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Executive Summary

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Developing an Inclusive Economy Action Plan (IEAP)

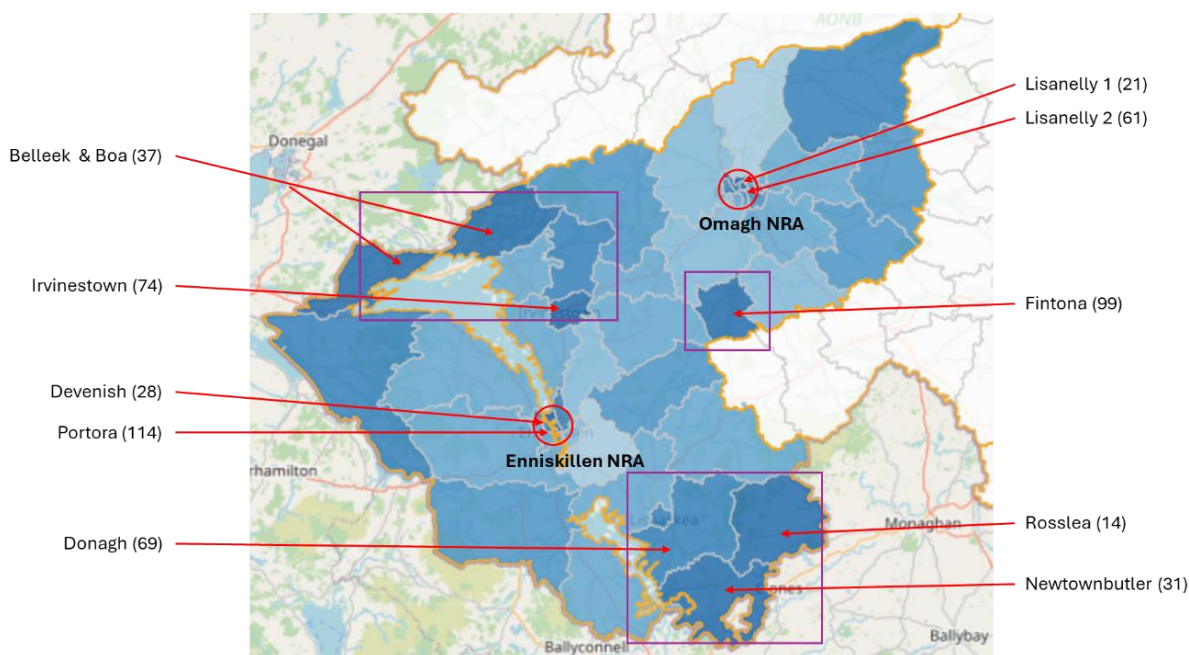
1. Fermanagh and Omagh has much to be proud of in the richness and beauty of its natural heritage, the strength and resilience of its highly entrepreneurial business base, its caring and hardworking community and voluntary sector, and the diverse fabric of its close-knit communities.
2. That said, in developing a plan to support continued economic growth and prosperity of the region, the Council, alongside its community planning partners, is acutely aware of the effects of poverty and disadvantage on the most vulnerable in our society and wants to ensure that everyone who lives and works in the district has access to opportunity and benefits from economic growth.
3. This plan maps out what Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and its network of stakeholders and community planning partners consider to be the priority aims and actions required to deliver a more inclusive economy in the region over the next five years.

1.2. Identification of key priorities

4. In developing this IEAP, the Council has sought to ensure the plan integrates and supports the delivery of key international, national and regional plans of relevance and Section 3 of this document evidences this strategic alignment in detail.
5. The plan has also been developed in the context of a review of the socio-economic indicators of relevance to an Inclusive Economy set out at Section 4.
6. To ensure the plan is reflective of stakeholder needs, an extensive consultation has been undertaken with a broad network of 68 key public, private, and voluntary/community stakeholder organisations. Key findings are set out at Section 5 and these have been used to ensure the strategic themes, aims and actions in the IEAP have been designed around identified stakeholder needs.
7. Using this evidence-based approach, clear calls to action exist around the key priorities of:
 - Equality and inclusivity;
 - Productivity and Innovation; and
 - Environmental sustainability and the journey to Net Zero.

1.2.1. Equality and inclusivity

8. Nine of Fermanagh and Omagh’s 49 Super Output Areas (SOAs) rank in the top 100 most income deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland, and 10 SOAs rank in the top 20% most employment deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland.
9. In 2022/23, almost one fifth of the population in Fermanagh and Omagh (20%) were living in relative poverty, and of the District’s most vulnerable groups, 22% of children were living in poverty.
10. This IEAP proposes interventions that will support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged areas of our community with a priority focus on Neighborhood Renewal Areas and other areas of significant employment and income deprivation.

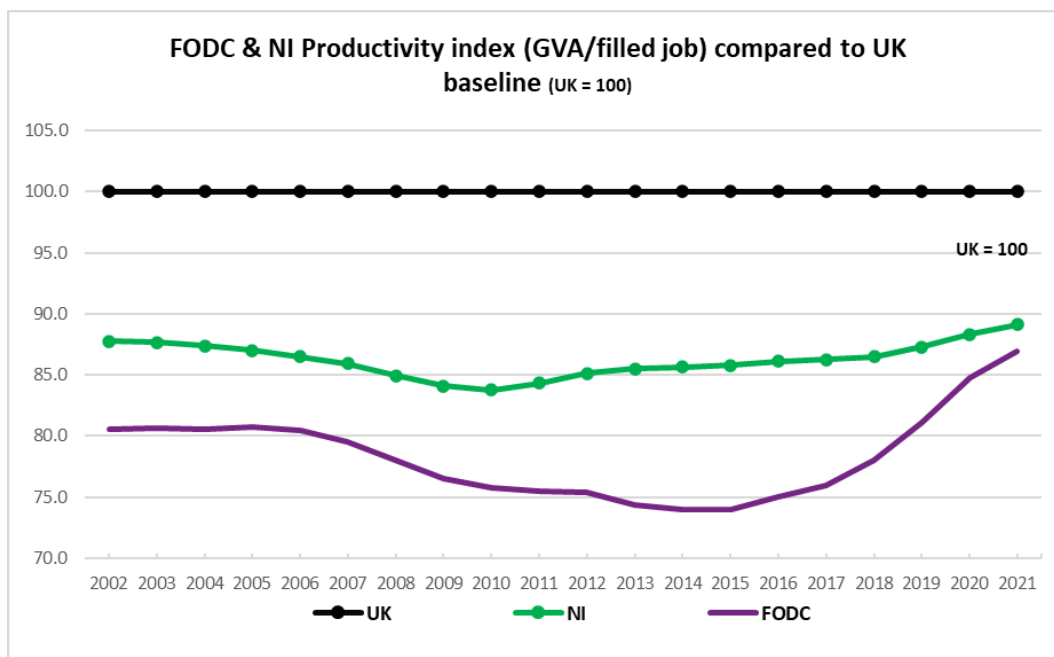


Fermanagh and Omagh’s most income deprived regions (ranking out of 890 in NI)

1.2.2. Productivity and innovation

11. Fermanagh and Omagh district is home to 8,445 registered businesses, 94% of which are micro-SMEs employing less than 10 people.
12. As businesses in the region typically do not have the same scale as their counterparts in other regions of the UK and Ireland, productivity and competitiveness is a challenge.
13. In productivity terms, businesses in the region lag some 13% behind the UK average, and up to 46% behind the Republic of Ireland¹.

¹ OECD (2022) Level of GDP per capita and productivity comparison.



Fermanagh and Omagh business productivity compared to a UK baseline

14. Whilst there has been a significant improvement in business productivity in Fermanagh and Omagh in recent times, more work is needed to increase efficiency and productivity through innovation.

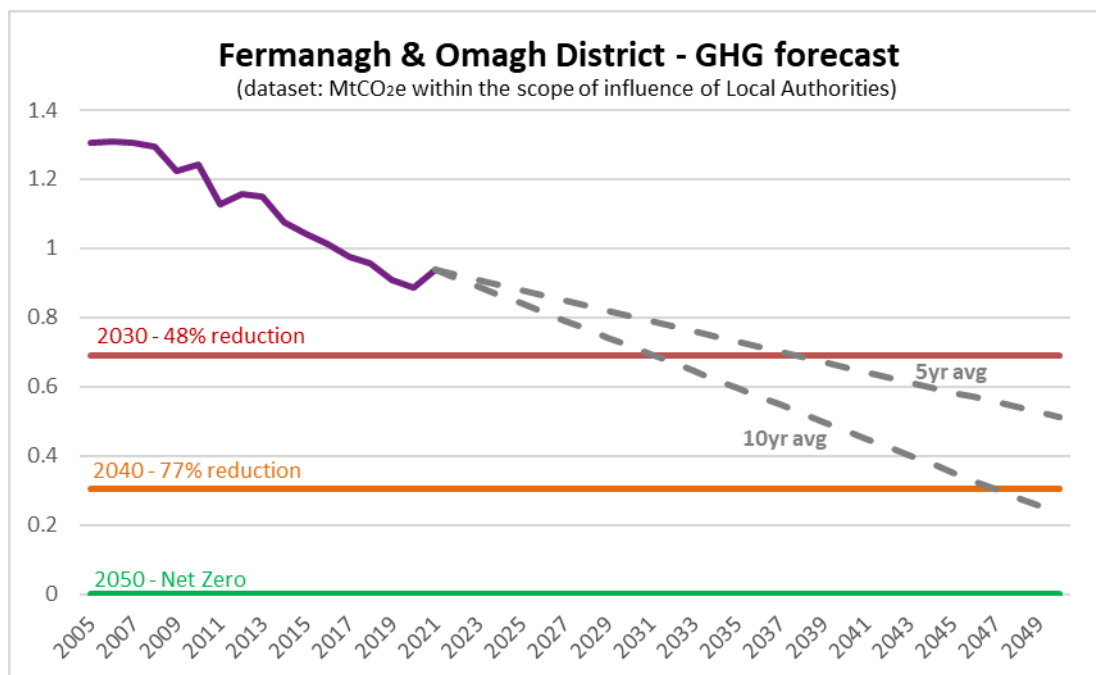
1.2.3. Environmental sustainability and the journey to Net Zero.

15. To date, it is estimated that the Fermanagh and Omagh region has achieved a 29.4% reduction in Green House Gas (GHG) emissions relative to emissions in 1990².
16. In its advice report published in 2023³, the Climate Change Committee has recommended interim GHG reduction targets that include:
- At least a 48% reduction⁴ in GHG emissions by 2030;
 - A 77% emissions reduction by 2040 (2040 target); and
 - Net Zero emissions by 2050.
17. Based on sustaining the average annual rate of GHG emission reductions achieved over the last ten-year period, it is reasonable to expect that the Fermanagh and Omagh district can meet its 2030 target on time, but at this rate of change it is unlikely to meet its 2040 target until 2047.

² the baseline year set out under the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

³ The path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland, Climate Change Committee, 2023.

⁴ against the 1990 baseline levels



Forecasted FODC GHG Emissions MtCO₂e⁵

18. However, as the rate of emission reductions in the region appears to have slowed in the past five years, based on the five-year average then FODC is at risk of missing its 2030 target. Under this scenario the target would not be met until 2038, and it would be 2064 before the 2040 target was met.
19. **Neither the 5- or 10-year average reduction rates will be sufficient to meet Net Zero by 2050**, and it is clear that a step change in performance is required if the targets are to be met.

1.3. Defining a purpose for the IEAP

20. The Council's overall purpose for this IEAP is driven by a desire to build a thriving economy that balances economic prosperity with environmental sustainability and that provides opportunities for all citizens in the district.
21. In this context, the purpose of this plan over the next 5 years is to fulfil priority three of the Council's new draft Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029, namely:

“To drive an inclusive economy and aid prosperity across our district.”

⁵ Source: UK local authority and regional GHG emission statistics, 2023. Dept. for Energy Security and Net Zero. Analysis by Food for Thought.

1.4. Delivering with a clear ambition

22. To achieve its strategic purpose, Fermanagh and Omagh Council has developed a clear ambition to be achieved in the next five years.
23. It is the Council's economic ambition that:

“By 2029 we will have a more inclusive, greener, and more prosperous economy that benefits people, businesses, and places across our district.”

1.5. Strategic Themes

24. To deliver its economic purpose and ambition for the region, three strategic themes have emerged from the strategy research and consultation process that provide the framework for the Inclusive Economy Action Plan. These are set out in the diagram below.



FODC Inclusive Economy Action Plan Strategic Themes

25. Clear objectives, aims and actions have been defined under each theme, which are set out in detail at Section 6 of this report, and are summarised below.

1.5.1. IEAP Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth and Innovation

26. The Fermanagh and Omagh district is one of the most entrepreneurial regions in Northern Ireland with high business birth rates and five-year business survival rates.
27. This strategic theme aims to build on the region’s strengths with the overall objective being to:
- “Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.”*
28. In developing a range of actions under this theme, consideration has been given to addressing some of the key weaknesses identified through the strategic review and stakeholder engagement phases, namely:
- That the region underperforms in female economic participation, disability employment, and has a growing level of economic inactivity in the 50 – 64 years population;
 - The productivity of businesses in the region lags behind the UK average by 13%;
 - The region is at risk of missing its GHG emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2040, and must accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy if the emissions targets are to be met on time; and
 - 9 of the region’s 49 super output areas feature in the top 100 most income deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland.
29. A total of 19 actions have been identified for this theme under five specified aims:
- Fully Leverage FODC’s share of the MSW Growth Deal;
 - Support FODC business growth;
 - Support increased FODC business productivity and innovation to close the District’s productivity gap;
 - Accelerate the transition to Net Zero; and
 - Build greater social value.

1.5.2. IEAP Theme 2: Building a Place for Sustainable Business.

30. The Fermanagh and Omagh district is a region of profound natural beauty and its rich natural assets and rural location simultaneously offer the region's greatest strengths and most challenging constraints.

31. The objective of this theme is to:

“Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.”

32. The previous Economic Development Plan for the region identified a range of critical infrastructure investment needs that remain unaddressed, and infrastructure needs (particularly road infrastructure) were referenced in every consultation interview undertaken in the stakeholder engagement phase for this IEAP.

33. The importance of addressing these long outstanding critical infrastructure requirements cannot be overstated and they are fundamental to the successful delivery of the overall plan.

34. A total of 16 actions have been identified for this theme under five specified aims:

- Campaign for critical infrastructure investment;
- Create capacity for economic growth through the provision of industrial land and enterprise space;
- Support the sustainable development of the region;
- Support town and rural community renewal; and
- Promote the Fermanagh and Omagh district as a great place for business and to live/work.

1.5.3. IEAP Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce.

35. The Fermanagh and Omagh district currently enjoys low unemployment rates. In the context of strong market demand for skilled labour, recruiting and retaining skilled workers is a challenge for employers in the region and is constraining economic growth.

36. At the same time, rapid advances in technology and increasing demands for efficiency, cost reduction, and reduced carbon footprint are presenting a major skills challenge. Technology is moving faster than companies can

design and scale up their training programmes, and the World Economic Forum⁶ has identified that by 2027, almost half (44%) of workers' core skills will be disrupted generating additional education and training demand.

37. In this context, the objective for this theme is to:

“Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.”

38. Meeting this objective will require close collaboration with key delivery partners. The established Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership provides an important forum for multi-agency and private sector collaboration on the employability and skills agenda, and the region is also blessed with highly capable and well invested South West College Further Education Campuses. Both the LMP and SWC will be key delivery partners under this strategic theme.

39. A total of 15 actions have been identified for this theme under five specified aims:

- Promote an industry-led skills agenda;
- Work to support inclusive skills development;
- Foster greater diversity in the workplace;
- Develop world-class strategic business leadership in the district; and
- Address the district's emerging skills gaps.

1.6. A Partnership Approach

40. This Inclusive Economy Action Plan requires leadership and action from partners across Fermanagh and Omagh's statutory partners, businesses and community/voluntary sector.

41. The Council will play a lead role in bringing partners together to collectively target the challenges and deliver on the opportunities identified, but the Council cannot achieve an inclusive economy on its own.

42. Working alongside the Community Planning Partnership, the Council will convene an Inclusive Economy Network to progress delivery of this IEAP linking into existing delivery mechanisms such as the Labour Market Partnership and the Visitor Experience Development Plan Partnership. A key consideration for the work across all of the strands will be sourcing and securing partnership funding.

