Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Comhairle Ceantair Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Rural Needs Impact Assessment

Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan – Draft Action Plan

Step 1: Define the Issue

The Community Plan for the district 'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030' was published in March 2017, following an extensive consultation process. The Vision "is of a welcoming, shared and inclusive Fermanagh and Omagh district, where people and places are healthy, safe, connected and prosperous, and where our outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage is cherished and sustainably managed." The Community Plan applies to the district as a whole and recognises that the area is primarily rural.

Since then work has been progressing to develop an Action Plan to support achievement of the agreed Community Planning Outcomes. The action planning process has followed an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA approach) and has involved all statutory partners, a number of government departments, representatives of the community/voluntary sector and of the private sector. The actions included are those which will help the Community Planning Partnership to begin to jointly tackle the major issues in the district and which require a high level of partnership working to achieve, with a focus, where possible, on prevention and early intervention

This Rural Needs Impact Assessment considers those actions for which Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has been identified as the Action Lead.

In terms of the impact on rural areas within the Fermanagh and Omagh District, the Draft Action Plan has identified Eight Outcomes with associated Indicators, an indication of the data gathered and considered in arriving at the agreed Outcome, and the resultant agreed Actions. The relevant Indicators and Data are set out in Step 2 of the Assessment.

In relation to Actions, the Council is the Action Lead in relation to:

Outcome 1 " Our People are Healthy and Well – Physically, Mentally and Emotionally"
Action 1.1: Increase uptake of physical, social, culture, arts and leisure activity programmes across all age groups and amongst under-represented groups to improve physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

Outcome 3 "Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient and empowered"

Action 3.6: Explore further opportunities to support/deliver programmes of inclusive activity promoting equality and celebrating diversity

Action 3.8: Identify and introduce more interactive and joined up processes to communicate and engage with service users
Action 3.9: Explore further opportunities to strengthen community resilience and capacity, across rural and urban areas
Action 3.10: Expand and develop activities for people living with a disability across the district's culture/arts and leisure venues
Action 3.12: Deliver a targeted programme of home safety assessments and, where appropriate, ensure safety improvement measures are implemented.

Outcome 5 "Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking"

Action 5.2: In line with the concept of 'Smart Region', develop a compelling proposition to attract investment into the area.
Action 5.6: Develop and progress a sectoral development programme with potential emerging/high growth sectors.
Action 5.8: Support the Gas to the West initiative and promote uptake across the region.
Action 5.12: Availing of and building on potential digital networks, promote Omagh and Enniskillen as economic and digital hubs for the district and support commercial and industry led development.
Action 5.13: Ensure and monitor the on-going availability and supply of appropriate industrial/commercial land and premises within the district, alongside consideration of opportunities for the sustainable redevelopment and use of key 'opportunity sites'
Action 5.14: Design a development and branding programme for farmers to enable them to promote awareness of local quality produce and to increase the potential to get better value for products

Outcome 6 "Our District is better connected"

Action 6.1: Lobby for/promote a joint government initiative to address the infrastructure deficit in border counties.
Action 6.4: Establish a Fermanagh and Omagh Steering Group to contribute to the Department for Infrastructure's review of the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN-TP) with a view to achieving more balanced regional development and with a particular emphasis on the upgrade of the A5, A4, A32 and associated cross-border linkages.

Outcome 7 "Our outstanding natural environment and built and cultural heritage is sustainably managed and, where possible, enhanced"

Action 7.1: Identify recycling champions and promote increased recycling across both the business sector and households
Action 7.3: Develop/extend Local Nature Reserves within the district

Outcome 8 "Our district is an attractive and accessible place"

Action 8.1: Investigate opportunities to bring markets into town centres so as to increase vitality and levels of footfall
Action 8.2: Investigate opportunities to address cases of derelict properties in

order to redevelop so as to provide safe and attractive spaces
Action 8.3: Enhance and improve the aesthetics of our towns, villages and neighbourhoods (i.e., external public places) to make these more welcoming, accessible, clean and attractive to business, local users and visitors.
Action 8.7: Review parking provision across the area (including coach parking), giving consideration to disability/mobility issues, and deliver on agreed actions
Action 8.10: Promote and increase countryside access across the district, promoting the 'leave no trace' principle

Step 2: Understand the situation

With the exception of the two main towns of Omagh and Enniskillen, all other areas of the district are considered to be rural. The Council is aware of the major factors affecting Rural Dwellers, with particular reference to the Economy, Employability, Housing ownership and levels of unfitness, Transport and Access to Services.

In relation to the development of the Draft Action Plan, the following data has been gathered and used to inform the actions:

1. Under Outcome 2: "Older people lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives", the relevant indicators are :

2b: % of people aged over 65 years in good health: 88% of the over 65 population in Fermanagh and Omagh report that they are in good health and this is a statistic which we would aim to maintain and, where possible, improve. Older people are at particular risk of loneliness and isolation, particularly those living in dispersed rural communities, and it is important that older people are enabled and supported to live long, active, healthy lives. Many families and communities within our district already benefit from the contributions of healthy, active older people through their volunteering activities and this is an area which could continue to develop and grow with the right support.

2e: Number of senior smart pass holders: Data indicates that 77% of those eligible for a senior smart pass in the Fermanagh and Omagh district currently have one. Of those who haven't applied, this may be due to a lack of awareness or, perhaps, due to rurality and extremely limited or infrequent public transport services. Those with access to a car may feel that they would not benefit from this. It is important that those who could benefit from this service are encouraged to do so and that all age groups make better use of public transport, where practicable.

