



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

FERMANAGH AND OMAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Position Paper Eleven

Open Space, Recreation and Leisure

October 2015

Open Space, Recreation and Leisure

Purpose: To provide Council with an overview of open space, recreation and leisure provision in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and implications for proposed land use to 2030.

Content: The paper provides:

- (i) An overview of the regional policy context**
- (ii) General overview of organisations related to the provision of recreation / open space**
- (iii) An assessment of the uptake of zoned recreation land within the existing Fermanagh and Omagh Area Plans**
- (iv) An assessment of the adequacy of existing provision of sports pitches, children's play spaces and other recreation facilities in the Council**
- (v) An assessment of the need for future provision of open space and recreation over the plan period to 2030**

Recommendation: That the Council notes the findings and considers how this study shall be used to inform subsequent policies and proposals in the Local Development Plan.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is one of a series of papers being presented to the Planning Committee as part of the preparatory studies aimed at gathering the evidence base for the new local development plan.

1.2 The purpose of this paper is to inform Members of the regional planning context in relation to open space, recreation and leisure and to provide information on existing open space and recreation provision. Although other formal, passive complementary areas of open space (e.g. parks and woodlands) and indoor leisure activities are included, the main focus of this paper is on outdoor recreation and play provision. Having considered the uptake of zoned recreation lands within the district, it then examines the need for open space and recreation land in the Fermanagh and Omagh Council area to 2030.

2.0 Types of Sport, Recreation & Open Space

- 2.1** The Council of Europe's European Sports Charter defines sport as "*all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aims at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships, or obtaining results in competition at all levels.*" There is wide recognition of the contribution that sport makes to a sense of local and national identity, to personal, moral and physical development, and individual enjoyment. Additionally, recognition needs to be given to the wider socio-economic and health benefits of sport and recreation – including job creation, physical fitness and cross-community relationship building.
- 2.2** This paper primarily relates to active, physical and mainly outdoor recreation, but it will also briefly consider the levels of provision - both current and future requirements- for other forms of leisure.
- 2.3** Open space is generally defined as *all open space of public value*. It can be privately or publicly owned and maintained, combining green space and leisure areas to improve and enhance the amenity of the area. Open space can serve many different needs of the population depending on size, location and accessibility. In urban areas, open space may fulfil many functions – facilitating sport and organised recreation, children's play, passive recreation, informal amenity, 'green lungs' providing wildlife corridors and urban breaks which help to define different neighbourhoods.
- 2.4** Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is one of a number of bodies with statutory responsibility for the provision of adequate recreational facilities within the Plan area. Other bodies who contribute to the provision and development of sport, recreation and open space facilities also play an important role. These include local sports clubs, educational establishments, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Forest Service, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Waterways Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland (in association with DCAL and the National Lottery).
- 2.5** As well as having responsibility for sport and recreation provision, the Council is leading the community planning process for the district, working in partnership with statutory agencies and the community, voluntary and business sectors to plan for and improve services that matter to local people, including sports and recreation facilities.
- 2.6** There are a range of parks and children's play facilities across Fermanagh & Omagh Council area. The area is presently well served by a wide range of formal private recreational clubs including soccer, rugby, cricket, gaelic games and golf. The widespread provision of school playing fields throughout the area also offers future potential for community use. The Councils are also actively involved in community partnerships for the development and operation of recreational sites.

3.0 Regional Policy Context

(a) Programme for Government (PfG) 2011 - 2015

- 3.1** The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) published the Programme for Government Building a Better Future on 12th March 2012. Included within the strategic priorities 1-4 set out for the Assembly term 2011 to 2015 are multiple references to improving the health, including mental health, and well-being of the population; unlocking the potential of the leisure sector as an instrument for positive change; and seeking to encourage greater involvement in sporting activities to advance social cohesion and integration – all of which have direct links to the provision and accessibility of open space and recreation.
- 3.2** The PfG specifically identifies the Play and Leisure Action Plan as one of the ‘building blocks’ to underpin the first strategic priority of creating opportunities, tackling disadvantage and improving health and well-being. Sports Matters, a strategy for Sport and Physical recreation is cited as a building block for strategic priority 4: Building a strong and shared community.

(b) Regional Development Strategy

- 3.3** The Regional Planning Policy Context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 and regional planning policy statements. The RDS 2035 aims to promote development which improves the health and well-being of communities recognising that a healthy community is better able to take advantage of the economic, social and environmental opportunities which are open to it.
- 3.4** The RDS provides Regional Guidance in supporting urban and rural renaissance (RG7), which places importance on promoting recreational space within cities, towns, neighbourhoods, and that new developments or plans should make provision for adequate green and blue infrastructure (green infrastructure include parks and green spaces; blue infrastructure includes ponds, streams and lakes). The amenity value of the natural environment, if linked to green infrastructure (RG11), provides opportunities for walking and cycling routes to heritage and other recreational interests and thus contributes to the health and well-being of people living in urban areas.

(c) Regional Planning Policy Statements

- 3.5** The RDS is complemented by the DOE’s Planning Policy Statements, the most relevant of which is PPS 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation. Planning Policy Statements will be replaced by the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) which was issued in final form on 28th September 2015. The SPPS does not represent a significant change to outdoor space, sport and recreation policy in PPS 8 but helps to shorten and simplify the guidance for councils. The policy objectives for open space, sport and outdoor recreation in both PPS 8 and the SPPS are to:

- Safeguard existing open space and site identified for future provision;
- Ensure that areas of open space are provided as an integral part of new residential development and that appropriate arrangements are made for their management and maintenance in perpetuity;
- Facilitate appropriate outdoor recreational activities in the countryside that do not negatively impact on the amenity of existing residents;
- Ensure that new open space areas and sporting facilities are convenient and accessible for all sections of society, particularly children, older people and those with disabilities;
- Achieve high standards of siting, design and landscaping for all new open space areas and sporting facilities; and
- Ensure that the provision of new open space areas and sporting facilities is in keeping with the principles of environmental conservation and helps sustain and enhance biodiversity.

