



Title of Report:	PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan Capital Projects – Upgrade of Girona Coastal Path, Portballintrae
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officers	Head of Funding Unit Head of Service – Tourism & Recreation

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£1,291,386 (100% funded)
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Capital
Code	
Staffing Costs	Staff Time

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	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 the PEACEPLUS Capital Project 'Upgrade of Girona Coastal Path' and request the Leisure and Development Committee to approve the project to move to Stage 2 of the Council's approval process for the development of capital projects.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The PEACEPLUS Partnership has been in operation since June 2022 and has overseen the design, development and implementation of the £6.1million PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan which was approved by Council on 5th December 2023.
- 2.2 The PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan includes a capital budget for the development of 5 x capital projects including the 'Upgrade of Girona Coastal Path.' The original total budget allocated to this project from PEACEPLUS was £275,000. Full project information including programme aims, programme beneficiaries, budgets & participants, programme rationale and outputs, programme activities and key issues project will address are included as **Annex A**.
- 2.3 Through delegated authority the PEACEPLUS Partnership has developed the project to Stage 1 of the Council's approval process for the development of capital projects.

3.0 Stage 1

- 3.1 Council's Capital Team undertook procurement in line with requirements of the PEACEPLUS programme for the appointment of an Integrated Consultancy Team. Following public procurement, the following appointments were made:
- Architect - Hall Black Douglas
 - Structural, Civil & Marine Engineer (LEAD) - Doran Consulting
 - QS - WH Stephens
- 3.2 On 10th February 2026, the Integrated Consultancy Team presented their Stage 1 report to Council's PEACEPLUS Capital Projects Working Group. The report was presented as instructed, in zones along the coastal path with associated costs so the project team could propose PEACEPLUS budget allocation to specific sections of the project. The zoned areas include:

Area	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Zone 1: Trailhead	New concrete paving area	New concrete paving area	Do nothing
	New decorative paving area	New decorative paving area	
	Making good to existing gravel trail	Making good to existing gravel trail	
	Site clearance and vegetation	Site clearance and vegetation	
	Proposed wooden fence replacement	Proposed wooden fence replacement	
	Signage, trail markers, bins, information boards (corten)	Signage, trail markers, bins, information boards (timber)	
	Benches (corten)	Benches (timber)	
	visitor monitoring	visitor monitoring	

	Allowance for interpretation installations (Girona Project) £50k	Allowance for interpretation installations (Girona Project) £50k	
Cost	£207,829	£186,914	£0

Area	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Zone 2: WWII Memorial	Site clearance and vegetation	Site clearance and vegetation	Do nothing
	New concrete paving area	New concrete paving area	
	Localised repairs of cliff erosion (Concrete Retaining Wall)	Localised repairs of cliff erosion (Gabion Wall Retaining Wall)	
	Signage, trail markers, bins, information boards (corten)	Signage, trail markers, bins, information boards (timber)	
	Benches (corten)	Benches (timber)	
Cost	£148,876	£106,524	£0

Area	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Zone 3: Three Quarter Bridge	New bridge & handrails	Remedial works to existing bridge (targeted repairs)	Do nothing
	Repairs to existing platform walkway planks	Repairs to existing platform walkway planks	
	Proposed wooden fence replacement & repairs to existing fences, railings, posts and handrails	Proposed wooden fence replacement & repairs to existing fences, railings, posts and handrails	
	Signage, trail markers, bins, information boards (corten)	Signage, trail markers, bins, information boards (timber)	
	Visitor monitoring	Visitor monitoring	
	Benches (corten)	Benches (timber)	
Cost	£597,973	£82,958	£0

Area	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Zone 4: Platform Walkway	Elevated walkway replacement	Elevated walkway replacement	Do nothing
	Repairs to existing adjoining boardwalk planks	Repairs to existing adjoining boardwalk planks	
	Proposed wooden fence replacement	Proposed wooden fence replacement	
	Localised repairs of cliff erosion (Concrete Retaining Wall)	Localised repairs of cliff erosion (Gabion Wall)	
Cost	£333,575	£285,757	£0

Area	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Zone 5: Runkerry	Replacement of timber steps	Diverted path	Do nothing
Cost	£43,815	£0	£0

Further information of the works can be seen at **Annex B and C**.

4.0 Current position

- 4.1 The total costs for the Girona Trails Project far exceeds the original approved £275,000 PEACEPLUS grant funding. Council's Funding Unit has been working closely with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) in a bid to secure additional funding to allow full completion of the Girona Trails Project. SEUPB have granted indicative approval for the increased grant funding to the PEACEPLUS Partnership to allow full completion of the project.
- 4.2 PEACEPLUS funding allocated for this project has now increased to £986,885 for construction costs and £304,501 for associated design team fees (Stage 2 onwards). Total funding allocation is £1,291,386.
- 4.3 The table below details the Option, from the Stage 1 report, that is to be delivered for each Zone.

