



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

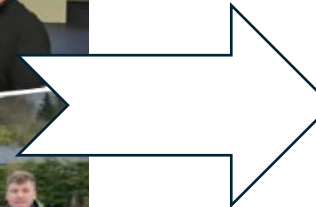


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## Performance Improvement Plan

Year 1:  
Continuous Improvement  
2024-2028

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025



**Year 2:  
Continuous  
Improvement  
2024-2028**

**Fermanagh and Omagh District Council: draft Improvement Objectives 2025-2026**

**Public Consultation**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February until Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

# Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

## Proposed Improvement Objectives 2025-2026



### What we propose we will do

The Council has a statutory duty to identify, consult upon, publish and work to deliver annual Improvement Objectives (IOs). It was agreed in the development of Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025, to align the Council's IOs for the next four years to the core priorities outlined in the new Corporate Plan, 'Our Council, Our Plan 2024-2028'. The four objectives agreed are:

- **We will prioritise the Council progressing towards Net Zero.**
- **We will work in partnership to tackle disadvantage to ensure our people have access to opportunities.**
- **We will work in partnership to achieve a more inclusive economy and to promote shared prosperity across our district**
- **We will seek to innovate and advance our governance and digital capabilities to improve the quality of our services and the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council.**

The Council has reviewed the progress made to date in its 'Taking Stock Report 2024<sup>1</sup>' and is proposing to continue with its current IOs for 2025-2026 to build on the progress already achieved but have refined some of the associated actions. By maintaining a consistent approach, the council aims to ensure the efficient use of resources, enhance service delivery, and support long term approaches to build on economic development, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing. This continuity has enabled the Council to refine ongoing initiatives, leverage established partnerships and respond effectively to evolving local needs, especially in relation to tackling disadvantage. Additionally, the Improvement Plan aligns to statutory requirements and reflects feedback from relevant stakeholders, ensuring that it remains relevant and community focused.

The tables below provide further detail on each of the Improvement Objectives, how each aligns to the 'FO 2030 Community Plan', the Corporate Plan 'Our Council, Our Plan 2024 – 2028', the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, relevant legislation, and strategies at the regional and local level. Information is provided on associated evidence and data trends which have supported identification of each Improvement Objective.

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<sup>1</sup> Mid-Year Progress on Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025 Improvement Objectives Report 2024, Regeneration and Communities Committee, 10 December 2024, Item 7.2, Paper J, available at: <https://fermanaghomagh.public-minutes.com/#c90bb6a372e264a92e6691c31d991010>

## 1. We will prioritise the Council progressing towards Net Zero.

<b>Improvement Objective One</b>	<b>Lead officer: Director of Environment and Place</b>  <b>Supported by: Lead Climate and Sustainable Development Officer and Head of Waste Management</b>
<b>Related Community Plan theme outcome/s and Corporate Plan priority area</b>	<b>Theme:</b> Environment  <b>Outcome: 6</b> Our outstanding natural and built environment is sustainably managed and, where possible, enhanced  <b>FODC Corporate Priority:</b> Climate Action: Embed sustainability to ensure progress towards Net Zero by 2040.
<b>Links to UN Sustainable Development Goals</b>	
<b>Target Customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All residents</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Agriculture sector</li> <li>• Green energy providers</li> <li>• Statutory Partners</li> <li>• Community and Voluntary sector groups</li> <li>• Schools and education sectors</li> <li>• Council Staff (inc. Building Managers)</li> <li>• Land and Property Developers</li> </ul>

**Strategic significance at regional and local level**

Progressing towards net zero in NI involves strategies at both regional and local level addressing emissions reduction across various sectors.

**Key legislation, regional strategies and plans include:**

- **Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022** :serves as a critical framework for addressing climate change within the region. It mandates ambitious targets to transition NI to a low-carbon economy and aligns with international and UK climate commitments.
- **Draft Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS) for Northern Ireland**: is designed to guide policymakers in integrating environmental consideration into decision making. It outlines five key environmental principles: prevention, precautionary actions, polluter-pays, rectification at source, and sustainable development. Once finalised these principles will legally obligate Ministers and Departments to incorporate them into policymaking under the Environment Act 2021.
- **NI Climate Action Plan**: This overarching framework outlines sector specific actions to achieve the legally binding net zero target by 2050, focusing on energy, transport, and agriculture.
- **The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024** require public bodies, such as Council, to report on their carbon emissions, as well as their plans and progress in reducing these emissions. The first Climate Change “Mitigation” Report is due October 2025. Public bodies will also be required to report on what they plan to do about, and their progress in, tackling the risks and impacts from climate change, with the first Climate Change “Adaption” Report due on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.
- **Green Growth Strategy**: Promotes sustainable economic development by integrating environmental sustainability into regional policies, including renewable energy production, clean technologies, and resource efficiency. This strategy is the primary framework that embeds the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 and integrates the legal obligations set out by the Climate Act, including the target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and a minimum 48% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The strategy emphasises decarbonisation, natural capital, circular economy and just transition.
- **Energy Strategy for NI (2021)**: Aims to transition to 70% renewable electricity by 2030 and enhance energy efficiency in homes, businesses, and public infrastructure.

**Key local strategies and plans include**

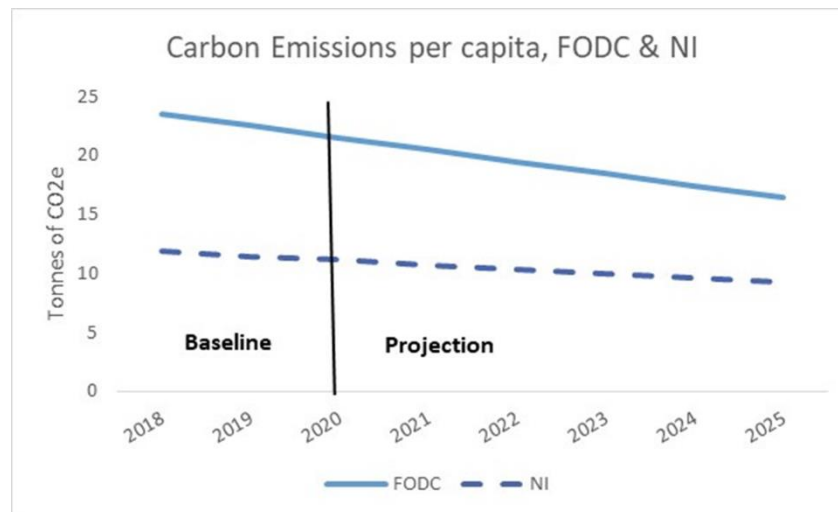
- [FODC Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy 2020-2030](#) and [Action Plan Restore, Revive, Thrive](#)
- [Local Development Plan 2030: Plan Strategy](#)
- [FODC Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [FODC Energy Management Policy 2019/20- 2029/30](#)
- [FODC Estate Strategy 2020-2030](#)
- **FODC Fleet Strategy** (internal document)

Collaboration between regional and local plans and policies ensures alignment of strategies, pooling of resources, and sharing of good practice.

