



August 21st, 2023

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on Monday, 21st August 2023 at 6:00 pm in Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre & MS Teams.

Committee Membership 2023 - 2024

Councillor R Howell **Chairperson**

Councillor O Magennis **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor L Devlin

Councillor D Finn

Councillor A Finnegan

Councillor C Galbraith

Councillor M Gibbons

Councillor J Jackson

Councillor D Lee-Surginor

Councillor A Lewis

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor A McMurray

Councillor D Murphy

Councillor K Murphy

Councillor S O'Hare

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

2.0 Declarations of Interest

3.0 Action Sheet arising from Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2023

For Information

 *AHC Action Sheet 21st August 2023 - PT 15.8.23.pdf*

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4.0 Active and Healthy Communities Revised Terms of Reference

For Decision

 *AHC - AHC Committee Terms of Reference 2023-2027.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 AHC Committee Terms of Reference.pdf*

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Presentations

5.0 Presentation - Community Trails Outdoor Recreation NI

Representatives from Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland will be attendance at meeting.

For Discussion/Decision - Open Session

6.0 Community Trails Update

For Decision

 *AHC Report - Community Trails Update.pdf*


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 *Appendix 3 Review of Sea Swimming at Newcastle Harbour.pdf*

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 *Appendix 2 NMDDC Beach Access Framework.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 NMDDC Prioritisation of Community Trails Development.pdf*

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7.0 Community Trails - Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland Service Level Agreement 2023/24

For Decision

 *AHC Report - ORNI SLA 2023 -24 August 2023.pdf*

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 *Appendix 1 - ORNI SLA 2023 - 24.pdf*

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8.0 Notice of Motion - Inclusive and Accessible Leisure Facilities

[AHC - Notice of Motion Inclusive and Accessible Leisure Facilities.pdf](#)

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9.0 Leisure Closure Days

For Decision

[AHC - Leisure Closure Arrangements 2023-24.pdf](#)

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[Appendix 1 - Leisure Clousre Arrangements 2023-24.pdf](#)

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16.0 Expressions of Interest - Leasing of Council Land

For Decision

[AHC - Leasing of Council Land - Expression of Interest.pdf](#)

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Community Engagement

17.0 Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Update Report

For Decision

[CCH update report for AHC August 2023.pdf](#)

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[Appendix CCH meeting 21 June 2023.pdf](#)

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[Appendix CCH meeting 19 July 2023.pdf](#)

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18.0 Additional Funding from Department for Communities (DfC) for Frontline Advice Services

For Decision

[Additional DfC Funding for Frontline Advice Services Report for AHC Committee Meeting 21.8.2023.pdf](#)

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[Appendix 1 Annex 5 from DfC Letter of Offer for Additional Funding for Advice Services 8.7.2023.pdf](#)

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For Discussion/Decision - Open Session

10.0 District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums Update Report including Appointment of Independent Members to DEA Forums

For Information

[DEA Fora report AHC Committee August 2023.pdf](#)

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[Appendix1 DEA Forum report August 2023 V2.pdf](#)

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(i) Appointment of Independent Members to DEA Forums

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

📄 ***Report on Assessment Panel for Recruitment of Independent Members for DEA Forums.pdf*** ***Not included***

11.0 Leisure Maintenance and Servicing Contracts

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

📄 ***AHC - Maintenance and Servicing Contracts.pdf*** ***Not included***

12.0 Fitness Equipment Maintenance and Servicing - Public Tender

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.


📄 ***AHC - Fitness Equipment Maintenance and Servicing - Public Tender.pdf*** ***Not included***

📄 ***Appendix 1 - Fitness Equipment Maintenance Servicing and Software Upgrade - Business Case.pdf*** ***Not included***

13.0 Programme Delivery Partner

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **AHC - Programme Delivery Partner.pdf**

Not included

14.0 Procurement of Metal Fabrications

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **AHC - Procurement of Metal Fabrication.pdf**

Not included

15.0 Newcastle Centre - External Painting

For Decision

This item is deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

 **AHC - Newcastle Centre External Painting.pdf**

Not included

 **Appendix 1 - Business Case Newcastle External Painting.pdf**

Not included

For Noting - Community Engagement

19.0 Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Report

For Information

 **01 August 2023 PCSP Report for August AHC meeting.pdf**

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 **Appendix FINAL PCSP Policing Committee Minutes 28 March 2023.pdf**

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20.0 Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Report

For Information

 **Newry NRP Report for August 2023 AHC Committee_.pdf**

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 **Appendix Minutes of Newry NRP partnership mtg 24 May 23 for AHC August 2023.pdf**

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21.0 Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Report

For Information

 *Downpatrick NR Report for August 2023.pdf*


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 *Appendix Action Sheet Downpatrick NR Mar 2023 for AHC August 2023.pdf*

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22.0 Letter of Offer for Areas of Risk 2023/24

For Information

 *AHC Report Areas at Risk 23 24 Bessbrook Crossmaglen.pdf*

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ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM PREVIOUS ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES MEETINGS

1

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014					
A171/2021	Business Case – Minor Works Scheme at Cloughreagh Community Centre	<p>It was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the business case as attached to the officer's report for the upgrade work at Cloughreagh Community Centre; Approve to procure and appoint a consultant to complete a survey, including a bill of quantities; Approve to appoint and procure a contractor to carry out the necessary works. 	J Hillen	Drawings are being completed by the estates department for upgrades in relation to DDA accessibility. When complete an updated business case will be provided to Council for consideration and forwarded to SFWG for consideration.	N
AHC/220/2021	Lease of commercial space at the McGrath Centre	It was agreed that as per the Acquisition and Disposal of Land Procedure to approve the use of an Agent to market and lease the commercial ground floor space at the McGrath Centre, Newry.	J Hillen	Lease complete	Y
AHC/234/2021	No 16 the Square, Rostrevor	It was agreed to note the contents of section 2.7 of the officer's report.	J Hillen	Project complete except for snag list	Y

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

AHC/081/2022	Down High School Lights and 3G Pitch	It was agreed to approve the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To progress a planning application for enhanced sports facilities at Down High School as per 2.1 of the officer's report. To approve a budget spend as outlined in section 4.1 of the officer's report. 	P Tamati	On going PAD meeting pending.	N
AHC/096/2022	Dunleath Park Enhancement	It was agreed to establish a skate park and pump track at Dunleath Park as part of a phase 1 development as per the budget outlined in 4.1 of the officer's report.	P Tamati	On going – Levelling Up application unsuccessful. Scoping for funding through DFC Living High Street being explored.	N
AHC/156/2022	Warrenpoint Community Centre	It was agreed to note the report and associated appendices and approve the project moving to the next stage namely RIBA Stage 3, to secure full planning approval, commence the IST and PQQ process to identify suitably qualified Design & Build Contractors.	J Hillen	Ongoing First project governance meeting took place on 24 th January 2023 and it was agreed that the building would be known as the Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Hub. Planning approval submitted. PEACE PLUS 1.4 application being submitted closing date 7 th Sept 2023.	N
AHC/200/2022	Newry Leisure Centre Swimming Pool	It was agreed to note the contents of the report and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newry Leisure Centre Swimming Pool would not close in December 2022. Officers would continue to work with the original project team and contractors to determine a programme for closure of Newry Leisure Centre swimming pool, prioritising minimal disruption to service users. 	P Tamati	Ongoing, report tabled at August SPR Committee.	N

AHC/010/2023	Upgrade works at Barcroft and Three Ways Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A future report to Council would be tabled to seek approval for closure arrangements of Newry Leisure Centre swimming pool. <p>It was agreed to note the content of the report and approve the appointment of the preferred bidder to carryout upgrade works at Barcroft and Three Ways Community Centres subject to contract and completion of due diligence checks.</p>	J Hillen	Complete.	Y
AHC/023/2023	Lisnacree Community Centre – Removal of Lease	<p>It was agreed to approve the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept Lisnacree Community Association's letter and formally thank the Association for the work they have done over the last 25 years. The termination of the lease between NMDDC and the Diocese of Down for Lisnacree Community Centre 	J Hillen	Legal formalities currently being completed.	Y
AHC/024/2023	Expression of interest for the Market House, Ballynahinch	<p>It was agreed to approve the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly advertise a lease for the whole Market House, Ballynahinch SP&R to consider issue of lease following public process by TDK Officers to seek legal advice regarding adding social value criteria when considering expressions of interest. 	J Hillen	EOI complete and assessed, Lease agreement being drafted by Legal.	Y
AHC/025/2023	Reconfiguration of Ballynahinch Community Centre – RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design Additional Costs	<p>It was agreed to approve the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve, in principle, the additional spend (detailed in 2.1) on Base Cost Estimate as per Consultants RIBA Stage 2 Report within 2023/2024 capital rates estimates, subject to clarification from Estates department regarding the requirement for 10 additional carparking spaces. Approve an additional spend (detailed in 2.2) if required as a Risk Allowance Estimate as per Consultants RIBA Stage 2 Report within 2023/2024 capital rates estimates. 	J Hillen	Estates Team progressing Planning Application	Y

AHC/026/2023	Donard Park – Artificial Pitch Upgrade	<p>It was agreed to approve the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To progress the appointment of an integrated design team for the upgrade of the Donard Park Artificial Surface. • To progress with the procurement and appointment of a contractor for this project on completion of integrated design team works, subject to appropriate budget provision. • To approve the business case for this project as per appendix 2. 	P Tamati	<p>Ongoing – Consultant team appointed to progress Planning Application.</p> <p>Funding application submitted to the DCMS IFA funding stream.</p>	N
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Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
AHC/007/2023	Community Consultation for Community Facilities Strategy	It was agreed subject to approval of the draft strategy at CMT and SMT that a public consultation be progressed in due course.	J Hillen	Amended copy of draft consultation is with Facilities Department for review before completing the internal approvals process (CMT/SMT).	N
AHC/038/2023	Rural Dial-a-Lift Transport issue tabled at the request of Councillor Sharvin	It was agreed to call on the Council to write to Department of Infrastructure to provide the financial security needed for local community transport organisations i.e. Down Community Transport and Newry and Mourne Community Transport to enable them to provide the vital service to our community particularly the rural communities across the District.	J Hillen	Letter issued. Formal response received 15 th August outlining that Dial-a-Lift services delivered by the Rural Community Transport providers will be funded from 1 st August 2023-31 st March 2024 at 95% of current allocation for April and July.	Y

ACTIONS ARISING FROM ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 JUNE 2023

6

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
AHC/049/2023	Action sheet Committee Meeting held on Monday 20 March 2023	The action sheet from the Committee Meeting held on 20 March 2023 was noted. AHC/171/2021: <i>Minor Works Scheme at Cloughrea Community Centre</i> In response for an update from Councillor D Murphy regarding Cloughrea Community Centre, Mrs Hillen undertook to provide more detail for Councillor Murphy. AHC/010/2023: <i>Upgrade Works at Barcroft and Three Ways Community Centre</i> Councillor Mathers voiced concern at the delays for the Community Centre and requested an urgent update be provided to the Community Association committee members with a clear timeline for the completion of works. Mrs Hillen advised that she would ensure a full update would be provided to the Community Association and Councillor Mathers. AHC/096/2022: <i>Dunleath Park Enhancement</i> Councillor Sharvin enquired if there had been any update given that the application for the levelling up fund had been unsuccessful. Mrs Hillen advised she would ask Mr Tamati to provide a full update through the Downpatrick DEA on his return. AHC/200/2022: <i>Newry Leisure Centre Swimming Pool</i> In response for an update on work to the Newry Leisure Centre swimming pool from Councillor Finn, Mrs Hillen advised she would ensure Mr Tamati would provide a detailed response to her on his return.	All J Hillen J Hillen P Tamati P Tamati	Drawings are being completed by the Estates Department in relation to upgrades for DDA accessibility. When complete an updated Business Case will be forwarded to SFWG and Council for consideration and approval. Works are complete and the building has been handed back to the Community Association. Update provided to Downpatrick DEA Councillors. See minute ref above AHC/096/2022 Reports tabled at August 2023 SPR Committee.	N Y Y Y

AHC/05/0/2023	AHC Terms of Reference	It was agreed to adopt the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Terms of Reference as detailed within appendix 1 of the officer's report.	All	Noted	Y
AHC/05/1/2023	To agree start time for AHC Committee Meetings 2023/24	It was agreed that the start time for AHC Committee Meetings 2023/24 will be 6.00 pm.	Democratic Services All	Noted	Y
AHC/05/3/2023	Notice of Motion, Inclusive and Accessible Leisure Facilities	It was agreed to note that further scoping work was required in relation to this Notice of Motion and once completed a report would be tabled for consideration.	P Tamati	Reports to be tabled at August AHC Committee	N
AHC/05/4/2023	Active and Healthy Communities Directorate Annual Assessment of Business Plans	It was agreed to approve the assessment of the AHC Directorate Business Plan 2022-23 and the AHC Directorate Business Plan 2023-24.	All	Noted	Y
AHC/05/5/2023	District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums Update Report	It was agreed to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mournes DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 26 March 2023. • Slieve Gullion DEA Forum Ad Hoc Meeting held on Monday 4 April 2023. 	J Hillen	All DEA Action Sheets being actioned accordingly.	Y

AHC/056/2023	Community Coordination Hub Update	It was agreed to note the report and approve the actions in the Action Sheet attached for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on Wednesday 15 March 2023. Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on Wednesday 19 April 2023. Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on Wednesday 17 May 2023. 	J Hillen	Noted.	Y
AHC/057/2023	Reconfiguration of Ballynahinch Community Centre, RIBA Stage 7	It was agreed to proceed to RIBA Stage 7 Detailed Design to Construction Phase and Handover.	J Hillen		
AHC/058/2023	Financial Assistance	It was agreed to approve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the appendices attached to the officer's report for revenue and capital projects and issue letter of offers post Council ratification and Call in. Pre-letter of offer conditions met prior to issue of full letter of offer issued and where this is not satisfied budget to be re-allocated. Overall allocation for Sports Capital Major and Minor – for major capital one was successful, for minor capital one was successful with the remaining budget allocation going to Minor Capital items bringing the total amount of projects awarded to 12 (moving into the scored and ranked). The total allocation of £275,000 from the sports budget as per rates. Appeal panel recommendation to fund application 3568 for £1500 from the Community Engagement theme. EGMS – procurement of a new online grants management system. 	J Hillen B Rankin	Letters of offer and letters with conditions have been issued. Letter to applicant 3568 issued. Commencement of procurement for new EGMS supplier.	Y
AHC/067/2023	Policing and Community Safety Partnership	It was agreed to note the report and the following Policing Committee and PCSP minutes: Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on Tuesday 31 January 2023, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on Tuesday 28 March 2023.	J Hillen	Noted.	Y

AHC/068/2023	Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	It was agreed to note the report and the following Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of Newry NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 18 January 2023, approved at Newry NRP meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023. Minutes of Newry NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023, approved at Newry NRP meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2023. 	J Hillen	Noted.	Y
AHC/069/2023	Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership	It was agreed to note the report and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of Downpatrick NRP Meeting held on Tuesday 29 November 2022, approved at Downpatrick NRP meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023. The Downpatrick NRP Action Plan for 2019-2022 (updated November 2022). 	J Hillen	Noted.	Y
AHC/077/2023	Summer Activity Programme	It was agreed to note the planned Summer Activity Programme for July and August 2023 as per appendix 1 of the officer's report.	P Tamati	Noted.	Y

ITEMS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 1 OF SCHEDULE 6 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (NI) 2014

AHC/065/2023	Ballstop requirements at Castlewellan Community Centre 3G	It was agreed to approve an additional spend as outlined within the officer's report and the procurement of option 2 and install a Skynet at the 3G Pitch Castlewellan.	J Hillen	Procurement complete. Currently awaiting Planning approval.	Y
AHC/066/2023	Provision of swimming pool maintenance and servicing	It was agreed to approve the additional spend outlined within the officer's report for Swimming Pool Plants maintenance and Servicing and for Swimming Pool Moving Floor maintenance and servicing.	P Tamati	Agreed.	Y

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities (AHC) Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 st August 2023
Subject:	AHC Committee Terms of Reference 2023-2027
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			<p>The purpose of this report is for AHC Committee to consider and agree to adopt the recommendations as detailed in section 3.0 of this report.</p> <p>Although a Terms of Reference for AHC committee were considered and agreed in June 2023, changes in Committee remits for SP&R, ERT and SE have been agreed in line with the new structures at Assistant Director Level.</p>
2.0			Key issues
2.1			To ensure AHC Committee Terms of Reference are up to date and aligned with the new structures at Assistant Director level, these have been revised and some adjustments proposed. The revised Terms of Reference for this committee has removed references to environmental health and the programmes unit with any additions highlighted in red as per appendix 1.
3.0			Recommendations
3.1			That AHC Committee consider agree to adopt the proposed changes of AHC Committee Terms of Reference as detailed in appendix 1.
4.0			Resource implications
4.1			<p>Revenue: There are no revenue budget implications associated with this report.</p> <p>Capital: There are no capital budget implications associated with this report.</p>
5.0			Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1			<i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i>

	It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>	
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)	
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
7.0	Appendices	
	Appendix 1: Active and Healthy Communities Committee Terms of Reference	
8.0	Background Documents	

	None
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ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

-TERMS OF REFERENCE-

Scope

The **Active and Healthy Communities Committee** ("the Committee") will be responsible for improving the health, wellbeing and social cohesiveness of the District's communities.

Responsibilities

- Lead on the improvement of health outcomes and the facilitation of healthy lifestyles through leisure and sporting provision and through health promotion and prevention policies.
- **Responsible for the development, monitoring and implementation of the Community Plan.**
- Tackle disadvantage and building active, engaged and responsible citizenship through the provision and support of community services, facilities and events.
- Implementation of the Council's Good Relations programmes.
- Improving social and community cohesion through effective community relations.
- Managing and overseeing local structures for Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP).
- Lead the development, implementation and ongoing management of the 7 District Electoral Area (DEA) Fora.
- Lead on the development and implementation of suitable strategies, policies and programmes for community health, wellbeing and social cohesiveness.
- Ensure the design and delivery of Council functions and services are accessible to all citizens.
- Responsible for sports development, including leisure and sporting programmes and facilities.
- Responsible for parks and open spaces, including playing fields and playgrounds.
- Leading on issues relating to outdoor recreation.

- Responsible for the management and implementation of projects linked to Social Inclusion and Social Investment Fund.
- The effective stewardship of delegated responsibilities for the District's resources and assets (financial, people and property based) for well-being, social cohesiveness community engagement and leisure.

Membership

The Committee is comprised of fifteen (15) Elected Members appointed to the Committee at the Council's Annual Meeting.

Quorum

No business shall be transacted unless at least 4 Members are present.

Chairperson

The Committee Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson shall be appointed at the Council's Annual Meeting in accordance with the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

Meetings

All meetings of the Committee shall be governed by the Council's Standing Orders and the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors. A timetable of meetings shall be agreed annually by the Council.

Sub-Committee and Working Groups

The Committee has the power to establish and appoint any number of Sub-Committees, Task and Finish Working Groups, Project Boards and Forums, as are necessary to consider in more detail the work of the Committee.

Communications and Reporting

The Minutes of the Committee shall be tabled at each meeting of the Council, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Declarations of Interest

A Declaration of Interests Register will be kept for all Committee Members. Each Member should take responsibility to declare proactively any potential conflict of interest arising out of business undertaken by the Council.

Council Task and Finish Working Groups/Project Boards/Forums

Reporting Arrangements

	Committees			
	AHC	ERT	S&E	SPR
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Sub-Group/PCSP	√			
Bonfire Sub-Group/PCSP	√			
Camlough Lake Task and Finish Working Group		√		
Castlewellan Forest Park Project Board		√		
Chief Executive Appraisal Group				√
Church Street Downpatrick Revitalization Steering Group		√		
Downpatrick Regeneration Project		√		
Economic Forum		√		
Elected Member Development Working Group				√
Equality and Good Relations Reference Group				√
Health Forum	√			
Forkhill former Barricks Task and Finish Project Steering Group		√		
Irish Language Strategy Working Group				√
Local Development Plan Steering Group		√		
Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark Management Group		√		
New Ireland Working Group				√
Newry City Centre Regeneration Project Board		√		
Newry and Mourne Travellers Forum	√			
Peace Plus Partnership		√		
Planning Call-in Panel/Planning Committee		√		
Ring of Gullion Landscape Partnership		√		
Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership		√		
Strategic Finance Working Group				√
Sustainability and Environment Working Group			√	
Warrenpoint Front Shore Public Realm Working Group		√		
Womens Working Group				√
Warrenpoint Health and Wellbeing Hub Working Group	√			
Community Coordination Hub	√			

Summary of AHC Terms of Reference Changes

Change	Explanation
Lead on the development and implementation of suitable strategies, policies and programmes for environmental protection and management, sustainability and climate change; energy management, biodiversity and environmental education	Remove – transfers to Terms of Reference for Sustainability and Environment
Provision of environmental health services, including public health and safety	Remove – transfers to Terms of Reference for Sustainability and Environment
Responsible for the development, monitoring and implementation of the Community Plan	Add in – removed from Terms of Reference for Strategy, Policy & Resources
And development of the financial assistance programme	Remove – transfer to Terms of Reference for Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Peace IV European Commission project and other European	Remove – future proofing funding sources
Environmental protection and services	Remove – transfers to Terms of Reference for Sustainability and Environment
Peace Plus Partnership	Reports to Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership	Reports to Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism

Report to:	Active Health and Communities Committee (AHC)
Date of Meeting:	21 st August 2023
Subject:	Community Trails - Update
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

	For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0	Purpose and Background			
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is for AHC Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider Outdoor Recreation NI's (ORNI) presentation on the 2022/23 SLA. • Agree Community Trail Development Priorities as per appendix 1. • Agree the NMDDC Beach Access Framework as per Appendix 2. • Agree the Review of Sea Swimming at Newcastle Harbour as per appendix 3. <p>In 2022/23 NMDDC agreed to enter into an SLA with ORNI to progress the development of community trails across the district and also to complete strategic work in the area of a Prioritisation Plan for Community Trails and a Review of Sea Swimming at the Newcastle Harbour.</p>			
2.0	Key issues			
2.1	<p>ORNI have now presented to AHC Committee the work they have completed on behalf of NMDDC via their SLA 2022/23 agreement. Officers are now seeking committee to agree the outcome of this work from the 2022/23 SLA as per the recommendation of this report.</p>			
3.0	Recommendations			
3.1	<p>That AHC Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider Outdoor Recreation NI's (ORNI) presentation on the 2022/23 SLA. • Agree Community Trail Development Priorities as per appendix 1. • Agree the NMDDC Beach Access Framework as per Appendix 2. • Agree the Review of Sea Swimming at Newcastle Harbour as per appendix 3. 			
4.0	Resource implications			
4.1	<p>Revenue/Payroll: There are no direct revenue budget implications associated with this report. All revenue budget implications are dealt with via the approval of specific SLA arrangement reports or project reports.</p>			

	<p>Capital: There are no direct Capital budget implications associated with this report. All Capital budget implications are dealt with via the approval of specific SLA arrangement reports or project reports.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	<p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1: Prioritisation of Community Trail Developments Appendix 2: NMDDC Beach Access Framework Appendix 3: The Review of Sea Swimming at Newcastle Harbour</p>
8.0	Background Documents
	None

A Review of Sea Swimming at Newcastle Harbour

March 2023

Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI
On behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council



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MAP OF NEWCASTLE HARBOUR



Fig. 1: Map of Newcastle Harbour

1 INTRODUCTION

In August 2022, Outdoor Recreation NI was appointed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council to undertake a review of sea swimming at Newcastle Harbour. This was in response to safety concerns and requests from the local sea swimming community for minor infrastructure that would improve the safety and experience, such as drying hooks, seating, depth markers, etc.

The Review sought to 'assess current sea swimming at Newcastle Harbour and explore opportunities for improvement' through delivering the following objectives –

1. Clarifying land ownership at the Harbour
2. Clarifying the needs or 'wants' of the sea swimming community
3. Understanding the ability of the Council to fulfil these 'wants'
4. Identifying any issues associated with sea swimming from both a participant and land manager perspective
5. Identifying potential solutions to address these issues based on industry guidance and comparable examples of good practice

This report details the findings of the Review.

2 WHY IS THIS REVIEW NEEDED?

In March 2022, local SDLP Councillor Laura Devlin requested that the Council undertake a study to review how access to the water at Newcastle Harbour could be improved for sea swimmers. This request was made on behalf of sea swimmers who regularly use Newcastle Harbour. At the same time, there was growing safety concerns relating to the volume, congestion and associated incidents of user conflict arising from the intense use of Slipway B that runs parallel to the north pier wall (see Fig. 1).

Swimming is not the only activity that the Harbour supports, but it is arguably one of the most popular activities with the greatest volume of participants. Slipway B is the preferred slipway of the majority of water users at the Harbour, not just swimmers. This Review seeks to better understand how and why this particular slipway is preferred by all users and establish if there is an alternative access point, or a way to reduce the safety risks and better manage the use of Slipway B.

Leading up to this Review, pressure on the Council to address the safety concerns and 'do something' for swimmers was mounting. The Council however is not the landowner of Slipway B and is therefore

without the permission of the landowner, not legally able to physically install any infrastructure on, or impose any change on it. This Review is therefore needed to clarify land ownership at the Harbour and understand the ability of Council to improve safety at the Harbour and fulfil the requests of sea swimmers for a safer and better experience.



Fig. 2: Newcastle Harbour²

Lastly, in line with national trends, the popularity of swimming and other water-based activities has grown significantly since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. This has unsurprisingly led to increased pressure on small, local sites like Newcastle Harbour and given rise to related visitor management issues such as overcrowding, congestion (people and traffic) and safety risks both on and off the water.

² Source:

<https://marinas.com/view/marina/g9cpjx-Newcastle-Harbour-Newcastle-NI-United-Kingdom#&gid=1&pid=3>

Recreation trends forecast that the popularity of open water swimming and water activities is set to grow, meaning the issues at Newcastle Harbour are likely to continue, and get worse, if unaddressed.

In light of this future forecast, this Review is needed to initiate steps towards a change. By exploring potential solutions at comparable sites, it is hoped that this Review can make suggestions for improving the safety and experience for both swimmers and land managers.

These suggestions will be made with the intention that they benefit all and do not impinge on one activity or party at the cost of another, because as outlined in the new Conservation Management Plan, the best way to protect Newcastle Harbour is to keep it functioning as a Harbour, and all water-based activities, including boating² are essential to that.

² Refers to all boating activities, motorised and non-motorised, including but not limited to sailing, fishing, cruising, canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, etc.

3 LAND OWNERSHIP

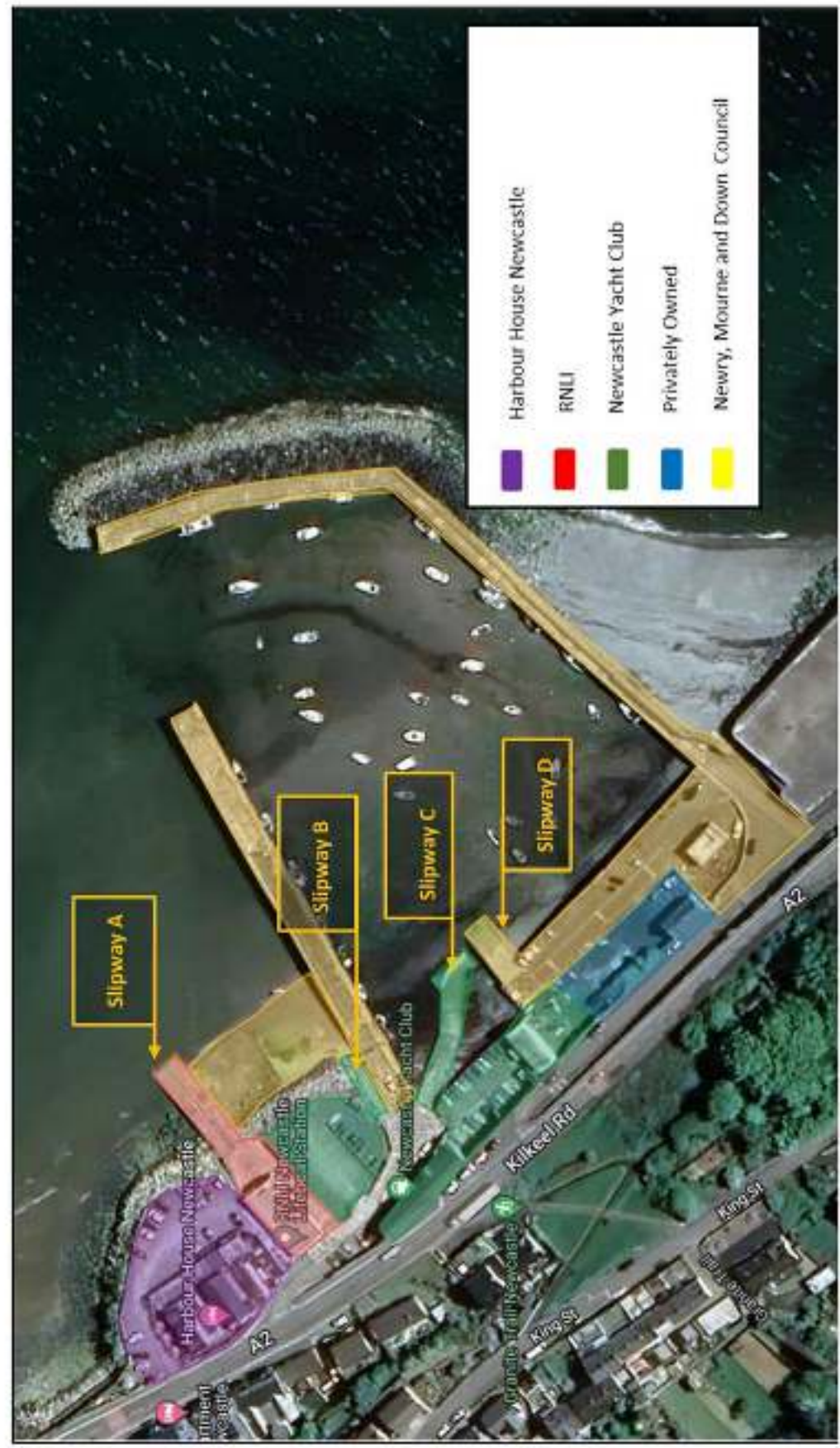


Fig. 3: Map of Land Ownership

The Harbour area is split into areas managed by six different owners –

1. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
2. Newcastle Yacht Club
3. RNLI
4. Dept. for Infrastructure
5. Private landowner
6. Harbour House Inn/South Prom

Fig. 3 and the following outlines the features and ownership extent of each:

3.1 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

The Council owns and manages the largest portion of land at the Harbour including the –

- Piers (north and south walls)
- Inner Harbour area (and moorings) – leased from Crown Estate but managed by Council
- Harbour car park
- Former 'Generator House' (as of 2023, is leased to Newcastle Harbour Heritage Association)
- 'Slipway D' - 1 of 4 slipways entering directly into the Harbour
- Apron of 'Slipway B'

3.2 Newcastle Yacht Club

The Yacht Club is the second largest landowner. It owns –

- Slipway B – top portion
- Slipway C – leased to the Council for maintenance
- Club House building
- 2x boat storage yards
- Car park
- Former RNLI station house

The Club House facilities are open when racing is on - Thursday evenings from May to September and Sunday afternoons from April to November. For Associate members, the club facilities are open 9am to 12noon.

The Yacht Club does not have any access control measures in place for either Slipway B or C. It does, however, control access to its car park via a padlocked gate.

3.3 RNLI

The RNLI own the station house, immediate surrounding area and their own dedicated slipway. Planning has been granted planning to upgrade the current station to house a new, larger Shannon class lifeboat. Commencement of work is pending.

3.4 Dept. for Infrastructure (Dfi)

Dfi has adopted the road leading down to the Yacht Club and north pier from the A2 Kilkeel Road. They are responsible for managing and enforcing the parking regulations in this area. Currently, there is no form of traffic flow management or signage to inform drivers of direction and/or dead ends. Parking is ad-hoc which often leads to congestion on busy days. In response to the parking issues, Dfi have plans to demarcate the parking and no-parking zones in this area to facilitate more efficient and emergency access – see Fig. 4.

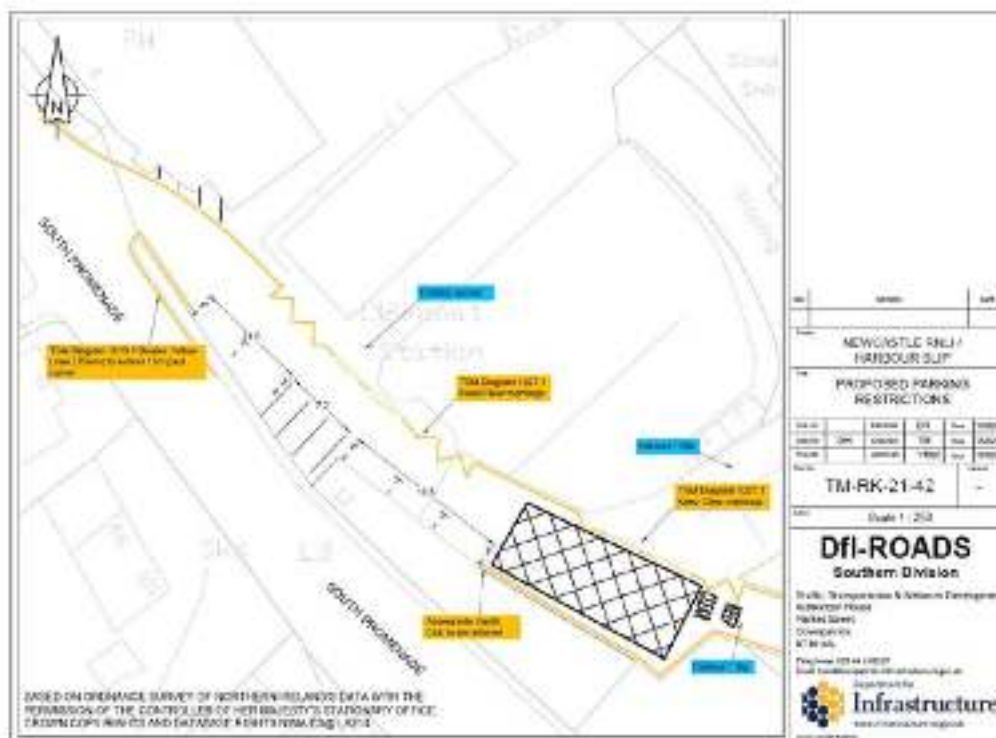


Fig. 4: North Pier Parking Proposals

3.5 Private Landowner

The Watch House and area surrounding is demarcated by railings indicating the extent of land under private ownership. Boats are stored in this area, the arrangement for which is unknown.

