

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2023

**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on
Monday 20 November 2023 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room, Downshire Civic
Centre and via Microsoft Teams**

Chairperson: Councillor R Howell (Chamber)

In attendance in Chamber: Councillor L Devlin
Councillor A Finnegan
Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor D Lee-Surginor
Councillor A Mathers
Councillor A McMurray
Councillor D Murphy
Councillor K Murphy

In attendance via Teams: Councillor D Finn
Councillor A Lewis
Councillor O Magennis
Councillor S O'Hare

Non-Members in Chamber: Councillor O Hanlon

Non-Members via Teams: Councillor J Brennan

**Officials in attendance
in Chamber:**

Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

AHC/125/2023: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Jackson.

AHC/126/2023: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McMurray declared an interest in item 7: Service Level Agreement with Education Authority.

AHC/127/2023: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2023

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 October 2023. **(Copy circulated)**.

In referring to Department for Communities Living High Street Funding, Councillor McMurray enquired whether consideration had been given as to how the site at the Newcastle Centre would be used including pedestrian access to the back to enable connection with Newcastle. He also enquired about the business case for the leisure centre.

Mr Tamati explained the Living High Street funding referred to flexible space and part of that funding was about linkages.

Mr Tamati advised confirmation of funding had not yet been received, that there was a process to go through and improving pedestrian access to the back and a range of options would be explored.

Mr Tamati advised the outline business case for the Newcastle Centre was being reviewed to ensure process was followed and it was hoped it would be brought forward in the new year.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 October 2023.

AHC/128/2023: NOTICE OF MOTION – LEISURE CENTRES

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport regarding a Notice of Motion in relation to Leisure Centres. **(Copy Circulated)**

Councillor Hanlon spoke of the Motion she presented to Council in July 2023 in which Council recognised that in the aftermath of COVID, local leisure facilities and services across the District were experiencing a number of significant challenges.

Councillor Hanlon explained the reason the Motion had been presented to Council was due to feedback Members were getting from service users and residents across the District regarding issues relating to classes being cancelled last minute and the vitality pool having to be closed for a length of time for changeover of water.

Councillor Hanlon thanked officers for the detailed report.

Mr Tamati provided an overview of the report giving a robust view of the service currently and moving forward. He spoke of a key challenge being staffing and delivery whilst working to ensure a level of service delivery that was acceptable to the public and management particularly in relation to lifeguarding.

Members were advised 5 National Pool Lifeguard Qualification courses had been completed in the last six months and a recent recruitment had offered a number of appointments, however of those very few were interested in permanent roles with a lot of interest in casual roles, and this was reflective of the workforce at the moment.

Mr Tamati assured members that officers were working through the challenges and outlined work undertaken to date.

Members were provided with an overview of the challenges faced in terms of vitality suite in Down Leisure Centre. Water Quality Management best practices requires spa pools to be drained, refilled, and reheated in line with industry standards to ensure legislative compliance with closures on a Monday facilitating this practice and allow this to be adhered to. Officers were working on alternatives on how to improve that, however any alternatives needed to be water quality management approved. It was hoped this could be resolved.

In relation to classes, Mr Tamati referred to a report on a Programme Delivery Partner presented to Committee on 16 November 2023, ratified by Council on 6 November 2023 which would help with the sustainability and succession planning around coaches and delivery of classes. Members were advised that in relation to opening hours there was an opportunity to look at that however given the current situation around industrial relations with management working through that process and Members would be updated in due course.

Councillor Hanlon thanked Mr Tamati for the positive report, commenting that it was a basic need for the District to have a fully functioning leisure facility and welcomed the partnership agreements, review of summers activity plans, extension of referral schemes for people with medical conditions and the rollout of autism swimming tuition. She reiterated the importance of examining opening hours and hoped that with the system and officers work this would happen.

In response to a query from Councillor Finn regarding booking arrangements for birthday parties within Newry Leisure, Mr Tamati advised he would pick the matter up with her directly.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Murphy, to note the contents of the officer's report which addresses the concerns outlined in the Notice of Motion.**

AHC/129/2023: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on the District Electoral Area Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Finnegan, to note the update report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:**

- **Slieve Croob DEA Forum Special Meeting held on Wednesday 8 November 2023.**
- **Crotlieve DEA Forum Private Meeting held on Tuesday 14 November 2023.**

AHC/130/2023 COMMUNITY COORDINATION HUB (CCH) UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on the Community Coordination Hub. **(Copy circulated)**

Mrs Robb referred to a public drop-in session that had taken place in Newcastle following recent flooding and how people who had attended were interested in a public meeting with statutory agencies. Members were informed there was an existing Community Resilience Group within Newcastle which included membership from various statutory agencies however it appeared to have weakened in terms of the public membership. Mrs Robb confirmed she was to meet with public members of the group in the coming weeks to ascertain the current membership and look at how to bolster that and then work in conjunction with the other statutory agencies as there was a lot from a DEA perspective that could be done to link in more closely with the community and provide a link to the other statutory agencies in the event of an emergency.

