

ACTION PLAN

UK (Northern Ireland), 2022



This action plan was prepared by Rural Area Partnership in Derry Ltd – RAPID, under Interreg Europe programme project Revitalizing Remote And Mountainous areas through Sustainable Alternative Tourism (RAMSAT). This project – RAMSAT- is supported under the European Union (Interreg Europe / ERDF).

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Part I – General information

Project: RAMSAT

Partner organisation Rural Area Partnership in Derry (RAPID) Ltd

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): Derry City & Strabane District Council

Country: Northern Ireland, UK

NUTS2 region: UKN04 North of Northern Ireland

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Part II – Policy context

1. The Action Plan aims to impact:

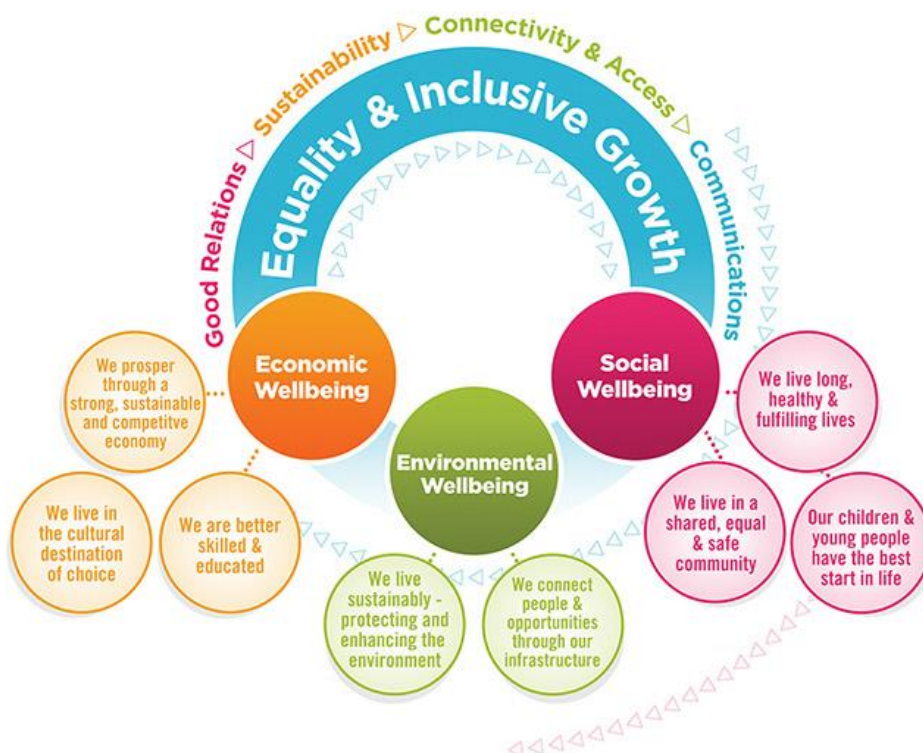
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

2. Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Strategic & Local Growth Plans : Derry City & Strabane District Council.

3. Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instruments:

The Strategic Growth Plan is the Community Plan for Derry and Strabane – a significant new statutory power which was handed to Councils as a result of local government reform. At its heart lies the vision to create a thriving, prosperous and sustainable City and District with equality of opportunity for all. This new approach to driving inclusive and sustainable growth is dependent on effective partnership working among local agencies and responsibility for its delivery lies both with Council and a range of Community, Voluntary and Statutory bodies. The Strategic Growth Partnership has been established to provide governance and oversight of this process. The strategy stems from the expertise of these partner and will be reviewed every two years to ensure it can evolve to meet the changing needs of people here.



A key focus of The Strategic Growth Plan is to establish a world-class visitor experience and make the area a destination of choice by developing and promoting our heritage assets through site preservation and capital investment.

Through RAMSAT Partner 5 (RAPID) intends to address this in line with Programme Priority Axes 4, Investment Priority 6 (c), Specific Objective 4.2.

Local council authorities have a statutory responsibility to lead community planning, specifically to identify the entities operating in their area that they will need to help them plan and provide services, and publish progress of outcomes every 2 years.