3.6 In plan making, councils should bring forward an Open Space Strategy (OSS) that must reflect the aim, objectives and policy approach of the SPPS, tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan area. This should be informed by a survey/assessment of existing open space provision (both public and private) and future needs. Both PPS 8 and the SPPS state that this assessment of existing provision should be against the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)¹ recommended minimum standard of 2.4 hectares of 'outdoor playing space' per 1000 population (Appendix 1), and that in doing so the council should take account of the level of outdoor playing space provision in the plan area, and its distribution and accessibility. Local Development Plans should identify existing open space provision, including any proposals for future development of these areas, and carries through the general policy presumption against the loss of open space to competing land uses set out in PPS 8.

3.7 PPS 8 and the SPPS take an identical approach to zoning for future needs, taking into account the following:

- Accessibility to and from existing and proposed housing areas;
 - The potential for any detrimental impact on biodiversity or on sensitive environmental areas and features;
 - The contribution that open space can make to the quality of the environment and community life;
 - The importance of protecting linear open spaces such as pedestrian and cycle routes, community greenways, former railway lines and river and canal corridors many of which are valuable in linking larger areas of open space, and providing important wildlife corridors/ecological networks;
- And, additionally in the SPPS:
- Promoting and protecting public access to and along the coast;

¹ Now known as Fields In Trust

- Making adequate provision of green and blue infrastructure; and
- Identifying and designating areas of open space which perform a strategic function, such as landscape wedges in urban areas.

3.8 Other relevant regional policy is contained in PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments which requires development proposals to integrate areas of public open space, including children’s play spaces, as an intrinsic element of any new residential development, to meet the needs generated by that development.

(d) Other relevant Government Strategies

3.9 The Northern Ireland Government has launched several important policy documents in recent years which promote the delivery of enhanced facilities for open space, sport and recreation. These strategies re-affirm the importance of sport and recreation and are expected to be delivered by a combination of central government departments together with Council and the community/voluntary sectors.

- **Play and Leisure Policy Statement** for Northern Ireland was produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in 2009. The aim of this policy framework is to improve existing play and leisure provision for all children and young people from 0 - 18 years. As a result, the **Play and Leisure Implementation Plan** was produced in 2011. This specifies high level outcomes with emphasis on the value placed on play, and improved play and leisure facilities for all children and young people in order to support their development, enjoyment and growth.
- **Sport Matters: The NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019** outlines a broader Government commitment to sport and physical recreation. Its vision is for “...a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport...” It sets key strategic priorities for sports and physical recreation over the 10 year period and informing future investment by all stakeholders across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors underpinning three areas: Participation, Performance and Places. The successful delivery of the Strategy requires stakeholders to reflect the Strategy in their business and development plans.
- **Active Places Research Report 2009 Bridging the Gap & 2014 update** provides an evidence base to inform the strategic development of sports facilities in Northern Ireland. The 2009 report identified unmet demand and shortfalls for sports facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts, athletic facilities and pitches in Northern Ireland. The 2014 update presents facility shortfall tables for Pitches and Sports halls only.

The facility shortfall tables presented in the 2009 Report excluded school sports facilities due to their limited availability for community use. However, in light of recent Community Use of Schools guidance published by Sport NI and the Department of Education, it is important to recognise

the potential value of school sports facilities in addressing the facility shortfalls throughout Northern Ireland.

- **Community Use of Schools (January 2014)**

The Department of Education produced this document to provide practical guidance to achieving community use of school sports facilities. There is a range of educational, recreational and sporting facilities which can be used to meet a variety of needs not only for pupils, but for their parents, families and local communities.

- **Mountain Bike Strategy for Northern Ireland 2014 –2024**

This strategy was prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI in May 2014. The vision of this strategy is to make Northern Ireland a world class mountain bike destination. It identified Gortin Glen Forest Park as a potential location for a National Mountain Bike Trail Centre.

(e) Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Corporate Plan 2015

3.10 In regard to local plans and strategies, the overarching vision of the Council's Corporate Strategy is to make Fermanagh and Omagh, the place of choice – where people, communities and businesses prosper and where people choose to live, a place where businesses choose to invest and visitors choose to spend time.

3.11 The Council has identified **People and Community – 'Quality of Life'** as one of its three corporate themes through which it will deliver on a range of strategic actions. A priority within this theme is to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all our residents and visitors. The Corporate Strategy identifies a key strategic action to 'Develop the Sports, Leisure and Recreation Infrastructure of the district'. A number of sub-actions are specified which include:

- Develop and implement a Sports Leisure and Recreation Strategy and Action Plan;
- Support the provision of formal and informal opportunities for physical activity with particular focus on deprived, under represented and special interest groups;
- Strengthen relationships with National Governing Bodies of sport, government departments and statutory and voluntary bodies; and
- Support opportunities for sporting progression by groups and individuals and for coach/club education and development.

(f) Emerging Policy

3.12 Sport NI, in partnership with the District Councils, is developing a Sports Facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland and 11 District Council Area Reports. As reflected in the key strategic actions for the Council within the Corporate Plan, the Sports Facilities Strategy will provide a framework for the

prioritisation and development of facilities and the prioritisation of investment by a range of investors in sports facility provision.

- 3.13** The Strategy and Reports will be delivered into two phases. The facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland was completed by July/August 2015 and the 11 associated District Council Area Reports are to be completed by November/December 2015 subject to the input from District Councils.

(g) Relevant Legacy Council Plans and Strategies

- 3.14 Omagh Town Centre Masterplan**, March 2015 states the vision for Omagh Town Centre is “As a step towards city status, to position and create an identity for Omagh which takes advantage of its natural assets, landscape and new regional context. ‘Outdoor Omagh’ will reflect a quality of life for the local community and visitor and will provide a framework for sustainable economic growth of a vibrant, attractive and distinctive central core”.

