

2025-2030

# HERITAGE PLAN (DRAFT)

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council



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



# INTRODUCTION

“We don't just remember our history – we live it, love it, and share it with everyone.”

This is the first-ever Heritage Plan for Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, a cross-cutting strategy designed not only to preserve our rich heritage but also to celebrate it and ensure it remains vibrant for future generations.

The Plan is a commitment by the Council to promote and protect our heritage and sets out the heritage priorities for the area over the next five years. It is not an exhaustive list of everything that needs to be done for heritage in the district but a strategic plan to frame our actions.

Across the district, history is a vibrant element of everyday life. It's an area rich with natural beauty, historic buildings, and a culture rooted in language, storytelling, music and folklore. The landscape itself tells a story, with peaceful lakes, winding rivers, and varied terrain with a little piece of history around every corner.

We are the caretakers of our heritage, managing and enhancing its unique charm and identity so that it stays relevant for future generations.

But it's not only about honouring our past; our heritage is also a driving force for the local economy, attracting tourism and supporting our community.

**In celebrating the past, we are also setting a course for our future.**



## **VISION**

“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”

– Corporate Plan 2024-2028



## **THE VALUE OF OUR HERITAGE**

“Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration.” (UNESCO)

Heritage in Fermanagh and Omagh embodies the valuable legacy handed down through generations and is as essential element of the fabric of life. From buildings and nature to traditions and customs, it helps define who we are, connects us to our history and shapes how we live today.

Heritage supports the economy by creating jobs and attracting tourism. But, more than that, it helps build and sustain strong, inclusive communities by giving people a sense of belonging and promoting cultural diversity.





## Natural Heritage

Our environment - including waterways, landscapes, woodlands, bogs, uplands, and native wildlife and plants - forms an essential part of our heritage.

## Built Heritage

This includes historical landmarks, buildings, monuments and other elements that show the physical presence of our past.

## Cultural Heritage

The traditions, sports, music, language, dance, folklore, transport, pastimes, crafts and skills that have been passed down through generations and enrich our cultural identity.

Natural, built and cultural heritage are deeply intertwined, and while we've highlighted their unique elements, their connection is most evident in the landscapes of Fermanagh & Omagh.



# NATURAL HERITAGE

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## UNESCO

“Natural heritage refers to natural features, geological and physiological formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.”

## Our Heritage

The Fermanagh and Omagh District is renowned for its beautiful scenery, with the vast open landscapes of hills, lakes, rivers, woodlands and bogs incorporating the Sperrins Mountains Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the UNESCO Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark.

The area is rich in biodiversity, with a variety of flora and fauna creating a vibrant and diverse natural environment.

Our Biodiversity Strategy is designed to help us safeguard and maintain our unique natural heritage so it continues to thrive for future generations. It sets out our commitments to conservation efforts, such as preserving hedgerows and creating green spaces in urban areas, vital for the survival of local wildlife.