Central government departments must participate in and assist the Council, perform actions in the Plan, and promote and encourage their involvement in local delivery. RAPID is working closely with Derry City & Strabane District Council in order to address the sustainable development of the Sperrin Mountains, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is currently underdeveloped and underutilised as a tourism destination.

Derry City & Strabane District Council is the local authority for Derry and Strabane district in Northern Ireland. It was created as part of the 2014 Northern Ireland local government reform, replacing Derry City Council and Strabane District Council. The Inclusive Strategic & Local Growth Plans (Derry City & Strabane District Council 2019) are the key policy documents which the RAMSAT Interreg Europe programme wishes to influence.

This includes the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan for the City & District (2019) and the Local Community Growth Plans for the three rural District Electoral Areas of Sperrin, Derg & Faughan.

In April 2015 and in accordance with the Local Government Act (2014) the 26 existing District Councils in Northern Ireland were replaced with 11 new, larger Councils. Of particular relevance to this report was the creation of the new Derry City and Strabane District Council which was the result of a merger between the former Derry City Council and Strabane District Council.

The 2014 Local Government Act also gave the new Council the statutory duty to lead, maintain and facilitate, in partnership with relevant statutory, support partners and the community, the Community Planning process.

Community Planning is defined in the Act as “a process whereby voluntary and community sector, statutory bodies and local councils come together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the well being of the area and to pave the way for the more efficient use of resources”, in particular:

- Improving social, economic and environmental well being (including promoting equality of opportunity, tackling poverty, exclusion and disadvantage);
- Contributing to achieving sustainable development across the region; and
- Planning and improving public service.

Under Community Planning, Councils (i.e. Derry City and Strabane District Council) have a statutory responsibility to lead community planning, specifically:

- Council will identify the organisations and agencies operating in their area that they will need to help them plan and provide services; and
- Publish progress of outcomes every 2 years.

Community Planning, as outlined above, is a process led by Derry City & Strabane District Council in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared, long-term vision to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Derry City & Strabane District area. It will also guide how our public services will work together locally to plan and deliver better services.

Derry City & Strabane District Council adopted a significant co-design process to develop the Strategic Growth Plan for the Derry & Strabane District. This included engaging with statutory organisations, business, community and voluntary organisations and interested citizens to agree the way in which the plan should be developed.

Following an extensive process of engagement and consultation with citizens, organisations and businesses the Community Plan for Derry and Strabane – the Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan - is now complete. The final strategy incorporating the views of all those who have contributed has now been launched.

There are 3 Pillars:

- Social Well-being – to improve the quality of life of all our people now and in the future
- Economic Well-being – to grow and sustain our economy to create more and better employment opportunities for everyone
- Environmental Well-being – to live in a low carbon, sustainably designed and connected region

As part of the Community Planning process, Derry City & Strabane District Council undertook an extensive consultation and co-design process within the Council area. This consultation sought to ascertain the needs and primary objectives across three 'wellbeing pillars':

The projects identified within the RAMSAT Action Plan meet the following aims & objectives of the Strategic & Local Growth Plans : Derry City & Strabane District Council (2019)

