

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Ref: AHC/2026

Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 17 August 2026 at 6.00pm in the Council Chambers, Downshire Civic Centre

Chairperson: Councillor T Howie

In attendance in Chamber:

Councillor P Campbell	Councillor C Galbraith
Councillor J Jackson	Councillor A King
Councillor D Lee-Surginor	Councillor O Magennis
Councillor A Mathers	Councillor K Murphy

Committee Members in attendance via Teams:

Councillor D Finn	Councillor R Howell
Councillor N Lawlor	Councillor A Lewis

Non-Committee Members in Chamber:

Councillor T Andrews	Councillor C King
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Non-Committee Members in attendance via team:

Councillor J Tinnelly

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 D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Smyth, Democratic Services Officer

AHC/053/2026:

APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

An apology was received from Councillor Brennan.

The Chairperson congratulated Kate O'Connor on her outstanding recent achievements, winning gold in the heptathlon at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and gold at the European Championships in Birmingham. Her success was a remarkable achievement and one that deserved recognition and on behalf of the Committee congratulations were extended to Kate, her family, coaches and everyone who supported her along the way and everyone wished her every success in the future.

AHC/054/2026:

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AHC/055/2026:

ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2026

Read:

Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 June 2026. (Copy circulated).

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Jackson, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 15 June 2026.

AHC/056/2026:

DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT

Read:

Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding an update on the District Electoral Area Forums. (Copy circulated)

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Campbell, it was agreed to note the report and approve the actions in the Action Sheets attached for:

- **Crotlieve DEA Forum Meeting held on 9 June 2026**
- **Downpatrick DEA Forum Meeting held on 9 June 2026**
- **Newry DEA Forum Meeting held on 16 June 2026**
- **Rowallane DEA Forum Meeting held on 16 June 2026**
- **Slieve Croob DEA Forum Meeting held on 23 June 2026**
- **Mournes DEA Forum Meeting held on 21 July 2026**

AHC/057/2026:

CANCER EXERCISE REFERRAL AND MOVE MORE PROGRAMME

Read:

Report from Conor Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy living regarding the Cancer Exercise Referral and Move More Pathway. (Copy circulated)

Councillor Mathers spoke in support of the recommendations and how he had met with those who had availed of the service and how there was a feeling of well-being and companionship among the group. He spoke of the importance of monitoring and reviewing

the new programme at an early stage to ensure that those moving to it found the classes suitable and sustainable for them.

Councillor Lee-Surginor spoke in support of the programme and the opportunities afforded to those affected by cancer. He enquired if there were any plans for the programme to be extended beyond Downpatrick and Newry to the likes of Ballynahinch, Saintfield, Newcastle etc.

Mr Haughey responded by explaining the Move More Programme was carried out with the Be Active classes and that would continue, however the main issue was resources with only one lead Council officer delivering these. He added initially it would go back to Newry and Downpatrick Leisure Centres with referrals from the South Eastern Trust the Southern Trust and if funding became available it was hoped that extension of the programme could be examined.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Lee-Surginor, it was agreed to approve the introduction of the revised 12-week Cancer Exercise Referral Programme from September 2026 and allow for the retention and integration of Move More within the Be Active for Life timetable as an ongoing physical activity and progression class.**

AHC/058/2025: **OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION – ADDITIONAL TRAINING PROVISION FOR GAELIC GAMES.**

Read: Report from Conor Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy living regarding the Notice of Motion in relation to additional training provision for Gaelic Games. (Copy circulated)

In welcoming the report, Councillor Campbell thanked officers and explained the basis of the motion was to try and utilise the amount of space that existed within Council facilities. He acknowledged that the amount of money and investment from Council in sports infrastructure had been phenomenal with an increase in the level of facilities however some were not used as much as they should. He suggested looking at alternative routes to get as much provision in place and see if Council could provide for local clubs that were experiencing growth and development in the uptake of the game and used his local club Saul GAC as an example of that.

The Chairperson said she appreciated the motion was specifically in relation to Gaelic games however all sports within District were growing and she was seeing that for soccer clubs particularly within the Rowallane area.

Councillor Jackson commented that the motion was examining provision within multi sports hubs and catering for Gaelic games and that his Party urged caution. They had concerns

that other sports would get less time on some of the pitches if there was an increase in Gaelic games activity, therefore until there was more information on how it would progress he requested a recorded vote.

Councillor A King spoke in support of the report and recommendations presented.