3.6 Harbour House Inn & South Prom

The Harbour House Inn provides food and bar facilities and accommodation, while the South Prom is a coffee house and café. There is dedicated parking for patrons to the rear. During winter months the South Prom provides hot water bottles and free coffee refills for swimmers.

4 KEY FINDINGS

Theme	Findings
<p>Access to the Sea at Newcastle Harbour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcastle Harbour is a prime location for coastal access for all water recreation users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is easily accessible from the road ○ Sea is easily accessible from multiple locations but particularly Slipway B ○ Exudes a perception of safety – other people around and close to RNLI ○ There is ample parking, both formal and informal (albeit unmanaged) • Visibility – it is highly visible from the road and on busy days, the volume of people can act as a attractor to those passing by • Newcastle Harbour is already a popular venue for a variety of water-based activities besides sea swimming including sailing, fishing, boat cruising and paddle sports (SUP'ing, canoeing, etc). • Despite being rich in access points, not all are desirable for water recreation users, e.g. when the Harbour is dry, Slipway C is too steep and enters into the Harbour, not the sea • Slipway B is the preferred Slipway because – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is accessible all the time ○ There is parking immediately beside it ○ Sheltered – less exposed to prevailing southerly winds therefore calmer sea state ○ Social aspect – ‘that’s where everyone goes’ ○ More accessible slip – concreted, gentle gradient, Harbour wall for support ○ Perception of safety – other people present and RNLI nearby ○ Harbour wall and distance buoys provide ‘markers’ for swimmers, i.e. points to swim too and back, also allows for progression • Area immediately surrounding Yacht club and Slipway B seems to be the ‘hub’ of activity, especially on busy days

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parking immediately beside slipway – no need to walk far with recreation equipment, e.g. SUP's ○ Close to Harbour House Inn ○ Where the majority of activity and access to the sea takes place
<p>Sea Swimming at Newcastle Harbour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea swimming is a hugely popular activity with a long-established history at Newcastle Harbour • There are reportedly 30-40 swimmers every day • Strava Heatmaps (see Fig. 5) show that the pattern of swimmers is to stay within the sheltered area behind the Harbour wall or swim to the Rockpool and back <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To the Rockpool and back is approximately 1 mile and is a long-established 'swim' for many at Newcastle Harbour • Sea swimming is an informal, unsupervised and unmanaged activity at Newcastle Harbour • Preferred access for the majority of sea swimmers is Slipway B (see above for reasons) • There are reportedly two groups that organise meets on Facebook and WhatsApp but there is a wider community of regular swimmers, local and visitors, not members of these groups • The Yacht Club offers a non-associate membership which some swimmers avail of – it costs £55 per annum, the number of members is capped but it permits use of the car park and YC facilities for changing (when they are open between September and May) • Despite the popularity, there are no dedicated facilities such a changing area, benches or hooks (except those offered by the Yacht Club as above) • The majority of swimmers park at the Harbour, and congregate on the rock armouring and low wall skirting around Slipway B. • Sea swimming at Newcastle Harbour has the potential to bring many economic and social benefits to the wider Newcastle Harbour area, and Newcastle town
<p>Use of Slipway B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unfair to attribute safety concerns and congestion to sea swimmers only, Slipway B is the preferred slipway for all water recreation users and those wishing to access the sea.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slipway B is not always extremely congested with overcrowding and associated user conflict and safety concerns more prevalent at peak times, i.e. April/May to October, peak visitor season, periods of good weather and coinciding with boat launching and sailing seasons • Slipway B is a bottleneck • Incidences of user conflict on Slipway B have been reported and are growing, resulting in an atmosphere of ‘us and them’ between swimmers and boat launchers/sailors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>It is important to note here that people are not mutually exclusive, users of Newcastle Harbour can be and often are both members of the Yacht Club, sailors or boat owners AND sea swimmers</i> • There are legitimate safety concerns arising from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The intense use of Slipway B ○ The constrained space, i.e. bottleneck ○ The variety and volume of users at peak times using Slipway B to enter and exit the sea ○ The absence of any access control AND lack of management on Slipway B • The true issue is the intense use of Slipway B which is a constrained space; by a variety of water users; combined with a lack of management or regulation at popular times of the year (typically April to October)
<p>Management of Slipway B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yacht Club do not seem to manage or regulate access to either of its slipways, creating a free-for-all situation on Slipway B at peak times of the year • There is no code of conduct or etiquette for the slipway, i.e. who has right of way? What is the procedure when boats are launching? • This can lead to user-conflict not helped by a lack of awareness and clarity regarding ownership and who has priority of access, e.g. swimmers vs. sailors/boat owners • This is reportedly creating an ‘us and them’ perception which is not conducive to peaceful and effective shared use
<p>Management of the Harbour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Harbour is a mosaic of different landowners each with their own management remit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council-owned areas are disconnected • The Yacht Club owns Slipway B while the Council own the apron at the end of the slip extending into the sea and skirting around the rock armoring • Despite the shared issues and overlapping of usage, there is no partnership approach to management of the Harbour
<p>Wants of Sea Swimmers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is reportedly high demand for minor infrastructure that would significantly improve the safety and experience for swimmers • The Sea Swimmers Survey³ identified that 'covered changing area' and 'hooks' were the two most popular requests – these are minor 'asks' in terms of cost and space required • Depth markers are also a popular request • Regardless of time spent in the water, swimmers need an area to change before and after swimming and tend to congregate on the rock armoring • It is important that this location is as close to the sea as possible, to make changing and getting warm a quick process • This 'congregation' on an active and narrow slipway may be deemed a safety hazard when boats are launching • At peak busy times, congregating may also exacerbate congestion increasing the chance of user conflict • There is a wish to see the safe swim sessions delivered by RNLI and Swim Ulster continued • Although there were over 80 responses to the online survey, there was a small turn out (13 in total) to the public consultation aimed at sea swimmers specifically⁴
<p>Council Ability to Deliver Improvements for Sea Swimmers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council does not have the power to install any infrastructure or equipment on another party's land that would enhance the safety and experience for sea swimmers, e.g. hooks, bench seating, etc • The Council <i>could</i> consider installing a changing shelter and hooks on their land but this is at the opposite side of the Harbour from Slipway B and therefore has reduced likelihood of use

³ See Appendix 3 for the Summary Report

⁴ See Appendix 2 for more information on methodology

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council provides options for funding for constituted groups – sea swimmers could apply for funding to develop a dedicated area for changing and hooks, but the applicant group needs to constitute and have the landowner’s permission
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is some concern around the water quality at Newcastle Harbour It is not a designated bathing site i.e. not monitored by DAERA It is close to the Wastewater Treatment Works – at the back shore there is a buoy which indicates the end of the outflow pipe
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is one of the most prominent issues at Newcastle Harbour The largest car parking area (owned by Council) is at the opposite side to where the greatest activity occurs Users tend to park closest to Slipway B, choosing to park on the roadside, or access road over the Council car park beside the Wastewater Treatment Works building There is no signage informing drivers of traffic flow or off-road parking areas
Visitor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No management of visitors/users or visitor flow - exacerbates the problem of congestion and overcrowding on busy days No signage directing people to car parking areas
Heritage Sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Harbour walls are a ‘scheduled monument’ – this will restrict what might be done or changed to the monument and within the scheduled zone of protection surrounding the monument HED will also be a statutory consultee on any proposals affecting or involving the monument

Table 1: Key Findings

The above highlights that sea swimming should not be viewed as the activity that is causing all the issues at Newcastle Harbour. Sea swimming can bring many benefits not just to the individual’s mental and physical health and wellbeing but also the wider local community and economy, in terms of sustaining businesses and attracting visitors.

The true issue is the intense use of Slipway B –

- Which is a narrow, constrained space;
- Used by a great volume and variety of water users;
- COMBINED with a lack of management or regulation;
- particularly at popular times of the year (typically April to October).

The rapid growth in sea swimming at Newcastle Harbour has exposed the above and arguably exacerbated the situation. In doing so, sea swimming has become the focus of attention when in reality the spotlight should be extended to incorporate the overall use and management of the Harbour as a whole.

Newcastle Harbour is a highly valued asset for the local community and town but it also has potential to be a key tourism attraction. The Council's last Tourism Strategy (2017-2021) identified 'signature access experiences at Newcastle' as 'catalyst projects and critical infrastructure' for 'Mourne Coastal Experience'⁵. The situation at Newcastle Harbour is so complicated that achieving any type of improvement or even progress towards the above Tourism Strategy vision, would not be possible under the current situation.

It is also not possible to simply 'fix' the Slipway B problems in isolation. A holistic approach is required looking at how the Harbour functions as a whole and setting out a plan for the management (and development if desired) of all elements - water access, parking, visitor information, safety, signage, etc - to serve the needs of all users.

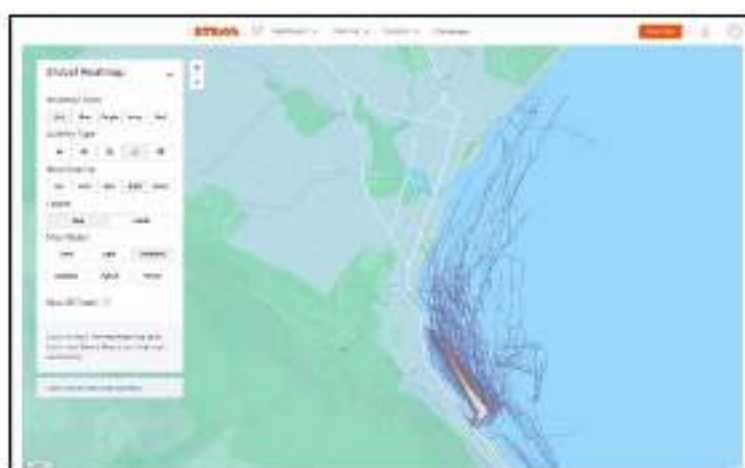


Fig. 5: Strava Heatmap showing swimming activity emanating from Newcastle Harbour

⁵ https://www.newrymournedown.org/media/uploads/nmd_tourism_strategy_20172022.pdf

5 LEARNINGS FROM ELSEWHERE

5.1 Who is a Swimmer?

In the context of open water swimming, a 'swimmer' is an encompassing term that includes –

- Established, competent outdoor swimmers (before it became on-trend)
- Competent indoor pool swimmers (seeking new places to swim)
- Novice outdoor swimmers (seeking new experiences)
- 'Sociable bobbers' (the ones with bobble hats)
- Winter swimmers (seeking a cold water high)
- Summer swimmers
- 'Dippers' (those who 'dip' or swim a very short distance; motivated by the cold water high rather than the physical activity of swimming)
- Paddlers (families) cooling off in hot weather

'Sea swimmers' come in all ages, abilities and competencies, and all can be seen at Newcastle Harbour; albeit some groups continuously throughout the year and some only present in the warmer months. This can be a concern for land managers – how to cater safely for everyone – but what it highlights is that Newcastle Harbour requires a wider strategy, policy or plan relating to water access for all water recreation users, not just 'swimmers'.

5.2 Industry Guidance

The following discussion and conclusions are based on key learnings drawn from a review of the following best practice guidance documents from leading industry organisations, namely:

- Visitor Safety Group: 'Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside: Principles and Practice'⁶
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents: 'Managing Safety at Inland Waters'⁷

5.2.1 UK Case Law

Sea swimming is not without its risks, however the liability on landowners seems to be a case of perception versus reality. In general terms, the majority of landowners appear to be averse to facilitating sea swimming at their sites. One of the primary reasons for this is fear of liability. UK case

⁶ <https://www.visitorsafety.group/>

⁷ <https://www.rospa.com/>

law demonstrates that landowners are unlikely to be liable if people swim in/off their land and are injured or drowned. From a liability point of view then, there is no reason why the Yacht Club or any other landowner should prohibit swimming.

Rather, the risks posed at Newcastle Harbour are not caused by sea swimming itself, they are related to the preferred use of one constrained slipway by all water recreation users, of which sea swimmers are one group. The safety concerns are therefore risks are borne out of –

- o Lack of management approach or policy relating to how the slipway should be used – by who, when and how.
- o Lack of regulated access – unfettered access to the sea can result in a free-for-all at peak times
- o Lack of enforcement – this goes hand in hand with absence of policy; there is no personnel enforcing the landowner's access/user policy
- o Lack of awareness and education – there is a lack of understanding and awareness amongst the majority regarding who owns what, and who has greater access rights, who has right of way, etc.

Only by acknowledging and addressing the above can the functioning, experience and safety of the Harbour be improved.

5.2.2 Determining Corporate Appetite and Management Approach

The management approach adopted by a landowner/manager is dependent on their corporate appetite for allowing access to the water for swimming or more generally water recreation.

The Visitor Safety Group (VSG) recognizes the following 'pathways' to managing open water access –

1. Unauthorised Access
2. Unmanaged Permitted Access
3. Responsible Access
4. Managed Access

With each of these approaches there are varying levels of intervention, ranging from minimal to advanced, depending on site-specific factors, namely –

- The type and location of the site, i.e. is it an undeveloped reservoir in rural uplands or is it a moderately developed harbour on the outskirts of a major town?

- Type of user/visitor and their expected level of skill, self-reliance and personal responsibility when undertaking outdoor activities
- The above should then determine the types and level of risk which require appropriate management intervention(s). The interrelationship between these factors is shown and explained in Fig. 6.

Newcastle Harbour, or Slipway B specifically, is likely to be a moderately developed venue with either minor or moderate management required.

The other key takeaways from Visitor Safety Group guidance is that –

- Access and freedom to explore the natural landscape should be protected and maintained – i.e. the experience of sea swimming should continue and not be sanitized
- It is important to strike a balance between user self-reliance and management intervention, i.e. on/in the water users are expected to take responsibility for themselves
 - On shore - at Newcastle Harbour - the safety risks associated with boat launching and overcrowding are high enough to warrant both physical measures to control access and policy interventions such as a water access policy and 'code of conduct or etiquette' for the slipway which all users sign up to
- Partnership – success is strongly dependent on engaging user groups and frequent swimmers to identify and work towards mutually beneficial management arrangements. Partnership is more likely to result in support and buy-in.
- Awareness raising – it is important to raise awareness through measures such as consultation and signage of the risks and the measures taken to address these.



Fig. 6: VSS Risk Control Spectrum

5.3 Local Case Studies

Outdoor Recreation NI undertook a series of one-to-one consultations with the two local authorities with the greatest stretch of coastline in Northern Ireland – Ards and North Down Borough Council and Causeway, Coast and Glens Borough Council – to understand how they manage sea swimming at their sites and their experience of different management interventions.

Comparable sites reviewed were – Portballintrae Harbour, Portrush Harbour, Donaghadee Harbour and Skippingstone Beach, Bangor.

The following management approaches were common across all sites:

- o Formal acknowledgement that swimming takes place
- o Partnership working – recognition that this is the best way to achieve success with both parties understanding each other's needs and motivations to work towards a mutually beneficial outcome
- o Acceptance to provide facilities and work with swimmers to accommodate their needs
- o Adoption of a formal management approach
- o Designation of a 'water recreation zone' (see Fig.8)
- o Segregation of swimmers; some with dedicated facilities such as a covered shelter
- o Engagement with users – through various channels, e.g.:
 - o signage onsite, 1-2-1 workshops/meetings, rangers/council officials onsite, social media, etc.
 - o Programme of awareness raising on safety, 'user code of conduct'
 - o Introduction of a 'code of conduct' or etiquette outlining who has right of way, and how to interact with other users, etc.

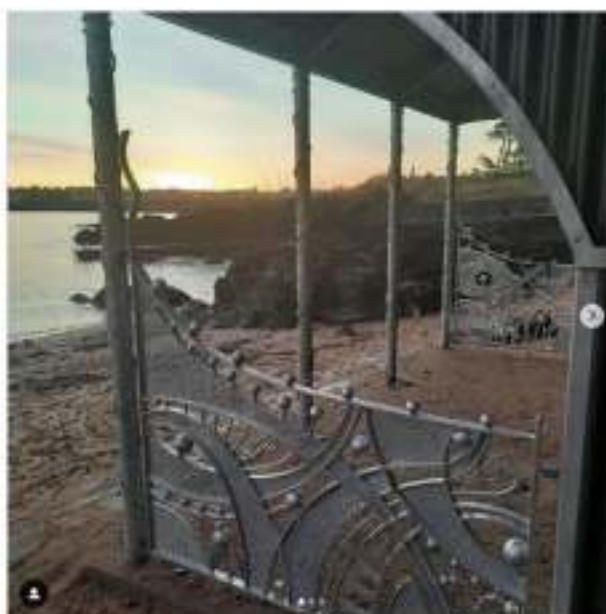


Fig. 7. Sea Swimmers Shelter, Skippingstone Beach, Bangor

Success Factor	Good Practice Detail
Collaboration	<p>Working in partnership with others including other landowners and user groups</p> <p>Regular communication through a variety of means</p> <p>Finding a common cause and goal to work towards with mutually beneficial outcomes</p>
Adopt a Formal Management Approach	<p>Acknowledge swimming is taking place and that there are risks associated with it</p> <p>Consult with user groups to reduce these and where appropriate take measures to address these</p> <p>Adopt an organisational approach to facilitating swimming</p>
Education & Awareness	<p>If people don't know about something, how can they change it? This could be applied to safety, risks, priority access, irresponsible behaviour, etc.</p> <p>Education and awareness raising provides users with opportunity to change high-risk behaviours or adapt their practice.</p>
Zoning / Management Zones	<p>In some cases, zoning areas, separating users or dedicating facilities for specific use is the safest way to cater for some activities, e.g. dedicated slipways for swimmers, water recreation zone where boats are not permitted</p> <p>This is usually a measure that is combined with other interventions.</p>
Engagement	<p>With all stakeholders and users - on the ground, in person – to identify poor behaviour, and educate about good behaviour, codes of practice, enforcement measures etc</p>
Regulation / Controlled Access	<p>In honeypot sites like Newcastle Harbour, regulated or controlled access is an effective way to ensure the safety of users and protect landowners. This can be in a variety of forms, e.g. gates, pedestrianised zones, seasonal openings, time-permitted activities, etc</p>

Table 2: Critical Success Factors

6 WAYS FORWARD

The Council is not the legal landowner of Slipway B therefore it is limited in its ability to intervene to address the situation. This is the responsibility of Newcastle Yacht Club, who were consulted in the Review but did not commission it.

Putting land ownership aside, the options to improve not just the safety and experience of sea swimming but the functioning of the Harbour overall for everyone are endless. If and how the Harbour develops is entirely dependent on –

- (a) the vision for the Harbour
- (b) who is driving that change and;
- (c) whether the different landowners choose to work together or not.

Through this Review process, a number of solutions that could facilitate progress at the Harbour are recommended. These are grouped according to hierarchy and whether they apply to Slipway B only or the Harbour as a whole. Underpinning both of these, and indeed any and all future progress are 'the fundamentals', which are deemed to be critical to success –

1. Accepting the Harbour as a shared space and one entity
2. One agreed vision and plan for the Harbour as a whole
3. Partnership working – all partners collaborating to achieve the vision

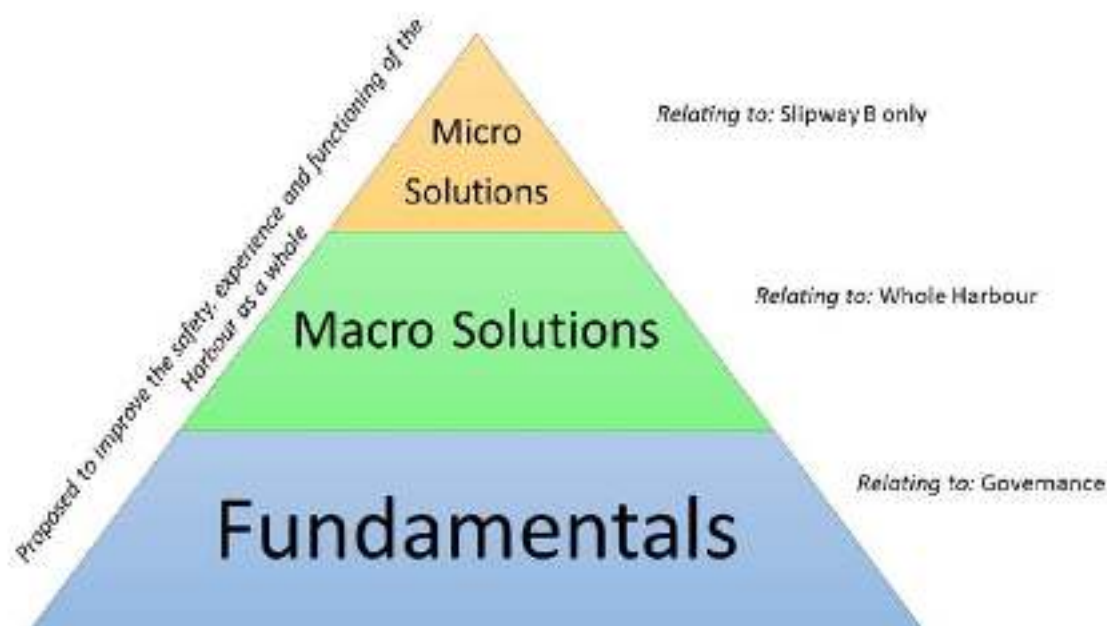


Fig. 9: Progress Pyramid

Theme	Explanation	Proposals
The Fundamentals	Putting in place the 'foundation blocks' is critical to the success of the Harbour fulfilling its potential	<p>1. Recognise Newcastle Harbour as one entity. For the Harbour to function better, Slipway B must be viewed and treated within the context of the wider Harbour, its functions and overall experience. It should not be treated in isolation, rather considered to be one cog within a much bigger wheel.</p> <p>2. Form 'Newcastle Harbour Management Group' The Harbour is a shared space, meaning the issues and potential solutions are too. Without working together, the Harbour is at a stale mate. No one organisation has the power or resource to improve the function and experience of the Harbour alone but working together towards a common vision with mutual understanding is key to unlocking the Harbour's potential. Initially this could simply be the primary landowners meeting to share information, and with time as relationships are built, active collaboration and combining resources could occur.</p> <p>3. One Vision, One Masterplan The Management Group could collaborate to establish a common vision which is manifested into a Masterplan which would determine projects, priorities and responsibilities. This Vision and Masterplan would need to be influenced by the region's overall agenda for the Harbour, meaning 'where does Newcastle Harbour sit within the wider agenda of</p>

		<p>economy, tourism and community?' 'What type of asset is it within the district?' 'Where does it sit within the district's Coastal Access Strategy?' 'How important is this facility?'</p> <p>Answers to the above will influence the vision for Newcastle Harbour.</p>
<p>Macro Solutions</p> <p>Newcastle Harbour requires a wider strategy, policy or plan relating to water access for all water recreation users, not just swimmers.</p> <p>This will be influenced heavily by the incorporation of, and importance placed on, the Harbour within wider economic regeneration, tourism and community development strategies.</p>	<p>4. Prepare an overarching 'Harbour Management Plan' relating to the co-ordinated functioning of the Harbour as a whole, inclusive of all facilities and services, for example –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Parking – one area for all? Visitor flow – pedestrianised, connected walkways between both sides? Access – emergency; primary and secondary; vehicle vs. pedestrian? Signage strategy – one brand/identity with accompanying signage strategy Risk assessments Emergency planning On-water activities Onshore activities, etc. 	
<p>Micro Solutions</p> <p>The following options could improve the safety and</p>		<p>5. Introduce a 'Water Access Policy' for the Harbour</p> <p>6. Council could consider land acquisition opportunities at the Harbour</p> <p>7. Consider spatial re-configuration of the Harbour depending on how the space is used, when and by whom</p> <p>8. The Yacht Club recognize the risks occurring on Slipway B and adopt a formal management approach (likely to be moderate management intervention), i.e. 'do something' approach</p>

<p>experience for sea swimmers, and indeed other water recreation users accessing Slipway B only.</p> <p>Newcastle Yacht Club own Slipway B therefore they have responsibility for addressing the risks posed by the current situation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Consult directly with those using the slipway to understand 'wants' and find common ground 10. Develop a 'code of practice' or 'slipway etiquette' in partnership with all users 11. Raise awareness of 'Codes of Practice' and rights of way through signage and engagement 12. Continue to promote and facilitate safe swimming practice – work with swim groups to develop 13. Extend membership options and numbers for swimmers to encourage use of facilities (this would have implications for insurance and cost but could be covered through membership fees) 14. Consider possible partnership agreements with the Council to find joint approach to managing Slipway B 15. Consider the creation of a dedicated space for changing away from slipway with direct, immediate access to the slipway 'Swim Safe Code' 16. Designated safe swim zone marked out in sea, or a 'water recreation zone' – compatible with other water users 17. Awareness and education – existing swim safe sessions could incorporate messaging around code of conduct and practice or 'slipway etiquette'
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Table 3: Way Forward Recommendations

7 BARRIERS

The following have been identified as potential factors that may influence or hinder any improvement or change at Newcastle Harbour:

- Absence of common vision for the Harbour – one that unifies all partners to achieve
- Lack of holistic development plan or Masterplan for the Harbour – where would changes sit within a more holistic plan? How would it benefit and impact other users and stakeholders? Each landowner is working in their own silo – needs to be a collaborative approach and understanding of changes that benefit the overall functioning of the Harbour
- Absence of a lead organisation/body driving change forward - who is best placed and resourced to do this?
- Absence of partnerships
- History – poor relations, bad feeling – there may be a need to repair or build relationship before progress can be made
- ‘The swimmers’ are not a constituted group – this makes it difficult for the Council to fund any requests – there may be a reliance on others to apply for funding or do works on their behalf, but any new infrastructure will require ongoing management and maintenance agreed
- Ongoing management and maintenance of any products or changes – this requires a resource beyond initial installation cost
- Land ownership – the responsibility of addressing the safety concerns and congestion around the bottleneck slipway falls to the landowner. In the event of a serious injury or death, the liability lies with the legal landowner, not the Council. Council has no legal right to install any infrastructure or intervene to manage the situation on Slipway B, nor do they have the ability to resource the ongoing management and maintenance of any infrastructure or intervention
 - o *Unless ownership status changes or infrastructure is installed on Council-owned land but this raises issue of funding non-constituted groups and ongoing costs of management and maintenance*
- Resource – does the landowner have the resource (financial and human) to address the risks and issues on Slipway B?
- Scheduled monument status – heritage of great value in itself but it may restrict what changes can be made

8 CONCLUSIONS

This Review has revealed that sea swimming should not be viewed as the activity that is causing all the issues at Newcastle Harbour. Sea swimming can bring many benefits not just to the individual's physical health and mental wellbeing but also the wider local community and economy, in terms of sustaining businesses and attracting visitors.

The true issue is the intense use of Slipway B –

- Which is a narrow, constrained space;
- Used by a great volume and variety of water users;
- COMBINED with a lack of management or regulation;
- particularly at popular and peak times of the year (typically April to October).

This current situation is unsustainable and unsafe, yet the Council is not responsible nor in a position to directly intervene. This is the responsibility of Newcastle Yacht Club.

The issues at the slipway are symptomatic of the overall Harbour's poor functioning, largely caused by the Harbour's fragmented layout, uncoordinated management and absence of partnership working.

A collegiate approach is essential to induce change and effectively manage the Harbour holistically – shared problems, shared solutions, shared responsibility.

Outdoor Recreation NI recommends that the first step towards any change is a step back...to put in place the foundations blocks which are believed to be critical to success namely:

- Establishment of a joint 'Harbour Management Group' comprising all partners involved in the direct management of the Harbour with a genuine appetite to work together.
- A Masterplan for Newcastle Harbour (where Slipway B and all other facilities and services as seen as individual parts integral to the effective functioning of the Harbour as a whole)

To inform the above, it is advisable that the Council undertakes the following work to help it understand the importance and role of the Harbour facility within the wider agenda of economic regeneration, tourism and community development:

- Coastal Access and Water Based Recreation Strategy
- Updated Tourism Strategy

9 APPENDIX 1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

9.1. Previous Plans & Studies

There has been no previous study dedicated to sea swimming, or any other water recreation activity, at Newcastle Harbour. However, Newcastle Harbour has been the topic of a small number of previous plans and studies that, to different extents and with different areas of focus, have looked at ways to regenerate the Harbour and surrounding area.

The following is a summary of those that (although outdated) are relevant to this Review.

9.1.1. *Economic Regeneration & Investment Strategy, 2015-2020, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council*

Ambitions are to –

1. To become the destination of choice in NI
2. To become NI's premier outdoor/adventure destination
3. To become one of NI's finest events destinations

Newcastle Harbour, as a destination for outdoor swimming at the foot of the Mourne, is in a prime position to contribute to the achievement of Ambition 2.

9.1.2. *Feasibility Study of the Former Generator House, 2018, Outdoor Recreation NI*

On behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Outdoor Recreation NI prepared a feasibility study assessing the options for the redevelopment and future management of NI Water's former Generator House on a non-commercial basis. The building was originally owned by NI Water, as a working part of the Wastewater Treatment Works facility. No longer needed within the £7million upgraded facility, the building was sold to Council in 2015.

Based on consultation and comparable case studies of what works elsewhere, the study outlined several options including 'the building is redeveloped into a community/watersports event centre managed by a local group under an agreed SLA'.

As of October 2022, Newcastle Harbour Heritage Association has leased the Generator House from the Council and plan to transform the building into a 'community hub' offering a meeting space with kitchenette, toilets, showers and changing facilities run for the good of the Harbour community by the Heritage Association.

When opened, this community-run facility will be a great asset to the Harbour and all who use it. Not only will it create a social space, it will provide much needed toilets and changing area for members of the public.

9.1.3. Residential Development, 2019, Farland Developments

In 2018, Farland Developments in partnership with the Prince's Trust had drawn up plans for the development of 30 apartments to be built within the Harbour area's scheduled zone. This included early stage discussion with the Council and Newcastle Yacht Club concerning land acquisition to facilitate the development.

As of October 2022, an area of land within the Harbour car park was still under private ownership but no formal plans had been submitted to the Council for permission to develop housing.

9.2. Current Plans & Studies

The following plans provide the strategic context for any interventions designed to improve the management, safety and experience of swimming at Newcastle Harbour. In other words, the recommendations made in this report are justified in the context of these plans and would contribute to the fulfilment of some of the Plans' wider, strategic aims and objectives.

9.2.1. Conservation Management Plan, 2022, Hamilton Architects

This Conservation Management Plan supercedes the original 2011 CMP, also carried out by Hamilton Architects. The CMP is an explanation of the Harbour's heritage significance. Based on this understanding of heritage significance, the Plan also contains a set of Conservation Policies which can be used as a guide for proposed works and how works can be carried out in a way that preserves and enhances the significance of the monument.

The key takeaways are:

- The CMP relates to the scheduled monument which comprises two 1 quays, boundary wall and watch house – all of which have a strong group value, the significance of which is related to their age
- As such, there are many competing interests and competing uses and pressures on the harbour that, if not addressed, could result in having a detrimental impact on heritage significance.
- The continued maritime use of the Harbour, i.e. leisure boating, fishing and sailing, are vital to maintaining the *Considerable Communal* of the Harbour
 - Development proposals and activities which would be seen as maintaining this, would be treated favourably
- Conservation Policies –

- o Newcastle Harbour has a rich maritime history and remains in use as both a working harbour and a way for visitors to engage with the sea. This link to Newcastle's historic and current connection to the sea should be preserved and enhanced.
- o Policy 4.1.1 – The primary maritime use of the harbour should be maintained and given priority over secondary uses

Ensuring that the primary use of the harbour has a focus on the sea will serve to preserve and enhance the heritage significance of the harbour

- o Repurposing buildings is prioritized over building new facilities.
- o **Management - Policy 4.7.4 – A plan should be developed relating to the separation of pedestrian use, car parking, boat storage and the other competing users**

9.2.2. *Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Tourism Strategy, 2017-2021*

'Maritime' is one of the three key themes that will form a strong and distinctive character for the Council area. Newcastle Harbour obviously represents as strategic asset, not only because of its location to Newcastle Town but also it serves as one of the primary access points to the sea for leisure and recreation. Newcastle Harbour represents a prime opportunity to create a 'destination experience' within the wider 'Mourne Coastal Experience'.

The Strategy boasts of the Council area's 'array of marine and inland water-based recreational opportunities' yet there is no strategy or policy dedicated to coastal access of water based recreation in the Council area. The role of different venues and sites, and their importance in the hierarchy of product and experience on offer is not known.

