



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

Consultation Engagement Framework 2023 - 2026

July 2023



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1. Context

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to involving local people in shaping the services that the Council delivers or facilitates independently or as a partner.

The Council is dedicated to the principles of community engagement and the involvement of local residents, businesses and visitors in the planning, development and management of services, policies and strategies.

At its core, community engagement is about involving individuals, community organisations, businesses, service users and wider stakeholders in decision-making processes to inform and shape policies, strategies, facilities, services and projects. Effective engagement ensures that the widest possible range of local views can be utilised to improve services and outcomes.

The Council will aim to continuously advance the quality and delivery of services by learning directly from those who use or receive them. To help with this, we want to know what the public have to say about the services we provide and what they want to see happen in their community and local area.

We recognise that to effectively shape and improve our District and services, meaningful consultation and engagement is crucial. Involving people will lead to better and more responsive services, as well as improved quality of life for all.

To ensure a consistent approach is taken across the Council, this framework will set out the different methods that staff can use to coordinate the involvement, consultation, engagement and empowerment of residents in service delivery and decision making. The document is intended to be a practical resource for employees and services to support the planning and delivery of all community engagement activities.

Our Vision

“Our Vision for Fermanagh and Omagh is of a welcoming, shared and inclusive 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”.

Diagram 1: FODC – Our Vision

2. Our Commitment to Engagement

We are committed to actively listening to, involving and supporting participation of local people in decisions and service delivery that impact on them.

We aim to involve the following in all consultation and engagement processes:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Statutory Bodies
- Community & Voluntary Sector
- Service Users
- Visitors
- Elected Members
- Employees and Trade Unions

There are various pieces of legislation that place a duty on the Council to consult and engage. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will strive to consult and engage in line with its statutory duties and beyond, where the process can help to develop and improve the delivery of our services and the lives of residents.

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the Council to consult and engage in relation to the Community Planning powers and for the Council to work in partnership with other public, private, community and voluntary sector partners to influence how and where services are provided, hence allowing a more flexible approach to meeting local needs.

Furthermore, the Council's Corporate Plan, Community Plan, Local Development Plan and Annual Performance Improvement Plans interlink with each other and have an overall commitment to consultation, engagement and involvement.

Local Development Plan

The Planning Act (NI) 2011, places an obligation on the Council to consult and involve the community and stakeholders in the development management process as well as the preparation of the Local Development Plan. The Council must produce its 'Statement of Community Involvement' outlining how it proposes to engage the community and stakeholders in exercising its planning function.

Community Plan 'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030'

The Community Plan for the district, 'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030', is the overarching, long-term strategy for the area. The Community Plan sets out three themes and six long-term outcomes which aim to improve quality of life for local people through improved social, economic and environmental wellbeing, and to contribute to sustainable development. It is delivered through a partnership structure involving organisations from across the public, private and community/voluntary

sectors with the Council acting as lead partner in managing the delivery of the Community Plan.

Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan sets the strategic direction for Fermanagh and Omagh District Council for the medium term, in four-year cycles largely aligned to electoral terms. It sets out the Council's key priorities and how the Council will contribute towards delivering the six long-term outcomes identified through the Community Plan, which our communities have told the Council will improve quality of life in Fermanagh and Omagh.

The vision and outcomes set out in the corporate plan are not achievable without close partnership working with our community planning partners and also with individual citizens and communities who have a key role to play in improving our district.

Annual Performance Improvement Objectives

Each year the Council identifies, consults upon and publishes Improvement Objectives which set out what it will do in the year ahead to deliver on the statutory duty to secure continuous improvement. Engagement and consultation are key components to help identify where improvement activity should be focused to ensure high quality of delivery.



Diagram 2: FODC – Community Planning Partnership Working

Other Key Strategies

The Council has a range of other key strategies and plans that also focus on consultation, engagement and involvement. A few examples of these include the following:

Climate Change and Climate Change Strategy

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to playing its part in the fight against climate change. In February 2021, Council approved its first ever Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy: Restore, Revive, Thrive – Our Environment, setting out the practical steps we can take over the coming years to minimise climate change impacts and identifying ways in which we can try to counter the severity of the Climate Emergency.

In October 2021, Council approved its Climate Change and Sustainable Development Action Plan detailing the actions behind our Strategy including how we will focus our efforts on reducing council emissions in areas such as energy & buildings, resource management, transport and land use.

There was extensive consultation and engagement with key partners, schools and residents to help inform the content of the Strategy. The consultation process had to be inventive as it took place during Covid-19.

Omagh and Enniskillen Place Shaping Plans

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, through the Community Planning Partnership; commissioned KPMG Future Analytics in 2022, to develop the Omagh and Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan. The Place Shaping Plans consider a range of key local plans; 'Our Community Plan 2030', 'Climate Change & Sustainable Development Strategy 2020-2030', the draft 'Local Development Plan 2030,' as well as previous Masterplans. The goal for these plans is to inform future decision making to position Omagh and Enniskillen as vibrant towns for current and future generations.

The plans were informed by extensive participative engagement, which included public, private, community and education sectors, as well as key statutory and government agencies. In addition to consideration of the views of stakeholders, extensive baseline analysis was undertaken to provide a sound evidence base upon which to form recommendations.

Play Park Strategy

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council created the Play Park Strategy to help improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our young people. The Strategy aims to guide the provision, sustainable management and development of Play Parks across the district between 2020 - 2030.

During the engagement and consultation stage, the team held consultation event in various urban and rural areas and engaged with key partners and groups to ensure the views of children, parents and individuals with disabilities had input into the strategy.

3. What is Consultation, Engagement and Involvement?

The terms consultation, engagement and involvement can be used interchangeably. However, for the purpose of this framework there are some differences between them.

The image below highlights the differences in the three terms:



Diagram 3: FODC – Definitions – Consultation, Engagement & Involvement

4. Why use Consultation, Engagement and Involvement Practices?

There are many reasons for using consultation, engagement and involvement practices, including a legislative requirement and targeting minority groupings, as well as many benefits:

Legal Requirement

There are legal requirements to consult and engage with the public and the framework has been developed based on current legal requirements and best practice.

Where there is a defined statutory process for consultation, then the statutory process will take precedence. For example, requirements to consult on spatial planning issues will be undertaken in line with the Planning Act (NI) 2011 legislation and associated statutory guidance. There is also a statutory duty in the Local Government Act NI (2014) to consult people on draft Improvement Objectives.

