



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan Capital Projects</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	Leisure and Development Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 November 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	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Funding Unit Manager

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

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	£131,475 (100% funded from PEACEPLUS)
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>N/A</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

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

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date: November 2023
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes	Date: November 2023
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes	Date: November 2023
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes	Date: November 2023
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	Date:

## 1.0 Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the implementation of capital projects in the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan and request the Leisure and Development Committee to approve a change in the capital projects - from 'Benbradagh: Gateway to the Sperrins Project' to the Dungiven Castle Park Project.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 In February 2022, the Council approved the nomination of 11 Elected Members to the PEACEPLUS Partnership under D'hondt.
- 2.2 In April 2022, Council approved recruitment of Social Partners to the PEACEPLUS Partnership.
- 2.3 In June 2022 The PEACEPLUS Partnership was established to oversee the development and implementation of the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.
- 2.4 On 4 October 2023, the PEACEPLUS Partnership approved the £6.1m Local Action Plan and sought approval from Council to submit the local Action Plan to SEUPB for approval.
- 2.5 On 21 November 2023 the Leisure & Development Committee approved the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.
- 2.6 On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Council approved the local action plan which included the £1.7m of PEACEPLUS Capital Projects under the Local Community Regeneration and Transformation theme.

## 3.0 Current Position

<b>Local Community Regeneration and transformation</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>1. Benbradagh – Gateway to the Sperrins</b>	Engagement along with required permissions from landowners has not been achieved.  The project is at significant risk of not being able to start or complete within the required timescales.  The PEACEPLUS Partnership has not agreed an alternative project in the same DEA. The alternative project is detailed in section 4.0 and in the attached Annex.
<b>2. The Girona Trail and Causeway Coastal Path</b>	Development and improvement of Girona Trail and Causeway Coastal Path walking routes.  Stage 1 development of project complete.  Project team for project implementation in place. Initial project meeting for project team scheduled for November 25.
<b>3. Layd Path, Ronán's Way &amp; Cottage Development</b>	Development and improvement of Layd Path, Ronán's Way & Cottage Wood walking routes.  Stage 1 development of project complete.  Project team for project implementation in place. Initial project meeting for project team scheduled for November 25.

<p><b>4. The Mountsandel Project</b></p>	<p>Development of historic Mesolithic site.</p> <p>Due to historical and environmental significance of the site, the Historic Environment Division (HED) of the Department for Communities (DfC), advised that a specialist Archaeology Advisor should be procured to support project development.</p> <p>Procurement for project Archaeology Advisor undertaken by Council's capital team. Tender assessment to be undertaken week beginning Monday 5<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>Project team for implementation of project to be procured following successful procurement of Archaeology Advisor.</p>
<p><b>5. Altnahinch Dam Project</b></p>	<p>Renewal and extension of boardwalk walkway at Altnahinch Dam.</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding agreed between Council and NI Water agreed and approved by Council in September 25.</p> <p>Council's Capital Projects Team are currently re-procuring for the design team.</p>

#### **4.0 Change Request for Benbradagh Project**

- 4.1 Due to the high risk of the project not proceeding an alternative project was identified in conjunction with Council's Coast and Countryside Team. Given that the project will be situated on Council owned land, the risk of the project not being achieved is significantly reduced.
- 4.2 The project will make improvements to Dungiven Castle Park as an outdoor recreation facility, including:
- Path improvements,
  - Outdoor furniture installation,
  - Improved directional and interpretive signage,
  - Habitat management.
- 4.3 The aim is to encourage and increase the potential for increased mobility, on a cross-community/cultural basis by increasing the attractiveness of current offering.
- 4.4 Proposed project maintains outputs previously approved by SEUPB for the Benbradagh project. Full project information including programme aims, activities, rationale, participants and beneficiaries, budgets, and outputs, and key issues project will address are included at **Annex A**.
- 4.5 On 16<sup>th</sup> October 2025, the Peaceplus Partnership agreed the proposed project. If Council approval is obtained, a change request will be issued to SEUPB for formal approval.

#### **5.0 Options**

##### **5.1 Option1**

Approve change request for the Benbradagh DEA Local Community Regeneration and Transformation project from 'Benbradagh – Gateway to the Sperrins' to the 'Dungiven Castle Park' project.

## 5.2 Option 2

Don't approve change request and return project funding to SEUPB.

## 6.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends approval of the change request for the Benbradagh Local Community Regeneration and Transformation project from 'Benbradagh – Gateway to the Sperrins' to the 'Dungiven Castle Park' project.

