A Notice previously in place relating to remedial works at Glenhordial WTW was completed in February 2019 and results from this works are being closely monitored, with further action to be taken if deemed necessary. Although there were no contraventions at Ballinrees WTW in 2022, a Notice is in place following the 12 contraventions for MCPA in 2017 which requires remedial works to be completed within a timeframe agreed with DWI.

WTWs with contraventions for pesticides, both regulatory and operational, from 2018 to 2022 are summarised within Table 2.1.

There was a total of six MCPA contraventions reported from both compliance and operational sampling in 2022, a decrease on the 11 contraventions in 2021.

Table 2.1: Pesticides Detected above the Regulatory Limit, 2018 – 2022

Water Treatment Works		2022	2021		2020	2019	2018
		MCPA	MCPA	MCPA	MCPA	MCPA	MCPA
W4722	Belleek	1					
W2509	Clay Lake		3		2		
W4301	Carmony		1		2		
W4501	Derg	4	6	1	12	12	5
W4541	Glenhordial	1	1		1	1	
W4701	Killyhevlín				1		
All WTWs		6	11	1	18	13	5

Water Treatment

Water treatment processes normally include the physical removal of potential contaminants by using chemical coagulation/flocculation, clarification (Figure 2.1), and filtration. Filters require periodic backwashing to operate effectively (Figure 2.2). Additional treatments such as ozone dosing and GAC (Granular Activated Carbon) filtration or PAC (Powdered Activated Carbon) dosing can also be required to remove unpleasant tastes and odours, and for pesticide reduction. The final stage of treatment is disinfection.

An important measure of the effectiveness of treatment is the assessment of the water quality throughout the treatment process and the quality of the final water leaving the works.

Figure 2.1: Clarification Stage



Figure 2.2: Backwashing a Filter



In Table 2.2, results are outlined for two sets of parameters that are used to assess the effectiveness of water treatment processes: process control parameters; and disinfection parameters.

Table 2.2: Water Quality at Water Treatment Works, 2022

Parameters	Place of Sampling	Total No. of Tests in 2022	No. of Tests not Meeting the Standards in 2022	% of Tests Meeting the Standards	
				2022	2021
Process Control Parameters					
Aluminium	WSZ	2003	4	99.80	99.65
Trihalomethanes	WSZ	429	5	98.83	99.07
Disinfection Parameters					
Coliform bacteria	WTW	6428	6	99.91	99.97
<i>E. coli</i>	WTW	6428	0	100	100
Turbidity	WTW	6424	6	99.91	99.92
Indicator Parameter					
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	WTW	239	0	100	99.58

WSZ = Water Supply Zone (consumer tap sample)

Process Control Parameters

Process control parameters are used to measure the effectiveness of treatment and are based on a selection of chemical parameters relevant to the processes in place at the WTWs.

In 2022, results from the compliance monitoring programme, shown in Table 2.2, reported non-compliances for both of the process control parameters, aluminium and trihalomethanes (THMs).

Aluminium

Aluminium compliance, which is measured at consumers' taps, was higher in 2022 with four regulatory contraventions (0.20%) reported compared to seven (0.35%) in 2021. Figure 2.3 displays the levels of aluminium compliance over the last five years.

Operational sample results and outputs from on-line monitors often highlight elevated aluminium levels at WTW before they become apparent in distribution. In many cases the remedial measures taken by NI Water in response to these early detections prevent, or limit the impact of, water quality events.

Overall, there was one Serious and five Significant events at five WTWs in 2022 relating to elevated levels of aluminium – see Annex 2 for details. Although these events do not always directly correlate with regulatory contraventions at consumers' taps at the time of the event, they can lead to the accumulation of aluminium in the distribution system and contribute to contraventions at a later date.

It is pleasing to note the continued improvement in regulatory compliance for aluminium in 2022. However, NI Water must continue to review its operational practices at its treatment works and take whatever measures are necessary to ensure this level of compliance is maintained or enhanced. Improvements to the treatment processes at WTWs which have been identified for funding in the PC21 Price Control Process should result in an improving level of aluminium compliance over the next four years.

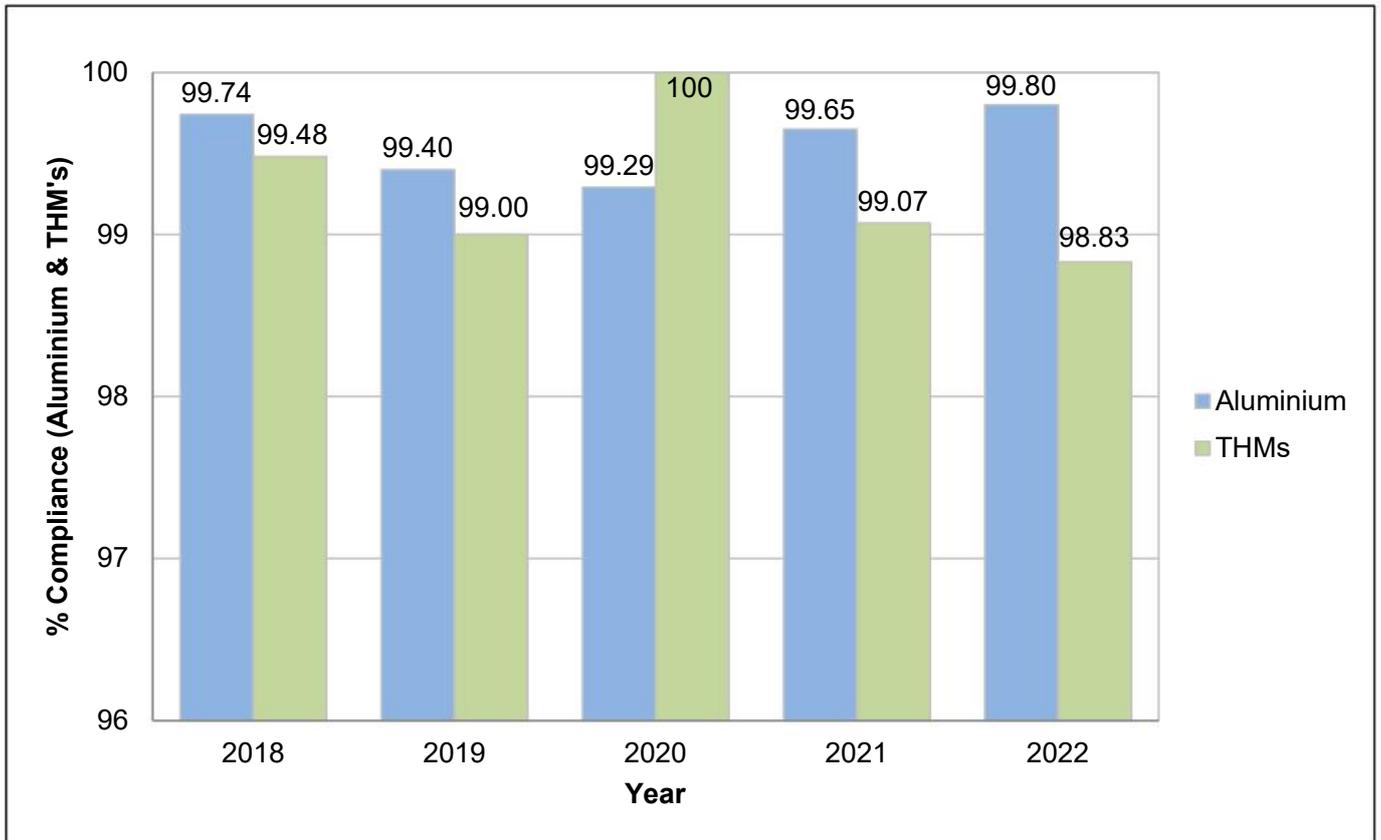
Trihalomethanes (THMs)

THMs are a group of disinfection by-products that form when naturally occurring organic substances combine with chlorine, which is added to disinfect the water and make it safe to drink. There are a number of reasons for THM non-compliance including: the quality of the raw water; the performance of the WTWs; the condition of the networks; and the length of time water spends in the distribution system (residence time). Effective and well managed treatment processes reduce the levels of these organics, which are directly related to the level of THMs that occur in the final water.

Figure 2.3 displays the levels of THM compliance over the last five years. In 2022, THM compliance was 98.83%, with five non-compliant samples, compared to 99.07% in 2021, with four non-compliant samples. THM levels are known to increase in the distribution system, and contraventions often occur at or near the end of distribution systems.

NI Water must ensure that good operational practices prevail within the catchments and at WTWs. It is also important that there is careful management of the storage levels in service reservoirs and the distribution network is adequately maintained to control the formation of THMs.

Figure 2.3: Percentage Compliance for Aluminium & THMs at Consumers' Taps, 2018 – 2022



Disinfection Parameters

The parameters, coliform bacteria, *E. coli* and turbidity (Table 2.2 refers) demonstrate the effectiveness of disinfection and pathogen removal. Effective disinfection is fundamental to the treatment process in order to safeguard consumers from the risk of microbiological organisms being present in drinking water. Testing for *E. coli* and coliform bacteria at WTWs provides assurance of adequate treatment and the provision of safe, clean drinking water. In 2022, NI Water reported 100% compliance for *E. coli* and 99.91% compliance for coliform bacteria at its WTWs, compared to 100% and 99.97% respectively in 2021. This is a slight decrease in coliform bacteria compliance, with six contraventions (at five WTWs) in 2022 compared to two contraventions (at two WTWs) in 2021.

Turbidity is caused by finely suspended particles in the water which must be reduced to below 1 NTU to enable adequate disinfection to take place. There was a slight decrease in compliance with the turbidity standard in 2022 (99.91% compared to 99.92% in 2021). Six turbidity contraventions occurred at six WTWs in 2022. Of these, one contravention at Castor Bay WTW was assessed as being a Significant event whilst one contravention at Forked Bridge WTW was assessed as being a Serious event. The latter event also involved an aluminium contravention; however, it occurred following a pumping main repair rather than due to treatment difficulties.

Indicator Parameter

Clostridium perfringens

Clostridium perfringens can be used in association with other parameters to assess the effectiveness of the water treatment processes. This organism is a spore-forming bacterium that

is exceptionally resistant to unfavourable conditions in the water environment such as extremes of temperature and pH; and disinfection by chlorination.

In 2022, full compliance was achieved for *Clostridium perfringens*. This is compared to 99.58% in 2021, when one contravention of the standard was reported.

Distribution

The water distribution network in Northern Ireland is extensive, consisting of 287 service reservoirs (SRs) and 27,086 km of mains pipe. Water mains transfer drinking water from the WTWs to service reservoirs and onwards to the consumer. Service reservoirs provide storage close to the point of distribution to help ensure that sufficient water is available to meet the varying demands of consumers.

In Table 2.3, two measures are used to assess the water quality within a distribution system: reservoir integrity and distribution networks.

Table 2.3: Water Quality Indicators within the Distribution System, 2022

Parameters	Place of Sampling	No. of Tests in 2022	No. of Tests not Meeting the Standards in 2022	% of Tests Meeting the Standards in 2022	% of Tests Meeting the Standards in 2021
Reservoir Integrity					
Coliform bacteria	SR	14886	17	99.89	99.89
<i>E. coli</i>	SR	14886	1	99.99	99.99
Distribution Networks					
Turbidity	WSZ	2003	0	100.00	99.95
Iron	WSZ	2003	17	99.15	99.35
Manganese	WSZ	2003	0	100.00	99.80

Service Reservoirs

Samples are collected weekly at every service reservoir in Northern Ireland. One such Service Reservoir is shown in Figure 2.4. It is a regulatory requirement that at least 95% of samples collected annually from each reservoir are free from coliform bacteria. The 287 reservoirs sampled in 2022 all met this requirement.

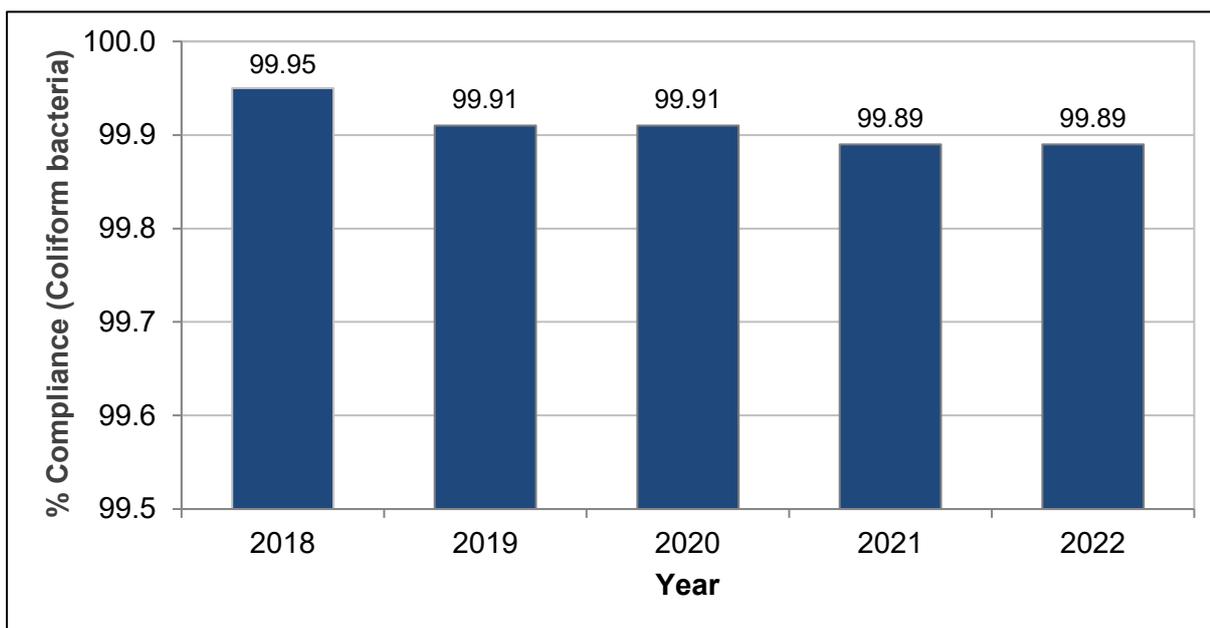
Figure 2.5 shows coliform bacteria compliance was 99.89% in 2022, the same as in 2021. Coliform bacteria were detected on 17 occasions at 16 different service reservoirs.