Legislative Context

Community Planning

- The Local Government Act 2014

Planning

- Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
- Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Equality & Good Relations

- S75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Licensing

- Cinemas (Northern Ireland) Order 1991
- The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
- Licencing of Pavement Cafés Act (NI) 2014
- The Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) (2010 Act) (Commencement No.1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017
- The Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 & Civil Partnership Act 2004
- The Betting and Lotteries (NI) Order 1994 & The Lotteries Regulations (NI) Order 1994
- Betting, Gaming Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985 & Betting and Gaming (NI) Order 2004

Corporate Commitment

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, as a public body, has stated its commitment to ensure that we deliver high-quality services for all our residents and visitors to the district.

To achieve this commitment, the Council must as a minimum inform residents, customers and stakeholders about the services we offer, consult on any changes to services and new developments, and offer a chance to provide feedback on existing services.

Benefits

The following areas are seen as benefits to using consultation, engagement and involvement practices:

- Increased trust and transparency – people’s views will be considered during the engagement process and included in decision making.
- Promotes Ownership – residents have greater ownership and pride in the decisions taken and services delivered and feel less removed from the organisation.
- Improved understanding – people from all sections of the community feel better informed of the services the Council does and does not offer, how to contact the Council and how they can get involved.
- Shared knowledge – people benefit from learning more about the Council and the Council learns more about customer satisfaction and residents’ expectations.
- Improved reputation – the more involvement and engagement with the public the more people will respect the organisation as a considerate and approachable one.
- Improved decision-making – decisions will be made through demonstrable evidence gathered from residents and visitors.
- Increased co-production – through engagement and involvement key services and projects will gain better links with partners to improve service delivery.
- Increased influence – residents will have more opportunities to influence the design, processes and delivery of services, policies and projects.
- Improved levels of satisfaction – through improved understanding, communication and cooperation both the Council and residents will feel more satisfied with the decisions taken and the standard of services delivered.

Supports Engagement with Target Minority Groups

The Council must use consultation and engagement practices to seek input from various groups of people when carrying out engagement and consultation. A few of these groupings have been consider below:

- **Children and Young People**

The Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 came into effect in December 2015. The aim of the Act is to improve cooperation between named

Children's Authorities and between the Children's Authorities and other children's service providers who provide a children's service or are engaged in activities which contribute to improving the well-being of children and young people. Within our district, 25.05% of residents are aged between 0 and 18 (the NI average is 24.04%)

To ensure that Children and Young People are included in any Council involvement processes, officers must consider how they can effectively engage with the various age ranges. Previous processes have used creative methods, such as getting children and young people to draw pictures that represent what the topic means to them or a competition to name a strategy. Officers should also consider contacting schools, youth clubs and other youth engagement programmes that may help encourage children and young people to participate in their process.

Please see Appendix 3 for more information on the Lundy Model of Participation, which provides a way of conceptualising a child's right to participation, as laid down in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is intended to focus decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order: space, voice, audience, influence.¹

- **Older People**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) places a duty to carry out our duties with due regard to promoting equality of opportunity for a range of groupings including older people. The Community Plan also has an Outcome for 'Older People to lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives', therefore it is important for the Council to engage with older people. Within our district, 18.35% of the population are aged 65 or over, compared to a Northern Ireland average of 17.15%

There are a number of areas you could consider to help you. Firstly, the Age-Friendly Officer could help advise on the best consultation/ engagement options to consider, including how to market the engagement, formats for events and the best way to evaluate the process. Secondly, the Council has a good working relationship with South West Age Partnership (SWAP), which is an Umbrella Body for all older peoples' community groups in the District. SWAP will be able to provide advice and help send out information to help with your process.

- **People with Disabilities**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) also places a duty to have due regard for promoting equality of opportunity for people with disabilities, including when consulting or engaging. This is reflected in the Corporate and Community Plans, with the aim of achieving an 'inclusive district'. Within our district, 23.94% of the population identifies as having a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities. The NI average figure is 24.33%.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

To ensure that your process is inclusive for people with disabilities contact Corporate & Strategic Services who can help advise on the best ways to engage with people with various needs and how to create accessible materials and event formats. Furthermore, the Council has an Access Advisory Group, made up of local people representing various disabilities who can help provide responses to consultations and pass on information to the pan disability community.

- **People from Difference Races**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) also places a duty to have due regard for promoting equality of opportunity for people from different races. This is also an aim in the Council's Corporate and Community Plans, as well as the Good Relations Programme. Within FODC, 98.29% of the local population identifies as 'White', compared to a Northern Ireland average of 96.55%. 1.71% of the local population identifies as 'Other' compared to a Northern Ireland average of 3.45%.

For advice and guidance on how to best engage with people from different races, Officers are encouraged to seek support from Community Services Good Relations. This will help you learn more on how to appropriately engage with people from a wide range of backgrounds by identifying how to contact different support groups, the best format for materials and events, and any additional support like interpreting.

- **Women**

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) places a duty for public authorities to have due regard for promoting equality of opportunity between men and women generally. It is noted that women in particular have been underrepresented in public decision making. Gender statistics within our district (Male: 49.93% and Female: 50.07%) are broadly reflective of the NI average (Male 49.19% and Female 50.81%).

To ensure that your process is inclusive, you may want to consider reaching out to local community-based women's groups. In designing an engagement process be mindful of any practical or social barriers that women might face – childcare is always a key example of this. Corporate and Strategic Services can help advise on engaging with local groups.