Improving access to the water is listed as a 'catalyst project' in the Mournes Coast Experience – Newcastle Harbour has the potential to deliver on a number of goals – to improve access to boats, to improve facilities for visitors, to animate the coastline – so should feature more prominently than it already does.

9.2.3. *Sports Facilities Strategy – Multi Sports Hub Review (June 2022)*

- The key issue for water sports clubs is a lack of storage and general club accommodation, most felt amongst emerging water sports but also amongst traditional water sports.
- Recommendation - Council Capital projects located in areas where there is lack of provision and identified need should consider incorporating water sports provision within the project. Camlough Lake, Warrenpoint Baths, Rockpool, Kilkeel and Newcastle Harbour, projects should be considered for multi sports hub provision in their respective DEAs.
- There is a shortfall in watersports provision and a need for investment has been identified

- For water sports the need is to support clubs in a number of traditional and emerging water sports activities.
- The approach to investment in watersports is recommended as Approach 3 – council investing in/supporting the voluntary sector by way of; (i) leasing Council

9.2.4. Living Well Together - A Community Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down to 2030

Outcome 5: "All people in Newry, Mourne and Down live in respectful, safe and vibrant communities"

Indicators of this outcome include "Level of Social Connection" and a measure of this would be "opportunities to connect with others". Another indicator of this outcome would be "Level of Social Capital" which is measured by "levels of community networks/infrastructure".

10 APPENDIX 2 METHODOLOGY

Aim –

To assess current sea swimming at Newcastle Harbour and explore opportunities for improvement.

Objectives –

- Clarify land ownership at the Harbour
- Clarify the needs or 'wants' of the sea swimming community
- Understand the ability of the Council to fulfil these 'wants'
- Identify any issues associated with sea swimming from both a participant and land manager perspective
- Identify potential solutions to address these issues based on industry guidance and comparable examples of good practice

The above was completed using two main research methods – desk research and consultation.

1. Desk Research

Desk research was used continuously throughout for the following –

- Review of current and previous studies and reports relating to Newcastle Harbour and open water swimming
- Review of Strategic Context documents – strategies, plans and policies to understand importance and role of Newcastle Harbour in wider agendas
- Examples of best practice – review of online material
- Industry guidance and advice – member forums, VSG online resources, etc.
- Land registry searches

2. Consultation

Consultation was used extensively as a qualitative research method –

- 1-2-1 meetings and video calls with key landowners and stakeholders – in person and videocalls – a full list of consultees is contained in Appendix 3
- Public meeting
 - Promoted to Newcastle Sea Swimmers only, 13 attended on 8th December 2022
- Online survey
 - Survey Monkey; open for period of 6 weeks during Nov-Dec 2022; promoted and shared on social media and to all key contacts for circulation; total 84 respondents.

3. Report Writing

The findings of this Review were prepared as a written report.

11 APPENDIX 3 PROJECT CONSULTEES

Name	Position, Organisation
Paul Tamati	Assistant Director of Leisure and Sport, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Conor Haughey	Head of Outdoor Leisure, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Jonathan McGilly	Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Barbara Fleming-Ovens	Operational Responsibility for Outdoor Facilities, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Councillor Laura Devlin	SDLP Councillor, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
Caoimhe Connor	Outdoor Activities Development Officer, The Outdoor Partnership
Mike McClure	Outdoor Recreation Development Officer, Sport NI
Tara Florence	Senior Architect, Hamilton Architects
Campbell Millar	Newcastle Harbour Heritage Association
Shona Collins	
Seamus McConkey	
Michael Cairnduff	Former Commodore, Newcastle Yacht Club
Victoria Singer	Commodore, Newcastle Yacht Club
Killian O'Kelly	Safety Officer, RNLI
John Anderson	Crew, RNLI (and Harbour sea swimmer)
Fiona Davey	Admin, FB Swimming Group 'Newcastle Sea Swimmers'
Ashley Hunter	Head of Participation, Swim Ireland
Richard Timms	Open Water Development Officer, Swim Ulster
Will Kirstein	General Manager – Rutland & Grafham Water And Visitor Safety Group (VSG)

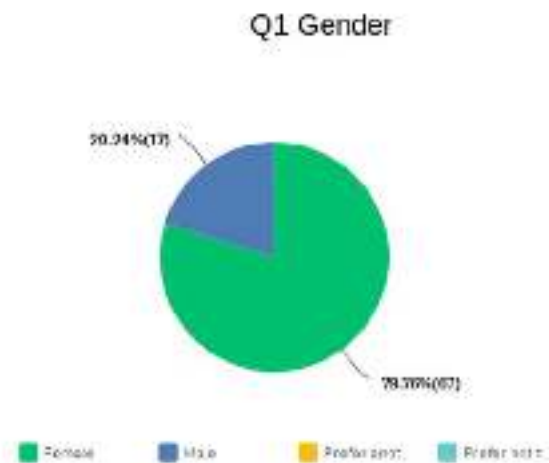
Name	Position, Organisation
Edel Trainor	Ards and North Down Borough Council
John Morton	Harbour Master, Causeway, Coast & Glens Borough Council
Richard Gillen	Coast and Countryside Manager, Causeway, Coast & Glens Borough Council

12 APPENDIX 4 SEA SWIMMERS SURVEY – SUMMARY REPORT

12.1 THE USER

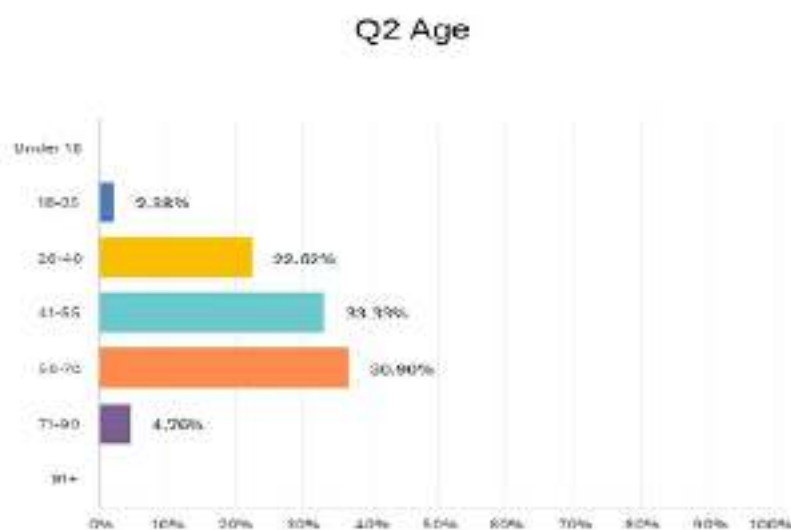
12.1.1. Gender

67 of the 84 respondents were female



12.1.2. Age

The most common age range was 56-70. Just over 70% of our respondents were aged between 41 and 70



12.1.3. Disability Focus

Q6. Do you consider yourself to have a physical disability?

Just 3 respondents declared that they had a physical disability.

We can filter using this response, in order to become aware of the individual wants and needs of those with a disability.

Key findings:

- When asked to declare the main problems facing them at the harbour, all 3 selected the following options:
 - Connection between both sides of the harbour that avoids the road
 - No covered area to keep gear dry

- When asked to declare the facilities they would most like to see introduced at the harbour, all 3 selected the following options:
 - Covered shelter with benches and hooks
 - Toilets

- 2 of the 3 stated that they would benefit from some type of disabled access to the sea at Newcastle Harbour. Both respondents stated that a handrail would be the most desired disabled access instalment.

12.2. USE OF NEWCASTLE HARBOUR

12.2.1. Impact of Covid-19

Q6 🔗 Save as ▾

When did you start swimming at Newcastle Harbour? (please enter year)

Answered: 83 Skipped: 1

RESPONSES (83) WORD CLOUD TAGS (1)

Tags + New Tag

post covid	<div style="width: 33.73%; height: 10px; background-color: #6c757d;"></div>	33.73%	00	View all Edit Delete
Untagged	<div style="width: 66.27%; height: 10px; background-color: #6c757d;"></div>	66.27%	00	View all

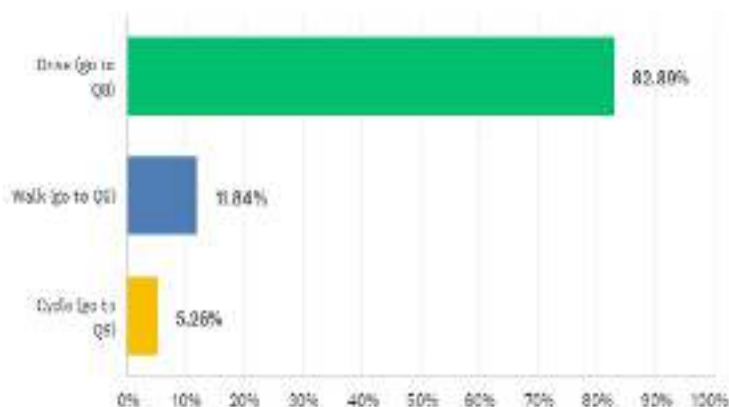
This question gives us an understanding of the impact of the covid 19 lockdown on user numbers at Newcastle harbour.

28 of the 83 responses answered that they began swimming in 2020 or after, this is 34% of the total group. This highlights the significant increases in numbers following the onset of covid-19 and introduction of lockdown measures.

12.2.2. *Transport Mode*

83% of respondents drive to the slipway. This indicates the need for sufficient parking facilities at the harbour.

Q7 How do you usually travel to swim at Newcastle Harbour?



The majority of respondents answered that they park in the YC car park, or on the road leading down to the slipway.

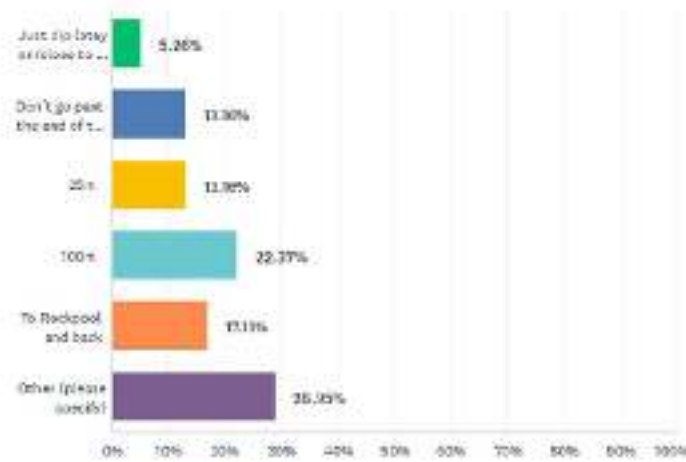
12.2.3. *Yacht Club Membership*

The majority of respondents (68%) do NOT avail of the yacht club’s associate membership.

12.2.4. Distance Swam

- 32% of respondents would swim 25m or less from the slipway.

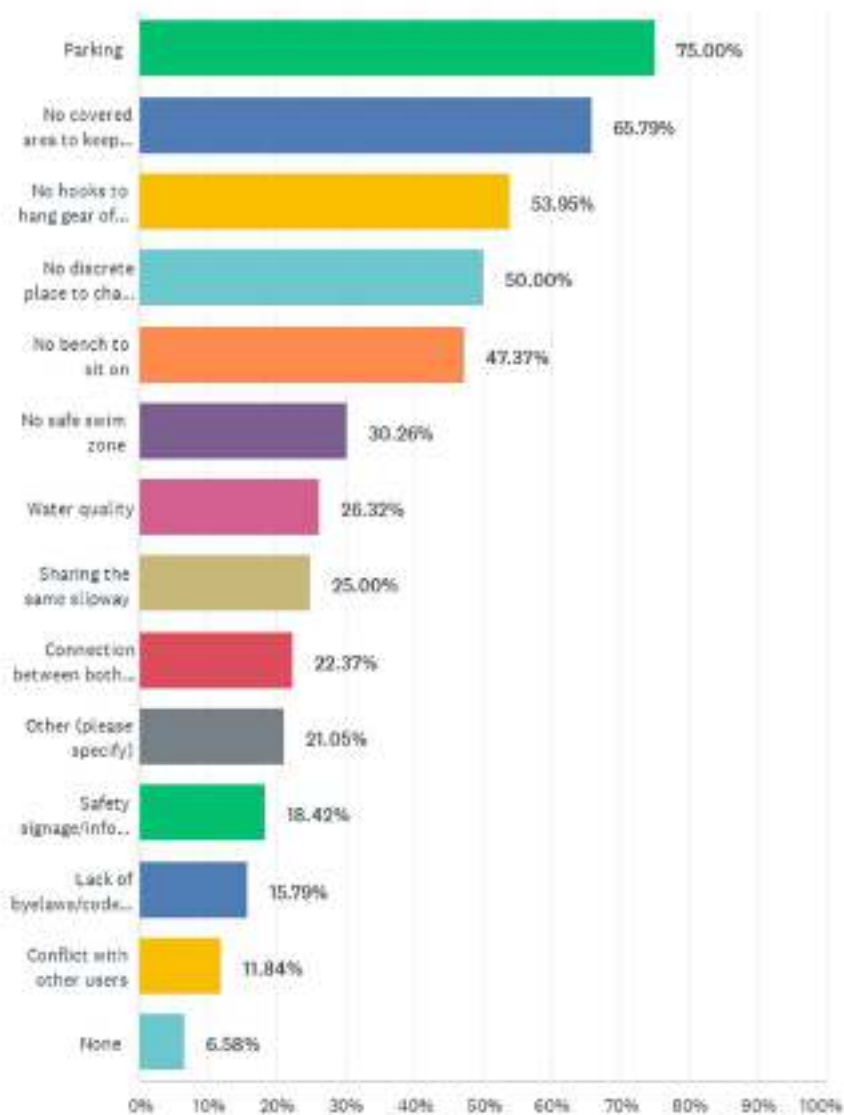
Q15 How far do you usually swim?



- 29% of respondents used the "other" feature to provide a written response.
- Taking steps to include those who used the "other" option to specify a distance beyond what we offered, we can conclude that 45 respondents would swim 100m+ when they visit the slipway. This is 59% of the total respondents.

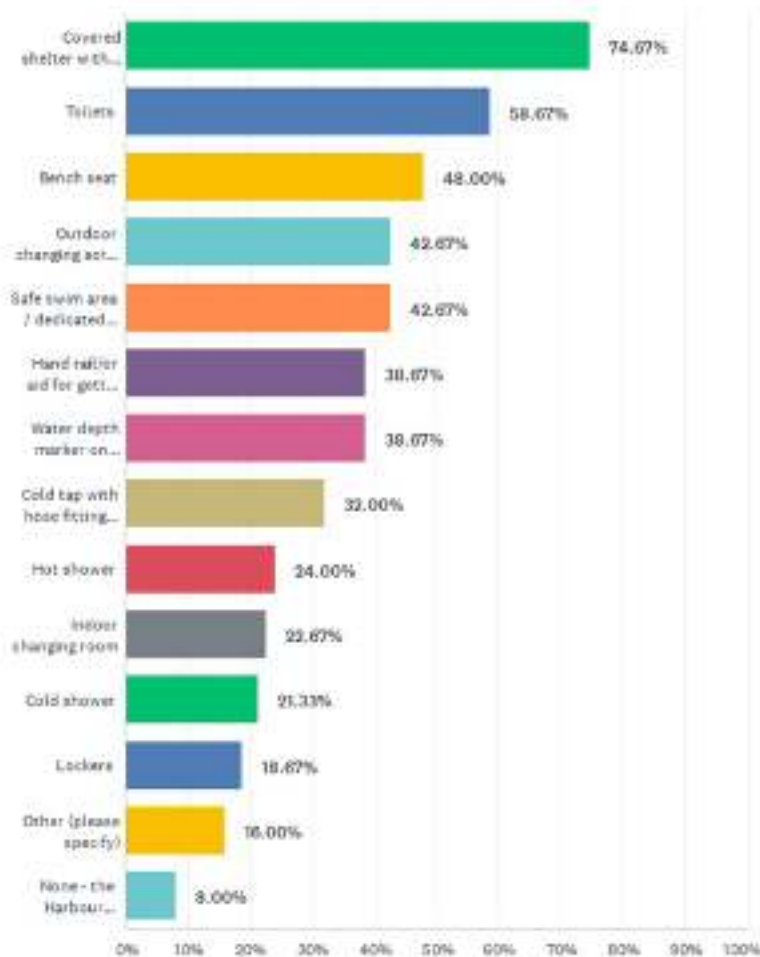
12.3. Issues at Newcastle Harbour

Q18 As a swimmer, what do you think are the main problems at the Harbour?



- 75% of respondents felt that parking improvements should be made at the slipway, this is no surprise considering 83% of respondents drive to the slipway.
- This question also raised awareness of the desire for a covered changing area, with hooks etc. to leave towels and other belongings while swimming. 66% of users felt this was a problem.

Q22 What facilities, if any, would you like to see provided for swimmers at the Harbour?



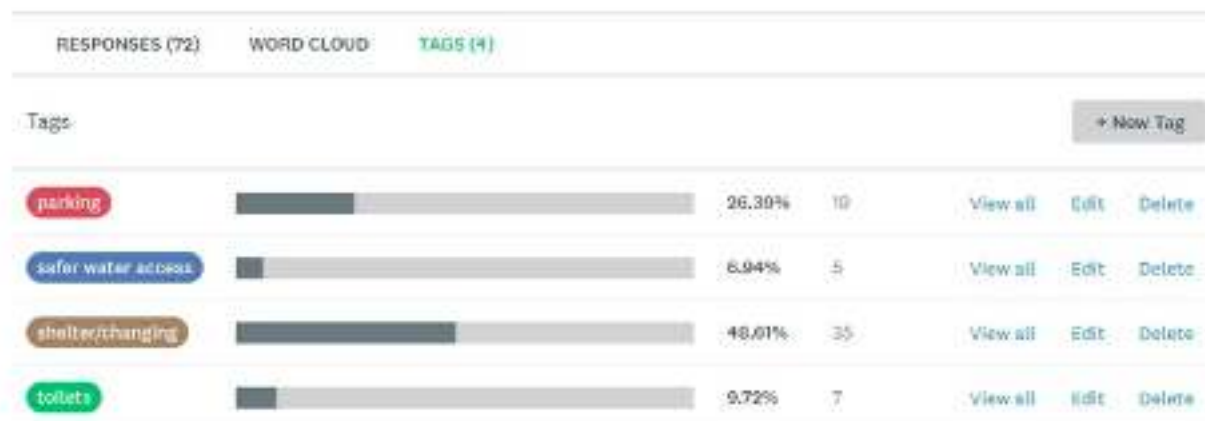
- The response to Q22 confirms the desire for a covered shelter. This is the most popular response with 75% of respondents.
- The least popular responses include the introduction of showers and lockers.
- Notably, only 8% of respondents feel the Harbour facilities are fine as they are.

Q27

 Save as ▾

How could your swimming experience be made better at Newcastle Harbour?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 12



- When given the opportunity to provide a written response surrounding improvements at the harbour, shelter and changing improvements emerged as the most popular response, with 49% of respondents mentioning this in their feedback.
- Over ¼ of respondents mentioned improvements to parking as a way to improve their experience at Newcastle Harbour.

12.4. NOTABLE COMMENTS

- "Winter is different to summer. Harbour closed to other users so parking not a problem, usually drive. Prefer to cycle in summer when harbour is busy. Rock Shore side of harbour would benefit from development for swimmers. Developing **Rock pool** for use sea swimming would be a great idea. Even if rock pool was opened again, I wouldn't use it"
- "If our **Rock Pool** was upgraded to facilitate all & properly maintained & recognised as the gem that it is..this would help in many ways"
- "**The Rock Pool facility** offers a safe swimming environment in the summer season, especially as the harbour is overcrowded and unsafe. Also the lack of having the Rock pool in use deprives both locals and tourists alike of the excellent swimming instruction and qualifications that it has always provided."
- "Think it is scandalous that **Rock Pool** not being saved. Shame on the Council."
- "**The long term future of the Rock Pool** is crucial. Iconic place: safe for swimmers, life guards and attendants in place when open. Upgrade is necessary sooner rather than later."
- "The health benefits of open water swimming are well documented. I feel Newcastle and NM&D could do more to support, promote and encourage residents to participate in this activity. We are fortunate enough to have the sea on our door step and do little to exploit the potential of this resource. I feel I need to mention **the Rock Pool**. This iconic structure is of historical importance. To my knowledge it is the last remaining open air cold salt water pool in Ireland. Any future plans for water activity in Newcastle needs to consider the Rock Pool. It is hard to find a balance for future. There is a certain charm and quaintness at the harbour but recognise that basic facilities are inadequate. Really appreciate an opportunity to take this survey."
- "**Opening the rock pool** would provide a safe environment all year round for people to avail of experiencing the benefit of cold water Emersion"
- "**Signage for swimmers** informing them of dangers in summer when boats leaving and entering harbour"
- "Many of the regular users do coffee elfresco and also support the local establishments.. sea swimming in newcastle encompasses those who swim in summer only and those who swim in all weather 12 months of year.. **slightly different requirements for summer and winter swimmers...** the swimming plan needs to be broader than the harbour..as number of people swimming has greatly increased in last few years the harbour area is too busy and very packed in summer esp when good weather...need to get facilities elsewhere to take pressure of harbour... if facilities developed on beach at RP access and toilets **.. maybe good to put life guards at beach... mli is at harbour..**"

13 APPENDIX 5 HERITAGE

13.1 Built Heritage Designations

Almost all of Newcastle Harbour including the walls and Watch House are designated as a 'scheduled monument' and protected under the 'scheduled zone' (ref. Ballaghbeg MRD 255:001). It was scheduled in 2004 on the basis of fragility and quality.

This scheduled monument status protects the character of Newcastle Harbour through the restriction of operations and activities that are deemed to likely damage the site, for example –

- "Any works resulting in the demolition, destruction or disturbance of, or damage to the monument;
- Any works for the purpose of removing or repairing the monument or any part of it; or of making any alternation or additions thereto"⁹

Put simply, this means that anyone wishing to carry out works within or to the Harbour will need to seek Scheduled Monument Consent and/or apply for planning permission and that it is not simply a case of obtaining the relevant landowners permission.

13.2 Natural Heritage Designations

A portion of Newcastle Harbour to the north, encompassing the Yacht Club slipway, falls under the following designations –

- Murlough Area of Special Scientific Beauty (ASSI); and
- Murlough Natura 2000 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)¹⁰

This means that there are likely to be restrictions in terms of what works may be carried out within this area of Newcastle Harbour. Some activities are deemed to be 'notifiable operations'¹¹ where they are likely to cause disturbance and/or damage to the flora and fauna. These activities, which may be associated with maintenance, management, access and recreation, will require 'consent' from DAERA and/or planning permission from the local Council.

⁹ https://apps.communities-ni.gov.uk/NISMR-public/docs/MRD/MRD_255/MRD_255_001/Public/MRD-255-001%20BALLAGHBEG%20declaration%20and%20map.pdf

¹⁰ <https://gis.daera-ni.gov.uk/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bb721449cb8949e7a4f90c722bd2d80b>

¹¹ See citation documents on <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dae/murlough-citation-documents-map.pdf>

Newry Mourne and Down District Council

Beach Access Framework

January 2023

Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI

on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Prepared by: Joe Murray

Reviewed by: Claire McLernon



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1. Background

In 2022, Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was commissioned by Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) to complete an assessment of its beaches in the context of accessibility for those with disabilities, their families and carers.

The study included assessing Council's current provision of beach access and making recommendations for the prioritisation of investment in beach access going forward.

1.1. Clarification of Terminology

The terms **accessible** and **inclusive** are used throughout this report.

'**Accessible**': Accessible refers to environments in the context of the user and must always be associated with a specific user or user group. For example, a facility such as a public toilet may be wheelchair accessible, or a beach might be accessible only to those with good mobility who are able to use steps.

'**Inclusive**': Inclusion is the process of conceiving, designing, planning, and maintaining all parts of the physical and cultural community to cater for the widest spectrum of ability and need. Inclusivity means accessible to all.

'**Inclusivity**' is the aspiration to which this study has been undertaken. Where full inclusivity cannot be achieved, recommendations have been made to make beaches more accessible for more people.

1.2. Assessment of Need

Over 1 in 5 people in Northern Ireland (NI) are reported to have a form of disability¹.

People living with multiple physical and mental disabilities are often deprived of fully inclusive access to goods and services in NI. Activities taken for granted by much of the population for example, accessing recreation settings and open spaces require comprehensive forward planning by many people with disabilities to ensure basic needs can be met at, or enroute to venues.

Barriers to access are arguably becoming fewer through the implementation of specific building regulations, meaning new built environment projects are typically more accessible to people with disabilities. Furthermore, protections are offered relating to accessing goods and services through the application of the Disability Discrimination Act, in place in NI since 1995. However, the application of regulations and standards do not always mean a fully inclusive outcome, particularly when looking at scenarios of retrofitting facilities in the built environment or indeed when providing access to the outdoor environment.

Given the limitations that disabilities can cause, some cannot experience the benefits of recreational activities. Beaches are an essential recreation setting that could provide significant physiological, psychological, and social benefits to those with disabilities.

¹ NISRA data on the percentage of those reporting a disability is sourced from the Labour Force Survey and uses the Government Statistical Service harmonised definition of disability. The definition covers people who report a physical or mental health condition or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more where this reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Overall, 21.7% of respondents aged 16-64 in Northern Ireland (Apr-Jun 2017) reported a long-term illness and a disability. In the UK overall the figure was 17.4%. This means that more than 1 in 5 people in Northern Ireland have a disability.

2. Strategic Context

This study aims to ensure that the future development of inclusive space, including beaches, aligns with a broader policy context. Outdoor recreation, equality and disability access in general is reflected in numerous policies and strategy documents of regional and local government departments, summarised in Table 1, with further detail provided in Appendix A.

Theme	Policy/Strategy
Overarching Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 (NI Executive, 2016). • Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building a Better Future (DfRD 2010).
Health & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together (DoH, 2016). • Active Ageing Strategy (2016-2021, NI Executive)
Economy & Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NI Tourism Strategy is in development. • NMDDC's Tourism Strategy addresses local potential and implementation of actions.
Culture, sport & Outdoor Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Living, No Limits 2016-2021: A plan to improve health and wellbeing for people with a disability in Northern Ireland through participation in sport and active recreation. • Our Great Outdoors: The Outdoor Recreation Plan for Northern Ireland (2014). • Sport Matters: Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019. • Sport NI Corporate Plan 2015-2020. • The Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland (DfC, 2011).
Natural Environment & Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIEA 'Our Passion, Our Place' Strategic Priorities 2012-2022. • DAERA Strategic Plan 2012-2020.
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy to improve the lives of people with disabilities (NI Executive 2012-2015). • 'Lifetime Opportunities' Anti-poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland (Department for Communities 2006).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy and Action Plan (2012-2017, Department of Health).
Community Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2015, NMDDC has produced Community Plans. These bring together all those involved in delivering public services in collaboration to improve the wellbeing of everyone – making a real difference to people’s lives.

Table 1: Summary of Relevant Local and Regional Government Strategies

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Disability Action Plan (2020 - 2023)

NMDDC’s Disability Action Plan (2020-2023) sets out how the Council intends to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities who live in, work, or visit the district. The Action Plan commits to engaging and collaborating with disability organisations, and promoting access to information, services, and facilities.

NMDDC has completed several actions from the Plan which positively promote attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life. This includes the appointment of an Activity Liaison Officer who provides participation opportunities for people with disabilities in sport and recreation. An extensive Disability Sport programme operates from Newry and Downpatrick Leisure Centres with varied activity programmes including two core groups for children with disabilities, trampolining, and swimming, as well as other activities suitable for those with disabilities.

While the focus of disability sport provision through Council is on increased facility and programme provision at leisure centres, Council is also responsible for management of external outdoor recreation sites, including in many cases beaches.

3. Trends and Benefits

The importance and benefits of outdoor recreation in the context of inclusive beach access is fundamental in contributing to wider social cohesion and in NI it can be a vehicle in contributing to cross community sharing and understanding.

In 2018, 17,560 academic studies on the benefits of Outdoor Sports for Society (BOSS project) were reviewed², providing evidence on the positive outcomes for individuals and communities of participating in outdoor recreation. These are summarised in Table 2.

	<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General mental health status - Quality of life and wellbeing - Combating mental illnesses and disease - Positive affective states - Reducing negative affective states - Control and coping - Self-development - Positive experiences - Active and happy ageing
	<p>Physical Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General physical health and related factors - Combating diseases like stroke, heart attack and cancer - Low injury rates and extended life expectancy - Healthy ageing - Subjective health perception - Sun exposure effectiveness
	<p>Active Citizenship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community benefits - Integration and inclusion - Volunteering - Bonding Capital

² Benefits of Outdoor Sport for Society <http://outdoorsportsbenefits.eu/resources/> (European Network of Outdoor Sports, 2018)

	<p>Education & Life-long Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Intra) personal development - Interpersonal development - Educational motivation and achievements - Cognitive aspects to improve learning - Environmental awareness and behaviour
	<p>Crime Reduction & Anti-social Behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase of prosocial behaviour - Prevention and reduction of crime
	<p>Additional benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lifetime physical activity - Accessibility - Cognitive functioning

Table 2 - Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

A Social Model of Disability in the Context of Outdoor Recreation

Assessment of need and engagement with Lived Experience Organisations during the preparation of this Study has highlighted the need to adopt a Social Model of Disability³ in any decision-making.

Typically, the focus of support for people with disabilities is weighted towards provision of essential health care and rarely focuses on quality social care and societal inclusivity. This widespread way of thinking is a medical model that looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs to access all the benefits that, in the context of this report, are listed in Figure 1. This leads to low expectations and people losing independence, choice, and control in their lives.

People with disabilities face social restrictions that impact their quality of life, and that of their own families, carers, with a consequence that healthcare needs can end up being greater across entire family circles. A different model - a Social Model of Disability - is a model that should be more widely adopted in decision-making. The model takes the view that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having facilities for dignified toileting, such as a Changing Place, but barriers can also be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people cannot do certain things.

³ <https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/social-model-of-disability/>

The aim to work towards more provision of inclusive beach access in Newry Mourne and Down will go a significant way to helping build this social model in NI, helping to bridge the gap between what is medically essential and what is socially needed by people with disabilities in order that the entire family circle can avail of the full range of health benefits offered by outdoor recreation and a connection to the environment.

Recent collaborative work by ORNI applied the Social Model of Disability to the outdoor recreation environment. While the central focus of this piece of work was identifying critical success factors for the installation of Changing Places Toilets in the outdoors, the same range of critical factors are applicable to the successful design of any inclusive outdoor experience.

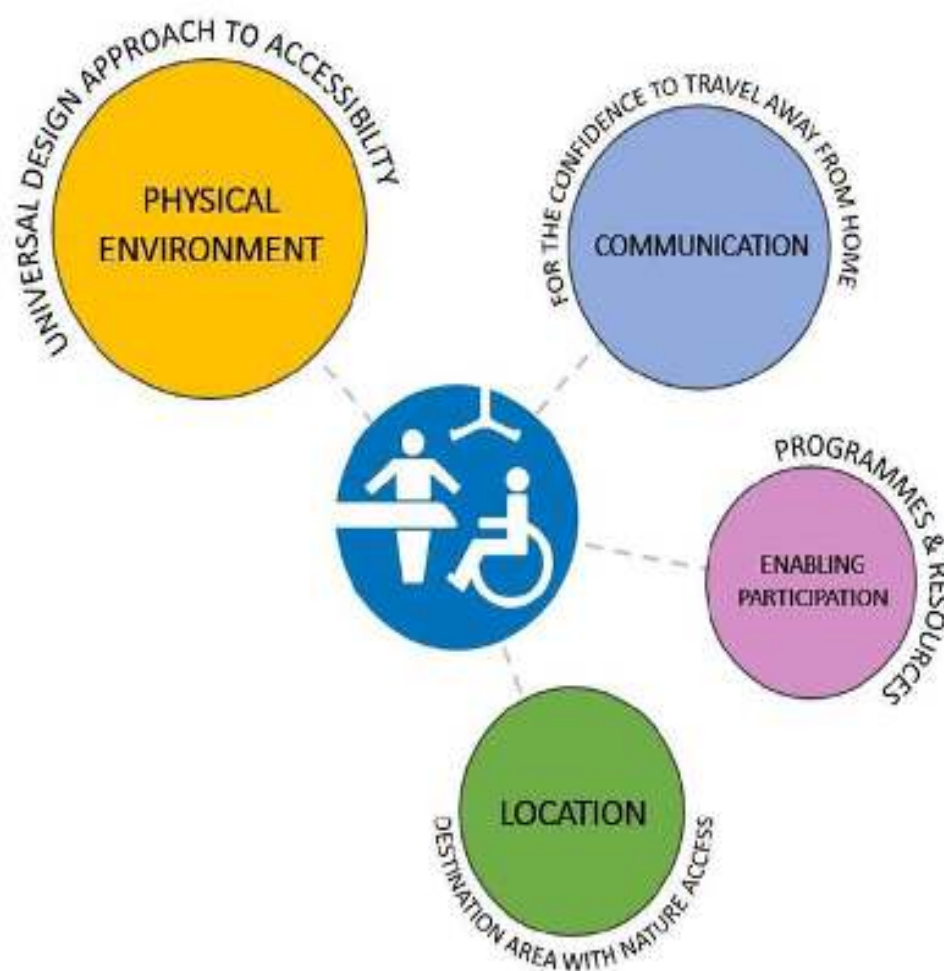


Figure 1 - Critical success factors for inclusive outdoor experiences (from ORNI Changing Places Toolkit⁴)

⁴ <http://www.outdoorrecreationni.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Changing-Places-Toolkit.pdf>

4. Methodology

Stage 1: Benchmarking

- Consideration of current trends and practice
- Identification of critical success factors
- Identification of best practice in design and management of beach access
- Engagement with outdoor recreation providers and disability access stakeholders in the rest of UK and Ireland

Stage 2: Baseline Review of Current Provision

- Identification of the need for and objectives of provision in consultation with key stakeholders
- Provision of indicative defining criteria for a quality accessible outdoor experience⁵
- Assessing current provision - GIS mapping of beaches assessed with this Study to identify their value as accessible outdoor experience provision
- Identification of infrastructure requirements, estimated development costs, and additional considerations for development
- Gap analysis and identification of development opportunities (including sites which are not necessarily accessible but would benefit from better provision)

Stage 3: Preparation of Recommendations

Clear recommendations include:

- A rationale for future developments
- Recommendations for suitable facilities, including phasing and prioritisation
- High level cost estimates for development

⁵ This study does not aim to provide a detailed breakdown of all criteria that contributes to the provision of quality accessible outdoor experience, but will summarise high-level output from existing standards, strategies, policies, and stakeholder engagement to inform decision-making.