E. coli was detected at one service reservoir on one occasion in 2022, consistent with 2021.

Figure 2.4: Service Reservoir



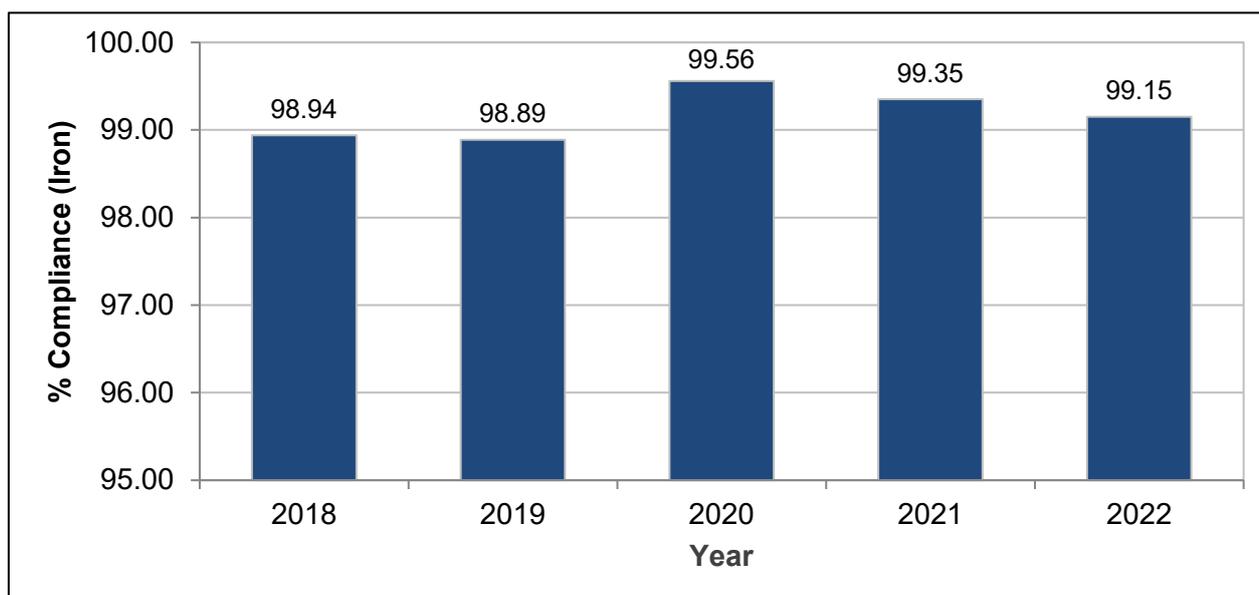
Figure 2.5: Percentage Compliance of Coliform Bacteria at Service Reservoirs, 2018 – 2022



Water Mains

In 2022 a total of 2,003 samples taken from consumers’ taps were tested for iron, manganese and turbidity. Of these, 17 (0.85%) contravened the regulatory standard for iron of 200 µg/l. This reflects a slight decrease in compliance from 2021 when there were 13 (0.65%) contraventions reported as illustrated in Figure 2.6. There were no contraventions of the regulatory standards for manganese (50 µg/l) or turbidity (4 NTU) in 2022, compared to four (0.20%) contraventions for manganese and one (0.05%) contravention for turbidity in 2021.

Figure 2.6: Percentage Compliance of Iron in Distribution, 2018 – 2022



Many of the mains delivering water to consumers' taps are made of cast iron and the deterioration of older mains may result in consumers receiving discoloured drinking water due to the presence of iron and manganese. NI Water has an ongoing Water Mains Rehabilitation Programme and this enables corrective action to be taken on a priority basis to improve the water quality being supplied to consumers. New mains are also installed or upgraded as required for new developments. A typical new mains installation is shown in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7: New mains installation



Photo courtesy of NI Water

Events and Risk Management

Drinking Water Quality Events

NI Water inform us of events that have affected, or are likely to affect, drinking water quality or sufficiency, and subsequently where there may be a risk to consumers' health. Each event is assessed into one of five categories based on increasing severity: Not Significant, Minor, Significant, Serious or Major. It is important that lessons are learnt from events and any necessary remedial action is undertaken. For events categorised as Significant or above the risk assessments in place for each water supply system are required to be reviewed.

48 events were reported to us in 2022. Of these, we categorised four as Serious; 24 as Significant; six as Minor; and 14 as Not Significant.

Of the four Serious events, one related to discoloured water in the Kilrea area and associated consumer complaints. This was caused by a short-lived high flow in the ductile iron trunk main from Ballinrees WTW to Garvagh caused by an unknown third party. The second involved damage to a water main and two sewers in the Sligo Road area of Enniskillen by a third-party contractor. Due to the contamination risk, and on the advice of PHA, a "Boil Water" notice was issued to the affected consumers. Subsequent isolation of the water main caused a loss of supply to consumers. The third Serious event involved elevated levels of aluminium and turbidity in the final water from Forked Bridge WTW following maintenance on a pumping main from Castor Bay WTW to Forked Bridge WTW. The final Serious event was the interruption to the supply of water across Northern Ireland due to a prolonged period of freezing conditions followed by a rapid thaw in December 2022.

There were 18 Significant events at 13 WTWs (Ballinrees; Belleek; Castor Bay; Caugh Hill; Derg; Drumaroad; Dungonnell; Fofanny; Forked Bridge; Glenhordial; Killyhevin; Killylane; and Moneymore) in 2022. The majority of these events were due to treatment difficulties or lack of adequate treatment. One event related to the loss of disinfection control, another due to oil contamination of a filter during planned refurbishment work. The remainder related to aluminium; cryptosporidium; hydrogen ion; individual pesticide (MCPA); iron; odour; THMs and turbidity contraventions.

The other six Significant events occurred in the distribution network: contamination of the mains water supply to 10 properties caused by ingress during operational work; water quality issues on a college campus due to problems with the internal plumbing; discoloured water as a result

of a pumping main burst; and three events relating to consumer complaints due to the condition of the iron mains, each affecting a number of properties.

Annex 2 provides further information on the four Serious and 24 Significant events in 2022.

Risk Management

As part of the drinking water safety plan (DWSP) approach, NI Water is required to carry out a risk assessment of each water supply system. Informed by the information generated from the catchment risk assessment, this supports the 'source to tap' approach in the management and control of the potential risks. The assessments must be kept under review, to ensure ongoing risks are adequately controlled and any new or emerging risks are properly identified. We monitor these plans to ensure, where risks are identified, there are control measures in place to ensure the protection of public health. There are 24 risk assessments in place covering all of NI Water's drinking water supplies.

Regulatory Control

The Technical Audit Process

DWI normally conducts a risk based technical audit programme to check NI Water's compliance with statutory obligations and best practice. The recommendations from technical audits form part of the risk management approach in protecting drinking water supplies. In 2022, following the removal of COVID-19 restrictions, the on-site technical audit inspection programme was resumed with five audits completed. A summary of the 2022 Technical Audit Programme is detailed in Annex 3.

Enforcement Action

In order to protect, maintain and improve drinking water supplies, NI Water's large capital investment needs are prioritised through the Price Control (PC) Process. The PC21 (2021 - 2027) capital investment programme, which commenced in April 2021, was ongoing throughout 2022 and DWI, alongside other stakeholders, continued to monitor the delivery of the agreed outputs which have drinking water quality drivers.

Although it is better to be able to plan investment through the PC process, there are occasions when it is necessary for DWI to take enforcement action against NI Water to secure compliance and protect public health.

During 2022, four Regulation 31(4) Notices issued under The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 (the Regulations) were ongoing. The details of these enforcements are contained in Annex 4.

Figure 2.8: Derg WTW Construction Works

One of the Notices issued by DWI in 2020 led to a major capital investment at Derg WTW (circa £12m) which was ongoing in 2022. This is primarily required to upgrade the works and ensure future compliance with the regulatory limits for the pesticide MCPA. Figure 2.8 shows the construction work at Derg WTW.

NI Water also commenced work on treatment improvements at Ballinrees WTW to comply with the two Notices which we issued in 2020 in relation to the individual pesticide MCPA contraventions and taste and odour contraventions.



Photo courtesy of NI Water

Further, in response to a notice we issued in 2021, NI Water conducted pilot studies at Drumaroad WTW to identify the preferred treatment solution to deal with aluminium contraventions associated with this water supply.

DWI monitors the progress of these projects through site visits to gain assurance that the Statutory Notices are on schedule and will be complied with.

Future Investment in Drinking Water Quality

DWI will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure the effective prioritisation of investment in drinking water quality through the PC21 Mid-Term review in 2023 and in the preparatory work for the next price control process, PC27.

In identifying the capital investment needs, NI Water will continue to assess the required treatment solutions through the use of mobile pilot plants. These are designed for a range of large-scale, on-site trials on innovative treatment solutions to identify the effectiveness of proposed treatment processes prior to large capital investment projects commencing. This approach provides confidence that the selected process will work at each specific site whilst identifying more carbon neutral solutions for water treatment, thereby contributing to the company's net zero targets. We fully support this approach and will continue to work closely with NI Water to contribute to climate change targets.

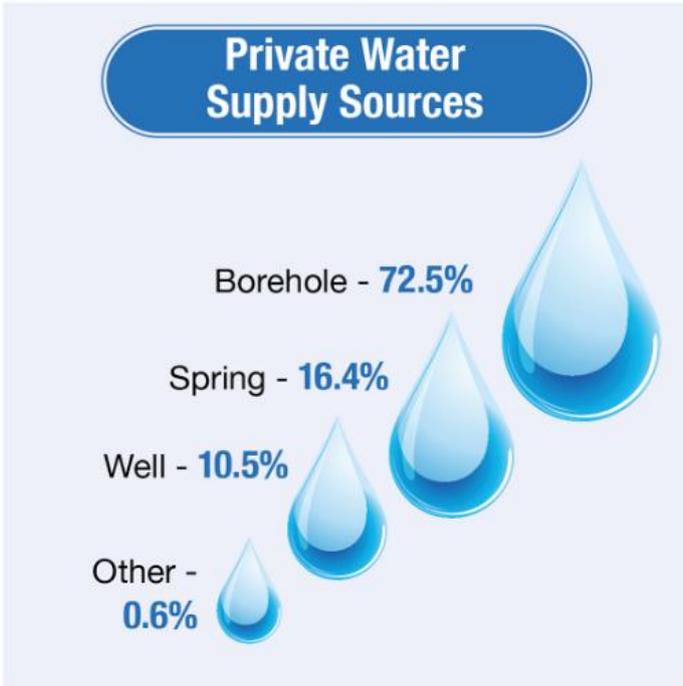
We acknowledge the financial constraints within NI Water's funding model and support the need for sufficient long-term funding to ensure public health protection and economic development. We must ensure that the provision of safe, clean drinking water remains a key priority for NI Water.

