

## **NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Ref: AHC/2026

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### **Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 March 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers, Downshire Civic Centre**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor C Bowsie

**In attendance in  
Chamber:**

Councillor C Galbraith	Councillor J Jackson
Councillor A King	Councillor N Lawlor
Councillor Lee-Surginor	Councillor A Mathers
Councillor K Murphy	

**Committee Members in  
attendance via Teams:**

Councillor J Brennan	Councillor D Finn
Councillor M Gibbons	Councillor D Murphy
Councillor J Truesdale	

**Officials in Chamber:** Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities  
Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living  
Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development  
Ms M Flynn, Head of Community Engagement & Relations  
Ms F Branagh, Democratic Services Officer  
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

**AHC/016/2026: APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Howell and Magennis.

**AHC/017/2026: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/018/2026: ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY  
2026**

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026. **(Copy circulated).**

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026.**

**AHC/019/2026: PRESENTATION ON ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Read: Presentation from Mrs M Flynn, Head of Community Engagement, regarding Presentation on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. **(Copy attached)**

Ms Flynn explained that the Executive Office had launched a Strategic Framework in September 2024, which included a commitment to support Councils in developing initiatives to prevent and challenge behaviours and cultures that contributed to violence against women and girls.

Ms Flynn stated that a number of Council staff had been trained through a train-the-trainer model in Bystander Intervention training, alongside 30 youth work staff from the Education Authority & Women's Aid Armagh Down, which had created a pool of trained personnel capable of delivering bystander intervention training on behalf of the Council.

Ms Flynn reported that a successful social media campaign had also been delivered, supported by video content, and a theatre production commissioned from Spanner in the Works, which had recently been performed across the District, reaching around 2,000 post-primary students, including a performance in Newry Town Hall to 400 pupils.

Ms Flynn outlined that the EVAWG Change Fund had distributed over £142,000 to 16 community-based projects across the District, and these projects included arts, sports, youth development, and communication initiatives, engaging approximately 4,000 participants, around half of whom were under 18, with many initiatives being delivered directly in schools. She noted that feedback had been very positive, with all participants reporting increased knowledge of violence against women and girls, and over 90% indicating increased confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour. She further advised that project videos had also been shared on social media and adopted by the Executive Office for internal staff training to demonstrate local impact.

Looking ahead, Ms Flynn said that the 2026–2028 EVAWG action plan had been submitted to the Executive Office for consideration, and a new round of Change Fund applications had been assessed, with funding awards expected to be issued in May, with a showcase event planned for 25 March 2026 in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry to highlight progress and reaffirm the Council's public commitment to addressing the issue.

She added that future plans included a youth conference in partnership with the Education Authority, a new marketing and advertising campaign, and continued collaboration with Women's Aid, which included a "one-stop shop" pilot providing support services for women at risk, involving multiple partner organisations, with plans to expand to other areas.

Ms Flynn also indicated that further bystander intervention training would be delivered, and subject to funding, the Council hoped to recruit a dedicated project officer to support and advance this work.

Councillor Truesdale welcomed the work and commended the speed from concept to delivery within the community. She queried whether emphasis on Artificial Intelligence (AI) would be rolled out across the District to be incorporated into training relating to EVAWAG.

Ms Flynn confirmed that Council was working with the Education Authority (EA), Women's Aid and PSNI and were considering future events to be rolled out and delivered within schools and youth group settings. She noted the challenges involved in addressing AI, given

the speed of development and trying to stay in front of challenges but confirmed that further training would be rolled out across the District.

Councillor Galbraith queried whether the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) would help provide input into rolling out the training, to which Ms Flynn confirmed that Council was supporting groups within the CVS through the Change Fund as detailed within the presentation, but asked that should Members be aware of other groups that could benefit from funding to pass on the details.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the presentation.**

**AHC/020/2026: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUM UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding District Electoral Area (DEA) Forums Update. **(Copy circulated)**

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

- **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**

**AHC/021/2026: GRANT FUNDING APPLICATION**

Read: Report from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director of Healthy Living, regarding Grant Funding Application. **(Copy circulated)**

Mr Haughey stated that the report sought committee approval as outlined in section 2.1, noting that the Northern Ireland Football Fund had launched a Grassroots Facilities Programme Fund, and officers had reviewed the criteria and identified Jennings Park as a suitable project under the multi-hub criteria within Stream 2.