5. Key Engagement Principles

The Framework considers the six Council Values as the underpinning principles of engagement. The principles will ensure that all services take a consistent approach in line with good practice. The six principles are as follows:



Diagram 4: FODC – Key Engagement Principles

6. Steps of Engagement

There are five steps that need to be considered to ensure that the engagement process is successfully delivered, and any outcomes are achieved. The five steps are as follows:

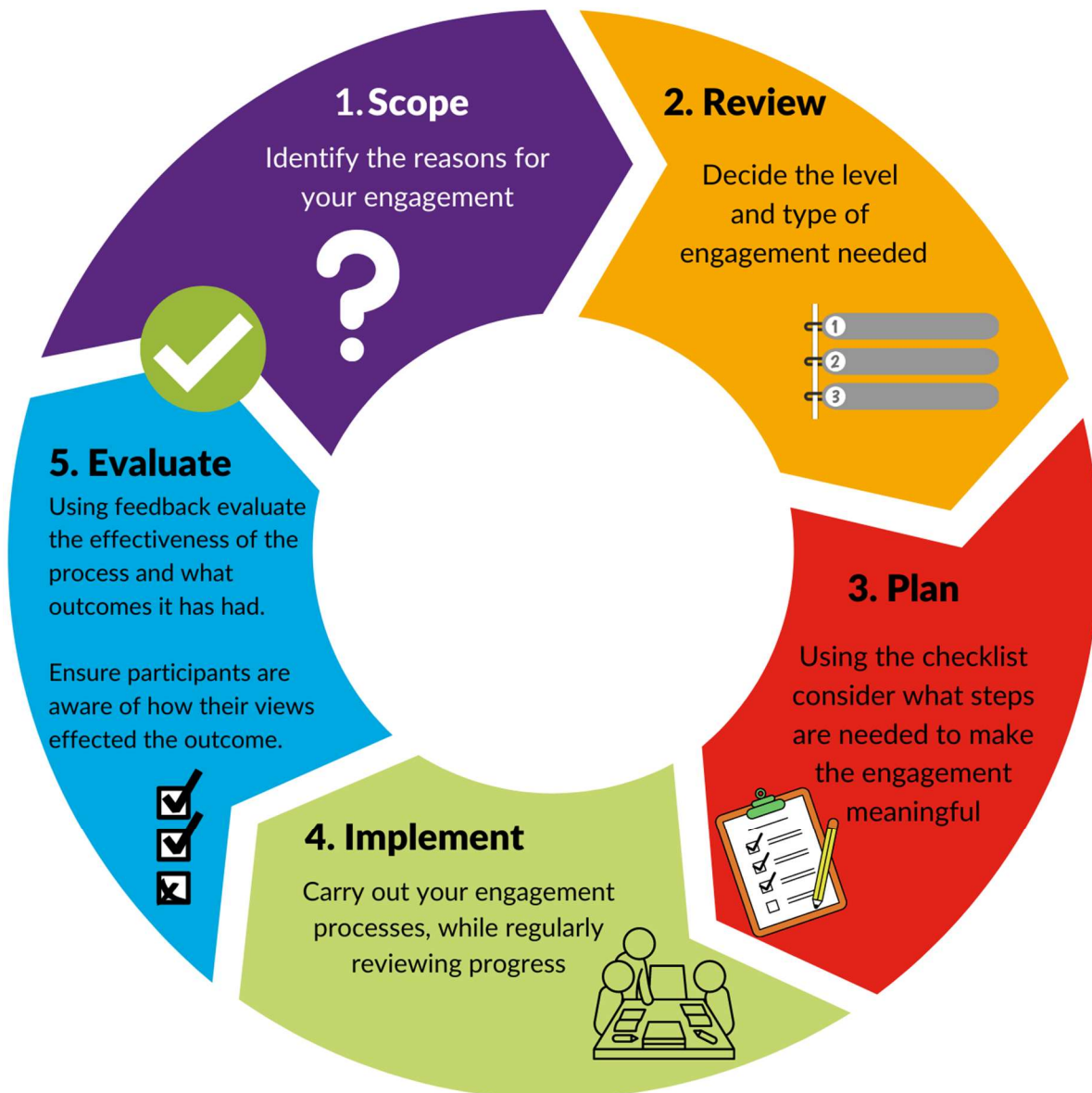


Diagram 5: FODC – Steps of Engagement

Stage 1: Scoping

For all levels of engagement, it is important to start by examining the reasons for your engagement.

When scoping you should explore the following areas:

Purpose

- What is the purpose of the engagement?
 - To gain understanding
 - To improve processes and procedures
 - To plan / redesign a service
 - To involve the community in addressing an identified need

Stakeholders/ Partners

- Who are the stakeholders or participants?
- What would the expectations of the stakeholders or participants be?
- Are there groups who may find it difficult to engage and how we can facilitate them?
 - For example – children, young people or people with disabilities.
- Why would the stakeholders/ partners engage on this issue?
- Who, outside of the Council, are key partners in the engagement topic?
- What partners can help support the advertising or delivery of the engagement?

Outcomes

- Outcomes must align with the Outcome Based Accountability Model. Therefore, it's important that you consider the following things:
 - What do you already know?
 - What are we currently doing?
 - How well are we doing it?
 - What are the potential outcomes from the engagement – What can be achieved?
 - How are we going to measure the baseline information against the new information gathered during or after the engagement exercise.

Timing

- Sufficient time is provided to plan, design, market and carry out engagement activities that are inclusive and encourage participation from all sections of the community.

Before you move on to the next stage of the process you should have answers to each of these questions to help inform your decisions in the next steps.

Stage 2: Review – What level of engagement is needed?

At this stage you should review what level of engagement is needed to carry out the process.

The level of engagement you decide to implement has a direct impact on what form of engagement exercise you should take. There are many engagement methods including, but not limited to, the following:

- Providing information
 - hard copy and digitally posters and newsletter
 - emails
 - press releases
- Seeking feedback
 - surveys
 - feedback forms
 - questionnaires
- Written consultation responses
 - handwritten/ digital feedback to proposals
- Focus Groups
 - using existing internal or/and external groups to gather feedback and ideas.
 - establishing one-off groups to seek feedback
- Public Meetings
 - to help inform the public and stakeholders and receive feedback on a particular development or service.
- Workshops & Community Events
 - to directly involve stakeholders and the public in shaping the project or service.
- Participatory decision-making events
 - involving the public and stakeholders in the decision-making process in the design of a service, policy or strategy.
- Citizen's Jury/ Participatory Budgeting
 - an event that allows the public and stakeholders to make the final decision on the design of a service, policy or strategy.

Be mindful that the level of engagement that you choose will have a direct impact on workloads and resources, including financial.

What are the Levels and are there any FODC Past Examples?

