

April 23rd, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Monday, 27th April 2026** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room, Downshire Civic Centre.**

Committee Membership 2025-26

Councillor C Bowsie **Chairperson**

Councillor M Gibbons **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor J Brennan

Councillor D Finn

Councillor C Galbraith

Councillor R Howell

Councillor J Jackson

Councillor A King

Councillor N Lawlor

Councillor D Lee-Surginor

Councillor O Magennis

Councillor A Mathers

Councillor D Murphy

Councillor K Murphy

Councillor J Truesdale

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 16 March 2026

For Information

📄 *Action Sheet from AHC 16-03-2026.pdf*

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For Discussion/Decision

4.0 District Electoral Areas Forums Update March 2026

For Decision

📄 *AHC Report - DEA Forums March Updates.pdf*

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📄 *Appx. DEA Forums Actions Sheets March 2026.pdf*

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Items deemed to be exempt under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014

5.0 2026/27 Community Support Programme

For Decision

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

📄 *AHC Report - Community Support Programme 2026-27.pdf*

Not included

For Noting

6.0 Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) & Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Updates

For Information

📄 *AHC Report - PCSP & Newry NRP Update .pdf*

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📄 *Appx. 1 Newry NRP Minutes 18.02.2026.pdf*

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📄 *Appx. 2 PCSP & Policing Committee Minutes 03.02.2026 .pdf*

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7.0 Social Inclusion Update

For Information

📄 *AHC Report - Social Inclusion Update.pdf*

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Invitees

- Cllr Terry Andrews
- Cllr Callum Bowsie
- Fionnuala Branagh
- Cllr Jim Brennan
- Cllr Pete Byrne
- Cllr Philip Campbell
- Cllr William Clarke
- Cllr Laura Devlin
- Cllr Cadogan Enright
- Cllr Killian Feehan
- Cllr Doire Finn
- Martina Flynn
- Cllr Conor Galbraith
- Cllr Mark Gibbons
- Cllr Oonagh Hanlon
- Cllr Glyn Hanna
- Cllr Valerie Harte
- Mr Conor Haughey
- Cllr Martin Hearty
- Cllr Roisin Howell
- Cllr Tierna Howie
- Cllr Jonathan Jackson
- Joanne Johnston
- Cllr Geraldine Kearns
- Miss Veronica Keegan
- Mrs Sheila Kieran
- Cllr Cathal King
- Cllr Aurla King
- Ms Elaine Kirk
- Cllr Mickey Larkin
- Cllr Niall Lawlor
- Cllr David Lee-Surginor
- Cllr Alan Lewis
- Cllr Oonagh Magennis
- Mr Conor Mallon
- Cllr Aidan Mathers
- Cllr Declan McAteer
- Ms Kerri McConnell
- Mr Martin McKibbin
- Sinead Murphy
- Cllr Kate Murphy
- Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Selina Murphy
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Cllr Siobhan O'Hare
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Mr Andy Patterson
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Cllr Áine Quinn
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Cllr Henry Reilly
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Cllr Michael Rice
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Ms Alison Robb
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Ms Maria Rogan
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Cllr Michael Ruane
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Conor Smyth
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Donna Starkey
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Sarah Taggart
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Cllr David Taylor
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Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly
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Cllr Jill Truesdale
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Mrs Marie Ward
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Cllr Helena Young
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ACTIONS ARISING FROM ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING – 16 MARCH 2026

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
AHC/018/2026	Action sheet from AHC Meeting held 16/02/26	It was agreed to note the action sheet	A Patterson	Noted	Y
AHC/019/2026	EVAWAG Presentation	It was agreed to note the presentation	M Flynn	Noted	Y
AHC/020/2026	District Electoral Area (DEA) Forum Update	It was agreed to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crotlieve DEA Forum Meeting held 10 February 2026 • Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 17 February 2026 • Rowallane DEA Forum Meeting held 17 February 2026 • Slieve Croob DEA Forum Meeting held on 24 February 2026 	A Robb	Noted and action sheets being actioned	Y
AHC/021/2026	Grant Funding Application	It was agreed to progress the submission of an application for grant funding for Multi-Sports Hub provision in Newry as detailed within the officer's report.	C Haughey	Application to be submitted by 29/4/2026	Y
AHC/022/2026	Digi-Hub Project Update	It was agreed to note the contents of the officer's report	A Robb	Noted	Y
AHC/023/2026	EVAWAG Update	It was agreed to note the contents of the report	A Robb	Noted	Y
AHC/024/2026	Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Report	It was agreed to note the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of the Newry Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held 26 November 2025 and approved at the Newry NRP Meeting held 18 February 	A Robb	Noted	Y

		<p>2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held 15 October 2025 and approved at the Downpatrick NRP Meeting held 2 February 2026.			
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Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 27 April 2026
Subject:	District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums Update Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Martina Flynn, Head of Engagement

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>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the report. • To consider and agree to approve the actions in the Action Sheets attached from the DEA Forum Private Meetings listed in 3.1 below.
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. ➢ Agree to approve the actions in the Action Sheets attached for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slieve Gullion Forum Meeting held on 3 March 2026 - Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 19 March 2026 - Mournes DEA Forum Meeting on 24 March 2026
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><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>

<p>5.2</p>	<p><i>Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision</i> 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>
<p>5.3</p>	<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>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
<p>.1</p>	<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>7.0</p>	<p>Appendices</p>
<p>7.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slieve Gullion Forum Meeting held on 3 March 2026 - Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 19 March 2026 - Mournes DEA Forum Meeting on 24 March 2026
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Background Documents</p>
<p>8.1</p>	<p>None.</p>

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

**Action Sheet of Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area (DEA) Forum Private Meeting
held on Tuesday 3rd March 2026 @ 5.30 pm in Cloughreagh Community Centre**

Chairperson:	Councillor Aine Quinn
In Attendance:	Councillor Declan Murphy Councillor Mickey Larkin Councillor Oonagh Magennis Councillor Martin Hearty
Independent Members:	Cathy McMahon, Confederation of Community Groups Claire Convery, Clanrye Group Ann Grant, County Down Rural Community Network Teresa Nugent, Independent Member, Rural Health Partnership
Statutory Partners:	Ryan Crilly, Education Authority Barry Traynor, Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Council Officials:	Aoife McComiskey, Slieve Gullion DEA Coordinator Elaine Carr, Peace Officer Kerri Morrow, Engagement & Development Manager
Apologies:	Councillor David Taylor Ciara Burns, Community Facilities Manager Briege Boyle, Community Facilities Manager

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed.
DEA/SG/72	Declarations of Interest	No declarations of interest were made.	Noted.
DEA/SG/73	Election of DEA Forum Chair and Vice Chair	<p>Councillor Aine Quinn was elected Chair of Slieve Gullion DEA, on the proposal of Councillor Declan Murphy and seconded by Councillor Oonagh Magennis.</p> <p>Councillor Martin Hearty was elected Vice Chair of the Slieve Gullion DEA, on the proposal of Councillor Aine Quinn and Seconded by Councillor Declan Murphy.</p>	Noted.
DEA/SG/74	Matters arising from Action Sheet from meeting held 6 January 2026	<p>Action Sheet confirmed as true and accurate record.</p> <p>DEA Coordinator to follow up on establishment of a Bulgarian Community Group in Newtownhamilton.</p>	<p>Approved.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
DEA/SG/75	PeacePlus Update	<p>Elaine Carr provided an update:</p> <p>PeacePlus newsletter to be issued and shared by DEA Coordinator.</p> <p>Community Led Health and Wellbeing Programme – Clanrye Group Appointed to Facilitate - Recruitment will be commencing shortly.</p> <p>Capacity Building Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Men’s Shed podcast. Slackpress appointed and programme has now commenced. -Sensory project has commenced (Silverbridge/Forkhill) - Gavin Murphy delivering - programme almost completed <p>Bloom and Branch - A facilitator has been appointed and will attend next DEA Forum meeting.</p> <p>Reimaging Project - MayWe has been appointed, delivery target is 3 projects per DEA. Slieve Gullion areas approved at last meeting. Facilitator to attend next meeting.</p>	<p>DEA Coordinator to circulate.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