**What's the story behind the baseline?**

Outcome six measures four population indicators at strategic level. Two of which are directly linked and are outlined below:

**6a: Carbon emissions**

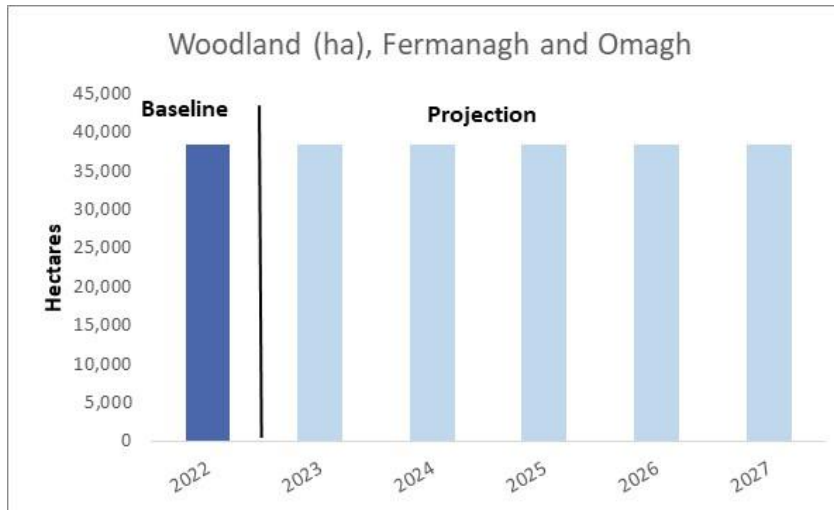


The average resident of the Fermanagh and Omagh district emits 21.1 tonnes of CO2e per annum. This is significantly higher than the average NI resident (10.6 tonnes CO2e). The CO2e emissions in FODC comprise of:

- 11.1 tonnes of CO2 (52%)
- 7.9 tonnes of methane (CH4) (37%)
- 2.2 tonnes of nitrous oxide (N2O) (10%)

These are all above the NI average but are likely to be driven in part by the km of roads in the (large) Fermanagh and Omagh district and the large agriculture industry.

### 6d: Natural Environment Woodland



There are 38,286 hectares of woodland in the Fermanagh and Omagh District

This includes conifer, broadleaf, mixed, short rotation coppice, regenerating woodland and types unknown. Approximately 1/3 of NI's woodland is in Fermanagh and Omagh.

The provision and good maintenance of woodland is vital to ensuring a thriving range of wildlife, flowers and fauna. It is also a key contributor to carbon sequestration.

#### Summary analysis:

Climate Change is the most significant

challenge likely to face the planet over the next ten years, globally. This objective has been retained from the Performance and Improvement Plan 2024-2025 as it is a key priority in the Green Growth Strategy and supports implementation of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 'Restore, Revive and Thrive'. The Climate Act (NI) 2022 brings a new legislative remit that all public bodies and businesses must implement and report on in NI. It has given us clear policy direction to reduce carbon emissions setting a target for 2050. It is still unclear how regional government will support local councils to meet net zero targets at local level through its central budget allocation, however climate change is central to all our activities, and we plan to lead the Council and community to carbon neutrality whilst acknowledging the financial constraints we are working within.

Councils are on the front line of mitigating climate change impacts, including extreme weather events, flooding, and biodiversity loss. The Council want to ensure that it has in place all the necessary processes and support mechanisms to capitalise on opportunities and meet its new legislative responsibilities whilst setting an example for residents and businesses, encouraging wider adoption of sustainable practices within the community.



	<p>The focus of the new Corporate Plan, 'Our Council, Our Plan 2024-2028' is to progress as an organisation to net zero. By prioritising net zero the Council is future proofing our communities against these environmental risks, ensuring sustainable development for future generations. The Council continue to strive to be innovative and seek new ways to do this and have identified its estate, fleet and amount of waste to landfill as the key focus over the next four years, however ongoing work in other areas will also be progressed.</p> <p>Climate change is perceived to significantly impact the cost of living for residents in Fermanagh and Omagh due to rising energy costs, increased insurance premiums, and the need for adaptation measures. Presenting the case for short term sacrifices to achieve long term sustainability requires a careful balance of transparency empathy. To gain public support for measures like retrofitting and expanding renewable energies, it's essential to frame the conversation with clarity and focus on benefits.</p>	
<b>Statutory Service Criteria</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strategic Effectiveness</li> <li>2. Service Quality</li> <li>3. Service Availability</li> <li>4. Efficiency</li> <li>5. Sustainability</li> <li>6. Innovation</li> </ol>	
<b>Actions (What we propose to do)</b>	<b>Actions retained or refined</b>	<b>How we are monitoring progress</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the Energy Performance Rating (EPC) of our estate to improve our energy management and efficiency.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to undertake EPC audits of priority one buildings.</li> <li>• Analyse the results of audits to support the development of an action plan with recommendations to reduce our energy use and promote energy efficiency practices.</li> </ul>	<p># of Priority 1 buildings within Council estate with an EPC rating</p>

<p>2. Increase the % of household waste preparing for reuse, recycling or composting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to progress waste transformation project to deliver an efficient and effective waste management service.</li> <li>• Continue to explore opportunities to increase the amount and quality of waste that is recycled.</li> <li>• Continue to promote campaigns to support a circular economy e.g. Clean, Dry, Empty, Flat (CDEF) campaign.</li> <li>• Develop initiatives to promote waste management and recycling and identify associated funding opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p># The amount of (tonnage) of local authority collected municipal waste arisings</p> <p>% engagement rate for waste communications and circular economy</p> <p># funding applications submitted</p> <p>% mixed dry recyclables</p>
<p>3. Reduce the Council's fleet emissions using sustainable fuels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the use of sustainable fuels within the council fleet</li> <li>• Continue to work with external partners to identify opportunities for the use of sustainable fuel source.</li> </ul>	<p># Vehicles fuelled by sustainable fuels</p> <p>CO2e emissions from the Council fleet</p>

**What difference will these actions potentially make?**

- Embed the legislative duties contained in the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 into our governance, processes, and interventions at local level.
- Improve the environmental behaviours of our citizens and encourage a more sustainable approach.
- A sustainable and transformative approach to waste management expanding recycling programs, reducing landfill waste, and encouraging circular economy practices.
- Energy efficiency is promoted. Retrofitting council buildings with energy efficient technologies.
- Transitioning the council's vehicle fleet to low emission vehicles.
- Assurance that ongoing efforts are being made to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> levels and support positive climate action through more sustainable management of the Council's estate and energy consumption levels.