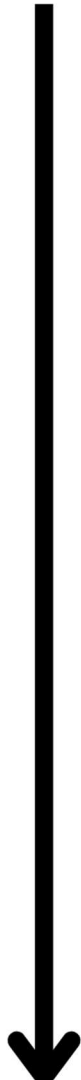
		Purpose	Expectation	Examples
<p>Lower Level of Engagement</p>  <p>Higher Level of Engagement</p>	Inform	Providing residents with information to assist with their understanding	To be kept informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media Posts • Website • Newsletter <p>inFO Resident's Newsletter</p>
	Consult	Collecting information from residents relating to attitudes and opinions	To be kept informed. To provide feedback and see how public opinion has informed the decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Public meetings • Citizens panels • Focus Groups <p>Participant Feedback Forms</p>
	Involve	Working with residents to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered	Working with the Council to ensure that concerns and aspirations shape the process and influence the decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Community/public events <p>Draft Linguistic Diversity Policy</p>
	Collaborate	Partnering with residents and stakeholders in each aspect of the design of services, policies and strategies	Provide advice and help to develop plans and solutions. For public's feedback to be incorporated into the service, policy or strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Forums • Participatory decision-making • Open events <p>Climate Change Engagement Events & Fermanagh Lakeland Forum Redevelopment</p>
	Empower	Placing the final decision-making in the hands of the residents	To decide what needs to happen or be implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen's Juries • Community Budgeting Event <p>PCSP Participatory Budgeting Event</p>

Diagram 6: Levels of Engagement

There are **five levels of engagement**– from informing residents to empowering individuals to make a strategic decision for the organisation. The following will provide you with more information on examples of previous engagement processes and good practice case studies.

1. Inform

If the correct level of engagement is to 'inform', then staff will be providing relevant and accurate information to residents, partners and other stakeholders to keep them updated on a particular service, policy or initiative. It is simply to ensure everyone is better informed and ensure that if they want to benefit from a service or initiative that they are aware that they can.

What is the expectation?

Stakeholders and the public will expect to be kept informed of what services are provided, when they are provided and any changes to what is provided.

Examples

Internal examples include the Resident's Newsletter and Community Newsletter. These newsletters help to raise awareness and understanding among residents and community groups.

The Winter 2022 'info Resident's Magazine' informed residents on fostering, business support, Refuge Collection Support Services and local Food Banks.



2. Consult

For this level, members of staff will engage with participants to gather information, facts and figures on attitudes and opinions. This information will then be used as evidence for staff to make decisions.

What is the expectation?

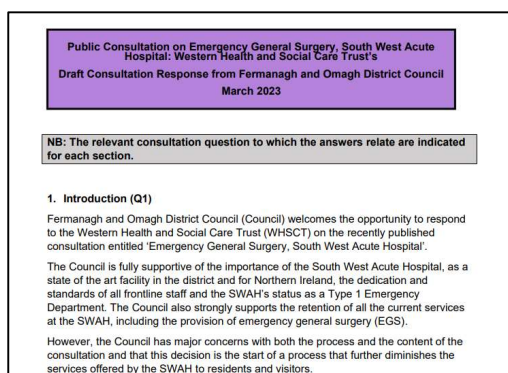
The public and stakeholders will want to be kept informed about the topic, as well as having an opportunity to be listened to and provide feedback. They will also want to learn how the public's opinion has informed the decision.

Examples

One example of 'Consult' within FODC is the Age-Friendly Programme Evaluations, although many participatory Council programmes carry out these types of engagement.

The Age-Friendly Programme Evaluations give an opportunity for older people who take part in a range of Council activities to provide information on a number of questions. These questions include how they found out about the activities, how they got to the venue, as well as what the benefits of the activities were and any improvements that could be made going forward.

Another example is asking for input from external partners to form a consultation response. A recent example of this is the consultation response to the Temporary Removal of Emergency Surgery at the South West Acute Hospital. Corporate & Strategic Services consulted with a number of key groups and organised events to gather feedback to inform the consultation response. This included speaking with members of the Disability Advisory group on how the action would impact people with disabilities, as well as the Save Our Services Group who had gathered statistics and research documents that could be considered in the document.



Evaluation - How did we do?

Date: _____ Location: _____

1. How much did you enjoy the event today?

didn't enjoy 😞 😐 😊 😄 😁 a lot

2. Would you come back to similar events?

Yes No

3. Are you a member of an older persons group?

Yes No

4. How positive are you about growing older?

not at all 😞 😐 😊 😄 very positive

5. Do you feel attending older peoples events make you feel more included in society?

Yes No

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council SWAH HSC Public Health Agency

3. Involve

At this level of engagement, staff will need to provide an opportunity, such as a workshop or public event, for residents and stakeholders to feedback on any concerns or ideas for improvement they have. This feedback will influence the decision taken.

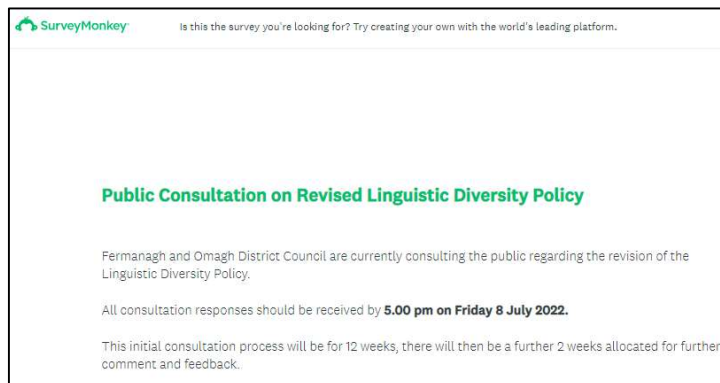
What is the expectation?

The people engaged with will want to work with staff to highlight their views and ensure that they help shape the process and influence the decision.

Examples

An example of an 'involve' level of engagement is the consultation process for the draft Linguistic Diversity Policy. To help develop the policy, Officers were required to establish an Elected Members Working Group, community events and engage with other stakeholders. The comments made at these meetings/ workshops were used to create the final draft document.

Another example is the short consultation process carried out to develop a 2-year Action Plan (2023/24 – 2024/25) for the Public Health Agency funded Access Inclusion Project. A meeting with the existing Access Advisory Group Members and an open public meeting were arranged to gather views of what direction the project should take. A Jotform questionnaire was also created to allow members who couldn't attend the meetings to leave comments. All the contributions made were collated and used to inform the future action plan.



4. Collaborate

When the 'collaborate' level of engagement is most appropriate, the Council will need to provide forums or decision-making participatory events to ensure that residents and other stakeholders can help design and shape services, policies or strategies.