		<p><i>Ending Violence Against Women & Girls</i> - The Council's EVAWG theatre programme has been successfully completed, engaging over 1,700 students across local schools in partnership with Spanner in the Works. Performances were delivered in St. Joseph's High School (Newtownhamilton High in attendance) and at Newry Town Hall (St. Paul's HS in attendance), with strong support from elected representatives and partner organisations. Feedback has been extremely positive, with the programme recognised as an effective way to promote awareness of healthy relationships and challenge attitudes towards violence against women and girls. A promotional video will be shared to highlight its impact.</p> <p><i>Programme planning:</i> Supporting groups with programme planning for Spring/Summer (Dungormley 8-week cookery programme; Starlet Bessbrook Home Safety, TAKE 5 and Strength and Balance; Lislea Men's Shed Home Safety and Recycling Talks; Carrickcruppen Breast Cancer Awareness Talk).</p> <p>Community Engagement Additional engagement activities included participation in Schools Networking and Men's Health Sub Group meetings, developing the DEA Action Plan 2026/27, planning International Women's Day activities, supporting PCSP with Crossmaglen Safety Event; attendance at Crossmaglen Square Improvement Project meetings.</p> <p>Upcoming Events-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Women's Day 5th March – bus from Crossmaglen/ Newtownhamilton • Support RHP with their IWD Tea Dance 12th March • Women's Mechanic Event – EmpowerHER (Lissummon 12th March; Forkhill 22nd April; Camlough 30th April) • Men's Bereavement Pilot (planned for May) • Healthy lunchbox sessions; Fuel Your Family– planning in progress for April delivery in Forkhill. Plans for another area in Autumn. • 3-week culture programme with two Newtownhamilton primary schools in April. 	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted. DEA Coordinator to circulate details for all events for members to promote.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Bus 2 visits to DEA 14th April 3x Cloughreagh/ Bessbrook Primary Schools and 16th April St. Paul's Bessbrook. • Supporting provided to community groups who support children and adults with learning disabilities. Workshops planned including African Drumming and Inclusion through Sport. • 30th May – Forest Feasts and Woodland Beats @ Slieve Gullion Forest. Community family event showcasing culture through music/dance/food and arts. • Men's Fest – planned during Men's Health Week 10th June • Ongoing work NIHE / Supporting Communities SG groups to access grants – Dungormley family fun day. Bessbrook and Cloughreagh. <p>DEA Action Plan – DEA Coordinator circulated draft 26/27 Action Plan. Suggestion/ amendments to be emailed to Coordinator.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>DEA/SG/77</p>	<p>Emerging Issues</p>	<p>Community Update-</p> <p>(a) Health & Wellbeing</p> <p>Teresa Nugent provided an update on Rural Health Partnership work including farm families programme and pain management programme. RHP social prescriber (Margaret) based in Crossmaglen GP surgery. Current job vacancy for Heritage Officer to be circulated.</p> <p>Bryson electricity vouchers (£250 value each) still available – criteria applies. Referrals can be made to RHP.</p> <p>Claire Convery provided an update on Clanrye's ongoing work. Clanrye have been appointed as the facilitator for the PeacePlus Thriving Together programme. Claire provided an overview of the project – 4x £2,000 projects will be delivered in Slieve Gullion DEA. EOI's will be circulated to groups via DEA early April.</p> <p>Barry Traynor provided an update on ongoing TILT (Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Together Initiative).</p> <p>Barry is available to attend groups to deliver Bend Don't Break self-compassion training.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

		<p>(b) Education Authority – Youth Service</p> <p>Ryan provided an update of EA’s ongoing work including new afterschool provision in Newtownhamilton High for 40 young people and Bessbrook evening provision. A new group will be established in Forkhill based in the Community Centre. A number of T:BUC applications for summer scheme grants are pending.</p> <p>(c) Community Update</p> <p>Teresa Nugent advised that Cullyhanna Community Centre is currently closed due to structural issues.</p> <p>(d) Environment</p> <p>Members discussed and highlighted the process of reporting potholes via DfI website.</p> <p>Cllr. Hearty highlighted the positive news that storm damage to Slieve Gullion Cairn is scheduled to be repaired and open again in Summer.</p> <p>Crossmaglen Square Improvement consultation 10th March 4pm-8pm in Crossmaglen Community Centre.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Agreement to keep on agenda for next meeting.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>Noted.</p> <p>DEA Coordinator to circulate details.</p>
DEA/SG/78	Performance Improvement Plan Consultation	Draft Performance Improvement Objective consultation currently open.	DEA Coordinator to circulate link.
DEA/SG/79	Date of Next Meeting	Tuesday 5 th May 2026 @ 5.30pm – Crossmaglen Community Centre.	Noted.

The meeting ended at: 6.40pm

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

**Action Sheet of Newry District Electoral Area (DEA) Forum Private Meeting
held on Thursday 19th March 2026 at 1.30pm in Newry Leisure Centre**

Chairperson:	Councillor Aidan Mathers
Independent Members:	Raymond Jackson, Confederation of Community Groups Allison Slater, Bolster Community Colin Hanna, Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency Ann Grant, County Down Rural Community Network Eamonn Connolly, Newry BID
Statutory Partners:	Sergeant Warren Roberts, PSNI
Council Officials:	Kerri Morrow, Development and Engagement Manager Martina Flynn, Head of Engagement Edel McGeeney, Peace Officer
Apologies:	Councillor Valerie Harte Councillor Cathal King Councillor Doire Finn Aisling Pryers, Housing Executive

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
DEA/N/2026/1	Declarations of Interest	None.	
DEA/N/2026/2	Matters arising from Action Sheet	Dublin Road Junction – carriageway comment updated at the request of R. Jackson.	Amended and Approved.
DEA/N/2026/3	Patrick Street site	Submissions made. Under review.	Coordinator to progress.
DEA/N/2026/4	Peace Plus	<p>Members agreed the following three areas for the reimaging project through the Peace Plus funding</p> <p><i>Geographical Area</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Greater Linenhall/Armagh Road/Canal</i> - <i>Carnagat/Derrybeg</i> - <i>Dublin Road</i> <p><i>Members requested Killen/Meigh area be considered under Bloom and Branch.</i></p> <p>Members were provided with an update on programme delivery, procurement progress, and upcoming opportunities across the DEA. Community Journalism and Media Training has now been successfully completed, with 19 participants finishing the programme and very positive feedback received.</p> <p>A range of cultural, heritage, and intergenerational programmes have progressed through procurement. Contracts have been awarded for key initiatives, including intergenerational support programmes focused on</p>	Noted and Coordinator to progress

		<p>ending violence against women and girls, as well as arts-based programmes promoting connection across generations.</p> <p>Several other projects—such as heritage needlework, poetry and song development, and shared history and cultural festival programmes—are at various stages of development.</p> <p>Additionally, a large-scale programme delivering social and emotional support for young people across all DEAs is currently open, focusing on resilience, anti-bullying, and emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>Members were also informed of new opportunities to support local businesses and food enterprises in adopting sustainable practices and becoming market-ready, with programmes available in both the Newry and Crotlieve DEA areas.</p>	
DEA/N//2026/5	Community Services	Members were provided with a verbal update on the relevant facilities. It was agreed that C. Burns (Community Services Manager) will issue a further update to Councillors via email following engagement with the Maintenance Team.	Community Services to update.
DEA/N//2026/6	DEA Co-ordinator's Report.	<p>Shared Education Programme - The next session has been rescheduled for 26 March at Newtownhamilton High School and will focus on addressing racism, alongside workshop input from the PSNI. Planning is currently underway to confirm facilitators in line with the theme of the session. Support will also be provided on the day to assist with the delivery and coordination of the programme.</p> <p>Ending Violence Against Women & Girls - The Council's EVAWG theatre programme has been successfully completed, engaging over 1,700 students across local schools in partnership with Spanner in the Works. Performances were delivered in schools and at Newry Town Hall, with strong support from elected representatives and partner organisations.</p> <p>Feedback has been extremely positive, with the programme recognised as an effective way to promote awareness of healthy relationships and</p>	Noted and Coordinator to progress.

challenge attitudes towards violence against women and girls. A promotional video will be shared to highlight its impact.