- Develop tourism to attract investors and promote the area as a vibrant social hub
- Support increased tourism product development and promotion of areas of outstanding natural beauty, woodlands, waterways, wetlands, nature reserves and heritage sites. In particular to increase access to same
- Support the development and delivery of improvement programmes for walking and cycling routes and countryside access
- Explore opportunities for an active and passive recreation as part of the Green Infrastructure Plan
- Promote in partnership with others the conservation, re-generation and sustainable management of all local woodlands and wetlands and the development of the region as a major countryside recreation destination
- Promote the development of Green Infrastructure Projects to contribute to reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change.
- Develop and deliver with local partners and statutory agencies an extensive expansion and/or improvement of walking and cycling routes through villages and the open countryside and expand provision of shared recreational spaces and programmes to encourage increased physical activity in order to maintain mobility and fitness and reduce rural isolation e.g. heritage, mountain, riverside and lakeside trails, walking clubs
- Support tourism product development and marketing opportunities in line with the tourism strategy for the City and District and as part of the Future Search exercise for the Sperrins including training and highlighting the built and natural heritage of the area
- Promote investment in physical and digital infrastructure, creating improved access points, signage and improving the quality of facilities enabling elderly and people with disabilities to participate in sporting and tourism activities
- Support the development and delivery of an extensive expansion and improvement programme of walking and cycling routes through villages and in the open countryside across the Sperrin DEA. This combined with the provision of shared recreational spaces will encourage increased physical activity. It will help to maintain mobility and fitness and reduce rural isolation e.g. heritage trails, mountain trails, riverside trails, country parks, forest trails, angling, canoeing, horse-riding, o² road mountain biking etc.
- Work with Government and Statutory Partners to ensure the delivery of a fully resourced management plan and associated delivery structure for the Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- Establish a local heritage partnership for the Sperrin DEA, encouraging local, regional and statutory partnership working across natural and built heritage

In order to progress achievement of the shared outcomes identified in the Strategic Growth Plan (Community Plan) Outcome Delivery Plans have been agreed and taken forward by community planning partners. The Outcome Delivery Plans are live and evolving documents, subject to ongoing review, and are performance managed through the identification and monitoring of performance level measures. The Actions identified in the RAMSAT Action Plan will help to achieve the following objectives of the Strategic & Local Growth Plans by 2023;

Strategic Growth Plan Objective (Policy Instrument)	RAMSAT Action	RAMSAT Action Plan contribution to improving to Policy Instrument
Develop a comprehensive Tourism strategy and action plan and establish a Tourism Delivery Partnership to oversee its implementation and the related Community Planning actions and act as an industry voice and lobby group.	Action 1 :Development of Enagh Lough Country Park Action 2 : Glenelly Valley Heritage Trail Development Action 3 : Oakfire Adventures Discovery Centre	The Action Plan will help the policy instrument meet the overall aim of ensuring “ <i>We will prosper through a strong, sustainable and competitive economy</i> ”. The development of an Action Plan of new projects for alternative tourism development in the Sperrin Mountains based on best practice examples from other regions The implementation of the Action Plan via the community planning process and delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan in the Sperrin region will help meet this policy instrument objective.
Develop and deliver an Access and Inclusion Programme encouraging participation and engagement, promoting	Action 1 :Development of Enagh Lough Country Park	It will enable local communities and statutory agencies to highlight the contribution and assets they can bring to implementing

<p>intercultural diversity, wellbeing and promoting accessible cultural experience</p>	<p>Action 2 : Glenelly Valley Heritage Trail Development</p>	<p>solutions to issues of sustainable development in terms of governance and long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Enable sensible co-ordination, integration and alignment of policies and programmes to make better and more efficient use of resources.</p>
<p>Drive capital investment in visitor orientation and infrastructure via securing new visitor destination premises with state of the art digital visitor services; and improve accessibility and the development of community tourism initiatives</p>	<p>Action 1 :Development of Enagh Lough Country Park</p> <p>Action 3 : Oakfire Adventures Discovery Centre</p>	<p>Enable sensible co-ordination, integration and alignment of policies and programmes to make better use of resources.</p>
<p>Support the development of key tourism, arts, heritage and cultural capital projects, that will have a significant impact on the delivery of the Tourism and Arts & Culture strategies including the completion of a scoping exercise on the feasibility of a significant major new iconic tourism/visitor attraction.</p>	<p>Action 3 : Oakfire Adventures Discovery Centre</p>	<p>It will enable local communities and statutory agencies to highlight the contribution and assets they can bring to implementing solutions to issues of sustainable development</p> <p>Enable sensible co-ordination, integration and alignment of policies and programmes to make better use of resources</p>
<p>Enhancement of the natural environment through biodiversity action planning and landscape scale conservation projects to</p>	<p>Action 1 :Development of Enagh Lough Country Park</p>	<p>It will make for better accounting for the impact of the Community Planning processes, especially in terms of substantial public sector</p>

protect and enhance natural environmental assets	Action 2 : Glenelly Valley Heritage Trail Development	investment in tourism development.
Develop community led regeneration initiatives to promote environmental stewardship and the responsible use and protection of the environment	Action 1 :Development of Enagh Lough Country Park	It will enable local communities and statutory agencies to highlight the contribution and assets they can bring to implementing solutions to issues of sustainable development Enable sensible co-ordination, integration and alignment of policies and programmes to make better use of resources