- 3.15** The Masterplan proposes that the rivers within the town will play a central role as an amenity for both local residents and visitors to Omagh, and as a place to relax, spend time and play. The regenerated riverside presents the opportunity for encouraging activities along the river such as fishing and canoeing. Facilities providing access for all to these activities are important and should be incorporated as close to the town centre as possible.

- 3.16** Community green ways along the length of the rivers are proposed, providing enhanced links between Omagh’s central core and the wider town. These greenways will provide continuous foot and cycle paths connected to existing pedestrian routes and community facilities to promote the use of the river as a central movement corridor for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the town. The Masterplan also proposes a continuous off road cycle way between the town and Gortin Lakes.

- 3.17 Enniskillen Town Centre Masterplan**, November 2012 states the vision for Enniskillen 2025 “will be bustling, thriving town...The town will make the most of its quality townscape, attractive courtyards and alleys, and boast a bold water front with a strong recreational emphasis... Its marina will be the hub for boating events in the region and a focus for social activities. It will be easily accessed by a network of walking and cycling routes throughout the town”.

- 3.18** The Enniskillen Masterplan proposes 24 no. interventions that will combine to make the Vision for Enniskillen a reality. It proposes the following in relation to recreation and sporting opportunities;

- A new waterside leisure and conference facility, with café and restaurant set within the new town park,
- A new town park providing a waterside public space surrounding the exhibition and conference centre and hotel,
- Development opportunities for commercial leisure and indoor sports facilities to complement the existing provision of the Broadmeadow,

- The existing bus station site to be rationalised and the garage facilities moved to a less central location. The newly available land to be developed for water-based recreation and sports (boat house, training facilities, storage, etc.), plus car parking,
- Enhanced riverside walk connecting Enniskillen Castle with Erneside and Derrychara Lagoon,
- New performance space, with multiple events spaces, including a smaller, more intimate space adjacent the Lakeland Forum and a more extensive, 'festival' type space opening out onto the main open space on Broadmeadow,
- Derrychara Lagoon to be the focus for a new water based tourism, with marina, maritime services and some commercial leisure development.

3.19 In recent years, both legacy councils produced separate strategies in relation to play and recreation. Omagh District Council published a Sport, Leisure and Recreation Strategy (2009 – 2011) which identified seven key themes which reflected the needs of the District, alongside objectives for providing solutions/focus for addressing these deficiencies. Fermanagh District Council published a Play and Leisure Strategic Plan (2013-2016). This strategy seeks to develop accessible space and places for children and young people across Fermanagh in recognition of the multiple benefits of outdoor play and recreation.

3.20 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council have also been working with Transport NI to develop an “Enniskillen Town Cycling Masterplan,” the aim of which is to help prioritise and deliver cycling provision in Enniskillen.

4.0 Fermanagh and Omagh Area Plans - Open Space Provision

4.1 Common objectives in the Fermanagh 2007 and Omagh 1987-2002 Area Plans regarding open space, sport and outdoor recreation included:

- To retain and protect existing recreational and amenity open space areas.
- To allocate sufficient land to meet the needs of recreation and amenity.
- To ensure that recreation and open space areas are well distributed in relation to housing.

In both plans, recreation land was only zoned in the main towns and local towns.

Enniskillen and Omagh Towns

4.2 The Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 zoned a total of 33.6 ha across the district for recreation purposes. Eight separate areas (30.6 ha) were zoned for recreation purposes in Enniskillen town. Of this, only 1.0ha (3.3%) has been developed for recreation with a further 4.0ha (13.2%) developed (or with approval) for uses other than recreation including housing, shops and school facilities (Table 1).

- 4.3** The Omagh Area Plan 1987-2002 zoned a total of 112.5ha across the district for recreation purposes. Nineteen separate areas (102ha) were zoned for recreation purposes in Omagh town. Of this, only 19.4ha (19.4%) have been developed for recreation uses with 16.8ha (16.8%) developed (or with approval) for uses other than recreation (Table 1).

Table 1: Uptake of Recreation Zonings in Enniskillen and Omagh Towns

Settlement	Area Zoned (ha)	Area Developed for Recreation (ha)	Area Developed for Other Uses (ha)	Area Undeveloped (ha)
Enniskillen	30.6	1.0 (3.3%)	4.0 (13.2%)	25.6 (83.6%)
Omagh Town	102.2	4.7 (4.6%)	8.8 (8.6%)	88.7 (86.8%)

Source: Planning Survey, FODC 2015

- 4.4** Therefore, the uptake of land zoned for recreation has been fairly low in both District Towns, particularly in Enniskillen. This low uptake has been exacerbated by the development of zoned recreation land for alternative uses including retailing and housing. The disparity in the amount of recreation land zoned between the two legacy councils considered alongside the uptake of zoned recreation land indicates the need to assess both the amount and suitability of lands currently zoned for recreation in Omagh town.

Local Towns in Fermanagh and Omagh Districts

- 4.5** The Fermanagh 2007 and Omagh 1987-2002 Area Plans identified zoned recreational land in the local towns - Irvinestown and Lisnaskea and Carrickmore, Dromore and Fintona (Table 2 below).

Table 2: Uptake of Recreation Zonings in the Local Towns

Settlement	Area Zoned (ha)	Area Developed for Recreation (ha)	Area Developed for Other Uses (ha)	Area Remaining Undeveloped (ha)
Irvinestown	2.2	1.2 (54.5%)	1.0 (45.5%)	0 (0%)
Lisnaskea	0.8	0 (0%)	0.1 (12.5%)	0.7 (87.5%)
Fintona	13.5	11.5 (85.2%)	0.26* (1.9%)	1.8 (12.9%)
Dromore	6.2	3.7 (60.0%)	0.1 (1.6%)	2.3 (37.0%)
Carrickmore	4.1	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.1 (100%)

Source: FODC 2015 *Existing farmyard and buildings

- 4.6** Of the five local towns, only Irvinestown has no remaining zoned recreation land for development (Table 2). It should be noted that whilst there has been no development of land zoned for recreation in Carrickmore, proposals for a GAA pitch on 1.8ha of this land was granted planning permission in 2011.

