

Engagement Action Plan for the Development of a Community Plan

Including a Phased Programme of Activities



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‘We want to ensure that no member of the community is excluded from receiving information in an appropriate format matched to their needs’

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1.0 Introduction to Community Planning

The Community Plan for the Fermanagh and Omagh district will set the strategic framework for developing public services, the purpose being to improve public service delivery for the benefit of all citizens.

There is no one definition of **community engagement**, but, broadly, it is when members of the public, either as individuals or as a '**community**', are involved in decisions about service development, commissioning and delivery.

Community planning is a new local government function in Northern Ireland (NI) which seeks to embed an evidence based approach to decision making with citizen participation and partnership working at its core.

A Community Plan must identify long-term objectives and actions for:

- Improving social, economic and environmental well-being and tackling poverty, exclusion and disadvantage;
- Contributing to achieving sustainable development across the region;
- Planning and improving public services.

The *Local Government Act (NI) 2014* places a legislative *duty on the Council, as the lead partner to 'facilitate, initiate, maintain and participate in community planning and publish progress on outcomes every two years'*. Statutory partners identified in the Community Planning Partners' Order NI 2016 must '*participate in and assist the Council; perform actions in the Plan and contribute to monitoring and reporting on outcomes.*' Government departments must '*promote and encourage and have regard to community planning*'.

In developing the Community Plan the legislation clearly states a need for community involvement in doing so with '*persons resident in the district; persons who are not resident in the district but who receive services provided by the council or one of its community planning partners; representation of relevant voluntary bodies; representatives of persons carrying out businesses in the area; other persons who, in the opinion of the council, are interested in the improvement of the district's social, economic and environmental well-being.*'

2.0 Engagement: Strategy overview

Fermanagh and Omagh Council and its Community Planning partners' are committed to delivering high quality services for everyone who lives, visits or works in the area. Citizen participation is embedded throughout the development process of the Community Plan. The principles outlined in the Council's *Community and Involvement Strategy 2016-2019* will be fully adopted. The engagement process will ensure the *Council's Equality Scheme 2015-2016* and associated *Disability Action Plan 2015-2016* are adhered to and meets section 75 duties prescribed in the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*. This Action Plan will set out what the community planning engagement process hopes to achieve, why, who with and how engagement will be

facilitated, the methods which will be used and how participants will be kept updated throughout the development process. The action plan places a focus on identifying how participation from stakeholders and the wider public contributes to the content of the plan.

In order to inform the Action Plan a phased programme of activities is outlined below which details each key milestone and relevant timeframe. It demonstrates a commitment to 'co designing' the Community Plan.

2.1 Table 1: Process for the Development of draft Community Plan Outlined

Phase One: Data Collection and Community Involvement

Timeframe April 2014 until End of October 2015

1. A robust statistical analysis of key data sets to develop an evidence database for the new Fermanagh and Omagh area encompassing social, economic and environmental data.
2. A review of local strategies and plans which impact on the council area.
3. Citizen Participation and Involvement to determine the needs of local people, who live, work or visit the area.

Phase Two: Draft Plan Strategy and Partner Involvement

Timeframe November 2016 until August 2016

4. Partnership working and collaboration amongst statutory and support partners to develop collaborative practice and consensus in determining the key issues and to strengthen the evidence base where necessary.
5. Review of all information to determine key priorities and determine long term outcomes with associated measures which will monitor performance collectively.
6. Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the draft Community Plan to assess the likely impact on environmental factors and provide alternative options where necessary.
7. Create a draft Community Plan to include a vision, aims, long term outcomes and key performance measures in achieving these, along with high level actions.
8. Provide an Environmental Report encompassing the Strategic Environmental Assessment Process.
9. Develop a Governance Structure and Delivery structure for the Community Planning Partnership

Phase Three: Establishment of Community Planning Partnership and publication of the draft Community Plan and Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Report for consultation

Timeframe September 2016 until December 2016

10. Constitution of a designated Community Planning Partnership Board and approval of content of the draft Community Plan and SEA, Environmental Report and wider governance options for consultation purposes.
11. Citizen Participation and Involvement to discuss and agree the contents of the draft Community Plan and Environmental Report for a period of 4 weeks pre-consultation and 8 weeks – consultation.