⁶ Future of jobs report, World Economic Forum, 2023.



1.7. Monitoring Progress

43. The IEAP contributes towards achievement of the six shared outcomes identified in the Community Plan for the District. Progress will be monitored and measured under the 18 key population indicators set out under those six shared outcomes, and under a range of social, economic, and environmental performance measures set out at Section 7 of this report.
44. Reporting on progress of the IEAP will be undertaken on a six monthly basis to the Community Planning Partnership and to the Council's Regeneration and Community Committee.

1.8. Our Inclusive Economy Action Plan at a glance

Drive An Inclusive Economy And Aid Prosperity Across Our District

“By 2029 we will have a more inclusive, greener, & more prosperous economy that benefits people, businesses, and places across our district.”

Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation

“Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.”

Fully Leverage FODC’s share of the MSW Growth Deal

Support FODC Business Growth

Support increased FODC business productivity & innovation

Accelerate the transition to Net Zero

Build greater social value

Building a Place for Sustainable Business

“Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.”

Campaign for critical infrastructure investment

Create capacity – Industrial land & enterprise space

Support sustainable development of the region

Support town & rural community renewal

Promote Fermanagh & Omagh as a great place for business & live/work

Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce

“Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.”

Promote an Industry-led skills agenda

Work to support inclusive skills development.

Foster greater diversity in the workplace

Develop world-class strategic business leadership

Address the District’s emerging skills gaps

Introduction

2. Introduction

2.1. Background to this plan

45. The period between the development of this Inclusive Economy Action Plan and the preceding Fermanagh and Omagh Economic Development Plan 2016 -2019 has been eventful and economically turbulent.
46. EU Exit, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine war, UK inflation, and the Cost-of-living crisis have presented significant challenges and resulted in economic shock to the local economy.
47. Whilst businesses and the communities in Fermanagh and Omagh have shown remarkable resilience, lasting effects are being felt in the form of a persistence of higher interest rates and slower business investment and growth rates, alongside the ongoing pressures of the cost of living crisis on households across the district. The absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly over recent years has also been sharply felt.
48. With the NI Assembly and Executive now re-established, the development of this five-year Inclusive Economy Action Plan (IEAP) is well timed and presents an exciting opportunity to develop, showcase and promote the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area. Businesses in the region are confident about future growth, and significant opportunities exist for Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) to lead on the inclusive economy and sustainable growth agenda.
49. Through a partnership delivery approach, it is intended this IEAP will act as a catalyst to support inclusive and sustainable economic development that will fulfil Council’s Corporate Planning priority for shared prosperity to “Drive an inclusive economy and aid prosperity across our district”⁷.

⁷ Priority Three: Shared Prosperity. FODC Corporate Plan (2024 – 2029) – Draft.

Strategic Context

3. Strategic Context

3.1. Introduction

50. In developing its Inclusive Economy Action Plan for 2024 - 2029, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has sought to ensure that the plan aligns, integrates and supports the delivery of key international, national and regional plans of relevance, to include:

- **At an international level**, alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **At national level**, alignment with a range of key policies that include:
 - Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework (NI Executive, 2021);
 - Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland 2021 (NI Executive, 2021);
 - 10x Economy: An Economic Vision for a decade of Innovation (DfE, 2021);
 - Economy 2030 – draft Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland (DfE, 2017);
 - Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 10 Year Plan (DfE, 2023);
 - Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland (DfE, 2023); and
 - NI Child Poverty Strategy.
- **At a regional level**, providing delivery support to:
 - The Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy; and
 - Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's:
 - Emerging Corporate plan (draft, 2024);
 - Community Plan 2030; and
 - Local Development Plan 2030.
 - and aligning and integrating with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's:
 - Visitor Experience Development Plan 2032;
 - Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy (2020-2030);
 - Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2022 – 2027);
 - Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan; and
 - Omagh Place Shaping Plan.

3.2. International Policies and Strategies

3.2.1. United Nations 2030 Agenda – 17 Sustainable Development Goals

51. In 2015, the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives of the member countries of the United Nations adopted the UN’s “2030 agenda” – a strategic plan underpinned by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A summary of the SDG’s is set out in Figure One below.



Figure 1: UN Sustainable Development Goals

52. The SDGs recognise the interconnected nature of equality, sustainability and prosperity in the health and wealth of the planet and its people. Each member country is tasked with taking action against the 17 goals as is relevant and applicable in the local context.

53. In the context of the Fermanagh and Omagh region, 11 SDGs are of particular relevance to the development of an inclusive economy in the region. These are considered under three key headings of:

- Equality and inclusivity;
- Productivity and innovation; and
- Environmental sustainability.

Equality and Inclusivity

54. Five of the UN’s SDGs are relevant to the development of an inclusive economy in Fermanagh and Omagh in the Council’s ambition to improve economic equality and inclusivity across the district.



1 NO POVERTY
End poverty in all its forms, everywhere.



4 QUALITY EDUCATION
Ensure inclusion and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



5 GENDER EQUALITY
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
Reduce inequality within and among countries.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

55. The Council recognises there is unequal distribution of economic prosperity across the district with a concentration of deprived communities identified in a number of locations⁸. This plan will seek to develop specific actions that will support the region’s most income and employment deprived areas (including Neighbourhood Renewal Areas) to close poverty and inequality gaps. A key focus will also be the development of resilient and sustainable communities particularly in rural areas.
56. The socio-economic analysis in section 4.4 identifies a significant disparity of economic inactivity between males and females in the region⁹, and this plan will create opportunities for increased female participation through enabling measures (e.g. childcare), and opportunities for better jobs and increased entrepreneurialism.
57. Another notable feature in the socio-economic profile of the region is the ageing population profile overall and in the context of economic inactivity¹⁰. Making adequate provisions for lifelong learning will be an important objective in the plan.

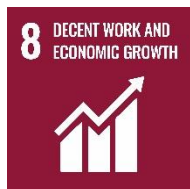
⁸ See Section 4.2.4

⁹ See Section 4.4.4

¹⁰ See Section 4.4.3

Productivity and Innovation

58. Three of the UN’s SDGs are particularly relevant to Fermanagh and Omagh in relation to productivity and innovation in the region and its businesses.



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

59. Productivity in the region tracks behind the NI average¹¹ which as the 7th of the UK’s twelve regions for business productivity performance,¹² itself lags some 10.6% behind the rest of the UK¹³, and as much as 46% behind the Republic of Ireland¹⁴. Driving increased productivity and innovation to deliver better jobs will be a clear focus for the development of a more inclusive economy in Fermanagh and Omagh.
60. In a recent survey of businesses in the Fermanagh and Omagh region, almost 70% of businesses were either unaware or have taken no action towards achieving the Northern Ireland Executive’s target for Net Zero¹⁵ and a key objective for this plan will be to support businesses in the transition towards Net Zero.
61. Investment in resilient infrastructure will also be a key enabler of a more inclusive economy with challenges to be overcome in road infrastructure, transport, telecommunications, and industrial land and enterprise development space.

Environmental Sustainability

62. As a District renowned for its beautiful scenery and wild open landscapes of hills, lakes, rivers, caves, woodlands and bogs, the natural environment is the very foundation on which the region’s economy is built, supporting all sectors but in particular agri-food and tourism and hospitality. Three of the UN’s SDGs are particularly relevant to Fermanagh and Omagh in this context.

¹¹ See Section 4.3.5

¹² Northern Ireland Productivity dashboard 2023, The Productivity Institute.

¹³ Depending on the productivity measure used.

¹⁴ OECD (2022) Level of GDP per capita and productivity comparison.

¹⁵ MSW IICF survey of businesses in FODC, Food for Thought, 2023.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

- 63. To achieve an inclusive and sustainable economy in the region, this plan will need to support the agri-food sector in its transition towards reductions in whole farm carbon footprint and will need to support all businesses on the journey to Net Zero.
- 64. Whilst the region is landlocked, nonetheless it has a duty of care to “life below water” in the responsible management of the unique natural wealth afforded through the UNESCO Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, and “Life on land” is equally important both to the agri-food sector and to tourism across the region. Building and developing a reputation for leadership in regenerative tourism and eco-tourism represents a significant opportunity for the region.

3.3. National Policies and Strategies

3.3.1. Draft Programme for Government

- 65. NI’s Programme for Government (PfG) draft outcomes framework sets out nine key outcomes aimed at delivering an inclusive society in which people of all ages and backgrounds are respected and cared for and in which all prosper.



Figure 2: NI Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework

66. Table One below picks out the relevant PfG outcomes and priorities and describes how this IEAP aligns to and will support the realisation of the planned outcomes.

Table One: NI Programme for Government – outcome alignment		
PfG Outcome	PfG priorities & commitments	IEAP Alignment
We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling the issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage in terms of welfare and poverty, and providing support where it is needed in both urban and rural communities. Promoting and protecting the rights of individuals to ensure we are recognising and respecting diversity, ensuring everyone feels included. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEAP will seek to provide everyone in FODC with the opportunity to contribute and benefit from economic growth to deliver greater prosperity. This plan will seek to develop specific actions that will target Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (and any future initiatives codesigned with DfC to tackle deprivation) to close poverty and inequality gaps. A key focus will also be the development of resilient and sustainable communities particularly in rural areas. Providing opportunities to address the economic activity gender gap, and development and learning opportunities for an ageing population will also be important.
Everyone can reach their full potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Giving people access to better jobs across different sectors by developing more opportunities, supporting personal development, addressing the issues that lead to underachievement and strengthening links between industry and academia. Creation and development of more opportunities and better jobs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This plan recognises that investment in innovation and skills is critical to delivering improved productivity and opportunities for better paid jobs. Strengthening the partnership between South West College, Council, and local businesses will be key to successful delivery of this IEAP.
Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced, and carbon neutral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating the conditions required to achieve a strong, competitive economy that helps Northern Ireland compete on the global stage, attract investment, and stimulate innovation and creativity. Ensure growth in our economy is undertaken in an environmentally friendly way to help tackle climate change, striving for low-carbon/zero-carbon alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEAP will seek to stimulate innovation to drive improved business productivity, leading to greater international competitiveness. Encouraging business investment in new & emerging technologies that deliver productivity improvement and/or support Net Zero delivery targets will be an important part of the plan.

Table One: NI Programme for Government – outcome alignment

PfG Outcome	PfG priorities & commitments	IEAP Alignment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the impacts industry has on climate change and striving for low-carbon / zero-carbon alternatives. • Growing the economy to attract and stimulate investment across Northern Ireland, including building sustainable investment, encouraging business start-ups and development through City and Growth Deals, and supporting sustainable development of rural industries. • Helping companies engage in innovation and research and develop creativity and entrepreneurship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEAP will include actions to educate and support FODC's key industry sectors to develop an understanding and the skills required to transition to Net Zero. • Leveraging the resources of the Mid South West Growth Deal will form an important part of the plan.
<p>We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will manage our resources efficiently and effectively, reducing our carbon emissions to ensure our environment is protected and enhanced while achieving sustainable economic growth to create a living and working active landscape that can be enjoyed and valued by everyone. • Creating economic opportunity through tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (including energy decarbonisation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FODC has resolved to formally declare a Climate Emergency and in this context this IEAP has embedded climate change and environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting theme across the plan.
<p>People want to live, work, and visit here.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to retain and attract people to live and work here by having attractive employment, a healthy and clean environment, recreation, and housing opportunities where people feel respected and safe. • We want to build on international relations and enhance our reputation, deal with the impacts of EU Exit and the COVID-19 pandemic, attract investment and help grow our economy. • Growing the economy to attract and stimulate investment across Northern Ireland, including building sustainable investment, encouraging business start-ups and development through City and Growth Deals, and supporting sustainable development of rural industries, including increased digital access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FODC recognises the importance of attracting businesses and skilled workers to the region as an important enabler of economic growth. • With its extensive border with the Republic of Ireland, EU Exit presents opportunities for the region and a key part of the plan will be supporting local businesses to maximise the opportunities presented by dual market access. • The Mid South West Growth Deal will provide opportunities for business start-up and development under its innovation and digital pillar.

3.3.2. 10X Economy: An Economic Vision for a decade of Innovation, DfE 2021

67. The 10X Economy is the Department for the Economy’s economic vision for Northern Ireland for the next 10 years – the proposed “decade of innovation”. Published in 2021, the plan calls for a step change in economic performance centred on a strategy underpinned by investment in new and emerging technologies, as presented in Figure Three (below).

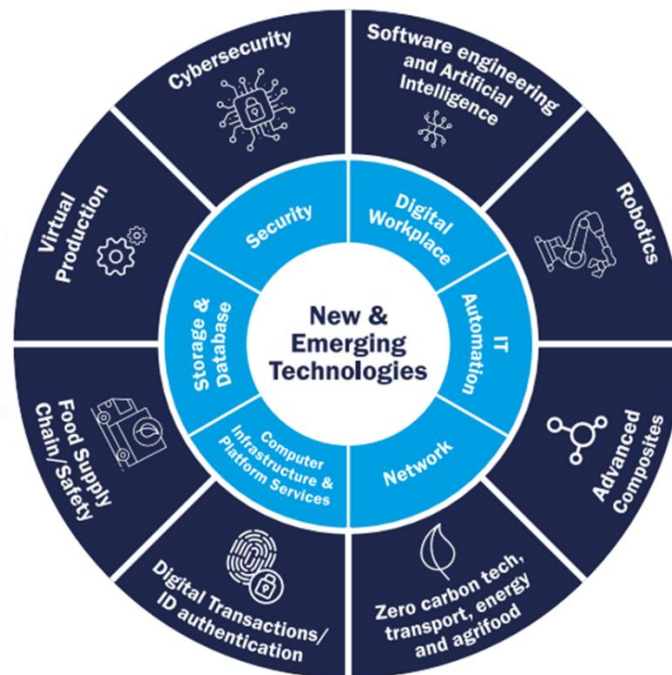


Figure 3: DfE’s “10X” Economic Vision

68. DfE’s economic vision for Northern Ireland states:

“Northern Ireland’s decade of Innovation will encourage greater collaboration and innovation to deliver a ten times better economy with benefits for all our people.”

69. The strategy identifies ten guiding principles that underpin the vision, all of which are highly relevant to the development of an inclusive economy in Fermanagh and Omagh district:

1/ Address those issues that really matter and will make a lasting and positive difference in peoples’ lives – this IEAP aims to deliver opportunities for improved prosperity for all citizens in the region;

2/ Deliver positive economic, environmental, and societal outcomes – this IEAP seeks to deliver improved productivity and sustainability practices across all sectors to drive economic growth and better paid jobs;

3/ Support a greener, sustainable economy – by educating and supporting businesses in their transition to a low carbon economy;

4/ Provide a fairer distribution of opportunities for all our people – by ensuring the IEAP closes the economic gap between communities across the region, with a particular focus on income and employment deprived areas;

5/ Inspire future generations to thrive – by developing closer partnership between Council, South West College, and the Business Community to develop the skills needed to deliver successful outcomes for citizens, businesses and the local community;

6/ Position NI amongst the most competitive small, advanced economies in the world – by supporting improved industrial productivity in the region;

7/ Focus on increasing innovation in high value-added areas and priority clusters resulting in higher wages – by delivering improved availability of industrial land and enterprise space to support sectoral clusters in partnership with Invest NI;

8/ Deliver improved outcomes for all including better jobs with better pay - by delivering the Council's vision for an inclusive economy;

9/ Position NI as an optimum place to work, invest, live and visit – by promoting the region to attract businesses and skilled labour to the Fermanagh and Omagh region; and

10/ Shaped by public sector innovation and co-design with partnership working at its heart – delivery of the IEAP can only be achieved in partnership between the Council and its key delivery partners including Invest NI, the Departments of Infrastructure, Economy, and Community, DAERA, South West College, and the local Business Sectors.

70. The 10X Economic Vision concludes that it is essential that small and micro businesses are part of this change – SMEs make up 99.9% of the Fermanagh and Omagh business base and it is critical that the plan helps promote, stimulate and support high-growth potential SMEs in the region.