5. Models of Best Practice

5.1. Portstewart Strand, Co. Londonderry

An 'Inclusive Beach' is a beach environment designed so that people of all ages and abilities can take part, have fun, and be included. Inclusive beaches provide access, parking, and Changing Places Toilets. Changing Places Toilets always offer hoisting and adult sized changing bench facilities – to full Changing Places standard whenever possible.

Inclusive beaches in NI offer free beach equipment loan schemes, in many cases operated as a partnership between charitable organisations and respective beach operators.

In addition to offering beach equipment for individual loan, inclusive beaches will host engaging events and activities. This may include beach fun days, surf days and litter picking events amongst others.



Figure 2: Beach Equipment for hire at Portstewart Strand made available through the Mae Murray Foundation.

Source: Mae Murray Foundation

The Mae Murray Foundation has partnered with the National Trust at Portstewart Strand. Previously this beach was not inclusive for many people with mobility, sensory and other needs. However, a beach equipment loan scheme is now available, together with a disabled toilet to Changing Places standard. The Mae Murray Foundation is a charitable organisation based in Northern Ireland whose objective is to enable people of all ages and abilities to take part in activities, experience the world and enjoy friendship together in an inclusive environment.

5.2. Cranfield Beach, Co. Down

Cranfield Beach sets the benchmark for beach accessibility in the NMDDC Council area. The beach itself offers a gently sloping mainly sandy beach, located at the entrance to Carlingford Lough, an area designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest. The idyllic location has the Mourne Mountains as a dramatic backdrop.

In 2019, the Mae Murray Foundation launched Cranfield as an Inclusive Beach in partnership with NMDDC, SportNI and DAERA. The partnership saw the introduction and provision of equipment such as beach wheelchairs, floating chairs, beach walkers, and a Changing Places facility with changing bench and hoisting equipment facilities for families and individuals who may have a range of differing abilities or need.

In addition to offering beach equipment for individual loan, the Mae Murray Foundation hosts a calendar of inclusive events at Cranfield Beach.



Figure 3: Beach Equipment for hire at Cranfield Beach made available through the Mae Murray Foundation. Source: NMDDC

5.3. Design and Management Standards and Guidelines

This section considers how inclusive features can and should be incorporated into the design and management of beaches. Specifications in this section inform the criteria by which beaches have been assessed in this study and also the standard to which recommendations should be actioned.

Unless otherwise specified, standards and specifications have been informed and supported by consultation with lived experience organisations and align themselves with the following guidance documents:

Accessible Outdoor Places Design Guidelines (2021), Disability Sport NI

Disability Sport NI (DSNI), funded by the Public Health Agency, has developed detailed technical guidelines which will promote a greater understanding of the inclusive design of outdoor spaces. These guidelines should encourage designers and operators in NI to embrace optimum levels of good practice in terms of access for disabled people.

Outdoor Access Guidelines (2017), Irish Wheelchair Association

The Irish Wheelchair Association's (IWA) sports department, in conjunction with Sport Ireland, has developed Outdoor Access Guidelines, intended for use by various organisations that provide and manage facilities within the Great Outdoors, including beaches. The guidelines specify that providing access for people who have a disability is generally recognised as requiring a Universal Design approach, defined by the Irish Disability Act 2005⁶ as 'an inclusive approach to design and construction aimed at making the environment and its facilities accessible and usable for everyone'.

NB: This study does not aim to provide a detailed breakdown of all criteria that contributes to the provision of quality accessible outdoor experience, but summarises high-level outputs from existing standards, strategies, policies, and stakeholder engagement to inform decision-making.

⁶ Irish Disability Act, 2005: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/enacted/en/html>

5.3.1 Inclusive Design

It is understood that not all outdoor experiences will be equally accessible to all people with a disability at any given time and may be dependent on characteristics of the physical environment, available ancillary equipment, programmes of activities and staff resource. However, where feasible, the constructed landscape should be designed to avoid hazards and allow as many people as possible a safe opportunity to reach, experience and enjoy the beach environment. Standards set out in this section should apply when designing such facilities to ensure best practice.

Accessible Blue Badge Parking

Accessible parking bays should be clearly signed and located adjacent to the main beach access routes. The recommended number of car parking bays for outdoor spaces is 8% of total capacity (1:12) or a minimum of two accessible parking bays, whichever is greatest.

Accessible parking bays should measure 6.6m x 2.7m minimum including a set-down/pick-up zone measuring 1.2 minimum.

Public Accessible Toilets

Accessible toilet facilities should be located and clearly signed at the most convenient location possible adjacent to the Blue Badge parking, beach or accessible entrance point including:

- Outward opening door(s) with easy-to-use lock
- Clear turning space not less than 1.5m x 1.5m
- Signs, grab-rails, the toilet, and fittings should contrast against the background, making them easier to identify
- Emergency assistance alarm pull-cord

Changing Places

Without a Changing Place, a beach experience cannot be considered inclusive. Where investment in toileting facilities is being made, changing Places should be installed. A detailed specification for Changing Places is provided within the publication '*Changing Places: the practical guide*⁷'. The

⁷ '*Changing Places: the practical guide*' can be found on the Consortium's website www.changing-places.org

Consortium oversees the process of assessing whether the standard has been met and if the facility can be registered.

A key component of whether a Changing Place is considered of acceptable standard is the provision of space, with 12sqm recommended in line with BS8300-2:2018 building design standards⁸. However, some undersized units not fully meeting BS8300-2:2018 *can* still be registered on the Changing Places website when it is the only option available. Deviation from full standard should never be done without thorough prior consultation with the Consortium. All registered Changing Places facilities should as a minimum provide:

1. A height adjustable changing bench
2. A tracking hoist system
3. Adequate space
4. A centrally placed toilet with room either side for assistants, and drop-down handrails
5. A screen or curtain
6. Wide tear off paper roll to cover the bench
7. A large waste bin for disposable pads
8. A non-slip floor



Figure 4: Example Layout of a Changing Place Facility - www.changing-places.org

It is relatively common for some accessible/disabled toilet facilities to be of a standard that exceeds what is required by DDA law, but do not fully meet the criteria to be registered as a Changing Place with the Consortium; but the facility will still be useful for many visitors with disabilities.

Level and Sloping Access

Level access from the parking area to facilities and the route providing the gentlest slope to the beach should always be chosen. A surface gradient of 1:40-1:50 is considered level while allowing for drainage of surface water. Where slopes are unavoidable:

⁸ BS8300-2:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment. Buildings – code of practice.

- The gradient should be as gentle as possible and no more than 1:12 (5%) for more than 10m per section and no more than 2 consecutive sections. Ensure a 1500mm level landing is available between sections
- A slope gradient of 1:15 (7%) is considered a ramp and therefore should include handrails/adjacent steps Some people may like to challenge themselves on more difficult routes and /or to use off-road mobility equipment.
- A steeper slope gradient of 1:12 (8%) is not recommended and is only acceptable in very exceptional circumstances when no other options are available or possible and only for a very short distance i.e., a maximum length of 2m with a maximum rise of 166mm.
- Handrails should be provided on both sides of sloped ground.

Route Surfaces and Dimensions

Route surfaces should be firm, compact, stable, non-slip, and obstacle-free. Suitable surface materials include tarmac, concrete, timber, and natural wood. Unsuitable surfacing materials include loose gravel, grass, dust binding, cobblestones, and moss. Loose particles should not exceed 5mm in size. Providing an alternate surface type along the sides of any route to create a divergence in colour and texture can also act as a guiding strip for people with a visual impairment.

The width of the route should be 2000mm to allow two wheelchair users to pass each other safely. A path width of 1500mm accommodates a wheelchair user and another person walking alongside. A minimum path width for a wheelchair user to traverse without another person walking alongside is 1200mm and is only suitable for very short distances.

Boardwalks

Access to the beach can be difficult or impossible for a person using a wheelchair or other mobility aids. In these instances, beach route walkways are necessary to give people easy access from their vehicles along pathways and onto the beach (Please note: the beach itself will require a wheel-able surface such as "mobi-mat" or continuation of boardwalk).

A timber boardwalk can provide a suitable route. Access onto the route/boardwalk should be gently sloped, wooden boards⁹ should be laid at right angles to the direction of traffic flow (otherwise mobility

⁹ Boardwalk material can include pressure treated wood, composite decking, pre-cast concrete forms and modified wood. All such materials should be treated with a slip-resistant surface.

canes or the front castors of wheelchairs may be caught between boards). It is good practice to lay down decking with very slight gaps between the individual boards. This may also give some extra grip if boards become wet and slippery. The gap should be no greater than 12mm.



Figure 5: (L) Modified Wood Accessible Boardwalk; (R) Accessible Boardwalk and Shelter

Seating and Picnic Areas

Any seating provided adjacent to the route or at any beach location should be placed back from the main route by at least 600mm to allow others to move freely past the seating area. Seating provided should be no lower than 450mm from ground level with a minimum of 450mm seat depth and with a heel space of 100mm to allow for easier rising from the seat. Armrests should be provided as they assist a person to sit into and to rise from the seat. Avoid sharp edges. A clear space of 1400mm in depth and 900mm in width is recommended adjacent to the seating to allow a person using a wheelchair to position their wheelchair alongside.

The height of a picnic table should be between 750mm-800mm with clear knee space of 700mm beneath. Cantilevered ends on picnic tables facilitate wheelchair users. The seat height should be within 460-480mm from the ground and minimum depth of the seat should be 450mm. The back support of the seat should be a minimum 455mm in height. There should always be a section of the table with no permanent seating attached.



Figure 6: Universal Design Picnic Table (Source: Irish Wheelchair Association)

5.3.2. On-site Beach Equipment and Support

Many people with disabilities may have limited mobility and the provision of specific equipment, in addition to permanent on-site facilities, can support increased participation in outdoor beach activities.

Consideration should be given to providing accessible equipment such as accessible beach buggies and boardwalk/mat access onto the beach.

While a permanent structure such as boardwalk should provide access as far as possible onto the beach, movement over the sand and to the water can be difficult or impossible for a person with mobility issues or for a person who uses a wheelchair. Mobility aids, such as portable mats and beach wheelchairs can provide further access onto the beach from the connecting beach access route/boardwalk.

Portable Mats

A **Portable/Removable Mat** walkway can be used to link with the boardwalk and bring the person further onto the sand and as close as possible to the water's edge. Ideally, there would also be a mat surfaced area of the beach beside the end of the portable/removable mats that allows a person/s using a wheelchair to come off the mat walkway and position within a group of friends without obstructing others who are using the mat walkway to reach the water.

Mobi-Mats® are beach accessibility mats that have been specifically developed for use in permanent or temporary recreation access points. A **Mobi-Mat®** is a portable and removable rollout access route

that can be used in a multitude of settings so that everyone can access their chosen environments i.e., the beach and seawater.



Figure 7: Mobi-Mat® Rollout Beach Access Mat

Beach Wheelchairs

A Beach Wheelchair is a low-wheeled vehicle for recreational use on sand, and sometimes in water. Unlike standard manual wheelchairs, they have large, rubber wheels which move easily over the sand. There are different types on the market, and each has its own properties.



Figure 8: Beach Wheelchair 'Buggies' (Irish Wheelchair Association)

De-Bug Beach Wheelchairs are all-terrain surf chairs that glide with ease over sand, gravel, grass, and other uneven terrains. All De-Bugs are made of stainless steel. The elevating leg rest provides additional comfort and support. The De-Bug is more suited to flat or compacted sand.

Hippocampe Beach and All-Terrain Chairs are, versatile and are better suited to soft sand. The Hippocampe Buggy can be used on both the beach and within any surrounding sand dunes where the ground tends to be slightly uneven and hilly.



Figure 9: Hippocampe Beach and All-Terrain Wheelchair (Irish Wheelchair Association)

Equipment Storage

A system for on-site management of beach buggies requires the facility to store the equipment when it is not in use, to pre-book the equipment and to safely store any wheelchair or other mobility aid while the beach buggy is being used. Some people who have a mobility impairment may require assistance to sit into/transfer to the beach buggy from their own wheelchair and the provision of a hoist, possibly shared with a Changing Places facility should be considered adjacent to an equipment storage facility.

5.3.3. Communication Guidelines

Well-designed, detailed, and accurate information about the accessibility of any site and its facilities and available amenities should be presented in various formats to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities. Promotional literature should make it clear that people with disabilities are welcome and can participate in the on-site activities.

The various formats through which information should be presented include:

- **The internet**, including websites, e-mail and social media where appropriate. Relevant forms and documents should be accessible on-line and in downloadable format. Clearly signpost the availability of these documents on literature and on websites.
- **Brochures and information leaflets** that are available in easy-to-read, plain English. Clearly display all available options and keep written communications brief and to the point.
- **Face-to-face interaction** using clear, simple user-focused language.
- **Information display boards** that are easy to read will orientate the visitor to on-site facilities.
- **Waymarking** for all routes should incorporate a wayfinding system that is clearly sign-posted and visible.

On-site Beach Equipment Availability

Information on the availability and use of on-site beach accessibility equipment should be made available through a variety of formats including online, social media, local media etc.

6. Baseline Review

The following 15 sites across NMDDC were assessed in the context of inclusive access:

- Holm Bay, Killyleagh
- Cuan Bay, Killyleagh
- Kilclief Beach
- Killard
- Ballyhornan
- Ardglass
- Coney Island
- Killough
- Minerstown
- Tyrella Beach
- Murlough
- Newcastle
- Cranfield Beach
- Greencastle Beach
- Warrenpoint

An overview of site locations is provided in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Study Area and Site Locations Overview

6.1. Site Assessment Criteria

Several themes, and therein components, are essential to ensuring a successful inclusive or accessible visit to a beach. Such consistent themes have arisen from stakeholder engagement, benchmarking and review of design and management guidelines and are considered essential to an inclusive experience. All components, outlined in Table 3 should ideally be in place to realise the full positive impact of investment in beach accessibility.

Theme	Component
Physical Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Blue Badge parking - Changing Place facility/Accessible toilet - Step-free access - Suitability of topography and distances i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Flat access throughout o Sand preferable over stone for use of Mobi-mat
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accurate and accessible marketing - Pre-visit communication in the event the accessibility of the beach is temporarily reduced e.g., shifting sands/unavailability of staff and equipment
Enabling Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equipment Store (for beach access equipment) - Availability of Council resource to manage i.e., maintaining good standards of hygiene, on-hand to manage access to Changing Place and equipment store, enforced Blue Badge parking, and real-time communication - Resourced programmes of activities
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An attractive destination in its own right - Well-connected and in proximity to other amenities i.e., refreshments - Part of a wider destination experience that is also accessible

Table 3: Site Assessment Themes and Components

Not all sites are open and accessible, or in a condition that is fit for purpose. Sites were screened against the criteria outlined in Table 4 taking into consideration current provision and scope for enhancement. Sites were then ranked in terms of priority for development (See Section 7). Beaches have been ranked in terms of their classification, in the context of inclusive and accessible access, Tiers 0-3.

Classification	Tier	Description
Flagship	0	Beaches that exhibit best practice in terms of quality, services and inclusive access that can support visitors within and beyond Council boundaries. Flagship beaches will be fully inclusive destinations in their own right and be complemented by a wider destination experience that is also accessible.
Inclusive Destination	1	High quality beaches that have supporting infrastructure to facilitate inclusive access that draw in local visitors from the Council area. These locations may lack local inclusive attractions and some visitors may visit as part of wider itinerary that includes other locations.
Local Accessible Beach	2	High quality beaches that do not necessarily have all the supporting amenities i.e., toilets, changing facilities and beach access equipment to support every visitor. As a minimum, Tier 2 sites should have safe and accessible connection to the beach and designated Blue Badge parking.
Limited Accessibility	3	Beaches that may be attractive destinations in their own right, but do not have supporting infrastructure or favourable topography to allow for safe access to the beach for all users.

Table 4: Clarification of Classifications and Tiers

Quality and Services											
Blue Flag	Accessible Connection to Beach	Toilets (Accessible)	Changing Places	Car Parking (Blue Badge)	Attractive Location	First Aid	Well connected	Local attractions (inclusive access)	Lifesaving Facilities	Equipment Hire	
Tier 0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tier 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Tier 2	✓			✓	✓						
Tier 3											

Table 5: Required Criteria per Tier

6.3. High-level Assessment/Screening of Sites/Current Status

All sites were assessed against the criteria outlined in Table 5 and assigned a tier classifying the level of accessibility of the site. The outcome of the assessment is presented in Table 6 and Figure 11.

Site	Quality and Services											Tier	
	Blue Flag	Accessible Connection to Beach	Toilets (Accessible)	Changing Places	Car Parking (Blue Badge)	Attractive Location	First Aid	Well connected	Local attractions (inclusive access)	Lifesaving Facilities	Equipment Hire		
Holm Bay, Killyleagh						✓							3
Cuan Beach (Killyleagh Yacht Club)						✓		✓	✓				3
Kilclief	✓				✓	✓							3
Killard (NIEA)						✓							3
Ballyhornan	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓				2
Ardglass			✓		✓	✓							3
Coney Island						✓							3
Killough						✓		✓	✓				3
Minerstown						✓							3



Figure 1.1: Current Accessibility Overview

7. Prioritisation of Sites for Future Development

The impact of inclusive access measures will be found at locations planned with a universal inclusive design approach. However, it is recognised that not every location can be accessible for every individual. Therefore, in the context of the outdoors, prioritisation of investment should focus on areas where a holistic experience is able to be provided. Therefore, focusing on 'destination areas' as a first step is likely to make the biggest impact.

Only sites with the potential to achieve the right physical environment, programmes, resources, and communications have been prioritised for development. The correct and complete approach should ensure a fully inclusive experience at multiple attractive and accessible locations.

A summary of beaches that have been prioritised for development are presented in Table 7. High-level recommendations for prioritised sites are presented in Section 8.1.

A visual of spatial distribution of beach accessibility is presented in Figure 12.

Site	Current Tier	Aspirational Tier	Rationale
Priority Sites			
Cranfield	1	0	<p>Cranfield Beach has been identified as the benchmark of beach inclusivity in the Council area.</p> <p>Cranfield Beach provides access, parking, and disabled toilets. Toilets offer hoisting and adult sized changing bench facilities – to full Changing Places standard. A free beach equipment loan scheme is operated by Mae Murray Foundation from Cranfield.</p> <p>In addition, Cranfield serves as a venue for events and activities, delivered by Mae Murray Foundation. This may include beach fun days, surf days, and litter picking.</p> <p>In order to elevate Cranfield to Tier 0 standard, it is recommended that the accessibility offer of the surrounding area beyond the beach e.g. play, are improved to create an overall inclusive destination around the beach.</p>
Newcastle	2	0	<p>Newcastle Beach currently benefits from accessible parking, toilets, and a ramped access point. This infrastructure together with its location, paralleling much of the main street, means that it is a prime site for further development as an all-inclusive beach.</p> <p>Recommended actions to elevate the site to Tier 0 standard include improved changing facilities to Changing Places standard, enhancement of parking and drop-off points and additional Council resource to carry out communications and management of the resource would be required.</p>

<p>Tyrella</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Tyrella Beach benefits from accessible parking and toilet facilities in close proximity.</p> <p>It is recommended that Tyrella Beach is prioritised for development of improved facilities to include enhanced accessible parking space, replacement of the current toilet block with accessible toilets and changing places facility and storage for beach access equipment.</p>
<p>Ballyhornan</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Ballyhornan Beach has benefited from recent investment in increased Blue Badge parking provision and a wheelchair accessible path as part of an Environmental Improvement Scheme allowing safe and inclusive access between the car park and beach. The beach is located centrally to Ballyhornan Village near a play park, shop, and catering facilities.</p> <p>It is recommended that Ballyhornan Beach is prioritised for further development to improve inclusive toilet, changing and beach access equipment storage facilities with an off-road connection to the car park.</p>
<p>Warrenpoint</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>While Warrenpoint Beach is primarily surfaced in pebbles, its existing infrastructure provides to a degree inclusive access through ramped access to a concrete walkway that borders the beach alongside a promenade with rest stops in close proximity.</p> <p>The location has scope for improved designated blue-badge parking and drop-off points alongside development of accessible changing and toilet facilities on-site and facilities for beach access equipment.</p>
<p>Kilclief</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Kilclief Beach is located 3 miles from both Strangford and Ballyhornan. Due to its poor connections, it has limited scope for ancillary provisions such as a Changing Place and equipment store but does offer a generously sized car park</p>

			with Blue Badge Parking. The site in its current state is an accessible recreation area. Formalised and improved access to the beach for mobility aid users should be considered by means of a ramp or boardwalk.
Non-Priority Sites			
Ardglass	2	2	Ardglass Beach benefits from its direct connectivity to amenities in the village such as Blue Badge parking and accessible toilet. However, current ramped access is steep, and the small size of the beach provides limited scope for a beach experience. Therefore, Ardglass Beach is not recommended for further development beyond its current provision.
Murlough	2	2	Murlough Beach is an attractive destination in its own right that benefits from Blue Badge parking and boardwalk between the car park and beach. However, the beach is located approx. 700m from any car park or suitable access point. Therefore, it is not recommended that Murlough is prioritised for future development in the context of inclusive access.
Holm Bay, Killyleagh	3	3	Holm Bay benefits from a newly upgraded access road from Cross Street, however it is not recommended that Holm Bay is prioritised for further development due to its distance from Killyleagh village, lack of scope for ancillary provisions and its stony surface which is unsuitable for most mobility aids.
Cuan Beach	3	3	Cuan Beach, located adjacent to Killyleagh Yacht Club, is ideally situated in a location with scope for ancillary provisions such as Changing Place, equipment store and Blue Badge Parking. However, it is not recommended that the site is prioritised for further development as the beach topography and surface is unsuitable for the majority of mobility aids. The site could be considered as

			an accessible rest area with existing benches and picnic tables that overlook Strangford Lough.
Greencastle	3	3	Due to its unfavourable topography and surface, lack of scope for inclusive ancillary provisions, and close proximity to Cranfield Beach, Greencastle beach is not recommended for future development in the context of inclusive access.
Minerstown	3	3	Due to lack of existing or potential ancillary provisions and environmental sensitivities, it is not recommended that Minerstown Beach is prioritised for further development in the context of inclusive access.
Killough	3	3	Due to its stony surface, unfavourable topography for inclusive access and lack of scope for ancillary provisions, it is not recommended that Killough Beach is prioritised for further development in the context of inclusive access. However, it is recognised that Killough Village itself offers viewpoints, picnic areas, benches, flat stretches of the Ulster Way and amenities making it inclusive.
Coney Island	3	3	Due to poor access and limited scope to provide ancillary provisions, it is not recommended that Coney Island is prioritised for any future development.
Killard	3	3	Killard features two beaches: Millquarter Bay, which is accessed from Killard Road, and Benderg Bay which is part of Killard Nature Reserve and managed by NIEA. Benderg Bay is too far from the nearest parking location and therefore should not be prioritised for future development regarding inclusive access. Millquarter Bay whilst lacking scope for ancillary provisions such as Changing Place, toilets, Blue Badge parking or equipment stores, could be improved through formal access improvements including a ramp or boardwalk.

Table 7: Site Prioritisation Summary

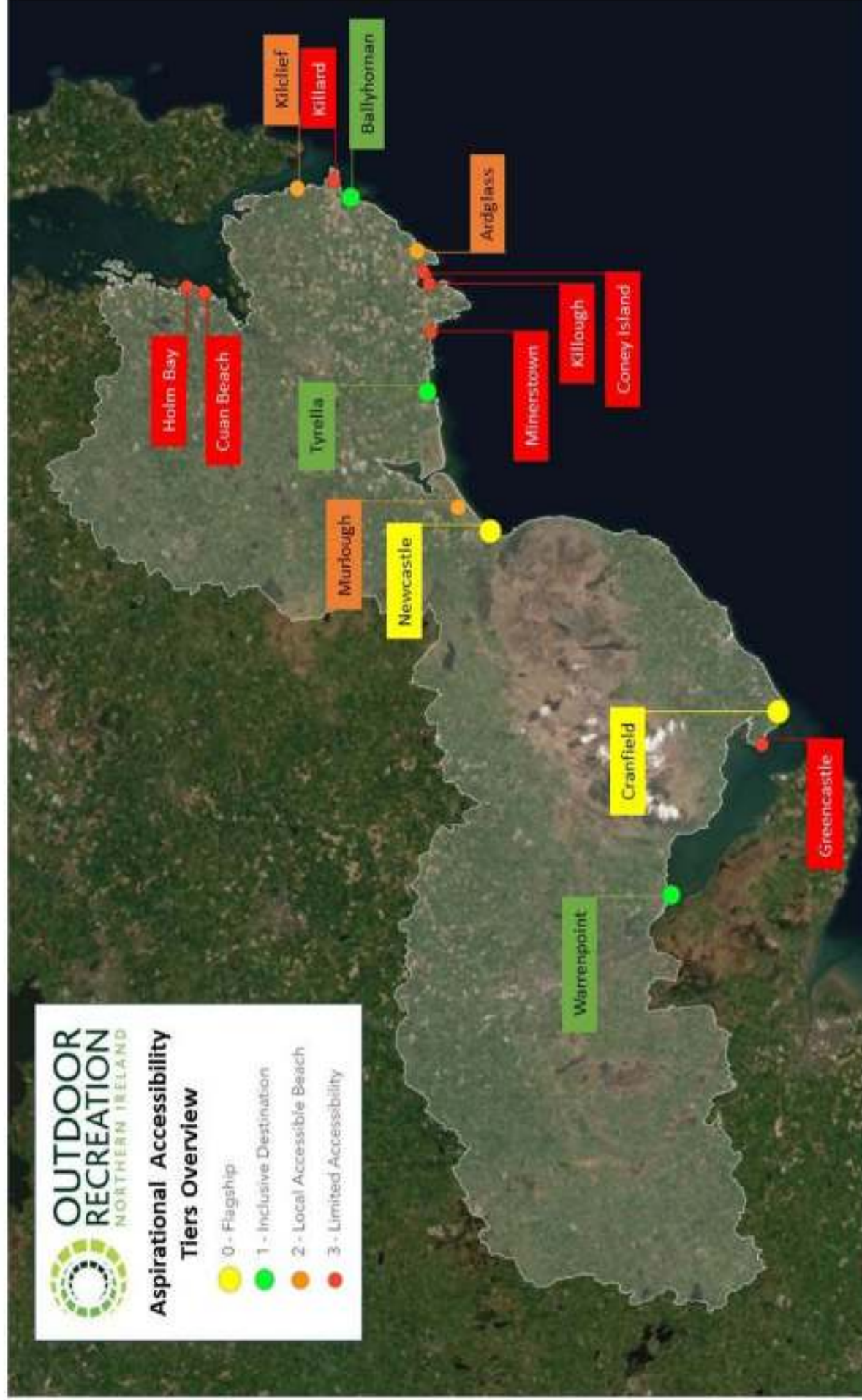


Figure 12. Aspirational Accessibility Overview

8. Recommendations

8.1. Developing the Infrastructure

8.1.1. Priority Sites

From undertaking the beach access audit across the study area and an analysis of best practice in access design and management, the following baselines have been identified for priority sites (see Section 8) and recommendations proposed to elevate each.

The following proposals are high-level recommendations only. Full spatial planning and feasibility screening is required before progressing with the development of infrastructure at any site.

Baseline	Recommendations
<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 1</p> <p>Cranfield Beach has been identified as the benchmark of beach inclusivity in the Council area.</p> <p>Cranfield Beach provides access, parking, and disabled toilets. Toilets offer hoisting and adult sized changing bench facilities – to full Changing Places standard. A free beach equipment loan scheme is operated by Mae Murray Foundation from Cranfield.</p> <p>In addition, Cranfield serves as a venue for events and activities, delivered by Mae Murray Foundation. This may include beach fun days, surf days, and litter picking.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tier 0</p> <p>It is recommended that Council;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintains the existing offering and partnership with the Mae Murray Foundation to provide inclusive events and activities • continues to develop inclusive recreational opportunities such as inclusive play and accessible recreational trails at the beach <p>These development will help bolster it as an inclusive beach destination promoting the beach from a Tier 1 to a Tier 0 site.</p>

Newcastle	
Tier 2	Tier 0
<p>Newcastle Beach currently benefits from accessible parking, toilets, and ramped access points in close proximity to a wider destination experience within Newcastle Town.</p> <p>While the site lacks a Changing Places facility and equipment offering, its location and existing infrastructure means that Newcastle Beach is a prime site for further development as an all-inclusive beach.</p>	<p>Newcastle Beach has the potential to meet all the criteria required to be a fully inclusive facility. It is recommended that adapted infrastructure is developed to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of an inclusive hub including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Inclusive changing facilities to Changing Places standard o Upgrade of existing accessible toilet facilities o Provision of a storage block for beach access equipment and support - Enhanced parking provision to include accessible parking bays and pick/up drop-off bays
Tyrella	
Tier 2	Tier 1
<p>Tyrella Beach benefits from accessible parking and toilet facilities in close proximity.</p>	<p>It is recommended that Tyrella Beach is prioritised for development of improved facilities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replacement of the current toilet block with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Inclusive changing facilities to Changing Places standard o Upgrade of existing accessible toilet facilities o Provision of a storage room for beach access equipment and support - Upgrade and reconfiguration of car park to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Enhanced parking provision to include accessible parking bays and pick/up drop off bays o Safe pedestrian access routes

Ballyhorman	
Tier 2	<p>Ballyhorman Beach has benefited from recent investment in increased Blue Badge parking provision and a wheelchair access path as part of an Environmental Improvement Scheme allowing safe and inclusive access between the car park and beach.</p> <p>The beach is located centrally to Ballyhorman Village with close proximity to a play park, shop, and café.</p> <p>Ballyhorman Village’s public toilet block currently has an accessible toilet, however, there is no off-road connection between the toilet block and beach car park.</p>
Tier 1	<p>It is recommended that Ballyhorman Beach is prioritised for further development to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide an off-road connection from the car park to the existing public toilet block and; - Upgrade existing public toilet block to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Inclusive changing facilities to Changing Places standard o Upgrade of existing accessible toilet facilities o Provision of a storage room for beach access equipment and support <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relocate existing public toilet block directly adjacent to the car park with enhanced provisions to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Inclusive changing facilities to Changing Places standard o Upgrade of existing accessible toilet facilities o Provision of a storage room for beach access equipment and support
Warrenpoint	
Tier 3	<p>While Warrenpoint Beach is primarily surfaced in pebbles, its existing infrastructure lends itself to a degree of inclusive access with ramped</p>
Tier 1	<p>It is recommended that Warrenpoint Beach is prioritised for development to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of an inclusive hub including:

<p>access to a concrete walkway that borders the beach alongside a promenade with rest stops in close proximity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Inclusive changing facilities to Changing Places standard o Upgrade of existing accessible toilet facilities o Provision of a storage block for beach access equipment and support <p>Enhanced parking provision to include accessible parking bays and pick/up drop-off bays</p> <p>It is recommended that a suite of inclusive facilities should be located within, or near the main car park.</p>
<p>Kilclief</p>	
<p>Tier 3</p> <p>Kilclief Beach is located 3 miles from both Strangford and Ballyhornan. Due to its poor connections, it has poor scope for ancillary provisions such as Changing Place and equipment store but does offer a generously sized car park with Blue Badge Parking.</p>	<p>Tier 2</p> <p>The site in its current state is an accessible recreation area with limited scope to become fully inclusive.</p> <p>Recommended development should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Improved formal access to the beach from the car park for mobility aid users should be considered by means of a ramp or boardwalk.

8.1.2. Non-priority Sites

While some sites have not been included in this study, or have been classified as 'non-priority', if a public need for improved access, from any perspective, is identified and it is feasible to improve aspects of accessibility including car parking, access routes and ancillary provisions, these projects should be considered on a regular basis and further explored and progressed as the resources become available.

8.2. Management

8.2.1. Site Management

With inadequate management and maintenance protocols in place, accessible sites can very quickly become inaccessible and unsafe.

Recommendation

It is recommended that, to ensure long-term success from investment and continued accessibility of outdoor spaces, a management plan is prepared for each site in Section 8.1.

Key considerations for inclusion in management plans should include:

- Sustainability and site maintenance. A comprehensive list of maintenance standards, in line with guidance from Disability Sport NI, is included in Appendix C¹⁰
- Public Liability Insurance and risk assessments
- Management of excess demand
- Clarity of rules and regulations

8.2.2. Cross-departmental Beach Access Steering Group

Consultation with Council Officers identified that responsibility for beach access falls across several departments. Currently within Council no mechanism exists to facilitate collaboration between those Departments involved in Inclusive beach access, leading to an uncoordinated vision and approach and consequently less focus and resources than it should.