5.0 Open Space and Recreation lands in Fermanagh and Omagh District

Introduction

- 5.1** A variety of open spaces in public and private ownership contribute to the quality of life for those who live within and visit the District. These include formal parks and gardens, sports and recreation grounds, children’s playgrounds, and less formal open spaces.
- 5.2** A general overview of open space and recreation lands within the Council area indicates that the Council and private clubs provide a total of approximately 330 hectares of outdoor recreation space within Fermanagh and Omagh, of which approximately 90ha are children’s play space (Table 3). For the purposes of this paper, information presented will be on the basis of the former district council areas unless otherwise stated.
- 5.3** In addition to formal sports and children’s play areas, there are other opportunities in the District for water-based sports such as canoeing, boating, water-skiing, kayaking and jet-skiing. Walking, cycling and passive recreational activities are often located along waterside locations. The numerous loughs make the Fermanagh area in particular, popular for water based sport and recreation. As a result this resource is more difficult to quantify since it is not a land based activity.
- 5.4** Other less-formal recreational activities exist within Fermanagh and Omagh, for example there is public access to Forest Service woodlands such as: Florencecourt, Necarne, Castle Archdale, Castlecaldwell, An Creagan, Seskinore, Gortin Glen, and Lough Bradan.

Table 3: Children’s Playing Spaces

(Breakdown for historic councils)	Fermanagh	Omagh	Fermanagh & Omagh Council
Children’s play space	45 ha	45 ha	90 ha

Source: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council 2015.

Outdoor Sports Provision

- 5.5** Fermanagh and Omagh District offers a full range of outdoor facilities ranging from sports pitches to more leisurely activities, set out in Appendix 2. The use of the NPFA (Fields in Trust) Standard for calculation of need for land for outdoor sport is primarily for urban areas with populations in excess of 1,000.²
- 5.6** Care needs to be taken when applying the NPFA Standard to the rural District of Fermanagh and Omagh. For example, a rural area with relatively few

² Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play. Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) 2006.

settlements may have relatively few sports facilities. On the other hand, a community or village with a population of 1,000 for example may still need a range of facilities, yet applying the standard to a single football pitch could suggest over-provision. Additionally, an area with a high dependence on passive recreation or on water-based outdoor sport would be expected to score poorly against the NPFA standard. Nevertheless, this standard does provide a useful starting point in assessing the overall level of provision in the Districts currently.

- 5.7** Sport NI's Active Places 2014 update has audited the grass pitch provision of the Fermanagh & Omagh council area, excluding education grass pitches, to be 105 ha. The synthetic pitch provision in the council is likewise indicated to be 2.7 ha, but Sport NI determine a synthetic pitch to have 4 times the value of a grass pitch, therefore this becomes equivalent to 10.80 ha. Thus, FODC has a combined area of 115.8 ha of grass and synthetic pitches, excluding education grass pitches.

Table 4: 2014 Quantity of playing pitches in District Council Areas (including education synthetic pitches but excluding grass pitches).

			EXISTING PROVISION				SHORTFALLS	
			Grass	Synthetic		Total Acres SNI	SNI Standard	
District Council	2011 Population Projection	Acres Recommended by SAS	Total Grass Acres	Existing Acres	SNI by 4			Perceived Acres Shortfall
Ards/North Down	155882	468	141	17	69	209	258	103
Lisburn City/Castlereagh	178544	535.632	168.97	19.03	76.12	245.09	290.54	116
Antrim/Newtownabbey	132389	397.167	121.05	15.44	61.76	182.81	214.36	86
Mid and East Antrim	132378	397.134	162.1	10.83	43.32	205.42	191.71	77
Derry City/Strabane	150592	451.776	206.22	11.41	45.64	251.86	199.92	80
Belfast	263313	789.939	377.41	49.07	196.3	573.69	216.25	86
Armagh/Banbridge/Craigavon	190559	571.677	331.79	23.38	93.52	425.31	146.37	59
Causeway Coast & Glens	140436	421.308	316.46	14.6	58.4	374.86	46.448	19
Newry, Mourne and Down	164514	493.542	370.5	15.15	60.6	431.1	62.442	25
Fermanagh and Omagh	112400	337.2	260.36	6.61	26.44	286.8	50.4	20
Mid Ulster District Council	129915	389.745	316.93	21.97	87.88	404.81	-15.07	-6
Totals	1750922	5252.77	2772.49	204.65	818.6	3591.09	1661.7	665

*Six Acre Standard (SAS) calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be twice that of a grass surface.

** Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be four times that of a grass surface.

- 5.8** In Table 4, the suggested shortfall which excludes education grass pitches, is 50.5 acres or 20 pitches. When converted to hectares, the shortfall figure for playing pitches is 20.4 ha. Table 4 was also completed based on a projected 2011 population of 112,400. However, the 2011 Census population is actually 113,161, a difference of 761 which is an additional 1 hectare when the NPFA standard of 1.2 hectares per 1000 population is applied.

Projection of Future Outdoor Sports Provision Need – for 2030

- 5.9** An assessment of the future needs of the council area up to 2030 can be calculated using the NISRA projected population of 121,544 and applying the NPFA standard as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Projected 2030 population (A)} &= 121,544 \\ \text{2011 Census Population (B)} &= 113,161 \\ \text{Additional population growth (A - B)} &= 8,383 \\ (8383 \div 1000) \times 1.2(\text{ha}) &= 10 \text{ ha} + 21.4 \text{ ha (existing 2011 shortfall)} \\ &= 31.4\text{ha} \\ &= 31.4 \text{ ha} \div 1.0 \text{ ha (average pitch size)}^3 \\ &= 31 \text{ pitches required.} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, Fermanagh and Omagh requires approximately 31 hectares of outdoor space provision which equates to 31 pitches.

