

**NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Ref: AHC/2024

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**Minutes of Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 16 September 2024 at 6.00pm in the Mourne Room,  
Downshire Civic Centre**

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**Chairperson:** Councillor C Galbraith

**In attendance in Chamber:** Councillor L Devlin                      Councillor A Finnegan  
   Councillor R Howell                      Councillor J Jackson  
   Councillor D Lee-Surginor              Councillor A Lewis  
   Councillor O Magennis                 Councillor A Mathers  
   Councillor L McEvoy                     Councillor D Murphy

**Non-Committee Members  
in Chamber:** Councillor T Andrews

**Non-Committee Members  
in attendance (via Teams):** Councillor M Rice

**Officials in Chamber:** Mr A Patterson, Director, Active and Healthy Communities  
Mr H Korkou, Assistant Director, Healthy Living (Acting)  
Mrs A Robb, Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development  
Mrs D Starkey, Democratic Services Officer  
Ms S Taggart, Democratic Services Manager (Acting)

**Also in the Chamber:** Mr A Herron, Chief Executive Officer, PlayBoard NI

**AHC/075/2024:            APOLOGIES & CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS**

Apologies were received from Councillors Finn, K Murphy and Young.

**AHC/076/2024:            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**AHC/077/2024:            ACTION SHEET ARISING FROM ACTIVE & HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 AUGUST  
2024**

Read: Action sheet of the Active & Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 19 August 2024. **(Copy circulated).**

*AHC/070/2024: Leisure Closure Arrangements*

In response to a query from Councillor Devlin regarding Kilkeel swimming pool, Mr Patterson advised it had been necessary to close over the weekend in order for essential maintenance to be carried out. Mr Patterson advised this was likely to be a temporary measure and an update would be provided to Mournes Councillors as soon as possible.

*AHC/068/2024: Attendance Matters, Department of Education*

Councillor Howell welcomed the information regarding the RAISE Programme that had been circulated to Members following the presentation at the previous Committee meeting and whilst welcoming the information received voiced her disappointment that there were areas of the District not included.

Councillor Howell proposed officers write to the Department of Education asking why large parts of the District had been excluded from the RAISE Programme. Councillor Howell's proposal was seconded by Councillor McEvoy.

**Agreed:** **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor McEvoy that officers write to the Department of Education asking why large parts of the District had been excluded from the RAISE Programme.**

**It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Devlin, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, to note the Action Sheet of the Active and Healthy Communities Committee Meeting held on Monday 19 August 2024.**

## **PRESENTATION**

### **AHC/078/2024: PLAY BOARD NI**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Alan Herron, Chief Executive Officer from PlayBoard NI to the Committee Meeting.

Mr Herron from the Play Board NI, took Members through a presentation entitled 'Newry, Mourne and Down Play Strategy, Impact Review and Assessment of Need September 2024.' (Copy attached to these minutes)

The Chairperson thanked Mr Herron for the presentation and invited questions and comments from Members as follows:

- What were the timescales with regards to year one recommendations for capital upgrade?
- Praise was given to all the work and data gathered to determine where work needed to be prioritised.
- The investment that was made to the Downs Road, Newcastle was commended with the news regarding Islands Park Newcastle also welcomed.
- In relation to the Mournes locations of Ben Crom and Pious Hill it was asked what was meant by transformation and community element.
- The need for considerations in planning applications to be taken forward e.g. Development at Burren Meadow Newcastle with 141 houses built in 2012/13 had no play facilities added.
- The importance of engaging with communities was reiterated.
- In relation to new play parks that may have missed out by a small number of houses yet had external funding that could be secured, would there be an opportunity for those to be considered at a later date?
- Reference was made to removal at Hillfoot Junior. Would Ballynahinch Collective be contacted about how the space would be utilised in the future and how it would be made safe for residents.
- The recommendations acknowledged Langley Road, Ballynahinch was a high volume of private residential development and that had pushed the requirement for an upgrade. Council was to continue to review play value, what happened in that case?