3.3.3. Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 and the Draft Green Growth Strategy for NI 2021

71. In February 2020 the Northern Ireland Assembly declared a climate emergency, and in June 2022 the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 came into force setting targets for the reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. Thereafter, in its advice report published in 2023,¹⁶ the Climate Change Committee has recommended interim targets that include:

¹⁶ The path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland, Climate Change Committee.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/advice-report-the-path-to-a-net-zero-northern-ireland/>

- At least a 48% reduction¹⁷ in GHG emissions by 2030;
 - A 77% emissions reduction by 2040 (2040 target); and
 - Net Zero emissions by 2050.
72. In the 31 years from 1990 to 2021, Northern Ireland achieved an 18% reduction in its GHG emissions. In this context, achieving a 2030 target reduction of 48% requires an almost 2-fold improvement in emission reductions to be made in just less than one third of the timeframe. With few actions taken to date, a step change is required if the 2030 emission targets are to be met.
73. NI's Green Growth strategy recognises that achieving Net Zero necessitates a sharp focus on the key 'enablers' of innovation, technology, skills, partnership, collaboration, and leadership delivered through proactive partnerships:
- "We will transform our economy by working proactively with businesses, communities and all parts of government to maximise funding and investment opportunities for Green Growth and promote innovation, skills, research and technology".*
74. Whilst Northern Ireland's first Climate Action Plan is yet to be published, it is expected it will include actions that are relevant to the implementation of this IEAP, setting targets for both Council and the private sector to deliver sustainable economic growth on a reducing GHG emissions budget. Key actions within this plan will include:
- Collaborating with South West College to train and equip the region's workforce with green economy skills as each key business sector embraces new technologies and innovation to transition to a low carbon economy;
 - Supporting FODC's key Business Sectors in the development of climate change mitigation and adaptation plans, supported by the Council's Climate Change Team in partnership with Mid South West's recently appointed New Zero delivery officer¹⁸; and
 - Supporting new and emerging 'green economy' businesses and jobs.

3.3.4. Economy 2030 - Draft Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland, DfE

75. DfE's draft Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland sets out a plan to build a globally competitive economy based around five pillars of growth, fuelled by two key drivers – increased competitiveness, and Inclusive growth.

¹⁷ against the 1990 baseline levels

¹⁸ A position recently established through collaboration of the three MSW partner councils with support from Innovate UK.

76. The strategy recognises that turning Northern Ireland into a leading, internationally competitive economy is essential if the region is to deliver the economic outcomes it wants for its people such as increased employment and rising incomes.
77. Figure Four summarises the strategic vision for 2030 and the five supporting strategic pillars.



Figure 4: DfE's Economy 2030 draft industrial strategy

78. The design of this Industrial Strategy is very relevant to Fermanagh and Omagh's IEAP - the two key drivers of 'increased competitiveness' and 'inclusive growth' are shared in common with FODC's aspirations for an Inclusive Economy, and all five of the strategic pillars are important to the future success of the region:
- **Accelerating innovation & research** – by encouraging stronger linkages between South West College and centres of innovation excellence such as AMIC, CIDRA, I4C, and organisations such as Digital Catapult;
 - **Enhancing Education, Skills and employability** – by encouraging stronger collaborative partnerships between South West College and FODC Businesses to develop relevant skills for industry;
 - **Driving inclusive sustainable growth** – by ensuring the IEAP provides opportunities for improved prosperity for all in Fermanagh and Omagh;
 - **Succeeding in global markets** – by working in partnership with Invest NI, Intertrade Ireland, the recently announced Intertrade UK, and others to help FODC businesses maximise the opportunities arising from dual market access; and
 - **Building the best economic infrastructure** – by lobbying for improved investment in roads, telecommunications, public transport, and critical services such as the South West Acute Hospital.

79. Aligning the IEAP to this strategy will assist FODC in maximising access to the investment opportunities that will underpin the delivery of this strategy in the region.

3.3.5. Tourism Strategy for NI 10 Year Plan (Draft)

80. The Tourism Strategy 10 Year Plan establishes a vision and a mission for the growth of the tourism sector in NI over the next ten years. It aims to help position Northern Ireland internationally as an attractive place to visit and seeks to deliver on the objectives of the 10X strategy by generating economic growth that is sustainable, inclusive and innovative. The vision of the strategy is to:

‘Establish NI as a year-round world-class destination which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage and culture, which will benefit communities the economy and the environment with sustainability at its core’.

81. The strategy explores the importance of the tourism industry to Northern Ireland and presents case studies of prominent tourism developments from across the province. Five strategic development themes are identified in the strategy which are:

- Attractive
- Collaborative
- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Sustainable

82. All five of the themes align with the priorities which emerged from the research and consultation exercises which underpin the development of this IEAP for Fermanagh and Omagh. The latter three themes resonated with the consultees in particular:

- **Inclusive** - This theme centres around the need for a tourism ecosystem that brings opportunities for all with lasting and positive economic and societal benefits to communities across the region;
- **Innovative**- This theme explores the need to deliver positive change through innovation and creativity in a bid to making the industry more competitive; and
- **Sustainable**- This theme seeks to transition the tourism ecosystem through the adoption of a greener more sustainable approach.

83. Establishing Fermanagh and Omagh as a region that leads in the delivery of regenerative tourism has been identified as a key opportunity within this IEAP.

3.3.6. Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland DfE 2023

84. The vision underpinning the Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland states:

‘By 2050, Northern Ireland will have an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy where business, people and planet flourish, with responsible production and consumption at its core’.

85. For a region of its population and size Northern Ireland is consuming a disproportionate amount of the earth’s resources and it is estimated that each person in Northern Ireland is consuming some 16.6 tonnes of resources per year compared to the recommended 6-8 tonnes per year (based on UN recommendations).
86. The strategy outlines the advantages of a circular economy model compared to the ‘take-make-use-dispose’ model which is described as the linear economy. The circular model offers an alternative which many countries are pursuing where:
- We rethink and reduce our use of earth’s resources;
 - We switch to regenerative resources;
 - We minimise waste;
 - We maintain the value of products; and
 - We maintain the value of products and materials as long as possible.
87. FODC has sought to ensure that sustainability is reflected as a cross-cutting theme within this IEAP and several of the strategic actions have been developed to reflect this.

3.3.7. Maximising Potential: A review of labour market outcomes for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland. UUEPC 2022

88. This report highlights that disabled persons in NI face a multitude of barriers to accessing employment. It acknowledges that over the past two decades little progress has been made to improve outcomes for those with disabilities in Northern Ireland in spite of a number of government interventions.
89. In the context of NI’s relatively poor performance overall, the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area has a widening disability gap indicating growing challenges for this section of the population in accessing the labour market.
90. As health-related inactivity represents the largest cohort within the region’s economically inactive population an important consideration in the development of an Inclusive Economy through this IEAP will be to ensure this group are prioritised and can benefit from the positive changes the plan aims to generate for the district.

3.3.8. Delivering Social Change: The Executive’s Child Poverty Strategy

91. The NI Executive’s Child Poverty Strategy sets out a framework of measures to ensure, as far as possible, that children in Northern Ireland do not experience socio-economic disadvantage.
92. Whilst some progress has been made since the introduction of the strategy in 2016, the percentage of Northern Ireland children living in relative poverty¹⁹ in 2021/22 was 18%, with 15% of children living in absolute poverty.²⁰ In the Fermanagh and Omagh district, the number of children estimated to be living in relative poverty in 2021/22 was 6,616 children (22.2%).²¹
93. FODC is committed to working with its delivery partners to address this need, and this IEAP will focus on closing the poverty gap in the most income and employment deprived areas across the district to support the delivery of the Child Poverty Strategy’s strategic outcome that families experience economic well-being.

3.4. Key Regional Policies and Strategies

3.4.1. Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy 2020

94. Regional Growth Deals are aimed at helping regions to harness additional investment, thus creating jobs and accelerating inclusive economic growth.
95. The Mid South West Economic Engine is a collaboration of three local Government partners, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and Mid Ulster District Council, and together the Council partners have developed the Mid South West regional economic strategy, which identifies four pillars for action:
 - Future proofing the skills base;
 - Enabling Infrastructure;
 - Boosting Innovation and digital capacity; and
 - Building a high-performing visitor/ tourism economy.
96. The headline ambition within the strategy is to raise productivity levels and in so doing create better paid jobs for residents in the region, close the productivity gap between the Mid South West region and the rest of NI, and drive the transition to Net Zero.

¹⁹ “Relative Poverty” refers to an individual living in a household with an equivalised income below 60% of UK median income in the year in question. “Absolutely Poverty” refers to an individual living in a household with an equivalised income below 60% of the inflation adjusted UK median income recorded in 2010/11.

²⁰ The Northern Ireland Poverty and Income Inequality Report 2021-22, DfC. March 2023.

²¹ Children in low income families: local area statistics, Department for Work and Pensions. March 2023.

97. The strategy has formed the basis of the Mid South West Region Growth Deal and the NI Executive and the UK government has committed £252m of capital funding to its implementation.
98. The MSW Growth Deal presents significant opportunities for the Fermanagh and Omagh region to be delivered under this IEAP, including:
- The A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass;
 - The Cuilcagh Lakelands Landscape Project; and
 - Upgrading and modernisation of the Ulster American Folk Park.
99. Under the wider ambitions of the MSW Regional Economic Strategy other funding opportunities will be scoped to deliver projects such as:
- Development of Industrial Land at Omagh;
 - Development of the Omagh and the Sperrins Visitor Experience;
 - Access to the proposed Industrial Innovation Challenge Fund to stimulate private sector investment in new and emerging technologies that deliver improved productivity and reduced carbon emissions; and
 - Net Zero Fast Followers programme to assist FODC businesses in the transition to Net Zero.
100. In this context, it will be important to ensure FODC fully leverages its share of the Mid South West Growth Deal funding, alongside wider funding opportunities, to support the implementation of this IEAP.

3.5. Key local Strategies and Policies

3.5.1. Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan

101. The Council and its Community Planning Partners have produced a Community Plan for the period 2017-2030, which sets out a Vision for Fermanagh and Omagh to be:

‘...a welcoming, shared and inclusive Fermanagh and Omagh 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’.

102. The Community Plan outlines three themes which underpin this vision:
- People and Communities
 - Economy Infrastructure and Skills
 - Environment

103. Table Two below sets out how this IEAP provides support to the delivery of four of the six shared outcomes defined in the community plan.

Table Two: FODC Community Plan – outcome alignment	
Outcome	IEAP Alignment
Our communities are inclusive safe resilient and empowered.	The overarching aim of this IEAP is to deliver an Inclusive Economy with shared prosperity for all.
Our children and young people have the best start in life.	The IEAP will aim to ensure that everyone can access good quality education and skills development opportunities to gain better paid jobs.
Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking.	<p>The IEAP will support the continued development of the district’s sectoral strengths in tourism, agri-food, manufacturing and engineering, and construction, and seek opportunities to innovate and expand into new and emerging sectors.</p> <p>The IEAP has identified a continued need to lobby for investment in vital connecting infrastructure including roads, public transport, greenways and blueways, and telecommunications.</p>
Our outstanding natural and built environment is sustainably managed and, where possible, enhanced.	The region’s natural environment is the foundation on which the local economy is built – the IEAP will focus on ensuring sustainable economic growth is achieved whilst ensuring natural resources are protected and sustained.

3.5.2. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Corporate Plan (draft)

104. The Council is currently in the process of finalising a new Corporate Plan for the period 2024 to 2028 which will set the strategic direction for FODC over that period. The draft plan identifies four key priorities for Council, which are:
- 1 **Climate action:** Embed sustainability to ensure progress towards Net Zero by 2040;
 - 2 **People & communities:** Provide opportunities for everyone to live well;
 - 3 **Shared prosperity:** Drive an inclusive economy and aid prosperity across our district; and

4 **One Council:** Ensure an efficient, effective and agile Council founded on good governance practices.

105. This IEAP is designed to support all four Council priorities, but in particular the overall purpose, strategic themes, and actions of this IEAP have been designed to deliver specifically against Priority Three – shared prosperity.

3.5.3. Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan 2030

106. The aim of the Local Development Plan is to provide a plan-led policy framework for making day to day decisions to help Fermanagh and Omagh District Council to deliver sustainable development including future housing, employment, retail and infrastructure provision across the district.

107. Objectives of the plan which are relevant to and align with the objectives of this IEAP are:-

- To promote sustainable economic development and growth by facilitating the creation of jobs and providing a sufficient supply of economic development land;
- Promote inward investment, diversify the local economy & assist with economic regeneration and physical renewal;
- Help generate skilled well paid employment opportunities and improve employability in most deprived areas;
- Recognise and accommodate the micro business base including rural enterprise, self-employment and home working;
- Support the provision of an accessible integrated, safe and sustainable transport network and walking and cycling routes;
- Improve digital connectivity; and
- Develop the Council area as a destination for leisure visits and sustainable tourism.

108. These key objectives are reflected in the strategic themes and actions set out at Section 6.

3.5.4. Visitor Experience Development Plan 2022-2032

109. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has collaborated with Waterways Ireland and Tourism NI to develop a Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) for the region. The VEDP provides a pathway for the development and strengthening of the 'Fermanagh Lakelands' and 'Omagh and the Sperrins' tourism propositions.

110. The VEDP recognises that overall tourism performance in the region is good but that opportunities exist to develop, interconnect, and grow regenerative tourism in the region.

111. The World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism as:
- “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”²²*
112. Regenerative tourism goes beyond this and seeks to ensure that tourism delivers a net positive benefit to people, places and nature.
113. Given the contribution that tourism makes to the regional economy, the implementation and rollout of the VEDP will be a significant driver for sustainable economic growth in the region and this IEAP will complement and support the delivery of regenerative tourism in the Fermanagh and Omagh district that creates jobs and promotes local places, culture and products.

3.5.5. FODC Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy 2020-2030, and the FODC Biodiversity Strategy.

114. FODC recognises that climate change is a real and present global crisis that can and will impact directly on the local economy. The Council recognises the role it has to play in driving meaningful change within the scope of its authority and has developed a Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy for 2020-2030 along with its first Climate Change Action Plan to 2024, and a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to 2027.
115. Key themes within these strategic action plans include the importance of raising awareness and promoting sustainability to protect and sustain the region’s natural resources and biodiversity for future generations.
116. For this reason, sustainability has been embedded as a cross-cutting theme underpinning this IEAP.

3.5.6. Enniskillen and Omagh Place Shaping Plans

117. The Council has developed Place Shaping plans for Enniskillen and Omagh that lay out the pathway for the development of these two major urban centres in the region to 2035.
118. The plans highlight a number of challenges and opportunities that are relevant to the development of this IEAP, including:
- The need for improved road infrastructure to improve connectivity and reduce congestion, including the A4 Enniskillen Southern by-pass and completion of the A5 Western transport corridor at Omagh;
 - The need to attract businesses to address town centre commercial vacancies and support town centre regeneration and revitalisation;

²² <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>

- The opportunity to develop blue-way and green-way infrastructure to deliver sustainable transport options; and
- The opportunity to leverage the natural environment including the UNESCO Culicagh Lakeland Geopark, and the Sperrin mountains as a regenerative tourism offering.

119. These matters are addressed within the action plan at Section 6.

3.6. Conclusion on strategic fit

120. This IEAP presents an opportunity for FODC to make meaningful progress against the delivery of 11 UN Sustainable Development Goals under the broad headings of:

- Equality and Inclusivity – with a particular focus on age, gender, disability, and the economically disadvantaged;
- Productivity and Innovation – to deliver a more competitive business base and a more vibrant labour market providing better jobs; and
- Environmental Sustainability – as a cross-cutting theme that underpins the overall plan, and with specific objectives for key sectors including Agri-food, Tourism, Manufacturing and Construction.

121. The IEAP is strategically aligned and will support local delivery of key national policies and frameworks including:

- Draft Programme for Government;
- 10X Economy;
- Draft Green Growth Strategy;
- Draft Industrial Strategy;
- Tourism Strategy;
- NI Child Poverty Strategy; and
- Circular Economy Strategy.

122. This strong strategic fit should help FODC foster strong delivery partnerships with key government departments, agencies and local actors (including South West College and local Businesses), whose buy-in and support will be critical to the successful delivery of the IEAP.

Socio Economic Profile

4. Socio Economic Profile of Fermanagh and Omagh District area

4.1. Overview

123. The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council region consists of County Fermanagh and parts of County Tyrone and is the largest local authority region in Northern Ireland, covering an area of 2857 km² equating to one fifth of the land area of Northern Ireland.