Section 2

Private Water Supplies

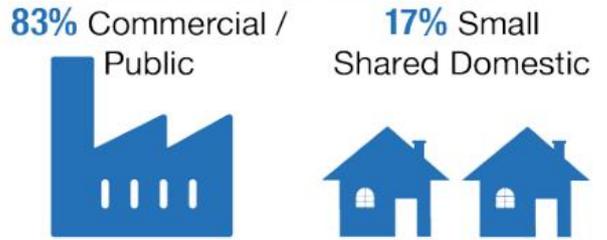


Private Water Supplies 2022 Key Facts



Register

171 Registered PWS Sites

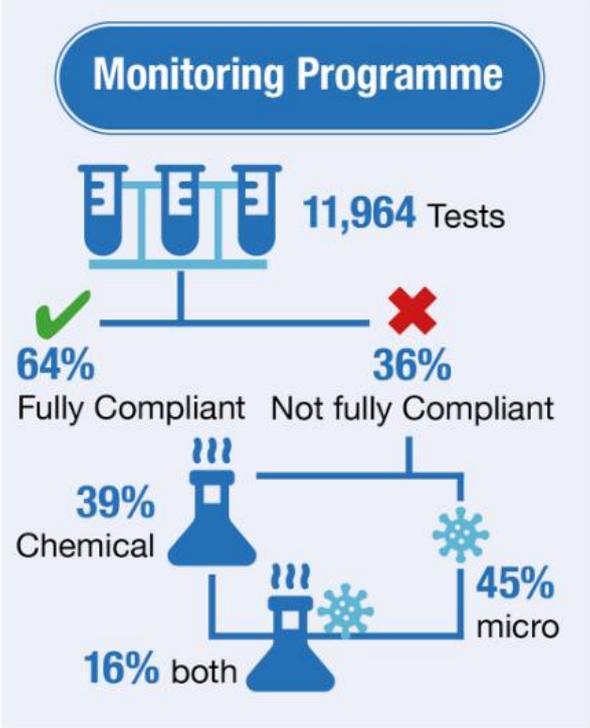


3 New Sites
4 Sites Removed

% Compliance



Actions



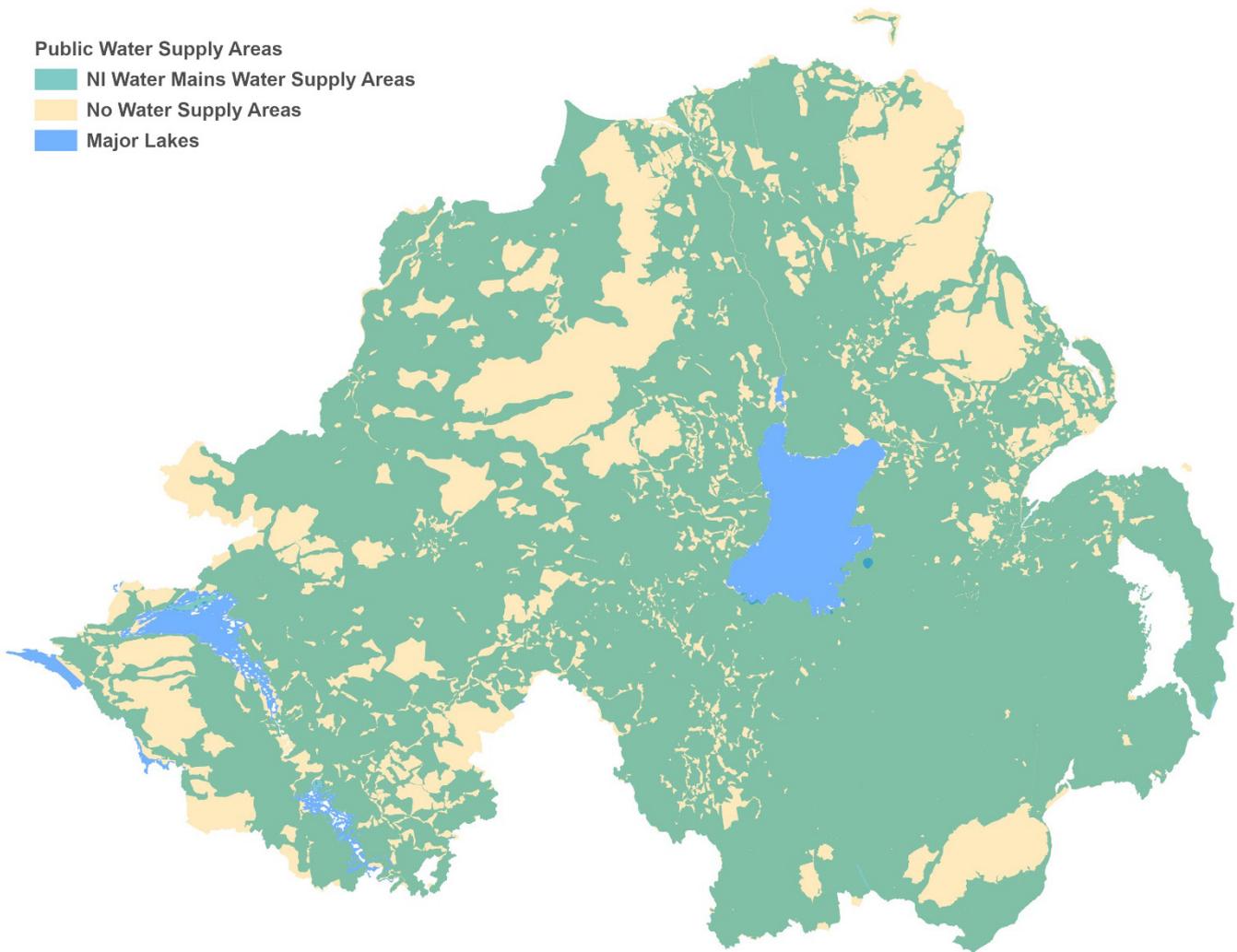
Restrictions	Training	Risk Assessments	Sampling	Advice
Applied at 15 sites Removed at 3 sites	29 local Environmental Health staff trained	22 site risk assessments completed / progressed	99.77% of scheduled samples collected	Provided on 463 queries

Section 2

Private Drinking Water Supplies

Northern Ireland Water Ltd (NI Water) supplies drinking water to over 99% of the Northern Ireland population; the remainder are deemed to be served by private water supplies. The spatial distribution of the NI Water mains water network supply zones is shown in Figure 1.1. The premises in areas beyond the extent of these zones are almost certainly served by private water supplies and are typically domestic properties.

Figure 1.1: NI Water Mains Supply Zones (and no water supply areas)



Consumers often assume the water they are drinking is from the public water supply. However, although the number of people directly served by a private supply may be small, many more people are exposed to them through their use in both commercial activities and public buildings. Despite a public water supply being available, some businesses utilise groundwater as a sustainable and more economically viable option.

Private water supplies are often used as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, the public water supply depending on the nature of the site. In some circumstances, a particular composition of water is required as an ingredient for a food product or perhaps a significant volume is required which is beyond the capacity of the existing mains water network. Private

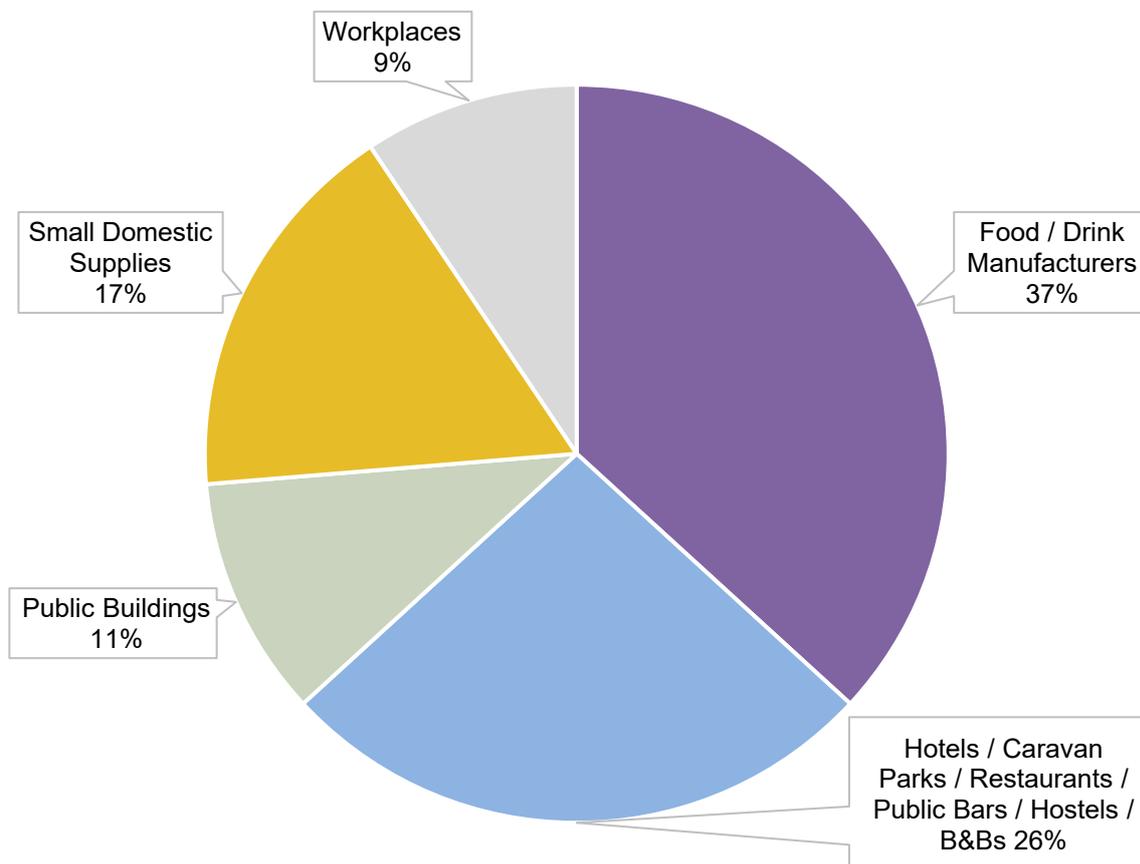
water supplies are found at a range of sites such as:

- food and drink manufacturers;
- public buildings including hospitals, workplaces and universities; and,
- within the hospitality industry such as hotels, restaurants and tourist accommodation.

Register of Supplies

There was a total of 171 private water supplies on our register in 2022 which required monitoring under The Private Water Supplies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017. The categories of these supplies are presented in Figure 1.2. In addition to those summarised below, it is estimated there are at least a further 1,200 supplies to single domestic dwellings which are not required to be monitored under the Regulations. These supplies are sampled by the Environmental Health Departments of local councils on request.

Figure 1.2: Categories of Private Water Supplies in Northern Ireland in 2022



Private water supplies may be drawn from either surface or groundwater sources. Surface sources can include streams, rivers and reservoirs while groundwater sources can include boreholes, springs and wells. In 2022, 99.4% of registered private supplies in Northern Ireland were from groundwater sources, most commonly, boreholes. A properly installed and tested borehole which has been appropriately sited can provide a sustainable yield of groundwater.

Monitoring of Supplies

An annual sampling programme is in place for all registered supplies. The frequency of the sampling and the range of parameters analysed are determined by the volume of water used and the type of the supply, i.e., commercial, public or domestic. Samples at all forms of private water supplies are collected by Environmental Health Departments of local councils, acting on our behalf. Each sampling officer can only collect samples once they have completed the relevant training by the DWI. The 2022 sampling programme included premises using private water supplies in all 11 council areas.

Of the 171 private water supplies on our monitoring schedule for 2022, 83% were commercial or public supplies and 17% were small domestic supplies (groupings of two or more houses). A breakdown of the numbers and sizes of private water supplies in 2022 is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Numbers and Types of Private Water Supplies in 2022

Types of Private Water Supplies Volume (m ³ /day)	Number of Supplies	Frequency of Sampling (per annum)
(i) Commercial / Public Supplies		
>1000 ≤2000	2	10
>100 ≤1000	21	4
>10 ≤100	49	2
≤10	70	1
(ii) Small Domestic Supplies (two or more dwellings)		
≤10	29	1
Total	171	

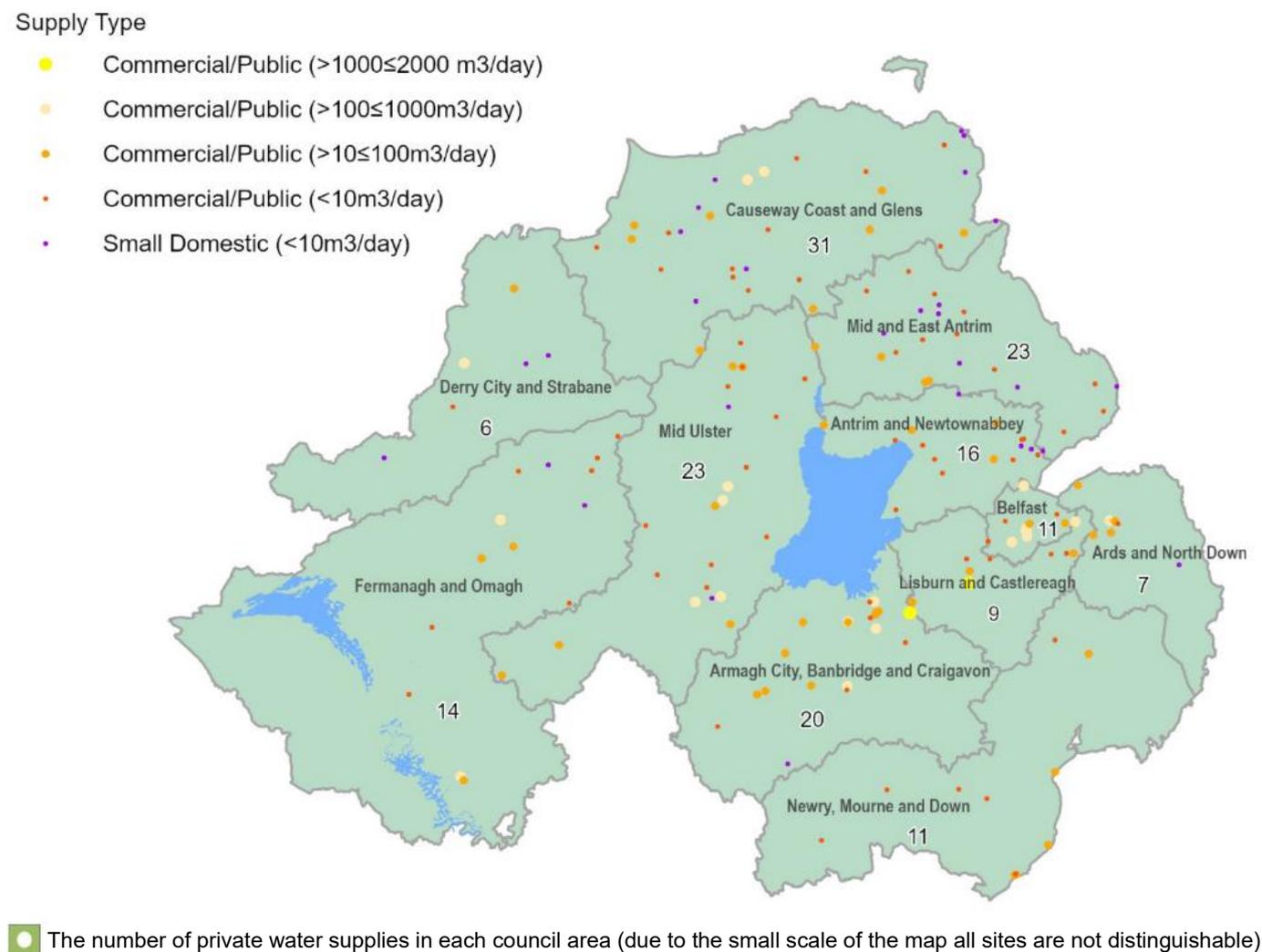
During 2022, four sites were removed from the sampling programme as they no longer met the criteria to be registered (i.e., no longer used for human consumption or supply no longer used in production). Sites were reclassified as necessary throughout the year if the use, volume, or distribution was altered (and subsequently the analytical requirements and sampling frequency were altered as required). In addition, a total of three new supplies were registered with us, these were:

- two food / drink manufacturers; and
- one tourist accommodation.

Although the sampling frequency for compliance sampling is set within the Regulations, many supplementary samples are taken throughout the year during follow-up investigations. If the circumstances warrant additional sampling, the DWI assist site owners through additional testing to either help in identifying the location of a water quality issue or to confirm the water quality issue has been remediated. In addition, where necessary, sites can be put on an increased sampling frequency for a set period of time to monitor any parameters identified as a risk in the supply. During 2022, a total of 35 such samples were collected. The results of the individual tests of these samples are not included in the calculation of the overall compliance for private water supplies.

A breakdown of registered supplies in Northern Ireland in 2022, categorised by size, is shown in Figure 1.3. All registered supplies can be found on the [DAERA iHub viewer](#).

