

**Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Rural Affairs Sub-Committee**

Terms of Reference

November 2023

1. Purpose

The Council's Rural Affairs Sub-Committee provides a forum to consider matters outside of the scope of the Council's existing statutory committees and working groups, which have a particular impact on rurality and the rural communities of the Fermanagh and Omagh District. rural parts of the District.

The purpose of the Sub-Committee is to:

- Seek to ensure that proper consideration is given to the particular challenges facing rural communities and that these needs are fully assessed in the context of Council policies and decision making.
- Seek to influence the activities of other statutory agencies to ensure an equitable outcome for rural communities and the Fermanagh and Omagh District
- Monitor digital connectivity in the district¹, supporting the roll out of publicly funded interventions where relevant
- Increase the understanding of issues faced by rural communities by promoting and developing the evidence base relating to rural issues
- Promote rural vibrancy and a positive understanding of the rural way of life

The Sub-Committee will have both an internal and external focus in informing Council of issues which affect the daily lives of the rural population of Fermanagh and Omagh.

The Sub-Committee will not have decision making authority but formal reports will be taken through the Policy and Resources Committee, providing recommendations for consideration and approval.

¹ Some work relating to digital connectivity, such as a response to a public consultation, which requires a more timely turnaround may be tabled directly to Committee in the absence of a suitably scheduled Rural Affairs Sub-Committee Meeting.

2. Key Objectives

The Sub-Committee's work will be evidence led, based on statistics, data, research and best practice. It will not duplicate work which is undertaken in other Committees, Sub-Committees or Working groups.

The key objectives of the Sub-Committee will be to consider key rural issues and inform decision making through an evidence led approach in relation to:

- How rural inequalities can be properly assessed, reported and mitigated.
- The impacts of rurality on the citizens of our district and the particular challenges this can present.
- The consideration of rurality in the provision of Council Services.
- The consideration of rurality, including funding models/resource allocation and access to services, provided by central Government and Arm's Length Bodies.
- Digital connectivity issues and developments across the district.
- The promotion of rural vibrancy and a positive understanding of the rural way of life.

The Sub-Committee's work will be directed by an agreed Strategic Workplan. The Strategic Workplan will be reviewed on a 2-yearly basis, alongside an overarching progress update.

3. Membership

The membership of the Rural Affairs Sub Committee will comprise 11 elected Members of the Council.

The Chair will be appointed from the membership of the Sub-Committee and will be rotated annually on the basis of party strength.

4. Meetings

Meetings will usually be held four times per year and will commence at 5pm (subject to review). Meetings will be held virtually.

Meetings will be quorate where there is a minimum attendance of 5 elected members.

Minutes will take the form of key discussion points and agreed actions together with a note of the responsible officer.

The minutes of the Rural Affairs Sub-Committee will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and then to the Council for ratification.

A schedule of meetings will be agreed and at least 5 days formal notice will be given of meetings together with the agenda and associated papers.

5. Review

The terms of reference will be kept under review. The Strategic Workplan which will direct the work of the Sub-Committee will be agreed by the Sub-Committee and reviewed on a 2 year basis.