

Report on	Ulster Way
Date of Meeting	15 th September 2022
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Anne Reid, Parks & Countryside Development Officer

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Council on the current insurance for Ulster Way and to seek permission to enter into a Permissive Path Agreement with one number landowner for the lands to the north east of Eagles Rock, Moydamlaght Forest.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Ulster Way is a long distance walk made up of a series of trails throughout Northern Ireland which total 636 miles (1,024km). It encircles the province and takes in all six counties as well as a small portion of trail in Donegal.
2.2	Within MUDC there are two sections of Ulster Way, one within the Sperrins and one within the wider Aughnacloy area. Map enclosed within Appendix A.
2.3	The insurance for Ulster Way across NI commenced approx. 2004 as a concerted regional effort was made to open up recreational trails and paths for the public in a bid to increase access to the countryside.
2.4	The initiative was launched by NIEA. The NIEA funded Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI) annually to take out insurance to indemnify private landowners for parts of the Ulster way that was on private land and where no access agreement existed. In 2017, NIEA cut this funding to ORNI and ORNI continued to cover the cost of the insurance, however some ORNI Board members felt that it was a cost that should have been borne by Councils as it is outside of ORNI's remit. ORNI Board has now taken decision not to renew the insurance due to increased costs as per recent letter issued (appendix B). ORNI have advised that there have not been any claims against this policy since it was taken out.
2.5	Within MUDC, the portion of Ulster Way on private land where no access agreement is in place equates to approx 1.3km. It is understood that this section is in the ownership of one number landowner. This is the section of Ulster Way that ORNI's insurance policy covered within MUDC.
2.6	Over the years there would have been maintenance and inspections of the Ulster Way route, in subsequent the inspection was carried out by ORNI volunteers. This however is no longer the case.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Council has made contact with the one number landowner to the north east of Moydamlaght Forests. This section of ground equates to approx 1.3km. Permission is sought to enter into a Permissive Path Agreement (PPA) with this landowner.
3.2	Under a PPA, the landowner still owns the land however the Council is responsible for the maintenance and insurance of the pathway. The next stage of the project is to secure landowner agreement through Council's Parks & Countryside Development Officer and Legal team.
3.3	As these landowner discussions progress, it is requested to add this section of the Ulster Way (approx 1.3km) to Council's insurance
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Additional financial costs may be required to add the additional 1.3km to Council insurance (anticipated to be minimal or none at all due to it being such a small distance) The path crosses open heath and requires little regular maintenance. The path is for experienced hill walkers only and is advertised as such.
	Human: There are no additional Council human resources implications associated with this project.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant policies and procedures as part of the entire project.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Considered in line with Council's policies and procedures.
	Rural Needs Implications: Considered in line with Council's policies and procedures.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To grant permission to enter into a Permissive Path Agreement with one number land owner on the lands to the north east of Moydamlaght Forest.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A – Ulster Way Map Appendix B – ORNI Insurance Letter