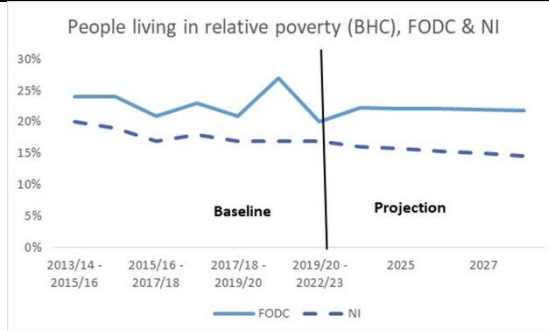


## 2. We will work in partnership to tackle disadvantage to ensure our people have access to opportunities.

<b>Improvement Objective Two</b>	<b>Lead officer: Director of Community, Health, and Leisure</b>  <b>Supported by: Head of Community Services and Head of Wellbeing and Cultural Services</b>
<b>Related Community Plan Theme, Outcome/s and Corporate Plan priority area</b>	<b>Theme:</b> People and Communities  <b>Outcome 1:</b> Our people are healthy and well – physically, mentally, and emotionally. <b>Outcome 3:</b> Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient, and empowered and <b>Outcome 4.</b> Our children and young people have best start in life.  <b>FODC Corporate Priority: People and Communities:</b> Provide opportunities for everyone to live well
<b>Links to UN Sustainable Development Goals</b>	
<b>Target customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women and girls</li> <li>• Older People</li> <li>• People with a disability</li> <li>• People with specific medical conditions</li> <li>• Children and Young People</li> <li>• Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities</li> <li>• People living in rural areas</li> <li>• People living in areas of disadvantage</li> </ul>

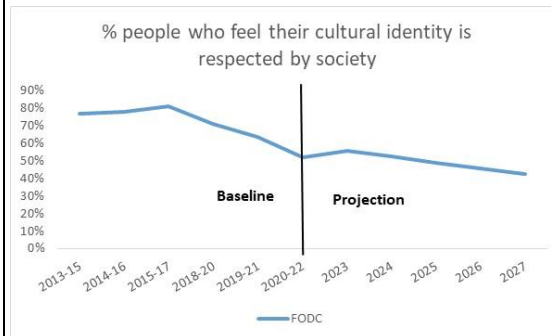
<p><b>Strategic significance at regional and local level</b></p>	<p>Tackling disadvantage and ensuring access to opportunities for all spans across many cross-cutting policy areas both at regional and local level. However, careful consideration using data and evidence has been used to support the identification of those considered target groups that are most at risk, as well as those groups of people considered ‘hard to reach’ in the IO context.</p> <p><b><u>Key legislation and regional strategies and plans include:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Local Government Act (NI) 2014</b> is the cornerstone legislation guiding local government. Key provisions in this context include:</li> <li>• <b>Community Planning.</b> These plans focus on improving social, economic and environment wellbeing while reducing inequality and disadvantage.</li> <li>• <b>Section 75:</b> Requires councils to promote equality of opportunity across a range of dimensions including age, gender, disability and socio-economic background.</li> <li>• <b>Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework:</b> This framework supports councils in addressing disadvantage in urban areas. Objectives include tackling poverty and social exclusion and empowering local communities by providing them with resources.</li> <li>• <b>Good relations Duty:</b> Provides that councils have a duty to promote good relations under the NI Act 1998.</li> <li>• <b>The Rural Needs Act (NI)2006:</b> This Act obliges councils to consider the needs of rural communities when developing policies and services. It aims to ensure fair access to opportunities for those living in rural and often disadvantage areas.</li> <li>• <b>Tackling Rural Inequalities and Promoting Social Inclusion TRIPSII Framework</b> supports local government efforts to tackle disadvantage and provide opportunities for all.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DfC emerging Anti-Poverty Strategy:</b> Although still under consultation this forthcoming strategy aligns with council’s community planning duties by setting out measures to reduce poverty and provide equitable opportunities. Councils are expected to play a key role on delivering on these objectives.</li> <li>• <b>Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022- 2030:</b> This strategy aims to deliver a holistic response to gender-based violence by addressing prevention protection, and support.</li> <li>• <b>DoH emerging Strategic Framework to prevent the harm caused by obesity and improved diet and levels of physical activity.</b></li> <li>• <b>NI Children and Young People’s Strategy 2019-2029:</b> Councils must consider this strategy, which aims to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. It emphasizes reducing child poverty, supporting education employment and health initiatives for disadvantaged youth.</li> <li>• <b>Mental Health Strategy (NI) 2021-2031:</b> This strategy is a long-term plan to transform mental health services and improve mental health wellbeing for all.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Key local strategies and plans include</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">FODC Active Together Strategy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">FODC ‘Pathways out of Poverty’ Strategy</a></li> <li>• <b>FO Local Community Wellbeing Plans</b> (internal documents)</li> </ul>
<p><b>What’s the story behind the baseline?</b></p>	<p>Outcomes one, three and four have 5 directly relevant population indicators, strategic level population indicators. They are outlined below:  <b>3a: Relative Poverty</b></p>



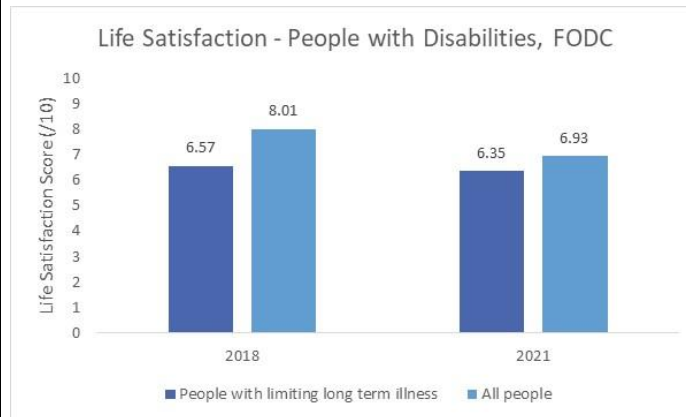
In Fermanagh and Omagh 23%, of the population, on average, has been in relative poverty over the last 6 years. Poverty (and deprivation) contributes negatively to a wide range of issues, including health, education and economic outcomes.

