

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2025

Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 June 2025 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers, Downshire Civic Centre

Chairperson: Councillor C Bowsie

**In attendance
in Chamber:**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor L Devlin
Councillor D Finn	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor R Howell	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor L McEvoy
Councillor D Murphy	Councillor K Murphy

**Committee Members in
attendance (via Teams):** Councillor M Gibbons

**Non Committee Members
in attendance:** Councillor T Andrews

Officials in Chamber: Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development
Mrs M Flynn, Head of Engagement
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer

Officials via Teams: Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living

AHC/048/2025: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Truesdale.

AHC/049/2025: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/050/2025: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2025**

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 19 May 2025. **(Copy circulated).**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, to note the**

**Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities
Committee Meeting held on Monday 19 May 2025.**

**AHC/051/2025: TO AGREE DATES AND TIMES FOR ACTIVE & HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2025/26**

Read: Schedule of Meetings for Active and Healthy Communities Committee for 2025/26. (Copy circulated).

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Magennis, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to approve the schedule of meetings for the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meetings 2025/26.**

**AHC/052/2025: ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE
BUSINESS PLANS**

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Directorate Business Plans for Active and Healthy Communities. **(Copy circulated)**

Park Runs

Councillor Mathers asked that Council reach out to Park Run organisers who had successfully brought hundreds of people and families into the District over the past few weeks in Newry. He added that organisers were grateful for the opportunity to hold Park Runs and it was important that these events were supported as there was potential to improve and grow. Councillor Devlin joined in highlighting the success of Park Runs including that held in Castlewellan.

Mr Patterson confirmed ERT officers were working with event organisers and the AHC Directorate was happy to support those efforts and work with colleagues.

Community Trails

Councillor Devlin enquired about the reopening of the community trail at Tievenadarragh following the recent storm and spoke of the importance of trails for communities.

Mr Haughey confirmed responsibility for the clearance of trails was with the S&E Department and the latest update was the Seaforde Trail had been reopened. He added that in terms of Tievenadarragh and Drumkeeragh, particularly Drumkeeragh which had been heavily damaged by the storm, a tender had recently been completed for specialised resources due to the size of trees that had been felled and it was hoped all works would be carried out with trails opened by mid-July.

Councillor Devlin thanked Mr Haughey for the update and extended thanks to all officers involved in the effort.

Capital Projects

In response to Councillor Devlin's request for an update regarding the Newcastle Leisure Centre and Rock Pool, Mr Patterson advised work had been progressing regarding procurement and that Consultancy teams were needed to bring in specialist subject matter experts, conservation architects, designers etc to get both projects to planning stage. He advised work would continue over the summer months with an expectation for consultancy teams to be in place for August/September after which consultation would take place with Members.

In thanking Mr Patterson for the update Councillor Devlin spoke of the importance of community engagement.

Maintenance Programmes

Councillor Finn referred to reviewing and implementing preventative maintenance programmes and thanked officers for their efforts with issues regarding Newry Leisure Centre equipment. She went on to request an update on the kind of maintenance for machines to ensure problems did not arise again.

Mr Patterson confirmed Council had approval to go to contract for a provider for the upkeep and maintenance of machines with work going on behind the scenes to ensure the user experience was seamless in terms of down time of machines.

Agreed: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Finn, to approve the Assessment of Active and Healthy Communities Directorate Business Plan 2024-25 and the Active and Healthy Communities Directorate Business Plan 2025-26.**

AHC/053/2025: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for:**

- **Slieve Gullion DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 13 May 2025**
- **Crotlieve DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 13 May 2025**
- **Mournes DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 20 May 2025**

AHC/054/2025: COUNCIL OF SANCTUARY

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding Council joining the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network and working towards recognition as a Council of Sanctuary. **(Copy circulated)**

In speaking in support of the report and proposing that NMDDC join the Local Authority Network and work towards formal recognition as a 'Council of Sanctuary' Councillor Lee-Surginor welcomed that Council was forward-looking and full of compassion as Newry Mourne and Down was a welcoming place that was supportive of people.

Councillor D Murphy seconded the proposal and spoke of how many Irish people had unfortunately experienced the need for sanctuary in different parts of the world with so many needless conflicts and that what was already provided would be strengthened. He added that it would come as some type of relief for many people that were unfortunately

experiencing attack and the need for sanctuary in different places in the North.

Councillor Finn voiced support for the proposal particularly with the backdrop of the violence witnessed across Northern Ireland over the last week.

Councillor Finn proposed Council write to DfC/TEO to ask for an update on the new Strategy on Racial Equality, EAWG, the Refugee Integration Strategy and Race Law Reform in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Devlin seconded Councillor Finn's proposal.

Councillor Jackson on behalf of the DUP group stated they supported an approach that allowed those fleeing war or persecution to find refuge in the United Kingdom and that had to be underpinned by the proper legal processes. He spoke of one concern which was to make sure that the Charter did not encourage illegal immigrants.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Finn, seconded by Councillor Devlin that Council write to DfC/TEO to ask for an update on the new Strategy on Racial Equality, EAWG, the Refugee Integration Strategy and Race Law Reform in Northern Ireland.

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee Surginor, seconded by Councillor D Murphy, to approve NMDDC to join the Local Authority Network and work towards formal recognition as a 'Council of Sanctuary.'

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

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Brennan , seconded by Councillor Jackson, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on the following items, which related to exempt information by virtue of para. 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information) and the public may, by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor Mathers, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

AHC/055/2025: EVENT SUPPORT

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding support for an event. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, to approve Council support for the initiative as set out within the officer's report.

AHC/056/2025: COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development seeking approval for the award of funding from the 2025/26 Community Support Programme budget. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Finn, to proceed with the Community Support Programme as set out within the officer's report.

AHC/057/2025: FUNDED PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development, regarding delivery of a funded programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Brennan, to continue with delivery of the funded programme as detailed within the officer's report to the end of September 2025, pending receipt of a Letter of Offer from the Programme Funder.

FOR NOTING

AHC/058/2025: SUMMER ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding the Summer Activity Programme. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Howell, to note the planned Summer Activity Programme for July and August 2025 as per appendix 1 of the officer's report.

AHC/059/2025: Policing & Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Report

Read: Report dated 16 June 2025 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding actions arising from recent Newry and Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meetings and the PCSP Meeting. **(Copy circulated)**

AGREED:

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Magennis, to note the following:

- **Minutes of Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Meeting held on 26 March 2025 approved at Newry NRP held on 28 May 2025.**
- **Minutes of the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting held on 25 March 2025, approved at the Policing Committee & PCSP Meeting on 27 May 2025.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.31pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 July 2025

Signed: Councillor C Bowsie
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities