



Outdoor Recreation, Open Space and Access Audit and
Recommendations for the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands
Area

Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of the Causeway
Coast & Glens Heritage Trust

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ACRONYMS

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASSI	Area of Special Scientific Interest
CCGBC	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
CCGHT	Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust
CANI	Canoe Association Northern Ireland
DAERA	Department of Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
DFC	Department for Communities
DFI	Department of Infrastructure
FSNI	Forest Service NI
GIS	Geographic Information System
HED	Historic Environment Division
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LPS	Landscape Partnership Scheme
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NED	Natural Environment Division
NCN	National Cycle Network
NGB	National Governing Body
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NIOA	Northern Ireland Orienteering Association
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NR	Nature Reserve
ORAP	Outdoor Recreation Action Plan
ORNI	Outdoor Recreation NI
PROW	Public Right of Way
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
TIC	Tourist Information Centre
TNI	Tourism NI
UAF	Ulster Angling Federation
UHGPC	Ulster Hang Gliding and Paragliding School

FOREWORD

Please note that this report is not an exhaustive list of all current outdoor recreation within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Area. The results recorded are based on data gathered through existing studies and information collected through desk research and consultation.

Although every endeavour has been taken to ensure accuracy in mapping, some trails, sites, public land and activities may appear under-represented due to a lack of feedback or limited response.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2017, Outdoor Recreation NI was commissioned by the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust to provide an assessment of the status of outdoor recreation activities, outdoor spaces, public access and provide costed recommendations for projects which could be advanced through a potential Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.

Given the special qualities of the area, it is vital that any outdoor recreation development for the area takes a balanced approach to ensure that the very resource which provides the opportunities for recreation and enjoyment is protected and managed appropriately.

The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area covers an area of some 209 km² and falls within the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area. The area's principal settlements are Castlerock, Ballykelly, Magilligan and Articlave. The area also includes the Magilligan Ferry which brings in visitors from the Inishowen peninsula as well as the wider Donegal area.

The outdoors of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands' area has undoubtedly a high quality natural resource base, both spatially extensive and diverse in nature. The area takes in the eastern shore of Lough Foyle from Ballykelly to Magilligan Point, over 39km of coastline including the blue flag beaches of Castlerock, Benone Strand and Downhill, the coastal plains beneath the Binevenagh basalt escarpment, the River Roe and an expansive public forest estate including Downhill, Binevenagh, Springwell, Grange Park, Ballyhanna and Cam.

It is this extensiveness and diversity of the resource base that lends itself to the provision of opportunities for the wide range of outdoor recreation activities for both the local population and for an increasing number of visitors to the area. The area is unique across Northern Ireland in that it is the only area that provides for land, water and air based activities near each other.

Within the area, the key providers of outdoor recreation are Forest Service NI (FSNI), CCGBC, NIEA, Lough Agency, RSPB, Ulster Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

An extensive process of consultation was carried out with individual Council Officers, Council elected members, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), public and statutory agencies, public and private landowners, outdoor activity providers, community associations and groups, clubs, and the public. In addition, two public consultation events took place which were attended by approximately 40 people.

From the consultation process several key issues regarding the current and future management, development and promotion of outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands were identified. These included:

Management:

- No active mechanism currently exists within the area to encourage collaboration between the many different organisations and interest groups involved in outdoor recreation across the area. These include landowners/land managers, NGBs, private sector activity providers and service providers.
- Currently there is no Memorandum of Understanding in place between the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and Forest Service Northern Ireland for the future development and management of recreation on Forest Service land within the area.

Development:

- Current provision is concentrated in several geographic areas and these are particularly important in determining the area's future outdoor recreation proposition namely; the coastal strip between Castlerock and Magilligan, the Binevenagh escarpment and surrounding foothills, the eastern shore

of Lough Foyle from Ballykelly to the Roe Estuary and the Forests which make up a large proportion of the area's central core.

- In terms of specific activities, the area already offers excellent water-based opportunities, but there is still significant opportunity to develop specific land-based products further to increase the outdoor recreation product on offer.
- Supporting visitor facilities for outdoor recreation, e.g. toilets and changing facilities are inadequate or non-existent at many of the key outdoor recreation sites and directly influences whether mobile activity providers bring groups into the area.
- Opportunities for those with mobility issues to enjoy the area for outdoor recreation are currently limited across the area.
- Whilst all Forests across the area provide local recreation opportunities, some forests have the potential if developed appropriately, to attract visitors from outside the area.
- Several initiatives currently being considered have the potential to create 'stand out' recreation products namely; the Downhill Demesne and Downhill Forest proposition, the creation of an off-road walk from Aghanloo Wood through to Castlerock village, the enhancement of the existing Lough Foyle and the development of a Regional Mountain Bike Trail Centre using several the area's key forests.
- Whilst the area already has several informal walking trails around villages and along river corridors, there is a desire for the provision of more formal Community Trails.
- The area shows significant disparity between the quality of outdoor recreation sites that currently exists with increasing distance from the coastal strip.
- Understanding the level of use being made of sites across the area is currently limited, with only a few key sites having counters in place to record user numbers.
- Specific bodies/initiatives have and will continue to play a significant role in the development of local outdoor recreation initiatives across the area, e.g. the CCGBC, CCGHT and proposed LPS, the National Trust, local community groups and private sector activity providers.

Marketing:

- There appears to be a lack of strategic approach to the marketing and promotion of outdoor recreation within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area within the wider 'north coast' area.
- Limited information is available on the specific opportunities available for outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands.
- There is insufficient detailed information on the walking and cycling product of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area which can be used by those on the ground assisting visitors coming into the area.
- Awareness/directional signage indicating the outdoor recreation opportunities available across the area is weak.
- There is a significant discrepancy in the provision and quality of onsite visitor information and signage across the area's outdoor recreation sites.
- There are other external effective marketing mechanisms already in place which should be supported, to promote the opportunities available within the area e.g. WalkNI.com, OutmoreNI.com.

An Action Plan setting out 29 key recommendations costing at £3,524,500 was developed. The main recommendations were:

Management Structures:

- Re-activate the Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum.
- Establish a Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Outdoor Recreation Forum.
- Put in place the necessary legal documents between FSNi and CCGBC and the National Trust to facilitate future recreational development on FSNi land.

Master Planning:

- Undertake a master/spatial planning exercise for 2 key sites namely: Ballycarton/Binevenagh Forest and Downhill Estate/Downhill Forest.

Product Development:

- Develop a walking trail between Aghanloo Wood and Castlerock including Binevenagh
- Develop an all ability trail/multi use trail in Ballycarton Wood
- Enhance the existing Lough Foyle Trail to bring it up to all ability/multi use standard
- Improve the access to the Martello Tower for walkers
- Improve the access to the Giant's Sconce for walkers
- Develop 3 community trails
- Develop a Regional Mountain Bike Centre
- Assess the feasibility of a long-distance mountain bike trail and deliver if viable
- Produce two new orienteering maps for Cam and Springwell Forests
- Improve take-off sites for paragliders/hanggliders
- Develop a significant recreation hub at Downhill

Promotion/marketing

- Prepare a Marketing Strategy and tactical Action Plan
- Develop a graphic device/identity for outdoor recreation
- Prepare a detailed walking and cycling map of the area
- Develop visitor information and signage guidelines for all sites, undertake a review of all sites and implement the new guidelines at all sites across the area
- Develop an Outdoor Recreation Participation Plan
- Deliver an annual small grants programme

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Need for this Audit

In 2014, the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT) applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme to celebrate its living landscape and ensure that it is conserved, enhanced and promoted for the benefit of all. Unfortunately, this application was unsuccessful in addition to a new application submitted again in 2016.

Feedback from the HLF noted that a key component of any future bid should be the connectivity between the area's unique heritage and its outdoor recreation product, with cognisance given to the fact that any future development related to outdoor recreation is done so sustainably and with the full cooperation of the area's local communities.

This Audit builds on previous work undertaken in the area related to outdoor recreation namely;

- Sperrin Walking Audit which includes Binevenagh (ORNI, 2011)
- The Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Action Plan (ORNI, 2014)
- Review of existing water-based tourism and leisure activities within Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough (ORNI, 2015)
- Review of existing coastal recreation activities and access opportunities within Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough (ORNI, 2015)

In the last 10 years, the provision and management of outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area has significantly changed and developed. For example, the area has seen a notable increase in activity providers and growth in recreation activities such as stand-up paddle boarding and walking. These recreation activities coupled with the dramatic landscape, rich heritage and national tourism attractions such as the Giant's Causeway, to the east of the study area, are packaged under the 'Causeway Coast and Glens Destination'.

Despite the changes in outdoor recreation provision this Audit is the first document that focusses solely on the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands. With the proposed Landscape Partnership Scheme being developed, this is an opportune time to consider how the outdoor recreation product can be developed to encourage greater understanding of the area's extensive heritage proposition for both the local community and visitors alike.

However, increasing opportunities should not be at the expense of the natural environment; protection of the landscape and heritage of the area remains critical. Thus, any project taken forward in the recommendations should take account of the total impact on the ecosystems upon which it relies to take place.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this Audit is:

'To provide an assessment of the status of outdoor recreation activities, outdoor spaces, public access and provide costed recommendations for projects which could be advanced through a potential Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area'.

The objectives are to:

- Detail and map (using GIS) the nature and extent of current outdoor recreation activities, open space and public access opportunities within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowland area including;
 - o All land, air and water-based activities
 - o Both area and site-specific facilities
 - o PROW and access agreements

- Detail and GIS map the current land management bodies involved in outdoor recreation provision in the area
- Detail and GIS map all environmental designations across the region
- Outline the relevant context of outdoor recreation within the area, against what is happening at a regional and local level
- Undertake consultation with relevant stakeholders including Council Officers, local community, tourism and business sector, public bodies, national governing bodies (NGB) of sport and user groups to identify current outdoor recreation provision and aspirations for future development of outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area
- Identify the future opportunities and priorities for both strategic development and site specific development that will increase the outdoor recreation opportunities across the area for both the local population and visitors alike based on the area's unique heritage
- Produce recommendations for a series of costed projects that could be fed into a future Landscape Partnership Scheme

1.3 Outdoor Recreation Defined

The term outdoor recreation invokes many different images. For some it automatically triggers a stereotype of activities such as rock climbing, canoeing and orienteering. For others, it has a much wider connotation including general leisure activities such as walking, cycling and horse riding. Outdoor recreation therefore includes all land, water and air activities normally found in a rural or urban fringe location that depend upon sustainable access to the natural environment including those which use built facilities but which have their roots in the outdoors and are predominantly reliant on the natural environment e.g. mountain biking, canoeing. Outdoor Recreation spans all levels of participation, ranging from the informal to formalised and organised events.

Within the Study Area, 23 outdoor recreation activities are known to take place, as shown in Table 1.

Although some activities such as sailing and boat cruising do take place along the coast of the Study Area, these have not been included in the Audit, as the access point for such activities is outside the area.

LAND	WATER	AIR
Adventure Racing	Angling	Gliding
Archery	Canoeing	Hang-gliding/Paragliding
Blokarting	Diving	
Clay Pigeon Shooting	Jet Skiing	
Cycling (On and Off-Road)	Kite Surfing	
Fell Running	Stand-Up Paddle boarding (SUP)	
High Ropes/Ziplines	Surfing	
Hover crafting	Windsurfing	
Horse Riding		
Kite Buggy		
Mountain Biking		
Orienteering		
Walking		

Table 1 Outdoor Recreation Activities taking place within the Study Area

1.4 Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

It is well documented that participation in outdoor recreation realises significant benefits both in personal terms to individual participants and in wider terms to society, the economy and the environment.

More specifically this includes getting more people active and therefore generating cost savings to the health service, improving the educational attainment of children and young people, supporting people into education, employment and training for example through volunteering, increasing social capital and creating economic prosperity through tourism.

1.4.1 Health and Well-Being

The link between active outdoor recreation participation and improved physical and mental health is well documented through research¹. It is known that it contributes to the reduction of illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease, can help tackle obesity and reduce the risk of depression, dementia and Alzheimer's.

In addition, contact with green spaces and natural environments is also known to improve psychological well-being, by improving self-perception and self-esteem, mood and sleep quality and by reducing levels of anxiety and fatigue².

A recent report (September 2016) has indicated that outdoor exercise delivers an estimated £2.2bn of health benefits to adults in England each year and therefore natural environments should be protected and managed for health promotion³.

1.4.2 Environmental Awareness

Participation in outdoor recreation is also one of the main ways of developing environmental awareness and care for the outdoors. Although most the Northern Ireland population now lives in towns and cities, enjoying and using the outdoors enables many people to become aware and develop an understanding of the natural environment and its landscapes, wildlife, history and culture. For those who take up environmental volunteering, social return on investment research shows that £1 invested in environmental volunteering can lead to a return of up to £4⁴. It has also been shown that people who volunteer in sport have a 10% greater self-esteem, emotional well-being and resilience and are 15% less likely to worry⁵.

1.4.3 Community Cohesion and Social Inclusion

The added value that outdoor recreation can bring to communities, particularly through increased social capital has become increasingly recognised over the past few years. Outdoor recreation promotes social inclusion, making communities become more cohesive and stronger. Research has shown that higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes and lower crime rates.

¹ A Countryside for health and well-being- the physical and mental health benefits of green exercise (CRN, 2005)

² Learning in the Natural Environment, Understanding the diverse benefits of learning in natural environments (Natural England, 2012)

³ BBC online news. 20 September 2016. Kinver (2016)

⁴ Inspiring People, Improving Places. (BCTV, 2010)

⁵ Hidden Demands – uncovering the true value of sport volunteers (Join In, 2015)

1.4.4 Growing the Economy

In 2013, SportNI, NIEA and Tourism NI published a report on the economic contribution of outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland which found that outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland generated £102million gross added value and that the sector employs more than 3,537 Full Time Equivalent ⁶.

In addition, the importance of outdoor recreation development on the local economy through tourism is significant. The outdoor adventure tourism sector was estimated by Mintel to be worth €128m in Northern Ireland in 2013, increasing to €146m⁷ by 2018, whilst in Wales, outdoor activity tourism contributes £481 million per annum to the economy⁸, in the Republic of Ireland overseas visitors engaging in activity tourism are worth €1.2 billion per annum ⁹ and in England 42.4 million adults visiting the natural environment generate a total visitor spend of £21 billion per annum¹⁰.

2 SCOPE

2.1 Study Area

The study area is defined as the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Area and covers an area of 209 km² (Figure 1).

The entire area falls within the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area and the area's principal settlements are Castlerock, Ballykelly, Magilligan and Articlave. The area also includes the Magilligan Ferry which brings in visitors from the Inishowen peninsula as well as the wider Donegal area.

The outdoors of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands' area has undoubtedly a high quality natural resource base, both spatially extensive and diverse in nature. The area takes in the eastern shore of much Lough Foyle from Ballykelly to Magilligan Point, over 39 km of coastline including the blue flag beaches of Castlerock, Benone Strand and Downhill, the coastal plains beneath the Binevenagh basalt escarpment, the River Roe and an expansive public forest estate including Downhill, Binevenagh, Springwell, Grange Park, Ballyhanna and Cam.

It is this extensiveness and diversity of the resource base that lends itself to the provision of opportunities for the wide range of outdoor recreation activities for both the local population and for an increasing number of visitors to the area as outlined previously in Table 1.

The area is unique across Northern Ireland in that it is the only area that provides for land, water and air based activities near each other.

The area is unique as it is the only area in Ireland that offers gliding. The Ulster Gliding Centre located at Bellarena on the coastal plain is perfectly placed to make the most of the local conditions which enable soaring along the cliffs of Binevenagh and as far as the hills of Benbradagh, near Dungiven. In addition, the area is also extremely popular with hang gliders and paragliders who 'take off' on the sloped fields beside one of the area's key visitor areas namely the Gortmore viewpoint on the Bishop's Road.

The area is also the only area in Ireland that offers hovercrafting which takes place on the flat coastal plains near Carrowmenagh.

The area also stands out from other areas in Northern Ireland because of the array of activities that takes place along the coast many of which utilise the area's three beaches. No other area of Northern Ireland can accommodate up to six water-based activities (sea angling, canoeing, kite surfing, SUP, surfing and

⁶ Assessing the Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation in NI (SportNI, NEA, NUITB, 2013)

⁷ Information from Mid Ulster Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021 (BTS, 2016)

⁸ The Economic Impact of Outdoor Activity Tourism in Wales (Visit Wales, 2014)

⁹ Survey of Overseas Travellers (Failte Ireland, 2011)

¹⁰ MENE Survey 2012-2013. (Natural England, 2014)

windsurfing) and 5 land-based activities (orienteering, walking, horse riding, blokarting and kite buggying) within such a small geographic coastal area with minimal user conflict.

Given that 32.4kms of the area's total boundary (50%) is coastal, the area offers across Northern Ireland the recreational user a unique opportunity to access a range of coastal defence heritage features related to World War II either from the water or from land.

The area is also the only Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) in Northern Ireland used for outdoor recreation which has a working railway line running parallel to many of the area's key outdoor recreation sites or has the potential to aid accessibility to future outdoor recreation sites in the area.

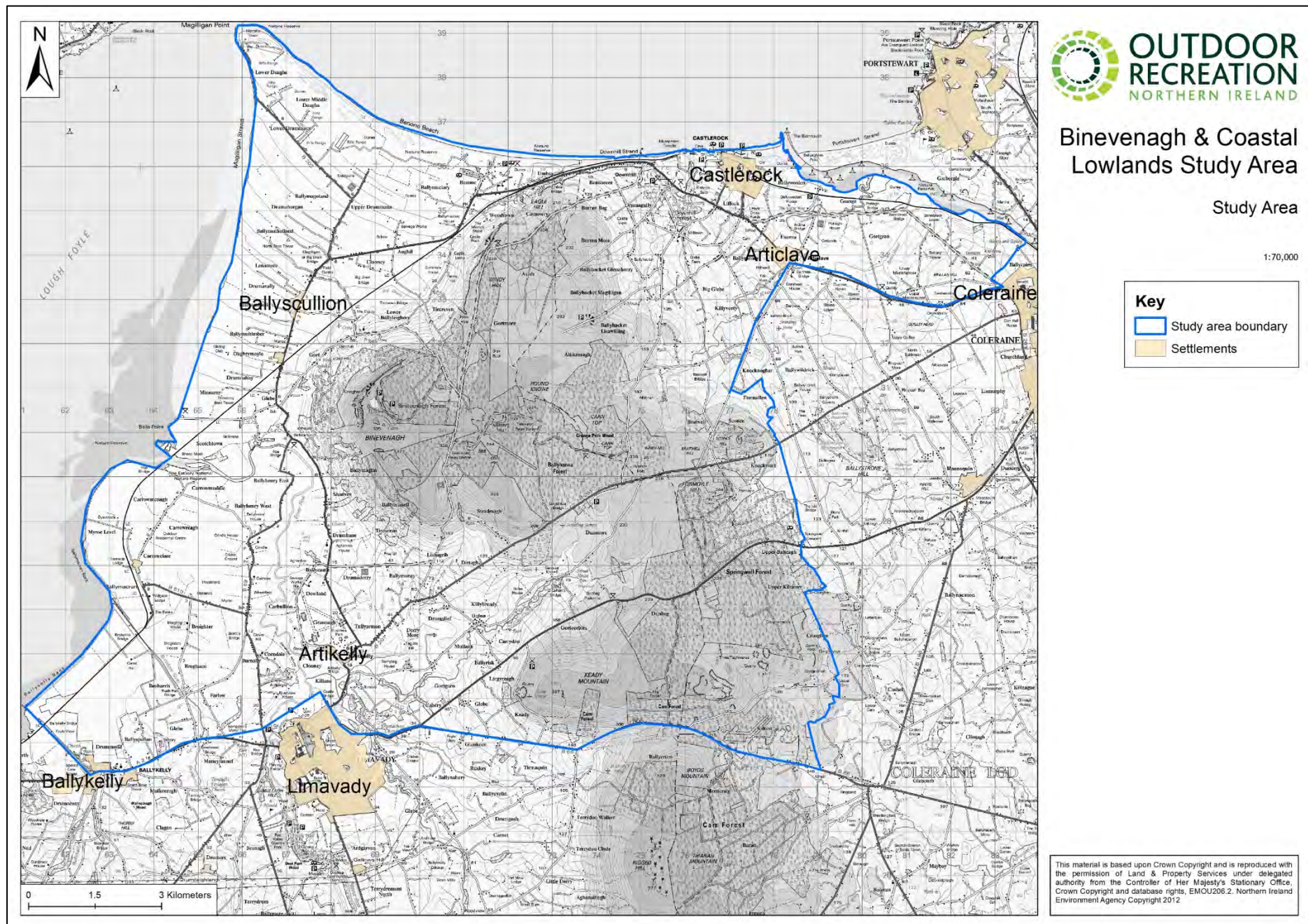


Figure 1 Study Area

2.2 Natural and Built Heritage

The exceptional quality of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands areas' landscapes and waterscapes, together with the recognition of the need to protect and conserve its rich natural resources for future generations is reflected in the scale and range of environmental designations across the area.