## Annex A: Dungiven Castle Park Development

Theme	Local Community Regeneration and Transformation	Programme Name	Dungiven Castle Park Development	Time Frame for delivery	Autumn 2025 - 2027
<p><b><u>Programme Aim</u></b></p> <p>The aim of the Programme is to put in place appropriate improvements to make Dungiven Castle Park, as an outdoor Recreation Facility, accessible through path improvements, outdoor furniture installation, directional and interpretive signage. The aim is to encourage and increase the potential for increased mobility, on a cross-community/cultural basis by increasing the attractiveness of the offering. Dungiven Castle and the Castle Park holds a host of heritage to be explored including myths and legends and there is an opportunity to restore, maintain and manage local habitats.</p> <p>Rural settings like Dungiven, in the past, like many other rural settings may not have attracted the levels of investment as the more urban centres, who may have been able to cite more obvious flashpoints or territorial lines, under PEACE Programming. It is important to note that single identity centres such as Dungiven, have the potential to develop a programme of activity that will attract a diverse and wider range of participants through this proposal, to include the natural hinterland of Dungiven itself, as well as visitors from the immediate Borough, not to mention other visitors.</p> <p>Like other settings named in this wider proposal, the opportunity for these communities to come together during the initial stages of the Programme, offers a great opportunity to compare, contrast and connect.</p>					
<p><b><u>Programme Beneficiaries</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local community</li> <li>• Walking Groups</li> <li>• Community organisations</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Tourists/visitors</li> </ul>			<p><b><u>Budget &amp; Participants</u></b></p> <p>£131,667 (80%CNR:15%PUL:5%Other)</p> <p>200 participants</p>		
<p><b><u>Programme Rationale &amp; Outputs</u></b></p> <p>Dungiven Castle Park, located in the grounds of Dungiven Castle, is a 25-acre park with many varieties of native broadleaf trees and flowering shrub. There is also a path network</p>					

linking features such as wetlands, two wildlife ponds, a picnic area and an Eco trail walking path.

There is potential to develop Dungiven Castle Park for development as a fully accessible walk or outdoor recreation activity in Dungiven for local people and visitors alike. This would include upgrade to some of the pathways and markers for walkers to follow, but it also provides us with the opportunity to animate and support some of the cultural heritage and unique shared history relating to the area itself.

By the end of the Programme:

- Increased promotion of Dungiven Castle Park as an outdoor recreation site.
- Increased cross-community and inter-cultural footfall into the Dungiven Castle Park area.
- Increased footfall and cross-community mobility within Dungiven for services, refreshments etc.
- Increased understanding of local history & heritage and its' importance to the immediate locality.
- Increased measures to restore, manage and maintain natural habitats in the Dungiven Castle Park
- 200 participants who have engaged, contributed and learned together over the course of the year project.

**Programme Activities**

- **Initial Launch Event/Scene-setting Workshop** in conjunction with the other Capital Build Projects, looking at the depth and breadth of the Programmes on offer, to look at the aims and objectives of each, to examine any linkages, or opportunities, to share ideas resources, to consider potential challenges. To consider the inclusion of sign-posting the projects from each of the individual sites. A "PEACEPLUS Works" Forum will be established to last the lifetime of the Programme, so that beneficiaries have the opportunity to compare, contrast and connect **(25 participants from each Capital Works)**.
- **Castle Park Improvements Workshop (50 participants)** An opportunity for participants to consult and feed into the actual improvements, and plans to be included during the proposed improvements to include looking at the existing walking trail, outdoor furniture other additions or attractions that may be relevant or required, e.g. inclusion of signage to include a directory of local businesses providing refreshments or accommodation etc.

**Key Issues Project Will Address**

- Areas or facilities of outdoor recreation can be used as tools for peace and reconciliation through organised and structured activity and animation.
- The encouragement of the groups/organisations/users of this facility will understand sustainability in their approach and their ability to attract new users post-programme to enjoy and respect the environment, irrespective of their background, people will naturally come together due to their common interest or passion (e.g. walking, habitat preservation, curiosity of heritage).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Workshops/Sessions (25 participants)</u></b> Delving into the heritage of Dungiven Castle in terms of the folklore and myth connecting with the history of Dungiven Castle and Castle Park area, with the aim and objective to install interpretive signage to bring all of this important heritage to life.</li>   <li>• <b><u>Environmental &amp; Biodiversity Programme (50 participants)</u></b> A programme looking at how best the beneficiaries can work together to preserve and protect the natural habitat of Dungiven Castle Park. A Programme looking at the development of an environmental cohort of volunteers, to contribute positively to its conservation.</li>   <li>• <b><u>Walking Programme (50 participants)</u></b> Offering participants the opportunity as part of a wider Programme of activity to engage in walking at different levels of difficulty or ability so that groups of individuals can attempt these activities within their own comfort zone. Walking/Tour Guide training will also be provided as an opportunity for sustainability beyond the lifetime of the Programme so that local beneficiaries will be able to guide and direct future walkers through the mountain tracks and point out places of interest, a social activity bringing people together through common interests, and through this interest connections will be made, developed and grown.</li>   <li>• <b><u>Finale Event</u></b> An opportunity for the Programme to be brought to a conclusion through an open day, taster session, traditional crafts exhibition and the launch of any digital or hard copy resources developed as a result of the Programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mindset that only certain people from a particular community will make use of an outdoor recreation site, due to its location but that in actual fact the “shared space” approach to our outdoor sites in a post-covid society has witnessed a positive upturn, and peoples’ habits have changed as a result, in this case an important factor is the fact that these sites bear testimony to our “shared history”, “shared landscapes” and “shared beauty-spots” for us all to enjoy, and that they are offered for everyone to avail of or learn about.</li>   <li>• The regenerative nature of a project that supports the natural environment and the relationship between a community and its’ environment, and the accompanying ripple-effect it will prove to have on the immediate locality.</li> </ul>
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