

Mass protest against North Down & Ards leisure privatisation



Where: North Down & Ards Town Hall, The Castle, Bangor, BT20 4BT

When: 6.30pm on 18 September 2025

Contact: Kellie O'Dowd on +44 7974 018408

A mass protest will take place today [Thursday] against the privatisation of leisure centres in North Down & Ards.

Workers, unions and members of the public will gather outside a meeting of the full council to call for leisure services in the borough to be brought back into public hands.



North Down and Ards Council will tonight vote on four potential models for the future of leisure services: Hybrid, Outsourced, In-House, and a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC).

Unions GMB, NIPSA and Unite strongly advocate for bringing all leisure facilities back under direct council ownership.

Kellie O'Dowd, GMB Organiser, said:

"We must ensure leisure services are provided for the long-term wellbeing of our communities and workers and not for private sector profit.

"The direction of travel in Liverpool, Warrington, Tower Hamlets and Haringey is to bring their leisure services back under public ownership.

"We believe Ards & North Down should do the same."

Janette Murdock, from NIPSA, said:

"This campaign, like many before it, will require strong community action to stop the negative experiences with private operators who prioritise profit over people.

"We urge residents to contact their local councillors and make their voices heard in support of in-house leisure services."

Joanne Mc Williams, from Unite, said:

"We know from previous experiences that council run facilities are better for workers, their families, rate payers and the community.

"Now is the time to make our voices heard."

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Member requiring help?

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