Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Title of Report:	**Benone Coastal Park - Development Blueprint**
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 November 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	No

Linkage to Council Strategy (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	P1, P3, P4
Outcome	A strengthened position as a world-class visitor destination with increasing visitor spend and employment. Increased citizens and visitors access to high-quality green spaces, and outdoor recreation opportunities.
Lead Officer	Head of Tourism and Recreation Holiday and Leisure Park Manager Coast and Countryside Manager

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	November 2026

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	n/a
Included in Current Year Estimates	**NO**
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	**NO**
Legal Opinion Obtained	**NO**

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
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:
	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Elected Members' approval of the Benone Coastal Park Development Blueprint, which sets out a strategic vision and phased approach for the future development, enhancement and sustainable management of Benone Coastal and Holiday Park.

2.0 Background

2.1 At the Leisure and Development Committee meeting in September 2023, Elected Members considered a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Benone Holiday and Leisure Complex. The SOC examined a range of options for the future management and development of the facility, including continued Council operation, capital investment and potential disposal or release of the site to the open market.

2.2 Council approved the findings of the SOC, subject to further engagement with key stakeholders and the public to ensure that their views and priorities were considered before determining the future direction of the site.

2.3 Following the completion of this consultation process, a further report was presented to the Leisure and Development Committee in January 2025. Council subsequently agreed to reconsider the findings of the original SOC and explore an alternative approach to the management and future development of Benone, taking account of the feedback received.

2.4 In response, working with Elected Members from Benbradagh and Limavady DEAs, Council Officers developed a draft Development Blueprint to establish a coordinated approach to the future of Benone Coastal Park. In addition, at the pre-Leisure and Development workshop in September 2025, the draft Blueprint was presented.

2.5 The Blueprint recognises Benone as a significant recreational, tourism and environmental asset and identifies opportunities to enhance the existing facilities, improve the visitor experience, support greater accessibility and inclusion, and strengthen the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the site.

2.6 The Blueprint proposes a series of short, medium and long-term interventions, providing a framework through which future investment priorities can be assessed and progressed, subject to detailed feasibility, business case development, available resources and the necessary Council approvals.

3.0 Consultation

3.1 During 2024, Council undertook an extensive stakeholder consultation exercise, facilitated by the Strategic Investment Board, to establish the views of local communities, facility users, visitors and other interested parties on the future of Benone.

3.2 The consultation included individual stakeholder engagement, questionnaires, a public survey, engagement with DEA Elected Members and a public meeting to present and discuss the findings.

3.3 The consultation identified a strong preference for Benone to remain in Council ownership, with an emphasis on protecting its natural environment while exploring opportunities to improve existing facilities and develop a more sustainable and financially viable offering.

3.4 Particular importance was placed on maintaining Benone as an accessible and inclusive destination for both local communities and visitors, alongside improving

recreational provision, promoting year-round tourism, supporting local businesses and exploring opportunities for partnership working and external funding.

3.5 The findings demonstrated that Benone should be considered as a wider coastal recreation and tourism destination rather than solely a holiday park. These findings have informed the preparation of the Development Blueprint and the identification of potential development opportunities across the site.

4.0 Engagement with Elected Members

4.1 Officers met with DEA Elected Members on a number of occasions, to present and discuss the emerging Development Blueprint and the potential opportunities for future development across the Benone site. (**Attached at Annex A**)

4.2 The site was divided into seven distinct areas, with a range of development concepts presented for consideration. Members examined the potential benefits, constraints, capital investment requirements and operational implications associated with each area.

4.3 Discussions focused on the importance of retaining Council ownership, prioritising necessary investment, improving the financial sustainability of existing facilities and ensuring that future development remains appropriate to the site's environmental designations

4.4 Following consideration of the options presented, Members indicated their preferred approach for the individual areas, including:

- **Area A** – Existing Leisure and Amenity Facilities including splash pool: Preparation of a development brief to assess viable future development and operating models, while retaining Council ownership.
- **Area B** – Camping Cabins: Phased replacement of existing accommodation, with initial design proposals for two fully accessible cabins incorporating Changing Places provision for visitors with complex needs.
- **Areas C and D** – Touring Provision: Reinvestment in existing touring facilities and consideration of expansion into adjoining lands, subject to a detailed business case.
- **Area E** – Naturalised Area: Retention of the area's natural character while exploring suitable camping, motorhome and nature-based recreational opportunities.
- **Area F** – Beach and Dune Recreational Area: Progression of previously approved boardwalk improvements, together with enhanced signage, connectivity and accessibility.
- **Area G** – Golf Course: Further assessment of opportunities to enhance and potentially extend the existing golf provision, including consideration within the proposed development brief.

4.5 Members emphasised the importance of progressing development on a phased basis, with each proposal subject to appropriate appraisal, affordability and environmental considerations.