Recommendation

Establish a **Cross-Departmental Beach Access Steering Group** within the Council to improve internal partnership working, made up of representatives from departments that have a direct or in-direct role in developing, managing and/or promoting outdoor recreation.

The Steering Group would meet periodically and seek to ensure buy-in, engagement and collaboration from other departments in developing, managing, and promoting beach access and development. This mechanism would ensure that the profile of beach access is raised across the Council and help with coordination and collaboration between departments on the delivery of projects and programmes on

¹⁰ For further guidance on the management and maintenance within the external environment see BS8300-1:2018, Annex A (informative), Management and Maintenance, p.59-64.

the ground. This is essential to successfully oversee and ensure the delivery of the recommendations and actions outlined in this report.

8.2.3: Strategic Beach Access Forum

Currently no opportunity exists for those involved in beach access, in the widest sense, to come together on a regular basis e.g Council officers, activity tourism providers, caravan park owners, land management bodies, private landowners, disability organisations, members of the local community.

Recommendation

The formation of a **Beach Access Forum** for the Council Area, with representatives from all interested parties in beach access.

This Forum would be facilitated by the Council (in particular, members of the Beach Access Steering Group) and would include representation from management bodies, major public landowners, private activity providers, local clubs and community associations and groups, particularly disability groups.

The purpose of the Forum would be to hold the Council accountable for the delivery of the beach access development, monitor progress, identify local issues and potential actions and solutions. It is envisaged that the Forum would meet bi-annually for update briefings to ensure regular communication and the coordination of the delivery of actions across partners.

8.3. Participation

When developing an inclusive or accessible site, early and meaningful engagement with 'lived experience' organisations is essential to ensure success. In its own right this partnership can act as a form of marketing and promotion among prospective user groups, adding to the likelihood of success.

Recommendation

It is recommended that participation programmes should be facilitated by Council in partnership with third-party organisations such as Mae Murray Foundation and Disability Sport NI at inclusive sites (Tier 0 and 1). A well-resourced participation offering would include a calendar of inclusive beach-based events and equipment loan schemes.

Case Study: Participation: Inclusive Beaches- Mae Murray Foundation, Northern Ireland

The Mae Murray Foundation promotes 'Inclusive Beaches' as beach environments that have been planned so that people of all ages and abilities can take part, have fun, and be included.

Beyond accessible infrastructure e.g., access, parking, toilets, changing facilities and hoists, Inclusive Beaches in Northern Ireland offer free beach equipment loan schemes and hosted events and activities, operated as a partnership between Mae Murray Foundation and respective beach operators.

Hosted events and activities may include beach fun days, surf days, litter picking events amongst others. Event notifications are emailed via the membership newsletter. Membership is free.

The Inclusive Beach Equipment Loan Scheme operates through a 6-step booking process that involves watching an induction video and water safety video.



6 Step Booking Process

1. Ensure you have membership of Mae Murray Foundation - which is free! [Click here](#).
2. Watch this online information and safety video. [Click here](#)
3. Read Frequently Asked Questions and Terms and Conditions.
4. Check beach schedules and equipment options for your preferred beach. If unsure about which piece of equipment is best for you, contact MMF office.
5. Complete the online booking request form. You **MUST** send your request 72 hours in advance. [Click here](#)
6. Await confirmation email with further instruction. If no email is received contact Mae Murray Foundation office on 03006001366

8.4. Communication

Consultation and desk research on the current marketing and promotion of beach access in NMDDC, has identified:

- no strategic approach to communicating and marketing beach access, activities, events, and experiences on offer across the District
- more integration is required between key Council departments, including the Leisure and Sport Team and the Tourism Team, to collate, disseminate and promote information on beach access to local people and visitors;
- there is an understanding that local people would benefit from high quality information on local outdoor recreation sites and facilities, particularly in relation to parking provision, access, permits, disabled facilities etc;
- effective communication of key events and experiences have potential to attract more visitors to the area

Recommendation

Good communication is critical to enable people to plan days out. Users, their families and/or carers need to know what experience is available to them to have the confidence to leave home for any significant period.

It is recommended that Council prepares a central online source of information for both local people *and* tourists regarding beach access. This is envisaged as a micro-site within the Council's website that would collate and promote all beach access information on:

- The unique and diverse natural landscape of the District, including the key assets of the coastline
- Essential logistical information in an easy-to-understand format on location, access, activities available, public transport provisions and visitor services available at each outdoor recreation site
- What visitors with disabilities can expect at beaches including those with mobility issues and other impairments including learning, hearing, visual and hidden. This will allow visitors to be informed and plan ahead
- Beach access equipment availability and loan information
- Activity providers, including information on location(s) and activities available
- Relevant events throughout the calendar year across NMDDC

- Local recreation clubs with details on activities, taster sessions and membership.

This online platform could either pool together information independently or source information such as mapping from external established websites such as OutmoreNI or the Council's "Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion" tourism brand.

While a micro-site within the Council website would centralise all beach access information for the District, multi-channel tools should also be integrated such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to extend market reach, drive interest and inspire locals and tourists to explore the coastline.

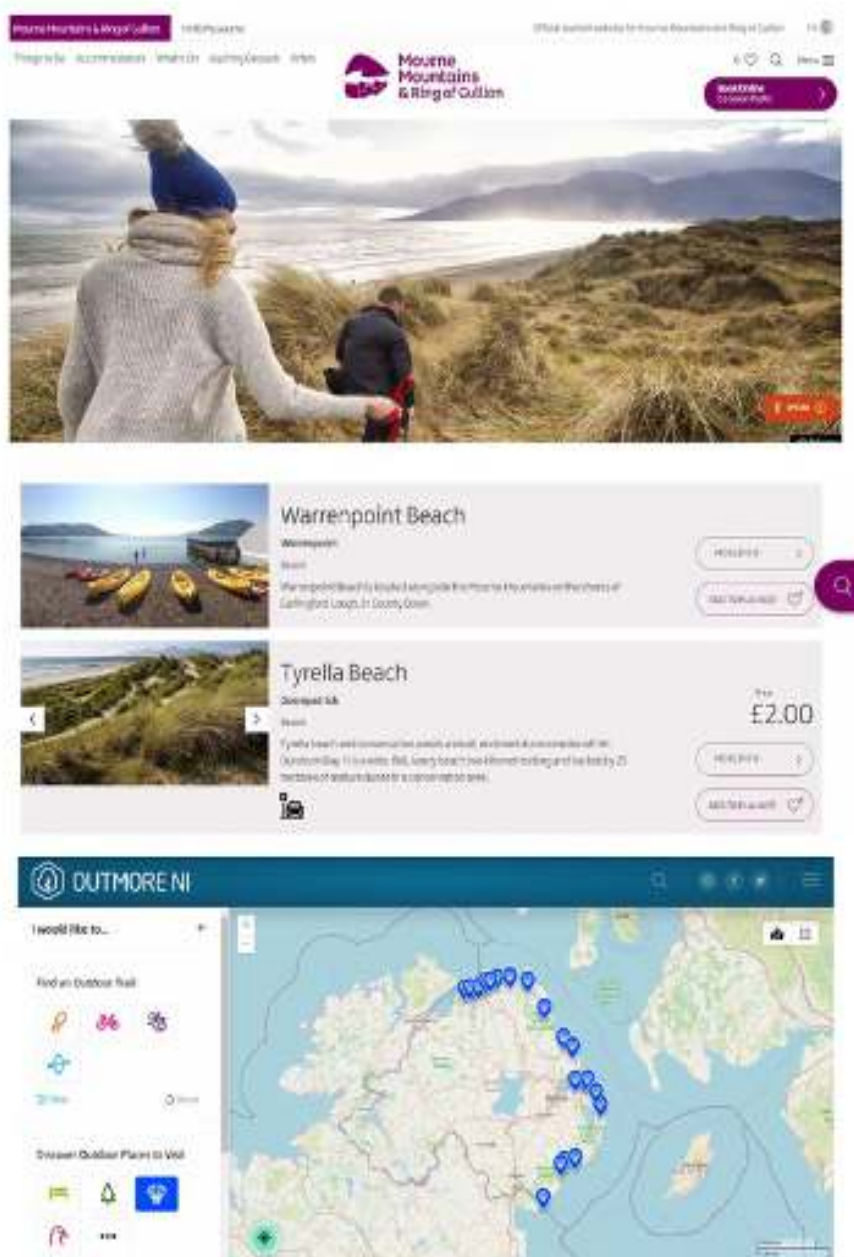


Figure 13: "Mourne Mountains & Ring of Gullion" website and OutmoreNI

8.5. Summary of Recommendations/Action Plan

This section presents the preferred options recommended for future development. Costs are presented within a range for indicative purposes only on the basis that development will be subject to further detailed design. Indicative costs and practical considerations for Changing Places facilities are included in Appendix D.

- Staff Cost (ongoing)
- Low (up to £20,000)
- Medium (£20,000 – £350,000)
- High (£350,000+)

Recommendation	Action	Delivery Partners	Estimated Costs
Developing the Infrastructure			
Cranfield Beach	Continue to develop inclusive recreational opportunities such as inclusive play and accessible recreational trails to continue to bolster Cranfield as an inclusive destination overall which would promote the beach to a 'Tier D' site.	Council	Estimate: Medium
Newcastle Beach	Stage 1: Commission a feasibility study to assess full potential and requirements for development to Tier 0 standard.	Council	Estimate: Low

	Stage 2: Delivery of infrastructure and ancillary items. This is likely to take place as part of a wider town regeneration scheme in Newcastle. <i>Details at 8.1.</i>		Dependent on Stage 1 Estimate: High
Tyrella Beach	Stage 1: Commission a feasibility study to assess full potential and requirements for development to Tier 1 standard Stage 2: Delivery of infrastructure and ancillary items <i>Details at 8.1.</i>	Council	Estimate: Low Dependent on Stage 1 Estimate: Medium
Warrenpoint Beach	Stage 1: Commission a feasibility study to assess full potential and requirements for development to Tier 2 standard Stage 2: Delivery of infrastructure and ancillary items. This is likely to take place as part of a wider town regeneration scheme at Newcastle. <i>Details at 8.1.</i>	Council	Estimate: Low Dependent on Stage 1 Estimate: High
Kilclief Beach	Development of wheelchair-accessible route from car park to beach <i>Details at 8.1.</i>	Council	Estimate: Low
Non-priority Sites	Ad-hoc development where feasible if there is a public need.	Council	Unknown
Management			

<p>Site Management</p>	<p>Preparation of, and adherence to, management plans for all developed sites. <i>Details at 8.2.1.</i></p>	<p>Council: Active and Healthy Communities; Neighbourhood Services;</p>	<p>Staff Cost</p>
<p>Cross-departmental Beach Access Steering Group (Intra-council)</p>	<p>Steering Group to be established, meeting at least 4 times per year. <i>Details at 8.2.2.</i></p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Staff Cost</p>
<p>Strategic Beach Access Forum</p>	<p>To be established with representatives from relevant stakeholders. Determine clear terms of reference. Meet at least twice per year. <i>Details at 8.2.3.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council (Beach Access Steering Group) - Public and Private Landowners/Managers - Private Activity Providers - Outdoor recreation clubs and groups - Disability Groups 	<p>Staff Cost</p>
<p>Participation</p>			
<p>Event Programme</p>	<p>Partnership with lived experience organisations to deliver a calendar of inclusive beach events and activities. <i>Details at 8.3.</i></p>	<p>Council DSNI Mae Murray Foundation</p>	<p>Unknown</p>
<p>Equipment Loan</p>	<p>Stage 1: Purchase of beach access equipment</p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Estimate: Medium</p>

	Stage 2: Delivery of equipment loan scheme. <i>Details at 8.3.</i>	DSNI Mae Murray Foundation	Staff Cost
Communication			
Central Online Source of Information	Creation of micro-site within Council website to provide high-quality outdoor recreation information to visitors and local community. Access Statements to be updated as more products and events are developed. <i>Details at 8.4.</i>	Council	Estimate: Low/Staff Cost

Appendices

Appendix A: Strategic Context - Further Relevant Detail

Northern Ireland Programme for Government: In Northern Ireland, a Programme for Government (PfG) 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. Many of the 14 outcomes are inter-dependent but with respect to outdoor recreation and disability access to goods and services across Northern Ireland, the following outcomes particularly apply:

- *We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment*
- *We have a more equal society*
- *We enjoy long, healthy, active lives*
- *We care for others, and we help those in need*
- *We are a shared society that respects diversity*
- *We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure*

Our Great Outdoors, an Outdoor Recreation Plan for Northern Ireland: In 2014, an Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland was published by a consortium made up of the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (whose statutory duties now re-structured across a new suite of Government Departments), Sport NI, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Northern Ireland Tourist Board (now Tourism NI), and in consultation with key stakeholders and user groups. The Outdoor Recreation Plan for Northern Ireland sets a vision for:

‘A culture of dynamic, sustainable outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland’

The Plan goes on to highlight that to achieve this vision, Northern Ireland will aim 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.

NIEA ‘Our Passion, Our Place’ Strategic Priorities 2012-2022: The Outdoor Recreation Plan for Northern Ireland delivers on a range of other Government strategies and policies, not least ‘Our Passion, Our Place’ that outlines NIEA’s four strategic priorities 2012-2022. One of NIEA’s four strategic priorities is:

People & Places – promoting health and well-being and influencing how we all behave towards the environment. NIEA will encourage access to and understanding of our environment and work with partners to actively involve communities and businesses in protecting our natural and historic places for the enjoyment and benefit of everyone.

Sport Matters (2009-2019) and Active Living, No limits Action Plan 2016-2021: The Active Living, No Limits Action Plan was produced with a view to making a significant contribution towards achieving the ambitions within 'Sport Matters: Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation', notably to help achieve a target for the latter 'to deliver at least a 6% increase in participation rates in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability...'. The purpose of the Action Plan is to:

- Give direction to the development of disability sport across Northern Ireland.
- Encourage strategic and joined up working.
- Agree where the sector would like to be by 2021 and provide a guide for how to get there.
- Provide a framework for strategic investment in disability sport.

A Strategy to Improve the Lives of People with Disabilities (NI Executive 2012-2015): the purpose of this Strategy is to:

- Set out a high-level policy framework to give coherence and guidance to Northern Ireland Departments' activities across general and disability specific areas of policy.
- Drive improved performance of service delivery leading to improved outcomes for persons with a disability
- Increase the understanding and importance of the needs of persons with a disability and ensure these needs are recognised when policy is developed or when implementing initiatives which impact on disabled people
- Improve the opportunities for people with disabilities to contribute across all areas of society.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Northern Ireland): The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (The DDA) applies in Northern Ireland¹¹ and is designed to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities. Under the DDA, employers and service providers have the positive duty to make reasonable adjustments to premises and policies to provide disabled people access to goods, facilities, services, or premises.

¹¹ Nb. The DDA has been repealed and replaced by the Equality Act 2010 in the rest of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales).

Appendix B: Beach Assessment Summaries

Holm Bay, Killyleagh

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	None	
2 Changing Place	None	
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	None	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A	
5 Step-free access throughout	None	
6 Favourable topography & distances	No	
7 Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Stone	Lack of scope for beach wheelchairs and provisions e.g. Mobi-mat
LOCATION		

8	Part of wider destination experience	No	Holm Bay is remotely located with a lack of wider destination experience from a wider destination experience
ADDITIONAL NOTES			
<p>Holm Bay benefits from a newly upgraded access road from Cross Street, Killyleagh, however it is not recommended that Holm Bay is prioritised for further development as an accessible beach due to its remote location, lack of scope for ancillary provisions and its stony surface which is unsuitable for most mobility aids.</p>			


Cuan Beach, Killyleagh Yacht Club

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1	Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	None There is potential for Blue Badge parking provision within the grounds of the Yacht Club
2	Changing Place	None There is potential for a Changing Place facility either standalone on the grounds of the Yacht Club or to be retrofitted in to the Clubhouse
3	Equipment store for beach access equipment	None There is potential for an equipment store either standalone on the grounds of the Yacht Club or to be retrofitted in to the Clubhouse
4	Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	None While there is potential for the above, the grounds of the Yacht Club are locked for the majority of the time.
5	Step-free access throughout	None
6	Favourable topography & distances	Yes The site is small with a flat footpath running adjacent to the beach with rest areas to view Strangford Lough from.
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Stone The beach is stony and unsuitable for the majority of mobility aids and provisions e.g. Mobi-mat
LOCATION		

8	Part of wider destination experience	Yes	Cuan Beach and Killyleagh Yacht Club are directly connected to Killyleagh
ADDITIONAL NOTES			
<p>Cuan Beach, located adjacent to Killyleagh Yacht Club is ideally situated in a location with scope for ancillary provisions such as Changing Place, equipment store and Blue Badge Parking. However, it is not recommended that the site is prioritised for further development as the beach topography and surface is unsuitable for the majority of mobility aids. The site could be considered as an accessible rest area with existing benches and picnic tables that overlook Strangford Lough.</p>			

Kilclief Beach

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	Yes	There is one line-marked disability parking space available alongside 13 regular parking spaces at the site's sealed surface car park.
2 Changing Place	None	
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	None	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	None	There is no scope for equipment store or Changes Place facilities at Kilclief Beach
5 Step-free access throughout	Yes	
6 Favourable topography & distances	Yes	The site is small and generally flat with dropped kerbing that allows users of mobility aids to access the site's one picnic table across the grass. Some, but not all, mobility aid users may be able to access the beach unassisted due to its gradient and narrow entrance.

				<p>The beach is generally flat and consists of compacted sand for the majority. This site would be suitable for some mobility aids and provisions e.g. Mobi-mat</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat</p>	<p>Stone</p>		
<p>LOCATION</p>				
<p>8</p>	<p>Part of wider destination experience</p>	<p>No</p>		<p>The site is located adjacent to Kilclief Castle, a 15th century anglo-Norman 'tower house', which is not accessible but does provide a point of interest. Kilclief Beach is an access/egress point along the South East Canoe Trail. The site is located 3 miles from both Strangford and Ballyhornan.</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL NOTES</p>				
<p>Kilclief Beach is located remotely 3 miles from both Strangford and Ballyhornan. The site has poor scope for ancillary provisions such as Changing Place and equipment store but does offer a generously sized car park with Blue Badge Parking. However, it is not recommended that the site is prioritised for further development. The site in its current state is an accessible recreation area and improved access to the beach for mobility aid users should be considered by means of a ramp or boardwalk.</p>				

Millquarter Bay and Benderg Bay, Killard

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	No	Road-side parking is unsuitable for Blue Badge parking
2 Changing Place	No	
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	No	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A	There is a lack of space available for these facilities at both locations.

5	<p>Step-free access throughout</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Access to beach from roadside is via a narrow and informal desire line which may be unsuitable for people with reduced mobility to traverse.</p> 
6	<p>Favourable topography & distances</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Road-side parking is a favourable distance from Millquarter Bay however the access point lacks formal provisions to make it suitable for all users. Benderg Bay is not a favourable distance from the nearest parking opportunity.</p>
7	<p>Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat</p> <p>Sand</p>
LOCATION	
8	<p>Part of wider destination experience</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Millquarter Bay lacks a wider destination experience with poor scope for the addition of visitor facilities. Benderg Bay is located on Killard Nature Reserve, however the site is not deemed accessible to visitors with reduced mobility.</p>
ADDITIONAL NOTES	

Killard features two beaches: Millquarter Bay, which is accessed from Killard Road, and Benderg Bay which is part of Killard Nature Reserve and managed by NIEA.

Benderg Bay is not a favourable distance from the nearest parking location and therefore should not be prioritised for future development regarding inclusive access. Millquarter Bay lacks scope for ancillary provisions such as Changing Place, toilets, Blue Badge parking or equipment stores, however access could be improved overall with formal access improvements including a ramp or boardwalk.

Ballyhorman Beach


Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
<p>1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point</p>	No	<p>Existing car park has 2 Blue Badge parking spaces</p> 
<p>2 Changing Place</p>	No	<p>Public toilets servicing Ballyhorman village, including disabled toilet, is located 150m approx. from car park. There is no off-road link between the car park and toilets.</p> 

<p>3</p>	<p>Equipment store for beach access equipment</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Public toilets have two storage rooms that are not currently used to store beach access equipment but may have the potential to.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>All sites are located adjacent to each other, however there is no off-road link currently between them.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Step-free access throughout</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Access to beach from roadside is via a formalised sealed surface pathway from the car park. The short connection between the pathway and the beach is short and which may not be suitable for all users to move between.</p>
			
<p>6</p>	<p>Favourable topography & distances</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat</p>	<p>Sand</p>	

LOCATION	
8	<p>Part of wider destination experience</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Ballyhornan Beach is located centrally to Ballyhornan beach in close range to shops, catering facilities and play park.</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL NOTES</p> <p>Ballyhornan Beach has benefited from recent investment in increased Blue Badge parking provision and a wheelchair access path as part of an Environmental Improvement Scheme allowing safe and inclusive access between the car park and beach. The beach is located centrally to Ballyhornan Village with close proximity to a play park, shop and catering facilities.</p> <p>It is recommended that Ballyhornan Beach is prioritised for further development to improve inclusive toilet, changing and beach access equipment storage facilities with an off-road connection to the car park.</p>	

Ardglass

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	Yes	
2 Changing Place	No	Public toilets including accessible toilet is located adjacent to Ardglass Beach
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	No	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A	

5	Step-free access throughout	Yes	<p>Ramped access to slipway and beach, however access is steep.</p> 
6	Favourable topography & distances	Yes	
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Sand	
LOCATION			
8	Part of wider destination experience	Yes	Located in close proximity to slipway and wider facilities in Ardglass village.
ADDITIONAL NOTES			

Ardglass Beach is located adjacent to the fishing village of Ardglass. The beach benefits from its connectivity to Blue Badge parking and accessible toilet. However, current ramped access is steep and the size of the beach provides limited scope for a beach experience. Therefore, Ardglass Beach is not recommended for further development beyond its current provisions.

Coney Island

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	None	
2 Changing Place	None	
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	None	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A	
5 Step-free access throughout	Yes	
6 Favourable topography & distances	No	
7 Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Sand	
LOCATION		
8 Part of wider destination experience	No	Access is located along a small laneway servicing private dwellings.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Due to poor access and limited scope to provide ancillary provisions, it is not recommended that Coney Island is prioritised for any future development.

Killough

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1	Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	No Parking is informal or accessed from Killough village
2	Changing Place	No
3	Equipment store for beach access equipment	No
4	Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A
5	Step-free access throughout	N/A
6	Favourable topography & distances	No
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Stone Poor surface for users with reduced mobility or users of mobility aids
LOCATION		
8	Part of wider destination experience	Yes Killough Beach is situated in an attractive location adjacent to viewpoints, picnic areas, benches, flat stretch of the Ulster Way and amenities in Killough Village.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Due to its stony surface, unfavourable topography for inclusive access and lack of scope for ancillary provisions, it is not recommended that Killough Beach is prioritised for further development in the context of inclusive access. However, it is recognised that Killough Village itself offers viewpoints, picnic areas, benches, flat stretches of the Ulster Way and amenities that are inclusive in nature.


Milverston

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	None	Road-side parking only, unsuitable for Blue Badge Parking provisions
2 Changing Place	None	
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	None	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A	
5 Step-free access throughout	No	
6 Favourable topography & distances	No	
7 Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Stone	Unsuitable for mobility aids and Mobi-mat provisions
LOCATION		
8 Part of wider destination experience	No	

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Due to lack of existing or potential ancillary provisions, and environmental constraints, it is not recommended that Minerstown Beach is prioritised for further development in the context of inclusive access.

Marlborough

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	Yes	<p>A generous amount of Blue Badge parking is available in the main car park, however this is on uneven ground.</p> 
2 Changing Place	None	
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	None	

4	Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	No	
5	Step-free access throughout	Yes	
6	Favourable topography & distances	No	Car park is located approx. 700m from beach with no facilities between.
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Sand with boardwalk access	
LOCATION			
8	Part of wider destination experience	Yes	
ADDITIONAL NOTES			
<p>Murlough Beach is an attractive destination in its own right that benefits from Blue Badge parking and boardwalk between the car park and beach. However, the beach is located approx. 700m from the car park. Therefore, it is not recommended that Murlough is prioritised for future development in the context of inclusive access.</p>			

Newcastle Beach

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	Yes	
2 Changing Place	No	Accessible toilet available.
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	No	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	No	There is scope for all elements to be developed in close proximity to each other.
5 Step-free access throughout	Yes	



6	Favourable topography & distances	Yes	
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Sand	Primarily sand with pebbles and larger stones that are easily avoidable.
LOCATION			
8	Part of wider destination experience	Yes	Newcastle Beach is located within the popular tourist destination of Newcastle Town and its amenities including shops, cafés and visitor centre. The entire area is within the Mournees and Slieve Croob Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Murlough SAC.
ADDITIONAL NOTES			
Newcastle Beach currently benefits from accessible parking, toilets and ramped access points in close proximity to a wider destination experience within Newcastle Town. Its location and existing infrastructure means that Newcastle Beach is a prime site for further development as an all-inclusive beach with improved changing facilities to Changing Places standard, enhancement of parking and drop-off points and council resource to carry out communications and management of resources.			


Greencastle Beach

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1	Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	None Informal layby parking only
2	Changing Place	None
3	Equipment store for beach access equipment	None
4	Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A
5	Step-free access throughout	No No ramped or stepped provisions
6	Favourable topography & distances	No
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Stone
LOCATION		
8	Part of wider destination experience	No
ADDITIONAL NOTES		

Due to its remote location outside a wider destination experience, unfavourable topography and surface, and lack of scope for inclusive ancillary provisions, Greencastle beach is not recommended for future development in the context of inclusive access, particularly with facilities and Cranfield in close proximity.

Warrenpoint Beach

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	None	There is a large car park with scope for multiple designated spaces for Blue Badge Parking
2 Changing Place	None	Nearest public toilets are located in Warrenpoint Park
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	None	
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	N/A	There is scope to provide such infrastructure in close proximity to each other at this location
5 Step-free access throughout	Yes	Ramped access to concrete walkway at beach
6 Favourable topography & distances	Yes	

<p>7</p> <p>Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat</p>	<p>Stone</p>	<p>Stone is unsuitable for some mobility aids, however a concrete walkway borders the beach and requires regular attention to clear pebbles that are washed in by the tide.</p> 
<p>LOCATION</p>		
<p>8</p> <p>Part of wider destination experience</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Warrenpoint Town offers shops, cafes, toilets and public park in close proximity to the beach</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL NOTES</p> <p>While Warrenpoint Beach is primarily surfaced in pebbles, its existing infrastructure lends itself to a degree of inclusive access with ramped access to a concrete walkway that borders the beach alongside a promenade with rest stops in close proximity. The location has scope to improve designated blue-badge parking and drop-off points alongside development of changing and toilet facilities to Changing Places standard with storage facilities for beach access equipment.</p>		

Tyrella Beach

Essential Element	Status	Further Notes
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
1 Priority Blue Badge parking & drop off point	Yes	Blue Badge parking is provided however their surface has become uneven over time
2 Changing Place	No	Accessible toilets available in car park. Access is becoming overgrown... 
3 Equipment store for beach access equipment	No	There is potential for storage to be retrofitted to existing toilet block and to be included in a new development.
4 Elements 1-3 are all adjacent to each other, and favourably close to the beach.	No	There is potential for Elements 1-3 to be developed and located in close proximity to each other and the beach.
5 Step-free access throughout	Yes	

6	Favourable topography & distances	Yes	Car park and facilities are located adjacent to Tyrella Beach.
7	Sand/Stone i.e. Potential for Mobi-mat	Sand	
LOCATION			
8	Part of wider destination experience	No	While Tyrella is not located within a wider destination experience, it is of a suitable size to accommodate large numbers of users for extended periods of time.
ADDITIONAL NOTES			
<p>Tyrella Beach benefits from accessible parking and toilet facilities in close proximity. It is recommended that Tyrella Beach is prioritised for development of improved facilities to include enhanced accessible parking space and replacement of the current toilet block with enhanced toilet and changing facilities to Changing Place standards and storage for beach access equipment.</p>			

Appendix C: Disability Sport NI - Recommended Standards of Maintenance

Recommended Standards

- Parking along access and external routes should be discouraged.
- Vegetation along external routes, including on sensory trails, should be trimmed to maintain clear width and headroom.
- Inspect and drain waterlogged external routes to ensure quality ground surfaces and prevent potential slip hazard.
- Undertake ongoing assessment of compliance of gaps, gates, and stiles
 - o e.g., repair of broken latches and hinges.
- Regularly inspect and maintain wayfinding signs, waymarkers, information display board etc. to ensure they are clearly visible.
- Ensure that external steps and ramps remain stable, usable and safe in all weathers e.g. remove debris, standing water, snow and ice.
- Handrails should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are firmly secured and that there is no splintering or cracking.
- Regular cleaning of guardrail infill panels at viewing areas.
- The ground around tactile signs, interpretation boards and maps should be regularly cleared.
- Repair or replace damage to beach boardwalks and routes and prevent vegetation encroachment.
- Clear loose pebbles and build-up of sand on beach boardwalks and routes.
- Fishing stands and platforms should be regularly inspected and maintained to ensure they do not become slippery.
- The regular resurfacing of sections of fishing stands and platforms may be required to prevent the deterioration of the surface.
- Protruding vegetation should be maintained regularly so as not to encroach onto fishing stands and platforms

Appendix D: Costs and Practical Considerations for Changing Places in the Outdoors

Legal Framework in Northern Ireland

In 2020, Northern Ireland's Finance Minister Conor Murphy pledged to make the necessary changes to the technical guidance of building regulations to make Changing Places a requirement in new or refurbished large public buildings. Consultation with all Councils in NI points to a growing understanding of the benefits of embedding Changing Places at the planning stage of developing or refurbishing public buildings, but a lack of legislative framework means that opportunities are overlooked or are dismissed as too difficult either financially or logistically. In-year budgets can restrict timescales required for adequate consultation and planning. Even when legislation is eventually enshrined into NI law, it is possible this will have a limited impact on bespoke outdoor provision; looking to Scotland, their new Planning laws only apply to large public buildings and amenities. It is therefore critical that each Council oversees Changing Places development in a strategic way to include provision for access to the outdoors, working with third party and private sector providers, and feeding information to the Changing Places Consortium.

Development costs and considerations

A key factor in Changing Places development is the Consortium standard that sets out a requirement for a 12 square metre space, with a specific configuration of equipment within. This is a much larger facility than providing for a DDA compliant accessible toilet. This space requirement is a key compromising factor when it comes to their successful development.

A common argument is that the development of such space designed specifically for a Changing Places fit out comes at additional cost compared to a standard DDA compliant accessible toilet. However, with existing Changing Places installations having paved the way, a range of development options are available that can result in a successful installation that offers value for money.

New building construction will require an integrated consultancy team with architects, quantity surveyors, civil/structural engineers, mechanical and electrical consultants, etc. There will also be costs associated with the procurement of an integrated supply team of contractors and sub-contractors, and costs associated with planning permission and other statutory approvals that may be required. However, successful installations already documented in this Action Plan demonstrate that it is rarely the case that this full combination of considerations is necessary and where it is, it is typically part of a larger more holistic package of capital works at a site or as part of a larger building construction or refurbishment. In the context of such a scheme, a Changing Place installation may in fact result in the best value for money in the longer-term.

Table 8 summarises some scenarios for Changing Places installation, examples of where these have already been applied, and approximate capital costs for such developments.

Scenario	Examples	Capital cost (approximate) ¹²
1. Fit out of an existing space, assuming structurally independent equipment and use of existing plumbing configuration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wendover Woods (England) Westonbirt, the National Arboretum (England) Benone Strand (Co. Derry/Londonderry) – sub-standard Cranfield (Co. Down) – sub-standard 	£20,000 -30,000
2. Integrated design of a Changing Place into a completely new space i.e. a new leisure or visitor centre, or shopping centre, with subsequent fit-out of Changing Places equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aurora Leisure Centre Tesco stores 	If well integrated at planning stage the capital cost to create the space will be low relative to overall construction costs, so fit-out only is assumed: £20,000-£30,000
3. Pre-fabricated full standard modular unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caswell Bay, Wales 	£85,000-£100,000 including groundworks, delivery, and installation.
4. Re-worked building configuration within existing footprint to create space suitable for equipment fit out. May include plumbing reconfiguration and structural works to internal walls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groomsport Divis Barn 	£100,000 + £20-30k fit-out
5. Full standalone toilet block construction – this includes DDA compliant accessible toilet, male & female toilets, and a Changing Place. May require planning approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunluce Avenue, Portrush 	£250,000

Table 8: High-level summary of development options and costs

¹² Costs shown are indicative only. Every facility will be subject to unique characteristics and these figures are intended as a high-level guide only and should not be used for detailed budgeting purposes.

Maintenance and Resource Considerations

All specialist equipment, including hoists and changing benches need to be fitted, regularly inspected, and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions. Providers need to ensure that a regular maintenance and inspection programme is adhered to. Equipment also needs to be checked by staff daily to ensure that any batteries are fully charged, and equipment is ready for use.

Providers of Changing Places need to consider resource commitments to ensure the replenishment of consumables and upkeep of excellent hygiene within any such facility. Consistency of excellent hygiene standards is critical to build user confidence and encourage return visits. Given that changing places will exist in parallel with other toilet provision the additional cost for domestic services is not considered to impose much extra cleansing resource over and above a standard toilet configuration consisting typically of male, female, and standard accessible toilets.

Outdoor environments and remote locations with low-density usage could arguably be seen to be less of a priority for regular inspection and cleansing, so this must be taken into consideration when selecting a site for Changing Place installation in the outdoors. Providers need to ensure robust cleansing protocols are committed to, otherwise a Changing Place is unlikely to be a success.