### 3b: Cultural Identity



The latest data (2020-22) show that 52% of people living in Fermanagh and Omagh believe their 'cultural identity is respected by society'. This indicator is broad, covering ethnic cultures, a person's identity and good relations issues. There has been a notable decrease in those who feel their cultural identity is respected by society. The key to improving this figure is to focus on embracing quality, inclusivity and diversity. The long-term risk of allowing this indicator to decline could be an increase in hate crimes.

### 3c: Life Satisfaction

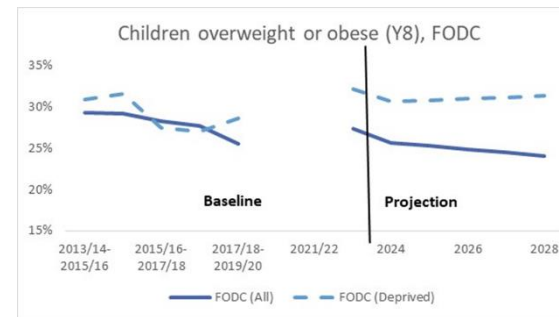
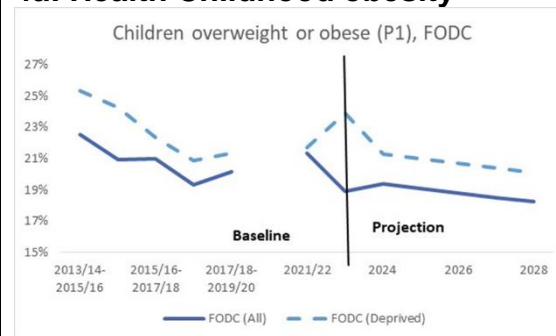


Life satisfaction is measured as a score / 10 across a range of facets of life:

- General life
- Physical health
- Mental health/emotional wellbeing
- Finances
- Living conditions
- Connectivity

The average score shows that people with a disability / limiting long term illness report a lower life satisfaction score. The difference was more marked in 2018 (the pre-Covid-19 era).

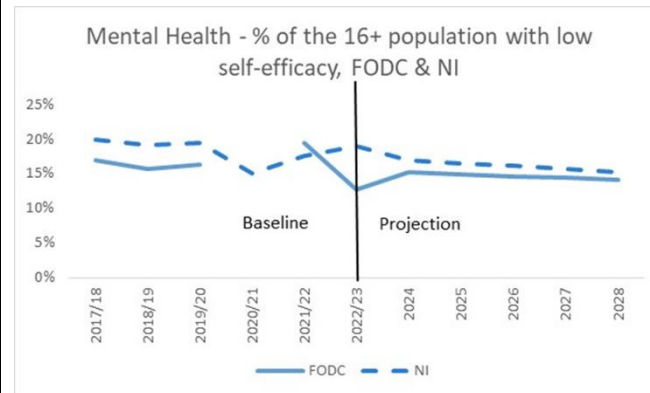
### 4a: Health Childhood obesity



In Fermanagh and Omagh, 19% of P1 children and 27% of Y8 children are overweight or obese. This is higher in deprived areas (24% and 32% respectively). These figures relate to the 2022/23 year. Data was unavailable for 2020/21 and 2021/22 (for Y8 only) due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The trend suggests a continuation of the (marginal) downward trend; however, the issue is whether it is acceptable to have over 1 in 5 children overweight and how this may impact future health outcomes.

### 1c: Mental Health - % of the 16+ population with low self-efficacy



The latest data (2022/23) suggests that 13% of people living in Fermanagh and Omagh have low self-efficacy. This is a statistically significant difference from the NI average. However, the significant change year-on-year in Fermanagh and Omagh is an anomaly and should be treated with caution. People with low self-efficacy have low self-confidence and thus feeling they have a minimal ability to control their own lives. Self-efficacy is considered as a pre-cursor to mental health; a person who has low self-efficacy doubts their

abilities, are less ambitious and give up on their aims when challenged.

### Summary analysis:

The Northern Ireland Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2022/23 states that 18% of individuals in NI (approximately 349,000 people) are considered to live in relative poverty (before housing costs); 14% of individuals in NI (approximately 271,000 people) are considered to live in absolute poverty (before housing costs). Both measures have increased year-on-year. Of all family types, 'couples without children' and 'pensioner couples' had the lowest risk of being in relative poverty, at 13%. The family type at the highest risk was 'single with children', at 38%. In total, almost one-in-four children living in NI are living in relative poverty. In total, 9% of individuals in NI live in 'food insecure' households. Of those living in relative poverty, 18% (64,000 individuals) lived in food insecure households; 25% of children in relative poverty live in food insecure households (27,000 children). In



Fermanagh and Omagh, 23% of individuals, on average, have been in relative poverty over the last 6 years.

Poverty within FO has been a longstanding, deep rooted issue. The FODC locality claims almost one tenth of the 10% most income deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in NI. Poverty rates in FO are higher than the Northern Ireland average and a fifth of children here currently live in poverty. FO specific research has highlighted that there are areas where co poverties exist, namely fuel, food and transport poverty and concluded that:

- 157 Small Areas (59%) are high-risk clusters for either fuel, food or transport poverty
- 52 Small Areas (33%) experience at least two types of poverty
- 4 Small Areas experience all three types of poverty (fuel, food and transport)

FO has the largest land mass and smallest population of all Local Authority areas within NI, almost 70% of our dwellers live outside the main towns of Omagh and Enniskillen, therefore, accessing the majority of services, jobs and opportunities can be difficult, thereby worsening poverty and making positive lifestyle choices more difficult. This is evidenced by low levels of self-reported physical activity, high levels of residents within the WHSCT who are overweight or obese and higher than NI average levels of dental cavities in those under 18. The cost-of-living crisis is having a significant impact on our residents with advice services reporting that debt queries have increased, in part, arising due to our lower than NI average Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI). FODC recognises that reducing poverty and improving life chances cannot just be about mitigating the impact of this severe hardship residents are currently facing but, tackling the root causes and work in Improvement Objective three of this plan will support addressing the long-term issues of economic inactivity, low wage levels and enhancing skills. However, immediate support is undoubtedly needed, and this improvement objective will work to support people now.

