

OPEN

Environment and Communities Committee

05 June 2025

Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration - A Commitment To Achieve Gender Equality In Sport And Physical Activity

Report of: Director of Public Health

Report Reference No: EC/20/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: All

Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To seek approval for Cheshire East Council to become a signatory to the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration, an international treaty that signifies a commitment to achieving gender equality in sport and physical activity.
- 2 This will complement Active Cheshire's ambition set out in their new Strategy (being launched on 12th June), to prepare a Strategic Plan for Women and Girls Equality in Sport and Physical Activity.

Executive Summary

- 3 Active Cheshire (the County Sports Partnership) plans to become a signatory of the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration, an international treaty that signifies a commitment to achieving gender equality in sport and physical activity. It is asking each of the three local authorities in Cheshire and Warrington to become joint signatories. The Declaration is a global statement of intent to promote gender equality in sport and physical activity. It recognises that women and girls have not had equality of access in sports and physical activity.
- 4 The International Working Group (IWG) on Women and Sport is the world's largest network dedicated to advancing equity and equality in sport and physical activity for women and girls around the world. IWG is the custodian of the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration. Nearly 600 organisations around the world are signatories, including the International

Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That The Environment and Communities Committee:

1. Agrees to Cheshire East Council signing The Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration
2. Delegates to The Director of Public Health authority to make all necessary arrangements for the signing of the Declaration to take place

Background

- 5 Active Cheshire are launching their new organisational strategy at an in-person event on 12 June 2025. Part of this strategy is the development of a Cheshire and Warrington Women and Girls Strategic Plan.

At this event, it is the intention for the Chief Executive of Active Cheshire to sign the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration alongside a representative from The International Working Group (IWG) on Women & Sport. The International Working Group (IWG) on Women and Sport is the world's largest network dedicated to advancing equity and equality in sport and physical activity for women and girls around the world.

IWG is the custodian of the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration, a treaty that signifies a commitment to achieving gender equality in sport and physical activity. Nearly 600 organisations around the world are signatories, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).

Cheshire East Council has received an invitation from Active Cheshire on 2 May 2025 to sign the declaration at the event on 12 June 2025. This invitation has also been extended to Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Council.

- 6 The Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration aims to promote gender equity and equality in sports and physical activity. Nearly 600 organisations globally, including international federations and national sports governing bodies, have signed the declaration. Any organisation, regardless of size or location, can become a signatory. Organisations must demonstrate a commitment to upholding some or all of the ten Principles of the Declaration. These are as follows:

- Equity and Equality in Society and Sport
- Facilities
- School and Youth Sport
- Developing Participation
- High Performance Sport
- Leadership in Sport
- Education, Training and Development
- Sport Information and Research
- Resources
- Domestic and International Cooperation

Further details of the Declaration and the ten Principles can be found here;

[Brighton-plus-Helsinki-2014-Declaration-on-Women-and-Sport.pdf](#)

- 7 Physical activity has already been identified as a Public Health priority as part of The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023-2028.

Council Officer time has been allocated to the physical activity agenda and existing commitments are funded through the Public Health Grant. We can evidence our commitment to some of the ten Principles of the Declaration. For example, Public Health have led the development and establishment of the Cheshire East Eat Well Move More (EWMM) Partnership. As part of the EWMM Partnership Action Plan, women and girls have been identified as a priority cohort and there has been a subgroup established to drive this work forward.

In addition, the Council commissions Everybody Health and Leisure to provide a leisure service for residents and the OneYou Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service. As part of both of the commissioned services, there is a commitment to inclusivity and gender equality.

Signing up to the declaration would enable further awareness regarding this important piece of work and for Cheshire East Council to be part of a global movement, in addition to the local and a sub-regional initiatives.

Consultation and Engagement

- 8 Significant consultation and engagement was undertaken with partners during the development of the Cheshire East Eat Well Move More Partnership and Action Plan, as referenced above. Women and Girls were identified as a priority cohort and a subgroup has been formed to identify and enable opportunities for targeted initiatives.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 9 Signing the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration will demonstrate the Council’s commitment to gender equality in sport and physical activity.

Other Options Considered

The alternative option would be to not accept the invitation to sign up to the Declaration.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do Nothing	An opportunity to demonstrate the Council’s commitment to gender equality in Sport and Physical Activity will be missed	This may cause reputational harm.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 10 The Council will have to ensure compliance with the legal definition of a woman under the Equalities Act 2010 meaning that a woman is defined by their biological sex.
- 11 Sex is a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act.
- 12 Notwithstanding the above, the Council has obligations to all residents of the Borough in pursuing the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023-2028 including people with protected characteristics.
- 13 In taking into consideration the above, there is nothing to prevent the Council from signing the declaration.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 14 There are no additional financial implications of signing the Declaration.

Human Resources

- 15 There are no additional Human Resource implications of this report and the recommendations. Council Officer time has already been allocated to the physical activity agenda.

Risk Management

- 16 As referenced above, there is a reputational risk to not accepting the invitation to sign the Declaration.

Impact on other Committees

17 Not applicable.

Policy

18 Signing the Declaration will contribute to Commitment 2: Improving Health and Wellbeing. It also relates to Commitment 1: Unlocking Prosperity For All and our aspiration to provide opportunities for all.

Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all	Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
---	---	--

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

19 Signing the Declaration demonstrates the Council's commitment to promoting and achieving gender equality in sport and physical activity.

Other Implications

20 The Public Health Service is already committed to improving physical activity levels and participation in Cheshire East. It is recognised that participation in sports and physical activity is good for your health and wellbeing.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Sal Khan	Deputy S151 Officer	20/05/25	22/05/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	20/05/25	21/05/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Louise Price	Principal Lawyer (Place)	20/05/25	23/05/25

David Hallworth	Finance Business Partner		
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors</i>			
PLACE DMT	Place Executive Director and Directors	20/05/25	22/05/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Rachel Zammit Health Promotion and Improvement Manager rachel.zammit@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Not applicable
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brighton-plus-Helsinki-2014-Declaration-on-Women-and-Sport.pdf