The area is abundantly rich in both natural and built heritage which is protected under several statutory designations. These designations in turn govern the management and development of this area to ensure the natural landscape and built features remain protected.

The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands includes six different types of statutory designations ranging from National to European level (Figure 2). All sites either fall entirely or in part within the study area¹¹.

This incorporates:

- 1 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- 10 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- 1 Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- 5 National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- 1 Ramsar site

The area also has 44.5 ha of Ancient Woodland¹² and 37.1 ha of Long Established Woodland¹³. Ancient and long established woodlands are considered our richest land based wildlife habitats, as well as an important cultural links to our past. Once lost they cannot be replaced.

Noted not only for the beauty and diversity of its natural landscape the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area is also rich in built heritage (Figure 3). Within the study area there are:

- 5 Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes
- 123 Listed Buildings
- 65 features with a 'protection status' on NIEA's Scheduled Monuments Record¹⁴
 - o 33 'listed' protection status
 - o 30 'scheduled' protection status
 - o 1 'state care' protection status
 - o 1 'proposed for schedule' protection status
- 30 Scheduled Areas

Details of the natural and built heritage designations can be found in Appendix 1.

¹¹ Information derived from NIEA digital downloads - <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/other-index/digital-intro/terms.htm>

¹² Woodland that has existed continuously since 1600

¹³ Land that has been continuously wooded since the first comprehensive maps of Ireland were produced in 1830-44, but which cannot be proven ancient

¹⁴ NIEA's SMR can be found at: http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/built-home/protection/scheduled_monuments-2.htm

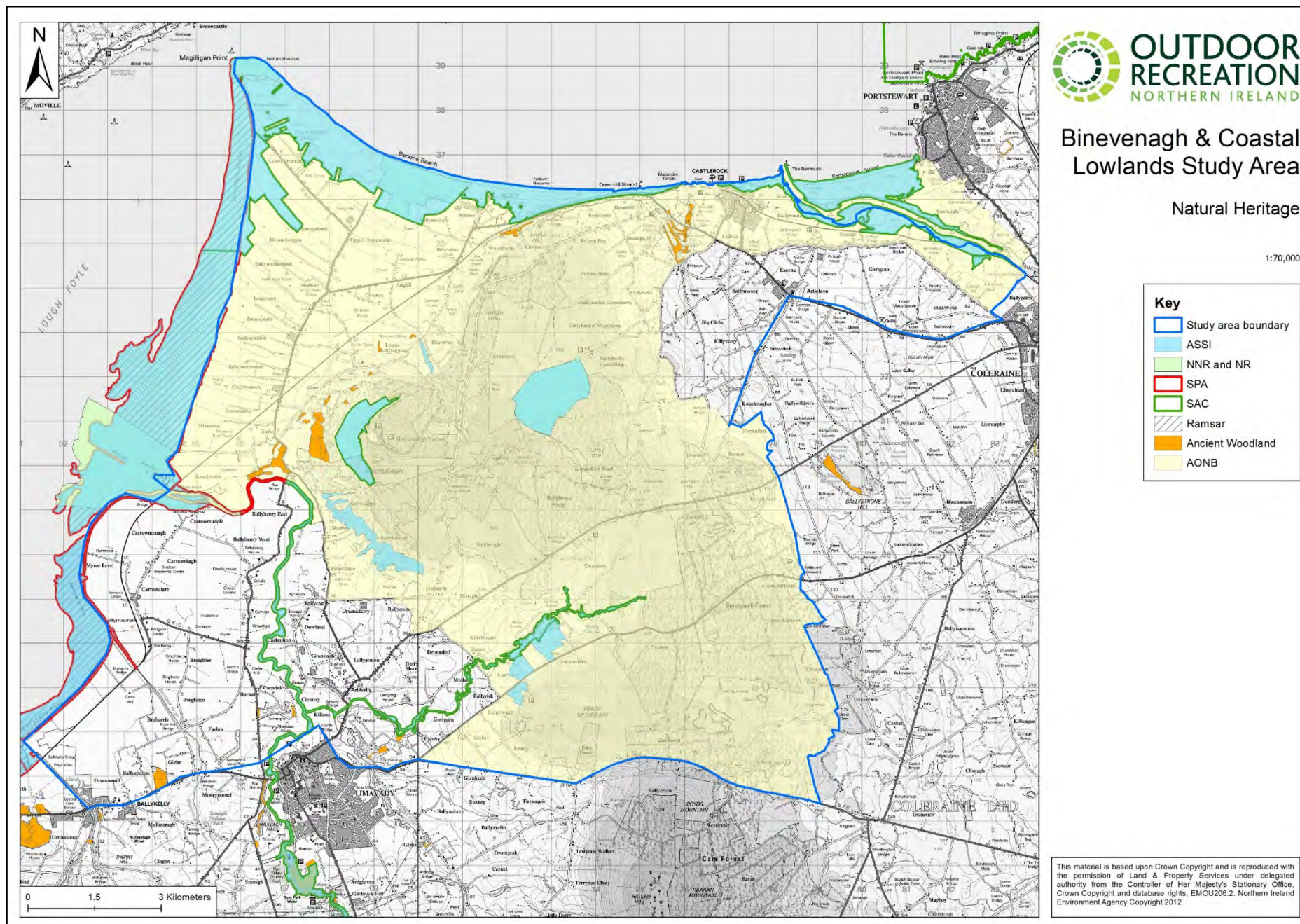


Figure 2 Natural Heritage Designations within the Study Area

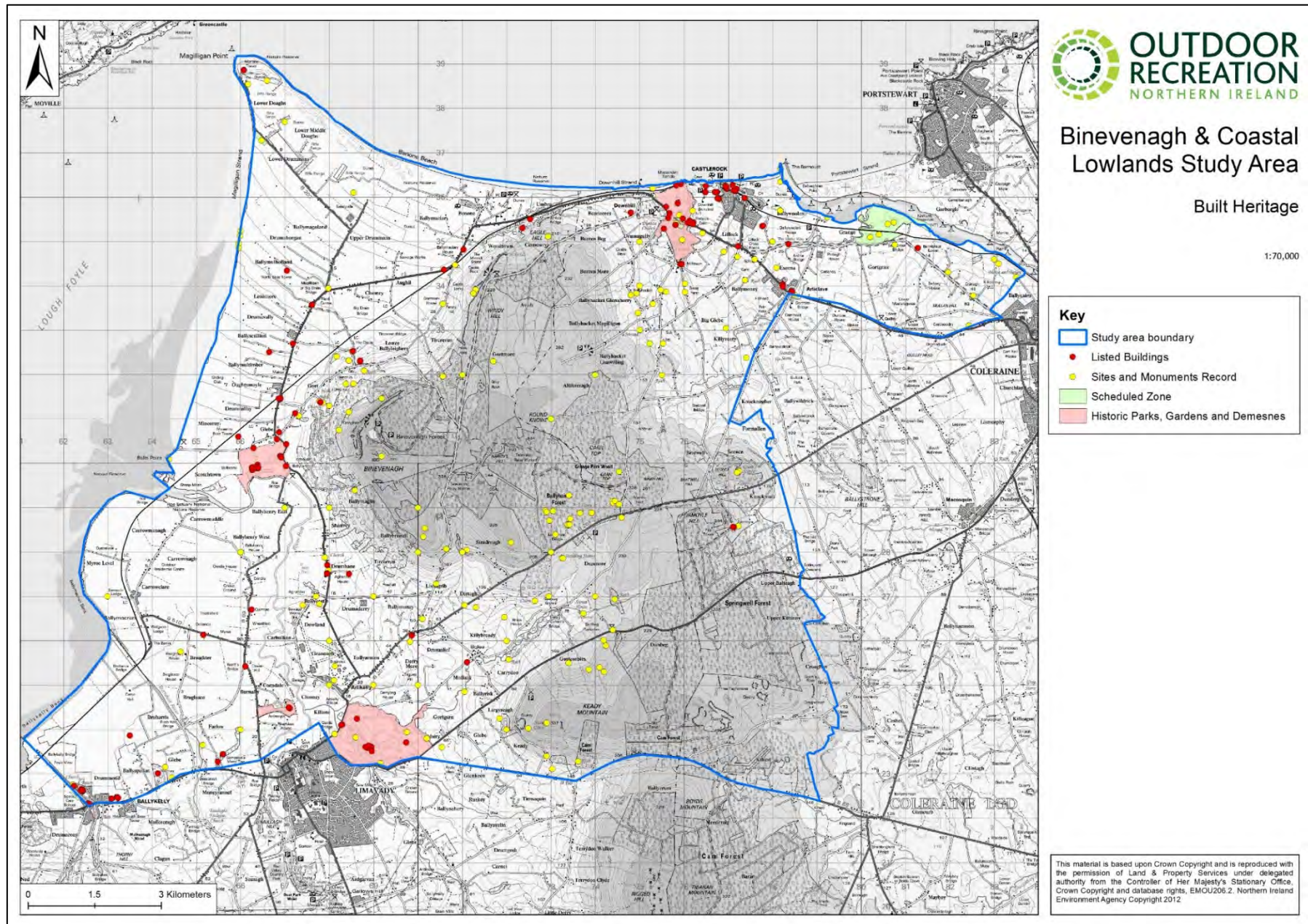


Figure 3 Built Heritage Designations within the Study Area

2.3 Land Ownership and Land Management

Figure 4 shows the extent and distribution of land ownership/land management within the study area¹⁵.

Most land in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands is owned and managed by Forest Service NI and private landowners. Within the area there are four private estates namely; Drenagh, Ardnargle, Walworth and Bellarena.

Other significant public or public interest landowners/managers include;

1. The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council - 9 sites (Magilligan Point, Gortmore view point, Swann's Bridge, Benone Strand, Downhill Beach, The Moors and Beach, Castlerock, Largantea picnic area and a site at Grange Park. Although the Council manages the beaches in the area, the foreshore (defined as the area between low and high water mark) is owned by the Crown Estate.
2. National Trust - 4 sites (Downhill Demesne, Grangemore Dunes and Bann Estuary, Avish Mountain (Gortmore) and Hezlett House)
3. Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) – 3 sites (Magilligan Point NR, and Binevenagh and Altikeeragh NNRs)
4. Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) – 1 site (Umbra)
5. RSPB – 1 site (Reserve on Lough Foyle)

Although not a landowner, Loughs Agency is the statutory body responsible for the management of Lough Foyle and its water catchment area including the River Foyle, tributaries and sea area for 12 miles between Malin Head and Downhill. Loughs Agency has a remit for the protection, development and promotion of marine tourism and angling.

¹⁵ Where the extent of the ownership was known, this was shown as an area, for example for FSNI-owned land. Where the extent of land ownership was not known, this was shown in point format.

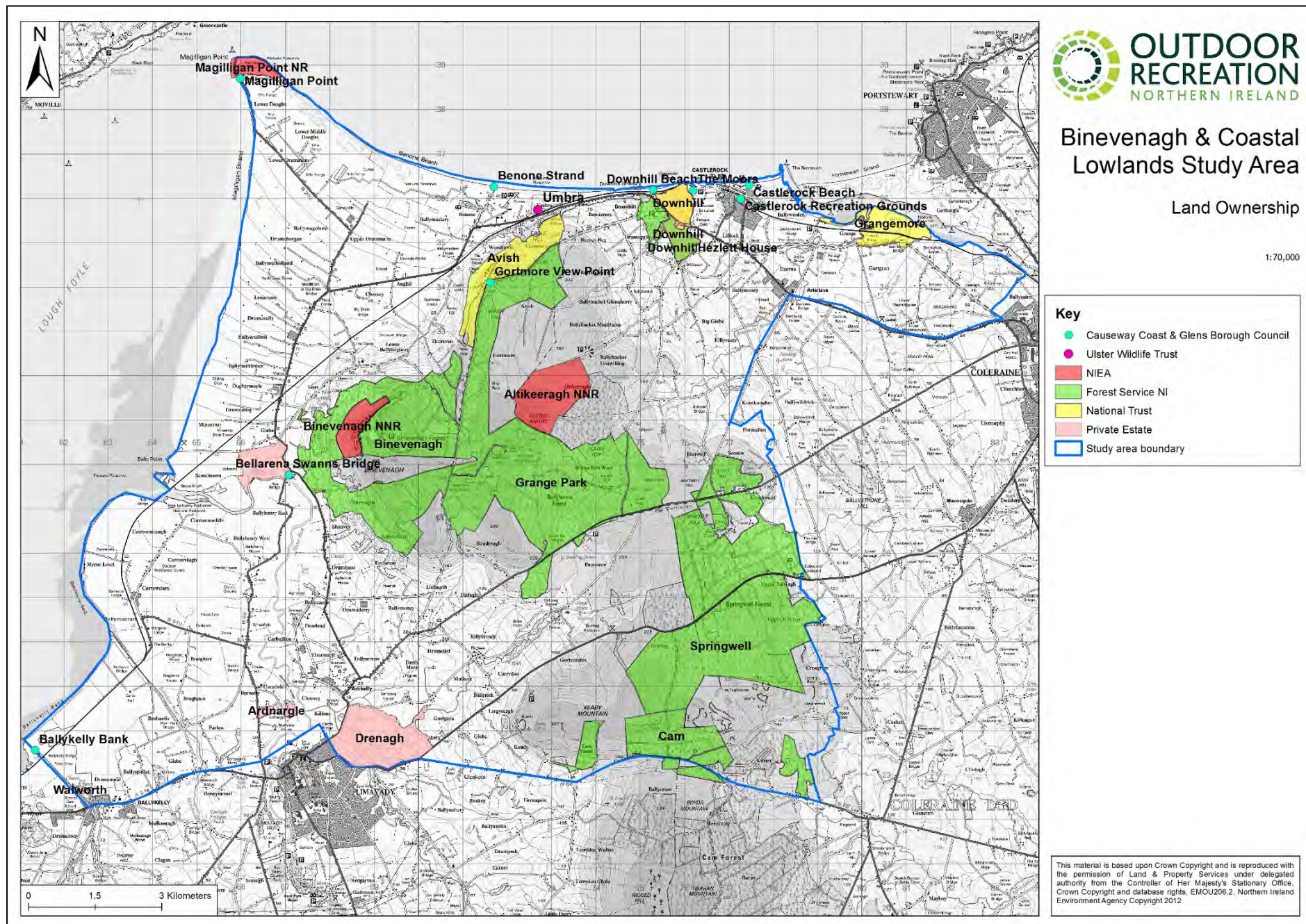


Figure 4 Land ownership within the Study Area

3 CONTEXT

This Outdoor Recreation, Open Space and Access Audit and Recommendations for the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Area is set in the context of several regional and local strategies and plans including:

- Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2016 -2021
- Sport Matters – The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009 – 2019
- Our Great Outdoors – the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland
- A Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020
- Exercise, Explore and Enjoy – A Strategic Plan for Greenways
- Mountain Bike Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014-2024
- Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Area Plan, ‘Growing Tourism Together’, 2012-2017
- Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Action Plan (ORAP)
- Review of Existing Water Based Tourism and Leisure activities within the Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough area
- Review of existing coastal recreation activities and access opportunities within Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough
- Binevenagh AONB Action Plan 2017 -2022 (Draft)
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council - Council Strategy 2015-2019

3.1 National Context

3.1.1 *Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021*

The Draft Programme for Government 2016 – 2021 is currently out for public consultation. In due course, the Programme for Government Framework will provide the strategic context for other key Executive strategy documents, including the Investment Strategy, the Economic Strategy and an Anti-Poverty/Social Strategy. The Programme will also inform the development of the Executive’s budget over the course of this mandate and provide a mechanism for ensuring limited funds are best directed to where they can contribute most.

The Draft Framework contains 14 strategic outcomes which, taken together, set a clear direction of travel and enable continuous improvement on the essential components of societal wellbeing. They touch on every aspect of government, including the attainment of good health and education, economic success and building confident and peaceful communities. In addition to merely fulfilling statutory obligations, the new Executive hopes to be able to target those things that make real improvements to the quality of life for the citizen.

The strategic outcomes are supported by 42 indicators, which are clear statements for change. The following indicators are of relevance to the proposed project:

- Reduce health inequality
- Increase life expectancy
- Improve mental health
- Improve our attractiveness as a destination and improve our international reputation

3.1.2 *Sport Matters – the Strategy for Sport and Recreation in N. Ireland 2009-2019*

Whilst Northern Ireland’s environment provides conditions of international quality for a range of activities, Sport Matters recognises that not everyone will wish to achieve in performance sport and the Strategy encourages the development and use of open spaces for a variety of informal recreational and outdoor pursuits. Being out in the fresh air enjoying the scenery, whilst taking exercise, is recognised as important elements of Sport Matters. The Strategy acknowledges that the natural environment provides many opportunities for a range of sporting and physical recreation activities but that access issues exist.

In aspiring to the target that 'by 2019 Northern Ireland will have developed a range of new, improved and shared sports facilities to a standard comparable with other similar regions of the UK', the Strategy indicates that this will require:

- Public access to and sustainable use of, publicly-owned lands across Northern Ireland for sport, physical recreation and activity tourism (2015 target included in the Strategy)
- A planning system which facilitates and protects the provision of spaces for sport and physical recreation by following Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space Sport and Outdoor Recreation (2019 target included in the Strategy)

Sport Northern Ireland has also approved a position statement regarding access to the natural environment in support of targets set out in the Sport Matters Strategy. The objective is to communicate Sport Northern Ireland's position on the importance it attaches to outdoor recreation through:

- Promoting the best possible access to the natural environment for sport and physical recreation within the confines of existing legislation and organisation of the land ownership prevalent in Northern Ireland
- Encouraging and supporting full access for responsible and sustainable recreation on public land through the development of policy frameworks by other public bodies – especially those that are custodians of public land

3.1.3 Our Great Outdoors - The Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland

This Action Plan published in 2014 was commissioned by Sport NI and Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) with support from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) Inland Waterways Branch.

The Action Plan highlights the importance of making the outdoors accessible to everyone and the opportunities that there are to participate, not only in rural areas but also in the urban fringes.

The Plan's vision is: "a culture of dynamic, sustainable outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland".

To achieve this vision, the aim is for Northern Ireland to be a place where:

- There are increasing opportunities and improved access and infrastructure for sustained and increased participation for everyone in a broad range of outdoor recreation activities
- There are accompanying benefits to local communities, especially those who are socially excluded in terms of health, social inclusion, cohesion, equality, and economic development; and
- People enjoy the outdoors and show a high degree of responsibility for themselves, towards others and towards the environment they are using, and play their part in maintaining, supporting and enhancing our environment and heritage.

All the above aims reflect the work within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Audit.

3.1.4 A Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020

The Causeway Coast and Glens region is one of nine world class destinations identified by NITB in NI.

The draft Tourism Strategy for NI to 2020 represents a 'top down' approach to tourism development and outlines the over-arching goals of tourism as a sustainable economic generator for the country. The Strategy outlines how these goals should be achieved, for example through 'visitor inspired experiences', competitiveness, cross-border partnerships and product differentiation. Three themes are identified: 1. People, 2. Product & Places, and 3. Promotion.

Under 'Product & Places', from 2014 onwards, the Strategy focuses on the 'completion of the signature projects' and 'fine-tuning' the tourism products on offer through investing in existing product, developing

year-round events, improving access especially to the public forest estate and preserving the natural environment, etc. (pp. 21-22)

As a signature destination, the Causeway Coast and Glens continues to be a key provider for DETI and Tourism NI. The development of outdoor recreation, adventure 'products' and 'experiences' are some of the key ways of enhancing the tourism potential of the area. The Audit therefore aligns with the National Tourism Strategy by making recommendations for the improvement of the outdoor recreation products for local and visitors to the area whilst contributing towards the achievement of natural tourism goals as set out by Tourism NI.