The investment in the RAMSAT project will enable RAPID and Derry City & Strabane District Council to influence the delivery of the objectives of the Strategic & Local Growth Plans : Derry City & Strabane District Council as outlined above.

The results of the policy change will be monitored by both RAPID and Derry City & Strabane District Council and the territorial impact will be measured via the publish progress of outcomes on the Strategic & Local Growth Plans which Council publishes every 2 years (next review in 2023).

Part III – Details on the actions envisaged

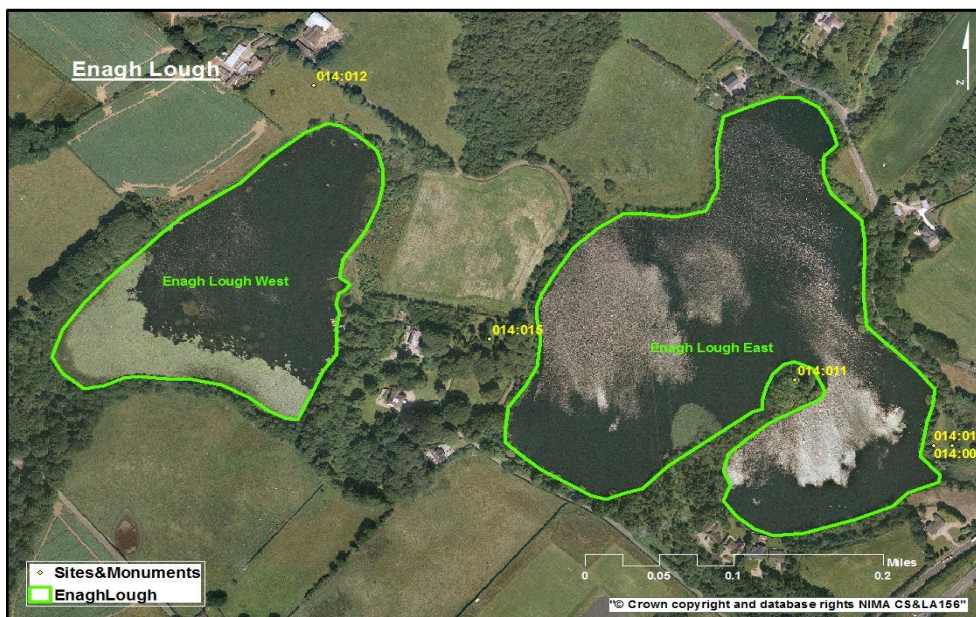
ACTION 1 : Development of Enagh Lough Country Park

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The following Good Practice example from RAMSAT project partners influenced the development of this project.

“The Silent Route”, Aragón, Spain - Transforming a binding road into a scenic road for cycling or motorcycling, creating resting places in villages. This project involved opening up an access route to help better connect an area which also provided a new tourism resource for the area.

Enagh Lough is just north of Derry city near Strathfoyle. It comprises of two extensive areas of open water surrounded by wetlands, mature deciduous woodland and improved agricultural grassland. Two buildings, a disused church and school, are situated nearby. The Loughs are also close to the shore of the Foyle Estuary and the Lisnahally Port. The main Port of Derry. Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd and other local community groups wish to develop the Loughs and the surrounding area via three-man projects.



Map of Enagh Lough Site

Enagh Lough is the site of a Gaelic Tower House or Castle built by the O’Cahan Clan in the medieval period. Templetown Crannog & Tower House on Green Island Enagh Lough is listed as an ancient monument site with remains of Templetown Church lying nearby. The island is now connected to the mainland by a causeway, however there are no visible traces on the island of the castle, other than a slightly higher central area.