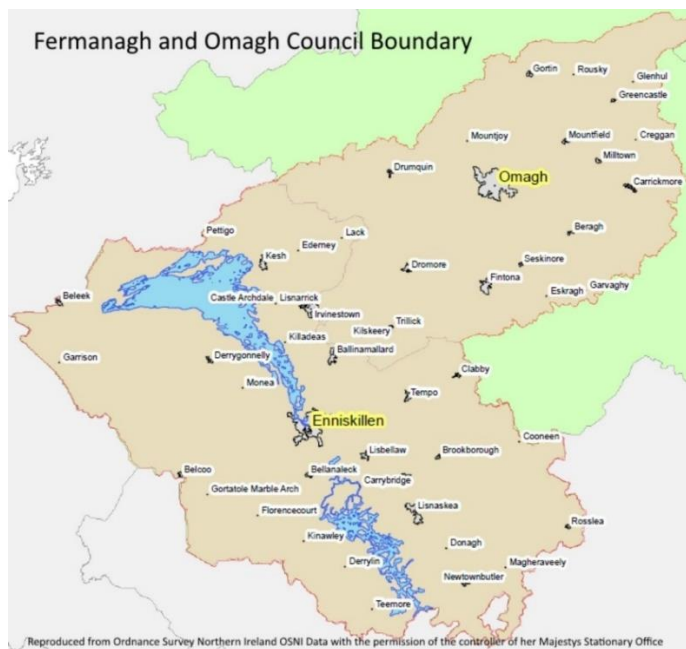


Figure 5: FODC region

124. The district is made up of the 7 electoral areas of Enniskillen, Erne East, Erne North, Erne West, Mid Tyrone, Omagh, West Tyrone, and consists of 49 of Northern Ireland's 890 Super Output Areas.
125. The region's natural heritage consists of a rich tapestry of rural landscapes, mountains, drumlins, lakes, wetlands, woodlands, pasture and mature hedgerows. The wealth of the rural landscape simultaneously supports the region's greatest strengths and most significant challenges.
126. The district is home to almost a third of all farms in Northern Ireland, with a vibrant agri-food sector consisting mainly of dairy production and red meat production (beef & lamb). The landscape also supports a strong tourism and hospitality sector, driven in no small part by upper and lower Lough Erne, and the Sperrin mountains. Other industry sectors also flourish, and the region is home to a broad range of businesses, most of which are indigenous small to medium sized enterprises.

4.2. Population demographic

4.2.1. Overall population

127. At the time of the 2021 census the population of Fermanagh and Omagh was 116,812 citizens homed within 45,715 households, making it the smallest Local Government District in population terms.
128. The region has experienced slower population growth than the Northern Ireland average, having grown by 3% between the 2011 to 2021 census figures, compared to the NI average of 5%²³. The population is expected to continue to grow below the Northern Ireland average with just 2.5% growth predicted over the next census period to 2031.²⁴

4.2.2. Age profile

129. In terms of broad age category, the current overall age profile is not dissimilar to the overall position in Northern Ireland.

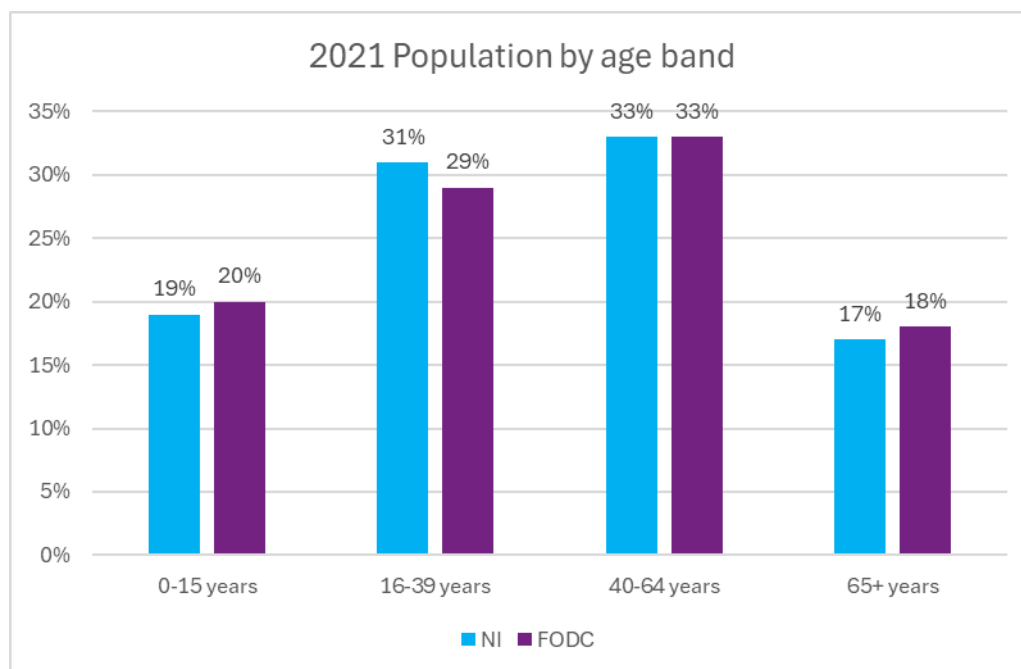


Figure 6: 2021 Population Profile by Broad Age Group (NISRA)

130. However, between the 2011 and 2021 census the region experienced a significant shift in its population age profile, with the proportion of older people increasing by 29%. This trend is expected to continue and by the 2031 census Fermanagh and Omagh is expected to see a further rise of 27% in the number of residents over the age of 65. This trajectory, combined with a decrease in the number of residents of working age 16-64, presents

²³ 2021 Census, NISRA.

²⁴ mid-2018 Population Projections, NISRA. 2020.

challenges for economic growth and also has implications for healthcare, social services and elder care services in the region.

4.2.3. Population Density

131. Population density in FODC has increased over time in proportion with increasing population density trends across NI, however FODC still has the lowest population density of all LGDs in NI at around 30% of the NI average density.

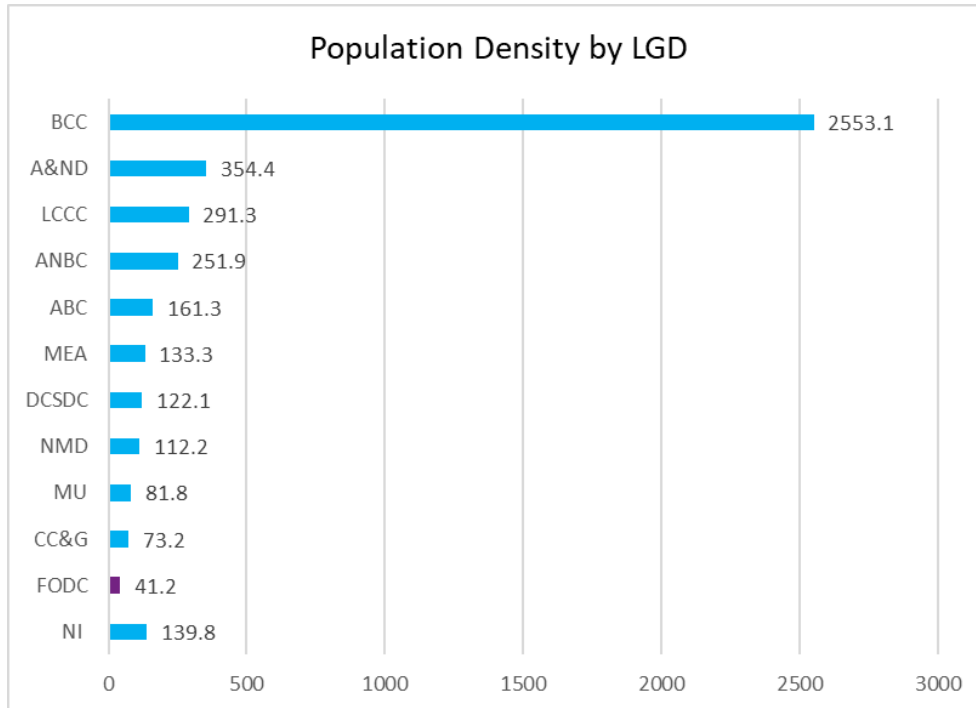


Figure 7: Population density by LGD

4.2.4. Deprivation

132. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures analysis was refreshed in 2017 and Figure Eight summarises the most deprived Super Output Areas within Fermanagh and Omagh across each of the deprivation measures.



Figure 8: Fermanagh and Omagh most deprived SOAs by measure²⁵

133. Nine of Fermanagh and Omagh’s 49 SOAs rank in the top 100 most income deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland, and 10 SOAs rank in the top 20% most employment deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland.

134. As Figure Nine shows, households in Fermanagh and Omagh had the second lowest Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) of all local authority areas in Northern Ireland.

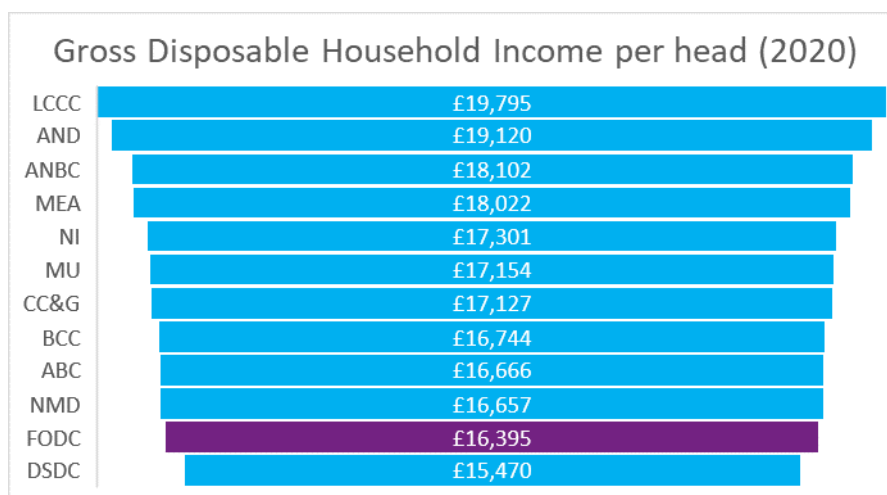


Figure 9: Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI)

²⁵ Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures 2017. NISRA.

135. In 2022/23, almost one fifth of the population in Fermanagh and Omagh (20%) were living in relative poverty, and of the District’s most vulnerable groups, 22% of children were living in poverty, with Lisanelly 1 ranking as the 2nd most child poverty deprived SOA in Northern Ireland. 8% of the district’s pensioners were living in poverty, with Rosslea, Kesh, Ederney and Lack falling into the worst 1% of all SOAs in Northern Ireland for pensioners living in poverty.
136. In fulfilling FODC’s ambition for a more inclusive economy it will be important that the implementation of this IEAP focuses on the most income and employment deprived areas across the district.

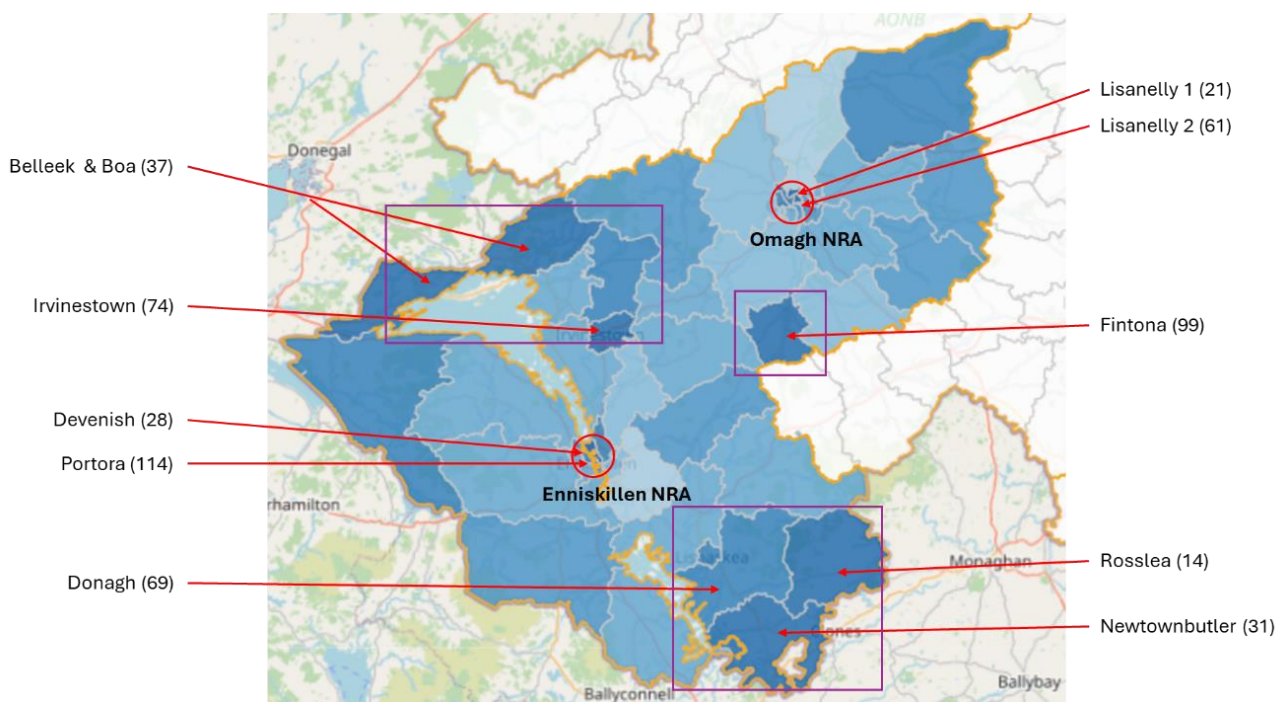


Figure 10: Fermanagh and Omagh’s most income deprived SOAs

137. In addition to the district’s two Neighbourhood Renewal Areas located at the region’s main urban centres of Omagh and Enniskillen, it is recommended that the three broad rural areas of deprivation identified in Figure Ten should also feature as target areas for income and employability action.

4.3. Economic Enterprise statistics

4.3.1. Business numbers

138. Fermanagh and Omagh 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 growth rate of 1.4% over the past six years.

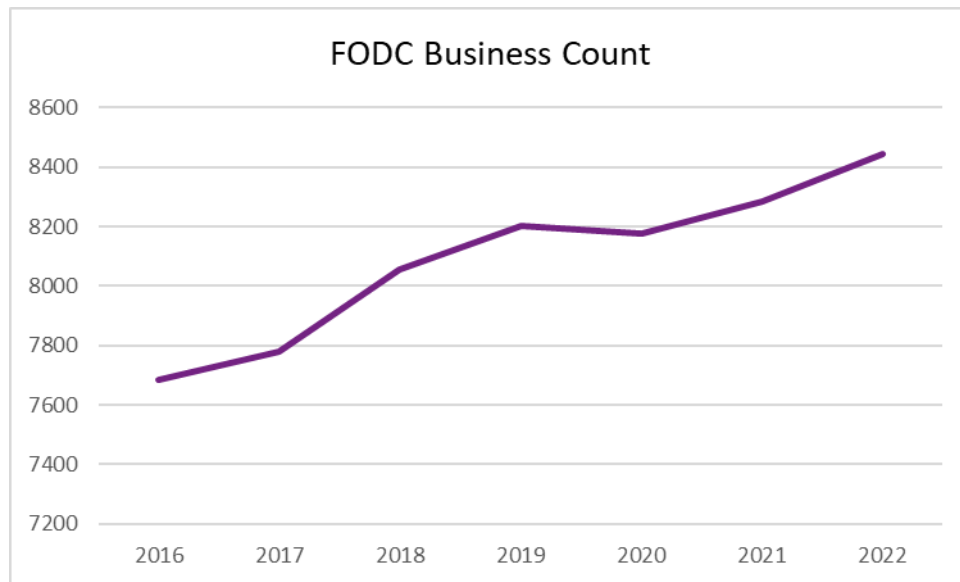


Figure 11: Growth in FODC registered businesses

4.3.2. Business size

139. A profile of FODC businesses by company size is set out in the chart below.

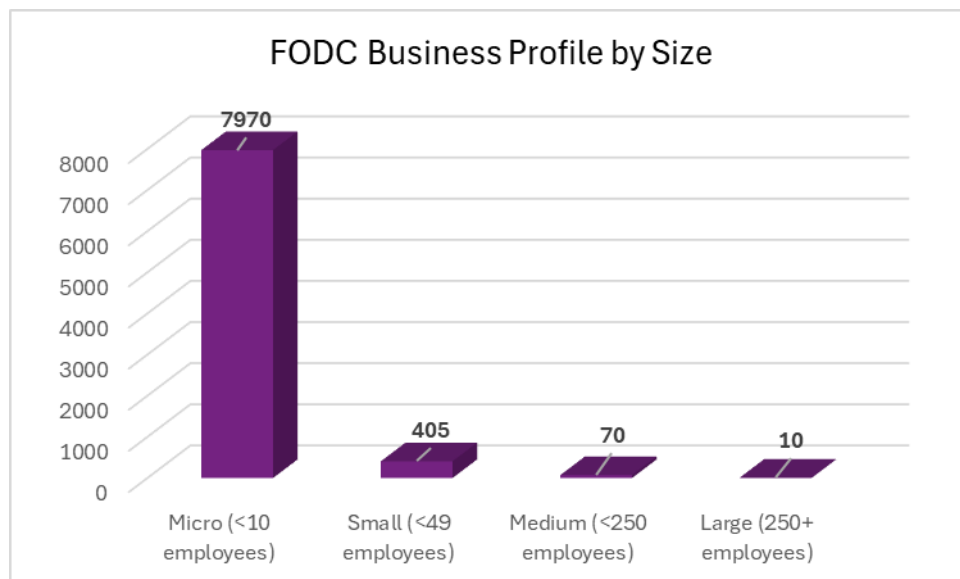


Figure 12: FODC registered businesses by size

140. Of the 94% of micro businesses employing less than 10 people, the majority are sole traders who do not have any other employees. 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 Districts in Northern Ireland.
141. This is significant as it poses additional challenges for FODC when engaging with businesses and implementing employment interventions. This point was specifically identified in the MSW regional economic strategy, which calls for a more flexible approach to apprenticeships using shared apprenticeship schemes.
142. FODC will need to consider innovative approaches in the engagement of micro SME's and also the scheme participants to make skills initiatives accessible and successful in the region.