The Three Ways Youth Project Stand Up: The Premiere for Change - initiative delivered three short films, supported through the Council's EVAWG Change Fund, aimed at raising awareness and challenging attitudes. The project was supported by Newry DEA and the Council, including coordination and access to venues. The films were launched at Newry Omniplex on 26 February, attended by over 190 guests, with very positive feedback on both quality and messaging. Ongoing support is in place to further develop the project and build on its impact within the community.

International Women's Day - The International Women's Day event, delivered in partnership with key agencies, took place on 5 March at Dromantine Conference Centre, welcoming 100 women from across the district. The programme focused on key issues including EVAWG, empowerment, and wellbeing, alongside training, guest speakers, and interactive activities.

Feedback was extremely positive, highlighting the event's success in raising awareness, promoting wellbeing, and creating opportunities for connection and support.

EmpowerHER Auto Nights - Newry DEA, in partnership with PCSP and Road Safe NI, delivered an EmpowerHER Auto Night at Three Ways Community Association, with 29 women attending. The session provided practical car safety and maintenance skills to support confidence and safety on the road, with very positive feedback received. A second, wider public session is scheduled for 15 April in The Buttercrane Shopping Centre and will be promoted to encourage broader participation.

Mosaic Workshops - Newry DEA delivered a Good Relations mosaic workshop on 6 March, engaging approximately 40 participants in exploring themes of inclusion, diversity, and shared space through creative expression. Feedback was extremely positive, highlighting the

value of the initiative in bringing people together in a relaxed and inclusive environment.

A second workshop is scheduled for 27 March at Three Ways Community Centre and is fully subscribed, with additional demand indicating strong interest in future delivery.

The following additional engagement and support activities were undertaken during the reporting period:

- Provided support to the Iúr Cinn Fleadh Appreciation Event.
- Attended planning meeting with PIPS Hope and Support to discuss the delivery of Mental Health Workshops across the Newry DEA during 2026/2027.
- Met with the Housing Executive regarding Cohesion Funding opportunities for community groups in 2026/27.
- Attended the monthly DEA Coordinators Meeting.
- Participated in the DEA, Good Relations and PCSP Planning Day.
- Provided funding guidance and support to Thomas Davis GAC.
- Undertook planning and preparation for upcoming events scheduled from April – June 2026.
- Supported Environmental Health with the promotion of Smoking Cessation Month.
- Provided support to EID events and Ramadan-related activities.
- Secured funding from Arbour Housing and Radius Housing for the Wildlife in the City initiative and the Newry Water Festival.

Community Support Hub – The next community support hub will take place on April 12 from 3pm – 6pm in Newry Leisure with a range of council departments and partners in attendance on the day. Members requested to share and encourage residents to attend.

Impacts of Cocaine – Members were informed of the upcoming launch of Impacts of Cocaine, developed by Davina's Ark and supported by NMDDC and PCSP. The event will take place on Monday 30 March at 6:30 pm in the Canal Court Hotel.

<p>DEA/N/2026/7</p>	<p>Independent Members and Statutory Partners Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Health and Wellbeing (b) Environmental (c) Economic Development (d) Safety and Good Relations 	<p><i>Health and Wellbeing Update</i></p> <p><i>Bolster:</i> Members updated that the Older People’s Consultation remains ongoing, and Members are encouraged to support promotion and engagement to maximise participation. Discover and Connect events are currently being delivered across Newry and Slieve Gullion, with all members of the community welcome to attend. Progress is continuing in relation to the development of new building premises, with further updates to follow. The Bessbrook Walking Group, led by individuals with learning disabilities, continues to take place on Friday mornings in Bessbrook. The Autism “Walking Warriors” group meets weekly on Friday evenings in Newry. Bolster will host its first Golf Classic in Warrenpoint in June 2026, with further information on team registration to follow.</p> <p><i>CCG Update:</i> Members were updated on the ongoing funding restrictions continuing to place significant pressure on the community and voluntary sector, with deadlines approaching and no letters of offer issued to date. In the Drumalane area, a shortage of volunteers has been identified as a key concern, CCG is providing support to promote local initiatives and encourage new membership. The Credit Union Utility Fund remains open, with funding still available, and those in need are encouraged to apply. A Volunteer Recognition Quiz Night is scheduled for 26 March 2026, with a larger recognition event planned for September 2026.</p> <p><i>Environmental Update:</i></p> <p>Update on the no drinking street signage to be provided at next meeting</p>	<p>Noted</p>
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		<p><i>Economic Update:</i> <i>NMEA</i> The GO Succeed programme has supported the completion of 19 business plans to date, while the Labour Market Partnership programme is progressing well, with 18 participants already supported into employment against a target of 20 which is expected to be achieved. In addition, the property portfolio in both WIN Business Park and Jonesborough remains at full capacity, reflecting continued high demand.</p> <p><i>Newry BID</i> A £350k grant secured from DFI and DFE to support flood resilience measures in Newry, with funding to be utilised by 31 March 2026. Businesses assessed and tailored, permanent flood mitigation measures implemented on a phased, property-by-property basis.</p> <p><i>Community Safety Update:</i> Members noted concerns regarding the use of scrambler bikes and discussed the potential for district-wide awareness messaging through the Council’s social media channels, as well as educational workshops highlighting the associated risks and dangers and diversionary activities. Members requested that the DEA Coordinator facilitate a multi-agency meeting to explore the issue further.</p> <p>Progress has been made on the retail-related cause concern, with the same group of young people involved. Youth diversion services and other relevant agencies are currently engaged in addressing the situation.</p>	
DEA/N/2026/8	Date of Next Meeting	Tuesday 14 April @ 1:30pm	

The meeting ended at: 3:00pm

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

**Action Sheet of Mournes District Electoral Area (DEA) Forum Private Meeting
held on Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 4.00pm in Newcastle Centre**

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Chairperson:	Councillor Laura Devlin
In Attendance:	Councillor Henry Reilly Councillor Jill Truesdale Councillor Glyn Hanna Councillor William Clarke
Independent Members:	Lloyd Douglas
Statutory Partners:	Paula Nixon, County Down Rural Community Network
Others in Attendance:	None
Council Officials:	Taucher McDonald, DEA Coordinator, The Mournes Andrew Sweeney, Maintenance Officer Kerri Morrow, Engagement and Development Manager Catherine Huges, Head of Performance Improvement
Apologies:	Councillor Michael Rice Councillor Niall Lawlor Annie Clarke, SHSCT Alan Knox

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	FOR COMPLETION – including actions taken/date completed or progress to date if not yet completed
DEA/MOU/1/2026	Welcome/Apologies	Welcome by Cllr Devlin	Noted.
DEA/MOU/2/2026	Declarations of Interest	None	Noted.
DEA/MOU/3/2026	Action Sheet 20 January	Brief update of the actions from the previous Forum meeting was given.	Noted.
DEA/MOU/4/2026	DEA Coordinator's Update	<p>Coordinator provided an update on the draft Mournes DEA Action Plan for 2026/27 and advised members that the document was live and subject to changes depending on needs presented throughout the year. Members are welcome to present suggestions in relation to locations and potential programme development.</p> <p>Fisherman's Health Workshop organised in Kilkeel area which provided health advice and support with signposting to relevant agencies.</p> <p>Mens Health Initiative and Water Safety Events scheduled for the April-June period, details will be circulated to Forum members.</p> <p>Action Cancer Bus in February successfully hosted and consideration as to a location for 20206/27 will be determined imminently.</p>	Noted and Coordinator to progress.
DEA/MOU/5/2026	Agency Updates	CDRCN provided an update on a health programme being developed for the Kilcoo area.	Noted.