- Reference was made to play facilities within forest environments. The play park at Castlewellan Forest Park was not fit for purpose and did not meet the needs of visitors and should be a priority for Council.

Mr Herron and Mr Patterson responded to queries as follows:

- From PlayBoard NI perspective timescales were dependant on when Council would be able to progress.
- Once there was Council approval for the Play Strategy Review 2024-29, it would be brought before the Council's Strategic Finance Working Group in order to secure finance as soon as possible.
- In locations such as Ben Crom and Pious Hill, the aim would be to take the space and put it back into a use which would be of more benefit to the population there. This would be done in consultation with the local community and would be about creating a space that met the needs of older residents within the area whilst acknowledging that there would still be play need. There would be some play equipment potentially but with a greater focus on the recreational space that could be used by the wider community.
- Once the Play Strategy was approved officers would engage with colleagues in Planning Department.
- At the beginning of the process in 2017 there was acknowledgement that in some areas, particularly more rural locations, that it could be difficult for communities to meet the requirements of the strategy.  
It was built in that if a community were able to secure funding through an alternative route that Council would do its best to facilitate that process and therefore may be an avenue for some areas e.g. an independently owned play park.
- Langley Road, Ballynahinch fell outside the requirements in terms of the capital upgrade however each year Council carried out maintenance reviews for each site, and should the play value reduce, sites such as this may fall into a category for upgrade at another time.
- In terms of Hillfoot Junior that was a matter for Council however the plan was to remove the equipment to create a safe space which would remain for recreational use.
- There would be consultation with communities on any plans.
- The scope of the Play Strategy Review included AHC funded and developed play parks however colleagues within ERT were looking at facilities at Castlewellan and other parks through a separate piece of work.

**AHC/079/2024:            PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW 2024-2029**

**Read:**                      Report dated 16 September 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Council's Play Strategy Review 2024-2029. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed:**                      **It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor McEvoy, seconded by Councillor Magennis to approve the recommendations of the Play Strategy Review as presented within the officer's report.**

**AHC/080/2024: DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA (DEA) FORUMS UPDATE REPORT**

Read: Report dated 16 September 2024 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 McEvoy, to note the report and approve the actions in the action sheets attached for Downpatrick DEA Forum Private Meeting held on 13 August 2024.**

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

**Agreed: On the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, it was agreed to exclude the public and press from the meeting during discussion on items 7 and 8, 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 Howell, seconded by Councillor McEvoy, it was agreed the Committee come out of closed session.**

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

**AHC/081/2024: SAINTFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE LEASE**

Read: Report dated 16 September 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding Saintfield Community Centre Lease. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Lee-Surginor, seconded by Councillor Howell, to approve the sub-lease of the Council facility at Saintfield Community Centre as set out within the officer's report.**

**AHC/082/2024: SWIMMING POOL PLANT SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE**

Read: Report dated 16 September 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Swimming Pool Plant Servicing and Maintenance. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to approve the re-appointment of a specialist supplier via Direct Award Contract for essential maintenance and servicing of leisure facilities as detailed within the officer's report.**

**AHC/083/2024: NEWRY LEISURE CENTRE SWIMMING POOL**

Read: Report dated 16 September 2024 from Mr A Patterson, Director of Active and Healthy Communities regarding Newry Leisure Centre Swimming Pool. (Copy circulated)

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Mathers, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to note the update on works to the Newry Pool and approved the additional costs of opening Kilkeel Leisure Centre Pool for a group booking as set out in the officer's report.**

**AHC/084/2024: TOWER CLOCK – DAN RICE HALL, DRUMANESS**

Read: Report dated 16 September 2024 from Mrs A Robb, Assistant Director, Community Development regarding repair to the Tower Clock at Dan Rice Hall, Drumaness. **(Copy circulated)**

**Agreed: It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Howell, seconded by Councillor Devlin, to note the contents of the officer's report.**

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.57pm.

For adoption at the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 7 October 2024.

Signed: Councillor Galbraith  
Chairperson

Signed: Andrew Patterson  
Director Active and Healthy Communities

## Newry, Mourne and Down Play Strategy

**Impact Review and Assessment of Need  
(Sept. 2024)**

## Presentation Overview

1. Play Strategy Review Process
2. Impact Overview (2017 to 2022)
3. Future Planning (Draft)
  - Overarching Capital Recommendations
  - Capital programme (Years 1 to 4)
  - Broader recommendations
4. Close

## Process

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      A[Capital Play Park Audit  
• Play Value Audits (by Play Services Ireland)] --> B[2017-2022 Strategy Assessment  
• Audit review and GIS mapping  
• Impact assessment and review]
      B --> C[Needs Analysis  
• Review of Demographic Need (Census 2021)  
• Population Density (household Pointer data)]
      C --> D[DEA Consultation Sessions  
• Session 1 – Overview of Play Value Audit findings  
• Session 2 – Demographic overview and needs assessment]
      D --> E[Future Planning  
• Capital Programme Development (4-year duration)  
• Non-capital Recommendations]
    
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## Impact of Play Strategy (2017 to 2022)

Year	High Play Value	Mid Play Value	Low Play Value
2017	29, 32%	25, 27%	38, 41%
2023	29, 30%	34, 15%	52, 55%

- 23% increase in High Play Value category (from 31% to 55%)
- 11% reduction in Low Play Value category (from 41% to 30%)
- 12% reduction in Mid Play Value category (from 25% to 15%)

## Play Value Score 2017

## Play Value Score 2023

### Overarching Capital Recommendations

Action to be Taken	Number of Sites
Capital Upgrade (under Play Strategy)	14
Addition of Inclusive Play Equipment	1
Consolidation	2
Transformation	3
Closure	2

### Year 1 Capital Programme

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
<del>Goulishes</del>	Granite View	65	111	Capital Upgrade
Downpatrick	Gravelow	79	198	Capital Upgrade
Sieve Gullion	Conway Park	82	180	Capital Upgrade
Mourmes	<del>Slieve Road</del>	84 <small>(Newer facilities available since 2020)</small>	504	Capital Upgrade
<del>Slieve Gullion</del>	Belfock	85 <small>(Newer facilities available since 2020)</small>	120	Capital Upgrade
Rowallane	Hillfoot Junior	79	-	Closure and removal of equipment
Newry	Springhill Drive	85	-	Closure & return of site to NMIIF management.

### Year 2 Capital Programme

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Newry	<del>Derrybeg</del>	80	798	Capital Upgrade
Downpatrick	bishops Court	83	102	Capital Upgrade
<del>Slieve Gullion</del>	<del>Del Ross</del>	84	700	Capital Upgrade
Sieve Gullion	Whitcross	106	-	Introduction of inclusive fixed play equipment to meet local need.
Downpatrick	Bridges Street	80	-	Transformation

### Year 3 Capital Programme

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Mourmes	Island Park	85	566	Capital Upgrade
Sieve Gullion	Lismore	85	709	Capital Upgrade
Sieve Gullion	Rathview	85	709	Capital Upgrade
Mourmes	Ben Crom	85	560	Transformation
Newry	Emmett Street Mourme Park	85 86	675	Consolidation onto one site

### Year 4 Capital Programme

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Newry	Peter MacFarland Park	84	438	Capital Upgrade
Mourmes	Rooney Road	85	381	Capital Upgrade
Sieve Croob	Drumroad	85	-	Capital Upgrade
Mourmes	Pious Hill	81	51	Transformation
Downpatrick	Model Farm St. Dymphna	71 79	-	Consolidation onto one site

### Broader Recommendations

#### Community Owned Play Parks

- Offer additional access to play through external funding sources and community ownership
- Council support through annual maintenance inspection and audit

#### Planning

- Residential growth has the potential to increase future demand on the capital play budget
- Consideration should be given to application of appropriate planning policy

#### Community Play

- 3,222 Children engaged in Community Play programmes (2017-2022)
- NMD should sustain and expand delivery, enhancing access to play



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**Thank you**

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