Access

It is typical that access to standard accessible toilets in outdoor or public settings is via a key-holder scheme, e.g. RADAR. This concept can be similarly applied to Changing Places, limiting access to only those key-holders approved for use. It is accepted that legitimate users are more likely to respect such facilities, contributing to better ongoing hygiene (though this cannot be assumed as a substitute for regular inspection and cleansing protocols). However, there are examples of abuse of remote facilities e.g. Divis and Black Mountain where the door has been vandalised and as such, the provider has had to resort to an on-request access protocol for their site; an acceptable practice during centre opening hours so long as staff is available to guarantee access.

Consistency and communication of access times is critical for giving people the confidence to travel to any location. Access to a Changing Place should be available at times as a minimum consistent with the opening hours of the outdoor facility it is being provided within.

Insurance and risk

Providers of Changing Places will need to carry out a full risk assessment and consider any resulting additional insurance costs. However, this has not been cited by existing facility providers during consultation as any significant barrier to owning and maintaining such a facility.



A District-Wide Planning Tool to Inform Community Trail Development Priorities in Newry Mournie and Down

Community Trails



- Provide better connectivity within communities and between communities and the surrounding countryside
- Increase access for people of all ages, abilities and by different means, i.e. on foot, bike or horseback, etc.
- Improves accessibility, i.e. making it easier for people to move around their local community with reduced need for use of a car for different purposes, e.g. exercising, walking the dog, travelling to school or work, etc.
- Encourages a change in behaviour - creating a community where walking is easier and safer may lead to changes in people's behaviour, i.e. integrate physical activity into people's everyday life which has proven physical and mental health benefits, leading to a healthier, happier population with perhaps less reliance on vehicles which in turn would have environmental benefits.
- Offer a better-connected network of paths – this can make an area more appealing to visitors/tourists, therefore bringing economic benefit to the area.



OUTDOOR
RECREATION

NOOR THIESE WERF LAYND

Our Community Trail Plan



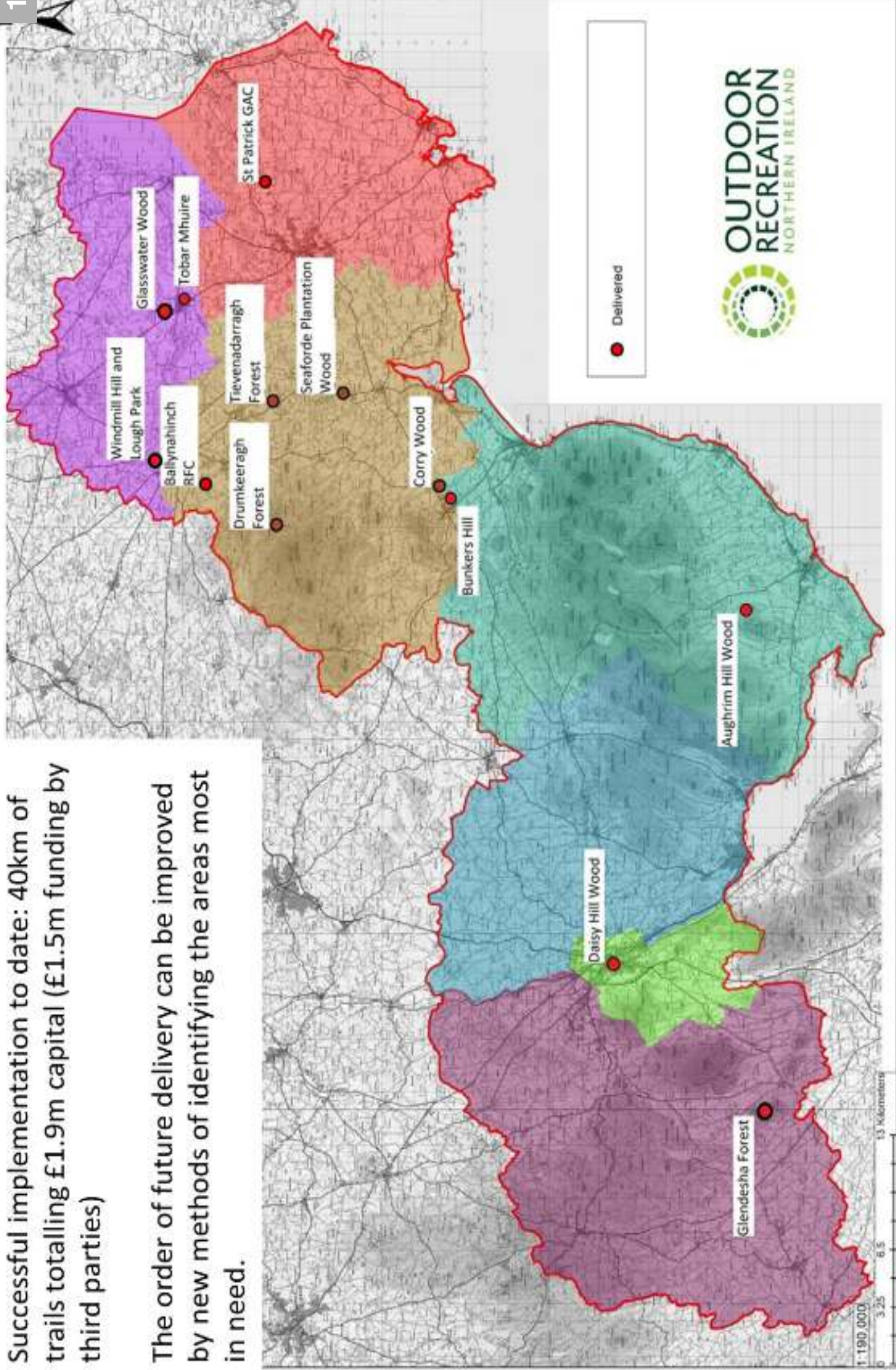
- Is a record of the existing community trail network within a District – usually managed in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and presented in map form. This includes all publicly accessible trails, not just those owned and managed by e.g. a Council
- Identifies opportunities and delivery mechanisms for potential future community trails, then works with Council and others to deliver.
- Sets out a long-term plan for development aligned with government targets. ***This should inform a priority order in which to deliver projects, ensuring public money is spent in the most impactful possible way***



Newry, Mourne & Down District Council, 2017 to present

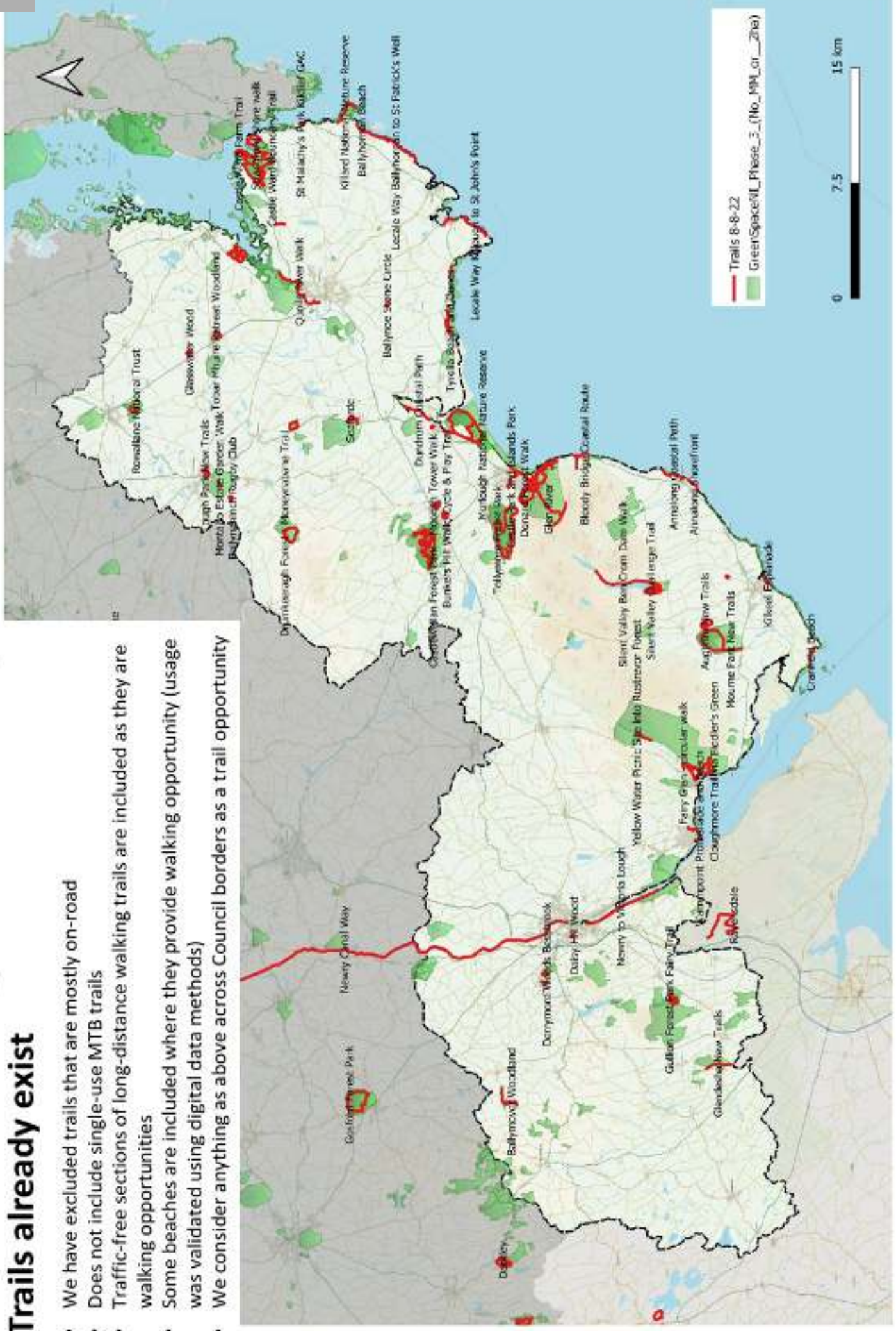
Successful implementation to date: 40km of trails totalling £1.9m capital (£1.5m funding by third parties)

The order of future delivery can be improved by new methods of identifying the areas most in need.

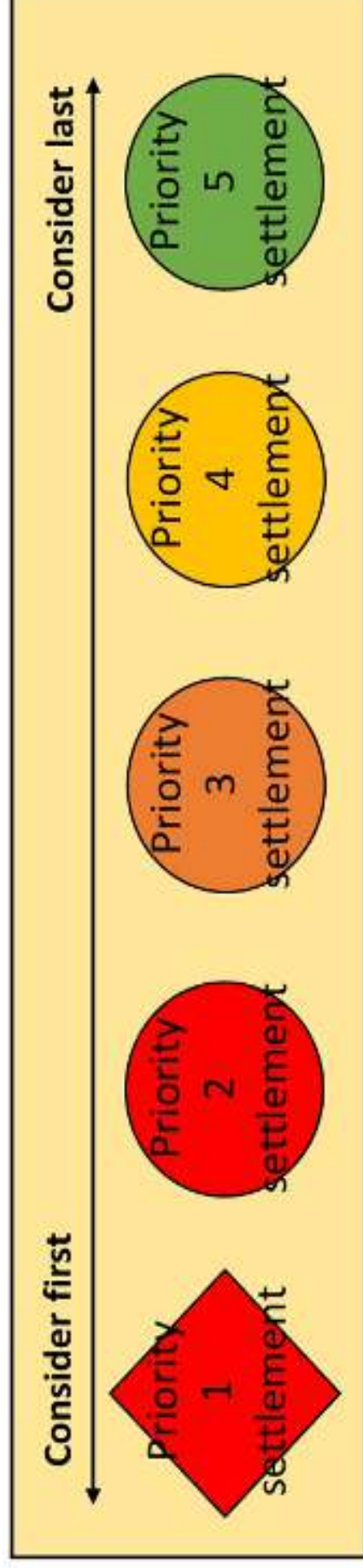


Step 2: Understanding where Community Trails already exist

- We have excluded trails that are mostly on-road
- Does not include single-use MTB trails
- Traffic-free sections of long-distance walking trails are included as they are walking opportunities
- Some beaches are included where they provide walking opportunity (usage was validated using digital data methods)
- We consider anything as above across Council borders as a trail opportunity



Step 4: Prioritise opportunities



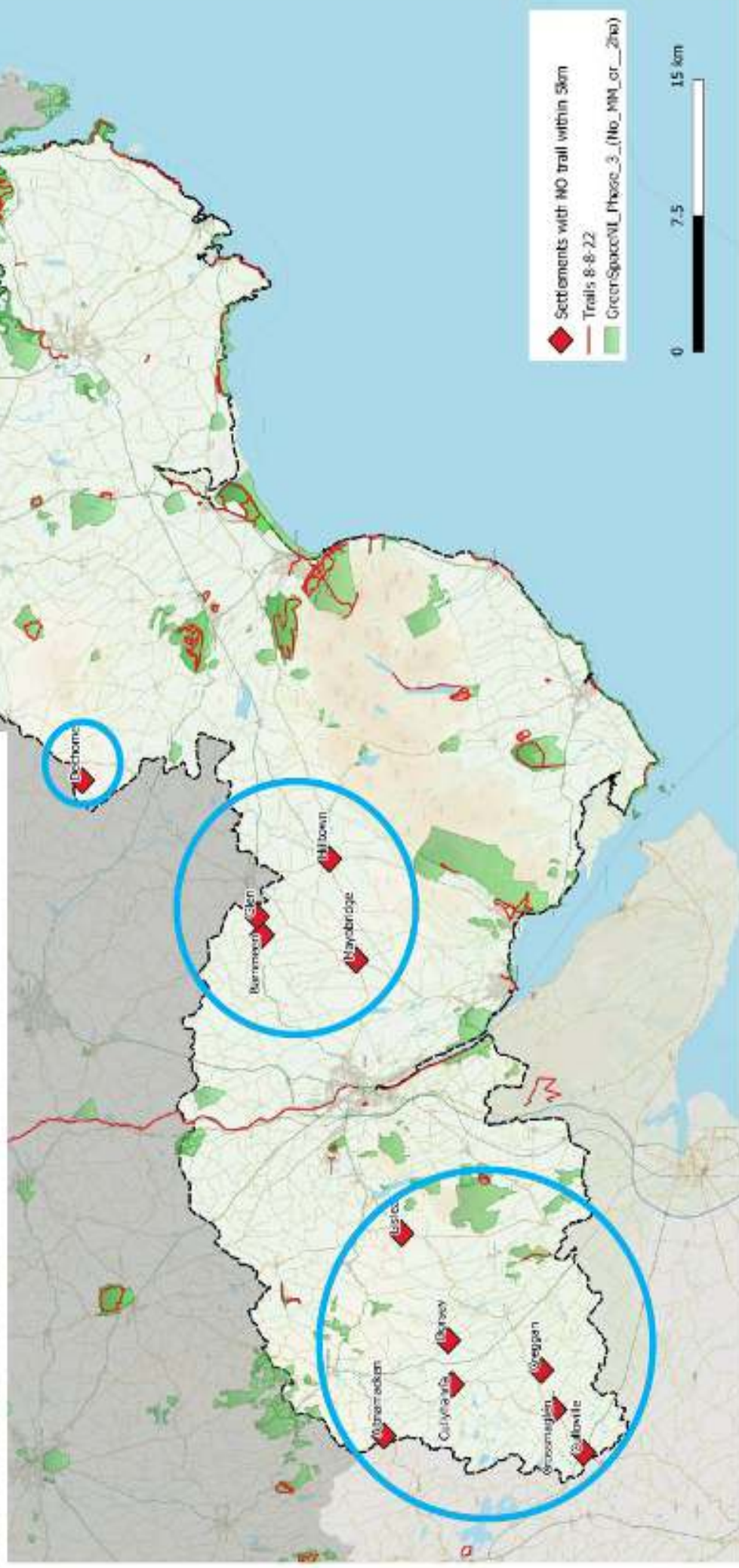
- At the Council/District/Municipal scale it can be difficult to understand spatially where NEED is greatest. Often we respond to the loudest voices. This planning tool provides a simple overview to validate whether demand satisfies a priority need, and to what extent.
- This allows Councils to plan ahead – targeting funding and understanding how best to distribute it.
- Helps management of expectations across communities and among elected representatives
- Should never be a tool to say ‘no’ but will ensure greatest need can be prioritised if necessary

Highest priority settlements

We consider the settlements of highest priority to be those who do not have any trails provision within a 5km radius

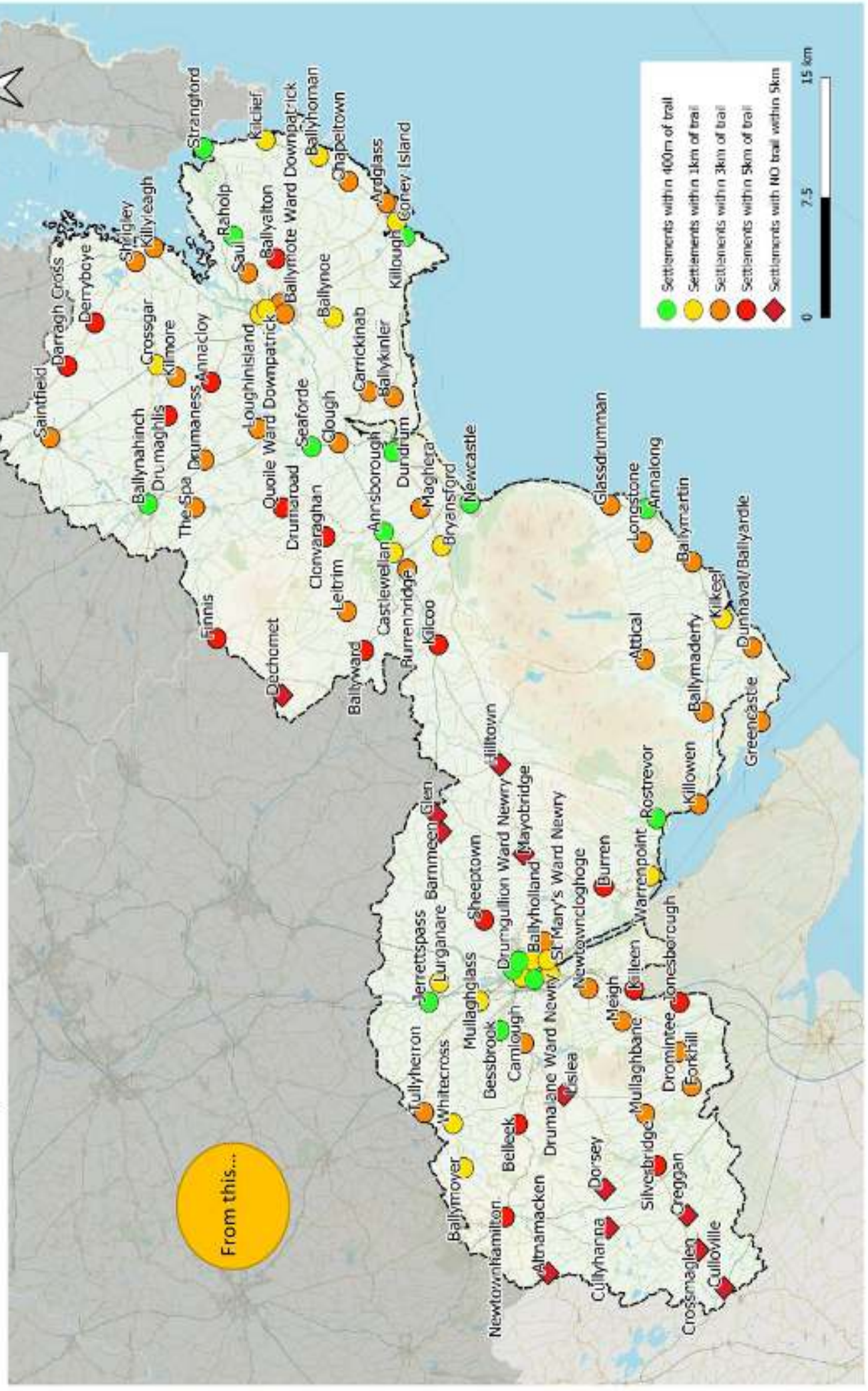
These appear in NMDDC as two main clusters, and an outlier, that are occurring in areas with limited existing accessible greenspace (also accounting for cross-border trail opportunities)

Scoping exercises and engagement with local communities will be required to identify opportunities for trail developments in these areas, either finding solutions or exhausting options.



OVER TIME...

As new trails are developed, more settlements will improve categories towards the 2050 vision of full provision:



Fundamentally, this is a framework that assesses access to green/blue space WALKING opportunities. This includes multi-use trails.

What about cycling trails?

If you wanted to assess access to cycling opportunities, the same framework principles could be used but it would be subject to a different definition of success and is a whole separate piece of work.

What about wheelchair accessibility/inclusive access to the outdoors?

As with cycling, the same framework could in theory be used to identify gaps in provision for people with disabilities and their families. However, it would be inappropriate to set a definition for success based on proximities and populations that in any way is lower to or different than one already set for walking = EQUALITY.

While we are perfectly ok to acknowledge that not all outdoor walking experiences can be feasible for all people (topographies, constrained widths, underfoot conditions, etc), any new and refurbished sites should be considered for wheelchair accessibility and everything that comes along with that to aspire to an inclusive experience. Trails should be screened out rather than screened in (i.e. fully inclusive should be a default).

What about extensions to existing trails, or trails that improve access to heritage?

Trails for these purposes should still be considered on their own merits. The prioritisation framework can certainly act as a tool for prioritising resources, but it reflects community impact at the most essential level. Where a trail extension or access to heritage is going to improve the quality of experience for a local community, it should still be considered.

What is the Output?

Settlements (Identified within the Local Development Plan) have been prioritised based on the extent to which they meet the 2050 ambition, and by marrying this with a live database of existing community trails. *Reminder: The Environment Strategy sets a target for all households to have access to greenspace within 400m of where they live, by 2050 (accessible greenspace = trails)*

Trails that satisfy a need for Priority 1 settlements should be addressed first, followed by Priority 2, priority 3, and so-on in that order. No trails proposals are off the table for consideration, it's just that where decisions to be made, rational justification can be made to pursue one trail development opportunity before another.

A list of outputs has been provided to Council as an excel database where prospective trails projects are aligned with settlements, and placed into a priority order, with a population weighting applied.

This database also includes information to inform recommended next steps for each proposal. These steps are based on a standard project delivery framework process, and includes provision to consider landownership constraints:

- Scoping Study Required
- Feasibility Required
- Concept design and Planning Permission
- Application for funding
- Procurement and delivery
- Already delivered
- Cannot proceed at this time

Ward/village/settlement	MOA	Type	Population	Project	Detail	Level of definition of community trail	Public access condition	Recommended next steps
1. Hilltown	Croftmore	Villages	3078	Aligned with planning this	Detail investigations and undertake all signed right of way along the route and identify link to the rest of town via retained footpaths. Evidence of need aligned with local authority's ambition to expand green infrastructure	Yes	1. Further work required	Concept proposal in this time
2. Hilltown	Croftmore	Villages	2008	Second column	Chamberlain drive	No	1. Further work required	Concept proposal
3. Hilltown	Croftmore	Villages	3078	MBT from GAA	1st from village to Hilltown GAA	Yes	2. The relevant body	Feasibility study
4. Monaghan	Shane Galloway	Village	2008	crossing the road	area to be provided for access	No	1. Further work required	Feasibility study
5. Monaghan	Shane Galloway	Villages	2008	to join from the projects	Walking trail to join Monaghan from Hilltown	Yes	1. Further work required	Scoping study
6. Monaghan	Lundbrook	Village	2008	the projects identified	Further scoping may be beneficial to identify work with Community to identify Community Trail opportunities	N/A	1. N/A	Scoping study
7. Dullymore	Shane Galloway	Village	805	with the village	Project to provide a link to the road with improved footpaths	No	1. Further work required	Feasibility study
8. Dullymore	Shane Galloway	Village	326	at the village	Scoping trail around around St Peter's GAA	Yes	1. Further work required	Feasibility study
9. Dullymore	Shane Galloway	Small settlement	212	with the village	Path to link the two football pitches and possible extension elsewhere to access road	Yes	1. Further work required	Feasibility study
10. Dullymore	Shane Galloway	Small settlement	227	with the village	area with access to local annual league	Yes	1. Further work required	Feasibility study
11. Dullymore	Shane Galloway	Small settlement	227	with the village	and proceed with delivery and planning for path	No	1. Further work required	Feasibility study
12. Dullymore	Shane Galloway	Small settlement	227	with the village	Further scoping may be beneficial to identify work with community to identify Community Trail opportunities	N/A	1. N/A	Scoping study

Snapshot of the output for priority decision-making and progression to next step in trail development

Report to:	Active Health and Communities Committee (AHC)
Date of Meeting:	21 st August 2023
Subject:	Community Trail Plans SLA with ORNI 2023-2024
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	x	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			<p>The purpose of this report is for AHC Committee to consider and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enter into a Service Level Agreement with Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) for 2023 – 2024 at a cost of £31,850 as per appendix 1. <p>In March 2018 AHC agreed to develop a detailed SLA with ORNI to create Community Trail Development Plans for the district and in April 2018 an initial 1-year SLA with ORNI was approved by AHC Committee. In June 2019, August 2020, May 2021 and in May 2022 further 1-year SLA's with ORNI where also approved.</p> <p>This partnership arrangement with ORNI and community trail plan assist Council as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping work to identify the potential development of community trails within the district. Completion of feasibility studies for identified community trails projects. Develop of management plans, land holder agreements and formal access agreements for identified trails. Progress and submission of planning applications for identified trails to ensure projects are 'shovel ready'. Secure funding for identified trails. Completion of specialist work to be carried out before grant application submissions (e.g. design works, ecologists, CPM teams) and procure and appoint at risk on the agreement that costs will be reimbursed once funding is secured and/or project completion. Assist Council with the appointment of contractors and management of project delivery through to completion.
2.0			Key issues
2.1			<p>There are a number of challenges to overcome to ensure the successful delivery of community trails including delays due to COVID-19, funding, procurement, contractor availability and inflationary cost increases. However, NMDDC through its community trail development plans have completed the following Community Trail projects which reflects over £1.5 million of investment with almost £1 million coming from external funding of the following trails:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saul GAC - 2018/19, Downpatrick. 2. Ballynahinch Rugby Club - 2018/19, Rowallane. 3. Drumkeeragh Forest - 2019/20, Slieve Croob. 4. Tievenadarragh Forest - 2019/20 Slieve Croob. 5. Seaforde Plantation & Corry Wood - 2019/20, Slieve Croob. 6. Daisy Hill Wood 2020/21, Newry. 7. Aghrim Hill 2020/21, Mournes. 8. Glendesha Forest Trail, Forkhill, 2021/22, Slieve Gullion. 9. Lough Park/Windmill Hill Trail, Ballynahinch 2021/22, Rowallane 10. Tievenadarragh Forest Car Park, 2021/22, Slieve Croob. <p>The establishment of Community Trails has also led to additional resource requirements as part of the day-to-day management and upkeep of these assets. The budget for repairs, maintenance and cleansing resources for Councils sits within the Sustainability and Environment directorate and additional budget provision for these services will need to be included within the annual rates estimates to maintain Councils community trails. Leisure services are currently working collaboratively with the Sustainability and Environment section to help establish these costs.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That AHC Committee consider and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enter into new Service Level Agreement with ORNI for the 2023-2024 financial year as per appendix 1 and the budget outlined in 4.1 of the officer's report.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>Revenue/Payroll: Revenue budget has been secured as part of Councils 2023/2024 rates estimates process to support the proposed ORNI SLA 2023/2024 of £31,850. Annual repairs, maintenance and cleansing costs for Community trails will have an impact on revenue and potentially payroll budgets that sit within the Sustainability and Environment directorate. Once established these should be accounted for within the Sustainability and Environment budgets and included in annual rates estimates processors going forward.</p> <p>Capital: There are no capital implications associated with this report. However should capital funding be required in 2023/24 a report will be tabled at Council's strategic finance working group for consideration.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: ORNI SLA 2023/24</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>

	None
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SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL and OUTDOOR RECREATION NORTHERN IRELAND

2023-2024

This paper details the basis for the work to be undertaken under the Service Level Agreement for the year 2023– 2024.

Under the Council's 2022-2023 SLA with Outdoor Recreation NI, considerable work has been achieved despite the on-going challenges of recovering from COVID namely;

- Community Trail Prioritisation Framework for the Council area developed
- Three Community Trails were completed and opened namely; Glendesha Forest, South Armagh, Glaswater Wood, Crossgar and Windmill Hill, Ballynahinch
- Extension of Tievenadarragh Community Trail car park completed
- Planning secured for three community trails namely; an extension to Corry Wood Community Trail, Annesborough, Teconnaght GAC and Bright GAC
- One community trail at final stages of being shovel ready ie. Inch Abbey
- Jane's Shore developed to 'shovel ready' status, (water access facility, car park and upgraded community trail)
- Pump track in Hilltown nearing shovel ready status for delivery in 2023-2024.
- Feasibility Study completed on Island Park, Newcastle pump track
- Feasibility Study completed on the Accessibility of the Council's beaches
- Review completed of outdoor recreation at Newcastle Harbour
- User numbers for all Community Trails in Council area collected on a quarterly basis.

The following table lists the priority projects for 2023-2024's SLA.

Projects (see below for detail)	Cost
1. Scoping Studies for 3 Community Trails (Lough Ross, Mayobridge, Sheeptown) as identified through Community Trail Management and Prioritisation Framework	€6,500
2. Detailed feasibility studies for 1 new Community Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hilltown 	€6,500
3. 1 Community Trails 'shovel ready' i.e. through Planning Permission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saul – Lough Money 	€15,000
5. Community Trail Data Collection for 14 sites (4 times a year and report)	€3,850
TOTAL	€31,850

DETAIL OF WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Scoping Study of up to 3 potential settlements that could accommodate a Community Trail

Using the Community Trail Prioritisation Framework scope out 3 settlements for future community trail development.

For each of the selected sites, work will include:

- Undertake desk research including GIS, to identify available greenspace within the vicinity of the settlement.
- Undertake a site visit of the proposed greenspace.
- Identify landowners of the greenspace and consult
- Consult with the local community /local representatives to establish demand and buy in.
- Report to Council Committees and Officers on which ones are deemed appropriate to move to feasibility stage.

Total cost **€6,500**

Feasibility Study for new Community Trails in Hilltown

Work will include:

- Consultation with local community /local representatives to establish demand and buy in.
- Undertake a site visit and GIS map the proposed routes.
- Identify and consult with land-owners and agree way forward e.g licence, PPA, lease etc.
- Consult with all statutory consultees (NED, HED, FSNI, DfC DFI) and ensure any other statutory requirements are met e.g HRA.
- Produce a concept trail design with high level costings for approval by landowner and which can be take forward the following year to 'shovel ready' status
- Report to Council Committees and Officers as and when required.

Total cost **€6,500**

Saul – Lough Money Community Trail ‘shovel ready’ i.e. through planning	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act as the first point of contact on all projects. 2. Undertake further consultation with the Community and individual landowners resulting in agreed final trail corridor. 3. Prepare the detailed concept trail prescription documents for all trails and all associated GIS mapping 4. Facilitate Council staff in putting together the necessary Development Agreements, Permissive Path Agreements, Licence Agreement etc as necessary. 5. Undertake detailed consultation with statutory consultees particularly those who may have planning concerns. 6. Appoint and manage specialists e.g ecologists, car park designers, to get projects through to planning submission phase 7. Submit planning applications on behalf of the Council and deal with all queries until PP is in place. 8. Report to Council Committees and Officers as and when required. 	
Total cost	£15,000

Community Trail – Data Collection.	
<p>To assess whether the Community Trails within the Council area are successful in terms of being well used by the local community and to help justify further expenditure on Community Trails within the Council area, it is essential that Council has some indication of the numbers using each Trail. As part of each capital project, counters are installed.</p>	
<p>ORNI will: Collect 4 times a year data on the following 14 Community Trails and compile into a Summary Report at the end of the year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar (multi-use) 2. Bunker’s Hill, Castlewellan (multi-use) 3. Castleward, Strangford (multi-use) 4. Ballynahinch Rugby Club (walking) 5. Saul GAC (walking) 6. Tievenadarragh Forest, near Seaforde (walking) 7. Drumkeeragh Forest (multi-use) 8. Corry Wood, Castlewellan (walking) 9. Seaforde Plantations (walking) 10. Aghrim Hill (walking) 11. Daisy Hill (walking) 12. Windmill Hill (walking) 13. Glaswater Wood (walking) 14. Glendesha Forest (walking) <p>Address any issues with counters that are not working with the supplier.</p>	
Total cost	£3,850

Please note:

Payment for this SLA - £31,850 will be made to Outdoor Recreation NI.

However, those capital projects that require specialist work to be carried out before a grant application can be submitted and that include VAT e.g car park design, ecologists, CPM teams etc. ORNI will procure and appoint at risk and seek reimbursement from the Council following completion of the project.

All expenditure with VAT costs will be reimbursed back to Outdoor Recreation Trading, ORNI's VAT registered company.