3.1.5 Exercise, Explore and Enjoy – A Strategic Plan for Greenways

Published by DFI in 2016, the Strategic Plan for Greenways fulfils a commitment in the 2015 Bicycle Strategy to explore the potential for the development of greenways.

The Plan's aim is to 'encourage a substantial increase in the number of people walking and cycling as a regular part of everyday life through the building of a connected and accessible regional Greenway network which will significantly increase the length of traffic free routes.

It is anticipated that realising the vision will create a region where active lifestyle and active travel can become part of everyday life for everyone – improving health and well-being, economic activity, social interaction and providing a resource for recreation and leisure.

The Plan identifies potential routes that should be explored to develop a Primary Greenway Network from which Secondary Greenway Network could progressively extend across the region. The Plan also suggests that plans in the future may provide for a third level network of community paths that would provide doorstep opportunities to connect local communities to their local green space and neighbouring communities.

The Secondary Greenway Network includes the route from Coleraine to Derry/Co. Londonderry which passes through the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.

3.1.6 Mountain Bike Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 –2024

The vision of this Strategy, published by ORNI in 2014, is to 'make Northern Ireland a world class mountain bike destination'.

By delivering this vision, a wide range of significant economic and social benefits will be achieved, such as greater economic prosperity, sustained employment in the trail construction sector through the building and maintenance of trails and increased employment in the visitor services sector. Social benefits include increased health and wellbeing of the population as participation levels rise and more people take up mountain biking, improved social inclusion as the trails attract a wide demographic population base, improved community cohesion, local enthusiasm harnessed and channelled into trail development, trail management and trail maintenance, physical connection of communities to trails and greater sporting success by local mountain bikers in all mountain biking disciplines as a consequence of improved formal trail facilities.

The Strategy identified the Causeway Coast and Glens destination as having the potential to become a short break destinations for mountain biking, with Glenariff and Binevenagh/Ballycarton/Cam/Springwell operating as two National Trail Centres. It also identified the potential to create long-distance rides including one in the Causeway Coast and Glens which would involve connecting numerous forest along the North Coast including Cam, Springwell, Grange, Ballycarton, Binevenagh.

3.2 Local Context

3.2.1 *Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Area Plan, 'Growing Tourism Together', 2012-2017*

The Tourism Plan sets out the strategic tourism priorities for the Causeway Coast & Glens area over a five-year period, responding to both the challenges and opportunities presented in the region. The Plan aims to be a 'roadmap for stakeholders to build tourism in the destination' (pp.3). The actions for achieving advancements in tourism are categorised under seven themes including 'Create and Build an Exceptional Visitor Experience'.

Product gaps identified include 'access to activity tourism' and 'family orientated product'. In response to these gaps and under the theme of 'creating and building an exceptional visitor experience' the Tourism Plan recommends:

Developing Activity Tourism:

- Continue to promote adrenaline and adventure sports and activity tourism
- Work with stakeholders, especially Outdoor Recreation NI and Forest Service, to implement Countryside Recreation Strategy and NITB and Forest Service study, to develop long-distance walking routes, off-road cycling, horse riding, canoeing and eco-trails

Developing Family Friendly Experiences:

- Promote the Causeway Coast and Glens as Northern Ireland's preferred destination in the domestic market for beaches, fantastic cycle and walking routes, coastal and forest trails and the River Bann waterway thus providing wonderful outdoor recreational resources.

The Tourism Area Plan highlights long-distance walking routes, off-road cycling, horse riding, canoeing, forests, beaches and waterways as areas for growth over the next 3 years. This Audit will incorporate the above priorities into the Action Plan and ensure that recommendations made contribute to the fulfilment of these goals.

3.2.2 *Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Action Plan (ORAP)*

Completed for the Sport NI and the Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum in 2014, the Causeway Coast and Glens ORAP provides a framework for the sustainable development, management and promotion of future outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities within the Causeway Coast and Glens, accommodating both the needs of the local community and visitors to the area.

A detailed 5 to 10-year Action Plan was produced outlining the priority sites for future development and those bodies responsible for delivering the actions.

As with the other local plans described above, this Audit will consider the recommendations made in the ORAP and incorporate the relevant actions in the final report.

3.2.3 *Review of Existing Water Based Tourism and Leisure activities within the Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough area and Review of existing coastal recreation activities and access opportunities within Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough*

Both these Reviews were completed by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of Loughs Agency in March 2015. Both included an audit of existing access and recreation product in terms of trails, both informal and formal and recommendations for future development proposed.

As with the other local plans described above, this Audit will consider the recommendations made in the Review and incorporate the relevant actions in the final report.

3.2.4 Binevenagh AONB Action Plan 2017 -2022

The 2017 – 2022 Binevenagh AONB Action Plan lists activities which will help achieve the four priority objectives outlined for AONBs in the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 i.e.

1. Conserve or enhance the natural beauty and amenities of the area
2. Conserve wildlife, historic objects or natural phenomena within the area
3. Promote public enjoyment of the area
4. Provide or maintain public access to the area

The identification, development and delivery of projects which provide and promote outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh area is a key priority within the document. Action 4.1 clearly states that an outdoor recreation strategy is needed for the Binevenagh AONB. This study, which includes a portion of the AONB, along with the adjacent coastal lowlands area, therefore achieves a significant action in this plan. It is hoped that several recommendations from this report can be taken forward with the support of Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership Scheme. Other recommendations will be better delivered through other funding mechanisms and programmes.

3.2.5 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council – Council Strategy 2015-2019

The overall vision of the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council over the period 2015 – 2019 is to ‘maximise the benefits of our unique location and landscape by providing ambitions, accessible, innovative and efficient services which fulfil customer expectation.

The Council has identified several key priorities for the area namely:

- Provide effective and sustainable local service
- Develop our economy and create jobs
- Empower our local people to take ownership of projects in their community
- Promote our tourism offer locally as well as internationally
- And protect the environment in which we live.

It has also identified 5 Strategic Themes to bring focus to the work of the Council namely:

1. Leader and Champion
2. Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
3. Innovation and Transformation
4. Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities
5. Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Assets

Theme 4: ‘Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities’ recognises the importance of the natural environment to people’s physical, emotional and cognitive health.

Theme 5: ‘Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Assets’ recognises:

- All environment in the area will benefit from pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
- Citizens will be given the maximum opportunity to enjoy the natural environment and
- The area’s natural assets will be carefully managed to generate economic and social returns without compromising their sustainability for future generation

This Audit will incorporate the above themes into the Action Plan and ensure that recommendations made contribute to fulfilling Council’s priorities.

4 METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary research techniques were employed during the preparation of the Audit. Data from previous projects within the area supplemented with further on-line research was used to complement an extensive consultation exercise.

4.1 Use of Existing Information and Data

Information on current provision and land ownership was derived from in-house records and the following sources:

- Existing databases: WalkNI.com, CycleNI.com, Ulster Way, CanoeNI.com, MountainBikeNI.com
- Research projects: Public Land Mapping Phase 1 and 2
- Causeway Coast and Glens Recreation Action Plan (2014)
- Sperrin's Walking Audit (2011)
- Review of existing water-based tourism and leisure activities within Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough (2015)
- Review of existing coastal recreation activities and access opportunities within the Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough area (2015)

4.2 Consultation

Consultation involved a variety of techniques including email, telephone, face-to-face and public consultation events. Table 2 shows the consultation method employed for each group of consultees

Consultee Category	Consultation Method
Local Council Officers	Face-to-face meeting Invited to public consultations
Governing Bodies	Telephone or email interviews Invited to public consultations
Public/Statutory Agencies	Face-to-face meeting (where relevant) Follow-up phone call to discuss (where relevant) Invited to public consultations
Activity Providers	Follow-up phone call to discuss (where relevant) Invited to public consultations
Community Groups	Face-to-face meetings Public consultations
General Public	Public consultations

Table 2 Consultee Categories and Consultation Methods Employed

Two public consultation events were organised and widely promoted via a poster (Appendix 8.2) through the following channels:

- Direct emails to all the above groups (database compiled by Outdoor Recreation NI)
- Websites including Outdoor Recreation NI.com, WalkNI.com and CommunityNI.com
- Twitter including Outdoor Recreation and WalkNI
- Facebook including Outdoor NI and WalkNI

- Direct emails via Council's community database list
- Direct emails to governing bodies of outdoor recreation for dissemination amongst members

The event dates and venues were:

- Monday 24th April, 7pm Castlerock
- Tuesday 25th April, 7pm, Ballykelly

The consultation events involved a short presentation given by Outdoor Recreation NI followed by a facilitated discussion to:

- Verify/alter research findings on the current outdoor recreation provision and identify additional data on current outdoor recreation provision
- Identify factors and issues that have led to the area not realising its full potential for the development of outdoor recreation
- Identify future opportunities for development related to the following themes, where possible, as set out in the proposed Landscape Partnership Scheme:
 - o Defence heritage
 - o Traditional built heritage features
 - o Atlantic and hazel woodland conservation
 - o Land, sea and air transport
 - o Connections between local communities
 - o Cultural Heritage of the Sea, Lough Foyle and the Inishowen peninsula.

Approximately 40 participants attended the consultation events, representing various organisations and interests. The feedback gathered through consultation has been used to inform Chapters 5 and 6 and the Action Plan.

4.3 Use of GIS

The spatial mapping tool ArcGIS was used to analyse and present the spatial data collected through the Audit. The following information was mapped:

- Current provision of all land, air and water-based activities (sites and trails)
- Land ownership (public and private)
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and permissive path agreements
- Environmental designations
- Future opportunities relevant to the proposed HLF Landscape Partnership bid

Please note that where the extent of the landownership was known, it was shown in polygon format and where the extent of land ownership was not known, it was shown in point format.

5 CURRENT PROVISION

This chapter provides a brief synopsis of the current provision for all 23 recreation activities as set out in Table 1. It is not an exhaustive list of every site, trail and facility but provides the detail identified through consultation and desk research.

5.1 Land-based Activities

Figure 5 shows the current provision for the following 12 land-based activities: adventure racing, archery, blokarting, kite buggying, high ropes, hovercrafting, clay pigeon shooting, fell running, orienteering, cycling and mountain biking. Walking is included in a separate map (Figure 6).

5.1.1 Adventure Racing

Typically, this activity is a combination of two or more endurance activities such as cross-country running, cycling, canoeing and swimming and involves the use of navigational skills. Due to its nature, it is an activity which is formally organised and managed by local clubs and private event-based companies.

Causeway Coast Adventure Racing is a local club based in Coleraine run by a voluntary team of experienced adventure racers.

The following sites/routes in the area are used for adventure racing:

- Swann's Bridge (access point for canoeing on the River Roe)
- Benone Strand

5.1.2 Archery

Due to the high-risk nature of this activity and the instruction required, archery is typically provided by private sector operators and/or outdoor education centres in a formal, managed setting. Within the area archery takes place on-site at three activity Centres namely, Carrowmenagh Activity Centre, Foylehov Activity Centre and Crindle Stables.

5.1.3 Blokarting

Also known as 'land yachting', blokarting is hugely popular in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area, mostly at:

- Benone Strand, usually on the upper section near Magilligan

'Blokartfun' and 'Blokartworld' specialise in blokarting experiences, both private operators are mobile and based just outside the study area in Limavady and Ballymena.

5.1.4 Clay Pigeon Shooting

Within the area no specific location was identified, however a nearby activity provider, Foylehov Activity Centre offers this activity on-site.

5.1.5 Cycling (On and Off Road Family Cycling)

Within the study, cycling refers to 'on-road' routes and 'off-road family cycling' trails. Mountain biking is dealt with separately in Section 5.1.11.

National Route 93 of the National Cycle Network runs from Derry to Bangor via Belfast, 28.5km of which runs through the study area. This is an official route and is promoted on Cycleni.com.

5.1.6 *Fell Running*

This activity requires undulating terrain usually for running off-road, across mountains and/or hills and using a mixture of open-mountain, paths, tracks and small lanes.

The following sites are used by fell runners:

- Binevenagh

5.1.7 *High Ropes/ Ziplines*

These activities usually occur on privately owned land but can be mobile. There is a permanent high ropes and zipline course at Carrowmena Activity Centre.

5.1.8 *Horse Riding*

Several well-established equestrian clubs, societies and private operators are based in the area, e.g. Crindle Riding Stables and Hill Farm, Castle Rock, Shean's Horse Farm, although based outside the area, uses Cam Forest and the beaches listed below.

- Benone Strand
- Downhill Beach
- Castlerock Beach

Horse riding on all these beaches is restricted to before 11am and after 7pm from 1st May to the 30th September.

5.1.9 *Hovercrafting*

The only site where hovercrafting takes place in Northern Ireland is near Carrowmenagh by a private activity provider – Foylehov Activity Centre.

5.1.10 *Kite Buggy*

This activity is like blokarting but only involves the use of kites to power the buggy/kart instead of a sail. The Causeway Coast and Glens Council actively promotes kite bugging as well as other kite sports on Benone Beach although there are restrictions in the summer months. Organized racing regularly takes place over the winter months at Benone Strand and is strictly managed by the organising club.

5.1.11 *Mountain Biking*

There are currently no formal mountain bike trails in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.

Informal mountain biking takes place the following sites/routes:

- Ballycarton wood
- Binevenagh, Cam and Springwell Forests
- Ballyhanna and Grange Park Forests
- Downhill Forest

5.1.12 *Orienteering*

The following forests/areas are formally used and mapped:

Sand Dunes:

- Benone Strand
- Magilligan

Forests:

- Ballykelly,
- Binevenagh - Championship and International events have taken place
- Downhill Forest and Demesne
- Springwell
- Cam

5.1.13 Walking

Walking is one of the most popular activities in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Area. With the dramatic scenery and mix of coastal, forest and hill walking environments there is a large and diverse range of walking trails.

5.1.14 Quality Walks

Developed in 2007 by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland (ORNI), the 'Quality Walk' Scheme recognises and promotes Northern Ireland's best short, medium and long-distance walking routes and includes the Waymarked Ways and sections of the Ulster Way. All Quality Walks have been accredited in partnership with NIEA and Tourism NI and promoted on WalkNI.com.

5.1.15 Formal Walking

In addition to the Quality Walks, there are several sites where formal walking takes place. A formal walking route is defined as a route which is signed and /or has on-site information, but is not classified as a Quality Walk. Routes not classified as a Quality Walk either do not meet the Quality Walk assessment criteria, or they may not yet have been assessed. A full list of known formal walking sites in the area are detailed in Table 3.

5.1.16 Informal Walking

In addition to Quality and formal walking routes, informal walking occurs at sites mostly used by the local community. An informal walking route has no route signage or information present on-site and the route has not been classified as a Quality Walk. A full list of known informal walking sites within the area are detailed in Table 3.

In many cases, informal walking takes place on land which although there is not necessarily a designated trail, the public have a right to access to, for example, the public has a right to access to all Forest Service land on foot. This is access where there is no formal arrangement in place. Informal access, where it is tolerated by the landowner, is known as 'de facto' access and often occurs because there is a history of use. Informal access without the knowledge or consent of the landowner is considered trespass.

Both formal and informal access can occur on public and private land.

Most access in the uplands of the area is 'de facto' and informal. Binevenagh is used extensively by walking clubs, Duke of Edinburgh groups, youth groups and schools from all over Northern Ireland, but mostly by the Education Authority for hill training, practice and assessment.

5.1.17 Public Rights of Way (PROW)

PROWs are routes that the public are legally allowed to access, regardless of whether the land is in public or private ownership. PROWs are created through the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 and responsibility for implementing this Order lies with District Councils. District Councils are also responsible for the management and maintenance of PROWs. There are currently no Public Rights of Way across the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Study Area.

In addition, although several private estates are in the study area they are not open for public access. When access is permitted to private estates in the area it is pre-arranged with the landowner and occurs at an agreed time and may involve a fee.

- Within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands over 69km of quality walks exist comprising of:
- 1 section of the Ulster Way (which includes a section of the North Sperrins Way and the International Appalachian Trail) totalling 32.1km in length
- 1 medium-distance quality walk totalling 16.7km in length
- 7 short-distance quality walks totalling 20.2km in length

Details of these routes can be found in Table 3.