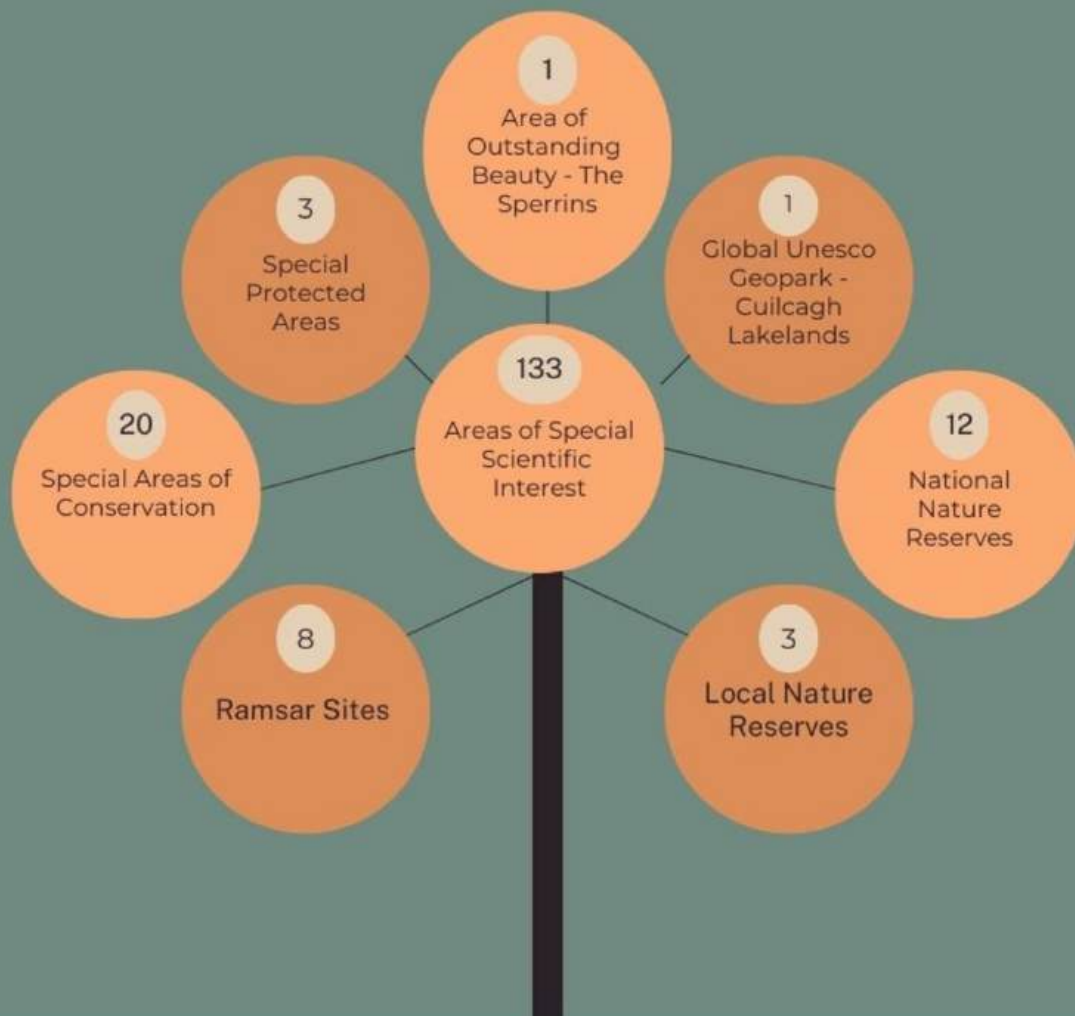


# PROTECT OUR HERITAGE



Fermanagh and Omagh contains a vast array of priority and protected habitats and species, evidenced by high numbers of protected areas.

We aim to maintain our district as a prime example of natural heritage, ensuring it remains a haven for biodiversity and a space where nature and history coexist harmoniously.



We implement a range of initiatives to nurture our environment and engage the community in conservation activities. Through careful planning, community engagement and a commitment to sustainability, we aim to foster a deeper connection between local people and the natural world, ensuring a greener, healthier future for all.

Don't Mow, Let it Grow.



Trees for Bees.



New Native Woodlands



Right Tree, Right Place,  
Right Reason



Pesticide Reduction &  
Invasive Species  
Management



Recording & Monitoring



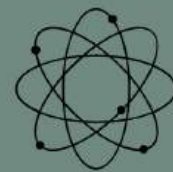
Forest Schools &  
Eco-Schools Support



Pro-active  
Engagement



Citizen Science





## **International Council on Monuments and Sites**

“Built heritage refers to physical structures, sites, and monuments that have historical, cultural, architectural, or social significance and are recognised for their value to society. These structures are tangible representations of a community's past and contribute to its identity.”



## **Our Heritage**

Fermanagh and Omagh's story is deeply connected to its built heritage. The diverse and rich built heritage features ancient settlements, religious sites and historical monuments dating back to prehistoric times. From megalithic tombs, ancient churches and castles to grand houses and estates, the ancient structures shape today's landscape. More than just physical buildings, they provide a window into the history of the area and connecting generations and their stories.

Stones and structures such as early medieval Rathes, Crannogs and Standing Stones and sites of worship scattered across the landscape stand as tangible legacies to our past.





“The built heritage in the Fermanagh and Omagh district illustrates the vital connection between our past and present.

They are living symbols of our resilience, creativity and innovation of our ancestors”.

Advancements in radiocarbon dating reveal the area's deep historical roots, including the presence of court tombs and early settlement artifacts.

Archaeological evidence also highlights significant transformations in our built heritage, such as the development of industrial mills, the construction of bridges and defensive sites, as well as the 17th-century Plantation of Ulster and the profound impact of the 19th-century industrial boom.

- 19** State Care Monuments
- 410** Scheduled Monuments
- 2455** Unscheduled Monuments
- 16** Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes
- 674** Listed Buildings
- 3** Conservation Areas (Enniskillen, Lisnaskea, Omagh)



The geopark protects geological heritage, promotes sustainable tourism, enhances biodiversity, and supports local communities through balanced conservation and growth

- 1** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 1** UNESCO Geopark
- 18** Areas of Townscape Character or Village Character
- 235** Local Landscape Policy Areas (LLPAs)
- 2** Areas of Significant Archaeological Interest
- 3** Areas of Archaeological Potential



As part of our commitment to enhancing and promoting our built heritage, we are actively implementing specific measures in key areas.

Planning & Regulation



Conservation Areas



Advice & Guidance



Collaboration with Heritage Bodies



Public Awareness



Education



# CULTURAL HERITAGE

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## UNESCO

“Cultural heritage includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance.

## Our Heritage

Preserving the stories of the Fermanagh and Omagh District is about more than just remembering the past; the stories, language and traditions form the area's cultural fabric, maintaining its identity and connecting generations. Sharing these stories not only enriches understanding of our cultural heritage – or what we refer to as intangible heritage - but also enhances our connection to our physical surroundings.

The diversity of languages, particularly the Irish language and Ulster Scots traditions, provides a vehicle to preserve and share the district's heritage, through historical stories, folklore and traditional knowledge across generations.

Recording oral histories is essential for preserving the extensive legends passed down through generations. The area's musical heritage, in all its many forms, is highly valued in the community.



“The Fermanagh and Omagh district is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, defined by the strong ties of its people, their traditions and the environment”.

Our rich heritage is also reflected in place names, family names, and townlands, highlighting the deep roots of the community. Enniskillen Castle Museums, the Ardhowen, and the Strule Arts Centre play key roles in showcasing local culture through exhibitions, educational programmes, and events, while genealogy research connects us to the personal histories that have shaped this community.

Pastimes and sports are aspects of cultural heritage, as they reflect our community's traditions, values, and shared experiences, offering insight into how people connect and engage with their cultural roots.

Transport heritage reflects a rich evolution, from life on the lough using cots to the advent of the railway, and everything in between.

This proud cultural legacy is at the core of the Heritage Plan, which aims to further develop, promote, and make our heritage experiences more accessible, ensuring they are inclusive and relevant for all.



Fermanagh and Omagh District Council delivers a range of activities to preserve and promote cultural heritage.

