

Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership Scheme – Saving Nature Programme

‘Restoration, Conservation and Protection of the SW Peatlands at Derrylaughan’



Presentation to Mid Ulster Council's
Development Committee

Thursday 1st October 2020

Mr Gerry Darby & Dr William Burke

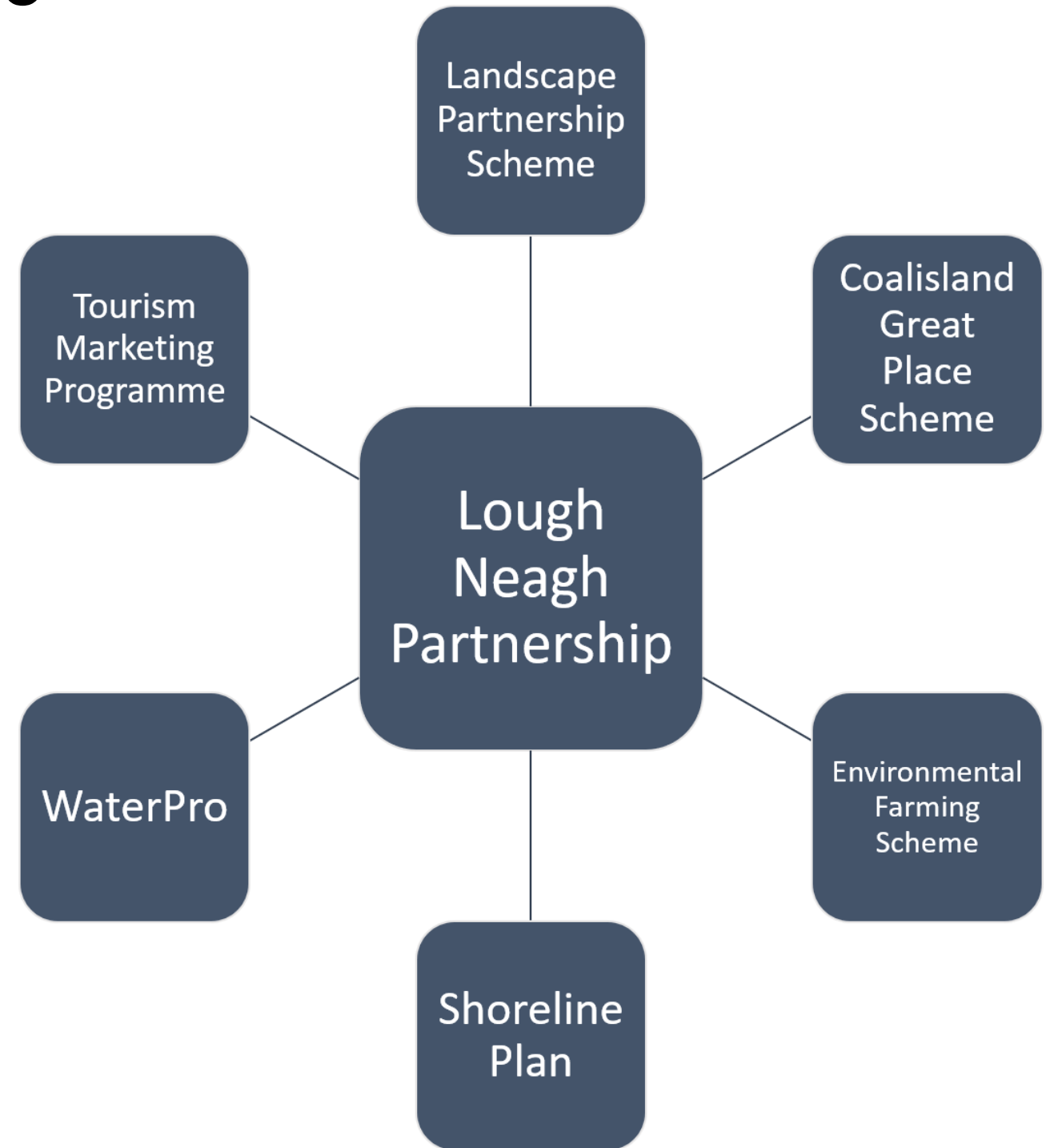


Lough Neagh Partnership – Who we are and what we do

Aim to coordinate a range of activities that can make a significant impact on the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the Lough Neagh area.