Ending violence against women and girls is a crucial government priority in NI including FO due to the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence and its devastating impact on individuals, families and communities. In NI, 98% of women report experiencing some form of violence or abuse in their lifetime, with 70% facing such experiences within the past year. Domestic abuse is a

	significant issue within this district as evidenced by police reports and services struggling to meet demands.	
<b>Statutory Service Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Effectiveness</li> <li>• Service Availability</li> <li>• Fairness</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Innovation</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (What we propose to do)</b>	<b>What might this look like</b>	<b>How we are monitoring progress</b>
4. Provide immediate support for people living in poverty.	<p>Develop and deliver a communications plan to work to reduce the stigma associated with poverty and empower people to seek support when required.</p> <p>Implementing an Integrated Advice Partnership Fund</p> <p>Undertake a poverty-proofing review of business areas to identify if we are doing all we can to support residents impacted by poverty.</p>	<p>Communications plan developed Y/N</p> <p>% engagement rate by Reach for Anti-Poverty</p> <p>Provider Appointed Y/N</p> <p># people supported with debt advice in Fermanagh and Omagh</p> <p>Completed poverty audit of Council Services Y/N</p> <p>Recommendations considered and agreed Y/N</p> <p># recommendations implemented by services areas</p>
5. Increase participation in physical activity	Improve the pathways to participation by promoting the availability of programmes and opportunities through the development of a single point of	<p>Information platform operational</p> <p>% of programmes promoted on the new information platform</p>

<p>among targeted groups.</p>	<p>information and by incentivising engagement after a targeted intervention.</p> <p>Engage with disability advocacy groups to identify barriers to participation and make reasonable adjustments to improve access to programming and activities.</p> <p>Support local clubs and societies to increase opportunities for people with a disability to participate in physical activity.</p> <p>Increase participation in physical activity amongst people with a disability by 15% from 24/25 figures</p>	<p># of eligible participants availing of incentive schemes</p> <p># meetings held % meeting attendance # clubs and societies engaged with</p> <p># local clubs and societies engaged with # people with a disability participating in organised programmes</p> <p># people with a disability participating physical activity by people with a disability in organised programmes and leisure facilities</p>
<p>6. Promote positive attitudes to end violence against Women and Girls.</p>	<p>Support local organisation to end violence against women and girls through utilisation of the Change Fund</p> <p>Promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls across the Community and Wellbeing directorate</p>	<p>#grants awarded</p> <p># initiatives developed</p> <p># staff trained</p>

### What difference will this action make?

- Support those in poverty to ensure they meet their basic needs in an unprecedented time with significant rising costs of living and more and more low paid families suffering food, fuel, and transport poverty.
- Utilise data and intelligence at local level in relation to deprivation and ensure projects and interventions are targeted at the most vulnerable in our society.
- Ensure targeted interventions are supporting those most in need during the cost-of-living crisis by developing a local criterion to assess who is considered 'the most vulnerable'.
- Enhance partnership working amongst support partners and strengthen referral mechanisms improving awareness of service availability and the needs of those living in poverty.
- Develop more sustainable pathways out of poverty, communities must be part of the decision-making process to break the cycle of poverty.
- Increase physical activity of key targeted groups including young people, older people, women, girls, people with a disability, BAME, those on low incomes, rural areas and areas of deprivation.
- Provide opportunities for everyone to participate in physical activity and encourage uptake to promote improved health benefits.
- Targeted strategies and interventions provide a robust foundation to support women and girls affected by violence and ensure a coordinated, long-term response to this pressing issue.
- Providing support for the CVS will ensure they can continue their vital work, effectively and sustainably. With stronger infrastructure, resources and skills these sectors can adapt to changing needs, enhance their impact and contribute to a more inclusive and resilient community.

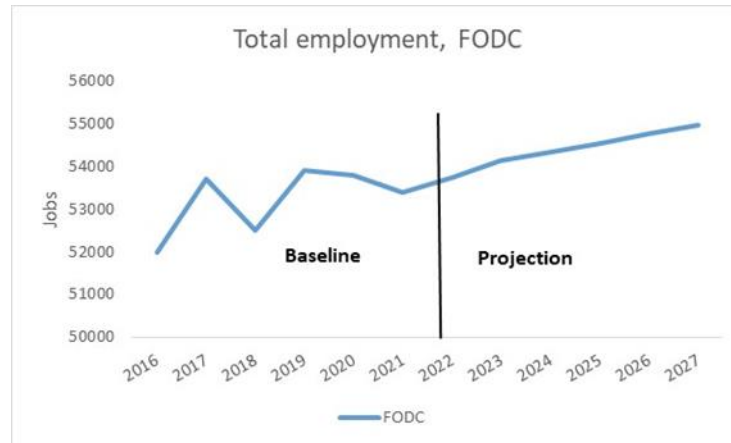
### 3. We will work in partnership to achieve a more inclusive economy and to promote shared prosperity across our district.

<b>Improvement Objective Three</b>	<b>Lead officer: Director of Regeneration and Planning</b>  <b>Supported by: Head of Economic Development and Investment and Head of Place Shaping and Regeneration</b>
<b>Related Community Plan Theme, Outcome/s and Corporate Plan priority area</b>	<b>Theme:</b> Economy, infrastructure, and skills <b>Outcome 3:</b> <b>Outcome 5:</b> Our economy is thriving, expanding, and outward looking  <b>FODC Corporate Plan Priority: Shared Prosperity:</b> Drive an inclusive economy and aid prosperity across our district.
<b>Links to UN Sustainable Development Goals</b>	
<b>Target customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recently unemployed</li> <li>• Those facing redundancies (contractually available to participate in programmes)</li> <li>• School Leavers and Graduates</li> <li>• Under-employed (in part-time employment seeking additional hours)</li> <li>• Existing business</li> <li>• New businesses</li> </ul>

**What's the story behind the baseline?**

Outcome 5 is directly relevant at strategic level and has 3 population indicators which are directly linked to this Improvement Objective and are outlined below:

**5a: Jobs**

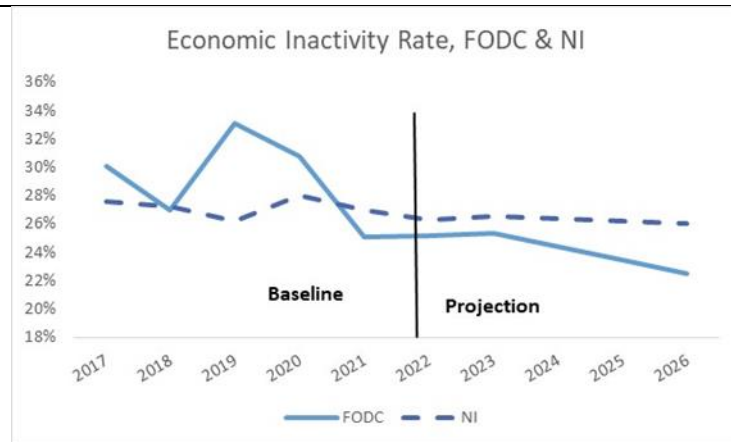


There are approximately 54,000 jobs located in the Fermanagh and Omagh District. This includes employees, self-employed and agriculture.