Gransha Woods

Gransha Wood is situated adjacent to the Gransha Hospital Site and is flanked by the Foyle Bridge on the east bank of the River Foyle. Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd have contacted Department of Health to request some form of community ownership of the wood and pathway. Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd has also requested that Department of Health grant a section of this land under community asset transfer to Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd to develop changing facilities for Enagh Lough and to provide an access link between the Enagh Lough site and Gransha Wood.

Enagh Old School & Chapel site

The Enagh Old School & Chapel site is a collection of old buildings just south of Strathfoyle on Temple Road adjacent to Enagh Lough Eastern. The buildings consist of a Catholic school (originally a National School), church and parish hall for the parishioners of the Strathfoyle and Maydown wider parish.

Enagh Old School & Chapel site.



Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd have successfully negotiated a 5-year lease with the Diocese of Derry and have recently commissioned Foyle Consulting Engineers to carry out a buildings survey of the site. This will involve a full site survey and production of a professional report on the state of the building. Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd envisage using the site as a hub for the Lough Country Park. The fact that the group has secured an initial lease with the promise of an extension should funding become available puts the group in a much stronger position to secure funding for the site

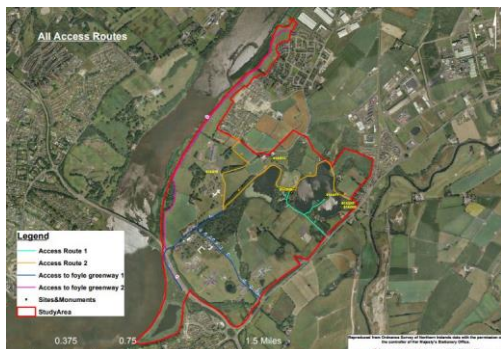
2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)
 - **Secure an access link between Enagh Country Park and Strathfoyle Greenway by 31st December 2022**
 - **Secure capital funding for the re-development of the Old School and Chapel site by 30th June 2023.**

The RAMSAT project funded external expertise support to develop a feasibility and scoping study into the project which enabled the partnership to secure funding to employ an architect to draw up design plans and submit planning permission for the Old School and Chapel site. Design plans have been drawn up and agreed and a planning application is currently being prepared for submission. Once planning permission is in place a capital funding application will be submitted.

In addition in terms of the link/path Derry City & Strabane District Council have adopted the project through the Council's Environment & Regeneration Committee following a presentation from the project partners. Council's Access Officer has agreed to develop a link between the Old School and Church Site and the new Strathfoyle Greenway. Stage 1 of this process has already commenced and involves identification of landowners and agreement on the best access route. Stage 2 will then involve development and signing of a permission pathway agreement with landowners. Stage 3 will involve the capital works (access paths and signage) in order to open the link to the public.

The Strathfoyle Greenway is a 2.7km extension of the Waterside Greenway, from Foyle Bridge to Stradowen Drive currently being developed by Derry City & Strabane District Council. A greenway is a dedicated cycling and walking route and can take a variety of forms: either off road (traffic free); or on road within part of the verge or footway but segregated from motorised traffic and generally referred to as a 'shared path' for cycling and walking.

Link with Gransha Wood and Enagh Lough



Strathfoyle Community Association have explored options for new access routes linking Enagh Lough with Gransha Wood. Significant potential exists to incorporate the woodland in Gransha into the Enagh Country Park and linking Gransha with Enagh Lough via a new greenway connecting Stradreagh and Judges Road which will ultimately link the proposed Enagh Country Park with Strathfoyle Greenway.

The creation of an access link between Enagh Country Park and Strathfoyle Greenway would fit with the development of the RAMSAT goals of increasing the number of visits to cultural and natural heritage and attractions and the amount of investment in promoting, preserving, and improving the natural and cultural heritage.