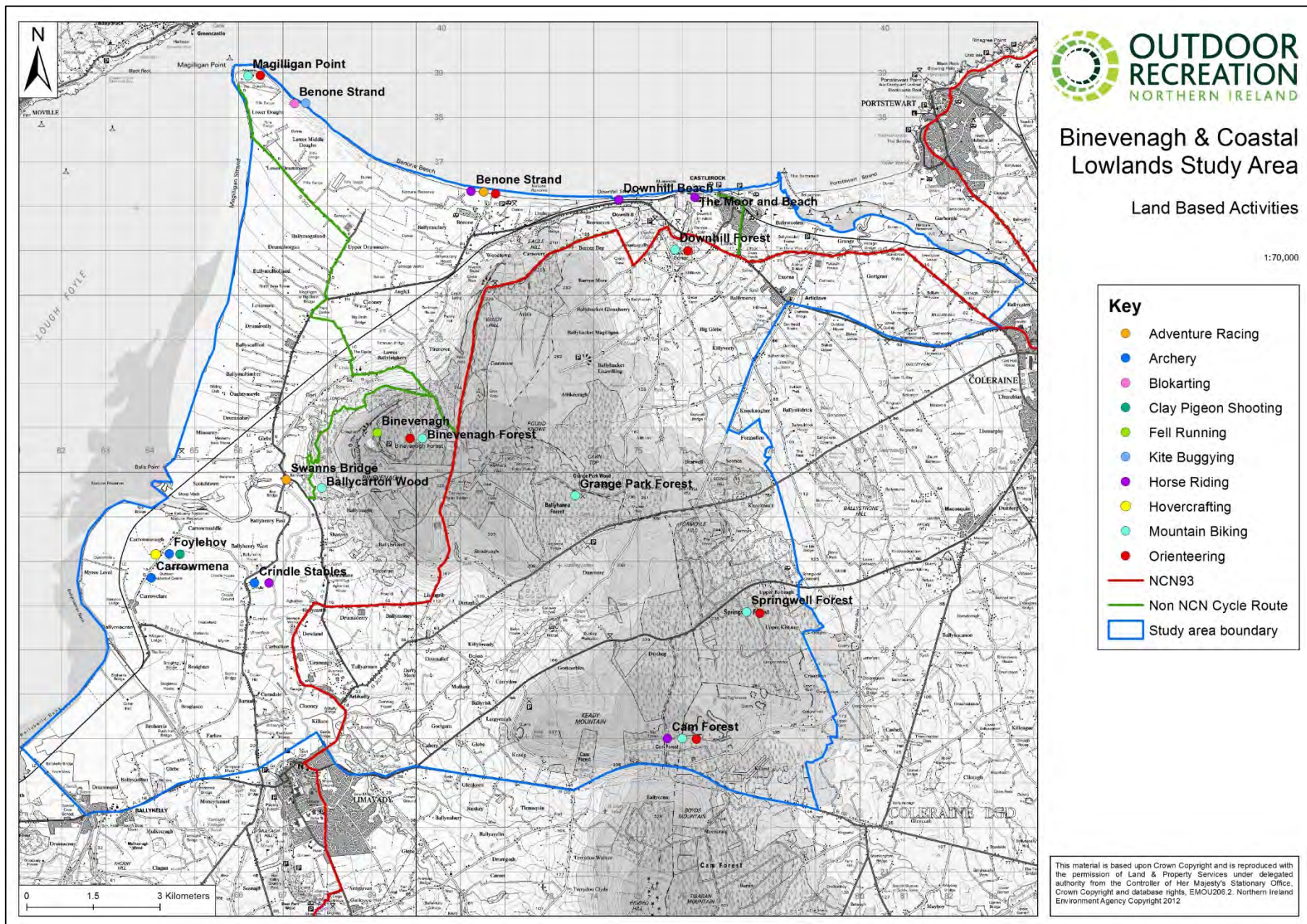


Figure 5 Land Based Activities with the Study Area

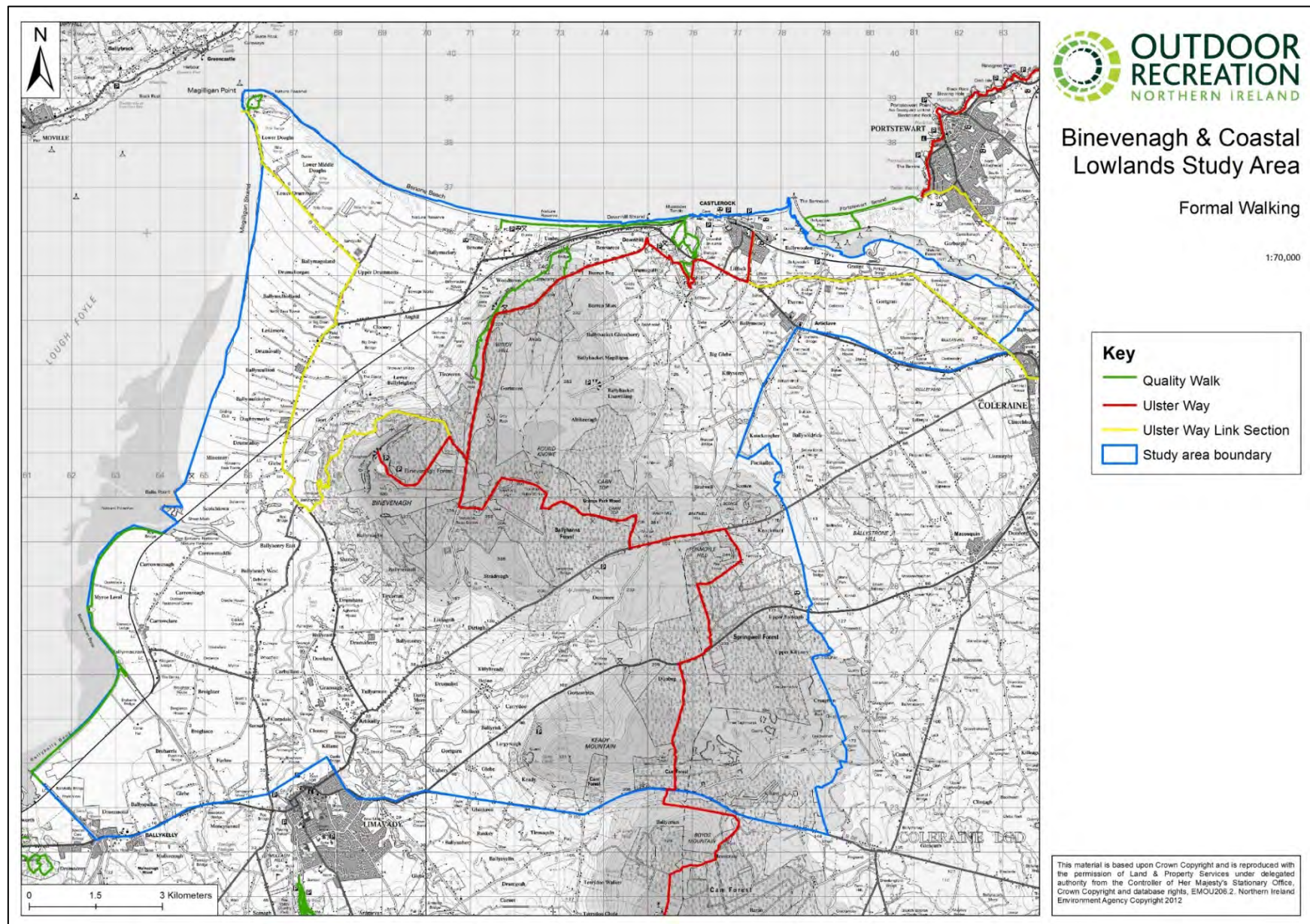


Figure 6 Formal Walking within the Study Area

FORMAL		INFORMAL		
Quality Walks		Length (km)	Sites (length unknown)	Sites (length unknown)
Long (20 + miles)	Ulster Way (including North Sperrins Way and International Appalachian Trail)	32.1	Binevenagh Forest	Altikeeragh NNR
Medium (5-20 miles)	Lough Foyle Trail (including Ballykelly and Ballymacran Banks)	16.7	Binevenagh NNR	The Moors
Short (under 5 miles)	Avish and Eagles Hill	5	Cam Forest	
	Benone Strand	4.7	Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House	
	Downhill Forest Pond Trail	1	Grange Park Forest	
	Downhill Forest Mill Trail	2	Swann's Bridge	
	Gortmore to Hells Hole	3.6	Springwell Forest	
	Magilligan Point	1	Downhill Beach	
	Mussenden Temple and Downhill	2.9		
	Total	69km	N/A	N/A

Table 3 Table showing Formal and Informal Walking Routes and Sites within Study Area

5.2 Water-based Activities

Figure 7 shows the current provision for the following seven water-based activities: angling, canoeing, jet skiing, kite surfing, stand up paddle boarding, surfing and windsurfing.

5.2.1 Angling

The area's variety of sea, river, lake and lough environments allows for different types of angling – game, coarse and sea angling.

The list below shows the Loughs Agency waters. Loughs Agency is responsible for licenses in the Lough Foyle catchment. No licence is required for sea angling except when fishing for salmon, sea trout or in an area that is deemed to be within the migratory path of salmon and sea trout.

Within the area there are also two private fisheries namely Duncrun Fly Fishing Trout Lakes, Binevenagh and Moorbrook Lodge, Castlerock who offers trout and carp fishing.

Inland Lakes/Reservoirs	Rivers	Sea/Lough
Altikeeragh Reservoir	Ballykelly River	Balls Point (River Roe)
Binevenagh Lake	Burnfoot River	Ballymacran Embankment, Lough Foyle
Burnfoot River	River Roe - there are two disabled fishing stands on the River Roe at Swann's Bridge and Burnfoot	Magilligan Point and Benone Strand
Downhill Forest Lake		Downhill Beach

Table 4 Loughs Agency Waters

5.2.2 Canoeing

Three canoe trails fall either entirely or partially within the study area:

- East Inishowen Sea Kayak Trail
- Foyle Canoe Trail
- North Coast Canoe Trail

In addition, subject to the correct sea conditions, kayak surfing takes place along the coastline at Benone Strand and at Castlerock. White water kayaking is also possible on the River Roe.

5.2.3 Jet Skiing

Jet skiing currently takes place on a formal basis at:

- Benone Strand

5.2.4 Kite Surfing

Kite surfing is an adrenaline activity growing in prominence across Northern Ireland. It is a cross between wakeboarding and parachuting as the rider is strapped to a small board (much like a wakeboard) and towed behind an oversized power kite at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour. The power and lift of the kite enables the rider to perform jumps with loops and spins up to 20 feet above the waves. The nature of the activity means that it requires long stretches of water, preferably shallow, with an onshore breeze.

Kite surfing takes place at:

- Benone Strand and Magilligan Point
- Castlerock
- Downhill

5.2.5 Stand-Up Paddleboarding

Stand-up paddleboarding or 'SUP'ing' has in recent years become a popular and steadily growing activity on the North Coast. One main activity provider based in the area offers SUP'ing namely Long Line Surf School who uses both the River Roe and accesses the sea at Benone Beach.

5.2.6 Surfing

Northern Ireland's surf scene is very much based on the North Coast. Within the study area, surfing takes place at:

- Benone
- Downhill
- Castlerock

5.2.7 Windsurfing

This is a surface water sport whereby participants ride atop a board which is connected to and powered by a sail (plastic/polyester based). Windsurfing takes place at Benone Strand.

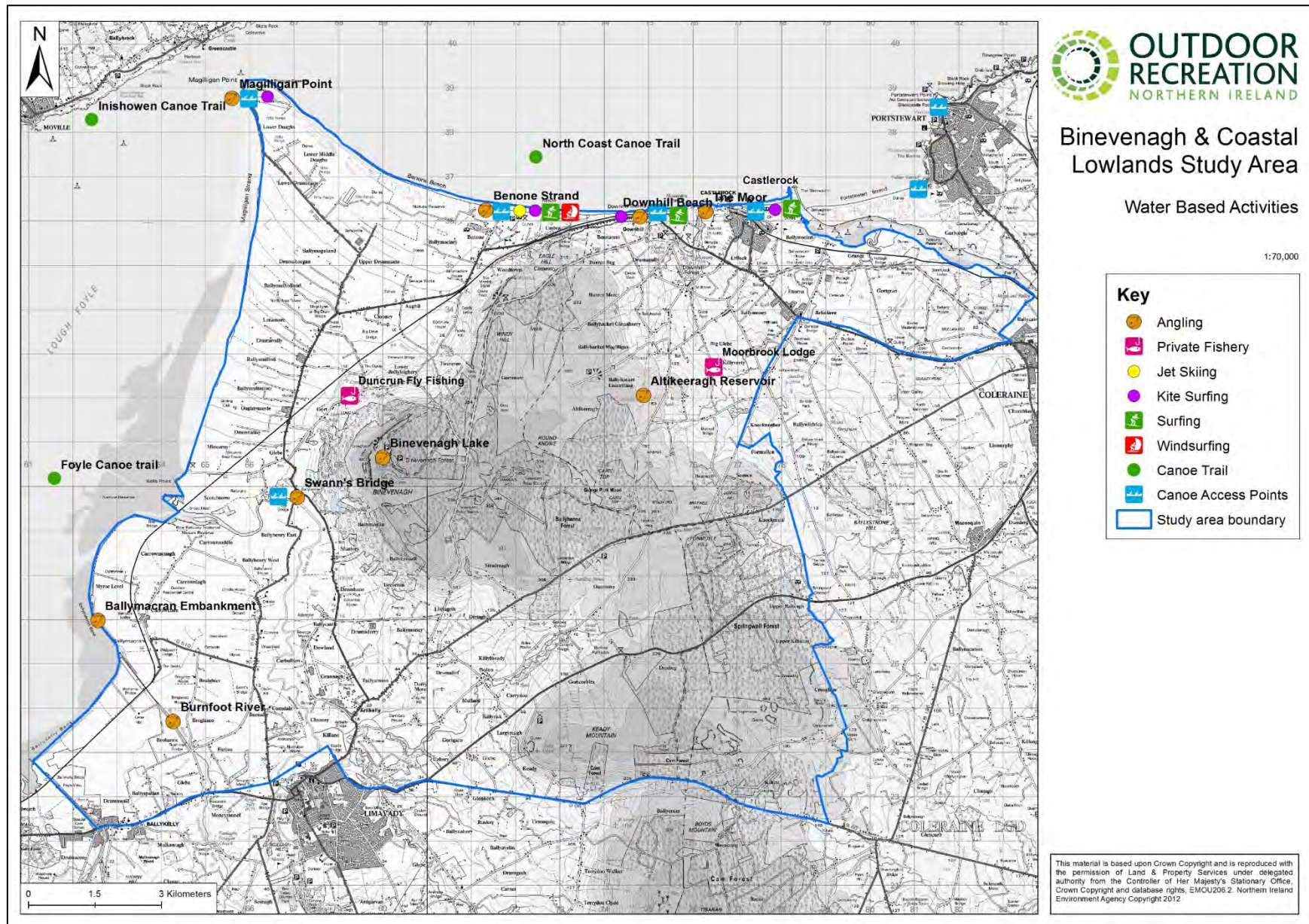


Figure 7 Water Based Activities in the Study Area

5.3 Air-based Activities

Within the area two air-based activities take place namely Gliding and Hang/Para gliding (see Figure 8 for map).

5.3.1 Gliding

The Ulster Gliding Centre located at Bellarena is the only gliding facility of its kind in Ireland. It is perfectly placed to make the most of the local conditions which enable soaring along the cliffs and hills from Castlerock to Benbradagh, near Dungiven. Gliding training is provided at Bellarena Airfield, located beneath the cliffs of Binevenagh on the shores of Lough Foyle.

5.3.2 Hang-Gliding/Paragliding

The Ulster Hang-Gliding and Paragliding Club identified use of the following sites within the area:

- Gortmore
- Hells Hole
- Binevenagh

5.4 Outdoor Education Centres

There is one education and residential centre in the study area, Magilligan Field Centre, Magilligan. This Centre provides opportunities for participation in recreational activities and outdoor instructor training and education programmes for schools, colleges, youth service and agencies and adult groups.

5.5 Activity Providers

Over 20 commercial activity providers were identified as being located or operating within the study area and offering a range of outdoor activities.

5.6 Events

The iconic landscape, coupled with the variety of environments and terrain, makes the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands a popular area for local, regional and national events, for example:

Adventure Racing/ Running – The Causeway Coast Adventure Racing hold an event in the area each year which attracts hundreds of participants each year.

Walking – Castlerock Walkfest and many charities' 'walk' events use the area on an annual basis throughout the year.

Cycling (on-road) – Row Valley Cycle Club - organise two events per year. Each event attracts approx. 120 cyclists. One is a road cycle event which starts in Limavady and goes south as far as Claudy and up to Downhill and back down to Limavady - two routes 60 and 40 miles, whilst the other is a mountain biking event which uses Binevenagh, Grange, Springwell and Cam Forests.

Ban Wheelers Cycle Club - organise Trail Quest 2/3 times per year – an orienteering/ treasure hunt/clues type of event - attracts families, approx. 60-70 cyclists.

The Church of Ireland, Catholic Church and the Methodist Church - jointly run the Tour De Foyle. The event starts in the Foyle Arena in Derry goes to Magilligan Point crosses on the Ferry and returns to Derry via the Inishowen side of Lough Foyle. It attracts over 200 riders each year.

Surfing – the Causeway Coast Surf Festival (annual national event), the Long Line Disabled Surf Fest, the "Big Blue" surf competition at Benone

Blokarting –The most recent competition was hosted by British Land Speedsail Association in May 2014. In the past, the Irish Power Kite and Sand Yacht Association has also held events at Benone.

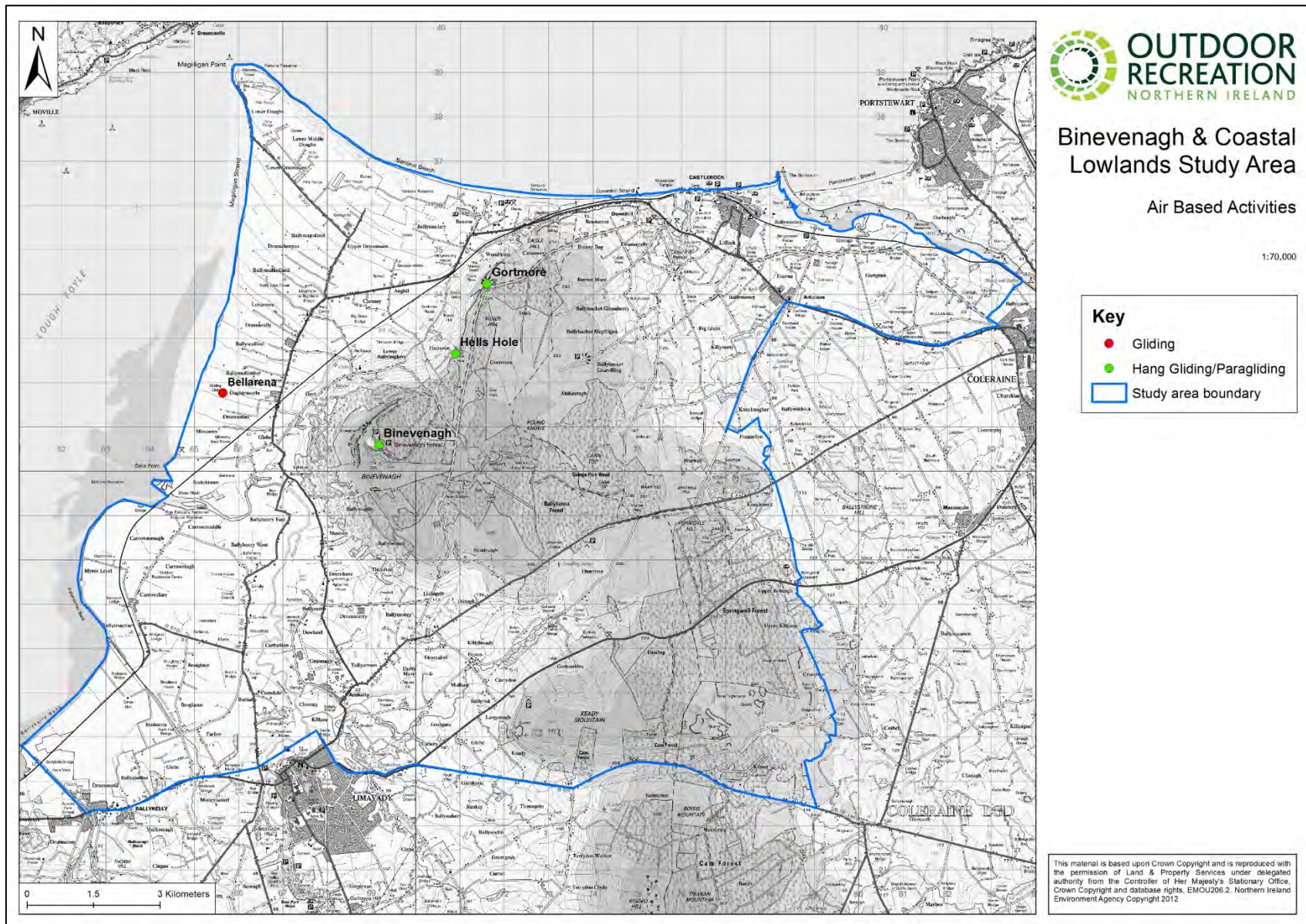


Figure 8 Air Based Activities within the Study Area

6 CONSULTATION RESULTS – KEY FINDINGS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

An extensive process of consultation was carried out with individual Council Officers, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), public and statutory agencies, public and private landowners, outdoor activity providers, community associations and the public (see Appendix O for list of consultees).

This section includes a synopsis of the key findings from the consultation followed by a SWOT analysis which details the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the current provision and future development of outdoor recreation at a local level in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands. The key findings are divided into:

- Management - refers to the structures that are required to ensure a high quality and a consistent experience for all outdoor recreation users to the area.
- Development - refers to both the outdoor recreation infrastructure required to do an activity, e.g. trails, canoe steps, etc. and the supporting visitor services and facilities which enhance the product and tourism offering, e.g. toilets/signage
- Promotion – refers to the wide range of media required to heighten the awareness of the local population and visitors to the area of the opportunities that exist for taking part in a wide range of outdoor recreation activities.

6.1 Key findings - Management

From the consultation process the main issues regarding the current and future management of outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands were:

- No ‘active’ mechanism currently exists within Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands to encourage collaboration between the many different organisations and interest groups involved in outdoor recreation across the area. These include landowners/land managers, NGBs, recreational users, private sector activity providers, community groups and service providers.
- Currently there is no Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place between the CCGBC and FSNI for the future development and management of recreation on Forest Service land.

These issues are discussed in more detail below.

6.1.1 *Regional Co-ordination of Outdoor Recreation – Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum*

There is currently no ‘active mechanism’ to allow those involved directly or indirectly in outdoor recreation participation in the widest sense across the area to come together to share experiences, knowledge and look at opportunities for improved collaboration on a wide range of outdoor recreation issues. With limited strategic collaboration and partnership working between these organisations this has resulted in a ‘silo’ approach being taken to outdoor recreation development, management and promotion.

Although a Causeway Coast Local Outdoor Recreation Forum was set up several years ago and was led by the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and Sport NI, this Forum has not met in the past three years. It was agreed by the CCGBC that following RPA, it would lead the Forum.

Within the study area as previously highlighted, excluding private landowners, there are several key landowners/ land managers involved in the provision of outdoor recreation within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area namely, CCGBC, FSNI, NIEA, Loughs Agency, RSPB, National Trust and the UWT. In addition, there are numerous activity providers operating in the area, several very active community organisations, service providers, e.g. accommodation and over 23 different activity user groups many of whom are in clubs.

Bringing all these groups together a minimum of twice a year would be beneficial. Re-activating the Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum is therefore essential. It is anticipated that the

Group would be serviced by the Council's Countryside Officers. Should a Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership Scheme be successful, it will be important that the Officers leading the project are represented on this Forum moving forward.

6.1.2 Local Co-Ordination of Outdoor Recreation – Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Outdoor Recreation Forum

Given the geographical size of the Causeway Coast and Glens, in addition to re-activating the Regional Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum, it is recommended that a Forum is established specifically for the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Area to improve partnership working and information/knowledge sharing at a more localized level.

Setting up a Local Forum would allow specific issues raised through consultation to be discussed and debated such as a greater understanding on permits/licence arrangements, difficulties of signposting local outdoor recreation businesses and securing access to land for events.