- 5.10** The range of pitch sizes from 3.29 acres for a GAA pitch to 1.93 acres for a soccer pitch considered alongside the number of GAA pitches within the Fermanagh and Omagh District has the potential to have skewed the existing provision of pitches upwards, and, as a result, the final projection for pitches required downwards. However, as many of the GAA clubs and pitches lie outside of the settlement limits they are unlikely to require future zoned lands for any expansion.
- 5.11** It should be noted that using the same methodology as above, but including education grass pitches (Table 5), indicates a shortfall of only 1.59ha. Furthermore, the masterplan for the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus includes 14 grass pitches and 2 synthetic pitches. As Sport NI apply 4 x the value of grass pitch to a synthetic pitch, the Lisanelly Shared Education Campus masterplan will result in an additional 22 pitches.
- 5.12** In addition to a quantitative assessment, the Fields in Trust/NPFA also addresses the distribution of open spaces. As a general guideline, it recommends that sports pitches should be within 20 minutes travelling time from all homes, using walking as the recommended mode of transport. Given that Fermanagh and Omagh District is essentially rural in character and given that many people use vehicular transport to travel to these facilities, it is reasonable to argue that drive times are more appropriate. The majority of settlements in both Districts are within a 20 minute drive time of the respective District towns where most recreation provision is located.

³ Based on Sport NI parameters of Gaelic pitches at 3.29 acres (1.33ha), soccer pitches at 1.93 acres (0.78 ha) and Rugby pitches at 2.1acres (0.85ha).

Table 5: 2014 Quantity of playing pitches in District Council Areas (Including education synthetic pitches and education grass pitches)

			EXISTING PROVISION				SHORTFALLS	
			Grass	Synthetic		Total Acres SNI	SNI Standard	
District Council	2011 Population Projection	Acres Recommended by SAS	Total Grass Acres	Existing Acres	SNI by 4			Perceived Acres Shortfall
Ards/North Down	155882	468	180	17	69	249	219	88
Lisburn City/Castlereagh	178544	535.632	241.57	19.03	76.12	317.69	217.94	87
Antrim/Newtownabbey	132389	397.167	214.25	15.44	61.76	276.01	121.16	48
Mid and East Antrim	132378	397.134	257.79	10.83	43.32	301.11	96.024	38
Derry City/Strabane	150592	451.776	293.51	11.41	45.64	339.15	112.63	45
Belfast	263313	789.939	520.21	49.07	196.3	716.49	73.449	29
Armagh/Banbridge/Craigavon	190559	571.677	460.27	23.38	93.52	553.79	17.887	7
Causeway Coast & Glens	140436	421.308	498.64	14.6	58.4	557.04	-135.7	-54
Newry, Mourne and Down	164514	493.542	546.55	15.15	60.6	607.15	-113.6	-45
Fermanagh and Omagh	112400	337.2	352.45	6.61	26.44	378.89	-41.69	-17
Mid Ulster District Council	129915	389.745	456.19	21.97	87.88	544.07	-154.3	-62
Totals	1750922	5252.77	4021.35	204.65	818.6	4839.95	412.82	165

Source: Sport NI Active Places update 2014.

6.0 Children's Play Space Provision

(i) Children's Playing Space (not including pitches for clubs)

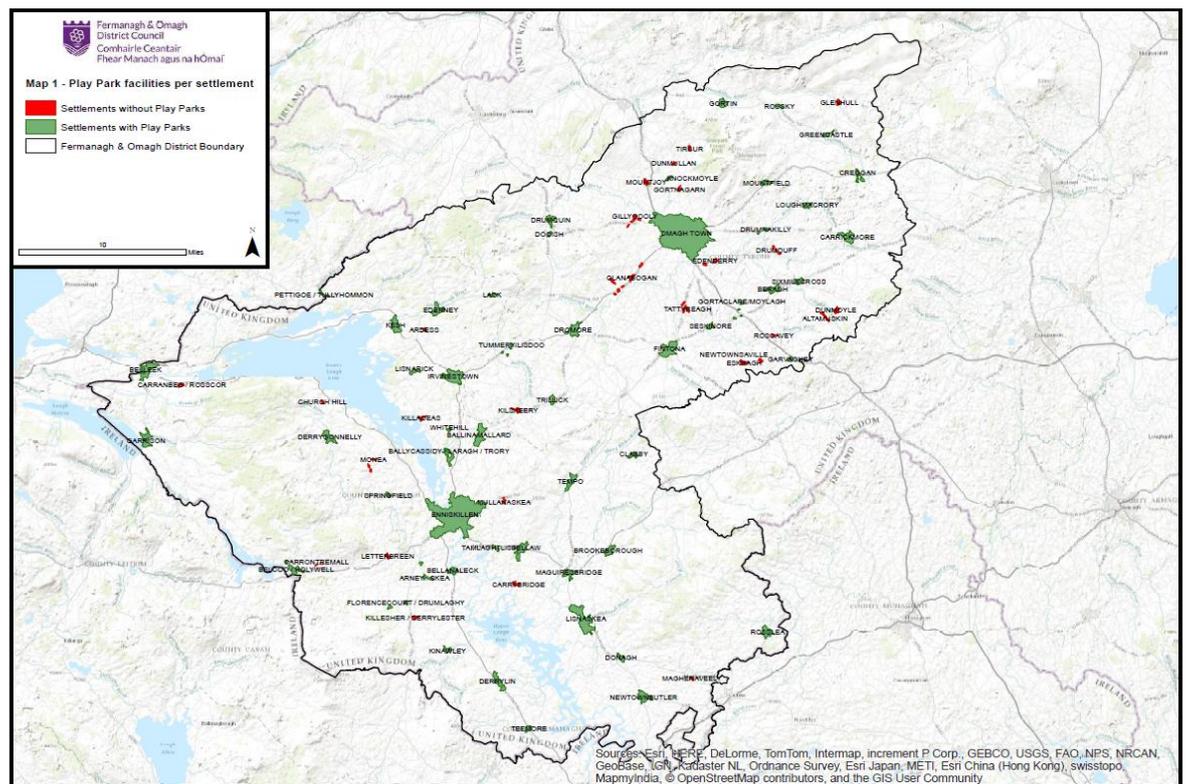
- 6.1** Children's play contributes to the health, well-being and overall development of children. Outdoor children's play facilities vary from formal equipped children's playgrounds to kick-about areas. Most facilities provided by the District Councils are located in the District towns with some provision in the local towns and villages (Table 6). However, there are 28 small settlements without provision of equipped areas of play of which 12 are in Fermanagh and 16 are in Omagh District (refer to Map 1).
- 6.2** Appendix 4 details the equipped children's play parks in the settlements. Map 1 indicates the locations of settlements with and without play facilities. These comprise a mixture of voluntary and council maintained play parks.

