

Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway	12th February 2019
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)	Revenue Costs £25k, grant funded from Dfl. Capital - £5.5m Estimated potential costs.

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Elected Members to proceed to and complete Stage 1 of the Council's Capital Project Management Process for works at Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway. (Feasibility and Outline Business Case)

Introduction

The Bicycle Strategy published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in August 2015 envisaged a community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for everyday journeys. The DfI Strategic Plan for Greenways fulfils a commitment in the Bicycle Strategy to explore the potential for development of greenways. It sets out a high level plan for the region to enable people to link to places locally, regionally and nationally by active modes of travel.

In support of this, DfI have developed a Small Grants Programme for the development of greenway schemes. This competitive scheme is aimed at providing support for council to work up projects that will contribute to a step change in greenway provision. The programme is a three stage competition which will provide funding for successful Councils to develop feasibility studies and detailed designs for assessment.

Background

In March 2016 a scoping study was completed to assess the potential for the creation of a Greenway between Ballycastle and Ballymoney.

In November 2016 the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) awarded Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council £8,000, under their Small Grants for Greenways Programme, to advance the initial study completed to a feasibility study for consideration by DfI. This work was completed by AECOM consultants and submitted to the Department for further consideration which would allow funding to develop the design aspects. The feasibility study was presented to Council in June 2017.

In August 2017, DfI informed Council that their submission for funding to advance the design had been unsuccessful, however in July 2018 an offer of a small grant towards developing the design aspects was made to Council. This small grant, in the Department's view, would allow the project to progress to project design for implementation. The funding for design costs has been capped at £25,000. Based on the estimated costs for capital implementation of the project (£5m), the total design costs, excluding legal costs and negotiation/acquisition of lands would be approximately 7%, therefore £375,000.

Funding Opportunities

DfI have indicated that it is committed to the development of Greenways across Northern Ireland and that there will be opportunities for local authorities to make applications for both preparatory expenses and potentially avail of capital in relation to such projects.

Next Steps

Part of the Tourism and Recreation Business Plan for 2018/19, agreed by Council, was to continue to assess the feasibility of Greenway development within the Borough along with the development of cycle trails, and whilst several pieces of work have been completed in relation to the potential delivery of a Greenway between Ballycastle and Ballymoney, approval is sought under the Capital Project Management process. At present it sits within the pre-stage 1 project listing. Based on the presentation to Council on 13 June 2017 and the opportunities that have been identified to progress Greenways, Members are asked to consider further progression of this project as part of the Capital Project Management System. (The June 2017 presentation by AECOM is attached for Members information at **Annex A**)

Recommendation

Approval is sought from the Leisure and Development Committee to proceed to and complete Stage 1 of the Council's Capital Project Management Process for works at Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway. (Feasibility and Outline Business Case).

Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway

DfI Stage 2 Assessment

Tim Robinson & Simon Wells

June 2017

AECOM

Introduction

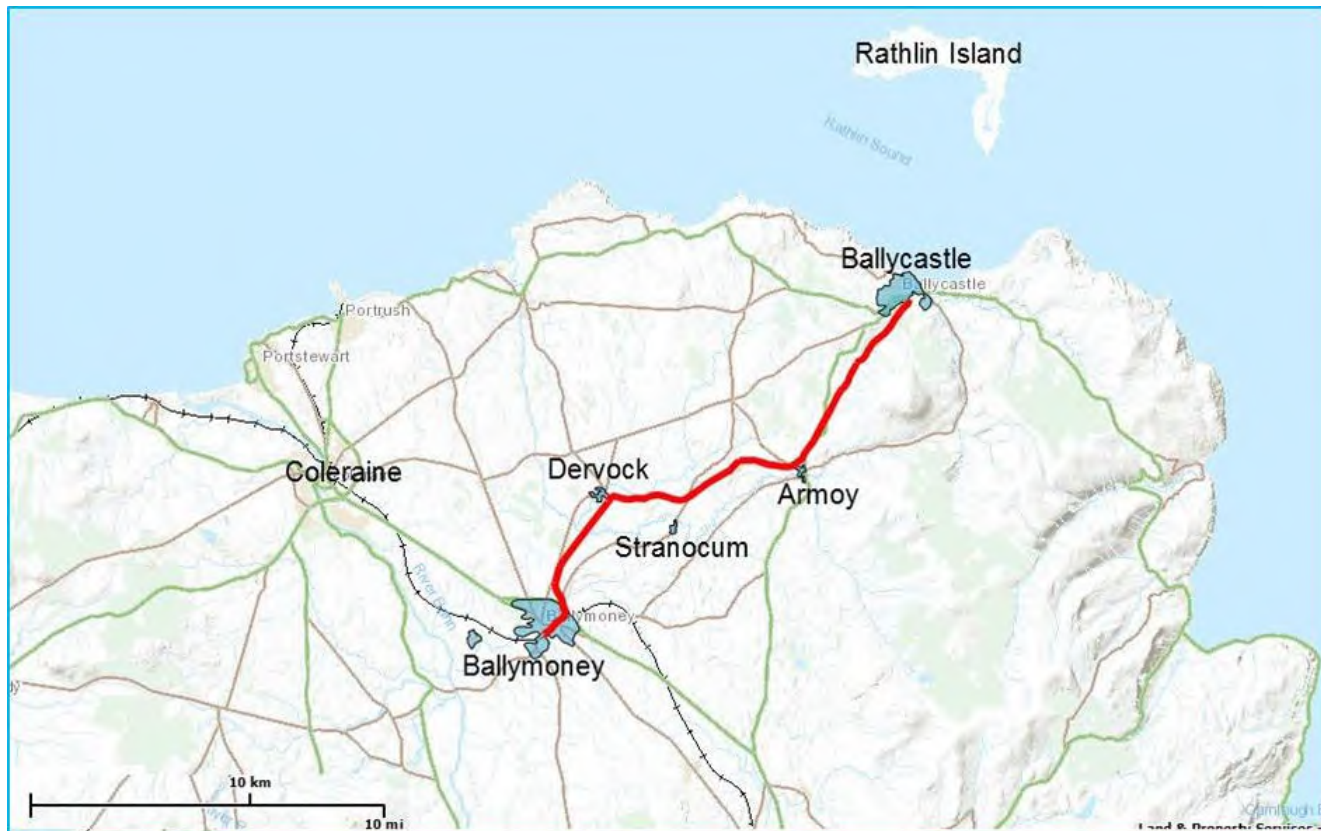
- DfI launch Small Grants Programme August 2016;
- Three-stage design competition:
 - Stage 1 project concept;
 - Stage 2 feasibility study; and
 - Stage 3 detailed design.
- AECOM awarded the commission Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway for Stage 2 Report mid February 2017
- Stage 2 report Submitted mid March 2017.

Study Scope

- Set out the concept and design options;
- Provide a viable outline business case and a delivery plan;
- Include a plan for community engagement; and
- Demonstrate commitment from the Council and other relevant organisations.

The above tasks would build on work already undertaken by Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust into the feasibility of a greenway between the two towns.

Route Alignment



Developing the Concept and Design

Examples of best practice for proposed Greenway:

- Successful use of cycle and shared use paths;
- use of innovative design; and
- construction/ build quality and upkeep/maintenance.

Following the review of Design Guidance and Best Practice, in this section we set out our considerations for key constituents of the greenway proposals, including: Greenway Width, Surface Finish, General Greenway Specification, Lighting, Utilities and Potential Diversions, Road Crossings, Bridges, Farm Access and Farm Activity, Boundary Treatments and Signing and Lining.

Concept Design Options

Data assembled included LiDAR, OSNI DTM, orthophotography, GIS datasets such as road centre lines and building outlines and land ownership boundaries were known.

Data was fed into Autodesk InRoads to provide accurate real world information. As the GIS model is data rich it will be of great benefit to the Council going forward with the project and will avoid reworking when new data is available.