Mrs Robb spoke of the importance of knowing from the people on the ground where the deficits were in information and how to better assist people to help communities as they were very often the first people to respond. She added that although in the recovery stage of flooding, there were lessons to be learned and things to improve on. It was hoped that by January 2024 there would be a more effective Community Resilience Group in the Newcastle DEA area and then this could be replicated in each of the DEA areas to improve the response to incidents going forward.

Councillor D Murphy welcomed the work of DEAs and spoke of the importance of seeing agencies such as NI Water, Rivers Agency and DfI on the ground and speaking to elected representatives to explain mitigating factors.

Councillor Devlin thanked Mrs Robb for the update and referred to a Community Flood Resilience Group that had been set up during her time as Chair of Council in 2020. She spoke of how it had been useful in bringing people affected by floods together with DfI Rivers and Council officials and that this needed to be revisited as it enabled flood alerts to be sent to phones, provision of information on sandbag locations and flood relief scheme etc.

The Chairperson spoke in support of Councillor Devlin's comments on the Flood Resilience Group and the importance of replicating it across the 7 DEAs.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Magennis, note the report and approve the actions in the action sheet for the:

- **Community Coordination Hub Meeting held on Wednesday 18 October 2023.**
- **Community Coordination Hub Emergency Meeting held on Thursday 2 November 2023.**

Councillor McMurray left the meeting for the duration of the following item.

AHC/131/2023 **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH EDUCATION AUTHORITY**

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding a Service Level Agreement with the Education Authority. **(Copy circulated)**

Councillor Finnegan welcomed the Service Level Agreement with the Education Authority as detailed within the officers report and spoke of how it brought young people together to build skills and confidence and how the good uptake in recent events and workshops would allow that to continue and be expanded upon.

Councillor Galbraith concurred with Councillor Finnegan's comments, however, spoke of his concern at providing funding when the Education Authority had made cuts to funding to the voluntary sector recently.

Councillor Galbraith requested a review after 1 year to ensure that the money spent was used in the best possible manner for the best outcome for young people. He also asked that the voluntary sector be much more involved in events organised by Youth Voice.

Mrs Robb confirmed she would report back to Committee on how money was spent and undertook to examine how events were promoted and advertised and use existing community and voluntary channels to get the message out. She advised that the SLA would regulate how the money could be spent by way of assurance to members.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finnegan, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor to issue a Service Level Agreement (multi-annual depending on budgets) through the Council's Grants and Funding Unit, verified in line with Council procedures.

Councillor McMurray rejoined the meeting at this point – 6.32pm.

AHC/132/2023

ALL ISLAND COMMUNITY SAFETY NETWORK

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding the All Island Community Safety Network. **(Copy circulated)**

In referring Members to the report, Mrs Robb highlighted that funding of €30,000 had been obtained to fund an All Island Community Safety Network, which would share best practice in Community safety with a number of partners.

Mrs Robb took the opportunity to advise Members that the process for appointing independent members of the PCSP had reopened and that the quota of members had not yet been reached. Members were asked if they were aware of anyone who would be interested to encourage them to apply.

In welcoming the report, Councillor D Murphy said it was a good sign that PCSP was able to go into other areas, particularly on a cross border basis and share experiences with County Councils especially in relation to community safety.

In response to a query from Councillor Lee- Surginor Mrs Robb clarified the PCSP recruitment was run by the Policing Board, not Council and applicants were welcome from members of the community within the entire Newry, Mourne and Down District and was not confined to certain DEA areas.

Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor to the note the officer's report regarding the All Island Community Safety Network.

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

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor S O'Hare, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 19 and 20 which related to exempt information by virtue of para. Three of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local /Government (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.

Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Galbraith it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

The Chairperson advised the following had been agreed whilst in closed session:

AHC/133/2023 ACCESS AND INCLUSION FUNDING

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport, regarding DfC Access and Inclusion Funding. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to approve the following:**

- **Successful funding bids to the DfC Access and Inclusion Fund.**
- **A Public Tender and appointment to complete the works outlined in the Access and Inclusion Funding Application.**
- **To approve the Business Case for this Public Tender as per appendix 1 and Council’s Procurement Policy.**

AHC/134/2023 SPORT NI COMMUNITY PLANNING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 20 November 2023 from Mr P Tamati, Assistant Director, Leisure and Sport, regarding Sport NI’s District Councils Community Planning 23/24 Investment Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Finn to approve the following:**

- **The successful funding bid to Sport NI’s District Councils Community Planning 23/24 Investment Programme.**
- **The revised Business Case as per appendix 1 of the officer’s report.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.08pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 4 December 2023.

Signed: Councillor Howell
Chairperson

Signed: Paul Tamati
Assistant Director Leisure and Sport