Table 6: No. of equipped Children's Play Spaces provided by the Council within Local Towns and Small Settlements

Settlement	Number of Children's Play Spaces
Carrickmore	1
Dromore	2
Fintona	4
Irvinestown	4
Lisnaskea	4
Villages Fermanagh Area	36
Villages Omagh Area	15
Hamlets Omagh Area	17

Source: Fermanagh and Omagh District Councils, Planning Survey 2015

Map 1: Play Park facilities per settlement



Source: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council survey data and mapping

- 6.3** Children’s play needs to be analysed on two tiers: the overall quantum and the spatial distribution. Relative to each other, the spatial distribution is seen as more important as it relates to access to provision within the various settlements i.e. in relation to children’s homes. NPFA/Fields in Trust’s “Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play” sets out a standard of 0.8 ha per 1000 population of Children’s Play Space. It further outlines a minimum standard of 0.6ha per 1000 population. As such, calculations have been included to reflect these upper and lower limits.

Quantum of Children’s Playing Space

- 6.4** Given the information supplied by the Council, an assessment of existing children’s play space in the towns within Fermanagh and Omagh District indicates that whilst there are variations in the level of provision between settlements there are no current deficiencies in provision within the relevant settlements (Table 7).

Distribution of Children’s Playing Space

- 6.5** In assessing the distribution of children’s playing space, distance needs to be calculated on the basis of walking time from children’s homes. Fields in Trust recommends different travel times (Table 8), dependent upon the nature of the facilities and defines a three-tier hierarchy (Appendix 3) including Local Areas for Play (LAP), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) and Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP).

Table 7: Assessment of Existing Children’s Playing Space Provision in the Towns in Fermanagh and Omagh District.

Settlement	Population (Census 2011)	Target (ha per 1000)		Current Provision (2015, ha)	Surplus/ Deficit (ha per 1000)	
		0.6	0.8		0.6	0.8
Enniskillen	13,790	8.3	11	23.9	+15.5	+12.7
Omagh	19,682	11.8	15.7	34.5	+21.5	+17.2
Irvinestown	2,264	1.4	1.8	2.0	+0.7	+0.3
Lisnaskea	2,960	1.8	2.4	4.1	+2.3	+1.8
Fintona	1,160	0.7	0.9	4.5	+3.6	+3.4
Dromore	1,202	0.7	1.0	1.0	+0.2	0
Carrickmore	451	0.3	0.4	1.1	+0.7	+0.5

Source: Census figures 2011 & Planning survey, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council 2015. Note: All figures are in hectares

Table 8: Walking Distances to Children’s Playing Space

Type of Space	Distance Criteria (Metres)	
	Walking Distance	Straight line Distance
Local areas for play or ‘door-step’ spaces – for play and informal recreation (LAPs)	100	60
Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play –for play and informal recreation (LEAPs)	400	240
Neighbourhood equipped areas for play – for play and informal recreation, and provision for children and young people (NEAPs)	1000	600

Source: Fields in Trust (Formerly National Playing Fields Association), 2008

6.6 While the actual extent of the areas served by Local Areas of Play (LAPs) have not been analysed because the catchment radius of one minute (60 metres) is very small, their overall distribution within each settlement is assessed. Notably, the distribution of children’s play space is of most significance in the district and local towns (Table 9). Due to the smaller size of the other settlements, it is likely that any play space is reasonably accessible to the whole settlement. A list of playgrounds within the Fermanagh and Omagh District and a general overview of LEAPS, LAPS and NEAPS across the settlements are set out in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5. In addition to equipped play areas, there are a number of Multi-Use Games Areas within the Fermanagh and Omagh District (Appendix 6).

Table 9: NEAP and LEAPs: Children’s Playing Spaces within the District and Local Towns in Fermanagh & Omagh District

Children’s Playing Space	Number within 2 Main District Towns	Remaining Local Towns
LEAP	38	11
NEAP	3	0

Source: FODC 2015

- 6.7** Using settlement population projections to 2030 to assess existing Children’s Playing Space within the towns, a projection can be made for the need for future provision over the Plan period. Whilst most of the towns have adequate children’s play space to 2030, when applying the upper standard of 0.8 ha per 1000 population there would be a slight shortfall in provision in Dromore (Table 10).