4.6 The feedback and preferred concepts arising from the DEA engagement have been incorporated into the Development Blueprint for Elected Members' consideration.

5.0 Implementation

5.1 The Development Blueprint establishes an overarching vision for the future of Benone Coastal Park, based on protecting and enhancing its natural assets, improving the

quality and diversity of facilities, and creating a sustainable destination for residents and visitors.

5.2 The proposed approach is structured around three delivery phases:

- Short term (1–2 years): Priority repairs, maintenance and improvements to existing facilities, together with the development and assessment of proposals capable of early progression.
- Medium term (2–5 years): More substantial development projects, supported by approved business cases, funding and identified resources.
- Long term (5+ years): Strategic investment opportunities requiring detailed feasibility assessment, external specialist advice where necessary and further Council consideration

5.3 The Blueprint is intended to guide future decision-making and investment planning rather than constitute approval to proceed with individual capital projects.

5.4 All proposals will be subject to further consideration of financial viability, wider economic and community benefits, environmental sustainability, planning requirements and funding availability.

6.0 Next Steps

6.1 Subject to approval, the Blueprint will provide a strategic framework for progressing individual proposals through the Council's established business case and capital investment processes. Progress and resource requirements will be monitored through Tourism and Recreation's annual business planning arrangements.

7.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure and Development Committee recommends that Council:

- Approves the Development Blueprint, (attached at Annex A), as the strategic framework for the future development and enhancement of Benone Coastal Park.
- Agrees that Officers progress the assessment and development of the identified proposals on a phased basis, subject to appropriate feasibility studies, business cases, funding availability and subsequent Council approvals.

BENONE COASTAL PARK

DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Project Context 4

Site Description 6

Stakeholder Consultation 9

Council's Preferred Approach 13

Strategic Approach 16

Vision 17

Opportunities for Development 18

Next Steps 43

Monitoring Progress and Review 44

Appendix 45

INTRODUCTION

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGBC) owns and manages six holiday and leisure parks, including the Benone Coastal Park.

Established in 1987, Benone has evolved into a popular coastal park and holiday destination.

The park offers a diverse range of facilities, such as tennis courts, a 9-hole par-three golf course, crazy golf, a golf practice driving range (currently closed), and an outdoor heated splash pool. Additionally, the park provides glamping lodges, touring caravan and family tent pitches, and catering facilities.

Through the management of Benone Coastal Park and other facilities, CCGBC has accumulated extensive experience in delivering high-quality visitor attractions.

The Council's proactive approach to tourism development underscores its expertise in creating and managing engaging visitor experiences that contribute significantly to the local economy.

This document proposes a strategic vision for the future development of the Benone Coastal Park.

This document has been prepared by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Officers with support from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB).



PROJECT CONTEXT

In September 2023, Elected Members approved a report presenting a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOC) for Benone Holiday and Leisure Complex (now referred to as Benone Coastal Park). Council approved the findings of the SOC subject to Officers entering into wider engagement with key stakeholders and the public to determine views and ensure proper consultation and feedback, which was then fed into the Council's decision-making process.

The SOC was commissioned as part of a planned review of the Council's Holiday and Leisure Park portfolio over the next number of years, to identify the future planning and investment requirements, with Benone being prioritised for initial assessment.

The Strategic Outline Case covered the following:

- Introduction and Background
- Strategic Case
- Economic Case
- Commercial Case
- Financial Case
- Management Case

The SOC identified a number of options for achieving business needs, potential scope and service requirements. These were:

- **Close the facility**.
- **Business as Usual** – Essentially maintain the Status Quo position. Likely to continue to make losses (perhaps increasingly so) on an annual basis;
- **A Council-financed capital project** to bring the facilities up to modern, commercially viable standard, maximise revenue income and reduce operational cost to a minimum (perhaps through the introduction of static caravan provision, but considerable cost anticipated). Considered to be difficult to achieve in the near-medium term given restrictions on Council's capital budget.
- **Release the site to the open market under a 'development brief'**, limiting future use to tourism related activities (albeit planning policy and environmental designations may influence this to a great extent in any circumstance);
- **Release the site to the open market through disposal**.

The SOC made the suggestion that 'the preferred way forward was to release the site to the open market under a development brief and this was approved subject to appropriate stakeholder consultation'.

Benone Strand & Duneland – Protective designations

Benone Strand forms part of one of the longest sandy beaches in Ireland between Lough Foyle & Magilligan Point in the west and Downhill Strand in the east.

The northerly facing beach and duneland has a backdrop of 6-mile-long basalt cliffs, which mark the western extent of the Antrim Plateau. The beach and duneland is one of the largest and most intensively studied coastal accumulation site in Ireland and amongst the top such localities in Europe.

The site is not only important in terms of landscape and seascape but also due to the biodiversity and habitats which exist.