Improved information sharing among the main providers of outdoor recreation in the area and those involved at marketing and promoting the area would be beneficial. Given that within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands there is no official Tourist Information Centre (TIC), the volunteer led information centre in Castlerock serves a valuable role in providing information on outdoor recreation opportunities for the both the local community and visitors to the area. The Centre however, as it is not a recognised TIC, often struggles to receive the relevant information or of sufficient quantity to allow it to offer the quality service to visitor's that they desire to give. In addition, other providers in the area (public and private) are not aware of the important role that the Centre plays and therefore do not pass on their information.

Like the Causeway Coast and Glens Outdoor Recreation Forum, should a Heritage Lottery Landscape Partnership Scheme be successful, it will be important that the Officers leading the project are represented on this Forum moving forward.

6.1.3 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Licence Agreements – CCGBC and FSNI

Prior to RPA, two of the three legacy Councils in the area, namely Coleraine and Moyle had MoUs in place with FSNI. To date no composite MoU for the new CCGBC is in place with FSNI.

Across Northern Ireland, FSNI is actively encouraging local Councils to take on the recreation and social use elements of its forests and many Councils have now entered into an MOU with FSNI and subsequently taken on at individual sites licenses /leases for the development, management, maintenance and liability of a wide range of recreation facilities including trails, play parks and visitor centres.

Given that so many of the recommendations of this Audit are directly dependent on developing recreational opportunities on FSNI land, it is essential that Council and FSNI work together expediently to sign the necessary documents to allow development to progress.

6.2 Key Findings – Development Opportunities

From the consultation process it became evident that:

- Current provision is concentrated in several geographic areas and these are particularly important in determining the area's future outdoor recreation proposition namely; the coastal strip between Castlerock and Magilligan, the Binevenagh escarpment and surrounding foothills, the eastern shore of Lough Foyle from Ballykelly to the Roe Estuary and the Forests which make up a large proportion of the area's central core.
- In terms of specific activities, the area already offers excellent water-based opportunities, but there is still significant opportunity to develop specific land-based products further to increase the total outdoor recreation product on offer.

- Supporting visitor facilities for outdoor recreation, e.g. toilets and changing facilities are inadequate or non-existent at many of the key outdoor recreation sites and directly influences whether mobile activity providers bring groups into the area.
- Opportunities for those with mobility issues to enjoy the area for outdoor recreation are currently limited across the area.
- Whilst all Forests across the area provide local recreation opportunities, some forests have the potential if developed appropriately, to attract visitors from outside the area.
- Several initiatives currently being considered have the potential to create 'stand out' recreation products namely; the Downhill Demesne and Downhill Forest proposition, the creation of an off-road walk from Aghanloo Wood through to Castlerock village, the enhancement of the existing Lough Foyle and the development of a Regional Mountain Bike Trail Centre using several the area's key forests.
- Whilst the area already has several informal walking trails around villages and along river corridors, there is a desire for the provision of more formal Community Trails.
- The area shows significant disparity between the quality of outdoor recreation sites that currently exists with increasing distance from the coastal strip.
- Understanding the level of use being made of sites across the area is currently limited, with only a few key sites having visitor counters in place to record user numbers.
- Specific bodies/initiatives have and will continue to play a significant role in the development of local outdoor recreation initiatives across the area, e.g. the CCGBC, CCGHT and proposed LPS, the National Trust, local community groups and private sector activity providers.

It is important to recognise that any future development of outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands should adhere to the following overarching principles:

- Development of facilities, products and access should contribute to both achieving/delivering local community and wider tourism objectives, where possible.
- Development should not be at the expense of the natural environment. A total ecosystems approach to development and management of recreation should be adopted and a balance sought between economic development and environmental protection.
- Development should not displace other activities/businesses. The impact of product development on surrounding businesses and activities should be considered, e.g. displacement vs. additionality.
- Development should be sustainable. Planning for the long-term and for particular target user groups should be key, i.e. delivering quality recreation products which are economically viable and environmentally sustainable.

6.2.1 Specific Product Development Opportunities

Opportunities exist in the area to improve both the existing outdoor recreation infrastructure and supporting visitor services and facilities. The activities which have the greatest potential for future development are walking, off-road family cycling and mountain biking.

6.2.1.1 Walking

Without doubt the greatest barrier to delivering meaningful improvement in the opportunities for walking in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area moving forward relates to Northern Ireland's access legislation. The 'Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983' is confusing and unclear for those using it and subsequently it is a discouraging process to create and assert formal public access.

There is also a lack of clarity in the legislation surrounding private landowner liability and consequently the fear of litigation is the most cited reason that private landowners will not enter into access

agreements for recreational activities across their land. A concerted effort is required to raise awareness and inform private landowners of the potential access arrangements that can be entered into when creating public access (e.g. permissive path agreements) and the perception of liability versus the reality that no successful liability cases have been brought in Northern Ireland in the last 20 years

Northern Ireland's access legislation is therefore a critical issue affecting the nature of how access and recreation is developed in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area and consequently all efforts should be made to develop future opportunities on land that is publicly owned/managed. It is recognised however that this is not always possible, nor desirable.

As previously stated in Section 5.1.14, over 69km of 'quality walks' exist within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands with another eight sites identified as sites where formal walking takes place.

Moving forward specific recommendations for the area's walking product includes:

1. Securing formal access across the area by the Council entering into formal agreements to secure meaningful and long-term access to the outdoors.
2. Enhancing and upgrading (where required) the existing walking product, with specific emphasis on the quality walks and those walks that have the potential to become 'all ability' (Category 1) or 'multi-use' (Category 2) trails as defined in the 'Principles and Standards for Trail Development' (ORNI, 2013).
3. Improving connectivity by creating linkages between existing trails and sites thus extending trail networks and enhancing recreation product without creating a host of new trails and sites. This includes Community Trails.
4. Helping the visitor enjoy the area's heritage, particularly using publicly-owned land, by increasing awareness of the existing walking product through improved visitor information and promotion.

Eight walks are recommended for priority development to help improve the walking opportunities within the area namely:

- Aghanloo Wood to Castlerock (including Binevenagh) – medium-distance quality walk
- Ballycarton Wood - all-ability /multi use trails
- Lough Foyle Trail - all-ability /multi use trails
- Sconce Hill
- Montello Tower
- Community Trails x 3

In addition, as a long-term aspiration, reference is made below to the secondary Greenway proposed for the area, as set out in the Strategic Plan for Greenways (DFI, 2016).

Aghanloo Wood to Castlerock (including Binevenagh)

Although forming the centre of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area, the Binevenagh upland area including the area both at the top of the escarpment and the apron of land below it has, to date, been underdeveloped and under promoted for walking. Steeped in history, culture and rich in natural and built heritage the area offers great potential for future development and a key component to the overall walking proposition in the area. It is recognised that any future development must be carried out sensitively to minimise any impact it may have on the area.

The area currently includes two quality walks developed on the National Trust land by the CCGBC, a section of the North Sperrins Waymarked Way/Ulster Way and two non-quality walks in Binevenagh NNR and Binevenagh Forest.

Unfortunately, the walking product in the area suffers from having unclear trailheads, inadequate car parking and visitor servicing facilities, inadequate or non-existent awareness/directional signage, waymarking trail infrastructure, e.g. stiles and on-site visitor information.

To capitalise on the area's rich natural and built heritage it is proposed to not only enhance the existing trails within this area, but to develop a longer trail extending from the ancient hazel woodland of Aghanloo Wood to Castlerock. This would give an off-road walking trail of c.19.5km, much of it paralleling the line of the Bishop's Road which was built as a famine relief project to provide a direct link as the crow flies between the Limavady and the Bishops residence at Downhill. 'Quality' walk status would be sought for the walk giving it prominence on WalkNI.com which receives c.500,000 unique visitors a year.

The walk can be divided into 6 distinct sections (see Figure 9 for map) namely:

1. Section 1 - a new purpose built walking trail c. 3km through Aghanloo Wood which will require a new parking area and trailhead. This will involve access negotiation with private landowners and consultation with NED of DAERA. A professional trail designer will be required to design the trail through this sensitive woodland and experienced contractors appointed to build the trail.
2. Section 2 - a section through Ballycarton Wood leading up to the lower slopes of Binevenagh. This will require significant enhancement of the current trailhead facilities and significant redesign and upgrading of path sections badly eroded by mountain bikers
3. Section 3 - a section which traverses along the lower slopes of Binevenagh until it meets the Leighery Road. This sections requires new trail furniture, particularly stiles and improved waymarking.
4. Section 4 - a 2-mile road section to the start of the quality walk leading from Hells Hole – Gortmore followed by the quality walk leading from Gortmore – Eagles Hill. This section requires improved directional/awareness signage and more obvious waymarking.
5. Section 5 - a new agreed section with private landowners from Eagles Hill to Castlerock along the edge of the escarpment overlooking Downhill/Benone Beach.
6. Section 6 - a new section crossing Downhill Forest/Downhill Demesne to link Downhill to Castlerock

Along the length of the trail are several heritage features of note including Aghanloo hazel woodland, St Aidan's Church, Tircrevan Pillbox, the Murder Hole and the Bishop's Road – all of which provide interest to the walker.



Photo 1 & Photo 2: Section 2 through Ballycarton Wood



Photo 3 Section 2 showing evidence of path erosion caused by mountain bikers



Photo 4 Section 3 Lower slopes of Binevenagh



Photo 5 Section 3 under the slopes of Binevenagh and looking towards Leighey Road

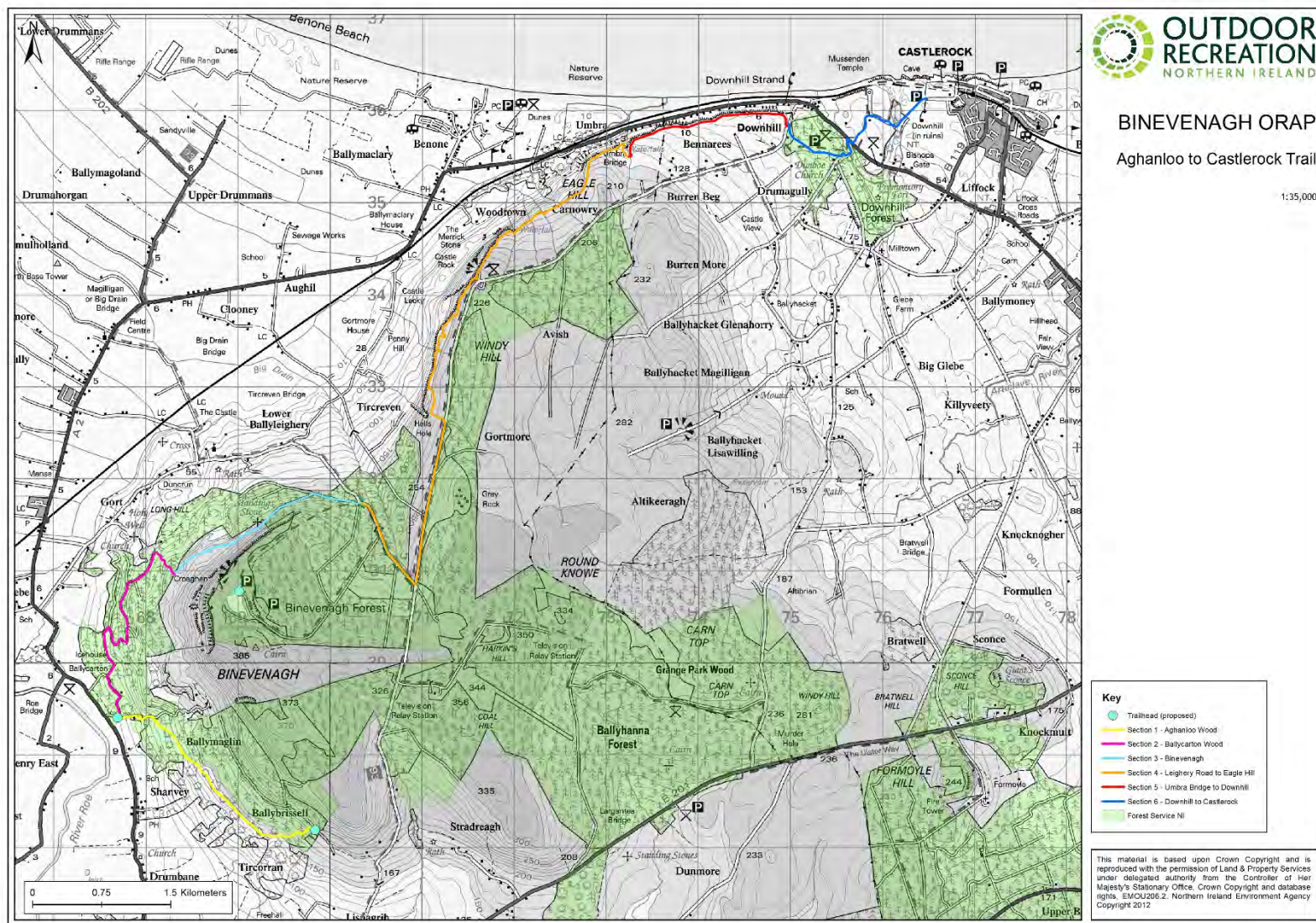


Figure 9 Aghanloo Wood to Castlerock

Binevenagh

In addition to developing/enhancing the walking trail product on the lower slopes of Binevenagh, the walking product at the top of Binevenagh within the Forest area could also be improved. A rough surfaced road leads from the entrance of Binevenagh Forest to a car park beside Binevenagh Lake, which is well used by anglers. FSNi has indicated that it has no plans to upgrade the road and it is unlikely that the Council would want to take on the costs associated with its maintenance in the future.



Photo 6 & Photo 7 Binevenagh Lake looking towards the summit of Binevenagh

Despite the state of the road, many visitors drive to the car park and use a network of ‘desires lines’ to walk to the edge of the escarpment which affords fantastic views over the coastal lowlands, Lough Foyle and the Inishowen peninsula. Whilst it is not recommended to formalise these desire lines from the car park to the escarpment and summit through new trail build, it is recommended that a new purpose built section of trail is built back to the car park from further along the escapement, thus providing a short circular route (see Figure 10 for map). A trail head panel/map in the car park showing visitors how far they can walk and new waymarking would also be beneficial and enhance the visitor’s overall experience to the site. For those who cycle to the car park, a bike rack would be a welcomed addition.



Photo 8 & Photo 9 Showing the views from the top of Binevenagh towards the Roe Estuary and over the Coastal Lowlands, Lough Foyle and the Inishowen peninsula.

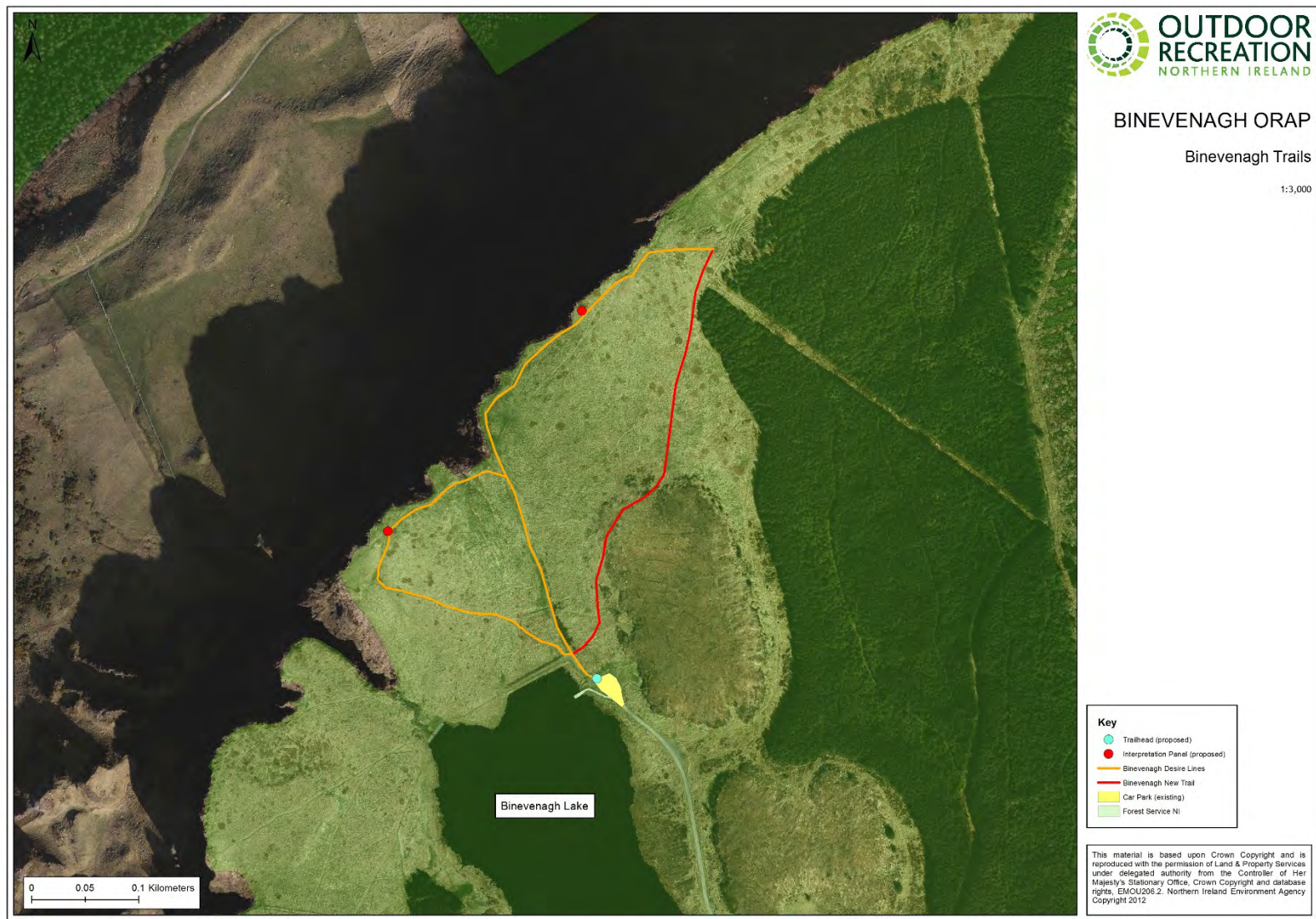


Figure 10 Binevenagh Trails

All-Ability Trails/Multi Use Trails

Currently across the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowland area, provision for those with mobility issues is limited as are multi-user trails, that is, trails that can accommodate both walkers and family cyclists.

Ballycarton Wood

Within Ballycarton Wood there is the opportunity to develop an all ability/multi-use trail radiating from the existing car park area. Work will need to be done to widen access to the start of the current trail, resurface the existing trail and develop the supporting visitor facilities at the trailhead. A new build section of trail will need to be professionally designed and built leading back to the car park through the site of FSNi's former apple orchard (see Figure 11 for map).



