



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Walking For All Partnership with Outdoor Recreation NI (Outscape)</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	Leisure & Development Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 June 2025
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Decision
<b>To be discussed In Committee</b>	<b>NO</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health.
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

<b>Estimated Timescale for Completion</b>	
Date to be Completed	December 2028

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	£5,028 over 3 years
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	£5,028 over 3 years

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<del>YES</del> /NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	<del>YES</del> /NO

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	n/a
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	n/a

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the SEUPB funding application by Outscape (previously Outdoor Recreation NI) for a “Walking for All” (WFA) project across Northern Ireland, working in partnership with named Councils, including Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 In November 2023 Council approved the following recommendation;

*“...that Council considers the request from ORNI and recommend for approval by Council that CCG agrees to be a named partner in the Outscape (ORNI) Peace Plus “Walking for All” project”.*

2.2 The Outscape/SEUPB project is detailed in **Annex A** – A summary of that document was a request for Councils with rural settlement populations to work in partnership with Outscape to promote the benefits of “led” walking in rural areas as a conduit towards the creation of healthy communities in rural areas, whilst also tackling social isolation and promoting social inclusion. CCGBC focus areas are detailed in **Annex B**.

2.3 The project will be delivered through the employment of an officer to coordinate an Action Plan devised by Outscape throughout the duration of the project. The cost of the officer will be met by funding through the Peace Plus programme, and Councils will act as the employing authority for the local WFA coordinator, providing office space and officer support (line management).

## **3.0 Current Position**

3.1 Outscape have been successful in their funding application to SEUPB which will realise circa €7.5million Peace Plus funding to deliver a community cross border walking programme.

3.2 Included in the above figure is the cost for recruiting and employing Walk Leaders across the participating Councils for the delivery of the area specific Action Plan. The Walk Leader would be expected to be in post from January 2026 to December 2028.

3.3 The original proposal put to Councils in 2023 included 100% funding for the employment costs, and those costs were included in the funding application. However, since the submission of the application, the costs of employment have increased due to changes in the employers national insurance threshold and a cost of living increase in salaries.

3.4 Outscape are now asking all partners to contribute financially to the project to meet the shortfall – calculated at £5,028 over the 3 year period.

## **4.0 Recommendation**

Members are asked to consider this update report on the Walking for All Outscape / Peace Plus project and recommend to Council;

- a) Accept share of the €7.5 million PEACEPLUS funding to deliver a community cross border walking programme.
- b) Recruit and employ a Walking For All Officer for a 3-year period (January 2026 – December 2028).
- c) Contribute financially £5,028 over the 3-year period to make up the shortfall in funding.

## **Annex A**

The proposed project, Walking for All (WFA) is to use led walks as the conduit to contributing to the creation of healthy communities in rural areas whilst also tackling social isolation and promoting enhanced social inclusion.

The project will also create opportunities for sustained, meaningful and purposeful contact between people and groups of different backgrounds, and in so doing will seek to make a direct contribution to peace and prosperity.

The project specifically delivers on

- contributing to the creation of healthy communities (including individuals and entire communities) in rural areas through a health and well-being focused solution.
- providing the opportunities for communities to grow together – economically, socially and culturally.
- helping communities become empowered to address social exclusion ensuring all people have access to quality services and therefore achieving a better quality of life for all.
- encouraging participants to socialise, gain confidence, build relationships in their local communities, interact reducing rural isolation and exclusion and contributing to more peaceful and prosperous rural areas.
- building community networks both cross community and cross border resulting in vibrant, inclusive and sustainable rural communities throughout NI and the border Counties.
- fostering a culture of volunteering – with the project focused on training Volunteer Community Walk Leaders, the project will help build the capacity of rural communities to develop and ultimately sustain activities in their own area.
- supporting rural enterprises e.g coffee shops and supports partnership and collaboration effort at all levels and between all stakeholders involved e.g e NGOs, County Council, County LSP and Local Communities.

This project differs from other existing Council walking initiatives with the focus on training up Volunteer Community Walk Leaders. The Walk Leaders will set up, lead and sustain their own walking groups across the Council area. These Walk Leaders will be supported at every step by Walking For All Coordinators (see below for more detail).

The proposed project is cross border. Confirmed partners in the Republic of Ireland include Sport Ireland and the Local Sports Partnerships of Counites Louth, Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrum and Cavan. Work is progressing with all Councils in NI (except Belfast City Council) to receive partnership support.

The proposed model for the project includes a core staff team of Project Manager, Finance Officer, Training and Communication Officer and three Regional WFA Managers. These positions will be employed by ORNI as the lead partner in the project. In addition, key to the success of the project is employing a local WFA Coordinator in each of the Council areas in NI and in each of the Local Sports Partnerships in the Republic of Ireland.

The role of the Coordinator includes:

- undertaking an audit of all community groups in the widest sense across the Council area  
(e.g sporting clubs, Mother and Toddlers groups, Age Friendly clubs, Men's Shed, Church groups).
- proactively engaging with these groups to recruit Volunteer Community Walk Leaders.
- delivering WFA training courses to new Volunteer Community Walk Leaders.
- initially leading walks with the new Walk Leaders to build their confidence and ensure quality control.
- providing ongoing support to Community Walk Leaders to maintain a weekly regular walk as a minimum.
- seeking to integrate existing walking groups (Walking In Your Community and Walking for Health) into WFA and providing the necessary refresher training.
- organising and hosting local networking walks and events for walking groups.
- identifying and delivering 'peace and reconciliation' interventions in specific communities.
- feeding walking group data and case studies to the Training and Communication Officer to populate the WFA website.
- keeping records for monitoring and evaluation purposes and preparing reports for the Regional WFA Managers.
- collectively reporting monthly to the Regional WFA Manager on targets and outputs.
- reporting to the Project Working Group when required.

## Annex B

