

<b>Magheracross Coastal Walking Trailhead and Scenic Viewpoint</b>	<b>11th September 2018</b>
<b>To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Protecting and Enhancing our Environments and Assets Promote our tourism offer locally and internationally Prosperity, Health and Wellbeing and Cohesive Community
<b>Outcome</b>	Improved access to our natural environment. Development of visitor economy and health and well-being opportunities.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Head of Tourism & Recreation
<b>Cost:</b> (If applicable)	£100k approx. to Council (£500k grant aided)

**The purpose of this report is to outline a proposed coastal walking trailhead and scenic viewpoint at Magheracross, Dunluce Road A2 (circa Dunluce Castle) and seek Members' approval to advance the project to Stage 1 of the Council's Capital Investment process (scoping, feasibility and OBC).**

### **Background**

In April 2018 Council Officers presented on the future development approach for the Causeway Coast Way, the 33 mile coastal walking trail connecting Portstewart and Ballycastle. Members' approval was given to pursue the strategic direction outlined in the Blueprint for the Causeway Coast Way and deliver, where possible, recommended interventions detailed.

### **Introduction**

Council Officers have been working with the Rural Development Programme team to identify early win projects in the fulfilment of the strategic vision for the Causeway Coast Way.

Proposed interventions included:

- Identify suitable sites for the development of trail heads at strategic locations along the route.
- Engage with local land owners in an attempt to identify and create off-road sections on coastal farm land.

Assessment of Magheracross car park / viewing point has concluded that the site is ideally positioned for both a trail head for the Causeway Coast Way and as a 'stunning' viewpoint for the car touring route known as the Causeway Coastal Route.

## **Elected Members Consultation**

Officers propose to hold a workshop on Thursday 4th of October 2018 to discuss the proposed detail of this project and a number of possible projects that could advance the strategic objectives for the Causeway Coast Way Blueprint.

### **Funding opportunity.**

An expression of interest has been lodged with the Rural Development Programme's Strategic Tourism Scheme to potentially avail of up to £500,000 capital funding based on a 75% contribution to costs. In conjunction with the Funding Unit the Tourism and Recreation Team and Infrastructure Team will look for additional funding avenues.

### **Possible Works**

With assistance from the Infrastructure Team, Officers have worked on a concept design for the site with key elements for improvement including:

- Bring the on-road walking element of the Causeway Coast Way into the site along the perimeter of the clifftop.
- Create an iconic feature viewpoint looking along coast line with vistas including the limestone cliffs towards Whiterocks and Dunluce Castle.
- Sensitive landscaping and provision made for the Causeway Coast Way to extend eastwards into the Dunluce Castle domain.
- Adjustments to car parking provision to reduce visual impact on the coastline.

### **Next Steps**

Subject to Elected Members' approval, Officers would propose to compile a conceptual design and project feasibility with a view to bringing this back to the Leisure and Development Committee for consideration.

### **Recommendation**

The Leisure and Development Committee is asked to approve the advancement of the Magheracross / Causeway Coast Way project to Stage 1 of the Council's Capital Investment Process.