Signed on behalf of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Signed on behalf of Outdoor Recreation N Ireland

Name: -----

Position: -----

Date: -----

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities (AHC) Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 st August 2023
Subject:	Notice of Motion – Inclusive and Accessible Leisure Facilities
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Sinead Geary, Head of Indoor Leisure

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

	For decision	For noting only	x
1.0	Purpose and Background		
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is for AHC Committee to note the response to the Notice of Motion received by Councillor Sharvin as per the recommendations of this report.</p> <p>In March 2023 Councillor Sharvin tabled the following Notice of Motion at full Council Committee which was referred to AHC Committee for consideration:</p> <p>"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council reaffirms its commitment to ensuring all leisure facilities are inclusive and accessible for everyone in our community.</p> <p>The Council recognises that we can do so much more for people with a disability, such as autism, and will undertake a review engaging with service users, Autism network providers and Disability Sports NI.</p> <p>The review should include the provision of training needs to all council staff both front of house, support staff and the aquatics team to provide inclusive 1:1 swim sessions for users with disabilities".</p>		
2.0	Key issues		
2.1	<p>In response to this notice of motion Council officers have completed a scoping exercise and engaged with a number of statutory and voluntary groups.</p> <p>It is important to highlight that Council leisure facilities are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant and where possible exceed these regulations. For example Council currently has x2 Changing Places facilities in Newry Leisure Centre, x1 in Downpatrick Leisure Centre with furthermore changing places facilities planned for Kilkeel Leisure Centre and the Newcastle Centre as part of any future upgrades and refurbishments.</p> <p>In terms of staff training, Council employee over 200 leisure staff who take part in training sessions twice a year which cover mandatory, site-specific, and additional personal development training. Working with Autism NI, officers have arranged autism training planned for 5th September prioritising swim teaching staff with further training planned for December 2023 in partnership with Disability Sport NI which will capture disability specific training for all staff.</p> <p>Although Council introduced exclusive use Autism swim sessions district wide in October 2020, officers are now progressing options for swimming tuition during these sessions and</p>		

	<p>have been working with a 3rd party operator in collaboration with Downpatrick Autism representatives to establish cost and practicalities for inclusive 1:1 swimming sessions.</p> <p>In addition to this, officers are progressing the option of disability and autism groups to access 1:1 swim lessons via private swim tutors currently registered with Council, which if agreed could start with immediate effect.</p> <p>In terms of programming Councils leisure facilities accommodate a number of disability groups and through Council's Sports Development section directly and indirectly support and deliver a number of initiatives including Council's elite athletes scheme, wheely active programme delivered in partnership with disability sport NI, seasonal disability and inclusive camps and coaching development training specific to autism and safeguarding.</p> <p>In addition to this Council secured funding and purchased inclusive bikes at a cost of over £10,000 allowing various disability groups to utilise and experience cycling activities and initiatives district wide including bespoke coach assistance for groups.</p> <p>In terms of ongoing improvements, in 2020 Council applied for and was successful in receiving funding for disabled car parking upgrades in Newry through the Department for Communities 'access and inclusion' fund. Leisure has made further applications to this fund which have been unsuccessful however continues to proactively engage with the Department for Communities for future funding opportunities to enhance leisure facilities and services. Funding through the 'Access and Inclusion Fund' has not been released for 2023 however when this does become live Council's leisure section will be submitting a number of applications focused on enhancing disability provision in leisure facilities.</p> <p>In July 2023 Sport NI announced a funding opportunity through it's 'Power of Sport' initiative that has a stream of funding available for disability initiatives. Council's Sport Development section has now submitted an application for this funding which incorporates funding for a disability swimming tuition programme.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That AHC committee note the contents of this report which reaffirms Council's commitment to ensuring all leisure facilities are inclusive and accessible for everyone in our community.</p>
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>Revenue: There are no anticipated financial implications associated with this report.</p> <p>Capital: There are no identified capital budget implications associated with this report.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>None</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>None</p>

Report to:	Active Health and Communities Committee (AHC)
Date of Meeting:	21 st August 2023
Subject:	Leisure Closure Arrangements 2023/2024
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Sinead Geary, Head of Indoor Leisure

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is for AHC Committee to consider and agree the leisure closure arrangements for 2023/2024 period as per appendix 1.</p> <p>On various public holidays leisure facilities have historically closed or operated in a reduced capacity to reflect customer demand during these periods, manage demand for staff annual leave and time off requests and balance the operational efficiency of the service.</p> <p>In March 2020 Council agreed new public holiday entitlements for all employees as part of the new annual leave procedure.</p> <p>Council Leisure and Sports Section currently employees approx. 200 permanent and casual staff across several facilities, many of which are open 7 days a week, up to 15 hours per day with x3 staff shifts on designated days. Given the operational dynamics of the service, ensuring employees receive the appropriate compliance training is extremely challenging.</p> <p>Previously in May 2017, Council approved up to 2 closure days per year per leisure facility for identified staff training and in October 2019 Council approved an additional closure day to permit staff training.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>Depending on which days are designated for public holidays, this can have a significant impact on costs for opening public holidays, customer complaints due to members expectations of access to facilities during this period and staff complaints due to having to work public holidays and time off during this period.</p> <p>Having considered the historical public holiday opening arrangements for leisure and as per the recommendation of this report, the proposed public opening days and times for leisure for 2023/2024 have been outlined in appendix 1.</p> <p>Council have a corporate and legal responsibility to ensure all staff receive appropriate staff training relevant to their job roles. Given the dynamics of the Leisure and Sports 7-day service, administering staff training and ensure high levels of attendance can be challenging.</p>

	<p>The proposed dates as per appendix 1 for staff training have been scheduled at a time of year when demand for services is at its lowest, however availability of staff potentially at its highest due to the proximity of the holiday period and particularly availability of casual staff.</p> <p>Balancing closure days of facilities with public demand for services can be challenging, and subject to staff availability, partial closures on these designated dates will be attempted to be implemented to minimise disruptions to services however depending on staff availability, full closures on these days may be implemented.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	That AHC Committee consider and agree the leisure closure arrangements for 2023/2024 period as per appendix 1.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>Revenue: There are revenue implications associated with opening Council facilities on public holidays as a result of staff cost enhancements when working these designated days.</p> <p>Subject to the approval of this report, any revenue implications for 2023/24 financial year will be absorbed within current rates estimates budgets.</p> <p>Capital: There are no anticipated capital budget implications associated with this report.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.3	<p>Proposal initiating consultation</p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Leisure Closure Days</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>None</p>

Appendix 1
Leisure Public Holiday Arrangements 2023/2024

Newry, Kilkeel and Downpatrick Leisure Centre

Day	Opening Arrangement	Opening Times
Sunday 24 th December 2023 (Christmas Eve)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours – Potential Early Closure
Monday 25 th December 2023 (Christmas Day)	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 26 th December 2023 (Boxing Day)	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 27 th December 2023 (Statutory Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Thursday 28 th December 2023 (Moved for Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday)	Closed	Closed
Friday 29 th December 2023	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Saturday 30 th December 2023	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Sunday 31 st December 2023	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours – Potential Early Closure
Monday 1 st January 2024 (New Year's Day)	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 nd January 2024	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Sunday 17 th March 2024 (St Patricks Day)	Closed	Closed
Monday 18 th March 2024 (Moved for St Patricks Day falling on a Sunday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Sunday 31 st March 2024 (Easter Sunday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 1 st April 2024 (Easter Monday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Tuesday 2 nd April 2024 (Easter Tuesday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Monday 6 th May 2024 (Early May Bank Holiday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Monday 27 th May 2024 (Spring Bank Holiday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Friday 12 th July 2024 (12 th July Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Saturday 13 th July 2024 (13 th July Holiday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Monday 15 th July 2024 (Moved for 13 th July Holiday falling on a Saturday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm
Monday 26 th August 2024 (Summer Bank Holiday)	Reduced Hours	9:30am – 4:30pm

Ballymote and Newcastle Centre

Day	Opening Arrangement	Opening Times
Sunday 24 th December 2023 – Sunday 1 st January 2024	Closed	Closed
Sunday 17 th March 2024 (St Patricks Day)	Closed	Closed
Monday 18 th March 2024 (Moved for St Patricks Day falling on a Sunday)	Closed	Closed
Sunday 31 st March 2024 (Easter Sunday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 1 st April 2024 (Easter Monday)	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 nd April 2024 (Easter Tuesday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 6 th May 2024 (Early May Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 27 th May 2024 (Spring Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Friday 12 th July 2024 (12 th July Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Saturday 13 th July 2024 (13 th July Holiday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Monday 15 th July 2024 (Moved for 13 th July Holiday falling on a Saturday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 26 th August 2024 (Summer Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed

St Colman's and Outdoor Leisure Facilities

Day	Opening Arrangement	Opening Times
Sunday 24 th December 2023 – Thursday 28 th December 2023	Closed	Closed
Friday 29 th December 2023 – Sunday 31 st December 2023	Open as per booking demand	Open as per booking demand
Monday 1 st January 2024	Closed	Closed
Sunday 17 th March 2024 (St Patricks Day)	Closed	Closed
Monday 18 th March 2024 (Moved for St Patricks Day falling on a Sunday)	Closed	Closed
Sunday 31 st March 2024 (Easter Sunday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 1 st April 2024 (Easter Monday)	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 nd April 2024 (Easter Tuesday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 6 th May 2024 (Early May Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 27 th May 2024 (Spring Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Friday 12 th July 2024 (12 th July Holiday)	Closed	Closed
Saturday 13 th July 2024 (13 th July Holiday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Monday 15 th July 2024 (Moved for 13 th July Holiday falling on a Saturday)	Closed	Closed
Monday 26 th August 2024 (Summer Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed

Seasonal Facilities

Day	Opening Arrangement	Opening Times
Friday 12 th July 2024 (12 th July Holiday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Saturday 13 th July 2024 (13 th July Holiday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Monday 15 th July 2024 (Moved for 13 th July Holiday falling on a Saturday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours
Monday 26 th August 2024 (Summer Bank Holiday)	Open Normal Hours	Open Normal Hours

Leisure Staff Training Arrangements 2023/2024**Newry Leisure Centre, Kilkeel Leisure Centre and St Colman's Sports Complex**

Day	Opening Arrangement	Opening Times
Monday 18 th December 2023 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Tuesday 19 th December 2023 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Friday 22 nd December 2023 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Tuesday 25 th June 2024 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Friday 28 th June 2024 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover

Down Leisure Centre, Newcastle Centre and Ballymote Sports and Wellbeing Centre

Day	Opening Arrangement	Opening Times
Wednesday 20 th December 2023 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Thursday 21 st December 2023 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Friday 22 nd December 2023 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Thursday 27 th June 2024 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover
Friday 28 th June 2024 (Staff Training Day)	Reduced Hours	6.00pm to 10.00pm – subject to staff cover

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee (AHC)
Date of Meeting:	21 st August 2023
Subject:	Leasing of Council Land - Expression of Interest
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Paul Tamati, Assistant Director: Leisure and Sport
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Conor Haughey, Head of Service: Outdoor Leisure

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either: -

For decision	X	For noting only	
1.0			Purpose and Background
1.1			<p>The purpose of this report is for AHC Committee to consider and agree the progressing of an Expressions of Interest (EOI) process in line with NMDDC Sport and Community Facility Management and Leasing Policy (2016) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cloughreagh Playing Fields & Carpark, Millvale Road, Bessbrook, BT35 7NL (Appendix 1) <p>Council have received correspondence from interested parties for land in Newry and officers are content that AHC Committee consider progressing this EOI via Councils Sport and Community Facility Management and Leasing Policy (2016) and via the associated 3 step process.</p>
2.0			Key issues
2.1			<p>Councils Sport and Community Facility Management and Leasing Policy (2016) considers the following 3 stage process when correspondence from interested parties in Council land is received.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage 1: Expressions of Interest for identified Land/Facilities. This stage requires an EOI for identified land/facilities to be publicly advertised, a submission of an outline business case from prospective leasers, and evaluation of the outline business cases scored against set criteria. Submissions must meet the minimum threshold score in order to progress to stage 2 of the process. Stage 2: Full Business Plan Submission. Submissions that meet the minimum threshold in stage 1 will be requested to submit a Full Business Plan which will also be evaluated against set criteria. Submissions must meet the minimum threshold score in order to progress to stage 3 of the process. Stage 3: Recommendation and Decision Submissions that meet the minimum threshold in stage 2 will progress to stage 3 and a Committee Report submitted to Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee for recommendation and decision. <p>To progress stage 1 of the policy AHC Committee approval is required which is being sought as per the recommendation of this report.</p>

3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That AHC Committee consider and agree:</p> <p>To progress an Expression of Interest Process in line with Councils Sports and Community Facility Management and Leasing Policy (2016) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloughreagh Playing Fields & Carpark, Millvale Road, Bessbrook, BT35 7NL
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	<p>Revenue: It is anticipated that the leasing of Council land and facilities will have a positive impact on Councils income budgets and decrease expenditure associated with maintaining this site.</p> <p>Capital: Although there is the potential for the site outlined in this report to be considered as surplus and designated for commercial sale, Councils Sports and Community Leasing Policy 2016 also offers alternative leasing options that will have wider non-monetary benefits for the community of the district and ensure the asset is retained in Council ownership.</p>
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>

5.3	<p>Proposal initiating consultation</p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Rationale:</p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Map of Land at Cloughreagh Playing Fields & Carpark.</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
	<p>None</p>

Appendix 1: Map identifying land at Cloughreagh Playing Fields & Carpark, Millvale Road, Bessbrook, BT35 7NL

Key: **RED = Council land at Cloughreagh Playing Fields & Carpark**



Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2023
Subject:	Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Update Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Damien Brannigan, Head of Engagement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either: -

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report. To consider and agree to approve the actions in the Action Sheets of the Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meetings listed in 3.1 below. <p>Background</p> <p>The information in the Action Sheets attached is provided to update the Committee on recent CCH activity and on activity planned to be undertaken by the CCH and its member organisations.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	To coordinate actions to mitigate impact on individuals and groups in the community.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That the Committee: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report. Agree to approve the actions in the Action Sheets attached for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on Wednesday 21 June 2023. ➤ Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting held on Wednesday 19 July 2023.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Support and assistance from partners to deliver actions in the CCH action sheets.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
7.1	<p>Appendix 1: Action Sheet of Community Coordination Hub Meeting held on 21 June 2023. Appendix 2: Action Sheet of Community Coordination Hub Meeting held on 19 July 2023.</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>
8.1	<p>None.</p>

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Action Sheet of Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting Wednesday 21st June 2023 @ 2:00pm via Teams

In Attendance: Chair: Damien Brannigan (Engagement)

Raymond Jackson (Confederation of Community Groups and Strategic Stakeholder Forum)
 James Elliot (DFC)
 Aidan McCabe (SHSCT)
 Laura Higgins (Admin Assistant AHC)
 Justyna McCabe (Programmes Unit)
 Eoin Devlin (Health & Wellbeing)
 Nicholas McCrickard (County Down Rural Community Network and Strategic Stakeholder Forum)
 Alan Beggs (Community Planning)
 Rosemary McDonnell (Community Advice Newry, Mourne & Down and Strategic Stakeholder Forum)
 Aisling Rennick (DEAs)

Apologies:

Brian Rankin (Sustainability)
 Janine Hillen (Community Engagement)
 Lynda Vladeanu (SEHSCT)
 Julie McCann (Community Services, Facilities and Events)
 Gerard Rocks (SHSCT)
 Lauren McMenamy (Community Planning)
 Sonya Burns (Programmes Unit)

	Agenda Item	Discussion and Action Agreed	Raised by/ Referred to
1.	Welcome & Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted. 	All
2.	Actions from last CCH meeting held on Wednesday 17 th May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions from last CCH meeting held attached. Raymond advised that Stephen McClelland of NMEA has completed the Social Supermarket Pilot Evaluation Report and it that was reviewed at a SSF meeting. It was agreed by CCH that Raymond forward the report to Council for circulation to all CCH members. 	All RJ
3.	Funding Opportunities for NI Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Opportunities for NI Community. Copy attached for information and distribution as appropriate. 	All
4.	Community Assistance Centre for Ukrainian Refugees Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justyna suggested that going forward this agenda item be renamed to include asylum seekers also. There is no Community Assistance Centre for Ukrainian Refugees this month in Newry, it is being reviewed by the NI Executive Office but it is unlikely that there will be any held over the summer months. Justyna added that there is still a need for assistance and signposting to help those who are most in need. Up to 1st June 2023 there has been 2,029 Ukrainian arrivals and 268 visas issued (estimate was 300) in the Newry, Mourne and Down area as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. There are currently approximately 28 asylum seekers lodging in a Hotel in Newcastle, some others have been moved to dispersal accommodation, 4 families to Downpatrick, 1 family in Newcastle and 1 family in Killyleagh. Applications for support have been coming in through CDRCN. 	JMCC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder groups in Newry and Newcastle met recently and the Southern Health Trust are piloting a Welcome Hub for asylum seekers which will start in July and be held on Tuesday mornings in Newry Leisure Centre. Rosemarie asked Justyna what needs are being identified so far, Justyna replied that needs include summer provision for children, summer activities and access to allow them to make their own cultural food. The Hotel lodgers do not like the food being made for them and have requested the possibility of them being able to cook their own food, Justyna is trying to locate a community kitchen to allow the asylum seekers some form of control in their lives. Transport is an issue too as some of the asylum seekers need to get to Belfast for solicitor appointments etc and they currently only receive £9.10p each week which is adding to their isolation and exclusion. 	RMcD & JMcc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This week there are several events being held for 'Refugee Week', yesterday there was a coffee and connect and the women were able to make their own which was very much welcomed. Today there is a taster yoga and pottery class in Ballynahinch, and a bus has been provided. On Friday there is an outreach programme in Castlewellan Forest Park and a Butterfly Walk where people can volunteer. 	JMcc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raymond said that Mears were on a call with Newry Strategic Stakeholders group and there are issues placing asylum seekers in Newry due to the lack of property and the cost of property. 	RJ
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicholas stated that one family from the Hotel in Newcastle have been relocated to housing in Downpatrick, but the children are still attending school in Newcastle and funding has been agreed for the last 6 weeks of term for transport. The children will most likely have to move to a school in Downpatrick in September. 	NMcc
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosemarie added that St Vincent De Paul are working with the families who have moved to Downpatrick. 	RMcD

5.	<p>Update from DfC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James stated that the first quarter DfC Social Supermarket (SSM) funding which had been secured has now been extended until September 2023 and that the public consultation on DfC's Budget 2023-24 allocations closed on 7th June and responses are currently being analysed. • It is anticipated that the full annual DfC budget will be confirmed before September with no proposed cuts to Neighbourhood Renewal or SSM funding expected. James added that the SSM funding now based on ½ of last year can be transferred by DfC any time this financial year. Damien asked when the CSP Letter of Offer for 2023/24 would be sent and James said his understanding was that last year's letter covered 2 years subject to the availability of budget in 2022/23 and 2023/24 and any subsequent CSP letters of variance. • Raymond added that once the SSM Pilot Evaluation Report has been shared with CCH members any comments they have should be fed back to him so that they can be considered in relation to progressing the continuation of the SSM Scheme subject to the awarding of the 2023/24 SSM funding to the NMD Strategic Holder Forum (SSF) being agreed by the CCH. • Damien proposed that the DfC SSM funding confirmed for the first 6 months of the 2023/24 financial year be awarded to NMD SSF (via CCG and/or CDRCN) for the continuation of the provision of a SSM Scheme. This would equate to £50,207.47 and this proposal, if agreed by the CCH, would be subject to approval at Council AHC Committee Meeting in August and if approved ratification at Council Meeting in September. The proposal to award the £50,207.47 to the NMD SSF was agreed by CCH members. • James also stated that Fareshare have discussed working with other relevant organisations to extend food supply. 	<p>JE</p> <p>JE & DB</p> <p>RJ</p> <p>DB</p> <p>JE</p>
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<p>5.1</p> <p>Hardship Grant to NI Councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damien advised that Councils had received a letter from DfC on 7th June 2023 in response to the queries submitted to DfC from across all 11 Councils in relation to the remit and scope of the 2022/23 Hardship Grant Scheme funding. Damien referred to the copy of the DfC letter which had been circulated with the agenda and which sets out what is eligible and not eligible within the remit of the Hardship Grant Scheme in 2023/24 and which confirms any other terms and conditions that must be complied with in relation to the funding. • Nicholas asked if any of the Hardship Grant Scheme funding could be used to help Ukrainian families and asylum seekers who are vulnerable and very much in need, Justyna added that this would be very much welcomed as many of these people have no recourse to public funding. Damien said that it was his understanding (from any DfC correspondence he had seen relating to the Scheme) that it was put in place to support the most vulnerable and therefore he could see no reason, unless any other CCH member could, why Ukrainian families/asylum seekers/those with no recourse to public funding could not be assisted through the Scheme and he asked James for his view. James said that it is his understanding that the Scheme is for those most in hardship and as long as the support is in the form of Vouchers Schemes and/or Food Related Schemes as detailed in the letter from DfC there should be no issue. • Raymond noted his thanks to DfC for clarifying the eligibility criteria, he added that SSF initially received 8 EOI applications for the Scheme's funding but after amendments and resubmissions in light of the clarification from DfC they now have 6 in total. SSF will be meeting to assess and agree protocols to ensure any risk of duplication to services and support is eradicated and that meetings will be held monthly to deal with any issues and to keep everyone up to date. • A spreadsheet provided by Nicholas was shared at the CCH meeting detailing the proposed spend of the Scheme funding across the 6 EOIs received. Damien asked for the details of each EOI application to be provided for CCH members 	<p>DB</p> <p>NMCC, DB & JE</p> <p>RJ</p> <p>NMCC, DB & RJ</p>
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	<p>information and Raymond responded that he would email these to Laura for circulation to all CCH members along with the spreadsheet shared by Nicholas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCH Members were all in agreement with the proposed allocations of spend detailed on the spreadsheet shared by Nicholas. 	All
6.	<p>Updates and Progress to date on DFC Funded Programmes</p> <p><u>Community Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raymond said that all updates had been covered at today's meeting, there are many issues in the local community and with the ongoing issue of there being no Executive in NI there is a feeling of uneasiness across the community and voluntary sector. <p><u>Trusts & PHA Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aidan advised that the new SHSCT Neighbourhood Renewal Officer has been recruited and will take up post on 10th July, the current officer will stay on until then so there is no break in service. <p><u>Council Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aisling advised that 2023/24 DEA budgets have experienced significant cuts and highlighted that the Council's Good Relations Programme funding from TEO which the DEA budgets benefit from has been reduced by 47%. Aisling referred to the open call for the nomination of Independent Members to the DEA Forums and Raymond said that he would telephone Aisling about this tomorrow. Alan advised that the Community Planning Strategic Partnership Board are meeting on Thursday 29th June and that it would be beneficial to circulate the SSM Pilot Evaluation Report to attendees and CCH members thought that this would be a good idea. 	RJ AMcC AR RJ AB

7.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All business was discussed and noted through the other items on the agenda. 	
8.	Date of Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 2.00 pm 	DB

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Action Sheet of Community Coordination Hub (CCH) Meeting Wednesday 19th July 2023 @ 2:00pm via Teams

In Attendance: Chair: Damien Brannigan (Engagement)

Raymond Jackson (Confederation of Community Groups and Strategic Stakeholder Forum)

Laura Higgins (Admin Assistant AHC)

Justyna McCabe (Programmes Unit)

Alan Beggs (Community Planning)

Rosemary McDonnell (Community Advice Newry, Mourne & Down and Strategic Stakeholder Forum)

Sonya Burns (Programmes Unit)

James Campbell (Health and Wellbeing)

Apologies:

James Elliott (DFC)

Brian Rankin (Sustainability)

Janine Hillen (Community Engagement)

Aisling Rennick (DEAs)

Julie McCann (Community Services, Facilities and Events)

Gerard Rocks (SHSCT)

Lauren McMenamy (Community Planning)

Aidan McCabe (SHSCT)

Nicholas McCrickard (County Down Rural Community Network and Strategic Stakeholder Forum)

	Agenda Item	Discussion and Action Agreed	Raised by/ Referred to
1.	Welcome & Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and apologies noted. 	All
2.	Actions from last CCH meeting held on Wednesday 21 st June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions from last CCH meeting held attached. 	All
3.	Funding Opportunities for NI Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Opportunities for NI Community. Copy attached for information and distribution as appropriate. 	All
4.	Update on Refugees and Asylum Seekers Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justyna advised that there has been no update from the Executive Office regarding potential date for the next Ukrainian Assistance Centre. There may not be one in Newry. As of 28th June, there are no homes with multiple occupancy properties (HMO), there are 7 family properties (5 in Downpatrick, 1 in Killyleagh and 1 in Newcastle), 27 service users including 10 children (9 children of school age 9-15 and 1 child of school age 16-18). There are 53 family service users in the family contingency Hotel. Justyna added that the information flow to Council has been quite poor and updates have not been regular. Health and Education sectors seem to be informed instantly. There was a Welcome Hub held in Newry Leisure Centre on Tuesday 4th July aimed at ethnic minority communities, this was led by the Southern Trust, however no one turned up. Going forward there will be meetings held on the first Tuesday of every month, the next one will take place 12pm-2pm Tuesday 31st July in Newry Leisure Centre. The aim is to promote ethnic minority communities. 	JMCC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are ongoing challenges for asylum seekers being able to access and fund transport for medical appointments and solicitor appointments in Belfast, The Executive Office acknowledges that this is a common issue, and they are looking into it. Justyna added that people can be reimbursed for health transport costs via a HC1, however, asylum seekers don't have the money to pay up front in the first place. • Raymond suggested to Justyna that perhaps Down Community Transport could assist with transport for asylum seekers, Justyna said she would contact them to see if they are able to assist. Rosemarie added that the Home to Hospital service that is currently in operation only covers South Armagh, Kilkeel and The Mournes. • Raymond asked Justyna to keep CCH informed with any updates and Justyna confirmed she is meeting with MEARS and The Home Office next week. 	
5.	Update from DfC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James is on leave and will provide DfC update at August's CCH meeting. 	
5.1	Hardship Grant to NI Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damien thanked Raymond for sending through the 6 proposals for Hardship Grant Scheme Funding which were emailed to all CCH members on 3rd July, proposals were received from Bolster Community, Confederation of Community Groups (CCG), County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN), Women's Aid, Rural Health Partnership (RHP) and CDRCN on behalf of Down Family Support Hub. Included in the same email was a spreadsheet detailing a summary of proposed spend for each proposal which was provided by Nicholas at the last CCH meeting. • Damien advised that SLAs referencing the Hardship Grant Scheme Funding allocated to the SSF were issued to CCG and CDRCN yesterday. • Damien reported that the 2023/2024 CSP Letter of Offer for the full year was received on 8th July from DfC and outlines the funding for Advice Services so CANMD's SLA will be issued mid-September following consideration/approval 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raymond asked would there be a MOU between Council and SSF, Damien explained that as with previous DfC funding MOUs the DfC SSM MOU would be attached to the SLAs or addendums issued to CCG and/or CDRCN on behalf of the SSF who would have to comply with the MOU's the terms and conditions. Raymond asked what the 'formal protocol for regulated volunteering' is that is referenced in the MOU. Damien explained that this has been in previous DfC funding MOUs and his understanding is that it was a protocol developed by Volunteer Now during COVID but that he will follow up Raymond's query with James to confirm. Alan stated that the Social Supermarket Pilot Evaluation was discussed at the recent Community Planning Strategic Partnership Board Meeting and that the evaluation was very thorough, comprehensive and well received. 	DB/JE
6. Updates from CCH Members:	<p><u>Community Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raymond met the SSF and the 6 Hardship Grant Scheme Funding proposals were discussed in terms of possible generic referral processes etc, demand will probably spike with the upcoming winter pressures on utilities, there is currently a drop off in demand. Some people have been accessing the Credit Union fund but not many. Community groups are providing summer schemes. Rosemarie added that the SSF meeting on the delivery of the Hardship Grant Scheme Funding was very productive, and that they will meet monthly to ensure no duplications and that spend is shared fairly across the district. <p><u>Trusts & PHA Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No representatives were available for today's meeting. 	

	<p>Council Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Campbell explained that the Affordable Warmth Scheme that was operated by NMDDC on behalf of DfC would now be managed by NIHE from 1st September 2023. All applications will have to be directly sent to NIHE. Sonya advised that all Financial Assistance Calls have been completed, she added that due to internal changes within NMDDC the Programmes Unit will soon be moving under a new Directorate. Alan explained that at the Community Planning Strategic Partnership Board Meeting held on 29th June there was a presentation by Integrated Care System (ICS) on the Southern Area Pilot which is in its very early stages. He asked CCH members to keep him informed if any priorities are identified. Alan also advised that there will be a Health and Wellbeing Thematic Summit in October 2023 and if anyone wants to be involved to let Alan know. Justyna asked Alan to please keep in mind Refugees and Asylum Seekers too. Alan explained that the Economy NI Programme closes in a couple of weeks and that he will share the link via the SSF. Sonya advised that the PeacePlus 1.1 submission is due by the end of September 2023 and 1.4 (Capital) is due at the start of September 2023. Raymond asked who will be leading PeacePlus, Sonya explained that anyone can apply but 1.1 is ringfenced for Councils. She added that other themes seem slow to open but when they do, turnaround is usually quick. 1.2 (which would be of biggest interest to SSF) is usually small grants and should be open soon. 	All
7.	AOB	All
8.	Date of Next Meeting	Wednesday 16 th August 2023 at 2.00 pm

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2023
Subject:	Additional Funding from Department for Communities (DfC) for Frontline Advice Services
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Damien Brannigan, Head of Engagement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either: -

For decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background										
1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report. To agree to award additional funding of £135,147.68 from the Department for Communities (DfC) to 'Community Advice Newry, Mourne and Down', alongside funding of £292,539.00 for Generalist Advice Services for 2022/2023. <p>Background</p> <p>The Council is the primary funder of 'Community Advice Newry, Mourne and Down', with the Council providing £292,539.00 for Generalist Advice Services, which is awarded through an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA). £143,871.30 of this £292,539.00 comes from DfC (under DfC's District Councils' Community Support Programme) and the Council contributes the remainder of £148,667.70 from its own resources.</p> <p>The Council received a letter of offer from DfC on 8 July 2023 advising that its Voluntary and Community Division is able to award additional funding alongside the annual Advice Grant of £143,871.30 for 2023/2024.</p> <p>The additional funding of £135,147.68 is provided specifically to support the following to be undertaken by 'Community Advice Newry, Mourne & Down':</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals (opening 21/22)</td> <td>£28,800.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consolidated Uplift for CS General, Advice and Appeals (21/22 - carried forward)</td> <td>£7,271.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consolidated Uplift for CSP General, Advice & Appeals (22/23 - also carried forward)</td> <td>£7,518.45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice (including uplift)</td> <td>£91,557.96</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Additional Funding</td> <td>£135,147.68</td> </tr> </table> <p>The additional funding is ring-fenced for this provision and must be spent by the 31 March 2024. Annex 5 (see Appendix 1 attached) from DfC's letter of offer provides information on the background to and the objectives of the additional funding.</p>	Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals (opening 21/22)	£28,800.00	Consolidated Uplift for CS General, Advice and Appeals (21/22 - carried forward)	£7,271.27	Consolidated Uplift for CSP General, Advice & Appeals (22/23 - also carried forward)	£7,518.45	Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice (including uplift)	£91,557.96	Total Additional Funding	£135,147.68
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals (opening 21/22)	£28,800.00										
Consolidated Uplift for CS General, Advice and Appeals (21/22 - carried forward)	£7,271.27										
Consolidated Uplift for CSP General, Advice & Appeals (22/23 - also carried forward)	£7,518.45										
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice (including uplift)	£91,557.96										
Total Additional Funding	£135,147.68										

	Councils are not required to match this additional funding.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	None.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	That the Committee: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report. Agree to award the additional funding of £135,147.68 from the Department for Communities (DfC) to 'Community Advice Newry, Mourne and Down', alongside funding of £292,539.00 for Generalist Advice Services for 2023/2024.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	There are no resource implications as the Council is not required to match the additional funding from DfC.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rationale:</i>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/>
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix I: Annex 5 from DfC Letter of Offer dated 8 July 2023.
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None.

Annex 5

Funding for Welfare Reform Advice Provision.

You will see that your letter of offer contains additional funding for:

- Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension: Face to Face advice
- Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension: Tribunal representation

This funding is provided specifically to support the continuation of the existing welfare reform advice provision in your area as well as additional monies for Tribunal Representation.

The funding is ring-fenced for this provision and must be spent by 31 March 2024. Councils are not required to match this additional funding.

The Department will take full responsibility with the administrative work involved in the vouching of this spend with your chosen provider.

Background

In January 2016 the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group under Professor Eileen Evason recommended that additional advice services be provided to help people to negotiate the changes in the social security system. The Evason report recommended that the Welfare Reform Support Programme provide funding 'through existing tried and tested channels' ensuring that claimants, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to skilled, independent advice, to help them negotiate the welfare reform changes and achieve better outcomes.

Objectives of the additional funding

- Objective 1- The provision of a comprehensive face to face service, including tribunal representation, Monday to Friday, in addition to the advice service already provided.
- Objective 2- The provision of a service capable of receiving GDPR compliant referrals from the free phone helpline and give advice on the entire range of welfare reform changes and mitigation schemes.
- Objective 3- The provision of a service where all work is undertaken in line with the Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard.
- Objective 4- Ensure all recommendations and improvements identified during staff performance evaluation are actioned.
- Objective 5- To assist Frontline managers to identify and action any necessary improvements for service delivery to clients, with a particular focus on the needs of vulnerable clients.
- Objective 6- To identify and implement any improvements to service delivery which will empower clients to help themselves and increase self-sufficiency.
- Objective 7 – Where urgent specialist support is identified provide a referral service for claimants.
- Objective 8 - Ensure frontline managers send their monthly MI figures to their regional office for Advice NI for collation by 10th working day of each month.