Work across five strategic thematic areas

- Tourism promotion
- Environmental protection, enhancement and sustainability
- Heritage conservation, management and promotion
- Leisure, recreation and safety
- Attracting investment and financial sustainability
- £14 million + secured since 2014





What is the LNLP Scheme?

- Developed with strategic partners to address the heritage needs of the Lough and its shoreline on a holistic integrated landscape basis
- Partnership project supported by HLF, Councils, government, environmental organisations and local community stakeholders
- Investment of £3.52 million over 5 years
- Covers an area of 405 km² and has the Lough Neagh wetlands, archaeology and people at its heart
- Contains 27 projects that relate directly to the conservation of the Lough's cultural, built and natural heritage

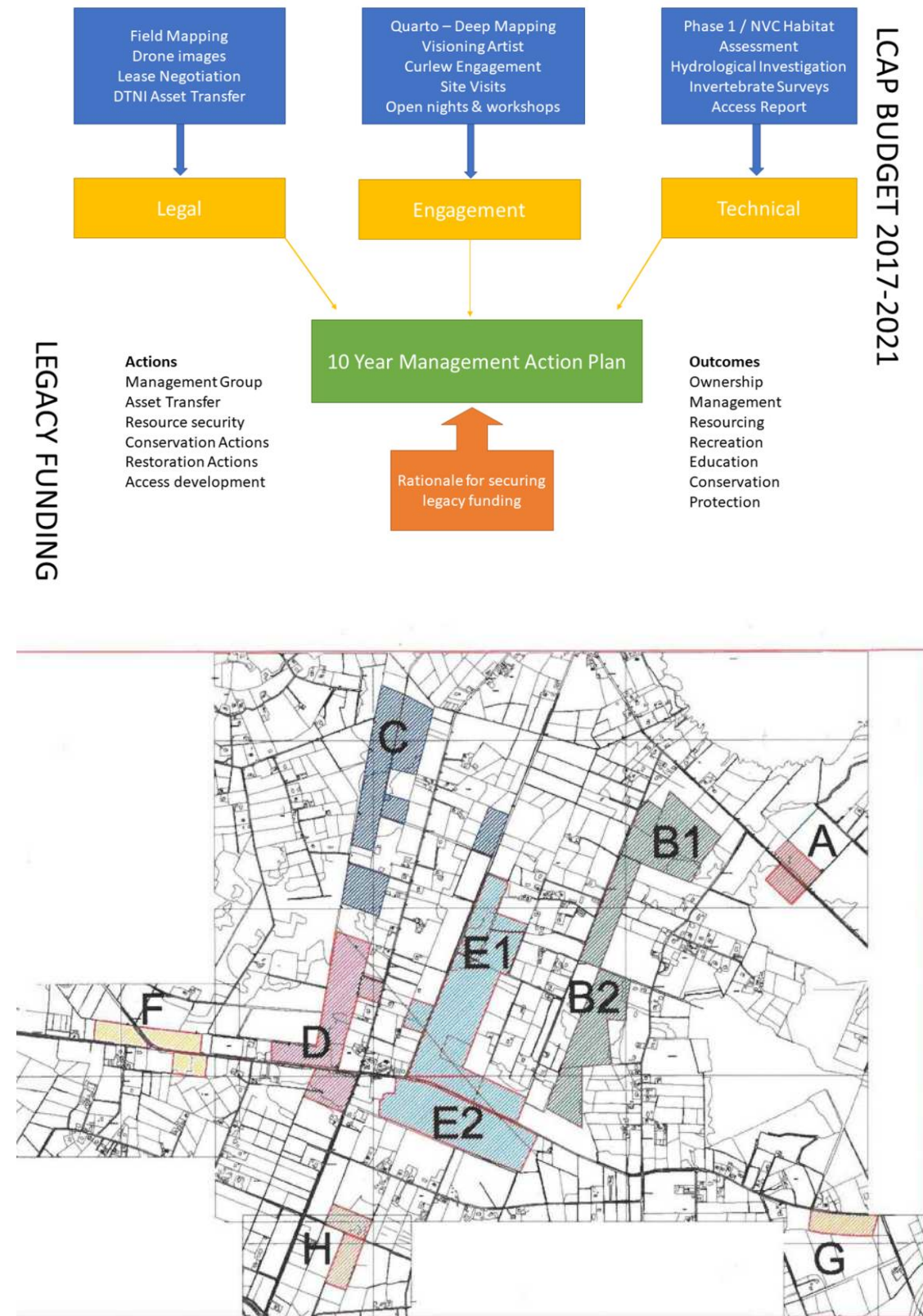
South West Peatlands

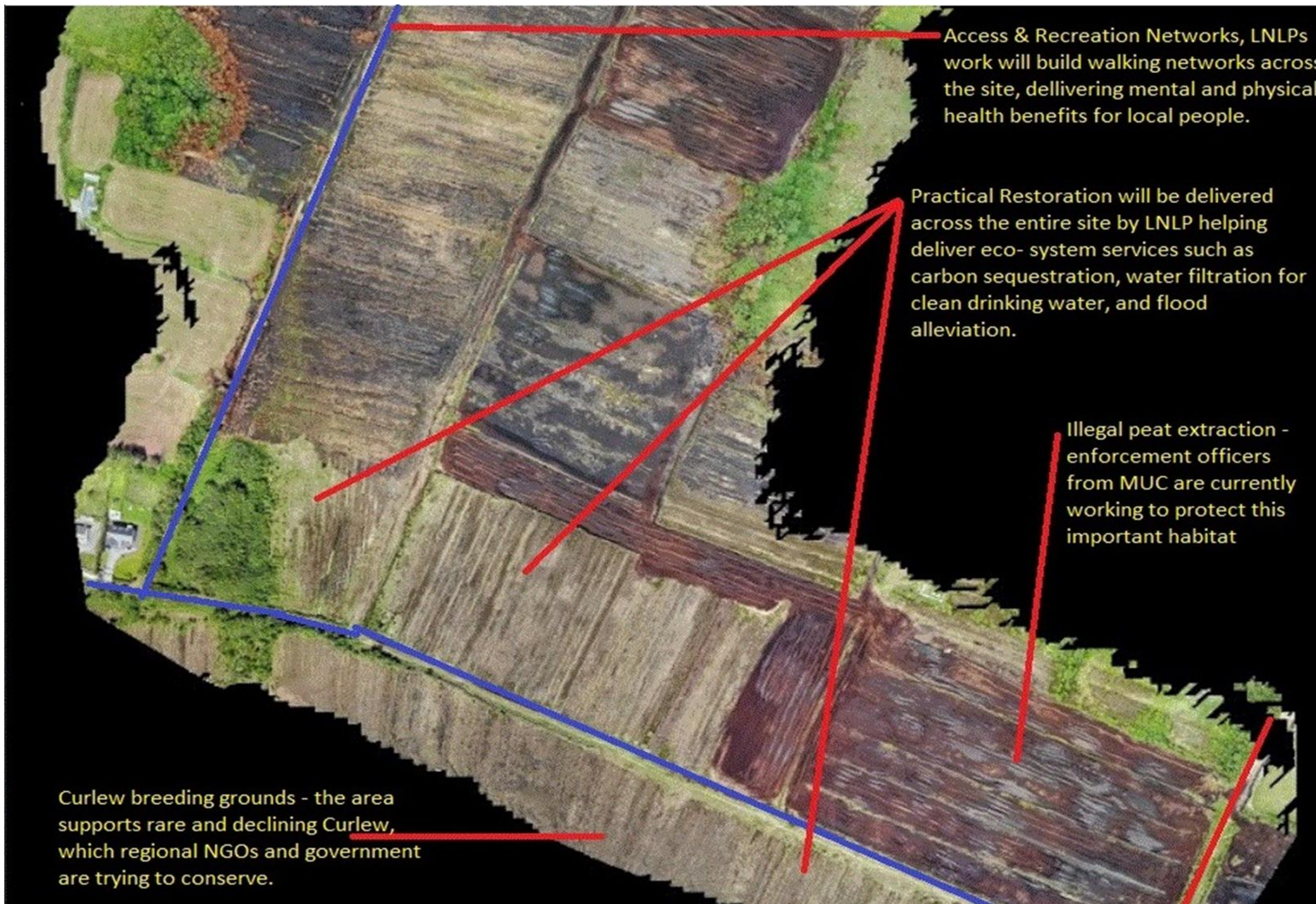


The study area encompasses a mosaic of lowland (mostly cut-over) raised bog and semi-improved grassland interspersed with alder-dominated woodland and scrub with low density rural settlements south west of Washing Bay

Dept. of Education Lands

- 300 + acres
- 20yr lease from 2020 – 2040
- £200,000 + investment by LNP
- Habitat surveys
- Hydrological assessment
- Species surveys
- Access plan
- Community engagement through 'Deep Mapping'
- Schools engagement
- Art programmes





Access & Recreation Networks, LNLPs work will build walking networks across the site, delivering mental and physical health benefits for local people.

Practical Restoration will be delivered across the entire site by LNLP helping deliver eco- system services such as carbon sequestration, water filtration for clean drinking water, and flood alleviation.

Illegal peat extraction - enforcement officers from MUC are currently working to protect this important habitat

Curlew breeding grounds - the area supports rare and declining Curlew, which regional NGOs and government are trying to conserve.



Curlew Conservation

- Our work aims to:
- Clarify the number, distribution and breeding status of Curlew Territories in the area
- Record the behaviour of breeding Curlew
- Identify nests, nesting attempts and nest outcomes
- Identify any potential threats to adults, nests, eggs/chicks or fledged young
- Align with national conservation actions and targets to protect this remnant population and prevent local extinction

Assessment of current access position: Condition Surveys, constraints, and opportunities

Accessibility rating: A traffic-light rating of each surveyed segment indicating its suitability as a recreational trail for walking, based on its particular attributes.