4.3.3. Businesses by sector

143. The graphic below illustrates the profile of businesses in Fermanagh and Omagh district by broad industry group.

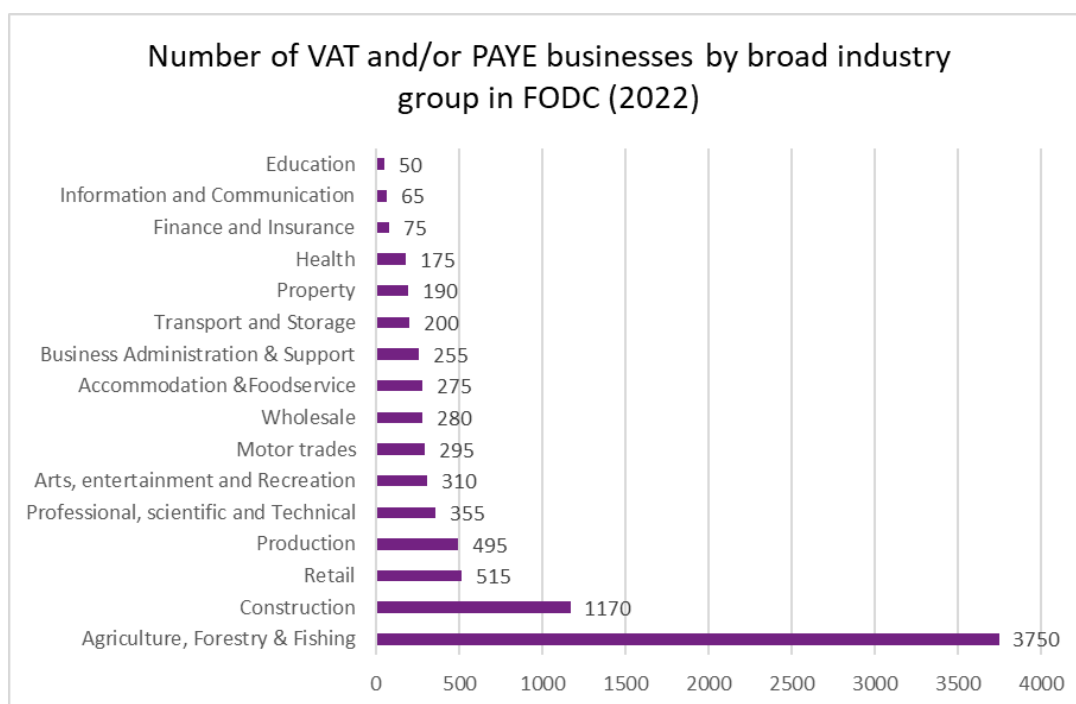


Figure 13: FODC businesses by sector

144. Key industry sectors for the region are Agri-food, Tourism and Hospitality, Manufacturing & Engineering, Construction and Retail.

4.3.4. Business survival rates

145. Analysis shows that business survival rates in FODC are some of the best in NI, and the region outperforms all other LGDs in Northern Ireland in terms of its 5-year survival rates. It is worth noting that NI as a whole outperforms the

UK in this measure, so FODC fosters one of the highest five-year business survival rates in the UK.

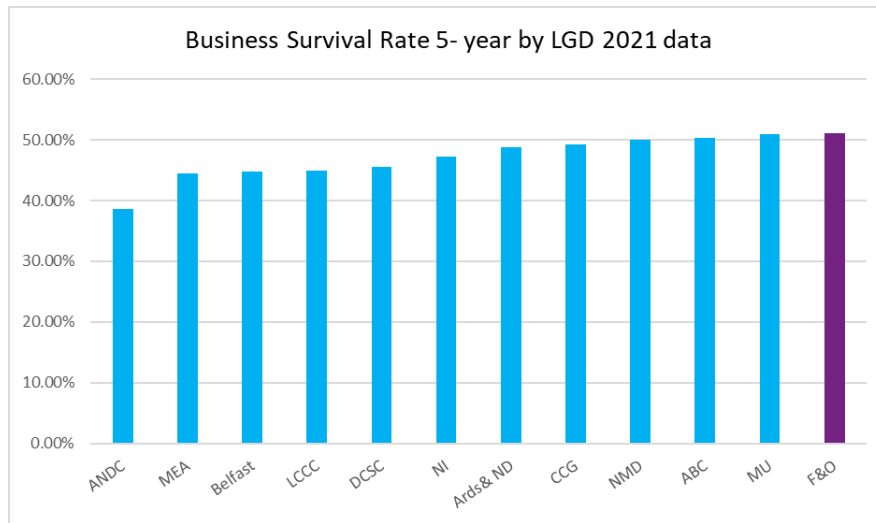


Figure 14: Business survival rates by LGD.

4.3.5. Business productivity

146. Overall, Northern Ireland is the 7th of the UK’s twelve regions for business productivity performance,²⁶ lagging some 10.6% behind the UK average²⁷, and as much as 46% behind the Republic of Ireland²⁸.

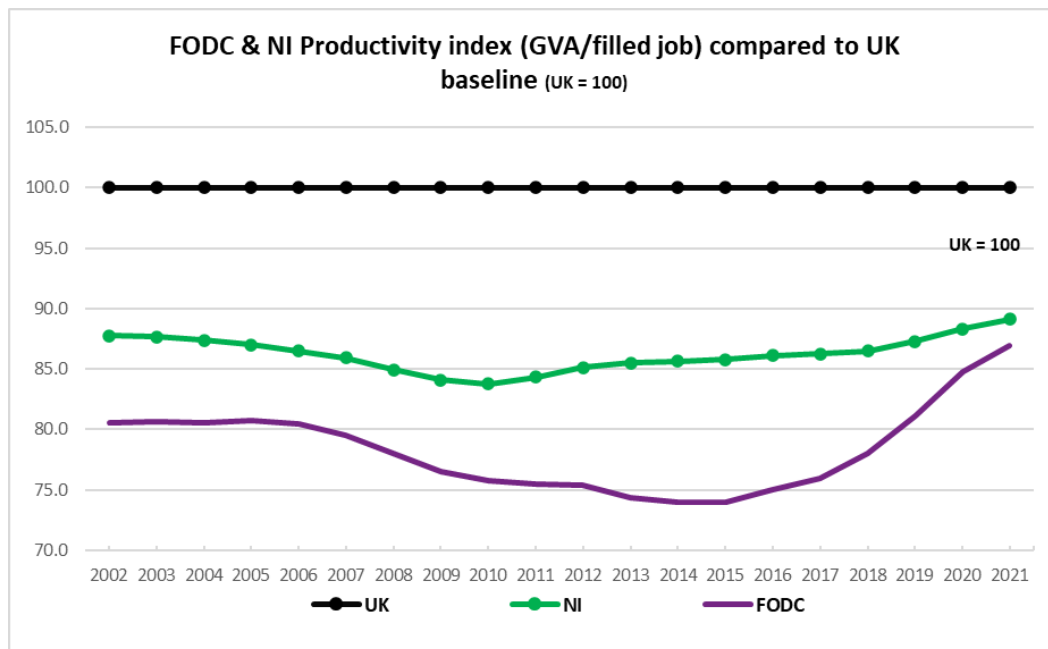


Figure 15: Fermanagh and Omagh productivity compared to a UK baseline.

Source: Sub Regional Productivity (GVA/filled job), ONS (2023)

²⁶ Northern Ireland Productivity dashboard 2023, The Productivity Institute.

²⁷ Depending on the productivity measure used.

²⁸ OECD (2022) Level of GDP per capita and productivity comparison.

147. Figure Fifteen shows that whilst there has been a significant improvement in business productivity in Fermanagh and Omagh in recent times, a gap continues to persist with FODC 2.4% behind the NI average and 13% behind the UK.
148. The dominance of micro-SMEs in FODC is a significant factor as businesses do not have the same scale as their counterparts in other regions of the UK and Ireland. An action under this IEAP will be to identify high growth potential SMEs and assist them to pull through as Invest NI clients to avail of the wide range of business supports necessary to scale up.

4.4. Labour market statistics

4.4.1. Wages

149. The following charts illustrate the median full-time hourly pay achieved in the FODC region by firstly; those attending workplaces in the FODC region and secondly by those residing in the FODC region.

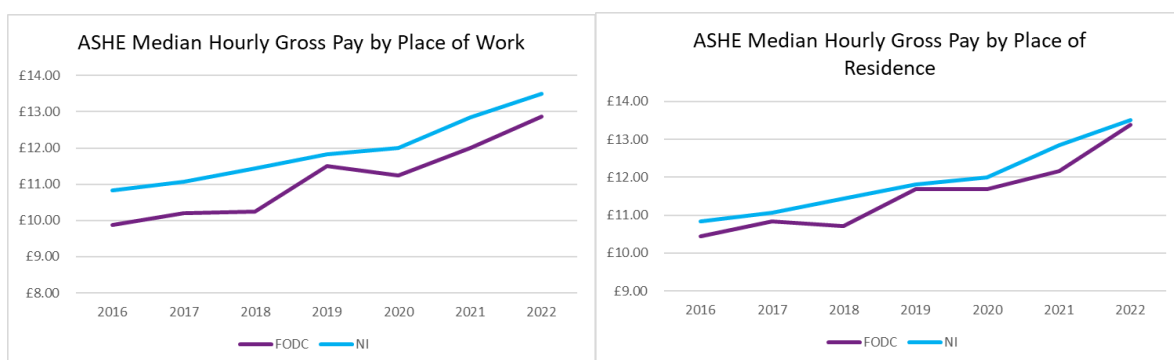


Figure 16: Median Hourly Gross Pay by place of work, and residence.

150. A comparison of the two graphs identifies a value gap between the wages employees can earn within the FODC region, and the wages that can be earned outside the region.
151. This would indicate that higher skilled workers in FODC are commuting outside the region to attend better paid jobs. This endorses the feedback received during the recent stakeholder consultation which concluded that better quality jobs are needed in the FODC region.

4.4.2. Educational attainment

152. As illustrated in Figure Seventeen, school children in Fermanagh and Omagh District out-perform their counterparts at all other LGDs in NI with regard to both GCSE and A Level results. This is a testament to the quality of the schools in the District and the strong work ethic amongst young people in the region.

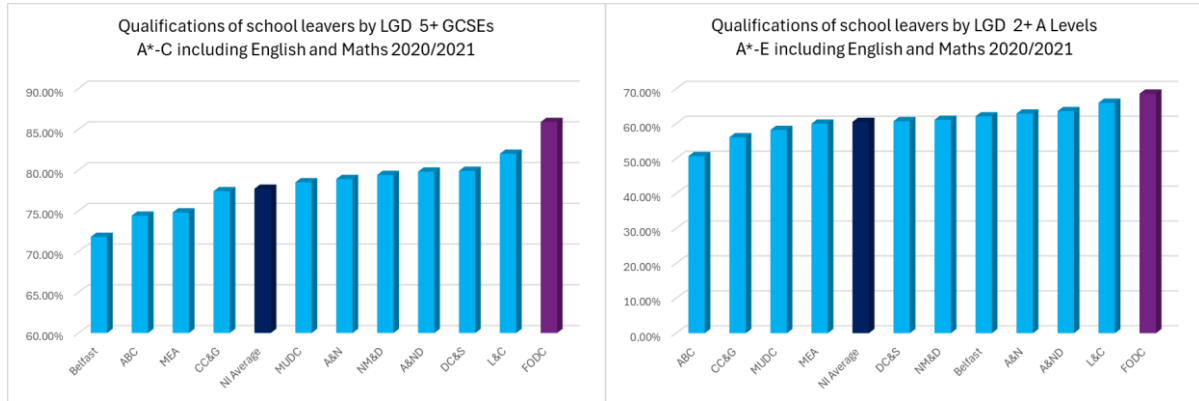


Figure 17: Relative GCSE and A level performance by LGD

153. In this context it is perhaps not surprising that the proportion of Fermanagh and Omagh school leavers who secure a university place is significantly higher than the NI average - a trend which has been consistent over time.

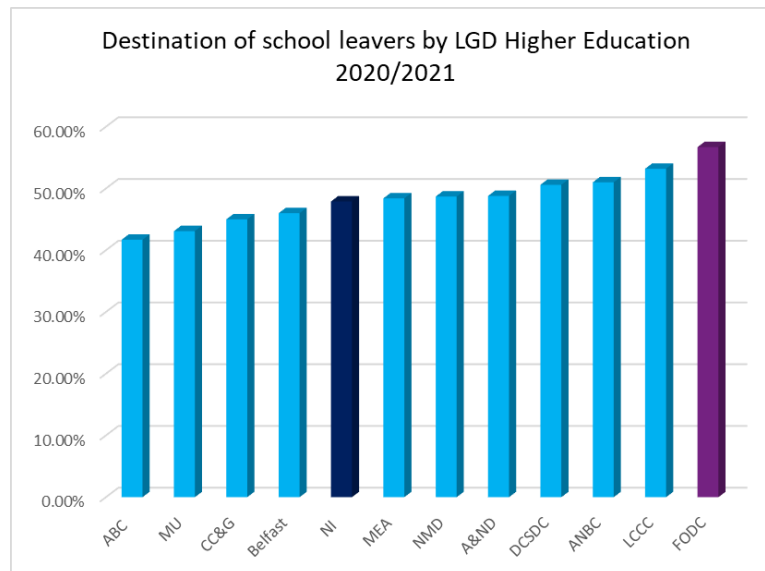


Figure 18: Destination of school leavers to Higher Education

154. In the 2020/2021 year, 57% of school leavers in Fermanagh and Omagh left school on a higher education pathway, compared to the NI average figure of 48%.

155. This strong academic success creates a challenge for the region. With fewer large businesses and a lower pay profile in the region, young people tend to leave this area to attend university and do not return to work in the region afterwards.

156. This trend is borne out by an analysis of the education profile of the working age population (aged 16-64) in FODC, where 76% of the population are qualified to Level 2 and above, which is lower than the NI equivalent figure of 79%. The decreasing percentage of the population aged 16 – 39 would also support this assessment.

157. A key challenge to overcome to support FODC's continued economic development will be to encourage a more mixed economy with larger businesses and better paid jobs being critical to the retention of skilled talent in the region.
158. Higher and Degree-level apprenticeships may also play a key role in providing alternative skills development pathways that encourage young people to remain in the District.

4.4.3. Labour Force Participation

159. The rate of economic inactivity across the FODC area has fallen since 2019 and is now lower than the NI average and FODC now ranks mid-table relative to the other LGDs in Northern Ireland.