Area	Item	Option to be delivered	Cost
Zone 1	Trailhead	Option 1	£207,829
Zone 2	WWII Memorial	Option 1 (minus Localised repairs of cliff erosion)	£39,579
Zone 3	Three Quarter Bridge	Option 1	£597,173
Zone 4	Platform Walkway	Option 1 (minus Localised repairs of cliff erosion)	£142,304
Zone 5	Runkerry	Option 3	£0
Total			£986,885

Notes:

Zone 2 - Bushmills Through the Wars Group will be responsible for a WW2 memorial stone.

Zone 2 & Zone 4 – Works related to the repairs of cliff erosion have been excluded from these zones at this stage as the statutory approvals required would delay the project and put the overall project at risk of not completing within the PEACEPLUS timeframe. This has reduced

Zone 5 - Council's Coast and Countryside Team are working on a landowner agreement which diverts the path and negates the requirement for the installation of new steps therefore no works will be completed in this Zone (Option 3).

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee recommends to full Council:

1. Approval to proceed to Stage 2 for full design and build of the Girona Coastal Path Project with £1,291,386 funding through the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan.
2. That the PEACEPLUS Partnership continues to progress this project under delegated authority from Council, proceeding to complete all Capital Project Stages through to completion (Stages 3 & 4). Should the funding situation change or if the project costs exceeds the costs noted in this report Officers will bring a report back into Committee requesting any necessary approvals.
3. Details of Tender Assessment and Report to be taken to Capital Projects Working Group (CPWG) for review and approval prior to proceeding to each Stage.
4. Officers will provide update reports to members after each stage, to update the members on progress and costs.

Annex A:

Theme	Local Community Regeneration and Transformation	Programme Name	The Girona Trail and the Causeway Coastal Path	Time Frame for delivery	Autumn 24 – Autumn 26
<p>Programme Aim</p> <p>For many of the proposals in this Programme, there is an acknowledgement that during the lifetime of the PEACE Programming, quite a focus of programming or addressing need has been focused, quite often in urban settings, looking at the obvious “flashpoints”, “peace lines”, “recognised territorial divisions”, in a sense many of the rural areas were, to an extent overlooked, the “peace hedges” not acknowledged enough, and whilst these outdoor settings, this one a coastal example, in some instances, sit in areas regarded as “single-identity settings”, they have the potential and the attraction to bring people together, both from rural and urban settings to enjoy and appreciate in their respective settings. This is also an opportunity for local people from these areas to welcome people from across the Borough and wider afield, encouraging them to see the area for themselves at first hand, acknowledging what it has to offer and in tandem begin to debunk some of the myths or stereotypes around the locality, building confidence and a sense of pride in their wider locality, increasing actual cross-community & cross-cultural mobility, this presents a hugely positive opportunity.</p> <p>Whilst the Programme is based in a hugely popular area of tourism, the immediate</p>					

locality over the years has experienced movement, including an influx of new families, challenging the notion that this particular area serves a certain older demographic. Whilst the tourists are catered in terms of services, the locals are also keen to participate and experience an investment which will benefit both of them, visitors and the generations to come. Where the “trailhead” of the coastal route begins is set in Portballintrae, a village synonymous with tourism and visitors, during the low season it remains a functional town in which people and families live, work, socialise and engage. Portballintrae and the surrounding area is nestled between the iconic ruin of Dunluce Castle to the West, the UNESCO world heritage site of the Giant’s Causeway to the East. In addition, the village hall of Portballintrae overlooks the North Atlantic towards Lacada Point where the Girona met its’ fate and on the outskirts of the village Lissanduff Earthworks is a feature, dating back to the Iron Age. In short Portballintrae is completely surrounded by centuries of history and heritage, and whilst this programme will enable locals and visitors alike to enjoy a safe and unspoilt view on the coastal route, the animation and programming will enable the local beneficiaries to understand, examine and reflect on the rich heritage, that are accidental guardians of the landscape. The Programme has been developed to provide participants with an opportunity to look at all the areas of interest, the layers of history and heritage that overlaps and makes their place so unique and yet a perfect example of a community operating within a space that has witnessed so many layers and events with significant historical impact, not just

<p>specific to Causeway Coastal route, but in terms of the passage of time from the Iron Age, the Gaelic Clans, Plantation, the retreat of one of the Galleons of the Spanish Armada in a significant European War of its era, the Victorian Mansion, Runkerry House, built in 1885, not to mention a submarine attack by a German U Boat in 1915 on the SS Wheater, which left 18 shell holes in and around the Portballintrae area. The Programme aims to equip the participants to better equipped and informed of the historical context about the place where they live, the shared history that they as participants will be confident to articulate, and using the refurbished pathway deliver their learning against the backdrop of one of the most dramatic heritage sites we boast on this island.</p>	
<p><u>Programme Beneficiaries</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the local community • educators • children and young people • community organisations • local businesses • tourists/visitors 	<p><u>Budget & Participants</u></p> <p>£275,000</p> <p>435 Participants (10%CNR:85%PUL:5%Other)</p>
<p><u>Programme Rationale & Outputs</u></p> <p>In many instances, our inability as a community to grapple with the concept of shared history or alternative narratives, has held us back from achieving our potential. Portballintrae is a fantastic example of a small, picturesque village which straddles and overlooks a vast amount of heritage, and shared history in a very small area. We are conscious that the village has a huge draw for tourists, especially the Causeway Coastal path, which will receive an upgrade, but will also see a level of animation and interpretation, coming about as the conclusion to the Programme of Activities in which the Programme beneficiaries will participate and input. This is a fantastic opportunity for a small area to embrace and develop the local and significant heritage that the village sits upon, to support a level of renewal and transformation of the village by the village. From the legacy and learning from the Peace IV Programme,</p>	

Portballintrae did not engage as a specific community, PEACEPLUS is setting about to address some of these gaps.