Approval for the development of the original facilities that were to become Benone Tourist Complex was granted in the mid-1980s with the site opened to visitors in 1989.

Timeline

1966 North Derry Area of Outstanding National Beauty designated

1985 Approval granted to develop facilities at Benone

1987 Construction started on facilities

1989 Benone Tourist Complex opened to visitors

1990 Benone Local Nature Reserve designated

1994 Benone Strand awarded first Blue Flag Award in NI

2005 Magilligan ASSI designated

2015 Magilligan SAC designated

2015 The Ark facility opened at Benone Strand



SITE DESCRIPTION

Designations

The value of the beach, dune land and surrounding landscape has long been appreciated. Its value is further reflected in the range of protective designations which have been designated initially in 1966. These designations encompass both the landscape and the value of the habitat that exists.

The table below outlines the various designations.

Designation	Date of Designation	Reason
Benone Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	1989	To allow people to visit and enjoy contact with the natural world
Magilligan ASSI	1994	Duneland habitat
Magilligan SAC	2005	Duneland habitat
Binevenagh AONB	Redesignated in 2006	Landscape value

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council is preparing the local development plan 2030 at present. The Preferred Options Paper makes specific reference to Benone and Magilligan.

Relevant sections:

The designated Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI); Lough Foyle (SPA); and Magilligan SAC, with a 7-mile-long beach backed by plant and wildlife rich dune ecosystem.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland – Coastal Development. The SPPS must be considered in the preparation of new Local Development Plans (LDPs) and is material in decisions on individual planning applications and appeals. The SPPS provides a policy framework for Councils to prepare specific policies for their LDPs.

The SPPS highlights that: *'Northern Ireland is valued for its beautiful and relatively unspoilt coast including well known features such as the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast, Benone Strand, Antrim Coast Road, Strangford Lough and the Mournes Coast.'* (Para 6.31, pg 31)

The beach and dune land system is an internationally recognised beach cuspate foreland. It is the largest and most intensively studied coastal accumulation site in Ireland and amongst the top such localities in Europe. The beach is popular in summer but is becoming increasingly busy throughout the year. Public access is concentrated around Benone and Downhill with Magilligan Point also playing a role.

Council is endeavouring to manage this site (and others) in a way that helps keep the site in favourable condition whilst also permitting appropriate public access.

New development in Designated Areas and new visitor facililties on the coast are most appropriate when they are low key, sensitive to, and designed to be in keeping with the designated status of the site.

Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) surrounding Benone, this zoning designation is intended to protect the visual amenity, environmental integrity, and local character of the coast.

The LLPA at Benone spans the undeveloped coastline and coastal dunes, restricting new building to maintain the character of the shore, protect against erosion, and avoid inappropriate coastal development

Magilligan Lowlands Landscape Character Assessment states *'The Magilligan spit and coastal sand dunes system is not only the major landscape feature of this LCA but is also of most biodiversity interest'.*

Statutory Designations and Planning Constraints

Set within the Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the duneland at the Benone Coastal Park is designated within the Magilligan ASSI/SAC, and these designations , whilst enhancing the sites significance and experience, restrict development opportunities.

Planning constraints that apply include:

- PPS 2 – Natural Heritage
- PPS 3 – Access Movement and Parking
- PPS 16 – Tourism
- PPS 21 – Sustainable Development in the Countryside



STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

With SIB support, Council completed a consultation exercise. The scope of the assignment included presenting the options identified within the SOC, including the preferred option and record the views, concerns and suggestions for the future of Benone from a range of key stakeholders.

Consultation activity included:

One-to-one engagement with key stakeholders

+

Questionnaires for facility users and visitors

+

Public Survey for feedback via Council website

+

Report on findings with DEA Councillors

+

Public meeting on process and findings

Key Findings from Consultation

A number of key themes and priorities were identified through the consultation process:

Management

- Strong preference for Benone to remain publicly owned by the Council, ensuring proper management.
- The asset and lands owned by Council at Benone is significant and has the potential for further site sensitive development in line with environmental designations.
- Emphasis on maintaining it as a natural asset with sustainable practices, minimal overdevelopment, and eco-friendly facilities (e.g., solar panels, wind energy).
- Recognition that Benone is more than simply a caravan park, as it has a diverse range of attributes and is a coastal park.

Sense of place and belonging

- There is a deep sense of belonging and attachment to “place” among visitors and local people for the Benone Holiday and Leisure Complex.
- Maintain Benone as a welcoming place where locals and visitors can gather for relaxation, recreation, events, and health and well-being activities.
- Offering facilities and activities that are cost-effective yet appealing to a wide range of users.
- Build on the proposed Active Travel Signature Project from Bellarena to Bishop’s Gate.