Phase Four: Approval of Community Plan and Environmental Report

Timeframe January 2017 until March 2017

12. Partnership working and collaboration amongst partners to agree the final content of the community Plan in a Community Planning Partnership.
 13. Publication of the agreed Community Plan and Environmental Report
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3.0 Aim of Action Plan

The *Community Planning, Engagement Action Plan* seeks to encourage people who live, work and visit in Fermanagh and Omagh to see themselves as key stakeholders in identifying and addressing local concerns through a long term strategy for the area; encompassed in a draft 'Community Plan'.

Overall Aim: 'To actively involve citizens and key stakeholders, who live, work or visit the Fermanagh and Omagh area in the Community Planning process'.

The *Community Planning, Engagement Action Plan* is an integral part of the local Community Planning process and will be monitored in line with the Council's *Community and Involvement Strategy 2016-2019*. It seeks to:

- Better inform**
- Improve understanding**
- Develop constructive dialogue**
- Raise the levels and quality of participation**

4.0 Our 10 key Objectives

The *Community Planning, Engagement Action Plan* aims to harness the knowledge of local people and key stakeholders to ensure the community plan reflects the local needs of local people. The Community Plan should outline key issues for the area, provide a long term vision for Fermanagh and Omagh, and indicate priorities, long term outcomes, high level actions and key performance measures to monitor performance. In working towards this aim key objectives are outlined below:

- 1. Provide wide ranging opportunities for communities, individuals and key stakeholders to get involved in decisions that affect their lives through the community planning engagement process and to monitor participation.**
- 2. Utilise an evidence base of statistics to inform discussions under the three pillars of 'social', 'economic' and 'environmental' to assess the priorities for the area.**
- 3. Assess the demographics of the area and relevant supporting information to inform the identification of key stakeholders are and where resources should be targeted.**
- 4. Develop a phased programme of activities outlining key milestones in the development process and associated timeframes.**
- 5. Coordinate consultation and engagement activity of partners and the wider community across Fermanagh and Omagh and assess the financial and human resources required to complete this.**

6. **Outline a variety of communication methods, utilizing technology advancement to promote accessibility and ensure adequate representation from all Section 75 categories and deliver targeted events where under representation occurs.**
7. **Reduce rural isolation barriers and engage in rural locations and demonstrate rural participation.**
8. **Provide adequate support to encourage participation for vulnerable groups including transport, use of interpreters, signers and childcare facilities when requested and record information to inform future engagement activities.**
9. **Provide summary reports of all engagement undertaken in relation to different mediums used.**
10. **Develop a Community Planning Database of participant's details to assist in the development of an ongoing two way communication and build relationships in delivering the plan**

5.0 Stakeholders

5.1 Who should be involved?

Stakeholders include all participants and groups based in and outside the Fermanagh and Omagh area who have an interest in the future of the District. There are a number of key stakeholder groups who will be integral to the development of the Community Plan including statutory and support partners; elected representatives, the residents who live here, visitors to the area and those who work here, as well as, the community, voluntary and business sectors.

5.1.1 Elected Representatives

Elected representatives have a key role to play in developing ownership of the Community Plan content amongst members of the community, and as community representatives, should be involved in discussions and consultations to establish the key issues for the draft Community Plan. The process of community involvement when supported by committed leaders, offers a major opportunity to develop broader community understanding of the challenges.

5.1.2 Citizens who live, work or visit in the area

The involvement of the citizens who live, work or visit in the area is central to the effective development and implementation of the draft Community Plan. They will be key to the development of the content of the plan and its development will be a process encompassing 'co-design' techniques and continuous involvement.

5.1.3 Statutory and Support Partner organisations

Local partners will need to consider the various methods by which they can involve communities in the preparation of the draft Community Plan. They will commit time and resources to the process.

5.1.4 Community and Voluntary Sector

The community and voluntary sector is often best placed to reach and involve those sections of the community that mainstream public sector organisations may find hard to reach. The sector may also play a role in models of service delivery.

5.1.5 Business sector

The business sector is a key stakeholder as it is a significant user and supplier of local services, as well as a key provider of local employment. Business activity contributes both directly and indirectly to community prosperity and quality of life.

5.2 Key issues concerning stakeholders

Statistical data regarding demographics and characteristics of the area has been analysed to assist in determining an appropriate programme of activities. The table below indicates that the age of the population of the area is varied with most age categories mirroring the NI average, with particular emphasis placed on the ageing population. It also details the strategy for engagement based on the analysis of the information; this will inform techniques and activities in line with the needs of those that are to be involved in the process, more specifically.