Figure 1.3: Distribution of Registered Private Water Supplies by Council Area in 2022



Risk Assessment

The Regulations require a risk assessment to be carried out for each registered supply to identify areas where there may be potential risks to the water quality. This assessment includes the whole private water supply system, from its source to the most representative point where the water is used, including any storage or treatment systems. These assessments are required to follow the same standard (BS:EN 15975-2:2013¹) as is used for the risk assessment of the public water supply.

The risk assessments of private water supplies are undertaken by Environmental Health Departments of local councils, acting on our behalf. Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) continue to complete risk assessments of private water supplies using a web-based application developed by DAERA. This ensures consistency of approach by all EHOs across all categories and sizes of sites. Each EHO can only risk assess a private water supply once they have completed the relevant training by the DWI. Annual formal training sessions and ad hoc

¹ BS:EN 15975-2: Concerning security of drinking water supply, guidelines for risk and crisis management

guidance is provided to councils. In 2022, a total of 22 risk assessments were progressed or completed on the web application.

The information gathered through the risk assessment process is used to provide sites with an action plan to mitigate identified risks and to assist sites with the ongoing management of their water supplies. It can also be used to fine-tune the monitoring programme for each site as it can identify additional analysis required.

Overall Drinking Water Quality

Comparable water quality standards are applied to both private and public water supplies in Northern Ireland through appropriate drinking water regulations. The Regulations provide flexibility and enable reduced monitoring of some parameters where certain criteria are met and a risk assessment confirms there is no risk to human health. This flexibility was introduced in 2021, with a large set of parameters being placed on a reduced frequency monitoring schedule and this continued into the 2022 monitoring schedule.

Table 1.2: Overall Water Quality in Private Water Supplies in 2022

Parameters	Determinations in 2022		
	Total Number of Tests	Number of Tests not Meeting the Standards	% Compliance
Coliform bacteria	301	32	89.37
Enterococci	173	15	91.33
<i>E. coli</i>	301	12	96.01
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	138	5	96.38
Microbiological Total	913	64	92.99
Manganese	265	17	93.58
Sodium*	57	3	94.74
Copper*	25	1	96.00
Hydrogen ion (pH)	301	11	96.35
Sulphate*	33	1	96.97
Iron	266	8	96.99
Lead*	67	2	97.01
Bromate*	43	1	97.67
Nitrate	137	2	98.54
Colour	265	1	99.62
Aluminium	265	1	99.62
Turbidity	301	1	99.67
Individual pesticides	7379	1	99.99
Other parameters	1484	0	100.00
Chemical Total	10888	50	99.54
Radon*	96	3	96.88
Radioactivity*	67	0	100.00
Radiochemical	163	3	98.16
Overall Total	11964	117	99.02

* Parameters on reduced monitoring frequency

The results in Table 1.2 show that, out of a total of 11,964 tests carried out in 2022, 99.02% met the regulatory standards. The regulatory requirements were not met on 117 occasions for 18 parameters, namely: Coliform bacteria, Enterococci, *E. coli*, *Clostridium perfringens*,

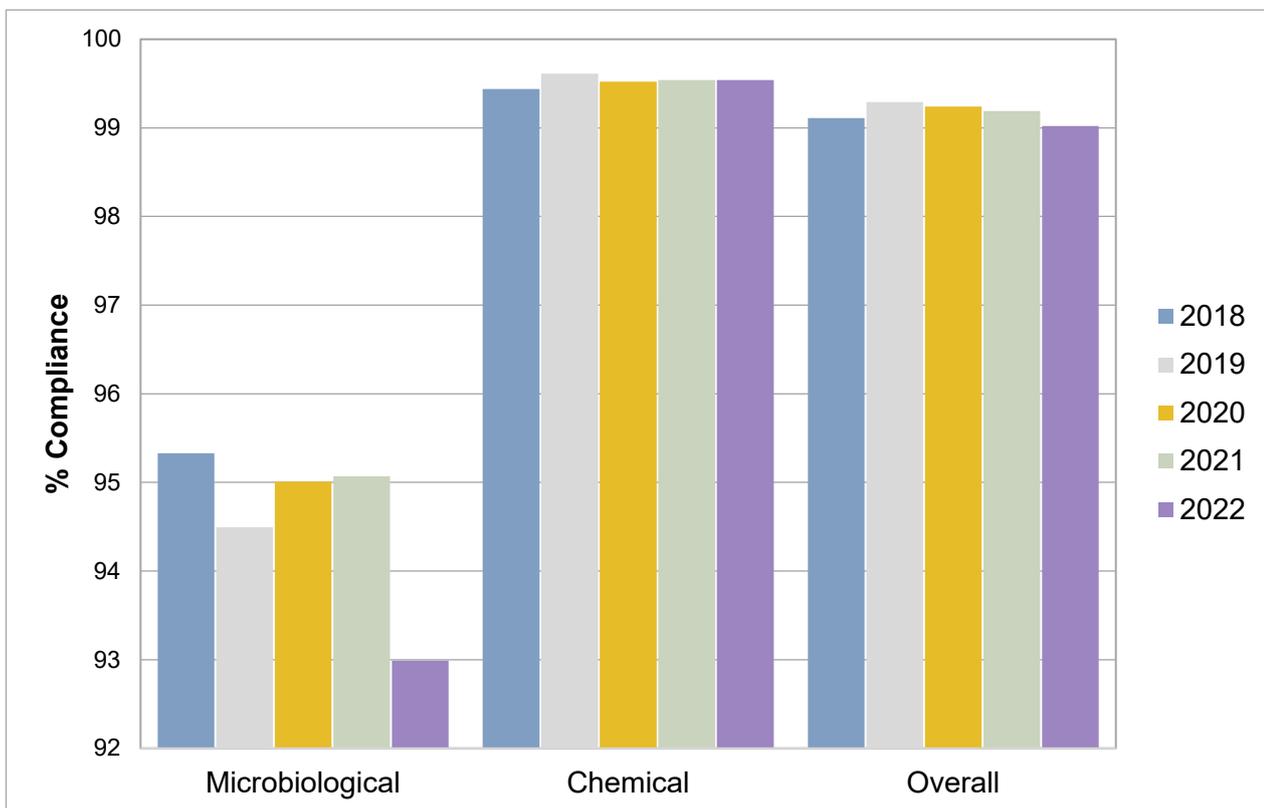
Manganese, Sodium, Copper, Hydrogen ion (pH), Sulphate, Iron, Lead, Bromate, Nitrate, Colour, Aluminium, Turbidity, Individual pesticides (Clopyralid) and Radon.

Under the Regulations, the sampling frequency and suites of parameters analysed at a private water supply may be adjusted based on previous test results and any identified risks. Consequently, many commercial / public supplies were analysed for a reduced suite of chemical parameters from 2012 to 2017. A review was implemented in 2018 to justify the reduced analysis and all supplies were returned to their full monitoring requirements for a three-year period, to re-evaluate the potential risk. Following a review of the monitoring data, a reduction in parameters was reintroduced for 2021 using a risk-based approach to determine the required analysis on a site-by-site basis. Where a parameter has historically failed or is greater than 30% of the parametric concentration value, it is retained and its inclusion in the monitoring programme will be reviewed again on an annual basis. In 2022, a total of 45 sites were subject to a reduction in parameters requiring monitoring. This reduction is set for a period of up to five years at which point all parameters will be analysed again to re-evaluate the potential risk.

A different approach was adopted for radon as its risk has been determined independently using Public Health England and British Geological Survey data in support of our monitoring results. Where no risk was identified and results were historically stable, monitoring for radon was removed with a review to be conducted through a check sample after five years. The Notice of Decision not to monitor radioactivity parameters is published on the DAERA website.¹

Microbiological contraventions account for 64 (54.7%) of the 117 contraventions at private water supplies in 2022. There has been a marked decrease in the level of overall microbiological compliance which is reported as 92.99% in 2022 compared to 95.07% in 2021, as illustrated in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Comparison of Compliance in Private Water Supplies, 2018 – 2022



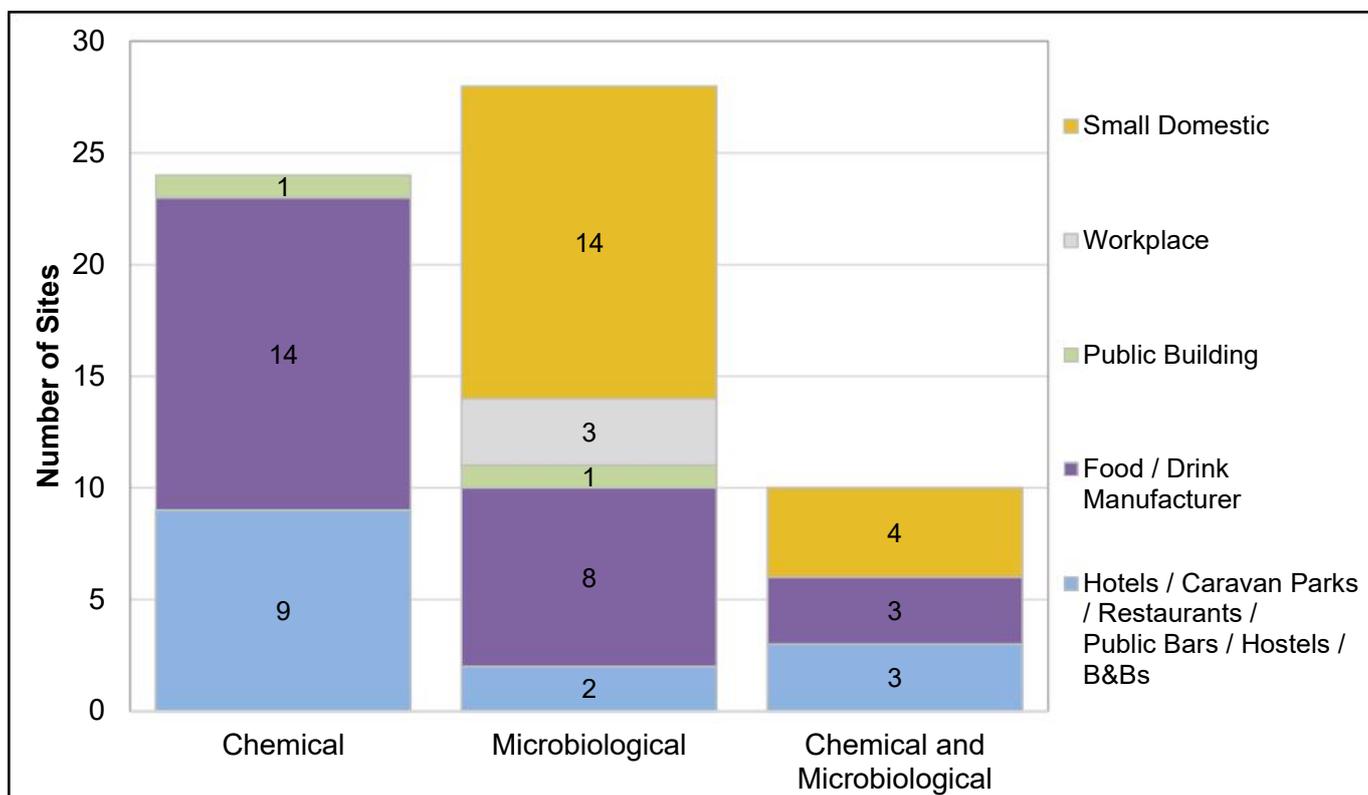
¹ [Notice of Decision Not to Monitor Radioactivity Parameters 2018-2022 \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

Contraventions of the chemical standards have been reported for a range of parameters listed in Table 1.2. Overall, the number of chemical contraventions remained stable at 50 in 2022, which is the same as 2021. Consequently, given the comparable number of total parameters analysed, there was the same value of chemical compliance for 2022, 99.54%, also illustrated in Figure 1.4. As with previous years, where the chemical standards have not been met, they relate mainly to contraventions for Hydrogen ion (pH), Iron, Manganese and Sodium.

Full compliance was achieved for 64% (109 sites) of the private water supplies tested in 2022. Of the 62 sites which did not comply with the regulatory standards, 45% (28 sites) contravened microbiological standards; 39% (24 sites) chemical standards; and 16% (10 sites) failed to comply with both microbiological and chemical standards.

The categories of these non-compliant sites, presented in Figure 1.5, show that 100% of chemical only contraventions occurred at commercial / public sites such as food / drink manufacturers, hotels, or holiday lets whereas for the microbiological only contraventions, 50% were at small shared domestic supplies and 50% were at commercial / public sites.

Figure 1.5: Categories of Non-Compliant Private Water Supply Sites in 2022



The significance of each contravention not only depends on the category or size of the sites but often, more importantly, on the purpose for which the water is used at the sites. In summary, for the 62 sites which did not comply with all the drinking water quality standards in 2022:

- 50 use the private water supply as the primary source of drinking water;
- six use the private water supply as an ingredient in food or drink;
- five use the private water supply for the washing of equipment and surfaces in contact with food or drink; and,
- one uses the private water supply for personal hygiene.

Factors Affecting Drinking Water Quality

Different aspects of the water supply chain contributed to the microbiological and chemical water quality contraventions reported in 2022 such as: catchment (including source protection); treatment; distribution; and sampling point (tap) issues.

Monitoring of private water supplies was kept constantly under review and adapted to account for any operational changes within businesses or access restrictions at domestic dwellings. Communication with supply owners focused on risk management and ensuring effective controls were in place, especially with a change in the turnover of supplies.

Micro-Organisms

The presence of micro-organisms in a private water supply is indicative of contamination of the water either at source or at some point within the distribution system. In particular, the detection of *E. coli* or enterococci bacteria specifically indicates faecal contamination of a water supply and can be a risk to public health. These faecal indicators were found to be present in 38 supplies during 2022: 18 small shared domestic supplies, three of which had disinfection treatment in place at the time of sampling and 20 commercial / public supplies, 13 of which had disinfection treatment in place at the time of sampling.

Rural water supplies in the vicinity of where animals graze or manure is spread are most at risk. This is particularly prevalent at times of heavy rainfall when water may run directly off farmland and carry micro-organisms into unprotected private supplies. Guidance on source protection is available in the [Private Water Supplies Technical Manual](#).

Poor microbiological quality also highlights where there is a lack of suitable treatment, or the treatment installed is not being operated and maintained appropriately. The quality of the raw water is a key element in selecting the correct treatment for a private water supply which may require pre-treatment prior to disinfection.