		Summer Scheme schedule in partnership with Youth Action and EA Youth Service.	
DEA/MOU/10/2024	Donard Carpark	Anti-social behaviour and traffic issues at Donard Park. Carpark works have been scheduled.	Coordinator to request an update on timeline of proposed works from G McCurry.
DEA/MOU/11/2024	Kilkeel Feasibility Study	Working group appointed.	Noted
DEA/MOU/13/2024	Business Representation on Forum	A need for business representation on the DEA Forum was identified.	Nomination Forms have been forwarded to Newcastle Chamber of Commerce.
DEA/MOU/22/2025	PEACE PLUS	DEA Forum to suggest 3 areas for re-imaging project. MayWe have been appointed contract holder for the development of localised action plans through this programme.	Forum to submit 3 geographical areas to DEA Coordinator.
DEA/MOU/23/2025	Facilities Management Update	Facilities Management to attend next DEA Meeting to provide update on works. Members recommend toilets in Island Car Park and Down's Road Car Park remain open until 8pm from now until the scheduled time change for Summer months which will be 10pm.	Facilities Officer attended and provided update on toilet facilities. Coordinator to put forward recommendation to Facilities Management.
DEA/MOU/6/2026	Thank You Letter	Thank You letter to be sent to Leeanne McEvoy following her resignation from Council and Mournes DEA Forum	Noted.
DEA/MOU/8/2026	Housing Needs	Housing Needs presentation to be forwarded to DEA Forum members	Coordinator to progress.
DEA/MOU/9/2026	Performance Improvement Review Update	Head of Performance Improvement provided an update on the Councils draft Performance improvement Objectives providing information in relation to updates	Noted

		<p>and amendments since the previous year's review. Members were advised that the draft PIO are currently out for public consultation requested that members encouraged the public to participate in the consultation which concludes on 17th April 2026. Details can be found on NMDDC website and social media platforms.</p> <p>Members requested that their concerns regarding meeting the objectives set for planning application reviews should be raised both within Council and departmental structures regionally.</p>	
DEA/MOU/10/2026	Ameracam Road	Request to determine land ownership of the laneway. Coastal Erosion at this site is significant and members requested that maintenance for the area be prioritised to avoid danger to public.	Coordinator to progress

The meeting ended at 17.20pm

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 27 April 2026
Subject:	Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Martina Flynn, Head of Engagement

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	<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 18 February 2026 and approved at the NRP meeting on 25 March 2026. To note the attached Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on 3 February 2026, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on 31 March 2026. <p>Background The attachments referenced above are provided to update the Committee on the ongoing work of the PCSP and the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership.</p>	
2.0	Key issues	
2.1	None.	
3.0	Recommendations	
3.1	<p>That the Committee note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held on 18 February 2026 and approved at the NRP meeting on 25 March 2026. Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on 3 February 2026 and approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on 31 March 2026. 	
4.0	Resource implications	
4.1	None.	

<p>5.0</p>	<p>Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<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>
<p>5.2</p>	<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>
<p>5.3</p>	<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>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)</p>
<p>6.1</p>	<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>

7.0	Appendices
7.1	Appendix 1: Minutes of the Newry NRP Meeting held on 18 February 2026. Appendix 2: Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP meeting held on 3 February 2026.
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None.



**Minutes of the Newry NR Partnership Meeting
Wednesday 18th February 2026
At 7.00pm
Room 1, WIN Business Centre**

In Attendance:

Paula McGuigan	Chairperson, NRP (Carnagat CA)
Bernie Mooney,	Education Authority N.I
Sean Mc Kevitt	Newry Mourne and Down District Council
Raymond Jackson,	Confederation of Community Groups
Aiden McCabe,	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Dr Conor Patterson,	Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
Ewan Morgan,	Community Restorative Justice Ireland
Maureen Ruddy,	Martins Lane CA
Francine Ruddy,	Martins Lane CA
Catherine O'Hanlon,	Department for Communities
Diana Marie O'Hanlon,	Greater Linenhall area CA
Denise Fearon.	Greater Linenhall Area CA
Patricia O'Gorman	Threeways CA
Jim Brennan,	Community Restorative Justice Ireland

Apologies:

Heather Kavanagh,	Southern Regional College
Joanne Markey,	Carnagat CA
Amy Fearon,	Threeways CA
Maureen O’Gorman,	Education Authority NI Youth Service
Kerri Morrow,	Newry Mourne and Down District Council
Maeve McParland,	Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
Paul Magennis,	Barcroft CA
Kathleen Magee,	Derrybeg CA

Matters Discussed

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Minutes/Matters arising.
4. Conflict of Interest.
5. Sub-group updates
6. DfC update/Action plan.
7. A.O.B
8. Date of next meeting.

ITEM	SUBJECT	MATTERS ARISING/UPDATE	ACTIONS	By Whom
1	Welcome / Introductions	All welcomed to the meeting		
2.	Apologies	Recorded as above.		
3.	Minutes/matters arising.	Minutes agreed as accurate. Proposed by Francine Ruddy and seconded by Patricia O’Gorman		