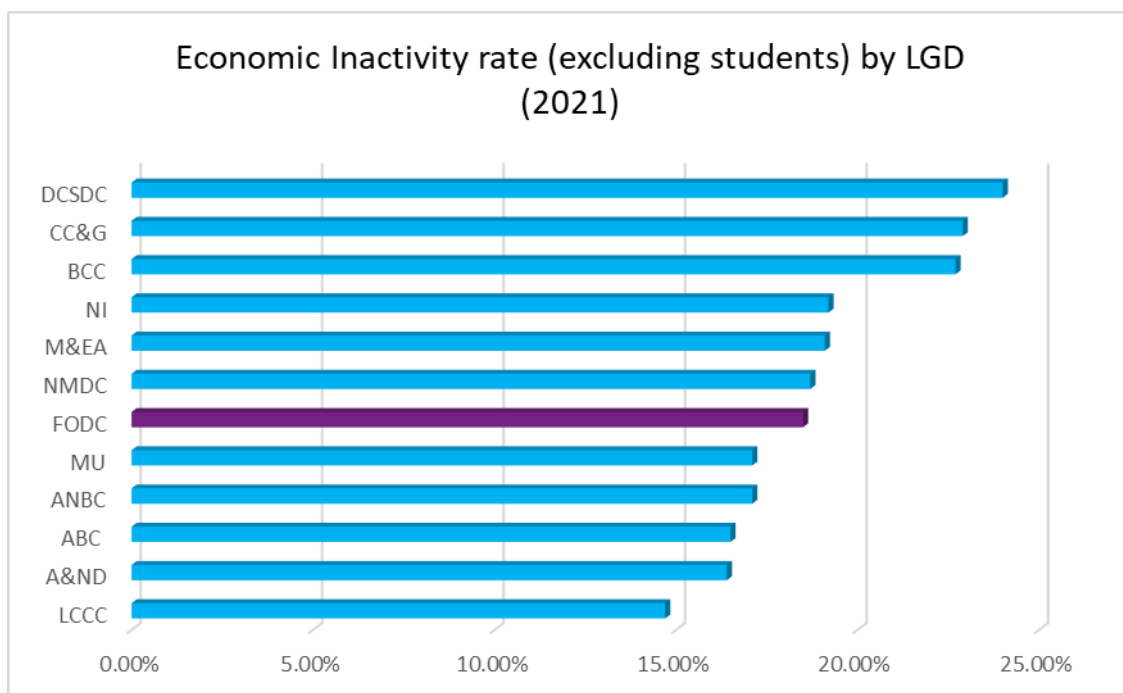


Figure 19: Economic inactivity by LGD

160. This is a positive trend and one which is helpful to the local labour market.
161. Research conducted by UUEPC on behalf of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council analysed the reasons for economic inactivity in the region in 2019. The analysis identified that the largest proportion of those economically inactive in FODC at that time were classified as long-term sick or having a disability (35%), which is significantly higher than the NI equivalent at that time which equated to 26%. A total of 22% were caring for family or home and the remaining 13% fell into the retired or 'other' categories.
162. If FODC could match Lisburn & Castlereagh performance this would yield an additional 3.8% of the adult population being available to the workforce.

4.4.4. Female economic inactivity

163. The gender economic inactivity gap in NI has reduced every year since 2016 with the exception of 2020 (the year associated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic).
164. The gender economic inactivity gap in FODC is wider than the NI average and Figure Twenty shows that gender economic inactivity gap in FODC doubled between 2017 and 2020 from -8% to -16%.

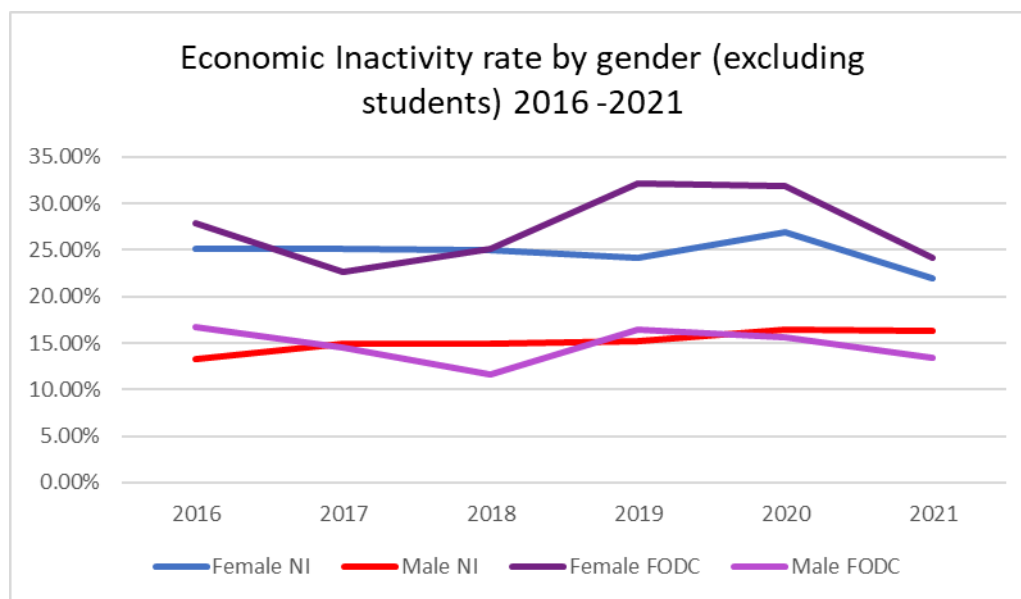


Figure 20: Gender economic inactivity in FODC v NI

165. As of 2021 the FODC gender gap stands at almost 11% which is nearly double the Northern Ireland average. Addressing this will be important to the goal of delivering a more inclusive workforce in the District.

4.4.5. Disability and Employment Outcomes

166. Overall, Northern Ireland performs poorly in terms of employment outcomes for people with disabilities. According to a study undertaken by DfC in 2022, over 60% of disabled people in Northern Ireland were economically inactive compared with just 42.5% of disabled people in the rest of the UK.
167. The position in Fermanagh and Omagh is worse than the NI average, making FODC one of the poorest performing LGDs in the UK with regard to disability inclusion in the workplace.

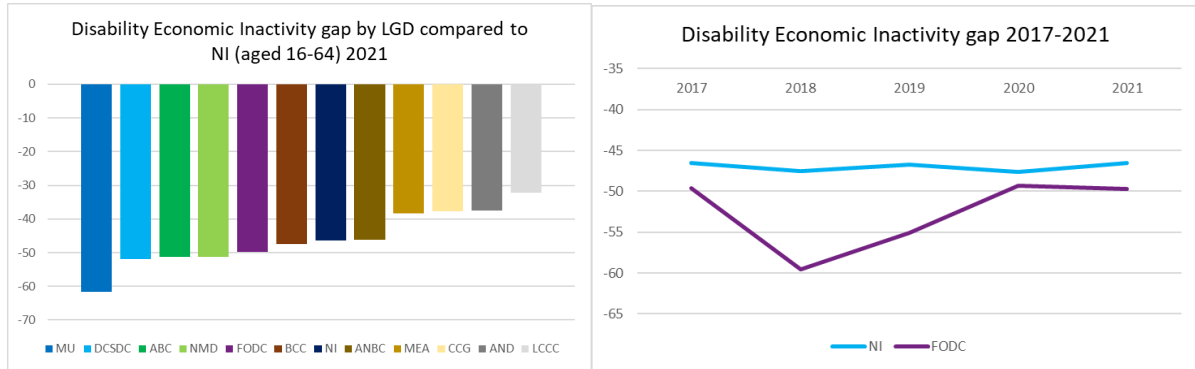


Figure 21: FODC performance in disability inclusion

168. Given the vision of the IEAP to improve quality of life conditions for all residents, there is a need to include measures to support disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities to improve their employment outcomes.

4.5. FODC regional infrastructure investment

169. A common recurring theme that featured in every stakeholder engagement meeting in the preparation of this plan was the view that the region has been economically weakened over time by poor levels of infrastructure investment.
170. FODC has the most extensive roads network of all NI Local Government Districts (LGDs) (3992Km), but yet has the lowest level of dual carriageway provision (570m) of all LGDs in NI.
171. Projects identified as being of strategic priority in the previous FODC Economic Development Plan remain undelivered – these will need to carry forward in this IEAP, and with the Northern Ireland Assembly now reinstated it will be a top priority for FODC members, officers, and regional MLAs to lobby the Department for Infrastructure to advocate for a more equitable level of infrastructure investment for the region.
172. As Figure Twenty-Two clearly shows, DfI spends the least amount of money per kilometer of road in FODC than of any LGD in Northern Ireland, and at £5,937 per Km this is well below the Northern Ireland average of £9,778.

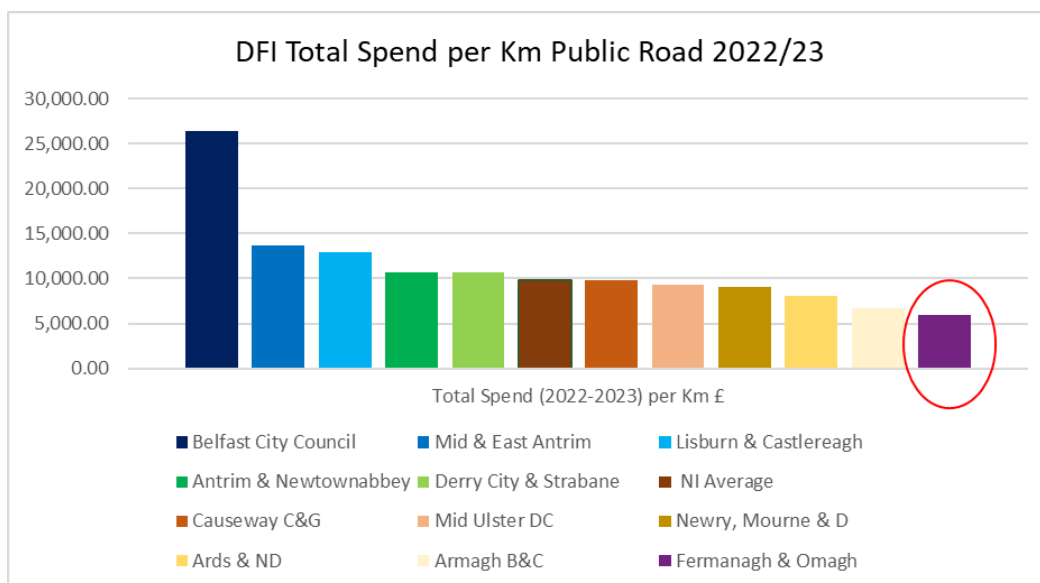


Figure 22: DfI spend per Km public road by LGD.

4.6. FODC Green House Gas (GHG) emissions

173. Figure Twenty-Three below shows the progress that has been made over the past 31 years in the Fermanagh and Omagh district in the reduction of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions to a current position of 938 kt CO₂e in 2021.²⁹

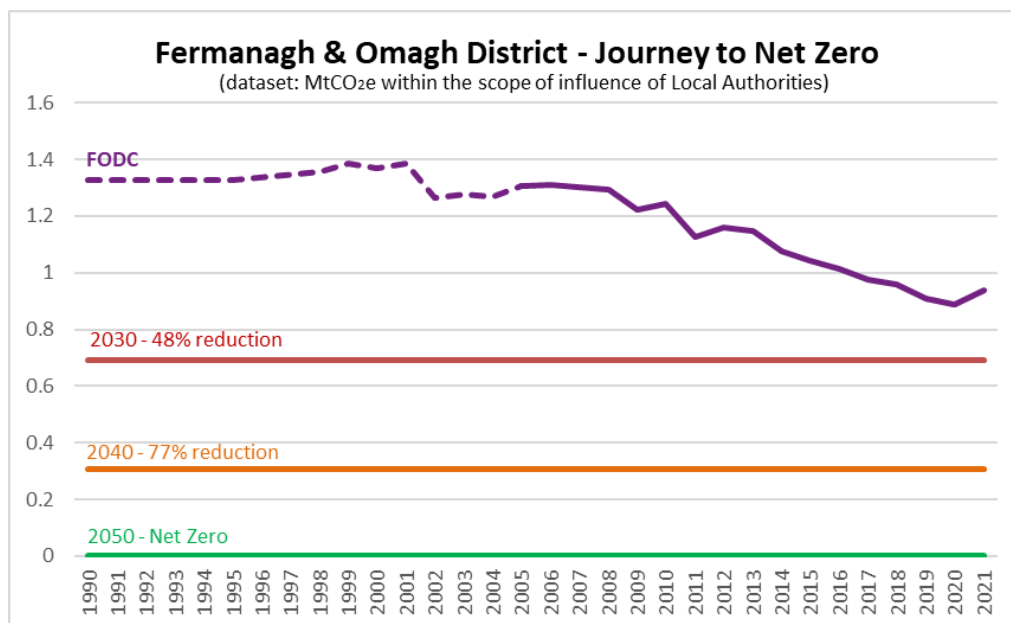


Figure 23: FODC GHG Emissions MtCO₂e 1990 to 2021³⁰

174. Based on the latest available figures, it is estimated that the FODC region has achieved a 29.4% reduction in GHG emissions relative to its 1990 baseline.
175. Figure Twenty-Four below presents a forecast for the region's GHG emissions using the average rate of reduction over the last 5 years and 10 years as forecasting scenarios.

²⁹ Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2021, July 2023.

³⁰ FODC data source 1: 2005 to 2021: Table 2.1, UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2021, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. July 2023.
FODC data source 2: 1990 to 2005 (dotted line) based on Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2019 statistical bulletin - data and charts, DAERA, June 2021. Uses 2005 to 2015 relative index to data source 1 to backcast 1990 to 2005 at local authority level.

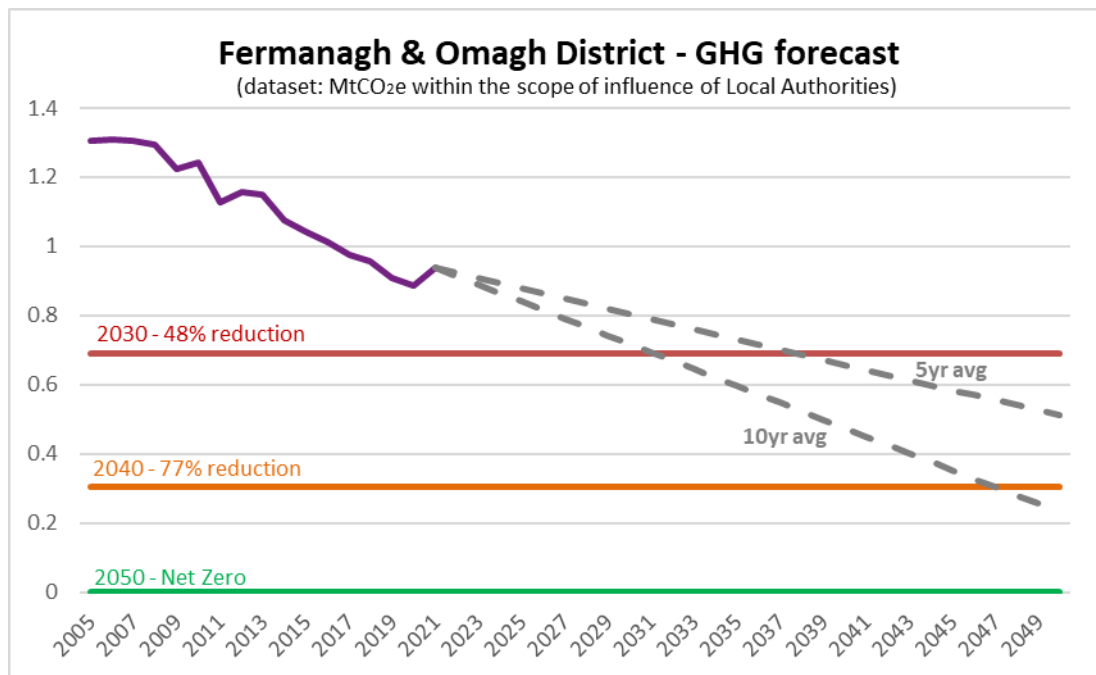


Figure 24: Forecasted FODC GHG Emissions MtCO_{2e}

176. Based on FODC sustaining the average annual rate of GHG emission reductions achieved over the last ten-year period, it is reasonable to expect that FODC can meet its 2030 target on time, but at this rate of change it is unlikely to meet its 2040 target until 2047.
177. However, as the rate of emission reductions in the region appears to have slowed in the past five years, based on the five-year average then FODC is at risk of missing its 2030 target. Under this scenario the target would not be met until 2038, and it would be 2064 before the 2040 target was met.
178. **Neither the 5- or 10-year average reduction rates will be sufficient to meet Net Zero by 2050**, and it is clear that a step change in performance is required if the targets are to be met. As industry represents 20% of the GHG emissions FODC can influence as a local authority, it will be important to ensure the IEAP contains specific actions to drive industry transition to Net Zero.