Tourism Focus

- The Benone complex should act as an outdoor recreation hub helping to address TNI’s vision of taking pressure off hotspots in the Causeway Coast area such as Portrush, Portstewart and the Giants Causeway.
- Supporting active travel complemented by unique accommodation offerings and quality experiences.
- Supporting activity businesses to develop in the area, as world class activity providers to complement the site’s world class location.
- Slow tourism to encourage longer stays and greater income locally.
- Widening the appeal to tourism affinity groups.
- Slow down traffic and promote year-round tourist experiences.

The importance of the environment

- Balance development with preserving Benone's low-key, natural charm.
- The importance of protecting the environment was as significant as making the site financially viable with many noting the "duty of care" that Council has for the site's environmental protection – essentially highlighting the role of Council as a custodian of the natural asset.
- Avoid excessive commercial development that might harm the environment or local ecosystem.
- Attempts to address unauthorised camping on the dunes, with fires being lit and rubbish left behind, which pose risks to the integrity of the dune system and the sustainability of the unique environmental attributes and the tourism product. Creating greater awareness of the importance of the dune system is key to this.
- The need to engage with all environmental stakeholders with a view to agreeing a collective way forward in terms of the sustainability of the wider asset.
- Giving the environment and biodiversity a voice as a key stakeholder.

Invest to save

- The lack of ongoing maintenance-based capital investment over the last few years has resulted in the facility looking and feeling tired as well as adding to the cost of running the facility.
- The need for additional capital investments to update the offering across all aspects including the play areas, the pods, the stands, the tennis courts, the splash pools, the crazy golf, the golf course, the centre itself, the heating systems, etc.
- The need to examine how to create an eco-friendly resort from design to delivery that can act as a demonstration project for other similar areas and which can seamlessly function as a recreation, tourist, and information education facility.
- Business, marketing and development planning to realise the site's full potential.
- The need to engage all local businesses as a way of adding to the wider tourism and local recreation products and which contribute to the sustainability of the asset.

Information, marketing and promotion

- Market Benone's facilities and natural beauty as a destination on Northern Ireland's Causeway Coastal Route and en-route to the Wild Atlantic Way – but 'off the beaten track'. Need for a new Benone brand.
- Highlight uniqueness and stress the site's hidden-gem status while raising awareness of its value for mental well-being, community events, and recreation.
- Sustainable growth for the site so that it can remain functional and relevant for the next 50–100 years.
- Better promotion and events to generate revenue – support needed to programme the site on a year-round basis required.
- The role of the private operators within and outside the site was seen as important to its future sustainability and appeal. Further examination of concession contracts or other economic development supports to build local enterprise development within the site.

Circulation

- During high season traffic congestion entering the Benone site can be considerable. Early engagement with DfI Roads could result in improved traffic management at the site including a new prioritised footpath between Bellarena and Bishop's Gate, which includes Benone and Magilligan, as part of the Department's Active Travel Agenda.

Community engagement

- Local community engagement is key to ensure the site can be utilised as a community asset both in high and low seasons.
- Building on the inclusive beach concept, supported by the Mae Murray Foundation, should be woven through the entire development process with a wider focus on disability and inclusion, contributing to a new inclusive and eco-friendly Unique Selling Point. Matching this with an inclusive golf and tennis offering would help to differentiate the site from other parks.
- Seek access funding to promote inclusion.

Partnerships and Funding

- The engagement exercise has identified a wide range of public, private and community stakeholders interested in engaging in the future development of the Benone site.
- The cost of redeveloping the site is likely to be quite considerable and could be accomplished in stages. As such developing a Master Plan would assist in pulling all of the opportunities identified in the consultation and engagement exercise together.
- Seeking external funding (such as through the Shared Island Coast to Coast project) should be explored and developing joint funded project options should be considered. Building on the legacy of The Open should also be considered in regard of the Benone Golf course.

The conclusion of this engagement exercise points to an aspiration from the range of consultees, that Council reconsiders the options outlined in the SOC, and in particular the preferred option stated in the September Leisure and Development Report.

COUNCIL'S PREFERRED APPROACH

At the Council's Leisure and Development Committee Meeting in January 2025:

Council agreed to reconsider the findings from the 2023 Strategic Outline Case and make a recommendation for an alternative approach.

This may include adjustment to the management and future development proposals in light of the feedback from the wider stakeholder consultation process.



Issues and Opportunities

As part of a planned review of Councils Holiday and Leisure Parks portfolio, this blueprint seeks to identify future planning and investment requirements. It aspires to provide a quality product that has stand-out that creates and positions the experience, so that it maximises the benefits of Benone's location for the local community and visitors to the area. The blueprint must balance the protection of the natural environment whilst improving the benefit, access and activity opportunities.