2. Under Outcome 5: "Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking", the relevant indicators are:

5a: Number of Jobs: Overall jobs in the Fermanagh and Omagh district decreased following the economic downturn in 2008/09 although, since 2012, has

been steadily increasing with the biggest increase in part-time employment. There are 54,400 jobs in the district comprised of 39,426 employee jobs; 6,170 self-employed jobs; and 8,808 agricultural jobs (including self employed farmers). Continued efforts are needed to provide the conditions which contribute to sustaining and growing employment opportunities in the district.

5c: Number of Registered Businesses: The number of registered businesses in Fermanagh and Omagh accounts for 11% of the registered businesses in Northern Ireland which is positive given that the district accounts for 6.2% of the NI population. The business base is, however, micro-micro with 85% employing fewer than 5 people and 45% with a turnover of less than £50k pa. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong with 1 in 5 people self employed, although this may be driven, in part, by lack of job opportunities and also numbers of part-time farmers. 91% of businesses in the district survive their first year which is also a positive indicator. Efforts are required to continue to promote entrepreneurship and to encourage business growth.

5d: Wage Levels: Average wage levels for those working in the Fermanagh and Omagh district are lower than the NI average, ie, £19,969 compared to £24,601. This may be due, in part, to a reliance on lower paid industries such as agriculture or hospitality. There is a need to attract high growth and higher paid industries to the district and to encourage growth within existing industries so that employees can benefit through increased wage levels.

5e: Tourism Expenditure: Overnight tourism expenditure in the district has averaged £57m per annum over the last 3 years (2014, 2015 and 2016). It is clear, however, that the tourism potential of the district is not fully utilized with none of the district's tourism attractions featuring in the top ten in Northern Ireland and performance reaching a plateau at a time when the NI tourism economy is steadily growing. Reasons for this need to be fully explored and efforts made to capitalize on the wealth of attractions our district has to offer.

3. Under Outcome 6: "Our district is better connected", the relevant indicators are:

6a: Length of motorways, dual carriageways and 'A' roads in the district: There are no motorways or dual carriageways in the Fermanagh and Omagh district (NB: Dept for Infrastructure recognizes 0.6km of road at the Cherrymount link in Enniskillen as dual carriageway) and 320km of 'A' class roads. There are ongoing efforts to secure upgrades of key transportation corridors, ie, A5, A4, A32, which are essential to the continued economic and social development of the district and to promote balanced regional development. Correlations can be drawn between the transport infrastructure gaps in the region and the lower visitor numbers to visitor attractions in the district.

6b: % of journeys made on public transport and active travel (walking, cycling): At 19%, the figures for the district fall below the Northern Ireland average of 23%. This could be due to the rurality of the district and the limited public transport service available across rural areas. In some cases there will be no alternative to use of the car, particularly for commuting, however efforts should

be made, where practicable, to encourage use of public transport and/or other forms of active travel due to the personal, social and environmental benefits which could be gained.

6c: % of premises unable to access broadband in excess of 10Mbps: In 2015, 37% of business premises in the Fermanagh and Omagh district were unable to access broadband speeds in excess of 10Mbps. This compared unfavourably with the NI average at just 14%. (Both of these have decreased in 2016, but the gap between the Fermanagh and Omagh district and NI remains). Fast and reliable broadband is an essential requirement for businesses in today's environment and this is a limiting factor in terms of business development, attractiveness of the district to investors and growth of the local economy. There is a need to encourage and secure investment in local infrastructure and to explore new and innovative models of delivery.

4. Under Outcome 8: "Our district is an attractive and accessible place", the relevant indicators are:

8c: Number of tourism trips to the district: There were 341,000 overnight tourism trips to the district in 2015/16, falling to 305,000 in 2016. The number of trips across NI has increased over the same period. None of the district's visitor attractions feature in the top 10 attractions for NI by visitor numbers and it is suggested that there is a correlation between this and the lack of key transport infrastructure in the district. Actions will focus on building tourist infrastructure and products, alongside capacity building and will complement actions already identified under outcomes 5, 6, and 7.

Step 3: Develop and appraise options

In delivering the Actions contained within the Plan for which the Council is the designated Action Lead, the Council is committed to working in partnership with identified Statutory and Support Partners.

Delivery in Rural areas will be informed not only by the experience of other Government Departments and Statutory Agencies, but also by working with representatives of the Community and Voluntary Sector and the Rural Community Transport Networks, with specific expertise and knowledge of the issues affecting local areas.
To ensure the delivery of fair rural outcomes, the Action Plan will be kept under continual review and actions may be revised according to the data gathered from the performance measures.

Step 4: Prepare for Delivery

The Draft Action Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with all the relevant Support Partners. The Public Consultation exercise will reveal whether there are any additional actions which are required, any additional sources of reliable information and any location specific requirements which will require a different approach to be taken.

The Community Planning Strategic Partnership Board proposes to undertake further public consultation on the draft Action Plan commencing in December 2017 for an eight-week period.

Step 5: Implementation & Monitoring

As indicated in Step 2, there are a number of rural specific indicators contained within the Plan. For each of the actions, identified partners will identify performance measures which will measure (i) how much did we do, (ii) How well did we do it? (iii) Is anyone better off as a result?

Evaluation & Review

The work of the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Planning Partnership will develop over time, informed by emerging evidence, data and ongoing community engagement.

This Action Plan will be kept under continual review and actions may be revised according to the data we gather from the performance measures. For example, if performance data tells us that an action is unlikely to make an impact on the outcome indicator, then we will review that action. Our first Performance Report will be published by 1 April 2019.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by	**Kim McLaughlin**
Position:	**Head of Community Planning and Performance**
Signature:	Kim McLaughlin
Date completed:	**13 December 2017**

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	**Brendan Hegarty**
Position:	**Chief Executive**
Signature:	
Date approved:	**14 December 2017**