

West Bay, Portrush – Beach Access Infrastructure Improvements	13th November 2018
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing our Environments and Assets Promote our tourism offer locally and internationally Prosperity, Health and Wellbeing and Cohesive Community
Outcome	Improved access to our natural environment. Development of visitor economy and health and well-being opportunities.
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism & Recreation
Cost: (If applicable)	Not known

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to proceed to, and complete on, Stage 1 of the Council's Capital Investment process for works at West Bay, Portrush. (Feasibility study, site investigation and project specification).

Background

Emergency repair works were undertaken to West Bay Promenade earlier in 2018 as a result of subsidence caused by degradation to part of the revetment wall. Subsequently additional works have been identified to provide improved and safe long term access to the beach from the promenade.

Council has received requests/complaints in the past from members of the public about the condition of the access ramp at the Black Rocks end of the beach, including calls to consider installing disabled access at this ramp. A similar proposal was considered as part of the West Bay promenade improvement scheme approximately 5 years ago but, due to budget restrictions, it was decided not to proceed with this element of the overall scheme.

West Bay is a popular beach all year round, especially with water sports enthusiasts. RNLI beach lifeguards now operate 2 units on this beach, one to the north of Castle Erin, and the other to the south. At this access point to the beach one side of the ramp is permanently inaccessible due to failure in infrastructure and at the other access point Officials need to closely monitor sand levels and close the access when levels fall below the point where the ramp meets the beach (again due to failed infrastructure).

Officers are preparing a specification to undertake long term repair works to the revetment and toe beam that forms part of the West Bay promenade. Part of the structure suffered from subsidence earlier in 2018 resulting in emergency repair works being undertaken. Further significant repair works are required to protect the long term integrity of the promenade. In addition, coastal erosion has impacted on the pedestrian access to the beach which has resulted in the access being closed off for safety reasons.

Discussions between the Infrastructure Team and Tourism and Recreation Service have identified the opportunity to improve access to the beach at two locations along the promenade. It would be appropriate to consider incorporating any access repair and/or improvements as part of the wider revetment works.

Project Proposal

Officers propose that Council take the opportunity to potentially enhance the public access to the beach from the promenade by;

1. Providing a ramped access at the western (Black Rocks) end of the promenade to improve accessibility to the beach and comply with access legislation replacing the existing infrastructure.
2. Scoping the feasibility of designing a multi-use ramp at the harbour end of the beach that can facilitate as wide a range of users as possible, to deliver safe and convenient access onto this increasingly popular beach. This should include exploring the idea of making it wide enough to facilitate vehicular access for the tractor and surf rake (beach cleaning equipment) accessing and egressing the beach at this end.

These proposals would be considered as part of the early design works within Stage 1 of the Capital Investment process.

Recommendation

The Leisure and Development Committee is asked to approve the advancement of the West Bay, Portrush Beach Access Infrastructure Improvements project to Stage 1 of the Council's Capital Investment process.