By the end of the Programme:

- A total of 435 participants will have engaged with the Programme.
- Increased levels knowledge and understanding about the significant heritage of Portballintrae and the surrounding area.
- Increased levels of confidence around the ability to articulate the shared history of the locality.
- Increased levels of mobility from outside the catchment area, for reasons of interest on a cross-community/cultural level.

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 can compare, contrast and connect **(25 participants from each Capital Works)**.
- **6 x Workshops/Sessions** on the significant phases of heritage in and around the immediate area **(50 participants)**
- **Workshops** (through storytelling, site visits, art workshops) for children and young people **(150 participants – 6months)** looking at important sites around their village, how would they like to see this developed, recorded, displayed.

Key Issues Project Will Address

- The fear around embracing shared history.
- The ability to articulate the shared history and heritage that exists as a positive element in our landscape, with confidence.
- The ability to connect and link in with other groups and communities, who alongside this community have a common goal, but may have a variation of backgrounds.
- The sense of pride and confidence achieved by a community, who have undergone a sense of regeneration and transformation such as this proposal.

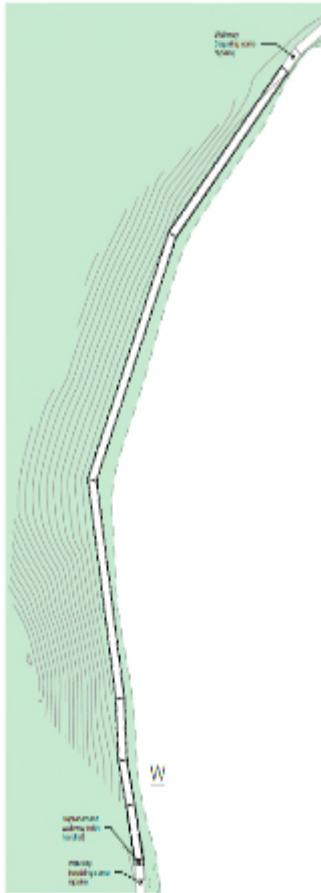
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of Workshops (150 participants) look at the potential animation along the causeway path, what type of interpretive signage is required? Would site visits to other examples of paths or cross-border sites like Newgrange/Navan Fort/Streedagh Beach (Co. Sligo - Armada wrecks here also) help? • Walking /Tour Guiding Facilitation (80 adult participants) An opportunity for prospective guides to engage in a wider Programme of Walking/Tour Guiding, with some of the other projects so that they have the ability to put to use their knowledge and the upgraded path, to demonstrate the depth, breadth and richness of the heritage on their front-door. • Finale Event Official launch of the upgraded path and the display of the newly installed interpretative signage, (links to websites, pamphlets if agreed as part of the Programme). • Capital Works Element <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provision of trailhead information hub in main car park, in line with other hubs provided at key recreational sites including Garvagh Forest and Banagher Glen. -Major repairs to Threequarter Footbridge (approx. length 60m) to replace decking and handrails. -Major repairs to raised boardwalk alongside River Bush (approx. length 120m) to replace decking 	
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<p>and associated handrail and substructure repairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Repairs to sections of localised cliff erosion alongside pathway.-Replacement of flight of timber steps along route.-Provision of waymarking and seating along route.-Provision of visitor monitoring equipment at 2 locations along route. <p>These works will significantly increase both the visitor and the local experience.</p>	
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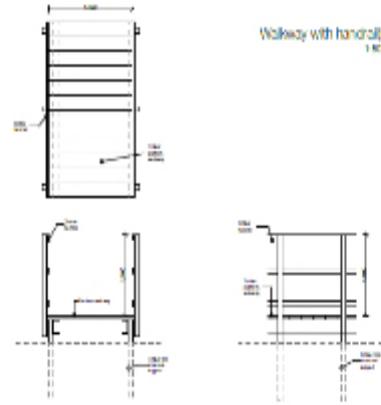
Annex B: Current Platform Walkway condition



Annex C: Proposed Platform Walkway



Plan
1:500



Walkway with handrail
1:10

Precedent images



Boardwalk in park



Boardwalk with handrail in park

Platform Walkway - approx 100m
 - Replacement platform walkway
 - Handrail
 - Rip-rap at base needed to adjoining landscape
 plan 10

HALL BLACK DOUGLAS

ADDRESS: 110 South Street Canterbury Kent TN1 1GB	Project: Green Project Platform Walkway	Drawing Title: Platform Walkway	Scale: A3
Author: H. Black Douglas	Client: GGL Heritage Council	Drawing No. 1001-2024-001-001	Date: 08/10/24
			Drawn/Chk: H. Black