Documentation & Archiving



Education & Awareness



Support for Heritage & Cultural Events



Promotion of Language and Dialects



Collaboration with Community Groups



Heritage Projects



Grants & Funding





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Fermanagh County Museum, part of Enniskillen Castle Museums, is committed to safeguarding the history of the local area as a source of enjoyment, education and culture for all. The Museum seeks to sustainably support and promote our unique local heritage from prehistory to the present, inspiring people locally, nationally and internationally to discover more. We seek to preserve our multi-disciplinary collections and heritage for future generations, engaging with people to accurately record and share information and knowledge. We are committed to increasing physical and intellectual access to our collections and services for all communities, abilities and faiths. We seek to uplift people through enjoyment of learning through participation in an imaginative programme of exhibitions, events, school sessions, information service, online engagement, outreach activities and tours, reaching out to new and existing audiences.

## **OUR PEOPLE, OUR PLACES, OUR PAST.**

**“Our heritage is rich, diverse and deeply rooted in the landscape and community’s identity, setting the Fermanagh and Omagh district apart as a place with significant heritage value”.**



## THREE CORE ELEMENTS

Fermanagh and Omagh District has a distinctive heritage delivered by the three core elements of:

- Unparalleled natural, built and cultural heritage (the landscape);
- Character and contributions of our people; and
- A profound and unique history.



The area's rich history, culture, and blend of built and natural heritage inspire local pride and attract tourism. Year-round heritage activities engage diverse audiences, with collaboration across sectors strengthening initiatives and community involvement.

The Council seeks to connect more people, especially young people, with heritage by sharing our unique story. By leveraging digital technology and strategic partnerships, we aim to broaden access, enhance conservation, and make heritage more inclusive. While heritage supports economic growth and regeneration, its positive impact on community well-being has shaped our plan, with the ambition to enhance and grow these benefits further.



## Heritage in Context

The value of heritage is demonstrated by its wide inclusion in governance policy and strategy.

The value of heritage is recognised as an effective tool for economic regeneration, an essential element of tourism, and a driver for urban and rural development.

The Heritage Plan will not exist in isolation. As heritage connects to so many aspects of our environment ranging from languages to sustainability, the Plan will support and be supported by a series of interlocking policy and guidance documents that affect governance in Fermanagh and Omagh.

It is important to note the number of strategic contexts and specific actions that will influence the Heritage Plan.

### The wider governance context

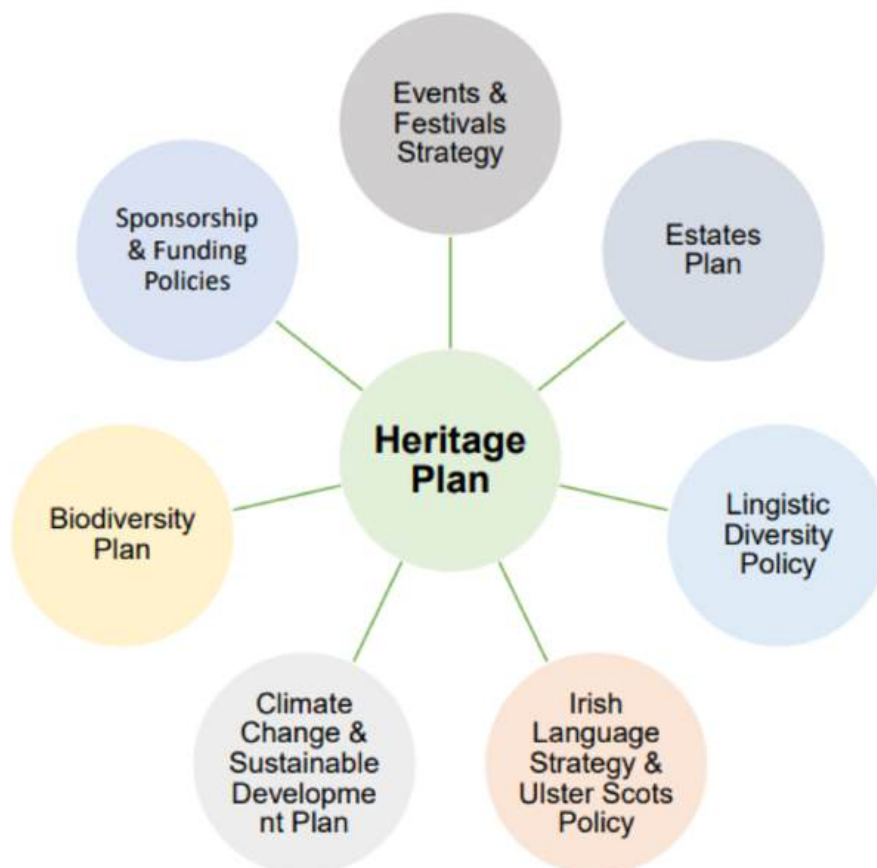


See appendices for more detail.