Photo 10 Current access to the proposed all-ability trail



Photo 11 Wide, flat, open trail requiring resurfacing

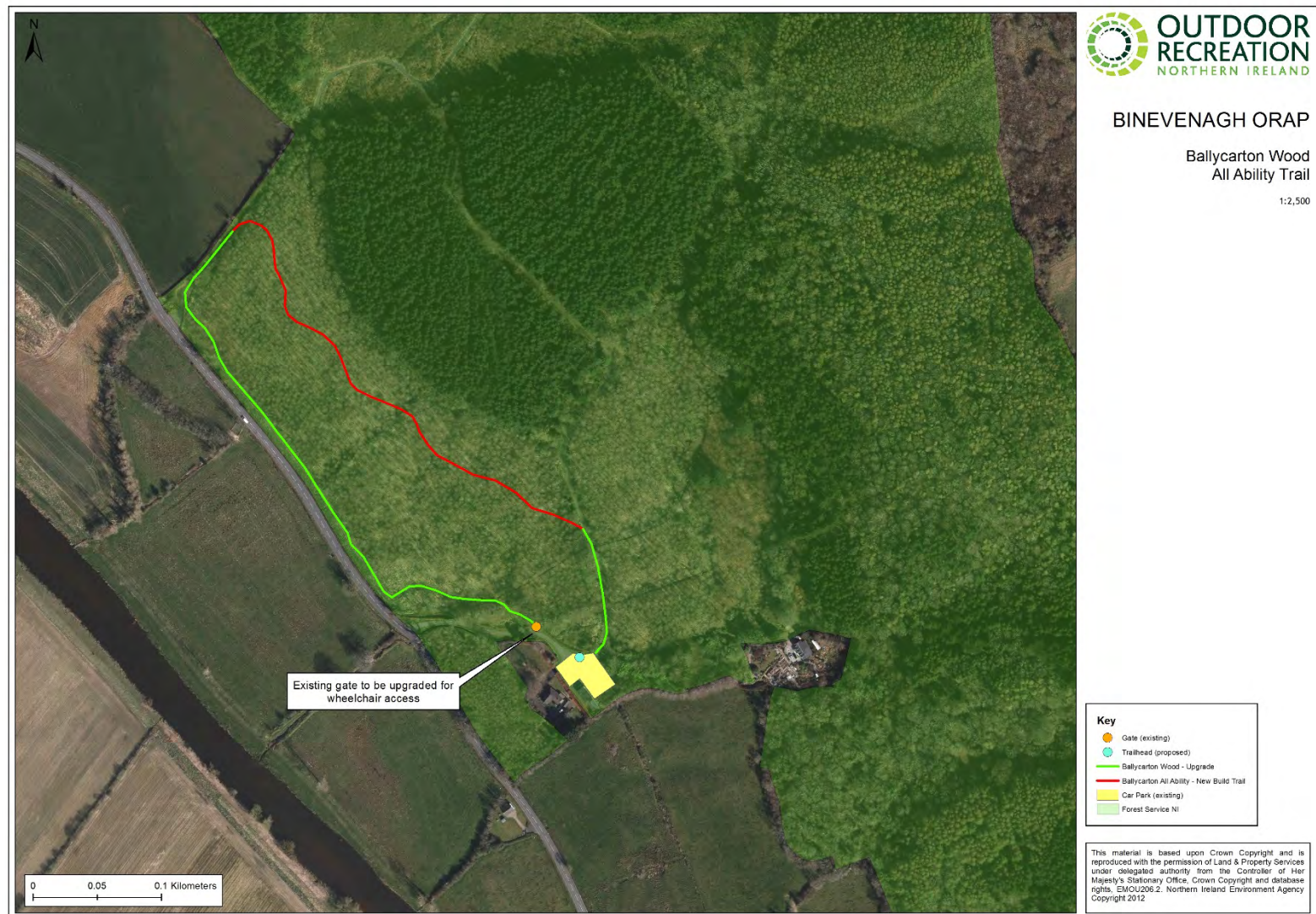


Figure 11 Ballycarton All Ability Trail

Lough Foyle Trail

Developed as part of the cross-border Inch and Foyle Wildfowl Project, the Lough Foyle Trail (8.5km) runs between Ballykelly and the Roe Estuary (see Figure 12 for map). Work included a small car park at the end of Station Road, Ballykelly, interpretation, waymarking, bird watching area and a bridge across the Burnfoot River.

Although the Trail is well used, several issues were highlighted during site visits and consultation which should be addressed moving forward:

- The walk is currently not signposted from the village of Ballykelly or from any of the roads leading down to the Trail's other access points. It is understood that the popularity of the walk has already resulted in car parking management issues at the end of Station Road. However, given the trail's potential as a key site moving forward as an all ability /multi use trail, it is recommended that the Council considers purchasing/leasing an additional piece of land beside the existing car park to increase its capacity.
- Along its length there are few opportunities to view the Lough given that the trail sits below the sea defence embankment. Developing several viewpoints on top of the embankment would help enhance the visitor experience as would placing additional seating along its length.



Photo 12 Current car parking capacity



Photo 13 Area of land beside current car park that could potentially be used as over flow car park

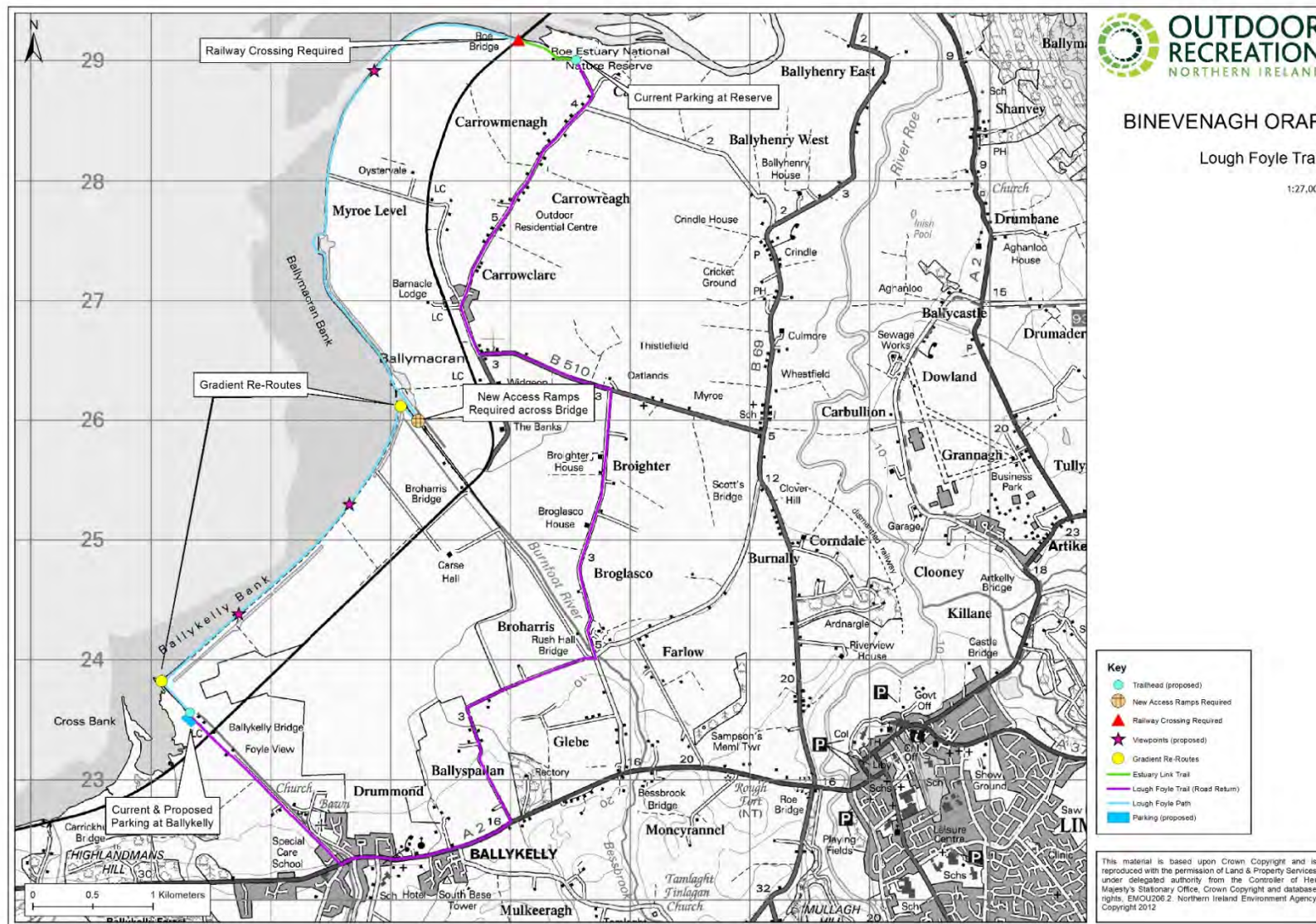


Figure 12 Lough Foyle Trail



Photo 14 & Photo 15 Looking along the trail with the sea defence embankment on the left

- With minimal investment and intervention, the walk has the potential to become an all-ability/multi use trail suitable for those in wheelchairs and using mobility scooters and for those with young families on bikes. There are several areas specifically which would need further consideration, consultation, design and construction namely;
 - o The access point out of Station Road car park which is currently too narrow for wheelchair access,
 - o The section at both ends of the Ballykelly Bank – gradient too steep
 - o The section leading up to the bridge from the Ballykelly Bank - gate access not suitable for wheelchairs
 - o Access onto the bridge itself - steps to be replaced with ramps
 - o Resurfacing of the trail – where necessary



Photo 16 & Photo 17 showing current gates not suitable for wheelchairs/mobility scooters

- Walkers who walk/cycle the full length of the trail from Ballykelly to the Roe Estuary must turn and retrace their steps as there is no railway crossing in place at the end of the trail (see Figure 13 for map). It is recommended that a railway bridge is installed and that the existing trail leading from the railway line to the car park at the Roe Estuary Nature Reserve is upgraded. This would allow a circular walk/cycle back to Ballykelly using the network of minor roads.



Photo 18 End of the trail where it meets the railway



Photo 19 Looking back towards the trail from the Roe Estuary



Photo 20 Path leading from railway line to Roe Estuary Nature Reserve car park

By providing access across the railway line, this could then open the area up further as there is the potential to create a walk along the edge of the River Roe to Swann's Bridge amenity area which could then connect to the new proposed trailhead at Ballycarton Wood. Access negotiation with private landowners will be required however to achieve this section of trail (see Figure 14 for map).



Figure 13 Lough Foyle Trail at Roe Estuary Reserve

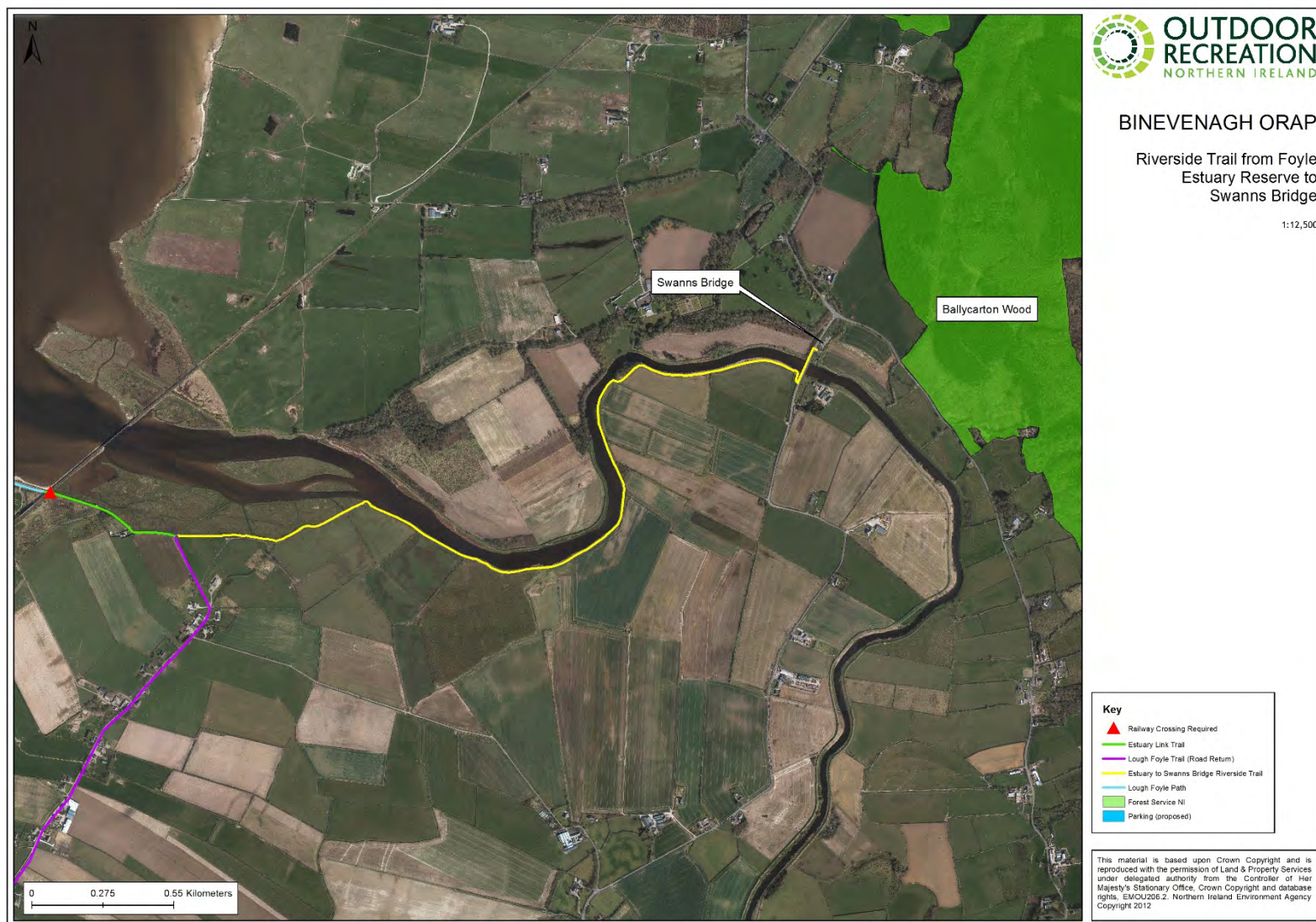


Figure 14 Riverside Trail from Roe Estuary to Swann' Bridge

Sconce Hill

Sconce Hill is a popular site for walking with the 'Giant's Sconce', a former iron age hilltop enclosure, being the main attraction. Currently access to the Giant's Sconce is informal with no designated trailhead or visitor servicing facilities. It is recommended that an official trailhead is created and that the appropriate waymarking, visitor information, etc. is erected to improve the visitor's overall enjoyment of the site.

Martello Tower

Currently a short 0.5mile quality walk leads through the dune land to the Martello Tower. The Tower, managed by Historic Environment Division (HED) of DFC, is considered the most significant of all the defence features within the study area, and the only one of its type in Northern Ireland. The Tower however is rarely open to the public and the surrounding area is currently very confusing for walkers due to the myriad of informal desire lines. The main path leading to the Tower is currently not suitable for those with limited mobility, the kissing gate precludes those with buggy's or wheelchairs from accessing the site and although there is a large car park past the entrance to the Tower for users of the Nature Reserve, this is not publicised or well known. Visitors to the area are not aware how far they can walk in the area, given that much of the surrounding area is owned by the MOD and therefore out of bounds to the public. Overall the area needs to become a more welcoming place for the visitor.

It is recommended as a priority that the path to the Tower is upgraded to make it easily accessible by a much larger proportion of the population. A boardwalk surface is suggested as well as the removal of the kissing gate to increase accessibility. A trailhead board showing a map of where walkers can go near the Tower is also recommended together with improved waymarking (see Figure 15 for map).

This site could be linked to the Ordnance Survey benchmark which is in front of the Point Bar and provides opportunities to tell the internationally significant story of the Lough Foyle Baseline.



Photo 21 & Photo 22 showing current access to the Martello tower and existing path condition



Figure 15 Martello Tower Trails

6.2.1.2 *Community Trails*

Developing a Community Trail Network across the area featured significantly throughout the consultation process particularly by SportNI and the area's Community Associations.

Community Trails, either link communities to surrounding 'green space' via a safe off-road route, or link one community to another, for example, along a river corridor.

Three community trails for future development have been identified within the area namely;

- Castlerock to the National Trust's Grangemore Dunes and Bann Estuary property (see Figure 16 for map)
- A circular route around Castlerock using an alleged PROW - Springvale Lane (see Figure 17 for map)
- A circular route around Ballykelly using the Ballykelly Bank, the Broharris Canal and minor roads (see Figure 18 for map).

Castlerock – Grangemore Dunes and Bann Estuary

The National Trust's Grangemore Dunes (250 acres) and Bann Estuary (24 acres) properties to the east of Castlerock includes the National Trust's only bird hide in Northern Ireland which overlooks the Bann Estuary.

Currently the Grangemore property which runs along the side of the estuary is managed for conservation and not promoted for recreation or walking, particularly given concerns about walkers needing to cross the railway line. The site however does present an excellent opportunity to connect the property to Castlerock via the development of a Community Trail.

The trail would involve linking the Grangemore Dunes and Bann Estuary sites and consequently increasing awareness of the Grange Beg Pillbox which is located beside the bird hide. A small bridge will be required to cross the River Articlave that flows into the Lower Bann River, in addition to appropriate trail infrastructure, e.g. stiles, gates, waymarking, interpretation etc. Further investigation and route choice is required for the area between where the National Trust's property ends and Castlerock village.

Springvale Lane – Castlerock

CCGBC is currently working with a private landowner to develop a circular Community Trail leading from Castlerock village along Springvale Lane, an alleged PROW, before returning to Castlerock using the periphery of Castlerock Golf Course. Like the Grangemore – Castlerock community trail, crossing the railway track is a concern. The trail should be signed with the appropriate waymarking and visitor servicing as required. Further investigation and route choice is required.

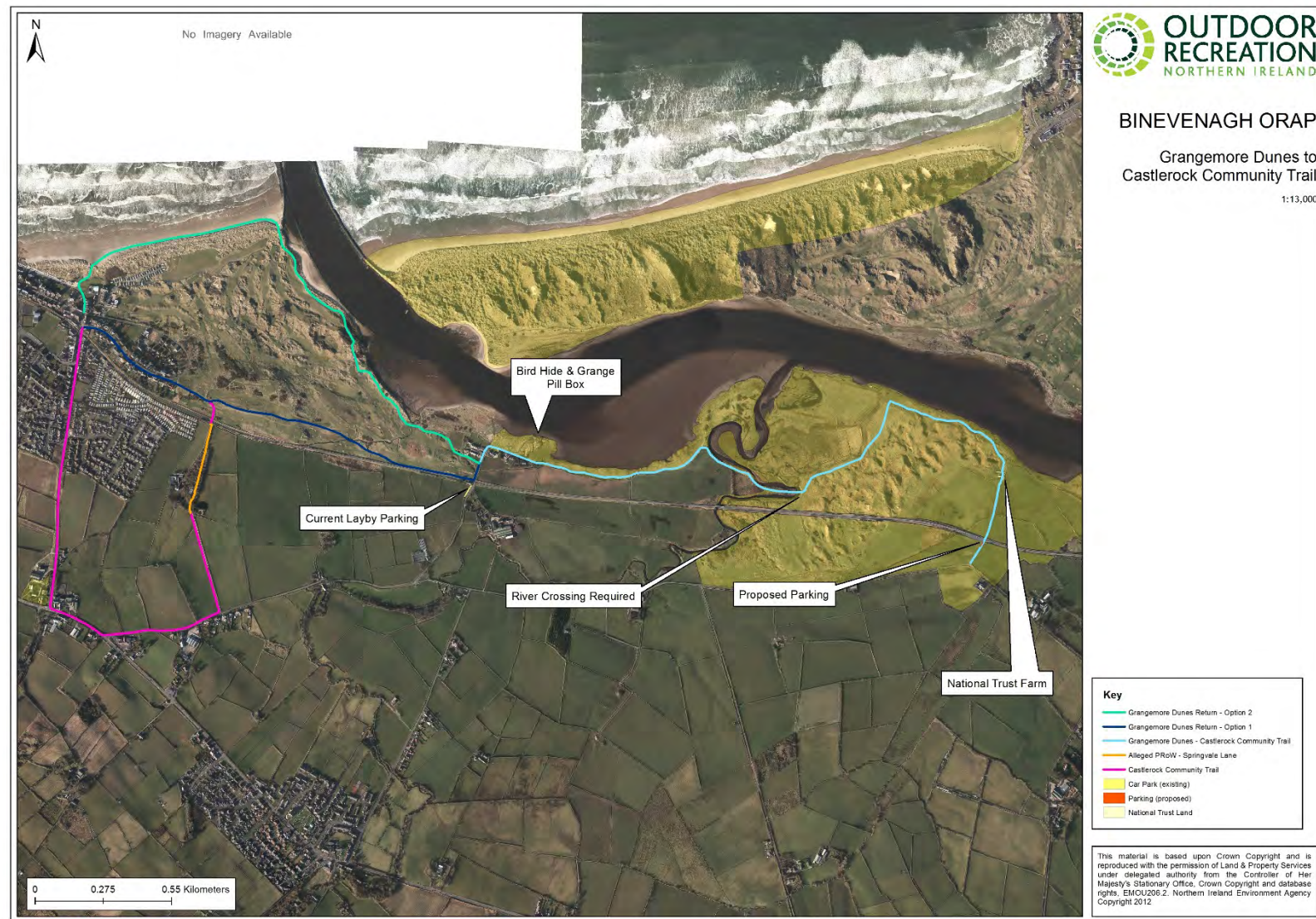


Figure 16 Grangemore Dunes to Castlerock



Figure 17 Castlerock Community Trail

Ballykelly Circuit using the Broharris Canal

The Lough Foyle Trail detailed in Section 6.2.1.1 offers an excellent opportunity to develop a short circular Community Trail around Ballykelly village. Starting in the village the trail would go out along the Ballykelly Bank and then return using the path parallel to the former Broharris Canal and Bushfoot River before returning to Ballykelly using small minor roads (see Figure 18 for map). Further work is required to negotiate access for the track along the side of the canal and river, which is understood to be currently in private ownership. This Community Trail should be built to the specification of an all ability/multi use trail given the surrounding flat topography.



