

**Comhairle Contae Fingall
Fingal County Council**

Minutes of Community, Sports and Culture Strategic Policy Committee

Thursday, 18th September, 2025

PRESENT

Councillor Eoghan Dockrell (Chairperson)
Councillor Angela Donnelly
Councillor Tom Kitt
Councillor James Humphreys

Apologies for inability to attend were received for Councillor John Walsh

The Area Chairperson, Councillor Eoghan Dockrell, presided.

OFFICIALS PRESENT

Paul Carroll, Director of Services Housing & Community
David Storey, Director of Services Environment, Climate Action, Active Travel & Sport
Naomi Weir, Senior Executive Officer Community
Linda Ennis, Principal Community Officer Community
Gene Griffin, Administrative Officer Community
Geraldine Whelan, Staff Officer Community
Betty Boardman, County Librarian Libraries
Lilian Whelan, Senior Executive Librarian Libraries
Declan Power, Senior Executive Officer Tourism Development
Sarah O'Neill, County Arts Officer Tourism Development
Sile Stewart, Deputy County Arts Officer Tourism Development
Caroline Cowley, Public Arts Co-ordinator Tourism Development
Christine Baker, Heritage Officer Planning & Strategic Infrastructure

CSC/9/25 (Agenda Item No 1)

Confirmation and Re-Affirmation of Minutes of the Community, Sports and Culture Strategic Policy Committee meeting held on Wednesday 25th June 2025

The minutes of the Community, Sports and Culture SPC meeting held on the 25th June 2025 which were circulated were **CONSIDERED**.

It was **PROPOSED** by Councillor E. Dockrell and seconded by Councillor A. Donnelly and **AGREED**: "That the minutes of the meeting of 25th June, 2025 be **ADOPTED** and **APPROVED**."

CSC/10/25 (Agenda Item No 2)

Fingal Libraries Update

Betty Boardman, County Librarian provided a report on Capital Projects ongoing and scheduled in Fingal Libraries. Lilian Whelan, Senior Executive Librarian briefed the meeting with the range of planned initiatives, activities and events being hosted by Libraries in the Fingal County Council area.

Following discussion, the report was **NOTED**.

CSC/11/25 (Agenda Item No 3)

Fingal Arts Plan 2019 - 2025

An update on the Fingal Arts Plan 2019-2025 was presented by Sarah O'Neill, County Arts Officer which proposed to extend the current Arts Plan.

Following discussion, the presentation was **NOTED**. It was **AGREED** to bring the proposal to extend the current Arts Plan to the Full Council Meeting.

CSC/12/25 (Agenda Item No 4)

Fingal Heritage Plan 2024 - 2030

Christine Baker, Heritage Officer, presented the 2024-2030 Heritage Plan and outlined the policy implementation matrix.

Following discussion, the presentation was **NOTED**.

CSC/13/25 (Agenda Item No 5)

Community Activities Funding

Linda Ennis, Principal Community Officer provided a presentation on the current Community Activities Funding Grant Scheme and proposed changes to the scheme to come into effect in 2026 subject to the agreement of the Full Council.

Queries were raised on the detail of the proposed changes. These were responded to by Linda Ennis and Naomi Weir.

Following discussion, the presentation was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** to bring the revised scheme to the Full Council meeting.

CSC/14/25 (Agenda Item No 6)

Councillor J. Humphreys - Replacement and Upgrade of Sports Facility Audit

SPCCSC 10/25 (Agenda Item No 6) **Motion**

The motion below in the name of Cllr J.Humphreys was **PROPOSED** by Cllr J. Humphreys and **SECONDED** by Cllr E Dockrell.