		<p>Matters arising: No Matters arising</p>		
4.	Conflict of interest	No Conflicts of interest declared		
5.	Subgroup updates	<p><u>Revenue:</u></p> <p><u>EANI:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework clubs within Derrybeg delivered by St Patricks and in Drumalane delivered by St Clares. numbers fluctuate between 8 and 17 attending each group. • Greater Linenhall Homework club had a few issues around staff. Postponed for a while. Due to restart. • Family learning in St patricks P.S • Small capital schemes in St Marys High Schools, St Clares Abbey and St Josephs primary school • Youth engagement programme coming to an end • Threeways Youth premier <p>Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent health planning day – discussion on the programmes – all approved • Look at option to remove First aid and provide additional money for Healthy eating programme • Heart screening in WIN, 30 attended – 2 people flagged for referral. • Community health champions – condensed programme 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second week of Older people's programme in Carnagat • Programme in Greater Linenhall Area. • 2 Autism bus programmes at the end of March – information to be circulated • Dementia bus – 2 in NR and 1 x council - Target 96 people • 4 people signed up for Community health champions • Condensed 2.5 hour programme - £150 for each person to run a health programme. <p>NMEA E2E programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 14 student employability programme • Master class – focused on employability for girls • Mock interviews one to one • Model taken to Newry High school • Senior girls career convention in Newry High • Year 12 interviews – first impressions • Year 12 students from St Marys' visited the Tayto factory in Tandragee – insight into manufacturing <p>NMDDC: Community Renewal Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running costs programme ongoing. • Support for local communities with day to day running costs – heating/electricity etc. • Most claims up to date. Some claims outstanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sean emailed Ballybot CA in relation to their non-attendance at the NR partnership meetings. 		
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They had received previous emails in relation to this issue with no response forthcoming • They have failed to attend an NRP meeting for over 12 months without forwarding a satisfactory reason for their non-attendance and according to the Constitution and guiding principles the NR officer has to make contact with the CA to notify them of their non-attendance and that they were now required to nominate others from within their CA on behalf of their Community. Failing a response from the CA, the matter would be further discussed at the next NRP meeting. <p>Community Renewal support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCG delivering ongoing support to all the groups (governance, administration, funding applications, training etc.) • Majority of our groups are working very well. • 2 groups have delayed their AGM's due to some issues. Await the new dates. • Other issues with 2 groups. Difficulties engaging with them. • We will pursue this further to try and make contact to get the issues resolved. <p>Outdoor activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very busy to date – 55 activities delivered across NR. • 1750 + people took part to date in the programme • Funding almost all spent – a little left. Contact Sean if you need some support <p>Safer Stronger Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ewan wanted to inform members that they work across 		
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		<p>all areas. They often work with key cases where there is no contact with community organisations as they can be difficult issues to resolve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 cases across NR to date • 291 people involved either directly or indirectly • All support agencies involved. • Planning an event based on the effect of migration and the port of Newry • Details circulated to the groups. <p>SRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date 52 students have enrolled and completed training. • Courses include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV SIA Door Security Level 2 Defibrillator Level 2 Supporting Teaching and Learning Emergency First Aid Level 3 CSR Card Makaton Level 1 & 2 Cat C Lorry Driving Bakery & Patisserie • Construction training is ongoing until the end of March and there is still small availability on digger driving forklift and tipper dumper courses. • If you know anyone who is interested, please get them to contact me and I can arrange training. • Courses in Emergency First Aid and Food Hygiene are recruited for and due to start at the end of February. 		
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6.	DfC Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of need in conjunction with local LMP • Paula received a letter from Nicola Creagh. No application from SRC until this review is completed • This assessment will provide evidence of the need in the area, the existing provision and identify any gaps. This review will be carried out by Deloitte. <p>Discussion on the Action plan.</p> <p><u>Key points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The format of the plan needs to change. • Positive that the communities are looking at any changes. This needs to be done with all partners ie. the partnership. • Trust would be willing to hand over to the communities as they have to add approximately 25% to the budget • Data and the current PFG and NMDDC Plans must align with our programmes. What are the needs based on current statistics. • Critically analyse the plan. • We don't prioritise our revenue programmes. • We only prioritise our capital schemes based on available funding and if they are shovel ready. • Further discussion on the Action plan to be held to look at next steps for the action plan. Require a distinct plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are completed for the next financial year • Currently no funding as there are no budgets • Hopeful that budgets will remain as at 2025/26 		
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7.	A.O.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members asked for information on the applications. • What data is used <p><u>No More Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone thanked for attending and NMEA and Sean thanked for the hospitality provided 		
9.	Date of Next Meeting	Wednesday 01 April 2026 7.00pm in WIN business centre	Circulate details and all information	Sean

POLICING COMMITTEE AND POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the Newry, Mourne & Down Policing Committee and Policing & Community Safety Partnership Meeting held on Tuesday 3 February 2026 at 6.00pm online via Microsoft Teams

In attendance:

Cllr Henry Reilly, *Chair*
 Michelle Osbourne, *Vice Chair*
 Cllr Terry Andrews, *NMDDC*
 Cllr Oonagh Hanlon, *NMDDC*
 Cllr Aidan Mathers, *NMDDC*
 Cllr Declan Murphy, *NMDDC*
 Cllr Jill Truesdale, *NMDDC*
 Cllr David Taylor, *NMDDC*
 Chief Inspector Adam Ruston, *PSNI*
 Chief Inspector Joseph Tierney, *PSNI*
 Inspector Darren Hardy, *PSNI*
 Inspector Paddy Heatley, *PSNI*
 Inspector Graeme Reynolds, *PSNI*
 Sergeant Stacey Arnott, *PSNI*
 Aileen O'Callaghan, *EANI*
 Michael Heaney, *YJA*
 Aidan McCabe, *SHSCT*
 Claire Crainey, *NIHE*
 Linda McDowell, *NIFRS*
 William Slater, *Independent Member*
 Andrew Kernaghan, *Independent Member*

NMDDC Staff Officials in attendance:

Alison Robb, *Assistant Director - Community Development*
 Martina Flynn, *Head of Engagement*
 Shannon Creaney, *Safer Communities & Good Relations Manager*
 Shane McGivern, *Safer Communities & Good Relations Officer*
 Aoibheann Dagens, *Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (PCSP & Good Relations)*
 Jacqueline Urey, *PCSP Officer*
 Kaitlyn Martin, *PCSP Officer*

1 Welcome, Chairperson's Remarks and Apologies

Chair Henry Reilly welcomed all attendees and noted that it was the first meeting of 2026. He thanked Tara Campbell and Niall Lawlor for their service as PCSP Independent Members and acknowledged their hard work and commitment during their time on the PCSP.

Chair Henry Reilly welcomed Andrew Kernaghan to his first meeting as a newly appointed PCSP Independent Member. He also confirmed that two additional PCSP Independent Members have been appointed to NMD PCSP and will join the next PCSP meeting in March 2026.

Chair Reilly outlined the housekeeping rules. He asked members to switch off or silence mobile phones, use the chat function to request to speak and keep microphones muted unless speaking. He also asked members to notify him via chat if they needed to leave early so this would not be mistaken for a connectivity issue. Chair Reilly reminded members that they were personally responsible for their comments and further noted that the meeting was being recorded to assist with the minutes.

Apologies were received from Kyle Peters, Lousie Kennedy, Cllr Kate Murphy, Cllr Conor Galbraith & Roisin Leckey.

2 Declarations of Interest

None recorded.

3 Draft Minutes of previous PCSP & Policing Committee Meeting held on 25 November 2026

Read: Minutes of PCSP & Policing Committee Meeting held on 25 November 2026 (copy circulated).

Agreed: On the proposal of Cllr Andrews seconded by Chair Henry Reilly it was agreed to approve the Minutes of the Policing Committee and PCSP Meeting held on 25th November 2026 as a true and accurate record.

4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5 PCSP Officer Report

Read: PCSP Officer Report (copy circulated via email)

Shannon Creaney advised that the PCSP Officer Report was for noting.

Ms Creaney advised that the PCSP Financial Assistance scheme had closed on 12 January 2026 and that a high volume of applications had been received. She noted that these were in the process of being assessed and, once assessments had been completed and letters of offer issued, she would circulate a list of groups that had been allocated funding. She added that members were welcome to attend project activities, visit events and support promotion through social media.

Ms Creaney also noted that this had been a particularly busy period for scam awareness talks, with this year representing the highest level of demand for these talks to date.

In addition, Ms Creaney advised that there had been a number of youth engagement events delivered in partnership with the PSNI, including a work experience event which had taken place during the week commencing 2 February 2026. She further advised that six performances of a play titled "*I Love You Mum, I Promise I Won't Die*", focusing on drug awareness, were scheduled for mid-March 2026. Finally, she noted that a Safety and

Wellbeing event was due to take place on 6 March 2026 in Newry Leisure Centre and encouraged members to attend.

Chair Henry Reilly thanked Ms Creaney for her report. He emphasised the importance of following up on road safety, scam awareness and related issues, noting that these matters were particularly significant at the present time.

Chair Reilly then reflected on road safety, sharing a personal experience from that morning where he observed a line of blue flashing lights outside his kitchen window. He advised that he later discovered this was the PSNI and emergency services attending a fatal road traffic collision involving a 7-year-old child, an incident that had left the community stunned. He commended the PSNI officers who had attended the scene as first responders, noting the challenges and pressures they face and expressed his gratitude for their work.