Photo 23 & Photo 24 Proposed new community trail making use of the path parallel to the former Broharris Canal and Bushfoot River and steps to be replaced with ramps to improve accessibility

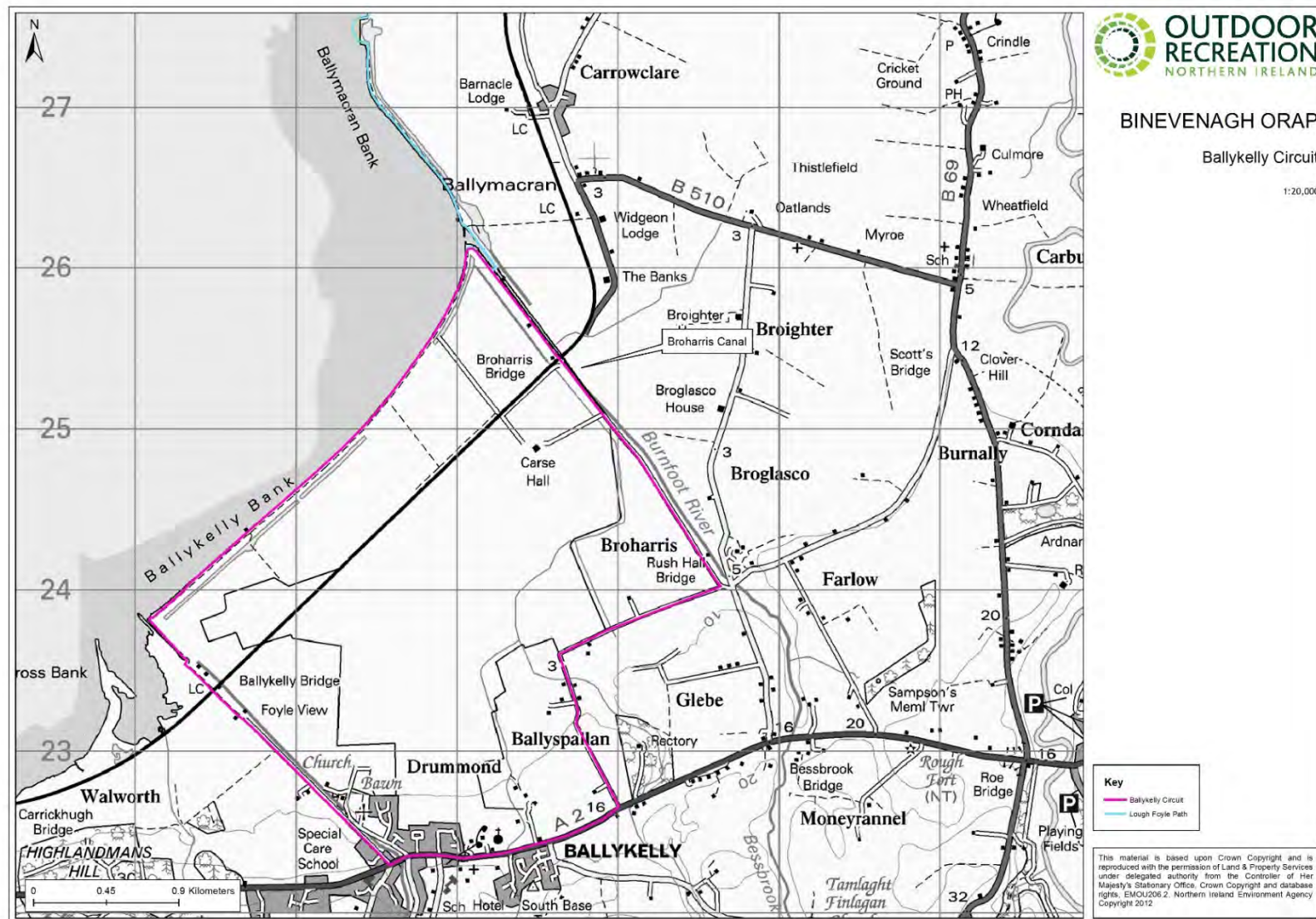


Figure 18 Ballykelly Circuit using the Broharris Canal

6.2.1.3 *Greenways*

Within Northern Ireland's new Greenways Strategy, the aim of which is to 'encourage a substantial increase in the number of people walking and cycling as a regular part of everyday life through the building of a connected and accessible regional Greenway network', the Secondary Network includes a greenway from Derry/Londonderry to Coleraine.

The development of the Greenway in the area would realise significant benefits to the area both within the immediate vicinity of the Greenway and the wider Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area in terms of health and well-being, social inclusion, community cohesion and economic prosperity. Given that the greenway would parallel the existing Belfast-Londonderry railway line which has been described as one of the 'greatest railway journeys of the world', this indicates the significant tourism potential of it as well as its use as a community resource for leisure or commuting.

The success of developing this secondary Greenway is totally dependent on whether individual landowners along the route are willing to co-operate and enter into access negotiations and ultimately agreements with the Council. Consequently in reality, this project will not happen quickly, at best within the next 10-15 years, unless the land along the proposed route is vested. It is recognised that ultimately very little reward could be gained for a very time consuming and staff expensive process.

6.2.1.4 *Mountain Biking*

Although the Mountain Bike Strategy for Northern Ireland identified the potential of Binevenagh/Ballycarton/Cam/Springwell becoming a National Trail Centre, no work has taken place to date on progressing this. Consequently, there is a significant opportunity to develop mountain biking in the area for both the local community and visitors. The Strategy also identified the potential of creating several long-distance rides including one in the Causeway Coast and Glens which would involve connecting numerous forests along the North Coast including Cam, Springwell, Grange, Ballycarton, Binevenagh.

As previously stated in Section 5.1.11 mountain biking does take place extensively across the area's forests using informal and unofficial trails. Many of these informal trails are environmentally unsustainable as well as posing significant safety and management issues for FSNi. In order to address the issue, it is recommended that a network of sustainable mountain biking trails is developed in the area.

Given the current conflict between walkers and mountain bikers in the Ballycarton/Binevenagh forest area, where a network of 'informal' downhill mountain biking trails cut across the walking trails, it is recommended that this area is given priority for design and development. Whilst the long-term aspiration of the area is to create a National Trail Centre, (minimum 30km of trails), as a first step, the development of 10km of trails in the Ballycarton/Binevenagh forest area would allow the area to become recognised as a Regional Trail Centre.

It is important however that any mountain biking development is not seen in isolation from other potential recreation development in the area, e.g. all-ability/multi user trails. Consequently, it is recommended that a detailed Master Planning exercise is undertaken for the whole of the Ballycarton/Binevenagh area which will consider a wider trail network and visitor servicing facilities such as car parking, toilets, café, visitor flow, on-site visitor interpretation, etc.

6.2.1.5 *Off-Road Family Cycling*

Currently the provision for off-road family cycling within the area is very weak and consequently opportunities to create safe off-road, family cycling trails should be considered at all sites which are highlighted for potential future development, e.g. Downhill Forest, Ballycarton/Binevenagh Forest.

In addition, as previously mentioned, consideration should also be given to upgrading the current Lough Foyle Trail to make it more off-road family cycling friendly.

6.2.1.6 Orienteering

Although the orienteering product is relatively strong in the area, two of the maps for sites in the area need updating namely; Springwell and Cam. It is recommended that these are updated in partnership with the NIOA.

6.2.1.7 Cycling (On-Road)

On-road cycling remains an important area of growth in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area and should remain so with development focused on the growth of events and sportives, organised at both local club and national event level. It is recommended that these are supported moving forward through a small annual grants programme (see Section 6.3.3).

6.2.1.8 Angling

A limited number of groups/organisations have the power to develop angling facilities and influence the nature of angling development in the area. Most of the area's fishing is provided by Loughs Agency. Two recommendations have been proposed moving forward by Loughs Agency namely;

- Loughs Agency Science Team to conduct a full stock and water quality audit to ensure the lake at Downhill/Benone beach is fit for purpose
- Develop a small fishery with access for all, using existing activities as a gateway for increased angling participation.

In addition, Lough Agency recognise the potential of the Ballymacran Embankment as it uniquely provides for both sea and coarse fishing and are hoping to upgrade the small roads leading to the site.

Given that these recommendations are core to the work of Loughs Agency's work, they have not been costed in the Action Plan in Chapter 7.

6.2.1.9 Hang Gliding and Paragliding

Currently hang gliders and paragliders use three main sites accessed via the Bishop's Road namely; Hell's Hole, Gortmore and Binevenagh. Although there is minimal conflict between the hang gliders and paragliders and other users of the area, on those days throughout the year when flying conditions are perfect, car parking is inadequate at the take-off sites. It is recommended that two small lay-bys along the Bishops Road are developed just before Hell's Hole and Gortmore to help address this issue.

6.2.2 Hub Development Sites

Across the area there is currently only one major activity-based 'hub' namely the coastal area between Magilligan and Downhill, with the actual 'visitor hub' being concentrated on Benone. Defined as a multi-use site which offers a variety of both outdoor activities and visitor support services (accommodation, cafe/restaurant, toilets, changing facilities, parking, etc.) in the one place, the hub stretches for over seven miles and includes Benone's blue flag beach and extensive dune system with access provided through boardwalks, new visitor building housing coffee shop, toilets and showers and next door the Benone Beach Tourism Complex (Council run) including visitor information, tennis courts, pitch and put, small swimming pool, crazy golf course, kiddies play zone and café. There are also two privately run caravan sites for static and tourism caravans in addition to the Council's touring site and glamping pods.

Moving forward, one of the area's strongest propositions for the future development of an outdoor recreation 'hub' in the area lies with the potential of developing the National Trust's Downhill Demesne property together with the neighbouring Downhill Forest.

Managed by the National Trust, the Downhill Demesne Estate which includes Mussenden Temple, (155 acres) is the first major tourist attraction on the Causeway Coastal Route after leaving Derry/Londonderry in the west and the Giant's Causeway in the east. In 2016, it attracted 48,000 visitors between March and the end of early September and has identified the 'family market' as the segment with the best visitor prospects.

Directly across the road from the National Trust property is Downhill Forest owned and managed by FSNI. Currently the Forest is used informally for walking. Within the Forest boundary there are several interesting heritage features that were once part of the wider Downhill Demesne and could be exploited namely; remnants of an ancient woodland (Hazelwood and Ashwood) and the duck pond and watermill.

Moving forward there is significant potential to create a stand out 'activity hub' by combining both the Demesne and Forest. Within the Forest it is proposed that a focus is put on the development of multi-use trails including off-road family cycling, walking and all-ability, and the creation of a large bespoke forest play facility, as both these products are weak in the area.

In order to progress the project, it is recommended that a full Master Planning exercise is undertaken incorporating both sites. This will consider product development, visitor flow, supporting visitor services, connectivity between the sites etc. New potential trail networks identified for the site should be professionally designed by a competent trail designer and adhere to the Principles and Standards for Trail Development (ORNI, 2013) and ensure that all heritage features of the site are incorporated into the design as much as possible.

The National Trust has already previous experience of taking on the recreational and social use and management of other FSNI owned forests across Northern Ireland e.g. Florencecourt. It is recognised that two long-distance walking trails currently pass through Downhill Forest with permission from FSNI and managed by the CCGBC namely, the Ulster Way and the International Appalachian Trail. It is important that any amalgamation and development of these sites considers these existing walks and aims to retain access along these long-distance trails.

6.2.3 Supporting Visitor Services and Maintaining the Product

Through consultation and site visits, it was evident that there is great disparity in quality and provision of outdoor recreation supporting services across the whole area.

Whilst some sites have benefitted from significant developments and modernisation of facilities particularly along the coastal strip, e.g. cafes, toilets, showers, picnic tables, bins, viewing points, etc. others have been neglected and are therefore less appealing to users. These sites are now in need of urgent upgrading to bring their recreation provision up to a standard that makes it inviting to the user and meets the expectations of the modern-day visitor.



Photo 25 New building comprising café, toilets, shower and changing facilities at Benone Strand

The fundamental issue identified within many of the weaker sites relates to the lack of basic infrastructure and lack of customer-focus. Much of the furniture, e.g. bins and picnic tables, look out of date and are often not sympathetic to their surroundings (see Section 6.3.2 for reference to waymarking, trail head information, interpretation panels).



Photo 26 & Photo 27 Access to Keady Viewpoint and visitor servicing facilities on-site



Photo 28 Gortmore viewpoint showing range of bins that are unsympathetic to the landscape

The importance of addressing visitor services was highlighted by the private sector mobile activity operators who reported that inadequate toilets and changing facilities prevented them bringing groups and therefore business to the area. It was also noted that in some instances where services are provided, e.g. toilets at Downhill Beach, these are only seasonal, opening at Easter each year and closing again in September, despite the outdoor activity season lasting a full 12 months.

Those operators based within the area reported that to address the issue of inadequate changing facilities at key sites, they erected their own tents to act as changing areas. Consequently, it is recommended that:

- Toilets and changing facilities are built at Swann's Bridge
- All sites recommended for significant hub development in the future, e.g. Ballycarton are equipped with adequate facilities and
- Those sites which have been identified as having inappropriate/vandalised/outdated furniture, e.g. bins are replaced.

6.2.4 *Monitoring*

Having the evidence base that highlights the use made of the area's outdoor recreation sites is vital moving forward, particularly the numbers using the area's walking/off-road trails. Vehicle and pedestrian counters are located at several sites across the area including Benone Strand and Gortmore Viewpoint. There are also counters specifically recording the numbers of walkers/cyclists at Ballycarton Orchard, Ballycarton Upper and St Aidan's, the trailhead at Gortmore and the footbridge over the River Burnfoot on the Lough Foyle walk.

Moving forward any new outdoor recreation developments should automatically include the positioning of counters at the location to help justify and prioritise future expenditure on the site.

6.3 *Key Findings – Promotion*

From the consultation process on the current and future promotion of outdoor recreation in the area several key issues were identified:

- There appears to be a lack of strategic approach to the marketing and promotion of outdoor recreation within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area within the wider 'north coast' area.
- There is limited information available on the specific opportunities available for outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands.
- There is insufficient detailed information on the walking and cycling product of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area which can be used by those on the ground assisting visitors coming into the area.
- Awareness/directional signage indicating the area's outdoor recreation opportunities available is weak.
- There is a significant discrepancy in the provision and quality of onsite visitor information and signage across the area's outdoor recreation sites.
- There are other external effective marketing mechanisms already in place which should be supported, to promote the opportunities available within the area, e.g. WalkNI.com, OutmoreNI.com.

6.3.1 *Marketing Strategy and Action Plan*

During the consultation, it was noted that outdoor recreation in general does not appear to enjoy the same marketing effort and promotion to the local population as other purely tourism related facilities in the wider north coast area e.g. The Giant's Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. Whilst the value

of tourism to the north coast area is not in question, there is an opportunity to increase the profile and marketing of outdoor recreation in the area given the strong demand and evidence regarding participation and visitor levels for these.

The most appropriate and effective way to do this would be to develop a Marketing Strategy with a specific tactical Action Plan for Outdoor Recreation. It is recognised that this would most likely be led by the Council working in partnership with other organisations such as the CCGHT, National Trust, ORNI and FSNI etc.

It is recommended that as part of the Marketing Strategy a simple segmentation is undertaken for participants of outdoor recreation and visitors to places of outdoor recreation in the area because it is anticipated that the tactics and platforms to market to the segments will be limited and there will be little opportunity to target highly defined segments.

The Marketing Action Plan should cover all areas of marketing outdoor recreation including promotional tactics and platforms, working with partners, events and participation programmes.

This report does not seek to pre-empt the outputs of the Marketing Strategy and Action Plan but rather recommends some key points for consideration:

- Consideration is given to creating a strong 'outdoor recreation identity' for the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area to provide a cohesive experience for visitors and local people.
- greater use should be made of social media channels. It is however recognised that developing and feeding content to satisfy this quickly moving marketing media requires dedicated staff resource.
- In terms of website content, Outdoor Recreation NI already has a significant proportion of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands key outdoor recreation information hosted on its web platforms. There is potential to feed through the content from ORNI's platforms to the website – which is likely to be the Councils. This would ease the burden on Council staff to create and maintain high quality and up to date content on the website.
- ORNI is launching in May 2017, an online mapping facility called OutmoreNI which will help local people find out what outdoor recreation opportunities are available on their doorstep and in their local area. There is potential that this technology could be hosted for the Council area within the Council website and would directly support the development of for example, the new proposed Community Trails.
 - o The Council has already bought into ORNI's WalkNI's marketing consortium. It is recommended that given the significant web visitors (almost half a million visitors to WalkNI.com over the last 12 months to 21 March 2017) and the benefits that the Council enjoys from ORNI's marketing expertise in this area, that this agreement is maintained.
 - o Whilst web based information is important for users of the area, providing a map detailing all the recreational opportunities in the area, particularly the walking and off-road cycling routes is also recommended. Accompanying information of length, grade, expected terrain, starting and end points is important for those providing information at the Castlerock Information Centre and Benone Complex.
 - o Whilst there are some events and participation programmes that take place already such as surfing and walking festival, a more extensive and co-ordinated event and participation programme is recommended with improved marketing of all events.

6.3.2 Signage & Waymarking

From consultation and site visits across the area, it was identified that a significant weakness within the area relates to both;

- Inadequate awareness/directional signage signposting users to the outdoor recreation opportunities available on the ground
- Discrepancy in the provision and quality of onsite visitor information and signage between the outdoor recreation sites within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.

For visitors coming into the area it is difficult to know what the outdoor recreation proposition is on offer. Few outdoor recreation sites are signposted from the main driving routes and therefore it is very easy for visitors to the area to pass through the area without being aware of the recreational opportunities available.

Sites that are poorly signposted or not signposted at all include:

- Lough Foyle Trail (both ends)
- Quality Walks on Avish and Gortmore
- Binevenagh trails (both upper and lower slopes)

In addition, there has been a missed opportunity to provide information at the new railway station at Bellarena. Currently when passengers disembark from the train, no information is provided on the area's outdoor recreation opportunities. It is recommended that an information/map board is erected showing visitors what they can do in the area and where the main outdoor recreation opportunities are in the area and how they can access the Binevenagh escarpment/Ballycarton area for walking, given its proximity.



Photo 29 & Photo 30 New railway halt at Bellarena with bicycle stands

Within any outdoor recreation site, it is essential to erect visitor information signage and where appropriate, trail waymarking. This is important not only from a marketing perspective but also in terms of visitor enjoyment and risk management.

Visitor information signage includes welcome signage, visitor orientation, interpretation and safety signage whereas trail waymarking refers to signage relating to or located directly on trails and includes trailhead signage, waymarker posts and disks, interpretation panels and safety signage (see Photos to Photo 31 - 33 for examples).

Sites such as Benone and the Lough Foyle Trail have recently benefited from new on-site visitor signage, but most outdoor recreation sites across the area have either no on-site signage or what signage exists is outdated, unappealing to the visitor, vandalised or tired looking.



Photo 31, Photo 32 & Photo 33 showing new on-site visitor welcome signage, waymarking and interpretation along the Lough Foyle Trail



Photo 34, Photo 35, Photo 36 & Photo 37 showing tired, uninspiring and outdated waymarking and on-site visitor information

It is recommended that guidelines are developed for both directional and on-site signage for all outdoor recreation sites across the area, a review of the current portfolio of outdoor recreation sites is undertaken and a programme of implementation is rolled out across the area. It is essential that any guidelines are future proofed regarding the potential of the CCGBC taking on more recreational development and management of the area's forests in the future.

The outdoor recreation identity/graphic developed for outdoor recreation, referred to in Section 6.3.2, should be fully incorporated into all aspects of the visitor information signage and waymarking. This will help build customer recognition and ultimately improve the visitor experience of outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.