Stakeholder Consultation & SWOT

5. Stakeholder Consultation and SWOT analysis

5.1. Overview

179. In developing its Inclusive Economy Action Plan (IEAP), Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has invested in meaningful engagement with a broad range of stakeholders from across the district achieved through online surveys, workshops and one to one interviews – 84% of the engagement activity was conducted in person through video and telephone interviews.
180. The consultation phase was widely publicised by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council through its website, e-zine and social media, and in total 68 participant organisations engaged with the IEAP consultation over the course of six weeks between 24 October and 13 December 2023, 33 of which were local businesses representing the main industry sectors in the region.
181. A list of the non-business organisations that participated in the consultation can be found at Section 8.1.

5.2. Stakeholder Consultation

5.2.1. Engagement with local businesses

182. To ensure the development of this IEAP reflects the needs of local enterprise it was important to ensure a wide range of businesses were engaged in the consultation phase, in terms of location, sector and size. Figure Twenty-Five shows the wide geographic spread of businesses who engaged in the consultation.



Figure 25: Location of FODC businesses engaged in stakeholder consultation.

183. 11 industry sectors were engaged in the consultation, with the mix of businesses largely reflective of the overall sectoral makeup in the region, with a strong representation from hospitality and tourism, manufacturing and engineering, construction, and agri-food in particular.



Figure 26: The mix of business sectors involved in stakeholder engagement.

184. 87% of the businesses engaged were small to medium sized enterprises, which again is reflective of the SME driven business eco-system in the region.



Figure 27: The mix of business sizes involved in stakeholder engagement.

185. Notably quite a high proportion of the businesses consulted were Invest NI client enterprises (53%), which is reflective of the export orientated nature of the FODC business base, particularly in the maker sectors.
186. One third of businesses reported that they had received no form of financial support from any source over the last five years. Of those who had received support, the sources of that support were fairly evenly distributed between Invest NI, FODC, and DAERA/Others.

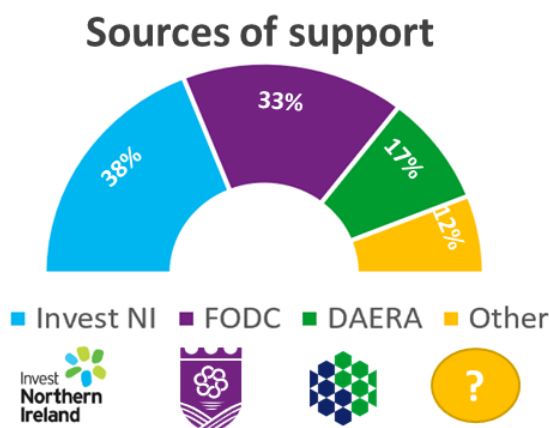


Figure 28: Sources of support received by FODC business stakeholders.

Fermanagh and Omagh business outlook over the next five years

187. Business stakeholders were asked to rate their level of confidence and expectations over a range of topics.
188. Figure Twenty-Nine below shows that businesses were overwhelmingly confident in their opportunities for revenue growth over the next five years with 93% of respondents indicating they were confident or very confident. A strong proportion of businesses also indicated that they expected the need to grow their workforce over the same period to meet their sales demand.

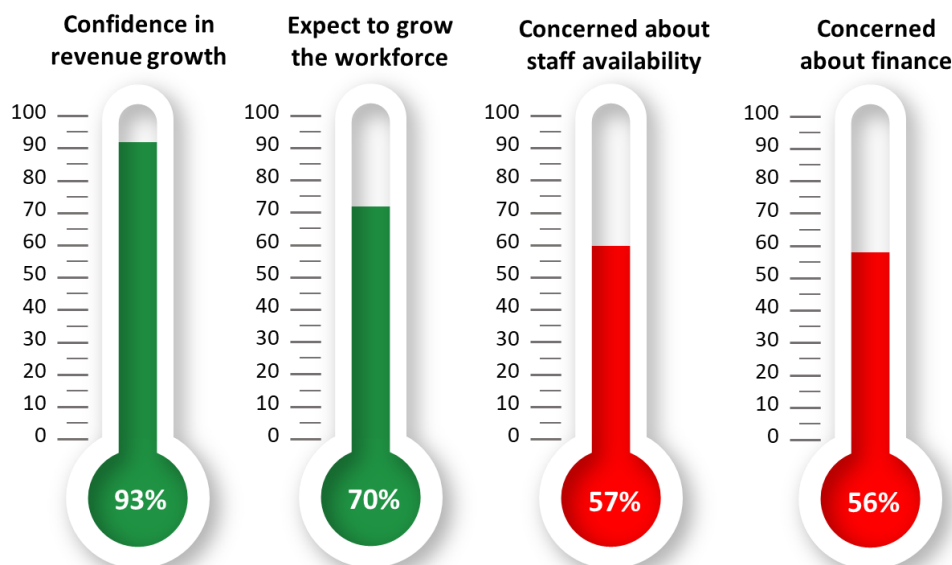


Figure 29: F&O business outlook over the next 5 years – key messages

189. Despite the optimism for sales revenue and workforce growth, the majority of businesses expressed concern about the availability of skilled staff to fill future vacancies, and it is clear that tight labour market conditions will persist for the foreseeable future.
190. In the context of low labour supply, this should create an environment in which companies can be encouraged to invest in productivity improving technologies that help them meet sales demand through upskilling and better utilisation of the employees they already have. Offering Higher and Degree Level apprenticeships may also play a key role in recruiting and retaining young people in local employment.
191. Another key concern for Fermanagh and Omagh businesses was the cost and availability of investment finance, with interest rates and inflation cited as factors that will challenge business ability to invest in new technologies and equipment.

Fermanagh and Omagh business priorities over the next five years

192. Respondents were asked to identify which themes held most importance for their business over the next five years and Figure Thirty summarises the top five business priorities identified in the consultation.

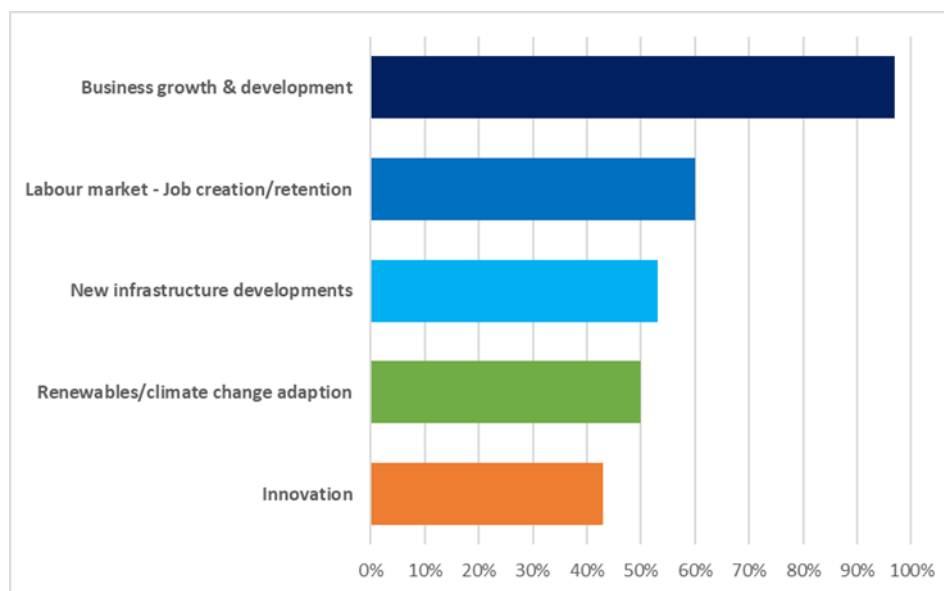


Figure 30: Top five business priorities for Fermanagh and Omagh businesses

193. Almost all respondents (97%) indicated that ‘Business Growth, Expansion and Development’ was their number one business priority – again reflecting a confident business outlook for the period ahead.
194. Aside from the labour challenges already discussed, top priorities for F&O businesses were identified as:
- The need for infrastructure investment (land and buildings) to support business expansion;
 - The need for investment in renewable energy and climate change adaption – this was largely driven by business concerns on the high cost of energy and the need for lower cost alternatives; and
 - The need for investment in new technology and innovation, with companies recognising the need to innovate to drive new product development and to address the challenge of driving increased throughput and efficiency from their existing resources and assets.

Fermanagh and Omagh business awareness of Net Zero targets

195. Three quarters of the businesses surveyed were aware of government targets to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions to achieve Net Zero by 2050, but as shown in Figure Thirty-One, the majority of businesses (70%) have made no plans to address this.

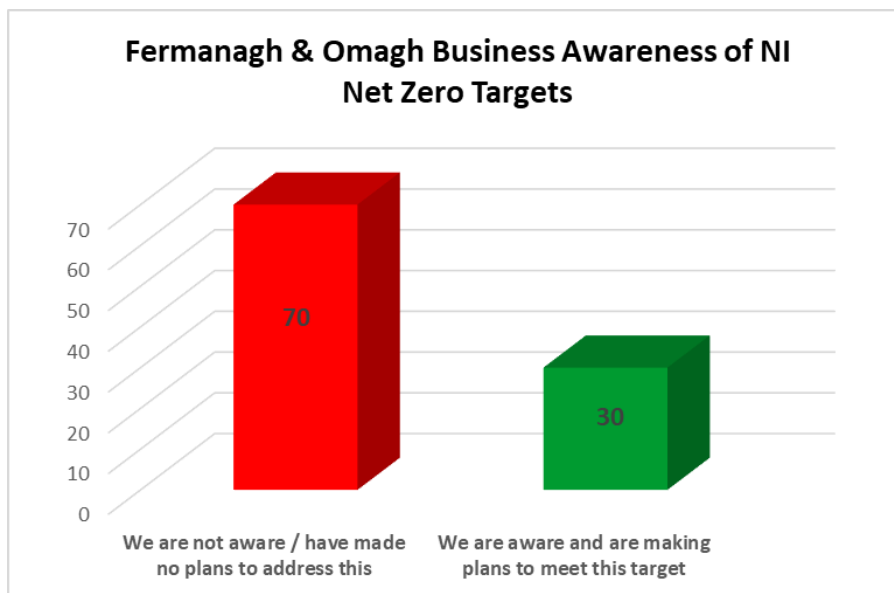


Figure 31: Fermanagh and Omagh business awareness of Net Zero targets

196. These findings are consistent with a previous survey conducted with Fermanagh and Omagh businesses in 2022³¹ and show that businesses in the region have made no further progress on this issue over the last two years.
197. As industry accounts for just over 20% of GHG emissions within the scope of influence of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council³² developing sector specific climate change action plans and skilling industry with climate adaptation capacity will be important objectives to achieve within this IEAP.

Fermanagh and Omagh business assessment of the region

198. As part of the consultation exercise businesses were also asked to summarise the regional strengths, challenges and opportunities they would like to see addressed in the next five years. These responses have been summarised in the SWOT analysis in Section 5.3.

³¹ Strategic Outline Case for the MSW Industrial Investment Challenge Fund. Food for Thought, 2022.

³² Local Authority territorial carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions estimates within the scope of influence of Local Authorities 2005-2021 (kt CO₂e). Dept for Energy security and Net Zero. July 2023.

5.2.2. Feedback from non-commercial stakeholder organisations

199. Active participation was sought from non-commercial stakeholders to identify the challenges and opportunities relevant to their sector, public service, sector of education, community or disadvantaged group. A full list of the non-commercial organisations who participated in the stakeholder consultation exercise has been included at Appendix One.
200. Participants were asked to reflect on the key priorities which could support the development of an inclusive economy in Fermanagh and Omagh District and to consider the needs of their local communities and local disadvantaged groups.
201. The information obtained from consultation with these organisations was combined with the feedback of the business community to develop an up-to-date SWOT analysis for the region, which is set out in the section below.

5.3. SWOT Analysis

202. The following table summarises the key strategic points determined through the stakeholder engagement process.

Table Three: Stakeholder SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong culture of entrepreneurship & indigenous business success. • High performing local enterprise agencies in Fermanagh and Omagh. • Several key sectors including tourism, agri-food, manufacturing & engineering and construction. • Labour Market Partnership in place & programmes have gained good traction and experience high levels of demand. • High performance in educational attainment & skills development. • Well invested South West College campuses in Fermanagh and Omagh offer world class facilities. • Natural assets of region including UNESCO Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark and Sperrins Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. • Built and cultural heritage– scheduled monuments such as Locks, architecture and character buildings 	<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-invested road infrastructure and key projects not started (A4, A5). • County Fermanagh not included in the All-Island Strategic Rail review. • Broadband provision has improved, but full fibre provision lags 5% behind NI. • 4G and 5G service provision is relatively poor - County Fermanagh is 93rd of 96 UK areas for mobile phone coverage, and the Omagh area is 87th of 96 (County Tyrone). • Poor public transport options & low levels of integration to key transport hubs e.g. airports • Community transport provision is insufficient to meet demand which has risen by more than 20% following the COVID pandemic. • Lack of large-scale industrial space around Omagh. • Lack of enterprise spaces and incubator hubs generally. • Local Waste Water Treatment capacity constraints impacting on development potential.

Table Three: Stakeholder SWOT Analysis

Strengths (continued)	Weaknesses (continued)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small rural towns offering essential key services & employment to wider areas. • Strong local identity, community ethos and spirit. • Good capacity for development in community and sports organisations. • South West Acute Hospital as a key regional asset. • Council, Invest NI and local enterprise agencies have strong working relationships and a history of successful joint working. 	<p>Enterprise productivity & development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High proportion of micro-SMEs limits productivity and scale. • Not enough support for startup businesses especially financial assistance. • Not enough support for business capital investment & expansion programmes especially financial assistance. <p>Labour market & skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight labour market with a shortage of workers constraining growth. • Young people leaving the area and not returning. Lower wages = low retention. • Shortage and affordability of childcare provision constraints female participation. • Migrant workers are often underemployed and experience barriers accessing language training courses. • Limited learning opportunities and training support for older people – enrolments 25ys+ are in decline. • Knowledge deficit in relation to new and emerging technologies e.g. Green technology, Productivity improving technologies, Artificial Intelligence etc. <p>Towns and rural communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perception that rural communities are being left behind. • Poor general infrastructure in rural towns such as parking, EV chargers, tourism information, attraction signposting. • Vacancy rates & dereliction in towns create poor image & downward spiral of closures. • Community learning & voluntary network in the region is depleted - infrastructure is not as strong as previously. <p>Net Zero Transition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow to develop climate change mitigations / FODC is at risk of falling behind target for 2030, 2040, and 2050. • Farms & businesses do not understand how to reduce their carbon footprint.

Table Three: Stakeholder SWOT Analysis

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage inward investment of large indigenous companies as well as tech and foreign investment. • Promote F&O as a place that offers a better quality of life and work life balance (digitally connected rural living) • New technology & automation to address labour shortfalls and deliver improved productivity & better jobs. • Optimise dual market access opportunities to EU and UK markets. • Develop a strategic forum with key local businesses across all sectors. • Greater collaboration between SWC and local business to address needs. • Build & expand the work of the LMP and other training support programmes (REAP). • Build world class business leadership and management skills. • Opportunity to lead NI in regenerative tourism. • Leverage heritage, culture and arts offers to support increased economic opportunities e.g. retail, hospitality, food etc. • Local food and drink offer used to strengthen the regional brand and create a signature theme. • Smart towns and villages including creation of high connectivity remote working and small enterprise centres to support better paid jobs in rural towns & communities. • Improve greenway infrastructure (Cycling, walking). • Leverage MSW Net Zero programme to build sector-specific climate change mitigation plans. • Delivery of the Visitor Experience Development Plan to support expansion and growth in the tourism offering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population, with growing numbers seeking early retirement. Health is an increasing driver of economic inactivity. • High cost of adult learning as a barrier to lifelong learning. • EU Exit & impacts on cross border trade / potential divergence issues. • Loss of EU funding & funding constraints generally. • Threat of competition from well-invested cross-border regions still receiving European funding. • Businesses not transitioning fast enough to cleaner, more sustainable ways of doing business. • Businesses delaying investment in anticipation of future support packages. • Risk of biodiversity loss, invasive species and pollution e.g. BlueGreen Algae. • Online shopping cannibalising town centre revenue. • Constrained economic growth arising from under-investment in infrastructure. • Impact of funding constraints for Rural Community transport / capacity being used for health service related transport (40% workload). • Reduced availability of financial assistance for Community and Voluntary Sector. • Social value is not properly valued or well understood when making strategic investments. • Risk of loss of services from South West Acute Hospital.