What is the expectation?

That people and stakeholders are actively sought to provide advice and ideas on how a future service, policy or strategy should be improved or be developed. When working in partnership with the Council, their feedback is incorporated into the outcome and is used to make the final decision. They will also expect to be kept updated on how their input directly impacted the decision taken.

Example

An example of this is the Climate Change Engagement Events. The two events allowed residents and other stakeholders to discuss three delivery areas within the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Team. The events helped gather information on local issues and ideas for new initiatives and improvements. The ideas were collated to allow managers to make decisions on how they could improve current or future provision. Examples of this include removing red-tape when registering as a Litter Champion and using more hard-hitting social media messages to encourage young people to take personal steps to mitigate against climate change. Finally, all participants were provided with an update on all the actions gathered at the events highlighting how they have or will shape services in the future.

Another example is the current engagement process for the redevelopment of the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum. At the design stage, Officers engaged with stakeholders and the public through open events and workshops to develop a suitable and sustainable design. For example, during the process people with disabilities were able to influence the design to ensure that the locations of changing rooms were more accessible. This level of engagement will continue for the development and fit out stage. At the end of each process, people who contributed to the engagement have been able to see new sets of plans to show how improvements have been made.



5. Empower

The highest level of engagement is 'empower'. At this level, the Council will be organising Citizen's Juries and Community Budgeting events. By doing so, officers will be giving the final decision-making power to residents or other stakeholders. The decisions taken will be the final ones implemented by the Council.

What is the expectation?

At the highest level of engagement, the participants will have one clear expectation – that they as a group decide what is implemented by the Council.

Example

There has only been one example of this engagement level in FODC in recent years. In 2019, the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) organised a Participatory Budget Event. The event allowed local residents and community groups to decide what projects were funded within the Lisnaskea area. The decision taken by the participants was final and the successful projects were funded by the PCSP.

These engagement events can be very difficult to facilitate and much consideration is needed to ensure that the delivery achieves the desired outcome.



The above image showcases the various groups who competed for the funding and participants who took part in the PCSP's Participatory Budget event.

Stage 3: Plan

At the planning stage, you should focus on what methods you are going to use to deliver the engagement. You should consider the details below and implement the actions that are relevant to the level chosen in Step 2. Only some of the points below will be relevant depending on whether you need to inform residents, carry out a written consultation process or organise public meetings or workshops.

A checklist highlighting the main points to consider when planning is available in Appendix 1.

When planning you should consider the following:

a) Staffing & Teamwork

It is important to ensure that you have enough staff resources to deliver the engagement and that you work with others to achieve your objective.

Whether you are ‘informing’ or ‘empowering’ people, you still need to work with other service areas or partners to collate information or organise an event. For this reason, teamwork and cross-directorate collaboration is vital. For example, to ensure effective marketing and sharing of the engagement information, the Officer consulting could engage at the start of the process with PR & Customer Services and Community Development.

To ensure effective processes there must be enough staff for each task, for example a dedicated person to create a newsletter or, if a physical event, to present, take notes and welcome members of the public. These roles should be allocated considering the skills people have, as well as providing an opportunity for others to develop.

To ensure that all members are aware of their roles and responsibilities an action plan with allocated tasks could be developed and shared with all parties. For larger engagement events a working group may help to ensure that updates are shared among teams and internal communication is strong.

b) Intended Participants

To successfully deliver an engagement process you must ensure that all the steps are tailored to the interests, actions and behaviours of the intended participants. This is key to all actions within the planning, implementing and evaluating stages, including the registration, marketing and engagement format.

For example, if the engagement process is targeted at younger people then you might want to use social media, including Instagram to share information and, if having an event, it may be best to have an online one to allow for interactive polls and to improve engagement with Youth Clubs. If the process is more relevant to older people, then it may be more productive to share information in newspapers and through Older People’s Groups, and if having an event, then a physical one during the day might suit best.

Officers must also consider how the Council can plan to engage with people from different geographic locations, special interests, backgrounds and affiliations. This must include under-represented individuals/ groups. For guidance on this, Officers should speak with Corporate & Strategic Services and Community Development.

Furthermore, it is important that Officers plan for certain possibilities including gatekeepers, personal agendas, political sensitivities, territorial issues and those who may have had a bad experience/ relationship with the Council.

c) Registration

In many cases, it will be sufficient for attendees to register at the event, rather than before they attend. If registration in advance is considered necessary you will wish to mitigate any potential for participants to be put off by the process, by keeping it as simple as possible. For example, allow people to register online and by hard copy, and don't ask for any unnecessary information.

It is good practice to include an option for people to detail any access or dietary requirements. This will help you plan for any catering, suitability of venues and the need for interpreters.

d) Engagement Format

The team must decide on an appropriate format for the engagement. This may be a newsletter template, short points within an agenda or a document that outlines the various steps, workshop/discussion points and presentations required.

For all levels of engagement, the process must have a clear structure that is agreed by everyone. If organising events, staff should make copies of the running order available so both staff and participants are kept informed and aware of the format.

To keep all activities as engaging as possible, staff should think creatively. This may involve including icebreakers, quizzes and group discussions into events to reduce nervousness and encourage feedback.

Officers should highlight, at the start and end of the exercises, that feedback from the process will be taken seriously by staff and the Council as a whole.

Furthermore, the engagement, unless it is solely informing participants, should not mainly focus on staff presenting to members of the public. This restricts participation and might come across as staff talking at the public rather than wanting to get their opinions.

e) Timings & Venues

It is important for staff to ensure that the engagement is organised to maximise the number of potential participants. This can be done by considering what times and venues are appropriate for the target audience. For example, if arranging several engagement events consider having them spread over a morning, afternoon, evening and weekend.

Venues must also be relevant to the topic, for example if the engagement is related to a specific venue's redevelopment it's best to have it at that venue. If it's a corporate topic, then it is better to host it at the Townhall/ Grange (where possible). It is also important to consider the geographic spread of any events. Rural areas should be considered to allow those who live in remote areas to engage. To support this, you may wish to consider a mix of physical venues and virtual events.

Additionally, staff must ensure that the venue is accessible to people with various needs, including those with disabilities.

f) External Partnerships

Officers will have identified any partners during the scoping stage, however during the planning, you should examine if it is worthwhile asking them for their input in any materials to help inform residents, for statistics and information to help create a consultation response or to attend or present at an engagement event.