Metals

Although some brackish groundwaters contain sodium, elevated levels in water supplies are usually related to water softening processes. The regulatory standard is set for aesthetic reasons as elevated levels may give rise to taste problems. In 2022, three sites reported contraventions for sodium, all of which had water softening treatment processes.

Some groundwaters may contain elevated levels of naturally occurring iron and manganese. Iron levels can also be raised due to deterioration of cast iron pipe work and / or storage tanks within the distribution system. High levels of iron and manganese may affect the appearance, taste or smell of the water resulting in turbidity, colour, taste, and odour contraventions and discoloration or staining of water fittings. It can also affect treatment systems, such as ultra-violet lamps due to metal deposits causing a reduction in their effectiveness for disinfection. Sites are advised to routinely purge wells / boreholes, clean out storage tanks and flush through pipe work or, where required, replace parts of their distribution network to reduce the levels of iron in their supplies. In 2022, 14 sites reported contraventions for one or both of these metals.

Lead, and other heavy metals such as nickel and copper, are usually detected at elevated levels due to corrosion of pipe work or fittings, especially if the source water is naturally acidic,

and / or due to the use of inappropriate fixtures and fittings. The Regulations specify that only products and substances approved for use with drinking water supplies should be used. The Drinking Water Inspectorate for England and Wales has published a list of [approved products](#) which are suitable for use within a private water supply system.

There were two lead contraventions in 2022, one site had a copper contravention and there were no nickel contraventions.

Pesticides

There was one pesticide contravention in 2022: Clopyralid, a herbicide used for controlling broad-leaved weeds such as docks and creeping thistle in grassland. This contravention could have been due to the inappropriate storage or use of pesticides in the vicinity of the source, although the exact cause has not been determined. In addition to this contravention, trace levels of a range of individual pesticides, below the regulatory limit of 0.10 µg/l, were also detected at 30 sites.

Actions in the Event of Failure

Contraventions are investigated through site visits conducted by EHOs and the collection of follow up samples. Depending on the nature and significance of the contraventions, it may also be necessary for us to conduct a site inspection.

Any contraventions at supplies, where the water is used as an ingredient in food production or as drinking water, and that are considered as a potential risk to human health, are reported to the Public Health Agency (PHA) for appropriate health advice. Where necessary, the Regulations contain a provision to issue Notices which can be used to restrict or prohibit the use of a supply.

Out of the 62 sites with contraventions identified in 2022, 60 were notified to PHA for advice: 41 microbiological and 19 chemical. As a consequence, restrictions on the use of the private water supply were put in place at 15 sites to protect public health.

These restrictions of private water supplies can include switching to, or blending with, the public water supply (where this is available), 'Boil Water Before Use' and 'Do Not Use' advisory notes.

Removal of these restrictions requires investigation into the cause of the water quality contravention, completion of work to remedy any issues identified and two consecutive satisfactory resamples. Accordingly, the restrictions were removed at five sites.

We continue to work with the owners and users of private water supplies and Environmental Health staff to bring the remaining supplies into compliance. Priority is given to advancing improvements to the water quality through provision of advice and guidance; agreeing action plans (particularly at the larger commercial / public sites); and promotion of Drinking Water Safety Plans (DWSP) for the ongoing management of these supplies.

We have a duty to ensure compliance with the water quality standards in The Private Water Supplies Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017. Our approach, where there is no known health

risk, is initially through informal negotiations. However, where necessary, we may take formal enforcement action to secure compliance and ensure a safe, clean supply of drinking water from private water supplies.

Single Private Well Web Application

The DWI routinely provides advice and guidance to the owners / users of all private water supplies across Northern Ireland. However, currently limited information is available on the 1,200 plus single dwellings in Northern Ireland, mainly in rural and remote areas, served by a private water supply. The [Single Well Application](#) which was launched in 2021, continues to be a valuable resource for these owners by identifying potential risks and identifying measures to improve their quality of water.

Annexes

Annex 1 Glossary

Annex 2 Events

Annex 3 Technical Audit Programme

Annex 4 Enforcement Action



Annex 1

Glossary and Definition of Terms

Abstraction Point	The point at which water is abstracted from a lake, reservoir, river, or groundwater source for the purposes of drinking water production.
Aesthetic	Associated with the senses of taste, smell and sight.
Animalcule	A tiny or microscopic life form.
Catchment	The area of land that drains into a watercourse.
Clarification	A process employed during drinking water treatment to assist in the removal of suspended solids and particulate matter.
Clopyralid	A herbicide used for controlling broad-leaved weeds such as docks and creeping thistle in grassland.
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	A spore-forming bacterium which is exceptionally resistant to unfavourable conditions in the water environment.
Coagulation	A process employed during drinking water treatment to assist in the removal of particulate matter.
Coliform bacteria	A group of bacteria which may be faecal or environmental in origin.
Contravention	A breach of the regulatory requirement.
Cryptosporidium oocyst	A protozoan parasite.
Determination	An analysis for a specific parameter.
Distribution Network	The system of mains water pipes bringing water from a water treatment works to service reservoirs and onwards to the consumer.
Drinking Water Quality Standards	The prescribed concentrations or values listed in the Regulations.
Drinking Water Safety Plan (DWSP)	A comprehensive risk assessment and risk management approach that encompasses all steps in water supply from catchment to consumer.
Enterococci	A sub-group of faecal streptococci commonly found in the faeces of humans and warm-blooded animals.
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (<i>E. coli</i>)	A type of faecal coliform bacteria commonly found in the intestines of animals and humans. The presence of <i>E. coli</i> in water is a strong indication of recent sewage or animal waste contamination.

Event	A situation affecting, or with the potential to affect, drinking water quality.
Faecal Coliform	A sub-group of coliforms, almost exclusively faecal in origin.
Faecal Indicators	A group of organisms that indicate the presence of faecal contamination of a water supply e.g. <i>E. coli</i> .
Filtration	The separation of suspended particulate matter from a fluid.
Flocculation	A process where colloids come out of suspension in the form of a floc.
Granular Activated Carbon (GAC)	An absorbent filtration media used to remove trace organic compounds from water.
Groundwater	Water from aquifers or other underground sources.
Hydrogen ion (pH)	The degree of acidity of the water. A pH of 7 is neutral; values below 7 are acidic and above 7 are alkaline. A low pH water may result in pipe corrosion. This is corrected by adding alkali during water treatment.
Impounding reservoir	A raw water source from which water is abstracted for the purposes of drinking water production.
Incident	An event where there has been a demonstrable deterioration in the quality of drinking water.
Indicator Parameter	Something that is measured to check that the control measures, such as water treatment, are working effectively.
Leaching	To lose, or cause to lose, soluble substances by the action of a percolating liquid.
MCPA	A herbicide used for controlling broad-leaved weeds in grass or cereal crops.
Mecoprop (MCP)	A herbicide used for controlling broad-leaved weeds in grass or cereal crops.
Microbiological	Associated with the study of microbes.
m ³ /d	Cubic metres per day.
µg/l	Micrograms per litre (one millionth of a gram per litre).
Parameters	The substances, organisms and properties listed in Schedules 1 and 2, and regulation 2 of the Regulations.
Pathogen	An organism which causes disease.

PC15	The third price control process whereby funding was allocated to NI Water by the Utility Regulator for the 2015 to 2021 period.
PC21	The fourth price control process whereby funding was allocated to NI Water by the Utility Regulator for the 2021 to 2027 period.
PC27	The fifth price control process whereby funding will be allocated to NI Water by the Utility Regulator for the 2027 to 2033 period.
Pesticides	Any fungicide, herbicide, insecticide or related product (excluding medicines) used for the control of pests or diseases.
Powder Activated Carbon (PAC)	An adsorbent media typically used to remove taste and odour compounds during a water treatment process.
Price Control Process (PC)	The process for the funding of NI Water by the Utility Regulator for a set period.
Prescribed Concentration or Value (PCV)	The numerical value assigned to drinking water standards, defining the maximal or minimal legal concentration or value of a parameter.
Raw Water	Water prior to receiving treatment abstracted for the purpose of drinking water provision.
Remedial Action	The action taken to improve a situation.
Residence Time	The period of time treated water spends in clear water tank, service reservoir or other storage facility.
Service Reservoir	A water tower, tank or other reservoir used for the storage of treated water within the distribution system.
Supply Point	A point, other than a consumer's tap, authorised for the taking of samples for compliance with the Regulations.
Trihalomethanes (THMs)	A group of organic substances comprising, for the purposes of the Regulations, four substances: trichloromethane (also known as chloroform), tribromomethane (also known as bromoform), dibromochloromethane and bromodichloromethane.
Turbidity	Turbidity is the measure of relative clarity of a liquid.
Water Catchment Partnership	The Water Catchment Partnership (WCP) was established in 2013 to help address significant water quality issues in Northern Ireland related to pesticides.
Water Supply Zone	A pre-defined area of supply used for establishing sampling frequencies, compliance with standards and information to be made publicly available.

Water Treatment Works

A facility that produces drinking water from a raw water source.

Wholesome/
Wholesomeness

A concept of water quality which is defined by reference to standards and other requirements set out in the Regulations.

Annex 2 – Events

Serious Drinking Water Quality Events in 2022

Date of Serious Event	Area and Estimate of Population/ Properties Potentially Affected	Nature and Cause of Serious Event	Associated Council Area(s)
03/03/22 – 07/03/22	Kilrea / Garvagh area (6,731 population)	A short-lived period of high flow in the trunk main caused by an unknown third party. This led to a high number of consumer contacts regarding discoloration of their mains water supply. The affected Service Reservoir was temporarily by-passed and targeted flushing was carried out in the area.	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
04/07/22 – 08/07/22	Sligo Road, Enniskillen (297 population)	Damage to a water main, and two sewers, caused by a third-party contractor. Due to the contamination risk, a 'Boil Water Notice' was issued to the affected properties. Subsequent isolation of the water main caused a loss of supply to consumers. Bottled water provisions were made available. Following repair work and satisfactory samples, "Safe to Drink" letters were issued.	Fermanagh & Omagh District
04/07/22 – 11/07/22	Forked Bridge WTW (91,365 population)	Elevated levels of turbidity occurred in the works final water following planned repair work on the Castor Bay to Forked Bridge pumping main. Subsequent aluminium and turbidity contraventions, both at the works and in the distribution system, were reported. Asset-to-asset tankering and re-zoning was used to maintain a supply of water while scouring and flushing was undertaken.	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough; Belfast City; Lisburn & Castlereagh City; Mid-Ulster District; and Newry, Mourne & Down District
16/12/22 – 23/12/22	Northern Ireland (1.9 million)	Interruption to water supply due to a prolonged period of freeze conditions followed by a rapid thaw. The resultant bursts throughout the system caused an increase in water demand. NI Water declared a Category 1 Incident. While the repair of bursts was prioritised, output from the works were increased to meet the demand. Where required, re-zoning and asset-to-asset tankering was used to restore water levels.	All

Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2022

Date of Significant Event	Area and Estimate of Population/ Properties Potentially Affected	Nature and Cause of Significant Event	Associated Council Area(s)
03/02/22 – 05/02/22	Baranailt Road, Claudy (10 properties)	Contamination of the mains water supply caused by ingress through an open hydrant during operational work to connect a new main. Bottled water was provided to affected consumers and the main was chlorinated and flushed as a precaution.	Derry City & Strabane District
21/02/22 – Present	Ardowen, Craigavon (6 properties)	Samples taken in response to consumer complaints contravened the taste and odour parameters (above the Health Notification Values). The samples also contravened the standard for iron due to the condition of the iron mains. Extensive flushing resulted in satisfactory taste and odour samples. The investigation is ongoing in relation to the iron contraventions.	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough
31/03/22 – 01/04/22	Castor Bay WTW (367,219 population)	Contraventions of the turbidity and iron standards in the final water following an unplanned power outage, causing a plant shutdown.	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough; Belfast City; Lisburn & Castlereagh City; Mid-Ulster District; and Newry, Mourne & Down District
06/04/22 – 25/04/22	Belleek WTW (5,022 population)	Contravention of the Individual pesticide standard for MCPA (2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid) in the final water from the works. The pesticide removal treatment was not fully operational at the time of this event.	Fermanagh & Omagh District
10/05/22 – 18/05/22	Derg WTW (41,681 population)	Contraventions of the individual pesticide standard for MCPA occurred in the works final water due to insufficient treatment. A Regulation 31(4) Notice has been issued by DWI in respect of pesticide contraventions. NI Water have undertaken a major upgrade of this works in response to this Notice.	Derry City & Strabane District and Fermanagh & Omagh District.

Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2022

Date of Significant Event	Area and Estimate of Population/ Properties Potentially Affected	Nature and Cause of Significant Event	Associated Council Area(s)
17/05/22 – 18/05/22	Drummaroad WTW (427,051 population)	A contravention of the Hydrogen ion (pH) parameter in the final water from the works. This was caused by inadequate pH adjustment through the treatment due to an online monitor reading incorrectly.	Belfast City; Lisburn & Castlereagh City; Newry, Mourne & Down District; and Ards & North Down Borough
08/06/22 – 09/06/22	Fofanny WTW (156,923 population)	Oil contamination of a filter used for pesticide reduction within the treatment works during planned refurbishment work on the filters. The filter was taken out of service pending removal of the oil.	Newry, Mourne & Down District
08/06/22 – 05/07/22	Killyhevlin WTW (79,584 population)	A <i>Cryptosporidium</i> oocyst was detected in the works final water on two occasions. All subsequent samples were satisfactory.	Fermanagh & Omagh District
22/06/22 – 27/07/22	College Campus, Lisburn (1,200 population)	Samples taken in response to a consumer complaint contravened the <i>E. coli</i> and coliform bacteria parameters. 'Do not use for drinking or cooking' advice was issued and bottled water provided. Further sampling and investigation identified storage tanks as the most probable cause. The storage tanks were by-passed and satisfactory samples obtained.	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
27/06/22 – 05/07/22	Glenhordial WTW (12,030 population)	A contravention of the individual pesticide standard for MCPA occurred in the works final water. The pesticide removal treatment was not fully operational at the time of this event.	Fermanagh & Omagh District.
03/07/22 – 05/07/22	Whiteabbey SR Pumping Main (14,259 population)	A burst occurred on the pumping main between Whiteabbey Lower and Whiteabbey Upper SR. During operational work to facilitate re-zoning, a number of consumers experienced discoloured water. Tankering and further re-zoning was used to maintain supply pending repair of burst and return to normal operation.	Antrim & Newtownabbey

Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2022

Date of Significant Event	Area and Estimate of Population/ Properties Potentially Affected	Nature and Cause of Significant Event	Associated Council Area(s)
05/07/22 – 06/07/22	Drumaroad WTW (446,519 population)	A contravention of the Hydrogen ion (pH) parameter in the final water from the works. Following an investigation, NI Water was unable to identify the cause of the contravention.	Belfast City; Lisburn & Castlereagh City; Newry, Mourne & Down District; and Ards & North Down Borough
09/08/22 – 15/08/22	Forked Bridge WTW (91,365 population)	A contravention of the aluminium parameter occurred in the works final water following a communications failure, which led to unstable flows within the pumping main from Castor Bay WTW.	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough; Belfast City; Lisburn & Castlereagh City; Mid-Ulster District; and Newry, Mourne & Down District
16/08/22 – 10/11/22	Derg WTW (41,681 population)	A contravention of the Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) parameter occurred in the works supply area due to sub-optimal treatment. NI Water have undertaken a major upgrade of this works.	Derry City & Strabane District and Fermanagh & Omagh District.
04/09/22 – 05/10/22	Ballinrees WTW (119,178 population)	Contraventions of the taste and odour parameters occurred in the works final water and related distribution due to insufficient treatment. Consumer complaints regarding Taste & Odour in the Ballinrees WTW supply area were received by NI Water. A Regulation 31(4) Notice has been issued by DWI in relation to taste and odour contraventions at Ballinrees WTW.	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough & Derry City & Strabane District
11/09/22 – 14/10/22	Moneymore WTW (4,634 population)	Loss of chlorination of works final water, due to a faulty pump, and failure of works to automatically shut down, due to inappropriate alarm settings. There was no impact on the microbiological water quality with all samples taken bacteriologically satisfactory.	Mid-Ulster District
26/09/22 – 11/10/22	Dungonnell WTW (28,355 population)	Contraventions of the Total Trihalomethanes (THMs) parameter occurred in the works supply area due to insufficient water treatment. Improvement work in relation to THMs at Dungonnell WTW is included in the PC21 work plan.	Mid & East Antrim Borough

Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2022

Date of Significant Event	Area and Estimate of Population/ Properties Potentially Affected	Nature and Cause of Significant Event	Associated Council Area(s)
07/10/22 – 08/10/22	Fofanny WTW (156,923 population)	A contravention of the aluminium parameter occurred in the works final water following an unplanned power outage which caused treatment difficulties.	Newry, Mourne & Down District
05/11/22 – 06/11/22	Ballinrees WTW (180,817 population)	Elevated levels of turbidity and aluminium occurred in the works final water following loss of effective treatment caused by a dosing pump failure.	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough & Derry City & Strabane District
08/11/22 – Present	Ardmore Road, Londonderry (80 properties)	Samples taken in response to consumer complaints contravened the iron and turbidity standards (including results above the Health Notification Values) due to the condition of the iron mains. Mains replacement is scheduled for 2023. NI Water put in place a mains flushing programme to reduce the risk for discoloured water as an interim measure until the mains replacement is completed.	Derry City & Strabane District
15/11/22 – 16/11/22	Killylane WTW (49,846 population)	Elevated levels of aluminium and turbidity occurred in the works final water due to treatment difficulties caused by a chemical dosing failure.	Mid & East Antrim Borough
18/11/22 – Present	Meadowbrook, Ballybogey (14 properties)	Samples taken in response to a consumer complaint contravened the aluminium, iron, manganese, and turbidity standards (including results above the Health Notification Values). This is most likely due to the condition of a short section of iron mains. Mains replacement is scheduled for 2023. NI Water put in place a mains flushing programme to reduce the risk for discoloured water as an interim measure until the mains replacement is completed.	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough

Significant Drinking Water Quality Events in 2022

Date of Significant Event	Area and Estimate of Population/ Properties Potentially Affected	Nature and Cause of Significant Event	Associated Council Area(s)
21/11/22 – 25/11/22	Caugh Hill WTW (79,501 population)	A contravention of the hydrogen ion (pH) parameter occurred in the works final water. Following an investigation, NI Water was unable to identify the cause of the contravention.	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough & Derry City & Strabane District
15/12/22 – 17/12/22	Dungonnell WTW (28,355 population)	Contraventions of the aluminium, hydrogen ion (pH) and turbidity parameters occurred in the water supplied from the works. This was due to treatment issues caused by cold weather conditions.	Mid & East Antrim Borough

Annex 3

Technical Audit Programme

In 2022, following the removal of COVID-19 restrictions, the on-site technical audit inspection programme was resumed. We acknowledge NI Water's co-operation during the completion of the audits as detailed in Table 3.1. NI Water has implemented or provided comment on, the recommendations and suggestions we raised in our audit reports.

The following table provides a summary of our 2022 Inspection Programme:

Table 3.1: Summary of the 2022 Inspection Programme

Date of Audit	Location	Audit Activity	Number of Recommendations ¹	Number of Suggestions ²
11/03/2022	Ballinrees WTW	To check that good operational practice is used in the water treatment process.	3	5
16/03/2022	Sampling Procedures	To check the sampling technique and ensure sample points are fully compliant.	6	11
13/09/2022	Clay Lake WTW	To check that good operational practice is used in the water treatment process.	6	9
18/10/2022	Laboratory Information Management System	To check that data is adequately managed by the 'Laboratory Information Management System'.	6	5
01/12/2022	Sampling Procedures	To check the sampling technique and ensure sample points are fully compliant.	8	5

¹ Recommendations are made where, in our opinion, action is required to avoid a foreseeable risk or a breach of a regulatory duty. If such a breach occurs, then we may consider 'enforcement action'. A formal written response from NI Water is required.

² Suggestions are made in relation to matters which relate to best practice.

Annex 4

Enforcement Action

The DWI Section of the [DAERA website](#) publishes details of all Enforcement actions.

Table 4.1: Summary of Enforcement Actions 2022

Type of Enforcement	Water Treatment Works (WTW)	Reason for Notice	Summary
Regulation 31(4) Notice 2020/001	Derg WTW	Contravention of the regulatory standard for the herbicide, MCPA	Requires NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Derg WTW that is effective in the removal or reduction of MCPA to achieve a final water result that meets the maximum regulatory limit of MCPA of 0.10µg/l by 31 March 2022. An amendment was issued in February 2022 to provide NI Water with an additional 12 months to complete the required treatment upgrade by 31 March 2023.
Regulation 31(4) Notice 2020/002	Ballinrees WTW	Contravention of the regulatory standard for the herbicide, MCPA	Requires NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Ballinrees WTW that is effective in the removal or reduction of MCPA to achieve a final water result that meets the maximum regulatory limit of MCPA of 0.10µg/l 2020 by 22 December 2023. This was issued on 17 December 2020 following the revocation of Regulation 31(4) Notice 03/19 on the same date.
Regulation 31(4) Notice 2020/003	Ballinrees WTW	Contravention of the regulatory standards for Taste and Odour	Requires NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Ballinrees WTW that is proven to be effective in the treatment of taste and odour parameters to achieve a final water and consumer tap result that is acceptable to the consumer and there is no abnormal change by 22 December 2023. This was issued on 17 December 2020.
Regulation 31(4) Notice 2021/001	Drumaroad WTW	Contravention of the regulatory standard for Aluminium	Requires NI Water to install and have operational, a treatment system at Drumaroad WTW that is proven to be effective in the removal or reduction of Aluminium to achieve a final water result that meets the maximum regulatory limit of Aluminium of 200 µg/l by 30 April 2025. This was issued on 8 July 2021.

Useful Information

(To access the information, click on the links below)

[Regulatory Framework](#) – provides details and links to current legislation relating to drinking water quality.

Drinking Water Quality Tables – provide details of drinking water compliance within individual water supply zones and council areas for [Public](#) and [Private](#) Supplies.

Drinking Water Advice and Guidance for [Public](#) and [Private](#) Supplies – provides a list of links for consumers and professionals requiring further information on drinking water quality.

[Useful Contacts](#) – provides a list of organisations and contact details related to drinking water.

Request for Feedback on this Report

Did you find what you were looking for?

The Drinking Water Inspectorate is constantly aiming to improve the standard of information provided in this report.

Any views or opinions you may have would be highly valued by us and we would greatly appreciate your feedback which can be provided by either:

Online Feedback Form:

To access a short online feedback form follow the QR code or link below (closes 31st December 2023):



<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/daera/45b6b0d8>

or

Email: dwi@daera-ni.gov.uk

or

Post: Drinking Water Inspectorate
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Malone Lower
BELFAST
BT7 2JA

Drinking Water Inspectorate for Northern Ireland
Resource Efficiency Division
Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Malone Lower
Belfast BT7 2JA
Tel: 028 9056 9282
Email: DWI@daera-ni.gov.uk
Email: privatewatersupplies@daera-ni.gov.uk
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Report on	Mid Ulster Council Area Community Resuscitation Group Action Plan 2019 – 2023
Date of Meeting	16 th November 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Leigh Gilmore, Health and Wellbeing Manager

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

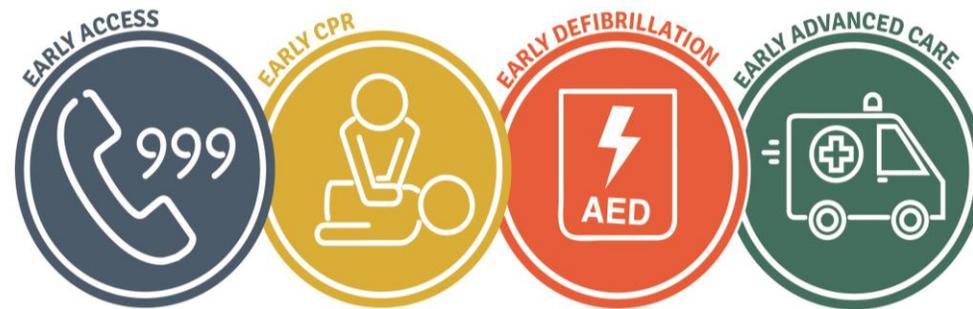
1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Members on the “Creating a Community of Lifesavers in Mid Ulster Council Area, Community Resuscitation Group, Action Plan 2019 – 2023”.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>The Community Resuscitation Strategy for Northern Ireland was launched in July 2014 with a vision to increase survival for those who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. The objectives set out in the Strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raise public awareness of the importance of early recognition of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and the importance of early intervention; • encourage members of the public to intervene in the event of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest; • increase the availability of, and access to, appropriate and effective CPR training provision across Northern Ireland; • achieve high uptake of CPR training; • make the most efficient use of the resources available to support community resuscitation training • improve the availability of, and access to, the automated external defibrillators that are in place across Northern Ireland, and enhance the capacity of information systems to capture and provide key data on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and patient outcomes.
2.2	The Creating a Community of Lifesavers in Mid Ulster Council Area, Community Resuscitation Group and Action Plan was established in 2019 and is due to end December 2023.
2.3	The Mid Ulster Plan sets out the priority actions to be taken forward over the period 2019-2023 with an emphasis on CPR/AED and PAD related actions.

<p>2.4</p> <p>2.5</p> <p>2.6</p>	<p>During 2019-2023 and although heavily disrupted by Covid the Mid Ulster Council Area Community Resuscitation working group continued its work where possible to identify and develop the Community Resuscitation themes across district area.</p> <p>This required collaboration by all partners to avoid duplication of effort, pool resources and expertise. This collaborative working enabled a Community of Lifesavers to be created within the MUDC area.</p> <p>The 2019 – 2023 Action Plan had 6 themes and 17 objectives (further details enclosed within the appendix). Whilst all 17 objectives in the plan commenced in terms of delivery, due to the Covid pandemic and the subsequent reduction in the capacity of all partners involved, some objectives had to be stalled and were unable to be completed. In the end 11 objectives were completed and 6 stalled.</p>
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>This 3-year plan is now coming to its natural finish. Lack of capacity and available funding from its key partners will bring this project to an end to this stage but it is felt by all partners that community resuscitation is well embedded now within the District through the Community 1st Responders, locally based AED's and the ongoing Schools programme.</p> <p>As the plan was due to cover 2019 – 2023 and with the plan due to end December 2023, a meeting took place recently with a Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) representative to discuss future options. The NIAS are facing resourcing and capacity challenges and has had to withdraw from implementing and sustaining many aspects of this plan and likewise in other Council areas. The NIAS have advised they don't envisage this position to change in the near future and therefore are not in a position to develop a further community action plan including the provision of training.</p> <p>During Covid, the British Heart Foundation ended its Heart Start Programme. This Programme has been the foundation for the Community Defib Programme. NIAS explained this was a major contributing reason why themselves and some other Councils were now not considering reestablishing their group(s) or preparing new action plans. NIAS also confirmed that the loss of the British Heart Foundation Heart Start Programme limited any possible training to CPR and defib training only and not first aid training.</p> <p>At present NIAS only has the capacity for a School Programme and is continuing to concentrate on it but has welcomed Councils involvement in it. NIAS did confirm they are still willing to work in partnership and were possible support but at this time are unable to take a leading role.</p> <p>The proposed Community training within the Action Plan was disrupted by Covid, the Train the Trainer training did not take place. The funding of equipment for the Train the Trainer Program which was being provided by Sport NI was also disrupted by Covid.</p>

3.6	At present there are four community first responder units in Mid Ulster – they are Mid Ulster, Killeeshil & Galbally, Carntougher & Armagh & Tyrone. NIAS confirmed there has been interest in establishing a group in Cookstown / Killdress area.
3.7	There are Automatic Defibrillators (AEDS) distributed across Council facilities. A list is enclosed with the appendix. Forty (40) AEDs are located on council property. Staff assigned to each AED location have responsibilities to ensure the AEDS are maintained, managed and registered with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. Groups, organisations/businesses across the District are still actively encouraged to register their AEDS in the Mid Ulster area. At October 2023, there are 236 AEDS registered with NIAS. In order to continue to help raise awareness, Council will maintain updates where it can on the Council website – this includes a link to the Northern Ireland Ambulance map of all registered AEDs: https://www.midulstercouncil.org/resident/health-wellbeing/community-life-saving
3.8	It is however felt that, despite this current plan coming to a natural end in December 2023, that the objectives and actions within the plan period are well embedded now within the District and that local groups still have a mechanism to engage in projects via the community planning process and as part of Council's AED policy and the ongoing documenting mapping and maintenance of local defibs.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council Policies and Procedures included the Councils AED policy.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A: Creating a Community of Lifesavers in Mid Ulster Council Area, Community Resuscitation Group, Action Plan 2019 – 2023

Creating a Community of Lifesavers in Mid Ulster Council Area

**Community
Resuscitation
Group**



Action Plan 2019 – 2023

Draft Version 5.0

October 2023

Background

The Community Resuscitation Strategy for Northern Ireland was launched in July 2014 with a vision to increase survival for those who suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, to the highest level that can be achieved across Northern Ireland.