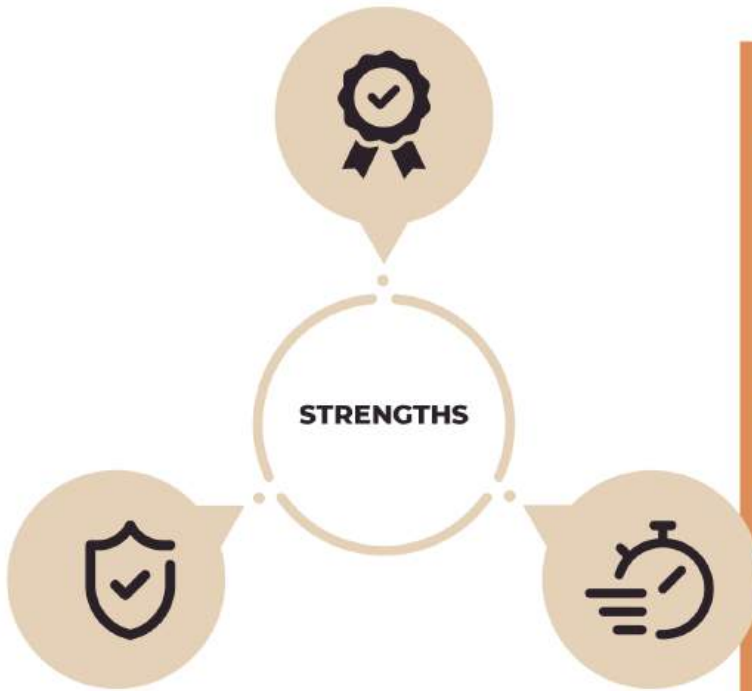


## Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Plans and Policies



# SWOT ANALYSIS

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Rich landscape and cultural heritage that fosters a strong sense of place and tells a compelling story.

Strong educational programmes and emerging partnerships to enhance community engagement and heritage preservation.

Effective use of existing resources, aligned policies, and innovative technologies to strengthen heritage initiatives.

Robust governance and support from elected members ensure focused action and long-term sustainability.

Limited access to heritage assets, particularly in Omagh and private ownership.

Insufficient and inconsistent funding hampers project development and sustainability.

Need for better communication and identification of heritage synergies across the Council.

Challenges from climate change, development impacts, and perceptions of heritage as primarily for older people.





Develop projects with soft outputs for a sense of place.

Support heritage events fostering a sense of place

Utilise AI and new technologies for diverse engagement

Revenue tail from new developments

Funding challenges for ongoing initiatives

Biodiversity and ecology impact of new developments



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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## Improve Access

Identify, explain and enhance access to our natural, built and cultural heritage, ensuring its value and conservation. This objective focuses on making heritage inclusive and accessible to transform hidden heritage into valued heritage and a source of inspiration, education and enjoyment.

## Develop and Promote

Develop and promote our heritage assets to contribute to community wellbeing, heritage-led regeneration and tourism within the district. This objective enhances diverse heritage elements, attracting visitors and fostering economic growth while promoting a unique sense of place.

## Work in Partnership

Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to create opportunities for awareness, engagement and participation supporting greater inclusion and diversity. By empowering individuals to learn, develop skills and explore heritage, this objective promotes inclusivity and a sense of belonging within the community through accessible and enriching opportunities.

## Protecting our Heritage

Champion the sustainable development, conservation and preservation of natural, built and cultural heritage. Taking action to protect our heritage ensures the sustainable development of future generations, preserves historical richness and leaves a lasting legacy for all. This objective prioritises the enduring vibrancy of our heritage in the community.

# IMPROVE ACCESS

1. Enhance the annual Spring, Summer and Autumn and Winter programmes for heritage talks and tours. Enable school and community group bookings and link programmes with themed weeks/days where possible.
2. Develop heritage engagement programmes with multi-generational appeal, offering 'taster' sessions and incorporating lifelong learning opportunities, including digital training for inclusion through projects like the NI Now project.
3. Identify ways to positively address the issues and pressures facing our heritage assets.
4. Support, where possible, good stewardship, improved access and sharing of knowledge, information, artefacts and interpretation.
5. Explore and promote the story of Fermanagh and Omagh, improve understanding about how particular assets fit into the story and contribute to local significance.
6. Conduct a thorough assessment to evaluate the current status of shared heritage assets, aiming to identify areas for enhancement and promotion.
7. Continue to implement and expand collection management efforts in line with the Collections Management Framework (2024-2027), focusing on developing underrepresented collections.
8. Conduct an annual evaluation of the Heritage Plan to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that actions are being met effectively. Make the evaluation accessible by sharing a summary report with stakeholders and the public, ensuring transparency and community engagement.
9. Pilot initiatives that integrate cultural and intangible heritage, including folklore, language, oral history, sport, pastimes, traditional crafts, music, and storytelling, to preserve and increase access to these practices within the community.
10. Enhance awareness and build community capacity to engage with and address heritage issues at the local level through communication, education, outreach, and skill development initiatives.
11. Support and enhance Fermanagh County Museum, part of Enniskillen Castle Museums efforts to preserve, interpret, and share Fermanagh, Omagh and the surrounding areas unique heritage through its collections and community engagement.

# DEVELOP AND PROMOTE

1. Conduct research into current audiences and develop programming that encourages broad participation, recognising the role of heritage in fostering belonging and inclusivity within diverse and minority communities.
2. Develop a heritage forum as a mechanism for communication, collaboration and sharing of skills.
3. Showcase our authentic heritage experiences to regional audiences by elevating our communications through Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism and Explore Omagh & The Sperrins.
4. Upskilling customer service staff to become story tellers of the place to develop staff skills and understanding and improve the visitor experience.
5. Improve digital access through the expansion of the Council's Collections Management System to enable communities to engage with their local heritage. Engage with children, family & intergenerational groups and extend household offer.
6. Work cohesively to ensure that the care, conservation and enjoyment of heritage is integrated into planning processes and ensure heritage forms part of regeneration projects where appropriate.
7. Promote best practices in the conservation and management of ancient graveyards by developing a Community Custodians scheme to support their maintenance and protection.
8. Prioritise projects that explore place names, family names, local stories, and the district's agricultural heritage to deepen our collective understanding of people and places.
9. Use the opportunities created by the Council's programme of corporate events to integrate a heritage element in such events, and to promote awareness and enjoyment of our heritage.
10. Review the existing model for delivery of European Heritage Open Day activities and explore options for community delivery, develop synergies with Culture Night activities and events.
11. Promote and support the inclusion of cultural pastimes such as indigenous and traditional sports, local clubs, storytelling, and music to celebrate and preserve community traditions.

# WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

1. Work in partnership with others to better explain, understand and interpret our built, natural and cultural heritage.
2. Support initiatives to explore Irish language and Ulster Scots tradition. Take opportunities to intertwine and showcase how they relate to place names and folklore.
3. Support local genealogical services and explore diaspora initiatives with Fermanagh and Omagh district, developing projects with partners that highlight stories of place, including emigration, migration, and immigration.
4. Use themed events such as European Heritage Open Day to showcase community-led local history projects.
5. Collaborate with education providers and heritage organisations to enhance access to heritage education, both in schools and through community projects.
6. Support community groups in the development of heritage projects that meet the objectives of the Heritage Plan and seek to promote best practices in research, promotion and conservation.
7. Support the sustainability of the Lough Erne Pilgrim Way project.
8. Develop and support exhibitions with partners to showcase natural, cultural and built heritage of the district.
9. Develop links with Heritage officers from neighbouring and cross border Councils to share knowledge, best practice, lessons learned and partner on suitable projects.
10. Explore projects relating to rural areas, including minority communities in border areas.
11. Collaborate with partners to explore and highlight the unique archaeology of the area, fostering discovery and preservation.

# PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

1. Collaborate and support the implementation of both the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 and Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Elevate heritage as a priority by integrating its significance into Council literature, highlighting local assets and raising awareness. Acknowledge the contributions of the Council and partner organisations, and emphasize the benefits to the district.
3. Improve districts profile with funding bodies.
4. Support projects that preserve local heritage ie: storytelling, vernacular building and traditional building skills.
5. Sustain our commitment to the community by advancing our school and community engagement initiatives. Including eco and green schools programmes.
6. Collaborate with organisations, share best practices, and offer training programs.
7. Support the objectives of the Sperrins AONB management plan.
8. Deliver projects that encourage engagement and promotion of our unique built, natural & cultural heritage.
9. Drive green infrastructure development through eco-friendly pathways, biodiversity enhancement, and nature-based solutions, supporting sustainable tourism and local economic growth.
10. Support sustainable, multi-generational opportunities for hands-on heritage experiences and learning.





## MONITORING & REPORTING

While the Heritage Action Plan sets a course of action over the next five years, our priorities will remain adaptable, ensuring resilience in the face of changing circumstances.

The vision and strategic objectives provide guidance, instilling confidence in the Council's commitment and fostering an environment conducive to sustained collaboration and investment.

A key driver is the active involvement of a diverse range of individuals in heritage activities. We are dedicated to including those currently underrepresented in heritage, creating opportunities for shared storytelling, and extending the benefits of heritage to all. Monitoring and evaluation will be developed against the actions to track progress and the actions will be monitored through the Council's internal Heritage Forum with bi-annual updates to the Council.

The Council's Heritage Stakeholder Group will be drawn from organisations in the sector and stakeholders including but not limited to: Statutory Agencies, Education, Community Groups and Heritage Organisations and Groups.



## HERITAGE HIGHLIGHTS

As a council, we are extremely proud of our rich heritage and remain committed to supporting heritage projects within the community. While we can't do everything alone, by working in partnership with others and creating space for collaboration, we can do our part to support and strengthen our shared heritage.

The Heritage Plan is not a reflection of inactivity but a strategic roadmap for the future, reinforcing our ongoing dedication to preserving and promoting our unique heritage.

We take pride in our achievements to date and look forward to building on this success. While this document highlights some of our recent accomplishments, it is by no means exhaustive, as we continue to work towards even greater milestones.

# HOW WE DO HERITAGE WELL



**Necarne Castle**



**Omagh Music Heritage**



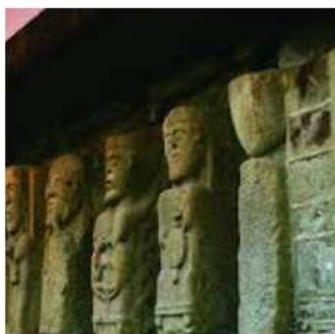
**Trees and Woodlands**



**Enniskillen Workhouse**



**Archaeology**



**Lough Erne Pilgrim Way**



2025-2030

# APPENDICES (DRAFT)

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council  
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## Appendix 1: Heritage in Action

### Natural Heritage

We implement a range of initiatives to nurture our environment and engage the community in conservation activities. Through careful planning, community engagement, and a commitment to sustainability, we aim to foster a deeper connection between local people and the natural world, ensuring a greener, healthier future for all.

- **Don't Mow, Let it Grow:** The Council varies its cutting regime to allow a range of grasses and wildflowers to flourish in the summer months, improving the biodiversity of the district.
- **Trees for Bees:** An annual programme delivering pollinator workshops to schools, raising awareness and encouraging the protection of bees.
- **New Native Woodlands:** The creation of new native woodlands that are larger, better connected, and more sustainable, supporting both biodiversity and enhancing the ecological health of the area.
- **Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason:** Our planting strategy ensures that every tree planted serves an ecological purpose, enhancing the local environment and biodiversity.
- **Pesticide Reduction and Invasive Species Management:** We take proactive steps to reduce pesticide use and manage invasive species through careful surveying, mapping, and control measures.
- **Recording and Monitoring:** All findings and progress are meticulously recorded on CEDaR, ensuring our actions are transparent and informed by data.
- **Forest Schools and Eco-Schools Support:** We invest in the future by supporting Forest Schools and Eco-Schools, providing children and young people with the knowledge and skills to protect their environment.
- **Proactive Engagement:** We provide a variety of free events, workshops, and educational programmes to increase environmental awareness and participation in conservation efforts.
- **Citizen Science:** We encourage community involvement through citizen science projects, enabling local people to contribute to scientific research and conservation efforts in meaningful ways.