Councillor Mathers welcomed the paper, stating that the plans were exciting and well overdue and requested that any updates be shared in a timely manner for those affected by any potential works.

**AGREED:** **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, 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.**

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

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, 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 Lawlor, seconded by Councillor A King, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

**AHC/022/2026: DIGI-HUB PROJECT UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director of Community Development, regarding Digi-Hub Project Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor D Murphy, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

**FOR NOTING**

**AHC/023/2026: ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (EVAWG) UPDATE**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Community Development, regarding Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Update. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lawlor, it was agreed to note the contents of the report.

**AHC/024/2026: NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director Community Development, regarding Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Report. **(Copy circulated)**

**AGREED:** On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Lawlor, it was agreed to note the following:

- Minutes of the Newry Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held 26 November 2025 and

**approved at the Newry NRP Meeting held 18 February 2026.**

- **Minutes of the Downpatrick Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held 15 October 2025 and approved at the Downpatrick NRP Meeting held 2 February 2026.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.21pm

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 13 April 2026

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor C Bowsie**  
**Chairperson**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Andrew Patterson**  
**Director Active and Healthy Communities**

# EVAWG (Ending Violence Against Women & Girls) Update

AHC Committee – 16 March 2026

Ag freastal ar an Dún agus Ard Mhacha Theas  
Serving Down and South Armagh



Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn  
agus an Dúin**  
**Newry, Mourne  
and Down**  
District Council

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Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

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## Context & Recent Progress

- ❑ The EVAWG Strategic Framework 2024-31 was launched by The Executive Office (TEO) in September 2024 – included a Delivery Plan for 2024-26 which supports Councils to develop initiatives to prevent and challenge the attitudes, behaviours and culture that can lead to violence against women and girls. Funding to NMDDC was confirmed in early 2025 (£65,000 2024/25 & £200,000 2025/26)
- ❑ Activities since then have included an EVAWG Stakeholder Conference, Domestic Abuse awareness training for Members & partners, EVAWG Bystander Intervention training, International Women's Day events and a social media campaign - [Open Your Eyes to End Violence Against Women and Girls](#)
- ❑ 2,000 Post Primary students recently attended performances of *The Voice Within* – a specially commissioned play examining themes of control and violence in relationships

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## NMDDC EAWG Local Change Fund 2025 / 26

- ❑ £142,920 funding approved to 16 local community-based projects across the District - these projects span areas including sports, youth development, community engagement with special interest groups, arts and education
- ❑ To date over 4,000 participants have engaged with these projects (including 2,150 participants aged 18 and under)
- ❑ 100% of participants report an increased knowledge of what violence against women and girls is, 92% report increased confidence in challenging inappropriate behaviour
- ❑ Series of short videos produced to profile the impact of these projects – currently being used by The Executive Office to demonstrate examples of good practice

[Women's Aid EAWG](#) [Crisis Cafe EAWG](#)

[Threeways community - MAIN.mov](#)

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## Future Plans

- ❑ NMDDC EAWG Action Plan for 2026-28 currently with TEO for consideration
- ❑ NMDDC EAWG Local Change Fund 2026/27 closed to applications in January 2026 – applications currently being assessed. LoOs to be issued late May 2026.
- ❑ EAWG Showcase event planned for 25 March in Newry, youth conference(s) planned for Autumn 2026 – including a focus on EAWG and AI / Cyberspace
- ❑ Marketing campaign planned, including outdoor advertising and further short videos
- ❑ Further development of local initiatives with Women's Aid & other partners – including the expansion of the One Stop Shop (Crossmaglen – 26 March)
- ❑ Delivery of further Bystander Intervention training to groups across the District
- ❑ Recruitment of an EAWG Project Officer for Council (subject to funding)

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Connect, Challenge, Change

# Ending Violence Against Women & Girls

**#SafeHerNMD**

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District Council

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**END** VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN  
& GIRLS