Motion: Councillor J. Humphreys - Replacement and Upgrade of Sports Facility Audit

"That this Committee recommends to the full Council that the Chief Executive begin the process of replacing the current Sports Facilities Audit, the new audit should take a broader view covering not just outdoor pitches, but also swimming facilities, indoor sports and wider community recreational infrastructure, this work should be completed in advance of the next County Development Plan, so that zoning, land use and investment decisions are based on a proper evidence base that reflects where the Council is at now, and where it is going, the updated audit should: 1) Move away from UK-based benchmarks like Fields in Trust, which are not part of WHO or EU planning frameworks and do not reflect modern thinking around inclusion, accessibility or long-term public need; 2) Look to European planning models, where infrastructure is planned over 25–50 years and access is what is measured; 3) Include real indicators of pressure, such as waiting lists, club oversubscription, changing demographics and access gaps for

particular age groups or communities; 4) Recognise public access to swimming and indoor sport are essential; 5) Support the planning of integrated, multi-use community spaces, as set out in Fingal's Culture & Creativity Strategy and Active Together plan; 6) Identify and protect sites for future facilities, particularly in high growth areas where infrastructure is already struggling to keep pace."

Report:

The Sports Audit was undertaken by KPMG on behalf of the council. The draft audit was presented to the members in May and the consultant is currently dealing with a number of queries raised. The final report will be presented to Area Committees later this year.

1) Move away from UK-based benchmarks like Fields in Trust, which are not part of WHO or EU planning frameworks and don't reflect modern thinking around inclusion, accessibility or long-term public need;

The Fields in Trust method has been identified as a well-established and well-regarded measurement for open space provision, including active recreation provision, going back several decades by the Fingal Sports Department/Parks & Green Infrastructure Division. This methodology employs a sport-agnostic methodology for identifying an appropriate benchmark that is applicable to pitch-based sports, allowing for benchmarking recommendations across a wider pitch sports category. The level of provision outlined in this model is in alignment with the adopted provisions of the County Development Plan.

2) Look to European planning models, where infrastructure is planned over 25-50 years, and access is what's measured;

As part of the audit, sports facility demand models were reviewed from the UK, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Growth patterns were assessed to 2029, the end year of the current Fingal County Development Plan.

3) Include real indicators of pressure, such as waiting lists, club oversubscription, changing demographics, and access gaps for particular age groups or communities;

The audit assesses changing demographics, including concentrations of younger and older people, as well as areas of high historic and anticipated population growth, using these as indicators of heightened pressure on facilities. Levels of club subscription and waiting lists were highlighted by respondents to the public consultation survey conducted as part of the audit along with stakeholder meetings with Fingal's co-funded officers.

4) Recognise public access to swimming and indoor sport are essential

Distinctions between different types of swimming pool and indoor facility (including those requiring paid access or membership fees) were made in the individual settlement profiles and LEA-scale summaries. On a county scale, access was measured on the basis of distance and demand, noting that localised access could vary based on type of facility.

5) Support the planning of integrated, multi-use community spaces, as set out in Fingal's Culture & Creativity Strategy and Active Together plan

The audit highlighted the particular benefits of community centres. Feedback was received on community centres as part of the public consultation, identifying these facilities as particularly valuable due to their multi-functional nature, including their particular value to young people and teenagers. Given the unique importance of community centres, their connection to FCC through the Fingal Community Facilities Network and the wide range of uses they offer, a recommendation was made that a more detailed examination be undertaken as part of a community facilities audit in order to give them the appropriate level of attention.

6) Identify and protect sites for future facilities, particularly in high-growth areas where infrastructure is already struggling to keep pace.

The audit placed special attention on high growth areas, identifying where heightened demand could be anticipated to be placed on local facilities and where further support could be required. Locations such as St Catherine's Park were identified as suitable sites for future facility development and have been identified by Parks & Green Infrastructure Division.

Source of Reply: David Storey, Director of Service for Environment, Climate Action, Active Travel and Sport Department

Discussion:

David Storey, Director of Services advised that the Draft Audit Report was presented to Councillors at the briefing sessions in May 2025 and that the Final Audit Report would be presented to Councillors in the coming months.

The report was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the matter would be revisited following presentation of the Final Audit Report

The Meeting concluded at 18:15

CHAIRPERSON

DATED