Chair Reilly invited members to provide any further comments. He encouraged them to attend as many PCSP events as possible, acknowledging that prior commitments sometimes made this difficult and admitting that he himself had been unable to attend as many events as he would have liked in recent months. He stressed that showing support for the PCSP was important, even if attendance was limited.

Cllr Terry Andrews echoed the Chair's sentiments, noting the importance of attending events as a learning opportunity. He praised the work being done and thanked the Chair and Ms Creaney for their reports.

Aileen O'Callaghan expressed her support for the DSA play "*I Love You Mum, I Promise I Won't Die*", highlighting its impact when she saw it with ABC Council. She asked if there would be opportunities to stage it in community centres as well as schools. Ms Creaney explained that only six sessions were currently scheduled, all in schools, roughly one per DEA. She advised the play might return in late summer, at which point broader rollout could be considered. Aileen emphasised that expanding access could reach more vulnerable children disengaged from school. Both agreed that wider availability would be beneficial, and Ms Creaney confirmed they would schedule as many sessions as possible during the next play tour to meet high demand.

6 ASB Sub Group Reports

Read: ASB Sub Group Reports (copy circulated)

Agreed: On the proposal of Cllr Aidan Mathers and seconded by Cllr Jill Truesdale it was agreed the Committee:

- **Approve the Action Sheet for the ASB Sub Group 1 meeting held on 3 December 2025**
- **Approve the Action Sheet for the ASB Sub Group 2 meeting held on 2 December 2025.**

Policing Committee Business

7 District Commander's Report – February 2026

Read: District Commander's Report – Period 4 (copy circulated)

Chief Inspector Ruston presented the report on behalf of District Commander Lynne Corbett, highlighting the work being carried out in the district. Before proceeding, he addressed the tragic road traffic collision that morning, which was earlier referred to by Cllr Reilly. He acknowledged the efforts of ambulance service and NIFRS colleagues, noting that their contributions are often overlooked despite the immense challenges they face. He reflected on the widespread impact of the incident on the child's family, the wider community and the vehicle driver's family, offering his thoughts and prayers to all affected. Chief Inspector Ruston also confirmed that the PSNI would provide any support needed to the family and the community.

Crime

Chief Inspector Ruston noted a 1.5% reduction in recorded crime across the district this year, a trend he had also observed across the wider service. He highlighted that the district's outcome rates for reported crimes were 33.4%, above the overall Police Service average of 29.7%, reflecting strong performance. He credited these results to the team's hard work and commitment to achieving justice for victims.

Chief Inspector Ruston also reported that 90% of victims had been contacted within the 10-day target, a performance metric the PSNI aims to improve further. He emphasised that high satisfaction scores from victims were an even more important measure, demonstrating that they were receiving a quality service.

Engagement

For the previous period, Chief Inspector Ruston reported that engagement had been very good and highlighted the exceptional support received from the PCSP. Key highlights included the delivery of the *Keep Safe* talks in December at Three Ways Community Centre, aimed at senior members of the community. He noted these sessions were well received and focused on staying safe at home, online and when out in the community, addressing concerns such as online fraud affecting the older persons.

He also noted the East Down Team participated in the *Power to Change* project at Windsor Park with members of Drumaness FC in attendance and that the Slieve Gullion team engaged with the Bulgarian community, holding their first public meeting in Newtownhamilton with over 30 attendees. He stated the focus of this meeting was on establishing a community group for the Bulgarian community, with the next step being integration with other local groups to foster cohesion and address potential issues.

Chief Inspector Ruston also noted the district's strong use of social media to share good news stories as NMD district had achieved the highest reach and the most posts across the PSNI over a two-week period thanks to the efforts of Inspector Heatly.

Hate Crime

Chief Inspector Ruston reported that hate crimes had increased by just under 24%, sitting slightly below the district's average since August. Racially motivated crimes were above average following lower trends in November and December.

He noted sectarian incidents were on a downward trend from their peak in July, reflecting national patterns in racially motivated disturbances. Over the past 12 months, racially motivated hate crime had risen by 40.6%. He shared an overview of two recent specific incidents to illustrate the situation and Chief Inspector Ruston expressed his sympathies, noting the distress caused by targeting individuals.

Vulnerability

Chief Inspector Ruston noted the support hub was working with a cohort of 36 identified vulnerable individuals, with cases reviewed on a daily basis. He advised the hub also explored the broader *Encompass* referral system, which identifies children and young people exposed to domestic violence. Chief Inspector Ruston noted that there were eight factors placing a child in this category and reported that the scheme received approximately 1,400–1,500 referrals per year for children affected by domestic violence.

Chief Inspector Ruston shared an overview of two recent incidents to highlight the complexity of these situations and how the PSNI works to protect vulnerable people in the community.

Antisocial Behaviour

Chief Inspector Ruston reported that ASB figures had remained largely stable, with a slight decrease. In December, Mondays were the most affected days, and the top three wards for ASB were Donard, Ballybot, and Warrenpoint.

Chief Inspector Ruston shared an overview of two recent incidents to highlight the complexity of the situations. Chief Inspector Ruston acknowledged media coverage of ASB in Newcastle, particularly involving motor vehicles. He highlighted targeted operations with the DVA to address anti-social vehicle use and stressed the need for joint efforts with the Council, especially concerning Donard Car Park. Chief Inspector Ruston also reported on educational initiatives. Officers in South Down, alongside representatives from Ulster Rugby, the GAA and the IFA, recently engaged students on respect and inclusivity. Presentations on healthy relationships were delivered at St Louis Grammar and sessions on drugs and ASB were held with the Boys' Brigade, both in Kilkeel.

Domestic Violence

Chief Inspector Ruston reported an upward trend in domestic violence (DV) reports in the area, with an increase of 115 incidents. He noted, however, that outcome rates remained above average for the south area, reflecting effective responses. He also highlighted a positive aspect of the increase, as it indicated that more victims felt confident reporting incidents.

Chief Inspector Ruston outlined ongoing work with the One Stop Shop in Downpatrick and Newry and explained plans to expand the service to South Armagh in partnership with Women's Aid. He emphasised the importance of reaching rural communities, where isolation can be a barrier and acknowledged that stigma around reporting DV persists. He expressed the intention to launch the One Stop Shop in Crossmaglen around March 2026.

Chief Inspector Ruston highlighted the *Encompass* programme, which is rolled out in schools to support children affected by domestic violence (DV). Chief Inspector Ruston shared an overview of a recent incident to highlight the complexity of situations and how the PSNI works to protect the community.

Chief Inspector Ruston emphasised that domestic violence and EAWG remain key priorities for the PSNI.

Road Safety

Chief Inspector Ruston reported another tragic fatal road traffic collision (RTC), bringing the total to three fatalities in this reporting period. This brought the total RTA fatalities for 2025 to seven, down from eight in 2024 and eleven in 2023, though Chief Inspector Ruston emphasised that even one death is too many.

He then highlighted ongoing enforcement work but stressed that driver responsibility remains critical. While most people drive safely, some rush, creating preventable risks.

He highlighted Operation *Season's Greetings*, conducted from early December 2025 to early January 2026, focused on road safety and safer nightlife. During November and December, enforcement included:

- 38 speeding detections
- 48 careless driving detections
- 14 detections for mobile phone use or failing to wear seatbelts
- 20 fixed penalties and court referrals for vehicle defects
- 56 drink or drug driving referrals, the highest in the district outside Belfast
- 83 detections for driving without insurance

Chief Inspector Ruston noted that while these figures reflected strong PSNI work, the level of drink-driving remained shockingly high. During the operation period, 37 drink-driving detections were made in the district, compared with 23 in Armagh, Banbridge, and Craigavon. He urged members to speak to family and friends about the dangers of drink driving and to contact the police if they suspect someone intends to drive under the influence, stressing this is a matter of life and death.