### Built Heritage

As part of our commitment to enhancing and promoting our built heritage, the Council is actively implementing specific measures in key areas:

- **Planning and Regulation:** The Council uses its planning powers to regulate developments within the district, ensuring that any new construction or modification to existing structures are in harmony with the character and historical significance of heritage buildings and conservation areas.
- **Conservation Areas:** Designating certain areas as Conservation Areas to manage and protect the unique architectural and historical aspects of these locations. In these areas, there are stricter controls over development, demolition, and alterations to preserve their character.

- **Advice and Guidance:** Providing advice, guidance, and support to property owners, developers, and the public on best practices for preserving the historical integrity of buildings and sites. This includes information on appropriate materials, techniques, and designs for repairs and restorations.
- **Collaboration with Heritage Bodies:** Working in partnership with national heritage organisations, such as the National Heritage Lottery Fund or the Historic Environment Division (HED) of the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland, to leverage expertise, resources, and funding for heritage conservation projects.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** Promoting public awareness and appreciation for the district's built heritage through educational programmes, heritage open days, and tours, fostering a sense of pride and stewardship within the community.

## Cultural Heritage

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council delivers a range of activities to preserve and promote cultural heritage. These efforts are aimed at maintaining and celebrating the rich traditions, languages, and artistic expressions of the district.

- **Documentation and Archiving:** The Council undertakes projects to record oral histories, music, dialects, and other forms of intangible heritage.
- **Education and Awareness:** Offering educational programmes and resources to schools and the public about the district's cultural heritage, raising awareness among younger generations and the broader community.
- **Support for Heritage and Cultural Events:** Encouraging and sponsoring cultural events, festivals, workshops, and performances that celebrate local traditions, music, dance, and crafts.
- **Promotion of Language and Dialects:** Initiatives supporting and promoting local languages and dialects, such as the Irish language and Ulster Scots, including language classes, promotional materials, and support for media.
- **Collaboration with Community Groups:** Working closely with heritage and cultural organisations, local history groups, and artists to support efforts to preserve and promote intangible cultural heritage.
- **Heritage Projects:** Supporting and implementing specific projects aimed at preserving, documenting, and promoting aspects of cultural heritage.
- **Grants and Funding:** Providing financial support for projects, events, and activities that aim to preserve and promote cultural heritage within the district.

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This appendix highlights our comprehensive approach toward our heritage. We are committed to fostering biodiversity, sustainability, and a deep appreciation of both our natural, built and cultural heritage.

## Appendix 2: SWOT Analysis for Heritage Strategy

The Council has undertaken a SWOT analysis to identify and assess strengths, weaknesses, external opportunities, and threats. This analysis provides an opportunity to align the Heritage Strategy with organizational goals, maximizing its impact on community development, economic regeneration, tourism, and heritage preservation. The SWOT analysis serves as a foundational step to ensure a strategic and responsive approach to heritage planning.

### Strengths

- **Abundance of landscape heritage**
- **Strong sense of place** for residents in County Fermanagh and County Tyrone
- **Heritage assets** that tell a compelling story
- **Strong education programmes** delivered by the Council
- **Emerging partnership opportunities**
- **Plan aligns** with organizational focus on key actions
- **Utilization of existing resources** to strengthen the offer
- **Innovations with AI and new technologies**
- **Strong cultural and built heritage** to support the visitor economy
- **Policy drivers** that align with objectives
- **Robust governance procedures** in the Council
- **Buy-in from elected members**

### Weaknesses

- **Limited heritage assets** in the Omagh area in Council ownership
- **Limited access** to assets in private ownership
- **Lack of funding** for project development
- **Challenging financial landscape**
- **Identification of heritage synergies** across the Council
- **Need to improve internal and external communications**
- **Start/Stop nature of funding** and project sustainability
- **Perception of heritage** as appealing only to older people
- **Politicisation of cultural heritage**
- **Climate change impact** on heritage assets
- **Limited awareness** of heritage importance
- **Impacts on biodiversity and ecology** of new developments

### Opportunities

- **Develop projects** with soft outputs to enhance a sense of place
- **Support heritage events** that foster a sense of place
- **Utilize AI and new technologies** for diverse engagement

### Threats

- **Revenue tail** from new developments
- **Funding challenges** for ongoing initiatives
- **Biodiversity and ecology impacts** of new developments

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This SWOT analysis will guide the Council in making informed decisions and strategies that enhance heritage planning and conservation efforts in the community.



## **Appendix 3: Heritage Initiatives and Projects**

### **1. Necarne Castle: A Journey through Time and Restoration**

Necarne Castle, also known as Castle Irvine, stands as a prime example of the Council's commitment to heritage. Dating back to the 17th century, the castle is currently at risk and undergoing a restoration process that aligns with ecological preservation efforts for bat habitats and bird sanctuaries. The goal is to prevent the imminent collapse of the historic structure while establishing a long-term strategy for its restoration.

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### **2. Omagh's Musical Legacy**

Omagh boasts a rich musical heritage, from the Showband era to hosting the largest Bluegrass festival outside the USA. The town nurtures local talent through the St Eugene's Brass and Reed Band and Paddy Laird's pantomimes at the Town Hall. To celebrate and preserve this musical legacy, Omagh has introduced a walking trail featuring iconic Showband landmarks and hosts an annual music weekend along with educational workshops that engage the community and foster a strong sense of identity.

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### **3. Roots of Resilience: Trees and Woodlands**

The Council is committed to planting 4,000 native trees annually through the "Trees for Bees" initiative to enhance biodiversity and support ecological balance. This initiative seeks to create new pocket woodlands within the Council estate, following the principles of "Right Tree, Right Place, Right Reason." This strategic planting not only supports the bee population but also contributes significantly to the district's environmental sustainability goals.

