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| Title of Report: | Mobile Sauna Provision Council Managed Coastal Locations |
| Committee Report Submitted To: | Leisure & Development Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 16 September 2025 |
| For Decision or For Information | For Information |
| To be discussed in Committee | NO |

| Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25) | |
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| Strategic Theme | Protecting and Enhancing our Environments and Assets Resilient, Healthy and Engaging Communities |
| Outcome | Citizens will have access to our natural environments to help develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health. |
| Lead Officer | Head of Service for Tourism and Recreation Coast and Countryside Manager |

| Estimated Timescale for Completion | |
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| Date to be Completed | April 26 |

| Budgetary Considerations | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Cost of Proposal | £20,000 |
| Included in Current Year Estimates | NO |
| Capital/Revenue | |
| Code | |
| Staffing Costs | |

| Legal Considerations | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Input of Legal Services Required | YES |
| Legal Opinion Obtained | NO |

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

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of work being undertaken to identify coastal sites under Council management that could potentially host mobile saunas.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The popularity of ‘cold-water exposure’ has grown significantly at many coastal sites which fall under Council’s management. No longer a seasonal activity, it is very much a year-round interest. The combination of consistent bathing water quality and the value of the coastline also contributes to the popularity. Increasing awareness of the health benefits associated with ‘cold-water exposure’ following a sauna has contributed to demand for mobile beach sauna provision. Council has initially informally facilitated one mobile beach sauna at Benone Strand, the first in Northern Ireland, and has received further requests for such provision along the coastline.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 In response to the number of requests received, Coast & Countryside has reviewed the coastal sites within Council’s estate to assess which may be suitable for such provision. As part of this review the following factors have been considered:

1. Accessibility to the beach.
2. Proximity to the beach.
3. Bathing water quality.
4. Safety considerations.
5. Other facilities in the proximity.
6. Other activities in the proximity.
7. Visual intrusion.

The shortlist of ten suitable sites will be assessed for sustainability to facilitate mobile saunas. The sites are as follows:

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|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Benone Strand | 2. Whiterocks |
| 3. Downhill Strand | 4. Salmon Rock, Portballintrae |
| 5. Castlerock Beach | 6. Ballycastle |
| 7. West Strand, Portrush | 8. Cushendall |
| 9. East Strand, Portrush | 10. Waterfoot |

This shortlist will be reduced further to consider that sauna provision is not over saturated and remains commercially viable.

- 3.2 Advice has been sought from Planning who have confirmed that any material change of use exceeding 28 days in a calendar year requires planning permission, as per Part 5 Temporary Buildings and Uses of the Schedule to The Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Officers plan to make an application for planning permission for identified sites across the Borough to site mobile saunas. Anticipated planning and preparation costs are £2000 per site identified. Subject to planning approval it is proposed to run an Expression of Interest for the identified sites to gauge private sector interest and subsequently hold a competitive procurement process by way of auction. It is intended that both the expression of interest and auction process are completed and operational by April 2026.

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.