Chief Inspector Ruston shared an example of enforcement during mobile patrols, illustrating the ongoing risks posed by drink and drug driving and the proactive work officers are carrying out to keep the roads safe.

Drugs

Chief Inspector Ruston noted an upward trend in drug offences during this reporting period, with certain areas showing higher rates. He also provided an overview of recent seizures, including £15000 worth of Zopiclone in 3 packages and highlighted the increasing use of postal and courier services to distribute drugs. Chief Inspector Ruston also highlighted the ongoing work of the postal interceptors.

Chief Inspector Ruston highlighted a significant seizure in Newry, where a cannabis factory worth over £100,000 was discovered. Over the past few months, there had been six or seven similar finds, typically in rental properties fitted with cannabis cultivation equipment.

Chief Inspector Ruston explained that he was working with the press office with a view to raise awareness among landlords, encouraging them to carry out checks on their properties to ensure they are aware of what is happening. He further noted that some operations had been running for over 12 months without any inspections, emphasising that this was not about blaming landlords but about preventing issues before they escalated. He also outlined the dangers associated with these setups. While criminals previously used magnet systems, they now often tap directly into the mains electricity, creating significant risks to themselves and anyone nearby. This practice frequently requires NIE to conduct overnight callouts causing disruption to local electricity supply and wider community impacts.

Chief Inspector Ruston noted that our district ranks third highest in the PSNI for seizures. While the South District was the only district showing an upward trend in seizures - which could suggest higher crime - he believes this reflects the excellent proactive work in our area, with teams actively targeting offenders. The district also ranks fourth highest for drug-related arrests, with 215 arrests made during the reporting period.

In January, a drugs search was conducted at a cannabis cultivation site, with the estimated value of the seizure between £60,000–£100,000. A male present at the location was arrested and charged overnight. During the same month, the district support team, responsible for proactive drug enforcement, stopped a vehicle and, following a search, seized numerous sealed bags of cannabis weighing approximately 1 kg. Both individuals involved were charged and are currently remanded in court.

Crime

Overall, crime figures have decreased by approximately 1.5%. However, by crime type, there has been an increase in sexual assaults of around 5%, equating to 16 additional sexual assaults during the reporting period. Reports of rape also increased in December 2025; it should be noted that these are historical cases involving people known to each other, rather than new incidents. While still serious, this distinction explains the rise in figures. Commercial burglaries peaked around November 2025, with approximately 23 additional incidents reported in the district. The trend now appears to be levelling off. A suspect was arrested in the Antim/Ballymena area while attempting to burgle a premises. This individual has been linked to a series of burglaries over the Christmas period and remains in custody.

South Armagh Review

Chief Inspector Ruston updated members on the South Armagh review and noted that the review was still ongoing.

Good Police Work

Chief Inspector Ruston highlighted the excellent policing taking place across the district. In one operation, a vehicle stop led to the discovery of a large quantity of cannabis and an unidentified white powder. Follow-up searches linked to the person involved resulted in further cannabis being located at an associated property. The individual was arrested for possession with intent to supply Class A and B drugs and has been charged to appear in court. In December, in the Newcastle area, police on mobile patrol conducted a vehicle search involving a 19-year-old, resulting in a significant cash seizure.

In Crossgar, there was a reported theft of agricultural machinery. This type of crime is increasingly seen across the service. The Neighbourhood Team, noted throughout this report for their proactive work, identified suspects via CCTV. Officers subsequently recovered the

majority of the stolen equipment from a property linked to the suspects. During the operation, a significant quantity of suspected drugs was also found. Three individuals were arrested for possession of Class A, B, and C drugs, and handling stolen goods. They are currently on bail pending further enquiries, including phone record analysis. This operation was led by the East Down Neighbourhood Team, who used their local knowledge to identify a suspect and coordinated with a neighbouring district team to successfully conclude the investigation. Their actions have likely prevented multiple other crimes in the area.

Assault on Police

Chief Inspector Ruston unfortunately notes that there has been no improvement in assaults on police officers. During this reporting period, there were 31 assaults on officers across 14 separate incidents.

One incident Chief Inspector Ruston highlighted occurred in Dundrum and involved extremely serious assaults on officers. Officers were called to respond to an ongoing fight and upon arrival, they encountered two individuals who were uncooperative.

The assaults and injuries included:

- One officer had a bite to the left bicep breaking the skin, the area was bleeding and bruised.
- Bruising, bleeding and leaving of finger-marks on the inner thigh, from the suspect nipping during restraint
- Another officer was kicked on the leg, and their shin was left bleeding & bruised
- Another officer was spat directly in their face
- Another officer was kneed in the genitals & kicked in the face, nipped on the arm & spat on
- Then another officer was spat in the face & bitten on the left index finger.

Chief Inspector extended credit to the officers. All officers remained on duty during the incident and subsequently went to hospital for treatment. Chief Inspector Ruston emphasised that the level of violence is increasing, and there is frustration with the court system regarding sentencing for such assaults.

In a separate incident, an officer was struck on the head with a bottle, resulting in severe concussion and an estimated six-week absence from duty. This has a knock-on effect both on the officer's life and the resourcing needed to cover their role, representing a significant cost to the public. Chief Inspector Ruston stressed that urgent action is needed to prevent these attacks, as the situation is escalating and becoming increasingly dangerous.

Update on the Threat to the Councillors.

In December, two individuals were arrested in connection with threats, as well as in relation to a pipe bomb left outside the Sinn Féin offices in Newry. Chief Inspector Ruston advised the investigation is ongoing, and the suspects have been released on bail pending further evidence, including phone analysis.

He advised this morning, another person was arrested in connection with the threats to Councillors and was currently in custody at Musgrave. He explained searches have been conducted as part of the investigation. Chief Inspector Ruston highlighted that credit is due to the CID unit and the Terrorist Investigation Unit for their work on this case.

Chief Inspector Ruston also noted that PSNI recruitment is currently underway, closing tomorrow (4th February 2026). He explained there is a particular focus on recruitment in our

district, which had some of the lowest figures in the previous round. He emphasised that there is significant local talent that could contribute positively to the police service, and this push aims to encourage applications from the area.

Chief Inspector Ruston concluded his report.

Chair Henry Reilly thanked Chief Inspector Ruston for his comprehensive report and noted how shocking it was to still hear of officers being bitten in their line of duty. Cllr Reilly then passed on well wishes to those involved and wished them a speedy recovery.

Chair Reilly then asked Chief Inspector Ruston to advise him if it was 1500 children who were referred on via Encompass for domestic violence. Chief Inspector Ruston reverted this question to Sergeant Stacey Arnott to clarify – Sgt Arnott advised she will identify the number and provide it to members later in the meeting.

Chair Reilly moved on to the car park issues in Newcastle and noted that the Council now has a budget approved and will proceed with the additional lights and unmanned barriers.

Chair Reilly then discussed the One Stop Shop, noting that the event in Downpatrick went exceptionally well. He highlighted Oonagh's observation that it has provided significant benefits for women in the area. Chair Reilly also welcomed the rollout in Armagh, mentioning that Martina Flynn has confirmed via the chat function that it is scheduled to begin on 26th March 2026 in Crossmaglen.

Chair Reilly then addressed the concerns raised regarding the Bulgarian community, noting that he had received calls from members of the community who feel they are being unfairly charged rent. He acknowledged that this may not be the appropriate forum to resolve the issue, as the rental charges are coming from the people they are employed by. Chair Reilly suggested that he may follow up with Chief Inspector Ruston on the matter at a later time and noted that other agencies might also be able to investigate. He thanked Chief Inspector Ruston again for the report, commenting that it provides valuable insight into the situation in the area.