- Accessible
- Accessible with works
- Not viable as a walking trail

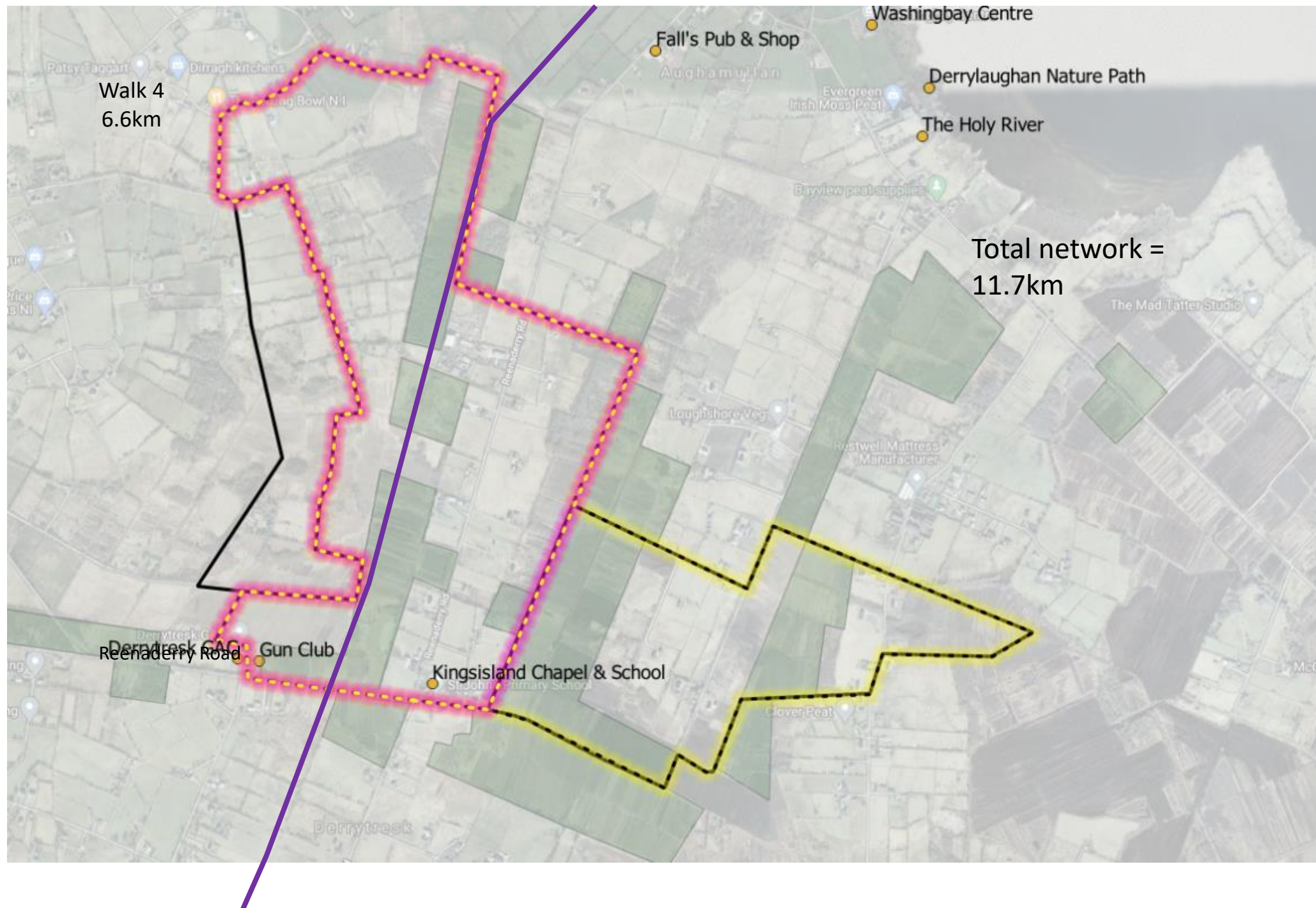


Context will be important.
Ramparts as walking routes will not fit normal trail standards

Reenaderry Road

Access development opportunities

A main framework of two loop walks, plus connecting links to create one big loop, opening up a fourth loop walk option with no further development:





Moving Forward 1: Registration of lands belonging to Dept. of Education with Land and property Services.

- LNLP paid for a cartographer to map the area of lands that DoE had outlined they owned in summer 2019 – with a view to submitting these lands to Land and Property services and obtaining a qualified title.
- This process would confirm the lease and allow progress on practical restoration works as well as helping us secure legacy funding.
- Assistance requested from Elected Members' to:
 - Contact the Land and Property Services re **Application No 2019/964799**, submitted by Department of Education for qualified title in Nov 2019.
 - Request details of the progression of the registration
 - Emphasise the importance of completion of the registration process for the benefit of the project and community.



Moving Forward 2: Address issues around illegal peat milling on the lease area.

- Peat is being extracted from the lease area without permission from the land owner DoE, and without planning permission from Mid Ulster Council
- This extraction started before the project sought the lease on the area and cannot continue in light of the natural heritage restoration objectives of the project.
- LNLP are not seeking to stop any of the legally permitted peat extraction sites in the area, and seek to support MUDC with their objectives for peatland conservation set out in their Local Development Plan 2030
- Assistance requested from Elected Members' to:
 - Seek information on how Planners are managing this breach of planning permission.
 - Request that Planners keep LNLP updated on the progression of enforcement actions on the site



Moving Forward 3: Securing future investment post 2021.

- The current funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund runs to June 2021.
- Lough Neagh Partnership are keen to continue the works that have been delivered in the area, with another phase of works which support the restoration of the peatlands & wildlife, delivers cultural engagement for community, and access to the site through the development of walking routes.
- LNP have been actively consulting with partner organisations, and funding bodies to secure future investment.
- Assistance requested from Elected Members' to:
 - Consider and recognise the SW Peatlands as a community asset that contributes to Council's heritage, recreation and healthy living community planning objectives.



Moving Forward 4 Request to provide full detailed presentation on all of the work of the Lough Neagh Partnership

-
- Request for LNP to give update to explain all work of Partnership and detail strategic future plans to full Council committee

Thanks very much