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### **4. Cappagh Graveyard: Partnership & Conservation**

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, in collaboration with Cappagh Historical Society, has worked diligently to preserve the remains of the Old Church at Dunmullan and its associated graveyard. In 2019, they successfully removed large trees and rampant ivy that threatened the structure, and continue to form strong partnerships to ensure the long-term conservation of this historical site.

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### **5. Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan: A Blueprint for Sustainable Conservation**

The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan reflects the Council's commitment to preserving and promoting biodiversity. By focusing on three central objectives and seven strategic priorities, the Plan aims to safeguard and rejuvenate the local environment. Achievements include:

- Significant increases in pollinator-friendly areas
  - Creation of community woodlands
  - Reduction in pesticide usage
  - Decrease in invasive species infestations
  - Enhanced awareness and community participation in biodiversity preservation
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## **6. Reviving Enniskillen Workhouse: A Triumph of Heritage Restoration**

The Enniskillen Workhouse has transformed from a workhouse during the famine almost 200 years ago to a vibrant heritage space. A collaboration between Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and South West College, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, resulted in meticulous restoration that opened to the public in 2023. This Grade B2 listed Victorian building now serves as a cultural hub and modern business facility, blending history with contemporary needs.

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## **7. Commitment to Education**

The Council is dedicated to fostering education and knowledge-sharing opportunities to engage the community in heritage preservation. Focused on young people, it offers various educational programs, booklets, workshops, and virtual resources aligned with school curriculums. Additionally, the Council extends outreach to health and wellbeing centres, viewing education as a catalyst for collective civic involvement in appreciating heritage.

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## **8. Altanagh Archaeology: Collaboration and Community Engagement**

The historic townland of Altanagh in County Tyrone was excavated in 1979, revealing Neolithic and Bronze Age burials. Recognizing its significance, landowner Danny Kerr restored the site and donated artefacts to Fermanagh County Museum. In 2023, Fermanagh Omagh District Council collaborated with the Termonmaguirc Historical Society to exhibit Altanagh artefacts at the Patrician Hall in Carrickmore, engaging local schools and community groups.

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## **9. Enniskillen Castle Museum**

Enniskillen Castle museum is pivotal in preserving and interpreting the history of County Fermanagh. The museum showcases archaeological and historical artefacts,

supported by local donations and the Association of Friends of Fermanagh County Museum. The Enniskillen Castle Masterplan 2016 improved heritage services and expanded displays, reinforcing the museum's role as a key heritage site while fostering community engagement.

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## **10. Lough Erne Pilgrim Way**

The Lough Erne Pilgrim Way combines spirituality, history, and natural beauty, following ancient paths once tread by pilgrims. The trail connects historic Christian sites and has positively impacted local communities by fostering sustainable economic growth through tourism and supporting local businesses while preserving historic landmarks.

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## **11. Global Voices, Local Choices**

The "Global Voices, Local Choices" initiative empowers underrepresented communities in Northern Ireland to curate interpretations of World Cultures collections held by National Museums NI. By engaging marginalized communities through art, music, and creative writing, the project ensures diverse histories and cultures are accurately represented, enriching the cultural landscape with varied narratives and perspectives.

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This appendix outlines the key heritage initiatives undertaken by the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, demonstrating a strong commitment to heritage preservation, community engagement, and environmental sustainability.

## **Appendix 4: Strategic Context**

Programme for Government – Outcomes Framework

DfC - 'Investing in Creative Delivery

DfE Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland (Draft)

New Decade New Approach

10x Economic Framework

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Community Plan 2030

Local Development Plan 2030

Climate Change and Sustainable Development Action Plan 2021–2024

Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027

Irish Language Strategy (2022)

Ulster Scots Policy (2021)

Good Relations Strategy (2021-2024)

Linguistic Diversity Policy (2014)

Estates Strategy (Draft)

Events & Festivals Strategy (2020-2025)

Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark Development Plan 2021-2030

Omagh Place Shaping Plan (2022)

Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan (2022)

Visitor Experience Development Plan (2022-2032)

Collections Management Framework (2024-2027)

Sperrin AONB Management Plan (currently under development)

### **Programme for Government – Outcomes Framework**

The Programme for Government supports the Heritage Plan's mission to safeguard the past and enrich the community's future. It supports sustainable living and environmental protection, which are essential for preserving heritage. It also promotes inclusivity and respect, aligning with the Heritage Plan's ambition to make heritage accessible to everyone. Heritage initiatives encourage healthy, active lives, and by enhancing cultural appeal, the region becomes an attractive place to live, work and visit.

### **DfC - 'Investing in Creative Delivery**

The 'Investing in Creative Delivery' document aligns with the Heritage Plan by emphasising a comprehensive government approach that recognises and enhances the role of culture, arts and heritage in broader social, economic and environmental policies.

It also seeks to address imbalances and barriers within the culture, arts and heritage ecosystem, fostering a more equitable environment. Moreover, it aims to coordinate with other sectoral strategies and initiatives, promoting collaboration and support for the region's cultural heritage. Finally, it prioritises community engagement, which resonates with the Heritage Plan's objective of making heritage initiatives accessible and inclusive for all, ultimately fostering a more holistic and community-driven approach to heritage preservation and enrichment.

### **Corporate Plan 2024-2028**

The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Corporate Plan 2024-2028 contains several actions for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the County's natural, built and cultural heritage.

Our vision is that, "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" – *Corporate Plan 2024-2028*

Core Objective:

Protect, enhance, and make accessible the rich, diverse, natural, built and cultural heritage of our district.