Mr Haughey advised that when officers examined underutilised pitches, it would be to ensure that no club would be at a deficit, regardless of whether it was a Gaelic club or a soccer club. He added that officers examined operational need and bookings to ensure all clubs had equal access to use of facilities, unless there was a lease arrangement that provided for sole use of it and that would be under Council's Service Level Agreements to clubs.

Councillor Lawlor queried whether the potential multi-use game area facility in Kilkeel, which was the subject of funding, was to be included within the review.

Mr Haughey responded by confirming the multi-use game area would be a 3G surface to facilitate all codes of sport including rugby and soccer also and would be part of that and utilised as per the booking process.

The Chairperson put the report and recommendations to a recorded vote, the results of which were as follows: (copy attached)

FOR:	10
AGAINST:	0
ABSTENTIONS:	2

The Chairperson declared the recommendations passed.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mathers, the following was agreed:

- **Note the Notice of Motion and the issues raised in relation to additional training provision for Gaelic Games.**
- **Recognise the work already undertaken through the adopted Sports Facilities Strategy and Multi Sports Hub Reviews to assess existing sporting facilities and current and future Gaelic Games facility requirements.**
- **Acknowledge the programme of strategic investment supporting Gaelic Games across the district, as summarised in Appendix 1 of this report.**
- **Support continued engagement between officers, clubs, governing bodies and other**

stakeholders to identify practical opportunities to make effective use of existing Council sporting facilities, to support increased participation and to inform the future implementation and periodic review of the Council's Sports Facilities Strategy.

AHC/059/2026:

OFFICER REPORT ON NOTICE OF MOTION – SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) PROVISION.

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development regarding the Notice of Motion on Special Needs (SEN) Provision. (Copy circulated)

Councillor C King thanked officers for the action focused report and how on a personal note he had seen first-hand the difference the right support, opportunities and provision could make to a person's life. He spoke of his own personal understanding growing up alongside a lady called Annette and how important this access was for the individual and for the whole family. He spoke of how his role as a Councillor, and through constituency work, he had seen the same challenges being raised by families again and again with parents and carers highlighting the lack of SEN provision.

He said the recommendations firstly provided an opportunity to establish current levels of funding and investment with the recommendation to write to the Departments of Education, Health and Communities seeking a breakdown of SEN funding and investment allocated to the district, including support for rural families, specialist provision and summer schemes being extremely important. He stated there was a need to know what investment was actually reaching communities and understand where the gaps were.

Secondly, he welcomed the commitment to integrate the core objectives of the motion into the review of Council's Disability and Equality Action Plans which provided an opportunity to make SEN and disability inclusion part of how Council operated rather than treating it as a standalone issue. He pointed out Council needed to look at its own facilities, accessibility and participation and went on to use the practical example of where there was an opportunity to put those principles into practice with the new City Park, Newry. He spoke of ensuring that families with children and young people with additional needs could access the park and more importantly, that they could actually use and enjoy the facilities with accessible provision, sensory considerations and play equipment that was inclusive and allowed children of different abilities to play alongside their peers.

Thirdly he welcomed the recommendation around the Community Planning Partnership, an area where real progress could be made and how by formally asking statutory partners in Health and Education for a comprehensive update on SEN provision across the district, identifying local service gaps and looking at how statutory, community and voluntary organisations could work together and how that joined-up approach was essential.

Councillor C King welcomed the Financial Assistance grants available to the community and voluntary sector stating it was important that those organisations knew what support was

available through Council and be encouraged to bring forward initiatives that could help meet local needs.

Finally, he welcomed the commitment to continue identifying opportunities to support and promote the SEN sector through Council facilities and programme provision as he believed that was where Council could make a practical difference.

Councillor Mathers made reference to recommendation 3.1.5 within the report to consider whether a Summer Scheme for children and young people with disabilities and/or additional needs could be piloted in the District as a means of opening up summer scheme opportunities alongside those which were open to children without disabilities/additional needs. He stated that budget provision should be considered as part of Community Development's budget estimates for 2027/28.

He took the opportunity to highlight local fun days that had taken place recently across Newry stating a pilot scheme provided an opportunity and welcomed movement on it as soon as possible.

The Chairperson welcomed the recommendation stating it was pertinent to consider it as a Council especially with the Education Minister's decision to remove SEN summer scheme provision over the summer.