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- Derry City & Strabane District Council
- Enagh Country Park Enterprises Ltd
- Strathfoyle Community Association
- Enagh Youth Forum
- The Honourable Irish Society

4. Timeframe

Objective	Completion Date
Secure an access link between Enagh Country Park and Strathfoyle Greenway	31 st December 2022
Secure capital funding for the re-development of the Old School and Chapel site	30 th June 2023

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

To be confirmed

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant)

EU Peace Plus Programme (2021-2027)

DAERA Rural Investment Programme (2021-2027)

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (2021-2027)

ACTION 2 Glenelly Valley Heritage Trail Development

1. The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

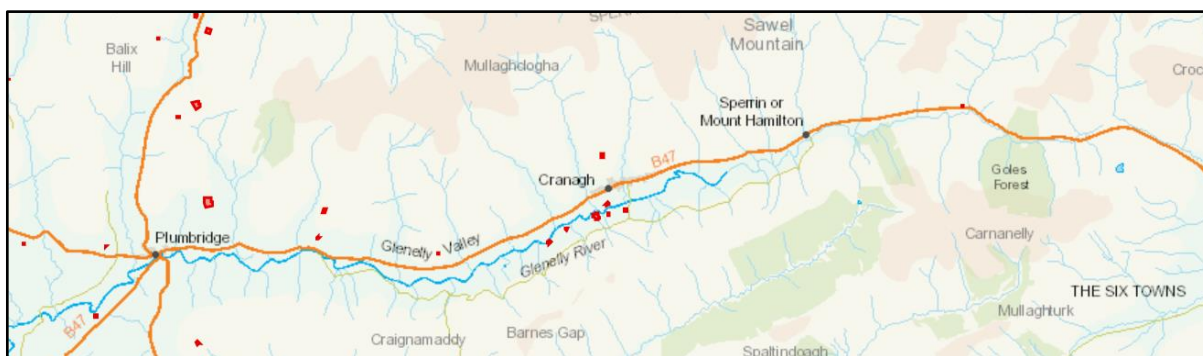
The following Good Practice example from RAMSAT project partners influenced the development of this project.

“Miner’s Hiking Trail”, Vzhodna Slovenija, Slovenia - a thematic trail that provides hikers the access to mining heritage and thus raises the awareness about heritage and its importance for regional development. The Trail also connects with other thematic and recreational trails in the region and is intended for various target groups

“Joint Adventure on the Mountain Paths (JAMP)”, Bulgaria - To improve the sustainable use of natural heritage and resources and cultural heritage. The main goal of the project JAMP (ROBG-384) is to support the sustainable development of the cross-border tourism from Romania and Bulgaria and to increase the promotion of the mountain area from district Mehedinti and counties Vidin and Montana by creating new products and services and through direct involvement all interested stakeholders in tourism development that will increase the number of the tourists in the region.

The Glenelly Valley is highly valued for its heritage and scenic beauty and is designated as part of the Sperrins AONB. It is an extremely sensitive landscape with significant archaeological sites and historic field patterns. This potential project involves improving walking routes and access to the following archaeological and natural heritage features. The valley stretches from Tyrone to Derry and from Strabane (in the south) to Limavady (in the north) but for the purposes of this project only monuments in Rural Derry and Strabane area are identified. This is an area of high archaeological significance and is also natural breath-taking Valley

Sites along Glenelly Valley



Examples of built heritage monuments include Clogherny Wedge which is a Bronze Age wedge tomb that is well preserved. Along the valley is a collection of ancient early Christian raths, Glenroan Portal Tomb dating back to dates to 3000BC and Goles Stone Row, which is a collection 11 individual upright stones, oriented north to south and arranged in a straight line, some 16 meters long. The stones date from the Bronze Age and are believed to have been associated with rituals to do with the rising moon.