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2023
Subject:	District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums Update Report including Appointment of Independent Members to DEA Forums
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aisling Rennick, Engagement & Development Manager Damien Brannigan, Head of Engagement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either: -

For decision For noting only

1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report. To consider and agree to approve the recommendations of the Assessment Panel in Appendix 2 in respect of the appointment of Independent Members to the District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. <p>Background</p> <p>The information in Appendix 1 attached is provided to update the Committee on recent DEA activity and on activity planned to be undertaken by the DEAs.</p> <p>Appendix 2 attached is provided to update the Committee regarding the recommendations of the Assessment Panel in respect of the recruitment exercise undertaken for and appointment of Independent Members to the DEA Forums.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	None.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	That the Committee: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report. Agree to approve the recommendations of the Assessment Panel in Appendix 2 in respect of the appointment of Independent Members to the DEA Forums.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Support and assistance from partners to deliver actions in the DEA action plans.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)

5.1	<p>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p>Proposal initiating consultation</p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	<p>Appendices</p>
7.1	<p>Appendix 1: Update on the ongoing work of the DEAs. Appendix 2: Report of Assessment Panel for Recruitment of Independent Members for DEA Forums.</p>
8.0	<p>Background Documents</p>

8.1	None.
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Appendix 1

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Update on the ongoing work of the DEAs

The following information is provided to update the AHC Committee on recent DEA activity and on activity planned to be undertaken by the DEAs.

All People in Newry, Mourne and Down Enjoy Good Health and Wellbeing:

Level of Health Status:

Downpatrick, Rowallane and Slieve Croob DEAs in partnership with the Carers Development Officer from the SEHSCT held a Carers Fest Social full day event in Preaching House Pottery on Friday 9 June 2023. Participants enjoyed a welcome breakfast followed by the opportunity to try Jute Bag design, Bao Bun Making, Creative planting and Macrame.

Downpatrick, Mournes, Rowallane and Slieve Croob DEAs joined forces with County Down Rural Community Network to implement a Medieval Vikings experience for Men across the district to celebrate Men's Health Week on 15 June 2023. Over 60 men attended the event having the opportunity to step back in time and learn about the dark Ages in Ireland. Those attending had the chance to taste traditional foods from the era, visit the textile worker and the herbalist, try their hands at longbow archery and axe throwing as well as many more ancient crafts and skill.

A Walk for Self-Care organised in partnership with the Rowallane DEA, Multi-Disciplinary Teams, National Trust and County Down Rural Community Network took place on Thursday 22 June 2023 in Rowallane Gardens. Over 40 participants had a guided tour of the gardens and house learning about its history followed by a Forest Bathing session led by Xhale. The event concluded with afternoon tea where goodie bags containing helpful information on sources of support and help were distributed.

As part of the Downpatrick DEA's health and wellbeing initiative, the DEA partnered with the Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke Association and offered free blood pressure and atrial fibrillation checks in the Ballymote Centre on Tuesday 4 July 2023. In partnership with County Down Rural Community Network the Action Cancer Bus will be available on Thursday 10 August 2023 in the Downpatrick Cricket Club car park. On the same date and venue, residents will be able to avail of free health checks on the Farm Families bus.

Crotlieve DEA delivered children's fitness classes with Compass North to Mayobridge Youth Club as part of their Summer Scheme.

Slieve Croob DEA in partnership with County Down Rural Community Network have organised the Action Cancer bus to come to Dundrum on Tuesday 1 August 2023. The visit of the Big Bus is an opportunity for residents to get an MOT check and make a healthy lifestyle change. Residents will be able to avail of free health checks including blood pressure, glucose & cholesterol, lung function and body composition analysis. Furthermore, breast screening will be available for women aged 40+ but who fall outside the NHS screening age.

Downpatrick, Mournes, Rowallane and Slieve Croob DEAs have partnered with County Down Rural Community Network and Papyrus to roll out a teenage disco in Leitrim on Wednesday 2 August 2023. Papyrus (Prevention of Young Suicide in the UK) are dedicated to the prevention of suicide and will be present to offer support and advice on mental health.

The Mournes and Slieve Croob DEAs have collaborated with County Down Rural Community Network to organise a Tea Dance in Leitrim on Friday 4 August 2023. Over 600 people will have the opportunity to connect with others and enjoy an afternoon filled with laughter and dancing. Many people within the district

live in rural areas that are very isolated and this event at the heart of the rural community is an opportunity to come together.

Crotlieve DEA Forum is working in partnership with Clanyre Group to deliver Chair Exercise Classes in Warrenpoint Town for an older person's group. The classes are designed to improve flexibility, mobility and overall health and wellbeing providing a social aspect as well.

In conjunction with the Southern Trust Promoting Wellbeing Team, the Kindness Box Launch project has been launched in the Newry and Mourne area. This project is part of a multi-agency response to address loneliness and isolation across the area and the scheme will be rolled out across the Southern Trust DEAs over the coming months.

In Rowallane DEA, Ballynahinch Suicide Prevention Task Group met on Thursday 8 June 2023 to make plans for the Festival of Hope planned for October 2023. This multi-agency task group comprising statutory and voluntary agencies led by County Down Rural Community Network hold a Festival of Hope each year to highlight sources of help and support for people in crisis. This year's 4-day event will commence week beginning 2 October with a variety of activities and events planned.

All People in Newry, Mourne and Down Live in Respectful, Safe and Vibrant Communities

Level of Civic Participation and Good Relations:

On Wednesday 14 June 2023, in response to concerns raised about the condition of the Shrigley playground and surrounding environment a multi-agency walkabout took place with representatives from NIHE, DFI, NI Water, NMDDC, Rowallane DEA Forum and Council's Outdoor Leisure Section together with local elected officials and members of the Shrigley Community Association. The walkabout identified problems with flooding, tree roots protruding from footpaths and necessary upgrade of the playground and surrounding area, all of which were to be addressed by the relevant organisations.

Downpatrick DEA in partnership with the Council's Social Inclusion Officer supported the local Syrian Families in organising an EID Celebration Event on Sunday 2 July 2023 in the Ballymote Centre. This was a very successful event and was attended by 100 residents.

To mark Refugee week, The Mournes DEA in partnership with the Council's Social Inclusion Officer delivered a traditional Eritrean Coffee morning event which provided an opportunity for asylum seekers from the Eritrean community to share their customs and traditions with the local community.

The Mournes DEA in partnership with KDA (Kilkeel Development Association) delivered a seniors' tea dance event to help reduce social isolation and loneliness as well as improve mental health and wellbeing of seniors living in the area.

The Mournes DEA organised an information coffee morning for people living in the Kittys Road area to help people connect with key support agencies.

The Mournes DEA supported the St. Louis' Grammar School Centenary Community Event. The community event brought together students and parents throughout the area and featured activities and performances on the day celebrating the cultures living in the area.

The Mournes DEA continues to link with statutory agencies and the Council's Social Inclusion Officer to provide support and opportunities for engagement for asylum seekers recently accommodated in the area.

Slieve Gullion DEA is working with Dungormley Residents group in Newtownhamilton to make some improvements to their local area including installation of bins at the picnic area, signage for the playpark and road safety issues.

Crotlieve DEA teamed up with the Council's Events Team to provide a Good Relations element to the Wake the Giant Festival in August 2023. Pupils from both St Dallan's Primary School and Dromore Road Primary School will meet at the Festival and plant trees together representing growth and a new generation.

Level of Personal Safety and Crime:

Slieve Gullion DEA in conjunction with SARWN (South Armagh Rural Women's Network) invited the local Neighbourhood Policing Team to speak with a women's group in Crossmaglen. PSNI Crime Prevention Officers provided information and advice to the group on how to improve their personal safety, especially as many live in rural and isolated areas.

Following reports of young people jumping off the Pier at Warrenpoint, the Crotlieve DEA organised a multi-agency meeting to address matters. As a result, a successful intervention event was held at the end of June 2023 at the Pier. Young people were engaged by the PSNI, PCSP, and EA at the Pier at an evening of music, games and fun, with the young people being provided with personal safety information at the same time.

Crotlieve DEA partnered with the PCSP and EA to deliver 3 evenings of diversionary activity at Fiddlers Green Festival. 40 young people were engaged in a response to previous reports of ASB at the festival. The EA facilitated team games, delivered age-appropriate personal safety information and the young people enjoyed watersports and an evening of fun at an Acoustic Café.

Crotlieve DEA teamed up with the PCSP, Council's Community Services team and the EA to deliver the annual Summer Splash Programme with a new cross border element. The programme will engage young people from Crotlieve and also Omeath this year. A week of activities will take place on both sides of Carlingford Lough. Personal Safety information will be provided alongside activities including watersports and a trip to Skypark.

Slieve Gullion and Newry DEAs are working with CRJ (Community Restorative Justice Newry/South Armagh) on a drugs awareness campaign regarding the use of cocaine in the local area.

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2023
Subject:	Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Martina Flynn, Safer Communities & Good Relations Manager Damien Brannigan, Head of Engagement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	For noting only	x
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report. To note the attached Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting listed in 3.1 below. <p>Background</p> <p>The attached Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting listed in 3.1 below are provided to update the Committee on the ongoing work of the PCSP.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	None.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That the Committee:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report. Note the following Policing Committee & PCSP Minutes as attached: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on Tuesday 28 March 2023, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on Tuesday 25 July 2023.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	All actions are budgeted for in the PCSP Action Plan.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p>

	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	<i>Proposal initiating consultation</i> Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consultation period will be 12 weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Rationale:</i>	
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)	
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.0	Appendices	
7.1	Appendix 1: Minutes of Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on Tuesday 28 March 2023.	
8.0	Background Documents	
8.1	None.	

POLICING COMMITTEE AND POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**Minutes of the Newry, Mourne & Down Policing Committee and Policing & Community Safety Partnership Meeting held at 2pm on Tuesday 28 March 2023
online via Microsoft Teams**

Present:

Councillor T Andrews, NMDDC
 Councillor R Burgess, NMDDC
 Councillor W Clarke, NMDDC
 Councillor H Gallagher, NMDDC
 Councillor O Hanlon, NMDDC
 Councillor A Lewis, NMDDC (Chair)
 Councillor D Murphy, NMDDC
 Councillor K McKeivitt, NMDDC
 Chief Inspector Peter Stevenson, PSNI
 Inspector Kelly Gibson, PSNI
 Inspector Sheila Loughran, PSNI
 Inspector Adam Corner, PSNI
 Sergeant Ryan Duffy, PSNI
 Audrey Byrne, PCSP Independent Member
 Michelle Osborne, PCSP Independent Member
 Dan McEvoy, PCSP Independent Member
 John Allen, PCSP Independent Member
 Michael Heaney, YJA
 Donna Weir, EANI
 Aidan McCabe, SHSCT

In attendance:

Martina Flynn, Safer Communities & Good Relations Manager
 Shannon Creaney, PCSP Officer
 Judith Thompson, PCSP Officer
 Linda Cummins, Democratic Services Officer

1 Apologies and Chairperson's Remarks

Apologies were received from Superintendent Norman Haslett PSNI, Roisin Leckey PBNI, Liam Gunn NIHE and Tara Campbell (PCSP Independent Member).

Councillor Lewis welcomed all to the last meeting of the current Partnership and thanked Members for their contribution and attendance over the last 4 years, noting the great work that had been done and looked forward to further important work being done in the new term.

Councillor Lewis extended sympathies to the family of former Councillor and PCSP Member Mr Brian Quinn who recently passed away.

Councillor Lewis advised members that Superintendent Haslett had been seconded out of the District for a 4-week period and his report had been circulated to members in advance of today's meeting.

Councillor Burgess advised that he would need to leave the meeting early as he had another meeting to attend.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3 Draft Minutes of Policing Committee and PCSP Meeting dated 31 January 2023

Read: Minutes of Policing Committee and PCSP Meeting held on 31 January 2023 (copy circulated).

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Lewis it was agreed to approve the Minutes of the Policing Committee and PCSP Meeting held on 31 January 2023 as a true and accurate record.

4 Matters Arising

Mrs Flynn advised there was one outstanding action from the previous meeting which was to write to the Permanent Secretary regarding sentences for offenders in relation to assaulting frontline service workers. The letter was in draft form awaiting signature and would be removed from action sheet once sent.

Councillor Andrews stated it was a very worthwhile exercise in showing support in getting sentencing strengthened for offenders as there was an increase in attacks and abuse on frontline services which was not acceptable.

5 District Commander's Report – Period 6

Read: District Commander's Report – Period 6 (copy circulated)

Chief Inspector Stevenson took the opportunity to thank Members for the outstanding support given over the years and went onto present the District Commander's Report to the Partnership, highlighting the following points:

General

- Victim Updates – 99% of victims are being updated by police within the 10-day target and there were currently no outstanding victim updates across the District.
- Newry City Neighbourhood Policing Team recently delivered crime prevention presentations in partnership with Newry, Mourne and Down Intercultural Forum and colleagues in the Fire Service.

- Kid's Court events have been held at Dunsford Primary School and St Brigid's Primary School, Downpatrick in conjunction with Roads Policing and colleagues from PCSP.
- Rowallane NPT also held a Kid's Court at St Mary's Primary, Killyleagh; 9 drivers brought in front of the children who delivered some speedy justice to the motorists.
- Rowallane NPT Officers entered the water at Killyleagh Harbour to rescue a young woman who was then taken to hospital to receive the relevant help.
- The Mourne NPT spoke to ninety 4th year students about online and internet safety.
- Crotlieve NPT attended 6 schools in February delivering various presentations on the role of police, internet safety and stranger danger.
- Slieve Gullion North NPT in partnership with the PCSP secured funding to conduct an engagement event with a minority community in Newtownhamilton.
- Slieve Gullion South NPT attended Newtownhamilton High School, engaging with year 12 students from 3 local schools regarding policing in the community and addressing preconceptions of the PSNI. This was also part of the 3-day training event for NPT Officers as part of the South Armagh Policing Review.
- PSNI Newry, Mourne & Down Facebook page has 68,552 followers with an average weekly post reach of 119,526. PSNI Newry Twitter has 8,502 followers.
- The Nextdoor app had 13,722 members with 31 posts in 2023 by NPT Officers.

Hate Crime

- Reduced this year by 65 - 295 incidents this year compared with 360 last year.
- Racial hate crimes continue to be highest reported at 132, followed by sectarian at 106 and homophobic at 41.

Vulnerability

- Support Hub currently has 9 cohorts, also supporting 73 vulnerable people who are reviewed on a daily basis.
- 7 repeat victims on D District list managed by Support Hub repeat victim process.

ASB

- Rowallane and Slieve Croob NPTs had a joint meeting with the Education Authority, PCSP, DEA Co-Ordinators, County Down Rural Community Network, Choice Housing and Clanmil Housing – plan is to have drop in events for the Summer months. Also discussion on a 4 week pilot relationship programme in the senior High Schools.

Domestic Abuse

- 147 incidents increase year to date, 2274 this year compared to 2127 last year.
- Domestic offences have an increase of 327 this year to date, 1711 this year compared to 1384 last year. This increase could be viewed as concerning, however it is also encouraging as domestic abuse victims may feel more confident in reporting incidents.

- New legislation in relation to controlling coercive behaviour and stalking offences came into effect between February and May 2022 which is likely to have had an effect on the figures.
- Op Encompass piloted in September 2021 and has now been rolled out throughout Northern Ireland.

Road Safety

- 2 further fatal road traffic collisions since the last PCSP meeting.
- 136 fixed penalty notices issued, 188 driving offences referred to Public Prosecution Services. 47 drink drivers detected.
- Slieve Gullion North NPT performed pro-active speed operations in Camlough based on data provided by the PCSP SID. Several fixed penalty notices were issued along with advice and guidance to motorists.
- Vehicle stolen in Newcastle, arrest made for a number of offences including theft and disorderly behaviour. Individual charged at court and released on bail.
- Incident in Killough where a vehicle made off from police, it was located close to Hilltown and male arrested for a number of offences.
- Motorcycle failed to stop on Dublin Road, Newry - due to good work across Districts it was sighted in the Lisburn area and male arrested and charged.

Drugs

- Drugs seized value January was 44,520, February 10,170. CRNs issued were comparable even though there was a difference in the value of the drugs, 26 issued January and 27 in February.
- 170 drugs arrests in D District since the beginning of 2023.
- RAPID Bins – 119 inspections, 51,244 items recovered and disposed.
- Mourmes NPT conducted a search recovering 3 suspect Class A drugs, suspect Class B drugs, 5 mobile phones and 1 imitation firearm, scales and suspected deal book. 1 male and 1 female arrested for various offences.
- Pro-active stop and search by Slieve Gullion South NPT, individual arrested for driving whilst unfit through drink or drugs and possession of drugs.
- Search conducted on a property at Drin Road, Dromara, 3 males arrested for possession and intent to supply and cultivation of cannabis.

Crime

- Total recorded crimes 8,537 compared to 7,302 for previous year.
- Crime outcomes have increased and are comparative on last year even though there had been an increase in crime.
- South Armagh Policing Review continues, the second IAG (Independent Advisory Group) meeting has been held and 3-day training package for Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood Officers has also been held. Two further recommendations have been recommended for closure from the Review.
- High risk missing person in Saintfield area had been located unresponsive and brought to hospital to receive appropriate care.

- Fuel laundering plant had been located in Culloville through joint operation with HMRC.
- 10 separate incidents of assault on police in February/March throughout the District equating to twenty plus officers being assaulted.

Discussion then took place with the following points raised:

Councillor Lewis thanked Chief Inspector Stevenson for a very comprehensive and in-depth report stating the great work being done was in stark contrast to those who seek to do police harm, delivering the message on behalf of the PCSP that one attack on police is too much and there was no excuse for any sort of attack. He conveyed his best wishes to the officers hurt, advising them they had the support of the PCSP.

In response to a query from Councillor Lewis on the South Armagh Policing Review Inspector Corner agreed to provide an update for PCSP Members on the Review, outlining progress made against the individual recommendations.

ACTION: PSNI to provide a written update on the South Armagh Policing Review, outlining progress made against the individual recommendations.

Inspector Corner also advised that two further recommendations had approved for sign off:

- Recommendation 12 – Officer Safety Training.
- 3 Day training package for Officers Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood Teams.

Other recommendations were still a work in progress, once any are deemed ready for closure they will be considered by the PSNI SMT and the NI Policing Board. Re-opening of Newry Street in Newtownhamilton (at the Police Station) forms part of the Estate Strategy for the South Armagh Review which it was hoped would make the Station more accessible and practicable for 2023.

Councillor Andrews raised concerns at the rise in number of assaults on police officers and also welcomed the Kid's Court events, noting that it made young people more aware of road safety and there was a lot of learning on both sides to be had.

6 PCSP Officer Report

Read: PCSP Officer Report (copy circulated)

Mrs Flynn highlighted to Members that the PCSP Financial Assistance Programme was currently open to applications, information and criteria had been issued and encouraged Members to raise awareness of the programme as it was a great opportunity for groups to apply for funding to do some locally based work. Seven videos have been produced highlighting groups which were previously successful in securing funding and the benefits of the programme – these are available on the PCSP YouTube channel and Facebook page. Financial Assistance programme closes on 17 April 2023 with Letters of Offer out by June 2023.

Agreed: It was agreed the Committee:

- **Note the report**
- **Note the attached PCSP Officer Report.**

7 SIDs Update

Read: SIDs Report (copy circulated)

Mrs Flynn advised Members that going forward the SIDs data report provided for PCSP meetings will no longer include detail on highest speeds recorded across the District, the focus should be on trends and not on a very small number of high detections.

Consistently seeing very high numbers of early morning speeds in Camlough morning and was heartening to know that the PSNI were using those statistics to guide local operations.

Mrs Flynn advised that another 7 SIDs had been procured and were awaiting installation. Approval was sought for the PCSP to engage the Department of Infrastructure to install these – this is considered the least complicated option with the Department being the landowner for all sites which would guarantee the works being carried out appropriately and finishing the piece of work started by the Partnership.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor McKeivitt it was agreed the Committee:

- **Approve the report**
- **Approve the recommendation that the Department for Infrastructure be engaged to install the final seven Speed Indicator Device Signs (SIDs) across the District.**
- **Approve Church Road in Ballynahinch as the final SID site for the Rowallane DEA**

8 ASB Sub Group Report

Read: ASB Sub Group Report (copy circulated).

In response to a query raised by Mr McEvoy, Mrs Flynn confirmed that the issue in representation in relation to Sub Groups - especially in the legacy Down area - had largely come from the Independent Members grouping which only had 6 members as opposed to 9 due to resignations and the fact there was no reserve list.

Mrs Flynn advised that Independent Members will remain in place until next year, the Policing Board are currently working on a recruitment strategy for new PCSP Independent Members. It was noted that that the PCSP will be reconstituted with new Elected Members after the Local Government elections in May.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor McKeivitt seconded by Councillor Andrews it was agreed the Committee:-

- **Note the report.**

- **Agree the attached Draft Action Sheet of ASB Sub Group 1 held on 21 February 2023 and ASB Sub Group 2 held on 8 February 2023.**

9 Statutory Partner Update

Mrs Weir (Education Authority) advised there had been a lot of recent collaboration and thanked the PCSP for attending the recent Youth Conference in the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle looking at the themes of mental health and isolation, environmental, climate and life skills.

The funding scheme for voluntary partners was being re-released for those groups who were unsuccessful or had not previously applied. Contingency plans are also in place to help support clubs in the meantime, especially St. Oliver Plunkett Youth Club in Crossmaglen, until an indicative budget was released from the Department of Education which could take up to 7 weeks.

The already successful applicants had been recently informed that they would get their payments on a month by month basis until a budget was put in place.

Mrs Weir informed Members that further collaborative work was planned with the PCSP to address the needs of the community in relation to ASB in the Down area following a funding offer released for street based attached youth work agreed with an existing provider.

Focus on core youth provision with 14 funding offers released opposed to 7 last time meaning more young people have access to provision across the District.

Mr McCabe (SHSCT) took the opportunity to thank Members and staff for their work over the term of the Partnership and looked forward to the continued collaboration.

10 Update from PSNI on implications of, and preparations for Brexit in relation to Policing in Newry, Mourne and Down (Standing item)

There was no update to report.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next PCSP & Policing Committee Meeting would be confirmed following the Local Government Elections due to take place on 18 May 2023.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 14.51pm.

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2023
Subject:	Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aisling Rennick, Engagement & Development Manager Damien Brannigan, Head of Engagement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report. To note the attached Minutes of the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2023. <p>Background</p> <p>The attached Minutes of the Newry NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2023 are provided to update the Committee on the on-going work of Newry NRP.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	None.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That the Committee:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report. Note the following Newry NRP Minutes as attached: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Minutes of Newry NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2023, approved at Newry NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 28 June 2023.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	None.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i>

	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix 1: Minutes of Newry NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2023.
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None.



**Minutes of the Newry NR Partnership Meeting
Wednesday 24 May 2023
At 7.00pm
Room 1, WIN Business Centre**

In Attendance:

Mrs Paula McGuigan	Chairperson, NRP (Carnagat Community Association)
Mr Collie Hanna,	Vice Chairperson, NRP (Barcroft CA)
Mr Paul Magennis,	Barcroft CA
Mrs Joanne Markey,	Carnagat CA
Ms Shauna McCourt,	Drumalane Quayside Close CA
Mr Malachy Maguire,	Ballybot CA
Ms Clíodhna Malone,	Ballybot CA
Mr John Hogan,	Ballybot CA
Ms Maeve McParland,	Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
Mrs Catherine O'Hanlon,	Area Manager Dept for Communities
Mr Sean Mc Kevitt,	Newry Mourne and Down District Council
Ms Orla Morgan,	Greater Linenhall Area CA (GLACA)
Ms Denise Fearon,	GLACA
Mrs Lesley Hamilton,	Southern Regional College (SRC)
Mr Raymond Jackson,	Confederation of Community Groups
Ms Bernie Mooney,	Education Authority NI. (EANI)
Ms Noreen Rice,	Meadow Armagh Road CA
Mr Brendan Cranney,	Meadow Armagh Road CA
Mrs Maureen Ruddy,	Martins Lane CA
Mr John Stewart,	Community Restorative Justice (CRJI)

Apologies:

Dr Conor Patterson,	Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
Mr Aiden McCabe,	Southern Health and Social Care Trust Promoting Well-being team. (SHCRT)
Mr Liam Gunn,	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Mr Kevin McCabe,	Drumalane Quayside Close CA
Ms Francine Ruddy,	Martins Lane CA.
Ms Aisling Rennick,	Newry Mourne & Down District Council
Ms Linda Develin,	Martins Lane CA
Mrs Kathleen Magee,	Derrybeg CA
Mr Ewan Morgan,	Community Restorative Justice
Mr Ronnie Poucher,	Ballybot CA

Matters Discussed

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes/Matters arising.
4. Conflict of Interest.
5. Sub-group updates.
6. DFC/Community updates.
7. Date of next meeting.

ITEM	SUBJECT	MATTERS ARISING/UPDATE	ACTIONS	By Whom
1	Welcome / Introductions	Mrs Paula Mc Guigan welcomed everyone to the meeting. On behalf of the Newry Partnership members, Paula offered her sincere condolences to Aisling Rennick and her family on the recent bereavement of her brother Fergal.		
2.	Apologies	Recorded as above.		
3.	Minutes/matters arising.	Minutes agreed as accurate. Proposed by Noreen Rice and seconded by Joanne Markey. No Matters arising.		
4.	Conflict of interest	No Conflicts of interest declared.		
5.	Charges for use	Malachy Maguire informed the members that he had been		

	<p>of Council land for Community activities.</p>	<p>informed by council that Ballybot Ca would have to pay a charge of £247.60 per day to use the Raymond McCreesh park for their summer programme.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the way forward to deal with this issue, Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These charges would force the communities to postpone their planned summer programmes. • They felt disappointed by this decision. • As volunteers they faced many struggles to deliver community programmes and they do not need any further barriers. • The members agreed that the Chairperson should write to the council seeking clarity on what they are paying for? 	<p>Draft a letter to be sent to Council</p>	<p>Paula/Sean</p>
<p>6. Sub-group updates</p>		<p>CRJI: Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing all reports (2022/23) for DfC and annual report for Sean • Awaiting news on new funding for 2023/24 <p>NIHE</p> <p>Carnagat Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on the new extension is well underway. • Sean has been out to take photos at the early-stage of construction. <p>E2E (Education to Employment Programme):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets met and budget spent for 2022/23 • Completing all reports for DfC and Sean. • Waiting on news of a budget for 2023/24 		

	<p>SRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets met. • No further training until further funding confirmed. • Waiting list for new courses if funding is approved. • Completing all reports for DfC <p>SHSCT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All targets met for 2022/23 • Completing reports and final claim. • Limited funding available based on 1st Quarter spend in 2022/23 – deliver small number of projects. • Await outcome of new budget allocation. <p>EANI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing reports on Social Education and Count Read succeed + programmes. • Proposed cuts to Education will have a huge impact both on schools and the wider community. • Await outcome of budget allocations. <p>NMDDC:</p> <p>Outdoor activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Targets met in 2022/23. • Final reports and claims submitted. • 2023/24 Can spend based on 1st Quarter spend for 2022/23 • Small number of activities – limited budget. • Await update on budget for 2023/24 		
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		<p>Community Renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets met in 2022/23 • Final claims and reports submitted. • CCG staff on protected notice. • Derrybeg to hold an AGM. • Continuing to support the 9 groups. • Allowed to spend based on 1st Quarter for 2022/23. • Nothing beyond 30th June. • Await decision on funding for 2023/24. • Raymond and Collie represent Newry on the 36 NRP's forum. The forum wants to keep NR separate from the other programmes within the review – AAR, SPOD's. 		
<p>8.</p>	<p>DfC/Community Update</p>	<p>Equality impact assessment has been put out for consultation on the proposed cuts across all areas within DfC.</p> <p>Waiting on the responses before a decision is made. There may be some kind of budget if they get a flavour from the information received. This may ultimately affect all budgets including NR and AAR(Areas at Risk).</p> <p>Moira Doherty met with all Council CEO's to give some clarity.</p> <p>Ask people to respond to the EQIA.</p> <p>Update from CA's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All groups planning for summer programmes. • Possibility of scaling back due to proposed cuts. • Carnagat to use the Derrybeg centre for some of their programmes as they have now vacated the Community house. 		

<p>9. A.O.B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raymond informed members of the DfC hardship fund – 382k across the Council district. EOI application for funds – runs to March 2024. • Credit union programme for people struggling with energy bills. • Sean to set up 2 focus groups for the People and place review team. • Noreen asked the members to email her if they have any issues that need to be discussed at the DEA forums. • Details of proposed charges for usage of council land. • Noreen also informed members that the 'happy days' playgroup likely to close due to funding cuts. <p>No More Business All the members thanked for their attendance.</p>	
<p>10. Date of Next Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 28th June 2023 • 7pm WIN Business centre 	<p>Circulate details and all information</p> <p>Sean</p>

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 August 2023
Subject:	Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Aisling Rennick, Engagement & Development Manager Damien Brannigan, Head of Engagement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	For noting only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the report. To note the attached Minutes of the Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023. <p>Background</p> <p>The attached Minutes of the Downpatrick NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023 are provided to update the Committee on the on-going work of Downpatrick NRP.</p>
2.0	Key issues
2.1	None.
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p>That the Committee:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report. Note the attached Minutes of the Downpatrick NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023, approved at Downpatrick NRP Meeting held on Tuesday 5 July 2023.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	None.
5.0	Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)
5.1	<p><i>General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes</i></p> <p>It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon Equality of Opportunity or Good Relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
5.2	<i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i>

	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation <input type="checkbox"/></p>
5.3	<p><i>Proposal initiating consultation</i></p> <p>Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be 12 weeks <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
6.1	<p>Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please complete the following:</p> <p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed <input type="checkbox"/></p>
7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix 1: Minutes of Downpatrick NRP Meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2023
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Action Sheet of Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 4.00 pm in Murphy's, Downpatrick

Chairperson:

Jenny Laverty
 Alison McCarthy
 Jeanette McCarthy
 Tatiana Seed
 Deborah Finlay
 Anthony Trainor
 Kathy Mullan
 Mary Cahalane-Woodward
 Paul Fitzsimons
 Dan McEvoy
 Macartan Digney

In Attendance:

County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN)
 Tosu Ur
 Tosu Ur
 SERC
 Model Farm Community Association (MFCA)
 Stream Street Residents Association (SSRA)
 Flying Horse Ward Community Forum
 South Eastern Trust (SET)
 Education Authority
 Downpatrick Community Collective
 Downpatrick Community Collective

Council Officials:

Technical Officer, Downpatrick NHR

Apologies:

Nicholas McCrickard
 Brian Morrow
 Lisa Perry
 Mel Murray
 Susan Casement
 Lillian Swaffield
 Damien Brannigan
 Aisling Rennick
 Kyla Hannaway

County Down Rural Community Network
 Department for Communities
 Flying Horse Ward Community Forum (FHWCF)
 Education Authority
 Bridge Street & Mount Crescent Community Association
 Bridge Street & Mount Crescent Community Association
 Head of Engagement
 Engagement & Development Manager
 Model Farm Community Association

Maria Kelly

Downpatrick Surestart

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION – including actions taken/ date completed or progress to date if not yet completed.
DNRP/01/2023	Welcome and Apologies	In the absence of the Chair & Vice Chair, the Technical Officer assumed the position	Technical Officer
DNRP/02/2023 Action Sheet	Action Sheet	Members unanimously agreed to adopt the Action Sheet of 29 November 2022 Following discussion regarding the Code of Conduct the Technical Officer advised this was necessary due to changes in group members, etc. Concerns regarding re-signing of Code of Conduct to be forwarded via the Technical Officer to Department for Communities for consideration.	Technical Officer

		Meeting to be organised with the Chair of St Patrick's & Thomas Russell Park Residents Association to gather information on the group and the areas it represents	
DNRP/03/2023	Promoters' Reports	The Promoters' Reports were presented to members and noted	Technical Officer
DNRP/04/2023	Additional Items	<p>Requests for following to be brought to next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Review of People & Places • Update on Position of Finance/Support for Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal • Updated List of Postcodes for the Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal 	Technical Officer/ Department for Communities

The Meeting ended at 5:30pm

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	August 2023
Subject:	2023 / 2024 DFC Areas at Risk Funding for Bessbrook and Crossmaglen
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb Assistant Director Community Engagement
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Julie Mc Cann Head of Community Services, Facilities and Events
For decision	For noting only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.0	Purpose and Background
1.1	For Noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NM&DDC have received letters of offer from the Department for Communities for a continuation of the Areas at Risk programme for the period 2023 / 2024 - Council have secured £24,000 per location to run community educational programmes for residents of the Crossmaglen and Bessbrook areas, a total of £48,000.
2.0	Key issues
2.1	<p>Areas at Risk Programmes will take place primarily within Bessbrook & Crossmaglen Community Centres. The programmes assist with meeting the Councils corporate objectives by empowering and improving the capacity of our local communities.</p> <p>As per the DFC letter of offer quarterly progress reports and financial claims will be submitted identifying what courses were run in the past quarter, what funding was spent, numbers attending, and any issues identified.</p> <p>In the last financial year, a wide range of activities took place including Makaton courses, door supervision courses, Kids Summer Fitness camps, Kids Fishing camps, arts and craft activities, Body Balance sessions etc. All participation targets were met and the full amount of grant aid was claimed by NM&DDC.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	<p><i>That the Committee agree</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To note that NM&DDC have received letters of offer from the Department for Communities for a continuation of the Areas at Risk programme for the period 2023 / 2024 - Council have secured £24,000 per location to run community educational programmes for residents of the Crossmaglen and Bessbrook areas, a total of £48,000.</i>
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Area manger Officer time
5.0	Equality and good relations implications
5.1	No equality impact assessment is required at this time;
6.0	Rural Proofing implications
6.1	A rural Needs Impact Assessment is not required at this time
7.0	Appendices
	None
8.0	Background Documents
	None