Councillor Jackson commended officers for the report stating that on behalf of himself and his party SEN provision was taken very seriously and that it was vital and important to families within the community who it affected. He added the Education Minister, Paul Givan had increased SEN classes since he had come in post and also Cheryl Brownlee, MLA, who recently launched an initiative entitled Every Child Matters. This was a guide for parents to get more clear information on the issue and local services and organisations.

Councillor Galbraith spoke in support of the report and recommendations and having worked as a youth worker for 20+ years said anything that Council could do to support those young people and adults had to be welcomed.

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Magennis, it was agreed to:

- **Write to the Departments of Education, Health and Communities seeking a breakdown of SEN funding and investment allocated to the Newry, Mourne and Down and South Armagh areas, including support for rural families, specialist provision and summer schemes;**
- **Corporate Policy Section to integrate the core objectives of this Notice of Motion into the upcoming review of Council's Disability and Equality Action Plans. This**

will ensure Council actively addresses the rising need for SEN support, improves facility accessibility and creates targeted opportunities for families. This aligns with the current action to promote positive attitudes and increase participation in public life;

- Formalise a request through the Community Planning Partnership asking statutory partners in Health and Education to provide a comprehensive update on current SEN provision across the District. This update should identify local service gaps and outline how statutory, community and voluntary partners can collaborate to better support families;**
- Community Development can continue to raise awareness of the potential for Financial Assistance grants to support local community and voluntary groups delivering SEN-focused initiatives;**
- Consider whether a Summer Scheme for children and young people with disabilities and/or additional needs could be piloted in the District as a means of opening up summer scheme opportunities alongside those which are open to children without disabilities/additional needs. Budget provision to be considered as part of Community Development's budget estimates for 2027/28;**
- Officers will continue to identify opportunities to support and promote the SEN sector through facilities and programme provision where possible.**

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

AGREED:

On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Magennis, 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 Campbell, seconded by Councillor K Murphy, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.

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

AHC/060/2026: SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding the issuing of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) (multi-annual depending on budgets) until 2029 through the Council Grants and Funding Unit, verified in line with Council procedures. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Galbraith, seconded by Councillor K Murphy it was agreed to issue a Service Level Agreement (multi-annual depending on budgets) until 2029 through the Council Grants and Funding Unit, verified in line with Council procedures.

AHC/061/2026: RENEWAL OF NI MAPPING AGREEMENT (NIMA)

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development, regarding payment of the annual charges associated with the Northern Ireland Mapping Agreement. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: On the proposal of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Mathers it was agreed to proceed with the Payment of the Northern Ireland Mapping Agreement annual charge as set out in this report.

FOR NOTING

AHC/062/2026: FUNDED PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATE REPORT

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development regarding an update on Funded Programme Delivery. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers it was agreed to note the officer's report and attached responses.**

AHC/063/2026: **GET ACTIVE NI**

Read: Report from Mr C Haughey, Assistant Director, Healthy Living regarding officers' intention to submit an application to Sport NI under the Get Active NI 2026/27 funding programme to pilot the Council's Be Active Pathways participation framework. (Copy circulated)

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers it was agreed to note the officer's report.**

AHC/064/2026: **IPB PRIDE OF PLACE AWARDS 2027**

Read: Report from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director: Community Development regarding an update on the hosting of the Pride of Place Awards. (Copy circulated)

Councillor Mathers took the opportunity to wish Road Ahead NI the best of luck following their nomination from the Newry DEA for the competition.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers it was agreed to note the update regarding the initiative as set out in the officer's report.**

AHC/065/2026: **NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT**

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

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor K Murphy, seconded by Councillor Mathers it was agreed to note the attached Minutes of the Newry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NRP) Meeting held on 20 May 2026, approved at the Newry NRP Meeting held on 24 June 2026.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.44pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 September 2026.

Signed: _____
Councillor T Howie
Chairperson

Signed: _____
Andrew Patterson
Director Active and Healthy Communities

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORDED VOTE

DATE: 17/08/2026. VENUE: Mourne Room. MEETING: AHC Committee.

SUBJECT OF VOTE: Item 6 – Officer Report on Notice of Motion – Additional Training Provision for Gaelic Games.

COUNCILLOR	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
J Brennan				Absent
P Campbell	For			
D Finn	For			
C Galbraith	For			
M Gibbons				Absent
R Howell				Absent
T Howie	For			
J Jackson			Abstain	
A King	For			
N Lawlor	For			
D Lee-Surginor	For			
A Lewis			Abstain	
O Magennis	For			
A Mathers	For			
K Murphy	For			
TOTALS	10		2	3