Actions:

We will conserve, develop, promote, and enhance access to our heritage assets increasing and contributing to civic pride and economic development, community cohesion and wellbeing.

We will work in partnership to create opportunities for participation, supporting greater inclusion, understanding and valuing the diverse and dynamic cultural heritage in the district

### **Community Plan 2023**

The Community Plan's emphasis on people and communities can be supported by the Heritage Plan through the promotion of inclusivity and engagement, ensuring that heritage initiatives are accessible and meaningful to local people. This fosters a sense of ownership and pride in cultural heritage.

The Community Plan's focus on the economy, infrastructure and skills provides essential support to the Heritage Plan by offering the resources and infrastructure required for heritage preservation and promotion. A robust economy and infrastructure can enable the development of heritage sites and the cultivation of skills vital for heritage conservation.

Furthermore, the Community Plan's environmental considerations complement the Heritage Plan by emphasising sustainable practices, crucial for heritage preservation as it safeguards natural surroundings and cultural heritage for future generations. In turn, the Heritage Plan's efforts contribute to the Community Plan's objectives by enriching the cultural fabric of the community and promoting sustainable heritage practices, thereby mutually reinforcing their shared goals.

### **Local Development Plan 2030**

The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Local Development Plan 2030 sets out spatial planning policy objectives and shapes the development and growth of the district until 2030.

Sustainable development is at the core of the Local Development Plan with historic environment, natural environment and landscape key elements. Locally, these elements contribute towards economic regeneration and a growing tourism market, alongside more holistic style benefits, such as health and wellbeing. The Local Development Plan seeks to ensure heritage assets, and the integrity of their setting, are protected, conserved and, where possible, enhanced. There is also recognition of the balance between investment opportunity and historical integrity.

### **Climate Change and Sustainable Development Action Plan 2021–2024**

The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Climate Change and Sustainable Development Action Plan 2021–2024 sets out and monitors the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions as part of the global challenge to reduce and adapt to the impact of climate change.

The threat of climate change and the need to promote sustainability is hugely important. Climate action has become fundamental to all our work and will drive many local and national initiatives in the coming years.

### **Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027**

The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027 sets out how we recognise, manage, join and collaborate to protect and develop biodiversity in Fermanagh and Omagh District over the next five years.

The importance of heritage and biodiversity are well established across the local authority and the wider community. The Biodiversity Strategy supports the local authorities, local communities and partners to achieve the best outcomes.

The strategy draws attention to more holistic outcomes such as health and wellbeing. And while the long-term societal impacts of the pandemic remain largely unknown, it did enable individuals to connect with heritage and the environment in new ways.

**The Heritage Plan is not only interlinked with the documents previously mentioned but also plays a vital role in harmonising and reinforcing the following key initiatives and strategies: Irish Language Strategy (2022), Ulster Scots Policy (2021), Good Relations Strategy (2021-2024), Linguistic Diversity Policy (2014), Estates Strategy (Draft), Events & Festivals Strategy (2020-2025), Omagh Place Shaping Plan (2022), Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan (2022), Visitor Experience Development Plan (2022-2032), Fermanagh Castle Museums: Accreditation (Currently under review) and Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark Management Plan (2020-2030).**

## Appendix 5: Finding out more about Heritage

An Creagan Visitor Centre - [www.an-creagan.com/biodiversity](http://www.an-creagan.com/biodiversity)

Biodiversity in Northern Ireland - [www.biodiversityni.com](http://www.biodiversityni.com)

Botanical Survey for British Isles – [www.bsbi.org.uk](http://www.bsbi.org.uk)

Butterfly Conservation - [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)

Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) – [www.nmni.com/cedar](http://www.nmni.com/cedar)

Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark – [www.cuilcaghlakelands.org](http://www.cuilcaghlakelands.org)

Ecoschools - [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org)

Enniskillen Castle Museums - [www.enniskillencastle.co.uk](http://www.enniskillencastle.co.uk)

Fermanagh Red Squirrel Group – [www.fermanaghredsquirrelgroup.com](http://www.fermanaghredsquirrelgroup.com)

Heritage Fund – [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

Heritage Trust Network - [www.heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk](http://www.heritagetrustnetwork.org.uk)

Historic Monuments Council - [communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/historic-monuments-council](http://communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/historic-monuments-council)

Keep NI Beautiful - [www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org)

Lough Erne Landscape Partnership – [www.lelp.org.uk](http://www.lelp.org.uk)

Lough's Agency - [www.loughs-agency.org](http://www.loughs-agency.org)

Marble Arch Caves - [www.marblearchcaves.co.uk](http://www.marblearchcaves.co.uk)

National Biodiversity Data Centre - [www.biodiversityireland.ie/](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/)

National Trust - [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Northern Ireland Bat Group - [www.bats-ni.org.uk](http://www.bats-ni.org.uk)

Northern Ireland Environment Link - [www.nienvironmentlink.org](http://www.nienvironmentlink.org)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

Saving Our Magnificent Meadows - [www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk](http://www.magnificentmeadows.org.uk)

Strule Arts Centre, Rooftop Museum - [www.struleartscentre.co.uk/your-visit/roof-top-museum](http://www.struleartscentre.co.uk/your-visit/roof-top-museum)

The Conservation Volunteers - [www.tcv.org.uk](http://www.tcv.org.uk)

Ulster Architectural Heritage – [www.ulsterarchitecturalheritage.org.uk](http://www.ulsterarchitecturalheritage.org.uk)

Ulster Wildlife - [www.ulsterwildlife.org](http://www.ulsterwildlife.org)

Waterways Ireland - [www.waterwaysireland.org](http://www.waterwaysireland.org)

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