Any proposed projects should aim to enhance the existing visitor experience by introducing quality and immersive experiences, that delve into the natural and cultural history of the area. The development of the Benone Coastal Park will increase visitor numbers, thereby boosting local businesses and creating employment opportunities. With its strategic location, situated on the western side of the River Bann, Benone needs to benefit from a similar level of tourism development as afforded in recent years to areas to the east of the River Bann, for example The Giants Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede and Magheracross. This blueprint aims to address that imbalance, encouraging the spread of visitor traffic and dispersing economic benefits more evenly.

Much of the existing facility infrastructure at Benone is over 35 years old (the Ark and Waves café dating from approximately 2015). Maintenance costs for buildings, facilities and grounds continue to increase as the impact of deterioration requires more repair and replacement year on year. In addition, utilities have increased significantly, as have staffing costs, rates and insurances.

Product development and experiential refreshes have not kept pace with visitor expectations and competition. Subject to cost benefit analysis, the suggested interventions for Benone are devised to ensure better market fit, adjustment and the introduction of new product. Whilst it is recognised that 'a clean slate' approach is not feasible from a resource perspective, revised experiences and new products are needed to sustain existing and new markets.

The current lack of immersive, outdoor attractions in the Binevenagh region creates an opportunity for year-round visitor experiences. Travelers often seek engaging, educational and cultural activities that offer deeper connections to the areas they visit. This can apply during inclement weather and off-peak seasons.
The lack of investment in Benone inhibits the ability to attract and retain visitors, reducing dwell time and economic contributions to the local economy. This Benone blueprint presents an opportunity to fill these gaps by providing a compelling outdoor, nature oriented and family-friendly attraction. By integrating a number of experiential components including sea-based water activities, environmental and landscape-based tourism experiences, golf, accommodation, health and wellbeing and family friendly activities, the centre will offer unique visitor experiences that complements the natural beauty of the area. It will enhance the appeal of the region, motivate visitors to travel more widely along the Causeway Coastal Route, and support the aims of the Council's Destination Management Strategy by enabling economic growth and tourism dispersal.

Market Analysis

The Benone Coastal Park is strategically positioned to tap into key tourism market trends and consumer segments. The primary target markets include domestic travellers (family), the local population seeking outdoor activities including golf, international tourists exploring the Causeway Coastal Route, and environmentally conscious visitors seeking immersive, educational and cultural experiences.

Domestic Market

Domestic tourism remains a significant driver in Northern Ireland, with growing interest in family-friendly attractions and staycation opportunities. The centre's location within the Causeway Coast and Glens region, a popular destination for local travellers, positions it as an easily accessible and attractive option for day trips and short breaks.

International Market

The Causeway Coastal Route is a globally recognised brand, attracting tourists from key markets such as Great Britain, North America, and Europe. These visitors are motivated by Ireland's unique natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and immersive experiences.

Emerging Trends

Visitors increasingly prioritise meaningful, responsible tourism. The Benone Coastal Park should have a focus on sustainability, outdoor activities, accessibility for all, and will appeal to many market segments younger travellers and families.

Benone also offers the opportunity to align with the trend toward all-weather, year-round attractions, addressing growing demand for activities that extend beyond the traditional tourist season. Its central location and unique offering ensure strong market relevance, while its educational focus and multi-sensory experiences provide differentiation in a competitive tourism environment.

The quality of the visitor experience, customer care, and the presentation of the wider Benone site, are all vital elements that need to thread through the proposed projects in this document. Differentiation is also needed to gain a competitive edge on similar offerings, and, where possible, commercial sustainability is needed through income generation measures.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, after giving due consideration to the strategic business case completed in 2023 and the subsequent consultation in 2024, wish to adopt the following approach to the management and development of Benone Coastal Park.

Develop a series of short, medium and long term interventions.

- Initiate a master planning process.
- Build on strengths of the Benone site and location.
- Identify opportunities for growth and quality improvement of experience.
- Identify measures to reduce inefficiencies.

VISION

Through Officer engagement with Elected Members and arising out of the public consultation, and SIB recommendations, a working vision for Benone has been formulated:

"Through best practice in destination management, maintain, protect and enhance the natural assets of the site; support minimal overdevelopment and the sustainable development of Benone through modern, eco-friendly facilities, benefiting the community and visitors, whilst maximising revenue income".

1. PHASE ONE

(Short - 1 to 2 years)

Phase One (Short) projects are those that have the ability to be fast tracked after needs analysis and viability tests. These will include:

- Repair and maintenance/ rejuvenation of identified assets.
- Development of existing facilities to improve on the visitor experience and ensure longer-term sustainability of the site.

2. PHASE ONE

(Medium - 2 to 5 years)

Phase Two (Medium) projects that will have approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment. These projects are designed to:

- Expand the market for Benone (balanced with international/local visitors and community needs).
- Consolidate the quality and viability of the offering for the longer term.