In the absence of any policy intervention, the projected employment levels are to grow by 900 jobs (2.3%) by 2027.

**5b: Economic Inactivity**



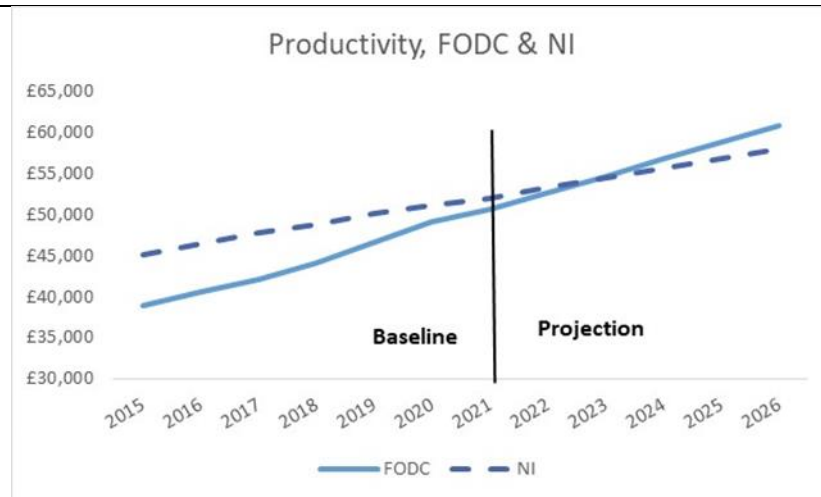


Economic inactivity is a well-known issue within the Northern Ireland economy.

The economic inactivity rate in Fermanagh and Omagh is 25% (2022), compared to the NI average of 26%.

This means that one-in-four of those aged between 16-64 are not available to work. Economic inactivity has tended to be higher in Fermanagh and Omagh than the NI average. Current economic inactivity levels are low by historical standards.

### 5c: Productivity



Productivity – economic output per employee – currently sits at £50,719 in Fermanagh and Omagh and £51,981 in Northern Ireland.

Productivity levels are correlated with wage levels (as productivity is classed as the sum of wages and profits), with productive economies tending to have better paid employees.

Sluggish productivity levels are a UK wide problem. The gap between FODC and NI has narrowed to 2%, but NI’s productivity remains 17% below UK levels and 29% below the ROI average.

**Summary analysis:**

Productivity, measured as GVA per filled job, in the FODC area was £50,719, which is 2% below the NI average, but NI’s productivity remains 17% below UK levels and 29% below the ROI average. There is therefore a continued need for investment in local business supports that effectively increase productivity among the existing workforce (from investment in skills through to capital investment in new equipment and technologies that can enhance productivity). There is also a need to encourage growth among micro, small and medium sized businesses operating within higher value-adding sectors, such as manufacturing and engineering and life and health sciences.

FODC is home to 8,445 registered businesses, accounting for 11% of the registered businesses in Northern Ireland. The number of businesses in the region has grown steadily at a compound annual rate of 1.4% over the past six years. The region has the highest proportion of micro-sized businesses (94%) employing less than 10 people. In the FODC region, 48.6% of businesses don't employ any staff, which is the highest preponderance of businesses without employees of all Local Government District in Northern Ireland.

Lack of access to workers and / or access to workers with the right skills acts as a major barrier to economic growth in FODC. Evidence highlights a tight labour market and high intensity of demand for jobs in key sectors of the local economy. There is therefore a need to ensure that collaborative working between industry and the education sector delivers a strong pipeline of workers with the necessary skills to drive economic growth, and that the district is promoted as a destination for inward flow of workers.

FODC faces the challenge of lower wages. The gross median weekly full-time pay (resident) in 2023 was £495 which is 8% below the NI average of £533 and 16% below the UK average of £574. This wage disparity poses significant potential socio-economic implications for the district. Lower wages can lead to reduced disposable income, impacting local consumer spending and economic growth. It may also contribute to a lower standard of living for residents and difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled workers. Addressing the issue of low wages requires targeted efforts such as promoting economic development, attracting higher-paying industries, improving skills and education, and encouraging entrepreneurship. By raising wages and improving overall economic prosperity, Fermanagh and Omagh can enhance the quality of life for its residents and create a more sustainable and inclusive local economy.

Businesses in the FODC area have reported issues in relation to shortages in the amount of industrial land available to facilitate growth and expansion within the district. As of June 2023, 7% (n=3) of all commercial property for sale / to let was in the FODC Council area, equating to 53 acres for sale in total 55. This deficit could limit growth of existing businesses, deter investment in the district by new businesses due to lack of suitable space, and ultimately negatively affect residents. Land deficit also limits the potential for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the district. FODC is constrained in its ability to attract FDI due to the lack of capacity in relation to industrial land in the Omagh area, creating an indigenous business community which results in less dynamism due to lack of innovative ideas from new and evolving businesses outside the district.