Table 2 below outlines in more detail the range of stakeholders and purpose of engagement in a summary format.

Table 2: Our stakeholders and engagement strategy

Who are our stakeholders	Engagement Support
<p>Our Statutory Partners The following organisations have been named as community planning partners in the Community Planning Partners Order. They have a specific duty to participate in the community planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health Agency • Health and Social Care Trust • Western Health and Social Care Trust • Northern Ireland Housing Executive • Education and Library Boards • Police Service of Northern Ireland • Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service • Invest Northern Ireland • Tourism Northern Ireland • Libraries Northern Ireland • Council for Catholic Maintained Schools • Supporting People Northern Ireland <p><i>All Government Departments will be invited to attend who have to ‘take due regard and contribute to ‘the community planning process</i></p>	<p>Partners will be engaged throughout the development of the plan in a process of ‘co-design’ and will commence participation following the initial phase (1) of engagement through an informal working group.</p> <p>Partners will ‘<i>support and add to</i>’ the evidence data base.</p> <p>Workshop minutes of all meetings will be recorded to show consistency, transparency and integration of process at all of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of evidence base. • Approval of Priorities and Outcomes. • Approval of associated measures. • Approval of associated high level actions. • Approval of draft content of Community plan. • Approval of recommended governance structures of community planning partnership. • Approval of draft Engagement Plan. • Approval of draft Environmental Report.
<p>Support Partners The following organisations have been initially selected as support partners following an assessment of the trends emerging in data analysis, initial community consultation and a review of all plans and policies operating in the Fermanagh and Omagh area by the Council in the interim period to assist in developing the plan. <i>(Note: these are subject to change upon selection onto the Community Planning Partnership Structure)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translink • South West College • SEUPB • NIEA 	<p>Partners will support and complement the evidence data base.</p> <p>Workshop minutes of all meetings will be recorded to show consistency, transparency and integration of process at all of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of evidence base. • Approval of Priorities and Outcomes. • Approval of associated measures. • Approval of associated high level actions. • Approval of draft content of Community plan.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loughs Agency • Rivers Agency • Forest Service • Waterways Ireland • NICIE • Arts Council NI • PBNI • NI Ambulance Service • Quarry Producers Federation • Federation of small businesses • Chamber of Commerce • Omagh Enterprise Centre • Fermanagh Trust • Supporting Communities NI • Fermanagh Rural Communities Network • FOCUS • Omagh Forum for Rural Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of recommended governance structures of community planning partnership. Approval of draft Engagement Plan
<p>Wider Population The Fermanagh and Omagh area is home to 114,992 people</p> <p>The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area is Northern Ireland’s largest region in terms of land mass – approximately 3,000km², or 20% of Northern Ireland – and the smallest in terms of population..</p> <p>Age structure Approximately 23% of the population is aged Under 16 years.</p> <p>There is a significant ageing population in the District; at present, over 14% of the population are aged 65 years and over; this is projected to increase to 20% by 2025.</p> <p>People with a disability 1 in 5 people describe themselves as having a disability and with an ageing population this percentage is expected to increase.</p> <p>Ethnic Origin / Country of Birth Approximately 14% of the population were born outside Northern Ireland (4% outside NI, ROI and GB). This is an increase from 2001 levels</p>	<p>To ensure all people across the Council area are provided with an opportunity to participate, Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with access for people experiencing disadvantage to attend workshops/public meetings by providing transport. • Facilitate public workshops in all District Electoral Areas in the new council area • Monitor equality monitoring data at all engagement activities and target engagement at under-represented groups of section 75 categories. • To reach people from across all age groups, a variety of techniques will be used during each phase (and stage) of engagement including electronic and non-electronic media forms. • Engagement events will be scheduled at different times of the day to allow working parents to attend. All children will be made welcome at all events who are supervised by a parent or guardian.