3. PHASE THREE

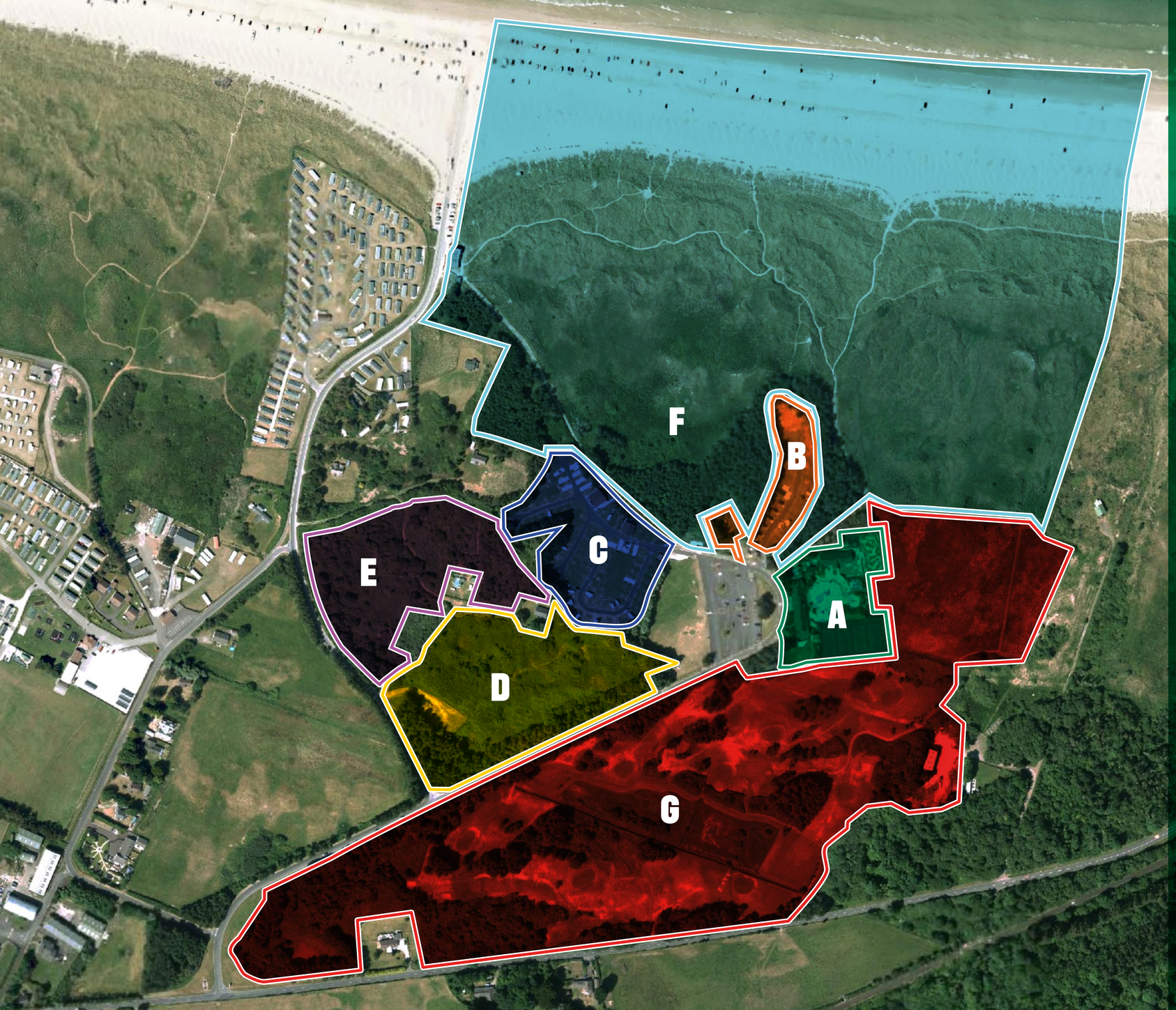
(Long - 5+ years)

Phase Three (Long term projects) with full strategic decision making in place, identified resources and that aim to secure the long term viability and attractiveness. These will also require approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment.

- Detailed assessment of need.
- Economic viability.

Longer term projects will require specialist external assistance to determine best fit options prior to the preferred development approach by Council and an investment decision.

The delivery of the above vision is to be achieved through the process of developing short, medium and long term proposals.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

For the purpose of the blueprint, the footprint of Benone has been subdivided into parcels of land.

Area A	Reception building, wetside facilities, tennis courts, crazy golf, café and surf centre.
Area B	Camping cabin and tent zone.
Area C	Existing touring caravan site
Area D	Scrubland and trees (see concepts for Area D)
Area E	Scrubland and trees
Area F	Duneland, beach, ‘The Ark’ water-sports facilities, boardwalks etc.
Area G	Golf course lands and the parcel previously used for driving range.

Area A

Area A is operating at a loss and has tired infrastructure, that will continue to be inefficient in the future. Area A therefore is a priority for intervention.