The objectives set out in the Strategy are to:

1. raise public awareness of the importance of early recognition of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and the importance of early intervention;
2. encourage members of the public to intervene in the event of an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest;
3. increase the availability of, and access to, appropriate and effective CPR training provision across Northern Ireland;
4. achieve high uptake of CPR training;
5. make the most efficient use of the resources available to support community resuscitation training
6. improve the availability of, and access to, the automated external defibrillators that are in place across Northern Ireland, and
7. enhance the capacity of information systems to capture and provide key data on out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and patient outcomes.

Action Plan

This plan sets out the priority actions to be taken forward over the period 2019-2023 with an emphasis on CPR/AED and PAD related actions.

During 2019-2023, the Mid Ulster Council (MUC) Community Resuscitation working group will continue to work to identify, and develop the Community Resuscitation themes across MUC area ensuring that outcomes in terms of survival are maximised. This requires collaboration by all partners to avoid duplication of effort, pool resources and expertise. It is hoped that working collaboratively will enable a Community of Lifesavers to be created within the MUC area.

The action plan takes cognisance of other related regional strategies and action plans and is intended to work alongside these. These include:

- Making Life Better – A Whole System Framework for Public Health. 2013-2023
- EANI related strategies
- Council Community Plans

R = Red	Action/Project unlikely to be delivered. Requires immediate action.
A = Amber	Action/Project delayed/stalled. May require action.
G = Green	Moving forward, No immediate action required.

EDUCATION							
Objective	Actions	Due date	Responsible	Progress	Oct 2023 Final Update	RAG status	
E1	Baseline Schools registered to teach CPR Education	Scope the MUC Area for number of Primary, Post Primary, Special Schools and Learning Centres registered to teach CPR Education	March 2018	EANI NIAS BHF	Baseline area profile shows that 78 (64%) of the 121 schools in MUC are registered within the Call Push Rescue or Heartstart Programme. This excludes Nursery and Pre-Schools.	Completed	
E2	Increase % of schools registered to teach CPR Education	Encourage schools who have not registered with either Call, Push, Rescue or Heartstart Programmes to teach CPR education to do so	June 2022	EANI NIAS BHF	In April 2018, 43 Primary schools were not participating in the Heartstart Programme. (7 are in the legacy NEELB area and 35 in the legacy SELB area). All Post Primary and Special Schools in the Council area are registered to teach Heartstart or Call Push Rescue. It is currently not a priority to recruit non-registered CPR schools due to resource requirements to provide the schools with	From June 2023 NIAS in partnership with the Education Authority and CCEA created a Community of Lifesavers Education Programme for Post Primary settings. From Jan 2023 teachers from Post primary settings were invited to Lifesaver Ambassador training. The reporting is not currently broken down to each Council area.	

					<p>manikins to teach.</p> <p>Heartstart teacher training has been suspended since March 2020 and will be reviewed in March 2021.</p> <p>Oct 2021 – BHF announced the closure of Heartstart in June 2021. NIAS & CCEA will be working together to develop a new Community of Lifesavers Education Programme for all schools.</p>	
E3	<p>Include CPR Education as a mandatory element within the NI Curriculum for both Primary and Post Primary Schools. Personal Development outcomes will include 'demonstration of emergency</p>	<p>Elected members, NIAS, EANI work jointly to address CPR education within the school curriculum</p>	<p>June 2022</p>	<p>EANI BHF MUC NIAS</p>	<p>BHF had been due to launch a public campaign on this in April 2021 which was to include motions at local government level across Northern Ireland. This was paused due to Covid-19 and school closures. There are plans to pick up the campaign again in 2021 and resources are being updated. Recent correspondence from the Education Minister to</p>	<p>Completed</p>

	first aid skills'			<p>BHF made clear he had no plans to make CPR training in schools mandatory.</p> <p>Jan 2021- An MLA Jim Shannon is progressing a Private Members Bill to make CPR mandatory in schools in NI</p> <p>Oct 2021 – Announcement made by Minister for Education Michelle Mcllveen on 20.09.2021 that CPR will be mandatory for 11-14 yr olds in Post Primary Schools. However the Special Advisor and the Minister agree that it should be all schools in a staged age related programme.</p>		
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COMMUNITY							
	Objective	Actions	Due date	Responsible	Progress	Oct 2023 Final Update	RAG Status
C1	Establish a baseline for members of the public (over 18yrs old) <u>willing & able to provide CPR</u>	NIAS will work with Department of Health to develop questions for adults over 18 yrs as part of the NI Health Survey.	June 2021	MUC NIAS	CPR and AED questions for members of the public have now been included in the NI Health and Wellbeing Survey which commenced Oct 2018 and will continue until April 2020. The results will be regional and not council specific so may require a council statistician to extrapolate the NI figures for Council area specific statistics. Oct 2021 – Data collected via the NI Health Survey now completed.	Completed	
C2	Establish a baseline for members of the public (over 18yrs	NIAS to agree questions to be asked to obtain the information required	June 2021	NIAS	CPR and AED questions for members of the public have now been included in the	Completed	

	old) <u>trained in CPR</u> in the past 5 years				<p>NI Health and Wellbeing Survey which commenced Oct 2018 and will continue until April 2020. The results will be regional and not council specific so may require a council statistician to extrapolate the NI figures for Council area specific statistics.</p> <p><u>Oct 2021</u> – Data collected via the NI Health Survey now completed.</p>		
C3	Establish a baseline for children aged 11-16yrs who are <u>willing and able</u> to provide CPR	NIAS will work with Department of Health to develop questions for 11-16 yr olds as part of the NI Health Survey	June 2021	NIAS	<p>CPR & AED questions have been finalised for children aged 11-16yrs and will be part of the Young People’s Behaviour & Attitudes Survey commencing Oct 2019</p> <p><u>Oct 2021</u> – Data collected via the NI Health Survey now</p>	Completed	

					completed.		
C4	Establish a baseline for children aged 11-16yrs who are <u>trained in CPR and the use of an AED</u> during their school years	NIAS will work with Department of Health to develop questions for 11-16 yr olds as part of the NI Health Survey	June 2021	NIAS	<p>CPR & AED questions have been finalised for children aged 11-16yrs and will be part of the Young People's Behaviour & Attitudes Survey commencing Oct 2019.</p> <p>Oct 2021 – Data collected via the NI Health Survey now completed.</p>	Completed	
C5	Establish a model to build capacity for CPR training across Community & partner organisations	MUC, NHSCT & SHSCT Community Development teams to signpost Community Groups to CPR training.	June 2021	<p>MUC</p> <p>Sport NI</p> <p>NIAS</p>	<p>SportNI & NIAS have negotiated a pilot which includes MUC area for Sporting organisations to receive CPR training.</p> <p><i>The Train the</i></p>	On Hold - Due to the Heartstart programme being closed by British Heart Foundation in June 2021 a further programme has not been developed that will enable this action to move forward presently. This is due to lack of capacity within the NIAS Community Resus Team.	

	<p>within Mid Ulster Council Area.</p>	<p>Partner organisations to consider ways for CPR training to be embedded in their routine business</p>			<p><i>Trainer Project was due to commence in March 2020. 60 trainers would be trained to roll out CPR training to clubs in their council area including MUDC. Project on hold due to Covid 19. Sport NI has already purchased all equipment and tutor clothing required for the Project.</i></p> <p><u>Oct 2021</u> – Due to the closure of the Heartstart Programme and the planned development of the Community of Lifesavers Education Programme this is on hold until Spring 2022</p>		
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C6	All residential addresses would have a house number displayed.	Explore the potential of a campaign to have residents display their house number, particularly in rural areas.	June 2021	MUC	<p>It is a legal requirement to display your house number. Potential to have an article in the council magazine regarding the importance of having a house number displayed in an emergency.</p> <p><u>June 2018</u> Council New Release on 25 June 2018</p> <p>“Is Your Number Up? Rural Homes Urged To Display House Numbers”</p> <p>In <u>March 2020</u> Sport NI rolled out a social media campaign to encourage sports clubs to visibly display there facility postcode around there facility in case of an emergency. A large numbers clubs</p>	Completed	
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				<p>have since completed this around there facilities.</p> <p><u>March 21-</u> MUDC repeated the 2018 News release encouraging MUDC residents to display their number</p> <p>Oct 21 Community First Responders Armagh and Tyrone running a pilot in Armagh Area for Primary school Children painting house numbers on stones and displaying in area. Could maybe be replicated in Dungannon area following pilot.</p>		
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COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDER SCHEMES							
	Objective	Actions	Due date	Responsible	Progress	Oct 2023 Final Update	RAG Status
F1	Assess need and feasibility for additional First Responder Groups in Mid Ulster Council area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review number of CFR schemes in the MUC area. Review radius covered by the current CFR Schemes 	March 2022	MUC NIAS CFR Schemes	<p>There are 4 CFR Schemes in the MUC area – Slaughtneil, Broughderg & Armagh and Tyrone, Killeeshil and Galbally CFR Schemes. The 3 schemes accounts for approx. 80 volunteers.</p> <p>CFR schemes were suspended from March 2020 due to pandemic. Armagh and Tyrone, Killeeshil and Galbally, and Slaughtneil are live again from Dec 2020</p>	<p>Broughderg Scheme closed in Oct 2020 as they did not have enough volunteers to sustain the Scheme.</p> <p>Slaughtneil has been renamed Carntogher.</p> <p>Both Armagh & Tyrone & Killeeshil & Galbally continue to respond.</p> <p>A new CFR Scheme has commenced called Mid-ulster and has 9 volunteers currently covering an area from Knockloughrim towards Cookstown.</p> <p>There has also been interest from Kildress in setting up a new Scheme. This is currently on hold due to capacity within the NIAS Community Resus Team to deliver the training.</p> <p>See link below to CFR areas. CFR Scheme map areas</p>	

F2	Work in partnership with NIAS to maintain and extend as appropriate the existing First responder schemes in the Mid Ulster Council area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss ways of communicating the role of CFR Volunteers with MUC residents. • Discuss how these schemes can be best supported. 	June 2022	NIAS MUC CFR Schemes	<p>Information added to MUDC website on Community Live Saving https://www.midulstercouncil.org/resident/health-wellbeing/community-life-saving</p> <p>Slaughtneil has been extended to cover Swatragh</p> <p>Consider the Council magazine to profile the CFR's and also the area they cover and the purpose of the Scheme.</p> <p>Oct 2021 – All Schemes are live again and new recruits will be trained in Killeeshil & Galbally in November 2021.</p>	Completed	
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F3	Obtain statistical information for ambulance response times within MUC area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide annual statistics of ambulance response times across the MUC Area. 	Annually in Sept	NIAS MUC	<p>2018/19 NIAS stats are:</p> <p>27.2% of Category A calls responded to within 8 mins. The target is 72.5% of Cat A calls should be responded to within 8 mins.</p> <p>Oct 2021 – All stats on hold in NIAS</p>	On hold - NIAS do not have this information.	
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DRAFT

AED's/PAD							
	Objective	Actions	Due date	Responsible	Progress	Oct 2023 Final Update	RAG Status
	STATIC						
A1	All organisations across business, statutory, Community and Voluntary sectors who own an AED will register it with Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, ensure it is 'Emergency Ready' & consider making it publically available 24/7 where appropriate	Scope the locations and numbers of Council owned AEDs and register them with NIAS	June 2021	MUC	Who has responsibility for AEDs in the Council facility? Are all council owned AED's registered? MUDC AED procedure developed and approved.	Completed	
		Map the number of staff CPR & AED trained across all Council locations	Dec 2021	MUC		Completed	
		Encourage organisations and businesses across the Borough to register their AED with NIAS	June 2022	NIAS MUC SportNI	Information on MUDC website Partners to raise awareness and publicise	Completed	

				<p>Defibrillator campaign to encourage defib guardians to register on “The Circuit” 2021</p> <p>An MLA is progressing a Private Members bill to have AEDs made mandatory in public buildings</p> <p>Consider Tobacco Control Officers advising businesses of registration if there is an AED on the premises and NIFRS officers advising businesses as part of fire risk assessments.</p> <p>Oct 2021 – BHF are running a campaign ‘Is your defib on the map?’ which will run from 22nd Oct to 22nd</p>	
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					Nov 2021. TCO's have received awareness regarding defibs and now have an AED flyer to give to business owners regarding having a defib and registering it.		
	Baseline number of AEDs in the MUC area	March 2019	NIAS	September 2018 – 120 registered Sept 2019 – 162 registered Jan 2021- 179 Oct 2021 – 211 (on map as emergency ready)	Final update - 263 defibs registered on the Circuit.		
	All partners to have access to the AED Guidance document and awareness of how to register AEDs on the NIAS website	Dec 2019	All partners	AED Guidance and the AED map link has been made available to all partners. AED map link on	Completed		