	<p>Evidence shows increasing levels of dynamism within the local economy, reflected in a narrowing gap between local business birth rates and the NI average in recent years. However, analysis of private investment data shows that despite accounting for more than one third of NI businesses, the district accounts for just 0.5% of private investment in innovative businesses. FODC area is home to 10 companies that have received external grants or private investment to support their growth. This represents just under one sixth of the total number of grant and investment raising companies in NI (3%, 10 out of 334). The total value of private investment raised by companies in NI since 2007 is £675m, with a median value of £300k. By comparison, FODC investment raising companies have secured a total of just £3.4m since 2011 (just 0.5% of the Northern Ireland total), with a median value of £200k. Considerable focus is therefore required on linking high- potential businesses, particularly within high-value adding sectors, to existing sources of funding that can accelerate growth.</p>
<p><b>Strategic significance at regional and local level</b></p>	<p><b><u>Key legislation and regional strategies and plans include:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NI Draft Programme for Government:</b> The PfG draft emphasizes improving wellbeing and reducing inequality across NI, with key outcomes related to economic inclusion, employment, and community cohesion. The PFG focuses on the Ministers key priorities, which are: Productivity, Good Jobs, Reduce Carbon Emissions and Regional Balance.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Development Strategy 2035:</b> provides a spatial framework for sustainable development in NI, emphasising balanced regional growth and rural development. Its relevance to FO is to promote connectivity and accessibility to ensure that rural communities can access economic development opportunities; whilst encouraging support for the unique needs of the district including tourism development and small business support, as well as advocating for sustainable development practices that protect the natural heritage.</li> <li>• <b>Skills for a 10X Economy:</b> This strategy aims to equip people with the skills needed to thrive in a fast changing, inclusive economy. Its relevance to the district ensures targeting educational and vocational training opportunities to reduce skill gaps. It also focuses on inclusivity by addressing barriers faced by underrepresented groups, such as women and young people in STEM fields.</li> <li>• <b>Green Growth Strategy:</b> This strategy supports a transition to a low carbon economy while creating opportunities for economic growth and social inclusion.</li> <li>• <b>Mid South West Growth Deal Strategy:</b> This strategy will support an inclusive economy in Fermanagh and Omagh. It is considered a vital road map for fostering an inclusive economy by addressing skills gaps, improving infrastructure, supporting businesses and sustainability.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sub Regional Economic Plan:</b> Will help to address the barriers to economic development within the district through projects that align with the Minister’s key priorities.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Key local strategies and plans include:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Inclusive Economy Action Plan (IEAP)</u></b> - This plan identifies actions to build on the economy within Fermanagh and Omagh to be more inclusive, greener and prosperous that will benefit people, businesses and places.</li> <li>• <b><u>Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP)</u></b> – The Plan for Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins is a people centred approach for improving tourism and the visitor experience. The VEDP sets a strategic ten year vision and pathway to develop new connections and ways of working that are more collaborative across communities, industry, various levels of government organisations and potential funders.</li> <li>• <b><u>FO Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024-2025</u></b> - Through the development of local annual Action Plans, enables regional objectives to be achieved whilst being adaptable to meet the needs of local labour market conditions by improving employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.</li> <li>• <b><u>PEACE Plus Programme:</u></b> The funding parameters in FO supports skill development and employability programs for marginalised groups.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Actions (What we propose to do)</b></p>	<p><b>What might this look like</b></p>	<p><b>How we are monitoring progress</b></p>
<p>7. Develop and Implement a Sub Regional Economic Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub Regional Economic Action Plan developed and agreed for a 3-year period (2025-2028) with annual review undertaken.</li> <li>• Implementation of Plan commenced and projects progressing.</li> </ul>	<p>Sub Regional Action Plan Agreed Y/N</p> <p>Performance Measures in Place Y/N</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish performance measures to monitor progress going forward, reflecting DfE monitoring requirements.</li> </ul>	
8. Support entrepreneurs to start a business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and promotion of the Go Succeed Start Programme to attract participants.</li> <li>Engage with potential entrepreneurs for the Go-Succeed Programme.</li> <li>Assist in the creation of business plans to support business start-up and the creation of new jobs.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for Master Classes to help develop skills.</li> <li>Evaluate the programme in line with funder criteria.</li> </ul>	<p>% engagement rate for Go Succeed Programme</p> <p># business plans (Statutory)</p> <p># jobs promoted through Go Succeed Start programme (Statutory)</p> <p># attendees at Master Classes relating to the Go Succeed Start Programme</p>
9. Support micro/small businesses to develop and grow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and promotion of the Go Succeed Grow Programme to attract micro/small businesses.</li> <li>Engage with micro/small businesses through the Go Succeed Programme. Provide mentor support, Master Classes based on business sector needs and provide support in areas to include innovation, Research and Development.</li> <li>Promote access to small grants of up £5k to relevant business and provide support where required.</li> <li>Evaluate the programme in line with funder criteria.</li> </ul>	<p># businesses supported through mentoring</p> <p># attendees at Master Classes relating to the Go Succeed Grow Programme</p> <p># grants awarded £ value of grants awarded</p> <p>% Value of grants awarded as % of budget available</p> <p># of businesses signposted to other business support</p>



<p>10. Create opportunities for those furthest from the labour market to secure quality local jobs.</p>	<p>1. REAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and promotion of the Rural Economic Accelerator Programme (REAP).</li> <li>• Design and delivery of programme of activity.</li> <li>• Conduct evaluation of Participant journeys post completion.</li> </ul> <p>2. LMP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure Department for Communities agreement on the 2025-2026 LMP Action Plan</li> <li>• Evaluate LMP Action Plan 2024/2025.</li> <li>• Confirm funding offer for 2025-2026.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver employability and skills programmes to address local labour market challenges.</li> <li>• Implement the 2025- 2026 approved Action Plan</li> <li>• Commence work to develop Annual 2026-2027 Action Plan (Regional Funding dependent).</li> </ul>	<p>% engagement rate for REAP Programme</p> <p># of programme participants.</p> <p>% of participants who progress to further learning or employment on programme completion Y/N</p> <p># of courses/qualifications completed</p> <p>Letter of Offer received Y/N</p> <p>LMP Annual Report 2024-2025 published</p> <p># of programme participants.</p> <p>% of participants who progress to further learning or employment on programme completion</p>
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**What difference will this action make?**

- A Sub Regional Economic Action Plan provides a framework to attract investment, create jobs, and support sustainable economic development tailored to the needs of Fermanagh and Omagh.
- Develop the skills set of people to match those that are needed within the sectors in Fermanagh and Omagh
- Sustain small micro businesses in an unpredictable environment whilst providing them with opportunities to grow and develop.
- Ongoing support for those interested in starting or growing a business with more identifiable and inclusive support available to social entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs and female entrepreneurs who are currently under-represented.

- Potential for new jobs to be created providing additional employment opportunities within the district.
- Sustaining local communities through growing indigenous businesses and reducing numbers of young people leaving the area
- Providing a pathway to employment for those who are currently unemployed, economically inactive or in part-time work.