Area

A

Concept

1

Capital Cost

High

Maintenance Cost

High

Reinvest in existing offering based on removal of deteriorated infrastructure. Reimagine splash pools and integrate improved public realm space to diversify offering (family theme). Council continues to manage and invest in the reception area, changing rooms, toilets etc.

This concept maintains the theme of family based splash pools and play facilities. If reinvested in, it could be enhanced with additional diversity playpark facilities and a reconfiguration of the site to improve access to catering facilities and golf course, changing, locker, driving range facilities. Some reinvestment will also be required in the tennis courts.



Area

A

Concept

2

Capital Cost

High

Maintenance Cost

Medium/High

Alternative provision that fits with market demand and provides efficiencies. This would provide a public realm space with new infrastructure, with a diverse offering for all demographics, including family. Eg. public seating, relaxation areas, café/restaurant facilities, public art and access to recreational activities such as crazy golf, skateboarding, tennis etc. Council continues to manage golf course and invests in reception, changing rooms, toilets etc.

This concept could provide facilities including water splash features and fountains (lower cost in terms of capital and maintenance than a heated pool). Diversity playpark, crazy golf, food & drink amenities, health and wellbeing opportunities.











Area

A

Concept

3

Capital Cost

Unknown until determination of who delivers

Maintenance Cost

Unknown until determination of who delivers

Council produces a development brief for Area A. To ensure that this brief provides an appropriate and viable development solution, an evaluation of best fit development for the site will be required.

Outline and Strategic Business Cases will then be required to assess the viability from a financial, technical and operational perspective.

Further factors for consideration are:

- Site and market suitability
- Stakeholder agreement
- Environmental considerations
- Cost benefit analysis

Council delivery vrs third-party delivery

The business case for the Concept 3 project will be presented to Council and a decision made on whether or not the development brief will be offered to third parties for expressions of interest, or if this project will be delivered solely by Council.



RECOMMENDATION

Area	Concept	
A	?	DEA recommendation for final blueprint



3. PHASE THREE
(Long - 5+ years)

Phase Three (Long term projects) with full strategic decision making in place, identified sources and are aimed to secure the long term viability and attractiveness. These will also require approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment.

Area

B

Customer demand for Area B has diminished in the last number of years, primarily due to increased competition from private sector providing high-end luxury camping cabins. Opportunity exists to meet the inclusivity agenda at this site and complement Benone's efforts in recent years to improve access provision.



Area

B

Concept

1

Capital Cost

Low

Maintenance Cost

Low

Retain existing basic accommodation provision for camping cabins.



Area

B

Concept

2

Capital Cost

Low/Medium

Maintenance Cost

Low

Phased replacement of camping cabins to provide fully accessible accommodation and associated facilities. Consideration will be given to expansion into camping area and relocation of the camping area to a bigger and more suitable site (possibly Area E).







RECOMMENDATION

Area

B

Concept

?

DEA recommendation for final blueprint







1. PHASE ONE

(Short - 1 to 2 years)

Phase One (Short) projects are those that have the ability to be fast tracked after needs analysis and viability tests.

Area C

Area C is a viable operation at present however the quality of experience is not to a high standard. Pitches are of a high density and the shower and toilet buildings are inefficient with poor interior finish.



Area

C

Concept

1

Capital Cost

Medium

Maintenance Cost

Medium

Reinvest in amenity buildings and services to increase the quality of provision. New showers, toilets, cleansing facilities and washroom and kitchen (include night security accommodation). Install energy efficient water and ambient heating systems/lighting. Reduce density of touring pitches from 95 to 70-80. Install new touring bays with sustainable and eco-friendly surface treatment and services.



Area C

Concept 2

Capital Cost

High

Maintenance Cost

Medium

Complete Concept 1 - reinvestment in existing facilities, and expand touring provision to extend from Area C into adjacent field at Area D. This will allow economies of scale to be maximised and increase income. Revenue costs including staff, maintenance and repair will remain relatively low due to existing management of touring van sites. Will require detailed business case to assess viability and return on investment.







RECOMMENDATION

Area

C

Concept

?

DEA recommendation for final blueprint



2. PHASE TWO

(Medium - 2 to 5 years)

Phase Two (Medium) projects that will have approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment.

Area

E

Currently an unutilised scrub and wooded area. It is accessible via a link road to the beach and Benone Avenue.



Area E

Concept 1

Capital Cost

Not determined at this stage

Maintenance Cost

Not determined at this stage

Retain in naturalised state (as much as possible) and seek expressions of interest for site from third sector investors, through the creation of a development brief. Possible ventures:

- Outdoor adventure centre
- Static caravan park
- Accommodation provision (hotel, camping cabins etc)

Council produces a development brief for Area E. To ensure that this brief provides an appropriate and viable development solution, an evaluation of best fit development for the site will be required.