<p>(with an increase in those from the wider EU very significant). Over 3,000 people do not have English as their first language.</p> <p>Sexual Orientation Robust estimates of the scale of the LGBT community do not exist at an LGD14 level. At an NI level, the <i>Integrated Household Survey 2012</i> estimated the proportion at 1.1%. However, this is considered to be at the lower end of the scale; the comparable figure for the UK was 1.6% (from the same survey). Other official estimates, drawn in 2005, suggested the figure was closer to 6%. Stonewall, the gay rights charity, suggested a figure in the range of 5-7% to be 'a reasonable estimate'.</p> <p>In the absence of contrary information, it could be reasonable to assume that the LGBT community accounts for 5-7% of the FODC population. Therefore, it is important to ensure this is reflected in the engagement with the community plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People will be engaged through the assistance of bodies and agencies which have the skills and expertise and already established contact links. However, children under 16 will be provided with opportunities to raise issues which affect them, and we will ensure they are listened to. • Engagement activities will all be held in accessible venues (both in terms of location and disability access). • Interpreters' and audio loop systems will be used upon request. We will promote availability of these on all publicity materials in advance of events. • Engagement activities will be taken to existing groups representing older people, younger people, people with a disability, people with different sexual orientation and ethnic groups to maximise involvement and ensure a diverse response to engagement.
<p>Community and Voluntary Sector</p> <p>There are more than 1200 groups represented on the Council's Community and Environmental Databases with groups representing community activists, environmental, welfare, recreation and social.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of all engagement activities will be forwarded to the in-house databases to maximise targeted representation on key priority areas of interest in the Community Plan. • Regional bodies whom have a membership base and which are representative of the community and voluntary sector will have representation on the informal working group. • Additional events will be facilitated which the CVS
<p>Business Sector</p> <p>There are 7,175 registered businesses in the FODC area – 46% of which are in the agriculture sector. The vast majority are micro-businesses, employing less than 5 people.</p>	<p>Businesses are an important facet of the community; they are employers in the region and service providers. The economy is also one of the three themes of Community Planning.</p>

	<p>It is important to gauge the views of the local businesses – large and small – in compiling the Community Plan. In order to keep the scale manageable, we propose going through representative bodies, such as the Chamber of Commerce, local enterprise agencies and Federation for Small Business, whilst also targeting businesses through the legacy council's business databases.</p>
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The list of stakeholders above is an indicative list only

Community engagement is likely to reveal different opinions and views, some of which may not be reconcilable. There will be a clear emphasis put on the need to manage expectations and to set clear parameters about the context in which the Community Plan will operate, which includes the new Programme for Government, healthcare targets, resource levels and statutory limitations.

6.0 Methods of engagement

The engagement process for the development of the Community Plan will aim to match the needs of the stakeholders identified above and target groups as and when they emerge. Table 3 below outlines the methods of engagement at each stage and phase and the purpose of the engagement.

Phase of Engagement	Purpose	Method of Engagement
Phase 1	To identify key issues for stakeholders	Public Workshops
Stage 1		Pop up shops
	To prioritise key issues identified and develop draft associated outcomes and performance indicators to address these	Online Surveys
Stage 2		Website/ social media
		Leaflets /Posters
		Email
		Press leaflets
		Telephone
Stage 3	To review the performance	Community Newsletters
		Focus Groups

	indicators and suggest innovative actions to progress the outcomes.	Community mapping Talking wall Community and Voluntary Sector Groups
Phase 2	To review evidence base and prioritise issues To draft vision, aims, long term outcomes, performance measures and high level actions.	Community Plan Themes Meetings One to one meetings Email Minutes/ Reports Presentation
Phase 3	To discuss and agree the contents of the draft Community Plan and Environmental Report	Public Workshops Pop up shops Online Surveys Website/ social media Leaflets /Posters Email Press leaflets Telephone Community Newsletters Focus Groups Art and creativity (children and young people) workshops
Phase 4	Partnership working and collaboration amongst	Community Planning Partnership Minutes/ Reports

	<p>partners to agree the final content of the community Plan as a Community Planning Partnership.</p>	
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7.0 Resources

Community Planning is multifaceted and something that all services within the Council (as the lead partner) will have a part to play in. In order to build knowledge and awareness of the new function amongst staff, the three Directors of Environment and Place (Environmental Pillar); Community Health and Leisure (Social Pillar) and Regeneration and Planning (Economic Pillar) will lead on engagement events, alongside relevant Heads of Service nominated from within their respective Directorates and other members of their staff to assist with note taking and facilitating public workshop events. There will be a minimum of 10 staff at each public workshop; this will include 4 facilitators, 4 note takers and 2 members of Community Planning Team (as a minimum). Engagement will take place in small groups at workshops focusing on one pillar.