**4. We will seek to innovate and advance our governance and digital capabilities to improve the quality of our services and the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council.**

<p><b>Improvement Objective Three</b></p>	<p><b>Lead officer: Director of Corporate Services and Governance</b></p> <p><b>Supported by: Head of Corporate and Strategic Services, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development and Digital ICT and Cyber Security Lead Officer</b></p>			
<p><b>Related Community Plan Theme, Outcome/s and Corporate Plan priority area</b></p>	<p><b>Theme: One Partnership</b></p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> All six outcomes</p> <p><b>FODC Corporate Plan Priority: One Council:</b> Ensure an efficient, effective and agile Council founded on good governance practices.</p>			
<p><b>Links to UN Sustainable Development Goals</b></p>				
<p><b>Target customers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Elected members</li> </ul>			

<p><b>What's the story behind the baseline?</b></p>	<p>In formulating the new Corporate Plan, the Council considered the type of organisation it wanted to be a forward-thinking innovative Council which is customer focussed and recognised internally and externally as accountable, transparent and effective. As we reach our first decade the Council must continue to provide strategic direction and leadership ensuring that robust systems and structures are in place to facilitate and support our dedicated, skilled and motivated staff to deliver key services for residents and visitors alike.</p> <p>This Improvement Objective underpins our 'One Council' approach, which ensures all services are working towards shared objectives and will help different areas of the Council work together more effectively over the next four years. Agility and innovation combined with the stable foundation of strong governance will characterise our ability to renew, adapt, respond and improve in an ever changing, turbulent local and global geopolitical environment.</p> <p>In identifying the actions under this Improvement Objective, we reflected on our budgetary constraints, our statutory obligations, our commitment to continuous improvement, and our growing maturity in developing the data and evidence to support and underpin our decision making, focusing on developing our 'One Council' approach to build whole community confidence in our service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Strategic significance at regional and local level</b></p>	<p>The framework of legislation strategies, and initiatives in NI empowers local councils to innovate and modernise delivery and governance. The Local Government Act (NI) 201, coupled with strategies like the Digital Transformation strategy provides councils with the tools to enhance efficiency, transparency and citizen satisfaction.</p> <p><b><u>Key legislation and regional strategies and plans include:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>General Power of Competence:</b> allowing councils to act innovatively in areas not explicitly restricted by law.</li> <li>• <b>NICS Generative AI Guidelines published in 2023,</b> provides overarching principles for responsible and ethical AI use in the civil service. Broader regulations, such as the UK Data</li> </ul>

	<p>Protection Act 2018(aligned with GDPR), govern data handling and privacy when deploying AI systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Digital Governance Act:</b> Supports the adoption of digital technologies across public services, encouraging councils to implement systems for citizen engagement, governance and improved service delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Freedom of Information Act:</b> Encourages transparency and accountability, promoting the use of digital platforms for public access to council information and governance data.</li> <li>• <b>Digital Transformation Strategy for NI 2020-2030:</b> Focuses on embedding digital innovation across the public sector. Prioritising areas including data driven decision making, digital inclusion and e governmental platforms to improve service delivery at the local level.</li> <li>• <b>Innovation Strategy for NI 2021-2031:</b> Guides councils in fostering innovation through partnerships with businesses, universities and the community. Encourages investment in digital technology to improve service delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Key local strategies and plans include:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FODC People Plan</b> (internal document)</li> <li>• <b>FO Digital Services 5-year strategic Framework 2021-2026</b> (internal document)</li> </ul>	
<b>Actions (What we propose to do)</b>	<b>What might this look like</b>	<b>How we are monitoring progress</b>
<p><i>*New</i></p> <p>11. Develop a 'whole Council approach' to</p>	<p>Develop and implement a Customer Service Transformation Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to include enhanced digital engagements</li> </ul>	<p># staff engaged in the development process</p> <p>Customer Service Transformation Strategy Agreed Y/N</p>

customer service transformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• and consolidation of existing customer support systems.</li> </ul>	
12. Maximise the capability of the Councils IT system to improve processes for talent management, succession planning and training and development of employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operationalise the Councils IT system to support talent management, succession planning and identification of training needs for staff through the digitisation of processes.</li> <li>• Roll out training for line managers on new processes and utilisation of the system.</li> <li>• Review implementation of the pilot and identify any challenges or issues before rolling out to all other Directorates.</li> </ul>	# learning and development opportunities completed by officers # staff trained # staff undertaking performance appraisals digitally Y/N  Post pilot evaluation undertaken
13. Enhance digital connectivity across Council facilities to enable new technology enabled services and support for residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and scope new and improved future service delivery models capitalising on enhanced connectivity.</li> <li>• Explore the opportunities for the council to leverage the use of Artificial powered Intelligence (AI) to support advancements in service delivery and effectively manage its use.</li> <li>• Promote the use of online bookings and automation to improve customer experience for registrations.</li> </ul>	# Future opportunities identified  AI Policy developed and approved Y/N  Staff awareness/ training rolled out Y/N  % of registrations completed using the Booking System

### What difference will this action make?

- In line with the Council 'People Plan', implementation of new Human Resource system functionality will enable greater efficiency and provide up to date data gathering and reporting to support management decision making which underpins the effective delivery of our services to citizens.
- All council public facing facilities will now have full fibre IT connectivity and this investment and roll out of IT infrastructure will underpin future-plans for more effective and efficient service delivery.
- Artificial Intelligence has the potential to improve efficiency and service delivery. It can also contribute to cost savings, improved user experience and assist with the management of workloads and efficiency.
- Introducing an online booking system for registration will provide citizens 24/7 access to services .Staff can easily manage complex scheduling and resourcing/staffing requirements. Citizens benefit from more frequent communications that are relevant & personalised.

## **We want to hear from you – get in touch.**

Fermanagh and Omagh Council is committed to continuously improving its services and listening to its customers. We welcome your comments or suggestions at any time of the year on any service area or policy decision. You can get involved and participate in consultations being conducted by, or on behalf of the Council. Meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to the public, except for those times when sensitive or confidential issues need to be discussed. Or simply get in touch and tell us your issue, concern or when we have done well. We love to hear positive feedback too.

### **You can get in touch by:**

**Phone:** 0300 303 1777

**Text Phone:** 028 8225 6216

**Email:** [info@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:info@fermanaghomagh.com)

**SignVideo:** For people who are deaf or are hard of hearing

**Live web chat:** Available on our website during office hours, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

**In writing:** Strategic Planning and Performance, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, The Grange, Mountjoy Road, Lisnamallard, Omagh BT79 7BL

Alternatively, you may wish to speak to your local Councillor – contact details can be found at [www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/councillors/](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/councillors/)

For further information on your Council, please visit our website at [www.fermanaghomagh.com](http://www.fermanaghomagh.com)

This document is available in a range of other formats upon request.

Please contact us with your requirements through the above contact details.

**End.../**