				MUDC website		
		Identify gaps of AED provision across MUDC to enable prioritisation of resource.	Dec 2021	All partners	Requests for AEDs will be assessed using the NIAS interactive map to ensure an equal spread across the District.	Completed
		Mid Ulster Council to consider the development of an AED policy/guidelines for Council owned AEDs.	June 2020	MUC NIAS	<p>NIAS are in the process of developing a template which all councils will be able to adapt to their needs</p> <p>Jan 2021- MUDC have adapted the NIAS document and have an approved procedure in place</p> <p>Oct 2021- MUDC have purchased new defibrillators</p>	Completed

Business							
Objective	Actions	Due date	Responsible	Progress	Oct 2023 Final Update	RAG Status	
B1	Businesses within the MUDC area will consider supporting the Chain of Survival concept for local communities and schools	<p>Explore the potential of the following with businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsoring an Advert on a Community AED to help fund the purchase of it Sponsor AEDs for Community First Responder Schemes Sponsor CPR training equipment for Schools wishing to teach CPR 	June 2022	<p>MUC</p> <p>NIAS</p> <p>Chamber of commerce</p> <p>Business in the Community</p>	<p>Further discussions are required as how this can be progressed.</p> <p>Letter to Chamber of Commerce? Invite to next meeting?</p>	On hold - Nothing further actioned since Covid Pandemic	

COMMUNICATION							
	Objective	Actions	Due date	Responsible	Progress	Oct 2023 Final Update	RAG Status
M1	Communicate effectively the collaboration with all partners in Building a Community of Lifesavers in MUC area	<p>Develop a Communication plan</p> <p>Develop key messages for all Communication channels</p> <p>Identify survivor stories</p> <p>Present on the Community Resuscitation Action Plan to Elected Members</p> <p>Discuss the language used regarding defibrillators and CPR</p>	<p>June 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MUDC</p> <p>All partners</p> <p>NIAS</p>	<p>DEC 19- NIAS attended MUDC Environment Committee</p> <p>Regular updates to Env Committee taking place</p>	<p>On hold – There has been no further updates.</p>	

M2	Restart a Heart week will be actively promoted and CPR awareness activities carried out.	All partners will play an active part in the promotion and delivery of CPR Awareness on World Restart a Heart week (16 th October)	April 2023	All partner organisations	<p>2018</p> <p>2019 https://www.midulstercouncil.org/news/news-archive/news-items-2019/october-2019/hundreds-more-join-mid-ulster-s-community-of-life</p> <p>2020- Very different this year, virtual messages shared via social media.</p> <p>MUDC shared messages from Resus Council social media posts had a total reach of 7464, with 172 engagements.</p> <p>BHF, Sport NI and NIAS all shared messages via their platforms during this week</p> <p>Oct 2021 - RSAH due</p>	<p>On Hold - Due to capacity in the NIAS Community Resus Team RSAH activities have not taken place unless independently by individual organisations.</p>	
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					to Covid restrictions and capacity within the Community Resus team has been very limited, mainly media related only.		
M3	To explore a mechanism of support for those affected by an Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest	Adopt research evidence regarding emotional support for those who attempt CPR and those who survive an Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest	December 2022	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service All partners	Oct 2021 – NIAS has been in discussions with Sudden Cardiac Arrest UK nationally and Alana Laverty (Cardiac Network Co-ordinator for NI) regarding the current pathway for PHCA survivors. Resus Council UK are developing a quality standard to highlight what care is expected following an OHCA. NIAS are part of this group and work is ongoing.	On Hold - NIAS were involved in the development of a resource for those who have witnessed or attempted resuscitation. This is available on the Sudden Cardiac Arrest UK website. Sudden Cardiac Arrest UK leaflet	

Report on	1. Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 20.03.2023 2. Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes – 29.03.2023
Date of Meeting	16 November 2023
Reporting Officer	Assistant Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Strategic Programmes

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide Members with an update on key activities as detailed below.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 20 March 2023</p> <p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum was established in March 2019. It is a partnership of public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations working together to deliver a range of strategic economic actions to develop Coalisland town.</p>
2.2	<p>Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes – 29 March 2023</p> <p>Maghera Town Centre Forum was established in August 2018. The forum meets on a regular basis allowing Council to work in partnership with agencies, businesses and community and voluntary groups to ensure Maghera can achieve its full potential.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 20 March 2023</p> <p>To present the minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on 20 March 2023 (Appendix 1).</p>
3.2	<p>Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes – 29 March 2023</p> <p>To present the minutes of Maghera Town Centre Forum held on 29 March 2023 (Appendix 2).</p>

4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial None
	Human Officer time
	Risk Management None
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments None
	Equality & Good Relations Implications None
5.0	Recommendation(s)
	It is recommended that Members;
5.1	Coalisland Town Centre Forum Minutes – 20.03.2023 Note minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum held on 20 March 2023.
5.2	Maghera Town Centre Forum Minutes – 29.03.23 Note minutes of Maghera Town Centre Forum held on 29 March 2023.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum – 20.3.23 Appendix 2 – Minutes of Maghera Town Centre Forum – 29.3.23



Minutes of Coalisland Town Centre Forum Meeting

Monday 20th March 2023 at 5.30pm

Microsoft Teams

Present

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Cllr Niamh Doris | Mid Ulster District Council (Chair) |
| 2. Cllr Niall McAleer | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 3. Francie Molloy MP | Coalisland Residents & Community Forum |
| 4. Avril Sharkey | Department for Communities |
| 5. Evan Maxwell | PSNI |
| 6. Dermot McGirr | Translink |
| 7. Patricia Toner | Sole Sister |

In Attendance

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| 8. Colin McKenna | Mid Ulster District Council |
| 9. Emma Hughes | Mid Ulster District Council |

DISCUSSION	
Apologies	
Cllr Dan Kerr	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Robert Colvin	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Joe O'Neill	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Malachy Quinn	Mid Ulster District Council
Adrian McCreesh	Mid Ulster District Council
Fiona McKeown	Mid Ulster District Council
Michael McGibbon	Mid Ulster District Council
Raymond Lowry	Mid Ulster District Council
Seamus Warnock	Mid Ulster District Council
Johnny McNeill	Mid Ulster District Council
Raymond O'Neill	Eden Blooms (Vice Chair)
Melanie Campbell	Coalisland Community and Voluntary Representative

APPENDIX 1

	<p>Connor Lowe Sharon McGowan Ursula Marshall Lesley Maxwell Brian O’Neill</p>	<p>Frank McGirr’s Department for Communities Mid Ulster Disability Forum Department for Infrastructure Coalisland Credit Union</p>
<p>1.</p>	<p>Cllr N Doris, the Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting – Monday 16th January 2023 Proposed by Cllr N Doris Seconded by F Molloy and agreed: The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 16th January 2023 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Matters Arising from Previous Meeting – Monday 16th January 2023 Cllr N Doris asked Council Officers for updates on the following matters arising:</p> <p><i>3.1 Tourist Information Point</i> C McKenna advised that a meeting took place on Friday 3rd February 2023 and a location was decided within the Civic Space. Installation is to be in this financial year so the Tourist Information Point is expected to be installed by 31st March 2023.</p> <p><i>3.2 Land Issues DfC / Mid Ulster District Council</i> C McKenna updated Members about the query in relation to land issues – the lands are in the Brackaville/Derry Road area which are located outside the town centre boundary. He advised that the relevant Council Officers have been contacted and asked DfC representative whether any contact had been made. A Sharkey reported that no contact has been made yet but that it would be better if consultation with Council could be at the start of the new financial year in April. C McKenna stated that it would be useful to pass on the relevant Council Officers’ contact details so that direct contact could be made. Action: C McKenna to forward relevant contact information to A Sharkey</p> <p><i>3.3 Gateway signage</i></p>	

	<p>C McKenna informed Members that the gateway signage for the districts towns and villages hasn't been agreed at Council level yet. However, when signage is agreed, it will be one uniform sign for the District.</p> <p><i>3.4 Fly posting</i></p> <p>E Hughes reported that fly posting falls under planning legislation. This is a reactive service and therefore a complaint needs to be raised. The complaint is with the Planning Enforcement Team ref: LA09/2023/0071/CA and she will update Members at the next meeting of any progress. F Molloy stated that the fly posting was unsightly on the fencing and it any progress on this would be welcomed.</p> <p>Action: E Hughes to monitor progress of fly posting complaint and report to Members at next meeting.</p> <p><i>3.5 Coalisland Town Centre Forum Constitution</i></p> <p>C McKenna advised Members that the Coalisland Town Centre Forum Terms of Reference state that the agreed number of members is 19. As there are some members unavailable to attend meetings, C McKenna suggested that this could be re-evaluated so that new Members could be given the opportunity to sit on this forum. F Molloy agreed that new membership would be advantageous and put forward a recommendation of a possible member who works in the town.</p> <p><i>3.6 Town boundaries</i></p> <p>E Hughes informed Members that as per advice from DfC and Mid Ulster District Council's Planning Team, the town centre boundaries are determined by the Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan. The area plan is currently being revised by the Mid Ulster District Council's Planning Team. It was advised that businesses within the town centre boundary fall within different planning legislation. Cllr N Doris recommended that there should be consultation with local businesses outside of the town centre boundary to see if there is support for progressing this.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Town Centre Updates - C McKenna updated Members</p> <p><i>Coalisland Public Realm</i> – The final accounts are being finalised ahead of approval which is expected in April 2023.</p>

	<p><i>Coalisland Revitalisation</i> – no further updates. Snag review is ongoing until retention ends.</p> <p>Mid Ulster Gift Card</p> <p>C McKenna updated Members with the Programme Summary Report to 20th March 2023. C McKenna stated that the Mid Ulster Gift Card is keeping money in our district.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Constable Maxwell informed Members of the current crime trends. Due to reports of incidents along the canal walk, there has been increased patrols along the path and in the town.</p> <p>There has been an increase of shoplifting in the local supermarkets, Newell Stores and Springisland. PSNI are running workshops for local businesses to help tackle this. Constable Maxwell advised that there is an increased police presence in the town due to ongoing matters in the area.</p> <p>Cllr N Doris asked if any Members had any issue which they would like to raise.</p> <p>C McKenna updated Members in relation to the query about carbon monoxide levels on Main Street/King’s Row. Environmental Health are aware of the air testing request for Coalisland. They are intending to get the monitoring installed within the next month or so. The testing is carried out over a 12-month period to take the seasonal changes into account. C McKenna will update Members at the next meeting of any progress.</p> <p>Action: C McKenna to get an update regarding the carbon monoxide/air testing query and report to Members at next meeting.</p> <p>C McKenna informed Members that this was the last meeting for Cllr N Doris. He thanked her on behalf of the Council for all her work and wished her success in her future endeavours. F Molloy also thanks Cllr N Doris for all her work.</p>

APPENDIX 1

	<p>Cllr N Doris said that it had been a pleasure serving the community of Coalisland and that she was particularly proud of the Public Realm work and the new Christmas tree.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 17.58pm</p>
6.	Date of Next Meeting TBC

MINUTES OF MAGHERA TOWN CENTRE FORUM

**Wednesday 29 March 2023 at 12:30pm
Via Microsoft Teams**

Present:

Cllr Brian McGuigan	Mid Ulster District Council (Chair)
Cllr Sean McPeake	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Cora Corry	Mid Ulster District Council
Cllr Martin Kearney	Mid Ulster District Council
Conall McKee	Department for Infrastructure
Michael McCrory	Mid Ulster District Council
Una Morgan	The Dugout
Gary Burns	Maghera Development Association
Kieran Bradley	Walsh's Hotel
Ursula Marshall	Mid Ulster Disability Forum

In Attendance:

Anne Marie Campbell	Mid Ulster District Council
Terry Scullion	Mid Ulster District Council
Fiona McKeown	Mid Ulster District Council
James Donnelly	Mid Ulster District Council
Colin McKenna	Mid Ulster District Council
Paul McCreedy	Mid Ulster District Council
Davina McCartney	Mid Ulster District Council

Apologies:

Sharon McGowan	Department for Communities
James Armour	Maghera Historical Society
Kyle Lucas	PSNI
Johnny Graham	Department for Infrastructure

	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1.	WELCOME Chairperson Cllr B McGuigan welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING - Wednesday 14 th October 2021 Proposed: Cllr Sean McPeake Seconded: Cllr Cora Corry	
3.	MAGHERA REGENERATION PROJECT - LEVELLING UP FUNDING UPDATE G Burns congratulated Council on securing the Levelling Up funding for Maghera Regeneration Project, which he felt was long overdue and much needed in Maghera.	

	<p>Anne Marie Campbell explained the background to the scheme and Davina McCartney delivered a presentation on the scheme.</p> <p>G Burns asked would there be a complete circular walking route around the town following completion of the wetland park. Cllr B McGuigan confirmed there would be a number of interconnected walkways around the town.</p> <p>G Burns congratulated the team on the fantastic high level concept.</p> <p>U Marshall asked that Mid Ulster Disability Forum be included in the development of the Wetlands Park plans. Also that the Disability Forum is allowed to comment on the change for a one way scheme to a two way scheme and the impact on footpath widths.</p> <p>Cllr S McPeake also queried the footpath widths and if the further community consultation and would delay the project's progress.</p> <p>D McCartney explained the change from a one way to a two way system would not impact on the footpath widths proposed in the original scheme but on the car parking arrangements that would be accommodated at St Mary's Church. She also explained that the community engagement would not delay scheme progress it was simply about keeping people informed about what was happening.</p> <p>Anne Marie Campbell stated a stakeholder engagement plan was being developed for the project.</p> <p>G Burns said he was disappointed that the proposed one way system was not going ahead as originally proposed and feels this is missing a once in a generational opportunity to improve traffic flow in Maghera.</p> <p>Cllr C Corry stated she agreed with Ursula's comments and asked if there was more consultation planned for the Wetland Park Project.</p> <p>AM Campbell stated there would be further consultation / engagement as the project progressed and that is was really important to get agreement on the whole project as all three elements need to be delivered. She asked that everyone gets behind the project and supports the Council Officers to deliver it on the ground.</p>	
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APPENDIX 2

	C McKee said they were very keen to see the Public Realm Scheme completed to allow them to follow on with the roads resurfacing.	
4.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING To be circulated.	