Table 10: Assessment of Requirement for Children’s Playing Space in Towns in Fermanagh and Omagh Districts – for 2030 Population

Settlement	2030 Projected Population	Target (ha per 1000)		Provision at 2015 (ha)	Surplus/ Deficit (ha per 1000)	
		0.6	0.8		0.6	0.8
Enniskillen	15,215	9.1	12.2	23.9	+14.8	+11.7
Omagh	21,191	12.7	16.9	34.5	+21.8	+17.6
Irvinestown	2,490	1.5	1.9	2.0	+0.5	+0.1
Lisnaskea	3,345	2.0	2.6	4.1	+2.1	+1.5
Fintona	1,057	0.6	0.85	4.5	+3.9	+3.65
Dromore	1,328	0.8	1.1	1.0	+0.2	-0.1
Carrickmore	405	0.24	0.32	1.1	+0.86	+0.78

Source: Planning Estimates 2015, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. Based upon % District change from 1991-2011, applied to settlement proportionate change in relation to NISRA 2011-2030 District projections (Appendix 7).

- 6.8** While the NPFA does not require a quantitative assessment of recreation within settlements of populations less than 1000, an evaluation of the overall recreation provision within the villages has been carried out (Tables 11 &12).
- 6.9** Within the former Omagh District, for the exception of Mountfield, all the villages have an equipped children’s play area and, for the exception of Loughmacrory, all have a non-equipped children’s play area (Table 11).
- 6.10** The Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 identifies ‘villages’ (39 no.) whilst Omagh area Plan identifies ‘villages’ (9 no.) and ‘hamlets’ (24 no.). The villages in the Fermanagh Area Plan vary greatly in size, form and function with several which could be described as hamlets or clusters. Therefore, for the purpose of

the above exercise, only the villages which were viewed as being broadly similar in terms of size, scale, services and population as those in the designated Omagh villages have been discussed.

Table 11: Recreation Provision in Villages within former Omagh District

Settlement	Equipped Children's Play Area	Non-Equipped Children's Play Area	Leisure/Recreation Facility
Beragh	■	■	■
Drumquin	■	■	■
Gortin	■	■	■
Greencastle	■	■	■
Loughmacrory	■		■
Mountfield		■	
Seskinore	■	■	
Sixmilecross	■	■	
Trillick	■	■	■

Source: Fermanagh & Omagh DC 2015

6.11 Within Fermanagh District, most of the villages surveyed have an equipped children's play area, a non-equipped children's play area and a leisure/recreation facility (Table 12). Furthermore, in the larger villages such as Ballinamallard, Brookeborough, Derrylin and Kesh, recreation provision is considerably better, where settlements can have two or more equipped children's play areas and several non-equipped areas.

6.12 Overall, applying the quantitative standard, provision of children's playing space is adequate in the identified settlements of both Districts.

7.0 Passive Recreation Provision

7.1 In addition to outdoor sports, both Fermanagh and Omagh Districts have a variety of passive recreation areas within settlements (Appendix 8). While there is no established benchmark to appraise passive recreation provision, these areas are valuable in providing recreation opportunities for those who do not partake in formal outdoor sports.

7.2 Both the Fermanagh Area Plan 2007 and the Omagh Area Plan 1987 - 2002 zoned additional lands for recreation and open space. Similarly for both Districts, most of these proposals have not been implemented, with some having been developed for other uses, as well as having approvals for housing development (See maps in (ii) Appendix 9).

Table 12: Recreation Provision in Main Villages within former Fermanagh District

Settlement	Equipped Children's Play Area	Non-Equipped Children's Play Area	Leisure/Recreation Facility
Ballinamallard	■	■	■
Ballycassidy / Laragh/ Trory	■		
Belcoo / Holywell	■	■	■
Bellanaleck	■	■	
Belleek	■	■	■
Brookeborough	■	■	■
Clabby	■		
Derrygonnelly	■	■	■
Derrylin	■	■	■
Donagh	■		■
Ederney	■	■	■
Garrison	■		■
Kesh	■	■	■
Kinawley	■		■
Lack	■		
Lisbellaw	■	■	
Lisnarick	■	■	■
Maguiresbridge	■	■	■
Newtownbutler	■	■	■
Pettigoe / Tullyhommon	■		
Rosslea	■	■	■
Tempo	■	■	■

Source: Fermanagh & Omagh DC 2015

7.3 There are a number of walks, riverside walks and cycle routes across the district as well as incidental and larger areas of open space which serve as recreation space. In zoning for future need the LDP will have to take account of the importance of protecting linear open space such as pedestrian and cycle routes, community greenways, former railway lines and river and canal corridors many of which are valuable in linking larger areas of open space, and providing important wildlife corridors/ecological networks.

8.0 Existing Indoor Recreation and Leisure Provision

8.1 In addition to outdoor recreation provision, indoor sport-based recreation is primarily provided by Leisure Centres within the Districts (Tables 13 and 14). Some schools, football clubs, church halls and hotels also offer indoor

facilities for public use e.g. gym facilities, handball, table tennis and bowling. Indoor recreation provision is generally good within the towns, with others such as Trillick serving their own rural areas. There are also a number of privately run gyms located within certain settlements and indeed the rural area.

Table 13: Main Leisure Centres within Fermanagh Area

Facility	Lakeland Forum Leisure Centre, Enniskillen	Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown	Castle Park Centre, Lisnaskea
Swimming Pool	■		
Sports Hall	■	■	■
Gym / Fitness Suite	■	■	■
Aerobics Studio	■	■	■
Steam/Sauna	■	■	
Squash Court	■		
Racketball Court	■	■	■
Handball Court			
Spinning Studio	■		
Games Room		■	
Children's Play Facility	■		
Creche	■		
Cafe		■	
Riding Arena		Nearby	

Source: Sport NI 2015

8.2 The Fermanagh and Omagh District also benefits from a variety of other leisure facilities including museums, outdoor activity centres, heritage centres, art galleries and entertainment venues across the district, some of which have links to Tourism (Table 15).