There is a statutory link between the Local Development Plan and the Community Plan and the importance of this will be demonstrated through joint engagement facilitated by both spatial planners and community planners where possible. This will allow the relevant staff to become familiar with issues across the three relevant engagement pillars (social, economic and environmental) and ensure transparency in approach.

An external body will be procured to oversee the engagement activities as an independent voice and to train facilitators, note takers and event organisers (Community Planning Team) in advance of events. This will be rolled out in workshop format. Training will be focused on:

- How to get the best out of events and give all attendees a voice
- Organisation of events and structured questions
- Note taking and recording at events

A small budget is available for publicising public workshops and consultations in advance. It is anticipated that phase one of the engagement process will require more publicising at the outset as a new function and to bring people up to speed about changes to local government. High profile publicising campaigns will be run in all 4 local papers and a poster/ leaflet campaign throughout the district by an external distributor to maximise its input with specific focus on the rural areas of the new council area.

To maximise impact and to avoid engagement duplication, both the Local Development Plan and Community Plan will run consultations on draft plans simultaneously over an 8 week period in October and November 2016 in relation to phase three of the process. This will allow for public notices and awareness raising campaigns to run side by side and to maximise input from the wider public and diminish consultation fatigue amongst respondents. It will also assist in ensuring alignment of the Community Plan and Local Development Plan and in building awareness amongst stakeholders and consultees of the linkages between both plans.

All Council run events during phase one and phase three will be reviewed and where appropriate pop up shops and road shows will be utilised to raise awareness and signpost people to online consultation and forthcoming events.

8.0 Continuous communication and updates

The importance of continuous two way communication in the development of the Community Plan will be integral throughout all four phases of development. In order to develop a two way communication platform with participants a '**Community Planning Database**' will be developed. Contact details will be entered onto a database of all those participating in the initial consultations who wish to receive updates on a regular basis about progress.

Key information will be collated from each method of engagement used during all phases of development. A range of update methods will be used to feedback to participants including:

- **Reports of events, workshops, events and online surveys**
- **Partner workshop action notes**
- **Summaries of all comments received in relation to development at each key stage**
- **Regular updates through the Council website and the newly established Community Planning Database.**

This will assist participants to track development and understand the progress made at each key stage of development. .

Consultation with participants at '**targeted events**' from phase one will be consulted again during phase three, to ensure continuity in the 'co-design' process with all key stakeholders.

The Community Planning Team will operate an open door policy to ensure everyone's voice can be heard during all phases of development.

9.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1 Action Plan Outcomes

Implementation of this Strategy should lead to the following **outcomes**:

- An evidence based approach to identifying and prioritising the key issues for citizens and key stakeholders.
- Better identification of key stakeholders in the process.
- Most appropriate engagement methods and language used for each identified stakeholder.
- Those affected by policy decisions are better enabled and facilitated to develop solutions (co-design) themselves and take ownership and control.
- A draft plan that considers and identifies the needs of local people in a meaningful way.

9.2 Measures

We will measure the above outcomes in the development of the Community plan through the collection, collation and analysis of quantitative data:

1. Number of participants attending public workshops.
2. Number of respondents to online surveys on the Council and Partner websites.
3. Number of respondents to social media surveys.
4. The number of invitations issued and the attendance at targeted events
5. Attendance levels at targeted events
6. % of Equality monitoring forms completed by attendees and therefore % of representation from minority groups, using the Section 75 categories engaged.
7. % of respondents in comparison to the socio economic characteristics of the District
8. % of respondents and participants from urban and rural areas within the District

The above statistical measures will be complemented with qualitative feedback which will assist the community engagement process to improve processes in the future based on the following:

1. Comments received from public workshops on locations of events, accessibility, information provided and general comments.
2. Information on how to improve the process.
3. Suggestions of other possible methods of engagement; engagement to empower citizens to get involved, remove barriers and improve accessibility.

END.../

Terminology Made Clear

Community Involvement: Effective interactions between planners, decision-makers, individual and representative stakeholders to identify issues and exchange views on a continuous basis

Participation: the extent and nature of activities undertaken by those who take part in public or community involvement;

Community Engagement: Actions and processes taken or undertaken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interactions can then take place

Consultation: The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.

Table 1: Process for the Development of draft Community Plan outlined

Table 2: Our stakeholders and engagement process

Table 3: Phased Programme of activities for

Annex 1: '*Your Plan, Your Say*' associated Action Plan for public community involvement