Other major megalithic monuments and natural and built heritage feature include Clogherny Wedge Tomb, Butterlope Glen ASSI, Glenelly River ASSI, Castledamph Stone Circles, Corick Abbey, and Goles Forest.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Actions

- Provide new directional and information heritage trail signage
- Negotiate any new access with private owners
- Develop virtual map

The RAMSAT project has funded external expertise to assist with a feasibility study into developing the Glenelly Valley Heritage Trail – including identification of sites, landowners and costings for signage and any new access works. The identified sites are all either scheduled monuments or state care monuments meaning that they are already in public ownership. Agreement on signage will need approval from the Department for Communities Historic Environment Directorate. New access agreements will be negotiated by Derry City & Strabane District Council Access Officer as per the statutory obligation of District Councils under the Access to the

Countryside Order (NI) 1983. The next stage in the project development will be bringing the project to the Sperrin Local Community Growth Partnership Board and then to Council's Environment and Regeneration and Business & Culture committee's. The virtual map will then be developed once the final list of sites have been agreed with landowners.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- Derry City & Strabane District Council
- Department for Communities : Historic Environment Directorate
- Glenelly Development Trust

4. Timeframe

Objective	Completion Date
Negotiate any new access with private owners	31 st December 2022
Develop virtual map	31 st March 2023
Provide new directional and information heritage trail signage	30 th June 2023

5. Costs (if relevant)

To be confirmed

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

Department for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs – Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Programme.

Derry City & Strabane District Council

Department for Communities – Historic Environment Directorate

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

ACTION 3 Oakfire Adventures Discovery Centre

1 The background (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The following Good Practice example from RAMSAT project partners influenced the development of this project.

“Mountain Bike Centre” Maestrazgo, Aragón, Spain - Maestrazgo has created a paradise for the BTT lovers with 14 routes and the hostel where you can sleep and clean the bikes, for an affordable price. More and more people are interested in this type of signposted and safe facilities, therefore, the beneficiaries are, on the one hand, visitors to the territory interested in practicing mountain biking, as well as local fans. Likewise, the local business community set up a product club around the Centre, with which they are also interested in making the Centre work.

Oakfire Adventure is an activity destination situated in 20km of woodlands & trails owned and maintained by NIEA and The Woodland Trust offering a variety of outdoor adventures making particular use of the quality woodland in which it is situated. Adventure activities include ziplines and tree line trekking together with team building and a major obstacle course.

Oakfire Adventures intend to develop their centre and increase their facilities by developing a new Discovery Centre and services hub based in the heart of Rural Derry and Strabane. The new Discovery Centre will include expanding parking facilities and the development of toilet, changing facilities, a picnic / food hub as a base for outdoor activities, hiking and cycling in the area.

Oakfire Adventures also have a community interest company (The Oaks Rural Community Hub Limited) which will be involved in implementation of the project. A community interest company is a special type of limited company which exists in the UK to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. Community interest companies channel their profits into social change. In addition the “Co-Design” ethos of the Strategic and Local Growth Plan also enables Derry City & Strabane District Council (particularly under the ‘Economic Wellbeing’ pillar) to partner with SME’s in order to deliver the plan.



2 Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Actions

- Secure Planning Permission for the new centre & submit funding applications

- Secure partnerships with the Woodland Trust & Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Identify access routes to local woodlands and parks.

Progress to date has involved the development of design plans and a planning application submitted. A funding application has also been submitted to Tourism Northern Ireland. A partnership has been secured with Woodland Trust and negotiations are ongoing with Derry City & Strabane District Council. Woodland Trust are currently working on a development project to identify new access routes to local woodlands and are currently in discussions with Derry City & Strabane District Council over indemnifying these routes.

3 Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- Oakfire Adventures
- Tourism NI
- Derry City & Strabane District Council
- The Woodland Trust
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency

4 Timeframe

Objective	Completion Date
Secure partnerships with the Woodland Trust & Derry City and Strabane District Council	31 st December 2022
Identify access routes to local woodlands and parks	31 st March 2023
Secure Planning Permission for the new centre & submit funding applications	30 th June 2023

5 Costs (if relevant)

To be confirmed

6 Funding sources (if relevant):

EU Peace Plus Programme (2021-2027)

DAERA Rural Investment Programme (2021-2027)

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (2021-2027)

Tourism NI

Date: 25th July 2022

Signature:



Jim McColgan. Chairperson

Signature:



Philip O'Kane. Manager



Date: July 2022

Name of the organisation: Rural Area Partnership in Derry Ltd – RAPID