Table 14: Main Leisure Centres within Omagh Area

Facility	Omagh Leisure Centre	Dromore Sports Complex	Trillick Leisure Centre	Ecclesville Centre, Fintona
Swimming Pool	■			
Sports Hall	■	■	■	■
Gym / Fitness Suite	■	■	■	■

Aerobics Studio	■			
Sauna	■			
Squash Court	■			
Racketball Court	■	■		
Handball Court	■			
Spinning Studio	■		■	
Games Room			■	
Children's Play Facility	■			
Creche	■			
Cafe	■			■
Riding Arena				■

Source: Sport NI

Table 15: Other Leisure Facilities within Fermanagh and Omagh District

	Fermanagh Area	Omagh Area
Museums & Heritage Centres	Florence Court Estate (Florencecourt) The Buttermarket (Enniskillen) Castle Barracks (Enniskillen) Headhunters Barbers & Railway Museum (Enniskillen) Marble Arch Caves & Geopark (Florencecourt) Belleek Pottery Visitor Centre (Belleek) Sheelin Irish Lace Museum (Bellanaleck) Castlearchdale Country Park (Killadeas) Clanog Heritage (Lisnaskea) Rosslea Heritage Centre (Rosslea) Innis Rath Island Visitors Centre FSC Residential Educational Centre (Derrygonnelly) Explore Erne Exhibition (Belleek) Belcoo and District Historical Society Inniskillings Museum (Enniskillen) Aughakillymaude Mummies Centre (Derrylin)	Ulster American Folk Park Ulster History Park (currently closed to general public) An Creagan Visitor Centre
Public Art Galleries	The Buttermarket (Enniskillen) Clan Art Gallery (Enniskillen) Ardhowen Theatre (Enniskillen) Siabh Beagh Arts (Rosslea)	Crosshill Gallery (Omagh) Tourist Information Centre - Exhibition Room (Omagh) Omagh Community House (Omagh) Tattykeeran Gallery (Beragh)

	Fermanagh Area	Omagh Area
		Gormleys Art Gallery (Omagh) Mc Kenna Gallery (Omagh)
Theatres, Performance Venues and Cinemas	Omniplex Cinema (Enniskillen) Castlecoole (Enniskillen) Crom Estate Ardhowen (Enniskillen) Lakeland Forum (Enniskillen)	Multiscreen Studios Cinema (Omagh) Strule Arts Centre (Omagh) Patrician Hall (Carrickmore)
Hotels	Carlton Best Western Hotel (Belleek) – Currently closed Fort Lodge Hotel (Enniskillen) Lough Erne Hotel & Golf Resort (Castlehume) Killyhevlin Hotel (Enniskillen) Westville Hotel (Enniskillen) Railway Hotel (Enniskillen) Belmore Court Motel & B&B (Enniskillen) Mahon's Hotel (Irvinestown) Lough Erne Hotel (Kesh) Manor House Hotel (Killadeas) Carrybridge Hotel & Marine Centre (Carrybridge) Don Carragh (Lisnaskea)	Sliver Birch Hotel (Omagh) Mellon Country Inn Hotel (Omagh) Kellys Inn Hotel (Garvaghey)
Outdoor Activity Centres	Corralea Activity Centre (Belcoo) Gortatole Outdoor Education Centre (Florencecourt) The Lakeland Canoe Centre (Enniskillen) Lustybeg Activity Centre (Lustybeg/Boa Island) Share Holiday Village (Lisnaskea) Necarne Ulster Lakeland Equestrian Park (Irvinestown) Lough Melvin Centre	Fintona Equestrian Centre

Source: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council 2015

8.3 In addition to the above, there are restaurants, public houses, night clubs and other entertainment facilities such as bingo halls and amusement arcades located across the District, though mainly concentrated in the district towns.

9.0 Conclusion and Key Findings

9.1 The purpose of this paper has been to provide an overview of open space provision within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council broken down into outdoor open space and children's play space provision. Having established the current provision, the paper has projected the future recreation needs for

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to 2030. The distribution and accessibility of such provision has also been assessed.

9.2 A summary of the key findings is as follows:-

- The existing provision of outdoor space is adequately catered for in Fermanagh and Omagh.
- Omagh town has currently an over provision of zoned recreation land and there is a need to assess how much of this should be retained in the new LDP, taking into account its location.
- Irvinestown has no remaining zoned recreation land.
- For the projected needs of 2030 - excluding existing education grass pitches - there is a need for an additional 31.4 hectares of land equivalent to the provision of 31 pitches.
- For the projected needs of 2030 - including existing education grass pitches - there is only a need for an additional 1.59 hectares of land.
- The development of the Lisanelly Education Campus in line with the current masterplan has the potential to deliver the equivalent of 22 pitches.
- Outdoor space in terms of children's play provision is more than adequately catered for in the two main towns of Enniskillen and Omagh and most of the small towns. However, Dromore would have a slight deficit based on the projected 2030 population. The majority of the villages also have play areas.
- Many children's play areas are located within residential developments and provide safe, easily accessible facilities particularly to young children and the elderly.
- The Fermanagh and Omagh District Area benefits from a range of informal and passive recreation facilities distributed across the main urban areas and in parts of the countryside. These are not included in the open space calculations but do provide invaluable recreational spaces.
- The District also benefits from a range of indoor recreational and leisure facilities, primarily in the two main towns and smaller towns.

9.3 In light of the current work that is being undertaken by Sport NI in partnership with the 11 District Councils to develop a Sports Facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland, it is recommended that the need for future pitch provision must be considered further once the outcome of that strategy is completed. Such information will also be used to inform the LDP's Open Space Strategy.

9.4 Taking into account the policy approach of the SPPS, it is suggested that key actions of the local development plan at strategy level may include the following:

- (i) provide policy for the protection and safeguarding for public open space;
- (ii) provide adequate and well-designed open space in new housing developments as an integral part of the development;
- (iii) protect environmental open spaces for example parks, gardens and linear open space such as pedestrian and cycle routes/walkways and river corridors that have open space value;
- (iv) facilitate where possible large scale leisure proposals on opportunity sites within or near town centres and smaller scale elsewhere within settlement limits