

Report on	DAERA: Environmental Challenge Fund 2020/2021
Date of Meeting	Thursday 12 th November 2020
Reporting Officer	N Hill Head of Parks
Contact Officer	A Reid Parks & Countryside Development 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 accept Funding Offer from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs: Environment Challenge Competition 2020/21 successful application for the redevelopment of Ballyronan Wood.
2.0	Background
2.1	Ballyronan Marina & Caravan Park is due to undergo extensive refurbishment this year. This has been made possible from funding secured from Rural Development Programme. These refurbishments will provide significant improvements to visitor reception and existing children's play facilities, public trails and walkways, vehicular access entrance and car parking on the site. The introduction of floating houseboat accommodation units and improvements to existing jetties and slipways will form part of the proposed refurbishment works at Ballyronan marina.
2.2	Further to this development there has been a requirement to develop Ballyronan Wood within the site. The woodland walk was first created in the early 1980s and since there has undergone minor repairs. The woodland walk is prone to seasonal closures due to flooding, given its close proximity to the Lough.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	In July 2020 an application was made to DAERA: Environment Challenge Competition 2020/21 to redevelop the woodland within Ballyronan as a quality off road multi-use 1km trail. The project plans has a long-term aim to link Ballyronan with Traad point, as land access and funding opportunities are identified.
3.2	Ballyronan Wood is Phase 1 in this long-term project. It is envisaged that at the start of the trail there will be an interpretation panel depicting the flora & fauna of the area. The trail will be way-marked, and eco-plastic boardwalk in sections where flooding is prevalent. The trail will have bench seating and art work throughout. The woodland will also contain bird and bat boxes.

3.3	The total cost of the project is £81,000.00. The application to DAREA has been successful and a letter of offer has been awarded to Council for £40,500. This is to cover 50% of the funding required to see the project to completion. The project must be completed by the 31 st March 2021. The redevelopment of Ballyronan Wood will significantly enhance the current Ballyronan Development Project.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: DAERA: Environment Challenge Competition 2020/21 Secured funding £40,500 (50%) MUDC contribution £40,500 (Outdoor Recreation Strategy included in agreed capital programme)
	Human: Human: Existing staff resources sufficient to coordinate project support. No additional staffing resource required.
	Risk Management: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members approval is sought to accept the DAERA Environmental Challenge Fund 2020/2021 funding opportunity as per the Letter of Offer.
5.2	That Council approve the allocation of match funding £40,500 to the Ballyronan Wood redevelopment from the Councils Outdoor Recreation Five year Strategic Plan capital programme allocation.
5.3	Members approval is sought for the appointment of suitably qualified ICT and IST for the delivery of associated consultancy and contract works services.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	DAERA Environmental Challenge Fund 2020/2021 funding opportunity as per the Letter of Offer.