By using GIS information it has highlighted areas or constraints such as ASSI that the works will either need to avoid or have mitigation measures built in.

Concept Design Options

There are no technical challenges that are foreseen that would cause a significant risk to the scheme.

An alternative section between Dervock and Ballymoney is proposed as there are minimal signs of the former railway and would traverse several farms with no advantage when compared to following parallel to the Knock Road which would provide better linkage to access from the North.

The path works are largely repetitive through sections of undeveloped land where services are unlikely to be located. There are no physical barriers that need diversion of infrastructure to be undertaken and the majority of the works will be carried out with standard plant and materials.

Scheme Details

Existing alignments are most visible at the Ballymoney and Ballycastle ends of the greenway.

Proposed to widen and enhance the surface finish as well as provide linkages and better connectivity between these existing sections.

A number of bridges will be required to be constructed or existing bridges widened to facilitate the greenway.

An alternative section between Dervock and Ballymoney is proposed as there are minimal signs of the existing railway. This follows parallel to the Knock Road.

There are no significant technical challenges foreseen that would cause a significant risk to the scheme.

New Bridge Crossings Locations

Road crossings are foreseen to be accommodated by reinstating bridges at existing locations. Example shown below.



Derelict stone bridge on Hillside Road



New Bridge on Hillside Road

Business Case

A preferred option has been identified from Ballymoney to Ballycastle using a high quality asphalt surface.

This option could be delivered at a capital cost of £4,975,364 and also includes revenue costs of £32,000 per annum from FY19/20.

The greenway is forecast to generate 64,000- 75,000 trips per annum.

Monetary benefits are forecast at £694,474 per annum. The benefit to cost ratio (BCR) for the preferred option (Option 3) the BCR is forecast to be 2.03.

Monetary benefits have been considered in terms of the health benefits delivered through increases in physical activity and the local economic impact of expenditure from domestic and out of state visitors using the greenway.

Plan for Community Engagement

We have set out a plan for community engagement at Stage 3.

The plan sets out the content and type consultation that is required to take place and includes a recommended format e.g. meetings with key stakeholders and representatives of identified community groups.

The proposed plan includes a holistic, people-centred approach to engagement and project development will contribute greatly to its success, helping to retain a distinctive local character and ownership which will lead to enhanced use.

Support for Greenway

In order to enhance the Stage 2 application evidence of support for the Greenway has been sourced from a wide variety of sources.

These are predominantly from within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council but also from other groups in the local community.

The Council's Mayor and Chief Executive have cited their personal commitment and support for the scheme, in addition to other bodies such as Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust.

The evidence has demonstrated that support, not only for the Greenway itself, but for active travel in general.

Meeting Dfl Assessment Criteria

As part of the Stage 2 Assessment we reviewed the proposal in the context of the Dfl Assessment Criteria.

The proposals for a Greenway between Ballymoney and Ballycastle are in line with the vision set out in Changing Gear : A Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland, and the Strategic Plan for Greenways.

It is anticipated that the route will bring about an increase in visitors to the area and as such local shops are also likely to benefit economically.

The proposals will also provide an everyday travel option and therefore supports active travel and active lifestyles as set out in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council document Places for People and the Public Health Agency's Making Life Better 2012-2023.

Conclusions

Ballymoney to Ballycastle Greenway is likely to generate a positive uptake for walkers and cyclists and particularly in terms of recreation and leisure.

It sits well with strategic and local policy, in terms of transportation and public health.

These include:

- changes to modal split;
- safety improvements through provision of traffic free routes;
- connecting people and places via cycle and walking; and
- and helping with economic regeneration.

The route design will deliver a range of quantitative and qualitative benefits.

Next Steps

Stage 2 submissions assessed by Dfl.

Successful Stage 2 will be invited to undertake detailed design including more detailed information on:

- Land issues;
- Costs; and
- Materials.

The Stage 3 applications will include:

- A fully worked up project bid for assessment; and
- A presentation of the final proposals to an assessment panel.

Thank You



Capecastle Tunnel near Ballycastle before and after images

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AECOM