Involving other organisations will highlight that the Council works in partnership with others, helps to share information and does not always have the ability/ remit to act on certain actions.

g) Community Ownership

To help enforce that we all need to show ownership and play a part in making changes, staff should highlight this message in any engagement messages, written consultation responses and at any physical events.

For example, at engagement events, Officers should consider asking people to fill out personal pledges. This will help them take an active approach in addressing the specific topic.

h) Marketing

As previously discussed, when planning your engagement make sure to correctly identify your target audience. Once you have identified the audience use communication and marketing methods that are effective and relatable to them. For example, Instagram and other social media posts might be more applicable to younger people. Advertising in the local press might also be worthwhile, particularly for statutory consultations.

To raise awareness of any engagement process with as many people as possible seek support from local support/ community groups who can help share your information. For example, the Council involved Youth Voice in the Climate Change Engagement events, which helped promote the event and get participation from young people.

It also may be effective to ask the Chair of the Council/ senior member of staff to launch or deliver a speech during the activity. By doing so, this helps to enforce the message that the Council is taking the process seriously and any subsequent actions are more likely to be considered by decision makers.

Finally, it is important to ensure that any marketing materials are engaging and accessible, including any posters and graphics (Refer to FODC's Brand Guidelines). This should also include clearly highlighting that the aim of the exercise is to get feedback and ideas from the public.

i) Incentive

To help boost registrations, staff could consider an incentive to encourage people to participate. This may be a voucher for a council facility to thank people for giving up their time. It is also worth linking with partner organisations who may be able to provide promotional gifts which in turn boosts their membership or profile.

j) Evaluation

Finally, it is crucial to plan how you are going to evaluate both the participant's input and the actual engagement process.

Firstly, identify how evidence will be collected, either through online or hard copy evaluations.

Evaluations should ask effective but simple questions and not include any unnecessary information. This will result in more responses being received, as well as better quality data. While it is important to not look for too much information, the evaluations should ensure the necessary quantitative and qualitative impact of the engagement is recorded.

To ensure that the information gathered fits with Outcome Based Accountability, staff need to consider measuring any pre and post-engagement data to clearly demonstrate how the engagement has had an impact. This may be through a survey on empowerment, level of satisfaction or increased knowledge/ understanding. To further help highlight the strengths and learning for Officers, participants should be asked how effective the engagement exercises were. Further questions could focus on the marketing of the engagement information, how easy it was to engage and how the format of any online/physical event could be improved.

Staff should also use the Council's Equality Monitoring Form to collect Section 75 data so engagement levels for the different categories can be collected and used to inform future engagement exercises.

Finally, feedback from the internal teams involved should be gathered to assess what worked well internally and what could be improved for future exercises.

Stage 4: Implement

This stage will involve implementing all the steps in Stage 3 to successfully deliver your engagement process.

When you are undertaking your engagement activity you should continually monitor progress to ensure you are meeting your agreed outcomes, reaching the target audience and effectively engaging. Feedback after each engagement activity will help identify any necessary improvements.

Stage 5: Evaluate

Following your engagement activity, you should evaluate the process.

As identified at the Planning Stage (Stage 3; Point J) you must collate and evaluate both the actual engagement process and the participants' feedback. This evaluation process must align to Outcome Based Accountability principles.

Again, the format of evaluation will depend on the level of engagement identified in Stage 2. For higher levels of engagement, all notes should be collated into a report to outline the feedback raised by participants, as well as the actions that the Council need to take forward to help make changes or decisions to the various policies, services or strategies.

Separately, if the engagement involved carrying out events or workshops, staff should use feedback from staff and participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement process. This will help capture the impact it had, as well as improvements that could be made to any future exercise.

Finally, to close the engagement process completely, staff should consider providing participants with an update on their input. This could be a general thank you email stating that their feedback has been included in a policy, service plan or delivery of a project. For a higher level of engagement, it may involve responding to the individual's feedback or providing a detailed update on how the engagement's outcomes have made a difference to a range of service delivery areas, for example, sharing the report presented to Council and the decisions made.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Checklist

Not all steps within the checklist will be relevant to all engagement processes. It will depend on the level of engagement identified as most appropriate by members of staff.

1. Scope		
Action	Completed/ Decision	Notes
<p>Decide what the purpose of the engagement needed is by asking the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose? • Who are the stakeholders or participants? • What would the expectations of the stakeholders or participants be? • Are there groups who may find it difficult to engage and how can they be facilitated? For example – children, young people (see Appendix 3) or people with disabilities. • Why would the stakeholders/ partners engage on this issue? • What do you already know? • What are we currently doing? • How well are we doing it. • What are the potential outcomes from the engagement – What can be achieved? • How are we going to record any current baseline information and measure it against the new information gathered during or after the engagement exercise. • Is there sufficient time to design, market and carry out engagement activities that are inclusive and encourage participation from all sections of the community? 		
2. Review and What Level is Needed?		
<p>Decide the level of engagement necessary to successfully deliver the engagement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform 2. Consult 3. Involve 4. Collaborate 5. Empower 		
3. Plan		

<p>Ensure that you have considered the workload, timescales and budget required to successfully deliver the engagement activity. It must be commensurate with the level of engagement chosen at Stage 2.</p>		
<p>a) Staffing & Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many staff members are needed to deliver the engagement? Only 1 or a team? • What service areas need to be involved? • Dedicate roles to other members (consider skills and development opportunities) • Is an Action Plan required to help each team member identify their tasks and to monitor progress? • Does a Working Group need to be set up, with regular meetings scheduled? 		
<p>b) Intended Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are you aiming to engage with? • How is it best to engage with the various groups, considering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advertising/ Marketing ○ Registration ○ Activity format ○ Evaluation 		
<p>c) Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do participants need to register? • How will they register? – Before the event or at the event? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hard copy ○ Online • What information needs collected and what does not? • Can a pre-engagement evaluation be carried out at this point? • Do I need to ask about access and dietary requirements? 		
<p>d) Engagement Format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What format will the engagement take? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Newsletter Article ○ Discussion Groups ○ Presentations ○ Other • Does a running order/ agenda need to be developed? • How will the process be engaging? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quiz ○ Ice-breaker activity ○ Group Discussions • How much presenting by staff is necessary? • Could the Chair of FODC/ Senior Staff member launch the process or open any event? 		