6.3.3 Events and Participation Programmes

A key mechanism to attract people to take part in outdoor recreation and visit sites of outdoor recreation is to host events and participation programmes. Whilst some events and participation programmes already take place within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area, a more extensive and coordinated event and participation programme is recommended. This should form a key part of the Marketing Action Plan the detail of which will be determined by the key segments targeted.

It is recommended that a small number of large events to attract local people and visitors from outside the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area should be held in the key outdoor recreation hub sites moving forward. In addition, all new sites developed moving forward should have an associated events programme, e.g. Downhill Demesne/Forest, Binevenagh/Ballycarton.

In addition, it was recognised from the consultation process that one of the area's greatest assets, for the area moving forward is the enthusiasm and competencies of local community groups and local clubs to promote and market the outdoor recreation offer. To facilitate these groups, running an annual small grants programme for community outdoor recreation events and club participation programmes is recommended.

Encouraging increased participation in the area's outdoor recreation sites could also be facilitated through:

- Developing the number of community based led-walking groups
- Developing the number of 'sports' programmes taking place in places of outdoor recreation across the area

A key partner to develop these participation programmes is the CCGBC Sports Development Team whose programmes and staff are part funded by Sport NI's Everybody Active Programme. Specifically, in the Everybody Active Programmes, Sport NI have asked Councils to focus on walking and cycling as two key activities as Sport NI recognise their mass appeal and ease of access to all residents. It is recommended therefore that an Outdoor Recreation Participation Plan is put together in partnership with the Council's Leisure team to encourage participation in outdoor recreation at sites throughout the area.

6.4 SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the current provision and future development of outdoor recreation at a local level in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands.

The information contained in the SWOT analysis is a summary of feedback gained through consultation and secondary research.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing recognition of Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands as an outdoor destination - Iconic landscape and diversity of environments used for outdoor recreation (beaches, forests, glens, river, mountains, sea) - Rich in natural and built heritage - Expansive stretch of coastline from Castlerock to Ballykelly - Coastline and beaches provide facilities for a wide range of water-based activities which other 'land locked' locations do not have, e.g. diving, stand-up Paddle boarding, surfing, kite surfing - 3 Blue flag beaches within the area (Castlerock, Benone, and Downhill) - Binevenagh escarpment provides facilities for air based sports which no other area in Northern Ireland can provide e.g. gliding - Good existing land based recreation product, e.g. quality walks, cycle routes etc. - Large public Forest Estate (Binevenagh, Grange Wood, Springwell, Downhill and Cam) - Established destination for niche activities, e.g. blokarting, kite buggying, gliding, hang/para gliding etc. - Gliding, surfing and blokarting has a reputation for being accessible to less able persons - Strong use of the area by private sector activity providers - Railway line runs through the area providing easy access to some sites - Magilligan Ferry included within the area allowing easy access from Donegal - Signature tourist attractions – Mussenden Temple - Link to 'Game of Thrones'. Some sites used in the making of the TV series, e.g. Binevenagh and Downhill Beach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section of the Ulster Way /North Sperrins Way on dangerous and busy 'A' class roads. - Issues reference access over National Trust land in Downhill Estate including Ulster Way diversion and payment to access land - No dedicated mountain bike facilities - conflict between mountain bikers and walkers on the lower slopes of Binevenagh - Where informal access is permitted, limited information is available to make walkers aware of the opportunities - Poor access in general to heritage sites, e.g. Martello Tower - Lack of toilet /visitor servicing facilities at key visitor sites/focal user points, e.g. Swann's Bridge, Ballycarton - Lack of sign posting /waymarking regarding opportunities for walking - Lack of visitor welcome in all forests - Issues reference CCGC signing up to licence agreements with FSNI for development of recreational opportunities within the Forests - Private landowners are discouraged from creating public access through fear of litigation and lack of economic incentive (i.e. financial return on access creation) - No MoU in place between FSNI and CCGBC to allow forest recreation development. - Opportunities for those with mobility issues limited. - Some key sites are poorly maintained, e.g. grass growing up through bins - Furniture at some key sites outdated and unsympathetic to the surrounding landscape, e.g. bins, picnic tables, seating. - Public transport is weak

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Castlerock Community Association performs a key role in information provision to visitors to the area - Recognition of the importance of marketing to the success of participating in the outdoors – CCGBC already a member of the NI marketing consortium WalkNI. com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car parking – lack of car parking in some activity hotspots and a lack of clear information about where parking is permitted - Irregular access to toilets/changing facilities at coastal sites - Railway line makes it difficult to exploit some potential outdoor sites - Perception that the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area is neglected in favour of the ‘North Coast’, in terms of tourism investment and promotion to visitors. - No detailed map of the area showing walking/cycling opportunities - Limited support given to Castlerock Information Centre - BeachNI.com the main marketing website to market the outdoor activities beaches in the area lost its funding from the Council.
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OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The creation of a coherent management approach to outdoor recreation within the area now that the new Council structure is in place. - Increased development of Forests if CCGBC and FSNI put in place the necessary legal arrangement. - Better communication and business sharing between commercial. activity providers based within the area and mobile operators coming into the area. - Enhance the walking product by developing opportunities in the uplands and foothills, low level walks, riverside walks, pathways linking communities and green space, linking existing walks and getting walks more off-road. - Link the area’s rich heritage better through increased walking/cycling development. - Improve facilities at specific forest sites e.g. Binevenagh Forest - - improving the product and visitor facilities and services - Improve the visitor welcome and basic visitor servicing at all forests - Develop as a minimum a Regional Mountain Bike Trail centre in the area’s forests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing access to the countryside without formal agreement puts increasing pressure on informal access agreements - Focus of investment and promotion of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands neglected in favour of other areas of the north coast - Lack of dedicated funding for AONB’s hinders current AONB management bodies from proactively engaging in landscape protection and recreation management - Detrimental impact that access creation may have on fragile/designated environments - User conflict at popular sites, e.g. Lower slopes of Binevenagh - Limited proactive engagement with private landowners on access issues - Degradation/destruction of the natural landscape through over-development – destroys the very landscape which attracts people to use it for recreation and enjoyment. The less visited beauty spots such as Binevenagh may lose the peace and tranquillity for which they have become known

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a new activity hub at Downhill Estate/Downhill Forest - Improve onshore facilities for water based users, e.g. toilets, changing facilities, parking - Improve disabled access at existing recreational sites where possible - Improve the area's recognition as a key outdoor recreation destination on the north coast - Develop a strategic approach to marketing outdoor recreation in the area - Assist the Castlerock Community Association in providing detailed information to the visitor by producing a detailed walking map/information booklet - Encourage more adventure style/niche events, e.g. ironman, triathlons, sportives, kite festivals - Encourage the CCGBC to make greater use of the area by delivering participation programmes 	
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Table 5 SWOT Analysis

7 ACTION PLAN

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
A: MANAGEMENT				
A1	Council Wide	<p>Re-activate the Causeway Coast and Glen Outdoor Recreation Forum - Forum to include all those involved directly/indirectly with outdoor recreation.</p> <p>Meet a minimum of 2 times a year</p> <p>Council Outdoor Recreation Officer to act as Secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGBC (to lead) • CCGHT • Forest Service NI • DAERA • DFC • NI Water • Tourism NI • Sport NI • UWT • National Trust • Loughs Agency • Private Sector • NGB • Community Associations 	Staff time
A2	Study Area wide	<p>Establish a local Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Outdoor Recreation Forum – Forum to include all those involved directly/indirectly with outdoor recreation.</p> <p>Improved partnership working and information/knowledge sharing at a local level.</p> <p>Meet a minimum of 2 times a year</p> <p>Council Outdoor Recreation Officer to act as Secretariat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGBC (to lead) • CCGHT • Forest Service NI • DAERA • DFC • NI Water • Tourism NI • Sport NI • UWT 	Staff time

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Trust • Loughs Agency • Private Sector • NGB • Community Associations 	
A3	Council Wide	Put in place the necessary legal documentation (MoU, licences) to allow development on FSNI land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGBC • National Trust • FSNI 	Staff time

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
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B: DEVELOPMENT – MASTER/SPATIAL PLANNING				
B1	Ballycarton Wood/Binevenagh	Undertake a master /spatial planning exercise for the area to include consideration of walking, all-ability, mountain biking trails and supporting visitor services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • FSNI 	£12,500 (excludes trail design)
B2	Downhill Estate/Downhill Forest	Undertake a master /spatial planning exercise for the area to include consideration of walking, all-ability, family cycling, bespoke play and supporting visitor services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • FSNI • National Trust 	£15,000 (excludes trail design)

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
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B: DEVELOPMENT				
B3	Walking Aghanloo Wood to Castlerock	Aghanloo Wood to Castlerock (including Binevenagh) Design elements: to include up to 5km Visitor servicing elements: to include new car parking at Aghanloo Wood trailhead, waymarking, trail furniture, on-site information, counters x4 Trail construction: to include a minimum of up to 5km new trail build	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCCBC • NIEA /DAERA • FSNI • National Trust • Private landowners 	£7500 £60,000 £200,000
B4	Walking Ballycarton Wood All-ability trail	Ballycarton Wood Design elements: to include up to 3km of new build trail Visitor servicing elements: to include waymarking, trail furniture, on-site information, counters Trail construction: to include a minimum of up to 3km new trail build and existing trail enhancement works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCCBC • NIEA /DAERA • FSNI 	£4,500 £10,000 £120,000
B5	Walking Lough Foyle All- ability/multi use	Visitor servicing elements: to include access to new viewpoints, trail furniture Trail construction: to include a minimum of 200m of new trail build and existing trail enhancement works Railway crossing at Roe Estuary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • Loughs Agency • Local Community • Private landowners • Translink • NIEA/DEARA 	£30,000 £20,000 Price of railway bridge?

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
B6	Walking Sconce Hill	Sconce Hill Visitor servicing element: to include new trailhead and associated visitor servicing on-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • FSNI • NIEA/DAERA 	£15,000
B7	Walking Martello Tower	Martello Tower Trail construction and visitor servicing: to include new boardwalk constructed path from entrance to Tower and associated visitor support services on-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • Loughs Agency • Local Community • Private landowners • NIEA/DEARA 	£6,000
B8	Walking Community Trail	Grangemore Dunes to Castlerock Trail features and visitor servicing: to include a bridge and visitor support services including waymarking, on-site information, counters etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • National Trust • Local Community • Private landowners • NIEA/DEARA 	£50,000
B9	Walking Community Trail	Springvale Land, Castlerock Visitor servicing: to include waymarking, on-site information, counters etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGBC • Local Community • Private landowners • NIEA/DEARA 	£6,000
B10	Walking Community Trail	Ballykelly Visitor servicing: to include waymarking, on-site information, counters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • Local Community • Private landowners 	£6,000

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
B11	Mountain Biking	<p>Regional Mountain Bike Trail Centre – develop a Regional Mountain Bike Trail Centre using Ballycarton and Binevenagh Forests.</p> <p>Design elements: to include up to 10km of new build trail</p> <p>Visitor servicing elements: to include new trailhead facilities including toilets, waymarking, trail furniture, on-site information, bike racks, counters x4</p> <p>Trail construction: to include a minimum of up to 10km new trail build</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT (LPS) • CCGBC • FSNI 	<p>£15,000</p> <p>£180,000</p> <p>c. £500,000</p>
B12	Mountain Biking	<p>Long Distance Mountain Bike Trails - assess the feasibility of establishing longer distance off-road trails linking the area's forests.</p> <p>Visitor servicing elements: to include new trailhead facilities waymarking, trail furniture, on-site information, counters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT (LPS) • Forest Service NI • DAERA • Private landowners • Community Associations • Local mountain biking clubs 	£10,000
B13	Angling	<p>Conduct a full stock and water quality audit to ensure the lake at Downhill/Benone beach is fit for purpose</p> <p>Develop a small fishery with access for all, using existing activities as a gateway for increased angling participation.</p> <p>Upgrade small roads leading to Ballymacran Embankment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loughs Agency 	N/A
B14	Orienteering	<p>Produce new updated maps for Cam and Springwell Forests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • NIOA • FSNI 	£6,000

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
B15	Para /Hang Gliding	Develop two small car parking laybys on the Bishops Road to facilitate access to sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just before Hell's Hole • Just before Gortmore viewpoint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UHPG • Translink • CCGBC • CCGHT 	£30,000
B16	Hub Development	Develop Downhill Estate/Downhill Forest as an outdoor recreation hub in the area. Costs include construction of all trails and visitor servicing opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • National Trust • Forest Service • 	£1,000,000
B17	Visitor Servicing	Upgrade existing outdoor recreation sites with new bins, picnic tables etc. Build a new toilet block at Swann's Bridge outdoor recreation site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • Forest Service 	£25,000 £120,000
B18	Monitoring	Install visitor counters at all new sites developed moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • National Trust 	Included within other projects

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
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C: PROMOTION				
C1	Council Wide	Marketing Strategy & Plan – develop a Marketing Strategy and tactical Marketing Action Plan for outdoor recreation within the area. To include the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area (could be contracted out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGBC • CCGHT • FSNI • ORNI • National Trust • Tourism NI • TNI 	£20,000
C2	Council Wide	Identity – develop an outdoor recreation identity/graphic device within the CCGBC brand for outdoor recreation that can be used within the promotion of all outdoor recreation in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC 	£5,000
C3	Council Wide	Visitor Information & Signage Guidelines – develop guidelines for all outdoor recreation sites across the Council area that can be used within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area sites. (could be contracted out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • TNI • Tourism NI 	Staff time
C4	Study Area Wide	Visitor Information & Signage Review – undertake a review of signage, visitor information and waymarking at the current portfolio of outdoor recreation sites across the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area to recommend the action required to meet the guidelines (could be contracted out)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT (LPS) • CCGBC • TNI • FSNI 	Staff time

Code	Site	Action	Partners	Cost
C5	Study Area Wide	<p>Visitor Information & Signage Implementation – develop the new signage and implement across all sites within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.</p> <p>To include as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellarena Railway Station • Quality Walks on Avish and Gortmore • Lough Foyle Trail • Binevenagh (upper and lower trails) • New Community Trails • New Aghanloo – Castlerock walking trail • Sconce Hill • Montello Tower 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT (LPS) • CCGBC • FSNI • NIEA/DEARA • TNI 	£25,000
C6	Study Area Wide	Walking and Cycling map – develop a walking and cycling map for the area with sufficient information allowing those visiting to make an informed choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC 	£5,000
C7	Study Area Wide	Outdoor Recreation Participation Plan – develop a plan in collaboration with Leisure Department of CCGBC to encourage people to take part in physical activity at sites of outdoor recreation with a focus on walking and cycling within the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • WIYC • Community Groups • Local cycle clubs 	Staff time
C8	Study Area Wide	Annual small grants programme – roll out a programme of outdoor events/programmes in partnership with community groups, NGOs, local clubs and NGBs by introducing an annual small grants programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCGHT • CCGBC • Community groups • Local outdoor recreation clubs • NGBs • NGOs 	£21,000
TOTAL				£2,524,500

8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 - Natural and Built Heritage

Designation	Name	Area (ha)	Total sites
AONB	Binevenagh	16594	
	Total	16594	1
ASSI	Magilligan	1069	
	Bann Estuary	348	
	Altikeeragh	180	
	Binevenagh	91	
	Lough Foyle	2005	
	Aghanloo Wood	91	
	River Roe and Tributaries	408	
	Ballyrisk More	13	
	Gortcorbies	55	
	Tircreven	6	
	Total	4266	10
NNR	Altikeeragh	180	
	Binevenagh	69	
	Roe Estuary	433	
	Ballymaclary	144	
	Magilligan Point	39	
	Total	866	5
Ramsar	Lough Foyle	2204	
	Total	2204	1
SAC	Magilligan	1058	
	Bann Estuary	348	
	Binevenagh	91	
	River Roe and Tributaries	408	
	Total	1905	4
SPA	Lough Foyle	2204	
	Total	2204	1

Table 5 Natural Heritage Designations

Woodland classification	Area (ha)
Ancient Woodland	44.5
Long-established woodland	37.1
Lost	19

Table 6 Non-Designated Natural Heritage

Designation	Type	Number	Area (ha)
Scheduled Monuments (with protection)	Listed	33	N/A
	Proposed for Scheduling	1	N/A
	Scheduled	30	N/A
	State Care	1	N/A
	Total	65	N/A

Listed Buildings	A	8	N/A
	B	7	N/A
	B+	18	N/A
	B1	53	N/A
	B2	37	N/A
	Total	123	N/A

Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesne Register	Drenagh	N/A	218.31
	Bellarena	N/A	77.61
	Downhill	N/A	96.13
	Ardnargle	N/A	15.10
	Walworth	N/A	2.49
	Total	N/A	409.65

Scheduled zone	Church	1	0.21
	Sweat house	1	0.01
	Wedge Tomb	1	0.12
	Rath	9	2.34
	Defensive Earthwork	1	1.52
	Walworth, Plantation Village Site	1	1.56
	Tamlaghtard Church, saints grave and holy well	1	0.02
	Prehistoric sandhills settlement site	1	2.11

	Mound	1	0.63
	Rock's fortification: Giant's Sconce	1	1.03
	Enclosure	1	0.82
	World War II training dome	1	0.08
	Motte and bailey	1	0.28
	Church site and cross-carved stone: Church Hill	1	2.00
	Cairn and enclosure	1	0.14
	Sand Dune system containing archaeological remains	2	74.08
	Ecclesiastical site 'Dunboe'	2	4.28
	Heavy anti-aircraft battery	1	3.80
	WWII Pillbox	1	0.01
	Mole & Railway Bridge	1	2.33
	Total	30	97.36

Table 5 Built Heritage Designations

The Future of Outdoor Recreation in Binevenagh & the Coastal Lowlands - Have Your Say



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

WHEN: MONDAY 24TH APRIL 7PM - 9PM

WHERE: HEZLETT PRIMARY SCHOOL, CASTLEROCK

OR

WHEN: TUESDAY 25TH APRIL 7PM-9PM

WHERE: BALLYKELLY PRIMARY SCHOOL, BALLYKELLY

Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is carrying out an Outdoor Recreation, Open Space and Access Audit for the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Area. All members of the local community are invited to attend the public consultation to share their views and opinions on the current and future outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities in the area.

To confirm your attendance contact Duane Fitzsimons on 028 9030 3930 or email duane@outdoorrecreationni.com



8.3 Appendix 2 - Individual Consultees

Consultee	Organisation
Mark Strong	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Richard Gillen	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Andrew Bratton & Colleagues	CCGHT
Aghanloo Community Association	Aghanloo Community Association
Castlerock Community Association	Castlerock Community Association
Barry Crawford	National Trust
Gemma Reid	Quarto Collective Consulting
Alison Morris	Alison Morris Consulting
Mark Parker	FSNI
Mike McClure	SportNI
Louise McSparran	Carrowmena Activity Centre
Roisin McDaid	Foylehove Activity Centre
Hazel Patterson	Crindle Stables and Activity Centre
Gabrielle Doherty	Hill Farm Riding Centre
Willie Ward	Adventure North West
Charlie Reid	NI Orienteering
Stephen Gilmore	NorthWest Orienteering
Gareth Moore	Xplore Outdoors
Michael Crozier	Out and About Hikers
Ivan Park	Causeway Coast Adventure Racing
Ivan Goldsworthy	Bann Wheelers Cycling Club
Emma Scott	Roe Valley Cycling Club
Wesley Jameson	Segway NI
Laurence McBride	Far and Wild
Elizabeth Gibson	Bushmills Outdoor Education Centre
George Brien	Blowkartfun
Pat Letters	Blowkart World
Matt Wright	Causeway Coasteering
Zoe Stephenson	Coasteering NI
Colm Higgins	Ravel Ramblers
Emma Kerr	Friends Hiking Group

Deirdre Macbride	Wee Binnians
Kieran Drayne	Foggies
John Hanna	Lecale Ramblers
Neal Lynch	Red Duck Diving
Hanno Windisch	Alive Surf School
John Bustard	Surf SUPNI
Tony Dunlop	North Coast Sailing
Carl Russell	Troggs Surf School
Dan Lavery	Long Line Surf School
Richard Lavery	Aquaholics Dive Centre and Sea Safari's
Peter Boston	Boy Matthew Sea Angling
Phil Barron	Ulster paragliding and Paragliding Club
Jim Rainey	Cloud Surfer Ireland
Stephen Johnston	Ulster Gliding Club

Table 7 List of Consultees