PCSP Chair Cllr Reilly opened the floor up for questions and comments

Cllr Terry Andrews thanked Chief Inspector Ruston for his comprehensive report, highlighting the strengths, comparisons, and work of the PSNI. He reflected on a serious assault on an officer some months ago, expressing sympathy for those injured and concern at the rising levels of aggression, including biting and spitting. He proposed that the partnership send a letter to the Attorney General and the Minister for Justice showing support for frontline public-sector workers, calling for additional resources, funding, and a review of laws to ensure stricter penalties for assaults. Cllr Andrews emphasised the need for swift and effective action to deter reoffending.

Chief Inspector Ruston commented that while Police Officers bear the brunt of violent behaviour, there is also increased aggression towards women and girls, healthcare professionals, and teachers, reflecting a wider societal issue.

Cllr Andrews asks that his proposal is extended to all the agencies affected.

Chair Reilly confirmed with Cllr Andrews that he is asking for a letter to be written to the Minister for Justice concerning how people who attack police officers are given a lenient bail sentence. Cllr Andrews confirms he wishes to write a letter to the Attorney General & the

Minister for Justice for them to review the laws concerning the protection of public-sector front-line employees, as the current law is clearly not fit for purpose. He also confirmed he wishes to ask for more funding.

The Chair requested that Ms Creaney confirm she had taken a note of this request and was happy to move forward. Mr Slater confirmed he was happy to second this proposal, and from what he has heard from this evening, he seconds all that Cllr Andrews has proposed as the current behaviour is totally unacceptable.

Ms Creaney advised members that a similar letter was written about 10 months ago from the partnership to the Lady Chief Justice. Ms Creaney advised that on the proposal of Cllr Andrews and seconded by William Slater, she would build on this previous letter to the Lady Chief Justice and add anything else that was necessary before sending an updated letter. Ms Creaney advised that she would share any correspondence that she receives from the Lady Chief Justice with the partnership via email.

Sergeant Arnott then updated members on the on school-year data from September 2024 to 2025 which had previously been queried. She advised:

- 915 domestic violence incidents involving children were handled by the support hub.
- 1,722 referrals for children were made, including 1,147 phone calls to schools.

Chair Reilly described these figures as alarming but acknowledged the potential benefits for children. Cllr Hanlon expressed concern as a parent and welcomed the One Stop Shop initiative being rolled out in rural areas, praising the PCSP for its work.

Chair Henry Reilly asked if there were any further comments on the PSNI report. Michael Heaney referenced the new Justice Bill, noting a planned offence with higher maximum penalties for assaults on public-service workers. Chair Cllr Reilly expressed PCSP should still send a letter to the Lady Chief Justice regardless of these updates.

Cllr Truesdale thanked Chief Inspector Ruston for the report and noted that areas remain concerning. She expressed worry over the rise in hate crime, including incidents based on sexual orientation and race, noting that 2025 has been described as the "year of hate" due to hate crime doubling in Northern Ireland. She acknowledged that some of this increase is due to more people feeling confident to report crimes, which is a positive development, but also noted that heightened political polarization has contributed to more online hate speech.

Cllr Truesdale thanked the PCSP team and the PSNI for engaging with the community and promoting inclusivity. She also praised the local PSNI team for their work tackling antisocial behaviour and illegal car modifications, highlighting their thorough approach, often uncovering additional offences such as drugs. She welcomed the planned installation of timed barriers and lighting at Donard Car Park but raised concerns that youths may simply move to other car parks in the area and urged the Council to explore measures to prevent this displacement. Cllr Truesdale also commented on drink-driving statistics, noting that NMDDC ranked second in Northern Ireland for December 2025, showing the largest increase. She highlighted that current drink-driving laws date back to 1967, with only minor amendments in 2016 and emphasized that alcohol affects individuals differently, regardless of height, weight or BMI. She questioned why people in Northern Ireland continue to take the risk, especially when drivers are four times more likely to be breathalysed than in England.

Finally, Cllr Truesdale thanked the PCSP for the One Stop Shop initiative. She shared feedback from attendees, noting their appreciation for the "kindness, compassion and non-judgmental approach" they experienced, and expressed her gratitude to the team and the Chair.

Chief Inspector Ruston commented on drink-driving, noting that the majority of offences are well over the legal limit. These are not cases of one or two drinks, but often six or seven pints, and he advised sometimes cases involve polysubstance use, including cannabis. He noted the issue spans all age groups, with both younger and older drivers being caught. While the older generation previously viewed heavy drinking and driving as more acceptable, detections have risen, which Chief Inspector Ruston attributes in part to effective police work. He suggested that the behaviour may be partly cultural, especially in rural areas where people are less likely to use taxis or buses. Drivers often assume that a "short drive" is safe, even when impaired. Chief Inspector Ruston also noted that there has been discussion about lowering the drink-driving limit to match Scotland, which he believes would be a welcome measure to reduce the risk to others on the road.

Chair Reilly added that the safest approach is not to drink at all before driving, reminding people that alcohol can remain in the system longer than expected.

8 PSNI Recruitment Campaign

Chair Henry Reilly notes the issue over police recruitment, however advised that he believes that Chief Inspector Ruston has covered this – therefore the PCSP Chair thanked the PSNI and PCSP Members for attending before moving on to the date of the next meeting.

9 Date of Next Meeting

The Chair confirmed the next PCSP & Policing Committee Meeting will take place on Tuesday 31st March 2026 in Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick - Chamber.

Report to:	Active and Healthy Communities Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 27 April 2026
Subject:	Social Inclusion Update Report
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Alison Robb, Assistant Director Community Development
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Justyna McCabe, Projects Coordinator

For decision	For noting only	X
1.0	Purpose and Background	
1.1	<p>Purpose: The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Council’s ongoing social inclusion work, highlighting key developments and emerging issues. The report is for noting.</p>	
1.2	<p>Background: The Council's social inclusion work continues to focus on three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing advice and support to minority ethnic residents through the Ethnic Minority Support Centre. • Implementing projects that support the integration of asylum seekers and refugees accommodated within the Council area. • Facilitating the Traveller Forum, which aims to champion Traveller rights and improve current provisions for the Traveller community within the District. 	
2.0	Key issues	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2025/26, the Ethnic Minority Support Centre recorded a total of 2,212 visits in Newry and Downpatrick. In addition, the Centre handles approximately 100 phone calls per week, addressing a wide range of enquiries from ethnic minority residents. • The Council continues to facilitate regular Newcomer Stakeholder Forum meetings which bring together statutory agencies and community partners to share information and coordinate local support for newcomer communities. • The Executive Office has provided the Council with £26,684 to support the continued provision of ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes, staff resources and orientation activities. Additionally, this funding supports the 	

	<p>delivery of Council-coordinated Community Hubs across various locations in the District. The first hub event was held at Down Leisure Centre on 18 February, with over 30 organisations and services in attendance, and the next event is scheduled for 21 April in Newry Leisure Centre. These hubs are open to all residents and offer opportunities to connect with Council services, as well as the wide range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations operating across the District. The funding is for activities already agreed via the Directorate Business Plan and Department Service Plan in support of Council’s Corporate Plan.</p>
3.0	Recommendations
3.1	That the Committee note the report.
4.0	Resource implications
4.1	Activities are funded by The Executive Office and Social Inclusion budget.
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 – N/a</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><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)</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i></p>
6.0	Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)
.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>
7.0	Appendices
7.1	None.
8.0	Background Documents
8.1	None.