<p>e) Timing and Venues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What times/ days will work best for the target audience? • Can a range of times/ days be provided? • What is the best venue – is it specific to the topic? • Is the venue accessible? • Does it have catering facilities (if necessary) 		
<p>f) External Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there partners who have a role to play in the engagement or may have actions from the process? • Can they help input into marketing materials/ a consultation response or facilitate/ present during an event? 		
<p>g) Community Ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you highlight that we all need to take ownership of various areas to make a difference? • Can people complete personal pledges? 		
<p>h) Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I need to take advice from the Marketing Team? • What are the most appropriate marketing channels? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social Media ○ Press Release ○ Newsletter ○ Posters • What other service areas, external organisations, community groups can help share the information? • Are the marketing materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engaging ○ Highlighting the aim of the process and the proposed outcomes ○ Accessible 		
<p>i) Incentive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any way to encourage participants to engage? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relate the message to their interests ○ Provide a small token of appreciation ○ Create a competition/ draw 		
<p>j) Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your evaluation consider Outcome Based Accountability? • How will you measure the success of the engagement process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of participants ○ Improvements from pre and post-engagement survey ○ Qualitative and quantitative report on actions and outcomes • What format will the evaluation take: 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online ○ Hard copy ● What information needs to be collected during the evaluation? How does it relate to the proposed outcome? ● Have you included Equality Monitoring questions to collect Section 75 data? ● Do participants need to receive updates on their feedback after the process? What format will this take? 		
4. Implement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement the actions identified in Stage 3 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor performance and outcomes after each activity to identify any issues and ensure improvements can be made 		
5. Evaluate		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carry out all tasks identified in Stage 3 relating to evaluations 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record and collate any information necessary to evaluate the outcomes of the engagement process 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek feedback from staff members on the successes of the process and any improvements for future engagement 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that any outcomes are followed through so they can influence any decisions/ improvements to policies, services or strategies 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Close the engagement process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thank you email ○ Update on the outcomes to participants 		

Appendix 2: Good Practice Examples

Inform - 'in-FO' Resident's Newsletter	
Area	Detail
Staffing & Teamwork	The main delivery team is the PR & Customer Services Team. However, all sections within the Council are required to provide information to be included in the document.
Intended Customers	All residents across the District.
Registration	Not required for this level of engagement.
Engagement Format	Residents received the Newsletter when buying a local newspaper or by visiting a Council venue.
Timing & Venues	Seasonal.
External Partnerships	External Designer & Newspapers.
Community Ownership	The newsletter provides information on various initiatives including contact details to help residents to engage.
Marketing	Information on the Resident's Newsletter is posted on the Corporate Social Media Channels.
Incentive	Cross words and competitions are included as an incentive to receive and read the newsletter.
Evaluation	PR & Customer Services Team ask for internal feedback during Marketing Forum Meetings.
Outcome	In December 2022, the 'in-FO' Resident's Newsletter reached 33,500 residents through the four local Newspapers and 1500 through Council Venues.

External Good Practice Link:

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Online Newsletter

<https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/council-publications/residents-newsletter>

Consult -
**Consultation Response to the Temporary Removal of
Emergency Surgery at the South West Acute Hospital**

Area	Detail
Staffing & Teamwork	Corporate & Strategic Services Team.
Intended Customers	Residents and Stakeholders - including marginalised groups who may be adversely affected.
Registration	Not required for this level of engagement.
Engagement Format	Verbal and written information submitted to FODC by interested individuals or groups.
Timing & Venues	Used existing groups/meetings such as the Disability Advisory Group and WHSCT Consultation Meetings.
External Partnerships	Not required for this level of engagement.
Community Ownership	Messaging from FODC included that this was your chance to provide feedback and evidence on the impact the decision might/will help.
Marketing	Not required for this level of engagement.
Incentive	Not required for this level of engagement.
Evaluation	Draft consultation response was brought to Policy & Resources Committee meeting to receive feedback from Elected Members.
Outcome	A 13-page consultation response, considering the views and opinions of the Community, was submitted to the WHSCT in March 2023.

External Good Practice Link:

DCSDC - Consultation Response to the Reform of Adult Social Care

<http://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/documents/s39110/Appendix%201%20Reform%20of%20Adult%20Social%20Care%20draft%20consultation%20response.pdf>

Involve -

PHA funded Access Inclusion Programme Future Action Plan

Area	Detail
Staffing & Teamwork	Access Inclusion Officer and Marketing & Communications.
Intended Customers	Current participants of the programme, members of the Access Advisory Group and those who were not engaged in the programme.
Registration	Email, telephone and jotform.
Engagement Format	Two online events and a jotform questionnaire.
Timing & Venues	One event during the day and one in the evening. Jotform questionnaire open for three weeks.
External Partnerships	PHA (as funder), external consultant and local support organisations.
Community Ownership	The events asked how the Council could work with people with disabilities to empower them, as well as how they could engage.
Marketing	Created poster and social media posts to allow support organisations and individuals to learn how they could get involved.
Incentive	Not required for this level of engagement.
Evaluation	Evaluation asked for feedback on the previous provision and what needed to be improved in the future to encourage more people with disabilities to get involved with the project.
Outcome	<p>Over 65 individuals and groups were engaged in the exercise.</p> <p>A new 16-point Action Plan was shaped by people with disabilities.</p>

External Good Practice Link:

The City of Edinburgh Council - Essential Users Permit Holders

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/carersparking/>

Collaborate - Climate Change Engagement Events

Area	Detail
Staffing & Teamwork	The leading teams were Climate Change & Sustainable Development and Corporate Policy. Marketing & Communications and Community Development were also involved in sharing information about the events to the public.
Intended Customers	All residents, businesses and community groups from the district.
Registration	An online editable pdf and jotform were provided to make it as easy as possible to register.
Engagement Format	<p>Two physical engagement events were delivered. The events followed the structure below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome 2. Climate Change Data 'Ice Breaker' 3. Background & Overview of the Council's Climate Change Strategy 4. Group Discussion (3 Groups): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Litter b. Biodiversity c. Education & Outreach 5. Showcasing of Local Initiatives and Activities 6. Group Discussion & Feedback 7. Outcome from Event (including Pledges and Competition Winner)
Timing & Venues	To ensure participants felt that their feedback would be seriously considered by the Council, it was decided that the events would take place in the two Headquarters, The Townhall and The Grange. The events took place in the evening to allow people who work or attend school/college to attend.
External Partnerships	<p>To encourage people of all ages to attend, Officers contacted the Education Authority, Youth Clubs, Youth Voice and South West Age Partnership.</p> <p>Keep NI Beautiful provided a presentation during the event and had a stall to encourage participants to sign up to their initiatives.</p>