Council delivery vrs third-party delivery

The business case for the Concept 1 project will be presented to Council and a decision made on whether or not the development brief will be offered to third parties for expressions of interest, or if this project will be delivered solely by Council.



Area

E

Concept

2

Capital Cost

Medium

Maintenance Cost

Low

Retain in naturalised state (as much as possible).

Possible ventures:

Relocation of camping provision and temporary grass-stands (golplas) for motorhome provision.



RECOMMENDATION

Area

E

Concept

?

DEA recommendation for final blueprint

Concept

1

3. PHASE THREE

(Long - 5+ years)

Phase Three (Long term projects) with full strategic decision making in place, identified sources and are aimed to secure the long term viability and attractiveness. These will also require approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment.

Concept

2

2. PHASE TWO

(Medium - 2 to 5 years)

Phase Two (Medium) projects that will have approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment.



Area

F

Popular recreational area within protected designation. Requires refurbishment and improved interpretation and access.



Area

F

Concept

1

Capital Cost

Medium

Maintenance Cost

Low

Refurbish 3 boardwalks known as Longboard, Kestrel and Marran. Improve connecting signage throughout the dune system, beach frontage and linking to accommodation, catering, carparking and other recreational facilities. Improve access for all from Ark building onto beach. Consider income generation activities at beach, including private sector sports, health & wellbeing, catering facilities (in conjunction with the private sector).



RECOMMENDATION

Area

F

Concept

?

DEA recommendation for final blueprint



1. PHASE ONE

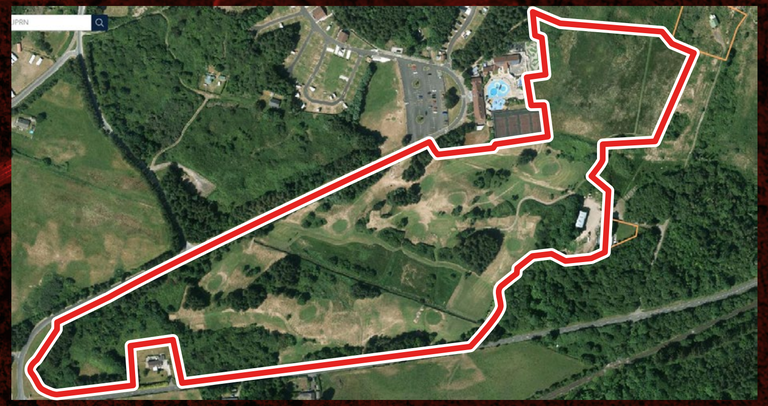
(Short - 1 to 2 years)

Phase One (Short) projects are those that have the ability to be fast tracked after needs analysis and viability tests.

Area

G

Existing 9 hole golf course.
Remains popular but
cold benefit from further
development / enhancements.



Area

G

Concept

1

Capital Cost

Medium

Maintenance Cost

Medium

Retain existing facilities and footprint of golf course. Investigate reopening golf driving range and attempt to de-designate SAC protection for grass driving range to allow for drainage and infrastructure.



Area

G

Concept

2

Capital Cost

Medium/High

Maintenance Cost

Medium

Expand on existing facilities and utilise elements of Area A including hall, tennis courts and storage compound, to create improved golfing facilities/ experience, with quality changing rooms, clubroom and training facilities. Evaluate benefits of installing modular systems to provide golf simulator provision. Explore feasibility of creating a youth academy in conjunction with a local golf club. External specialist advice to be sought on design concepts and development options.



RECOMMENDATION

Area

G

Concept

?

DEA recommendation for final blueprint



2. PHASE TWO

(Medium - 2 to 5 years)

Phase Two (Medium) projects that will have approved business cases and resources allocated for larger scale investment.

NEXT STEPS

The blueprint for the Benone Coastal Park represents an outline for a phased and proactive approach to development of lands within Council's ownership and management.

It offers a vision for investment and, if recommended concepts are approved, will provide a series of transformative interventions, each of which must be tested by:

- Financial viability (Business Case economic return).
- Wider economic benefit (balanced market between international visitors, staycations and local community usage).
- Community benefit.
- Sustainability (sound management and stewardship).
- Environmental enhancement/ protection.

The core offering will be:

- A year-round eco-leisure experience for families, groups and independent travellers.
- A day visit and overnight stay offering.
- A nature/landscape meets outdoor activity experience. With options for hospitality, accommodation, water and sea-based activities and golf.
- An adventure hub for the wider Binevenagh area including hiking, coastal activities, cycling, accessible golf, wellbeing/relaxation (hotbox/spa etc) and landscape emersion.

MONITORING PROGRESS AND REVIEW

If adopted these proposed projects and wider development aspirations, including management and operational adjustments, will be detailed within Tourism and Recreation's annual business plan mechanism. This will flag resource requirements and detail issues and outputs and update the status of delivery against agreed timescales.