Area	Detail
Community Ownership	Participants were asked to create personal pledges to help combat climate change in their daily lives.
Marketing	<p>The team focused on a number of areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Releases • Social Media Posts - including videos/ related images • Community Newsletters • Youth Groups • South West Age Partnership • Council Databases • Climate Change & Sustainable Development Contacts <p>A two month period of advertising happened to ensure as many people were aware of the events as possible.</p>
Incentive	Each participant received a small buffet at the event and a sustainable water bottle. Participants were also entered into a draw to win a gift voucher for one of the Council Arts or Leisure Centres.
Evaluation	<p>The participants were asked 'if they felt empowered to make a difference to climate change' when they arrived and left the event.</p> <p>Feedback from participants was received at the end of the events and a debrief meeting took place between the two service areas.</p> <p>Feedback on the information participants provided was returned to them to show how their contribution shaped the decisions on future delivery.</p>
Outcome	<p>In total 28 participants took part in the events. A 376.3% change in 'feeling empowered to combat climate change' was registered.</p> <p>A report containing 48 Actions was developed. Some of these actions can be progressed by FODC in the short, medium and long term. The others can be fed back to other organisations who have a remit to act on them.</p>

External Good Practice Link:

Transport for London - Catford Town Centre, changes to South Circular Road

<https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/catford-town-centre>

Collaborate - Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan

Area	Detail
Staffing & Teamwork	A bespoke steering group was set up from across service areas including Enniskillen Town Councillors, Community Services, Arts & Heritage, Capital Programmes, Parks, Estates & Property, Planners and Community Planning.
Intended Customers	Organisations that had a role to play in the Enniskillen town centre area. Organisations were mapped from across the public sector (statutory partners) community and voluntary sector and our business sector.
Registration	Registration process for online webinars was facilitated.
Engagement Format	The engagement process used the following formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic conversations • Poster and leaflet campaign • Targeted focus group discussions • Bespoke targeted surveys • Use of internal and partner databases • 'Creative Competition' for Children and Young People • Easy-Read version of the draft Plan • Extensive use of social media • Drop-in sessions with consultants • Online webinars • Public Information Stands • Targeted Scheduled Focus Group Discussions
Timing & Venues	A mixture of online and physical events - which took place during various times of the day, and both on weekdays and weekends.
External Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Partners • Businesses • CVS
Community Ownership	Yes – the draft Plan makes it clear that various partners (including CVS Sector) have a role in delivering the actions and best ideas.

Area	Detail
Marketing	<p>A timeline was prepared in advance of all 3 engagements held throughout a 24-week period. A variety of marketing methods were used including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media platforms • Press releases • Radio adverts • Kiosks • Enniskillen Town poster campaign • Extensive use of databases
Incentive	<p>Prizes were provided for the 'Creative Competition' which targeted Children and Young People - Marble Arch Caves Family Ticket, Lakeland Forum Family Ticket and Ardhowen Family Ticket</p>
Evaluation	<p>Three rounds of consultation took place:</p> <p>The first was with key partners to determine data and evidence, policy gaps and context. This helped to inform the suggested direction of travel.</p> <p>The second helped to determine the views of the community and what they wanted or needed to help Enniskillen thrive.</p> <p>The third round supported gathering views on the draft plan which contained the ambition, actions and best ideas for the next 15 years.</p> <p>Feedback was provided on all consultation received through a consultation report which allowed people to see where their comments informed the content or understand the rationale for suggestions made that could not be carried over.</p>
Outcome	<p>94% on average agreed with the 6 themes identified in the Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan and 88% agreed with the ambition.</p> <p>The Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan was approved and adopted by the Steering Group and Community Planning Strategic Partnership Board in February 2022 and its implementation is currently underway.</p>

Empower - PCSP 'Community Cash' Event

Area	Detail
Staffing & Teamwork	PCSP Team & Community Services.
Intended Customers	Lisnaskea Community Groups & Residents.
Registration	Community Groups submitted forms with their entries to PCSP. Participants at the event registered with PCSP to gain voting rights.
Engagement Format	The delivery of a one-off 'Community Cash' event. Each group had an opportunity to present their ideas to members of the Community. At the end of the event, each participant voted for the project they wanted to see funded in the local area.
Timing & Venues	An evening event at the Castle Park Leisure Centre, Lisnaskea.
External Partnerships	PSNI & Local Community Groups.
Community Ownership	The initiative gave local people the opportunity to make democratic decisions about funding for their areas.
Marketing	The team focused on a number of areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word of Mouth • Press Releases • Social Media Posts • Community Newsletters • Local Community Groups
Incentive	The successful community projects had a chance of each receiving a share of £3,500

Area	Detail
Evaluation	<p>The results of the vote evaluated each of the proposals.</p> <p>PCSP gathered feedback from participants at the end of the events and a debrief meeting took place between staff to highlight strengths and improvements.</p>
Outcome	<p>Seven Community Groups received £500 each.</p> <p>Programmes were delivered in the Lisnaskea area by Brookeborough Primary School PTSA, Carroysl Community Association, Erne East Community Partnership, IMPACT Youth Club, Knocks Drama Group, Little Lambs Mother & Toddler Group and Oak Healthy Living Centre.</p> <p>The seven programmes helped improve community safety in the area.</p>

External Good Practice Link:

[Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Participatory Budgeting Grants](https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/live/community-services/community-development/participatory-budgeting)

<https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/live/community-services/community-development/participatory-budgeting>

Appendix 3 – Lundy Model of Participation

The Lundy Model of Child Participation was developed by Belfast academic Professor Laura Lundy. The model includes a checklist to help organisations, working with and for children and young people, to comply with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and ensure that children have the space to express their views; their voice is enabled; they have an audience for their views; and their views will have influence".²



Diagram 7: Lundy's Voice Model Checklist³

² https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

³ <http://dcya.gov.ie/documents/playandrec/20150617NatStratParticipationReport.pdf>