Table Three: Stakeholder SWOT Analysis

<p>Opportunities (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council fund raising measures ringfenced to support regenerative tourism / reinvestment in tourism offering e.g. boating levy for better jetties/facilities, parking charges for attraction improvements etc. • Encouraging the use of community assets to grow social and community enterprises to support community needs. • Improved utilisation of Enniskillen Airport. <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities arising through PeacePlus, Shared Island and Mid South West Regional Growth Deal. • Potential new MSW Industrial Innovation Challenge Fund to support investment in new technology & automation. • Digital Transformation Flexible fund will see £1.1 Million expenditure over the next three years across six calls. 	
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203. This SWOT analysis has been used to determine the key emerging strategic themes and actions for the IEAP, which are set out in Section 6.

Inclusive Economy Action Plan

6. Inclusive Economy Action Plan

6.1. Purpose of the IEAP

204. The Council’s overall purpose for this IEAP is driven by a desire to build a thriving economy that balances economic prosperity with environmental sustainability and that provides opportunities for all citizens in the district.

205. In this context, the purpose of this plan over the next 5 years is to fulfil priority three of the Council’s new Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028, namely:

“To drive an inclusive economy and aid prosperity across our district.”

6.2. Economic ambition

206. To achieve this purpose, it is Fermanagh and Omagh Council’s economic ambition that:

“By 2029 we will have a more inclusive, greener, and more prosperous economy that benefits people, businesses, and places across our district.”

6.3. Emerging strategic themes

207. To deliver its economic purpose and ambition for the region, three strategic themes have emerged that provide the framework for the action plan. These are set out in Figure Thirty-Two and explained below.



Figure 32: FODC's IEAP Strategic Themes

6.3.1. IEAP Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth and Innovation

208. The Fermanagh and Omagh district is one of the most entrepreneurial regions in Northern Ireland with high business birth rates and five-year business survival rates. This strategic theme aims to build on the region's strengths with the overall objective being to:

“Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.”

209. In developing a range of actions under this theme, consideration has been given to addressing some of the key weaknesses identified through the strategic review and stakeholder engagement phases, namely:

- That the region underperforms in female economic participation, disability employment, and has a growing level of economic inactivity in the 50 – 64 years population;
- The productivity of businesses in the region lags behind the UK average by 13%;
- The region is at risk of missing its GHG emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2040, and must accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy if the emissions targets are to be met on time; and
- 9 of the region's 49 super output areas feature in the top 100 most income deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland.

210. A total of 19 actions have been identified for this theme under five specified aims:

- Fully Leverage FODC's share of the MSW Growth Deal;
- Support FODC business growth;
- Support increased FODC business productivity and innovation to close the District's productivity gap;
- Accelerate the transition to Net Zero; and
- Build greater social value.

6.3.2. IEAP Theme 2: Building a Place for Sustainable Business.

211. The Fermanagh and Omagh district is a region of profound natural beauty and its rich natural assets and rural location simultaneously offer the region's greatest strengths and most challenging constraints. The objective of this theme is to:

“Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.”

212. The previous Economic Development Plan for the region identified a range of critical infrastructure investment needs that remain unaddressed, and infrastructure needs (particularly road infrastructure) were referenced in every consultation interview undertaken in the stakeholder engagement phase for this IEAP. The importance of addressing these long outstanding critical infrastructure requirements cannot be overstated and they are fundamental to the successful delivery of the overall plan.
213. A total of 16 actions have been identified for this theme under five specified aims:
- Campaign for critical infrastructure investment;
 - Create capacity for economic growth through the provision of industrial land and enterprise space;
 - Support the sustainable development of the region;
 - Support town and rural community renewal; and
 - Promote the Fermanagh and Omagh district as a great place for business and to live/work.

6.3.3. IEAP Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce.

214. The Fermanagh and Omagh district currently enjoys low unemployment rates. In the context of strong market demand for skilled labour, recruiting and retaining skilled workers is a challenge for employers in the region and is constraining economic growth.
215. At the same time, rapid advances in technology and increasing demands for efficiency, cost reduction, and reduced carbon footprint are presenting a major skills challenge. Technology is moving faster than companies can design and scale up their training programmes, and the World Economic Forum³³ has identified that by 2027, almost half (44%) of workers' core skills will be disrupted generating additional education and training demand.
216. In this context, the objective for this theme is to:
- “Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.”*
217. Meeting this objective will require close collaboration with key delivery partners. The established Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership provides an important forum for multi-agency and private sector collaboration on the employability and skills agenda, and the region is also blessed with highly capable and well invested South West College Further

³³ Future of jobs report, World Economic Forum, 2023.



Education Campuses. Both the LMP and SWC will be key delivery partners under this strategic theme.

218. A total of 15 actions have been identified for this theme under five specified aims:

- Promote an industry-led skills agenda;
- Work to support inclusive skills development;
- Foster greater diversity in the workplace;
- Develop world-class strategic business leadership in the district; and
- Address the district's emerging skills gaps.

6.4. Action Plan

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective:		<i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.1 Fully leverage FODC's share of the Mid South West Growth Deal.	1.1a) The Mid South West Growth Deal will provide £252m capital investment support to the MSW region. This IEAP is fully aligned to the Growth Deal's four key pillars of 1/ future proofing the skills base, 2/ enabling infrastructure, 3/ boosting innovation and digital capacity, and 4/ building a high performing visitor/tourist economy. <i>A top priority action of this IEAP is to ensure FODC fully utilises its equitable share of the fund to deliver the key outcomes from this Plan.</i> <i>FODC's ability to develop funding strategies to support the revenue funding requirement of the capital programme will be critical to the success of this action and the delivery of the Visitor Experience Development Plan for the district.</i>	FODC MSW Council Partners Sponsor Departments in NI Executive/NIO.	FODC has fully allocated and utilised its share of the MSW funds in the delivery of this IEAP.
	1.1b) Collaborate with MSW Council Partners to realise the wider ambitions of the MSW Regional Economic Strategy for the region.	FODC MSW Council Partners	Realisation of the wider MSW RES ambitions.
	1.1c) Council must fully leverage the funding opportunities afforded by the MSW Growth Deal to pursue additional complementary funding through other programmes including PeacePlus and the Shared Island Fund.	FODC MSW Council Partners Funding programme partners	Complementary funding secured through available programmes.

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective:		<i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.2: Support FODC business growth.	1.2a) Enterprise Support – sustain F&O’s successful track record in the number of business births and 5-year business survival rates by assisting F&O businesses to maximise their support opportunities under the new Go Succeed enterprise support service.	FODC Omagh Enterprise Centre Fermanagh Enterprise	Grow business startup and survival rates from a 2023 baseline of 9% and 51% respectively.
	1.2b) New business startups – particular focus should be given to encouraging new business startups that support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the green economy (e.g. renewable energy companies, energy efficiency companies, waste management and recycling companies, green building/construction companies, air and water resource management companies etc). greater entrepreneurial diversity (e.g. Young entrepreneurs, out-of-retirement entrepreneurs, female entrepreneurs, disability entrepreneurs, community interest entrepreneurs, ethnic minority entrepreneurs). 	FODC Omagh Enterprise Centre Fermanagh Enterprise	Grow business startups from a 2023 baseline of 9%. Diversity case studies that can be used to encourage others to start a business.
	1.2c) Support business expansion and sustain F&O’s successful track record in business survival rates by lobbying for improved capital and revenue financial support measures to assist companies in the region to achieve their growth plans.	FODC Invest NI	Improved business funding Number of jobs created.

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective:		<i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.2: Support FODC business growth (cont).	1.2d) Develop initiatives that assist businesses in the region to leverage the full benefits of dual market access to the UK and EU e.g. cross-border supply chain development programmes, meet the buyer events.	FODC Invest NI Intertrade Ireland Intertrade UK	Increased external and export sales from the FODC region.
	1.2e) Assess the SME business base to identify high growth potential export-focused companies and assist the rate of pull through to become Invest NI clients to access the full range of Invest NI business supports on offer.	FODC	Increased number of FODC companies pulling through as INI clients.
1.3: Support increased FODC business productivity & innovation to close the FODC productivity gap.	1.3a) Develop sector-specific productivity improvement plans - support FODC's key industry sectors to become more productive by establishing industry-led task and finish groups for each sector, supported by sector-specific third party productivity improvement expertise, to develop sector specific productivity improvement plans that identify key opportunities to improve productivity, for example: through digitisation, new technology, robotics, and automation, AI, value stream mapping and process improvement, lean manufacturing, outsourcing, skills development and capacity building.	FODC Centre for Competitiveness Private Sector Consultants	Improve productivity from a baseline of 87% relative to the UK average. Better paid jobs.

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective:		<i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.3: Support increased FODC business productivity & innovation to close the FODC productivity gap. (cont).	1.3b) Capital investment support - Support FODC businesses to derisk productivity improving capital investment projects by accessing funds targeted at driving improved productivity, including the £1.1m Digital Transformation Flexible Fund, and the proposed £7.5m MSW Industrial Investment Challenge Fund.	FODC Newry & Mourne District Council MSW Council Partners	Increased capital investment in productivity improvement.
	1.3c) Promote South West College as a gateway to R&D and innovation, knowledge transfer, and skills capacity building – collaborate with SWC to build Enniskillen and Omagh Campus connectivity to regional and national hubs of innovation excellence including AMIC, CIDRA, I4C, the proposed MSW Agri-food Innovation Centre, Digital Catapult, and University Centres of Excellence etc.	FODC SWC Innovation centres Universities	SWC as a well-connected hub of innovation & knowledge transfer.
	1.3d) Access to R&D – encourage and support F&O businesses to avail of R&D and innovation funding support to drive increased investment in R&D.	Invest NI Innovate UK	Increased F&O business spend in R&D.
1.4: Accelerate the transition to Net Zero.	1.4a) Council to make full use of the Innovate UK funded Mid South West Net Zero Delivery programme. Supported by the Council's Climate Change Team, work with the MSW Net Zero (NZ) delivery officer and local industry leads to develop & implement sector-specific climate change mitigation action plans.	FODC MSW NZ delivery officer.	Sector-specific net zero action plans for each of FODC's key sectors.

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective:		<i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.4: Accelerate the transition to Net Zero (cont).	1.4b) Support the district’s Agri-food sector to meet the challenges of achieving Net Zero targets without negatively impacting on livestock numbers and local agricultural output by collaborating with DAERA to promote key initiatives including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole farm carbon foot printing programme; and • Ruminant Genetics programme. 	FODC DAERA CAFRE SRG ³⁴	High F&O farm participation levels in both programmes.
	1.4c) Through the delivery of the Visitor Experience Development Plan support the development of regenerative tourism business clusters within the tourism and hospitality sector across the district.	FODC Tourism NI Waterways Ireland Private Sector Consultants	FODC Visitor Experience Development Plan.
	1.4d) Council to identify and promote funding opportunities to encourage businesses to invest in technologies that will reduce their carbon footprint and accelerate F&O’s transition to Net Zero (e.g. renewable technologies, energy management, smart building controls, LED lighting.)	FODC Invest NI DAERA	FODC businesses availing of green technology funding support.

³⁴ Sustainable Ruminant Genetics Limited – the not-for profit partnership between Ulster Farmers Union, Livestock and Meat Commission, NI Meat Exporters Association, and Dairy Council NI responsible for the promotion and uptake of DAERA’s ruminant genetics programme.

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective:		<i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.5: Build greater social value.	<p>1.5a) Council to consider how it can expand on the NI “Buy Social” procurement model to develop a Social Value Procurement Policy that maximises and measures social value opportunities derived from its annual capital and revenue spending budgets by embedding community and environmental benefit clauses and social enterprise sub-contracting requirements in FODC contracts (e.g. Lakeland Forum; A4 Enniskillen Southern Relief By-pass; A5 Western Transport Corridor etc). Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating training and development opportunities e.g. apprenticeships; • creating opportunities for individuals with greater needs e.g. disability; • creating employment opportunities for individuals in Neighbourhood Renewal areas or SOAs with employment and income deprivation; • Generating benefit to local community and voluntary groups; and • Making a difference to the local environment and protection of biodiversity. 	FODC	<p>Social Value embedded in Council Procurement Policy.</p> <p>Increased social value from FODC spend.</p>

Theme 1: Driving Sustainable Growth & Innovation			
Objective: <i>Deliver a more competitive and sustainable business base to support an increasingly vibrant labour market with better paid jobs.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
1.5: Build greater social value (cont).	1.5b) Engage with the Department for the Economy to ensure the F&O district derives maximum benefit from the Social Economy Work Programme; target FODC's most deprived areas and in particular rural deprived areas to stimulate social enterprise; create the conditions where community-based social enterprise activity can flourish, through capacity building, funding, and effective marketing & promotion.	FODC DfE Invest NI	Promotion of FODC social enterprises under the Social Economy Work Programme.
	1.5c) Improve social enterprise supply chain integration - Council to collaborate with sector partners to engage large businesses in the region to raise awareness within the business community of the value of social enterprise and encourage businesses to develop relationships and integrate social enterprises into their supply chains as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility agendas.	FODC DfE Social Enterprise NI Local businesses	Local social enterprises sustained through increased commercial revenue.

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
Objective: Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
2.1 Campaign for critical infrastructure investment.	2.1a) Roads: Council to champion the need for critical roads infrastructure investment by lobbying the Department for Infrastructure and its Minister to prioritise investment in the region for key projects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A4 Enniskillen Southern Relief By-pass; • A5 Western Transport Corridor; • Connectivity between the two key urban centres of Omagh and Enniskillen (A32); and • Traffic congestion improvements at critical bottlenecks e.g. Omagh and Fivemiletown. 	FODC MLA's Dfl.	Increased infrastructure investment (from 2022/23 baseline of £5,937/km compared to NI average of £9,778) Increased Km of dual carriageway over 2022/23 baseline of 0.6km.
	2.1b) Rail: Council to lobby the Department for Infrastructure and its Minister to rectify the omission of County Fermanagh in the scope of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review.	FODC, MLA's Dfl.	Amended All-Island Strategic Rail plan.
	2.1c) Broadband: Council to lobby the Department for Economy and its Minister to prioritise investments through Project Gigabit, and any future funding sources to close the gap in high speed and full fibre broadband service provision in the region compared to the rest of NI.	FODC MLA's DfE	Increased service provision from a baseline of 89% Full Fibre (94% NI) & 94.16% superfast (>30mbps) (NI:97.7%).

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
Objective: <i>Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
2.1 Campaign for critical infrastructure investment (cont).	2.1d) Mobile Broadband: Council to lobby the Department for Economy and its Minister to ensure the region is prioritised in the Mobile Action Plan for NI (MAP NI) to close the gap in 4G and 5G mobile phone coverage compared to the rest of the UK.	FODC MLA's DfE	Improved signal coverage from a Co Fermanagh baseline of 93 rd out of 96 UK signal areas, and 87 th of 96 for the Omagh area (County Tyrone).
	2.1e) Air: Council to consider commissioning a feasibility study to assess options for the development and utilisation of Enniskillen Airport as a boost to tourism and the local economy.	FODC	Feasibility study produced.
	2.1f) Hospital services: Council to advocate for the protection and expansion of key services at South West Acute Hospital as critical infrastructure supporting economic and social value in the region.	FODC WHSC Department of Health	Key health services sustained in the region.

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
<i>Objective: Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
2.2 Create capacity for economic growth through the provision of Industrial land & enterprise spaces.	2.2a) To encourage new businesses to invest and support existing businesses to expand, Council must work with key partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure the funds required to acquire, design and develop large scale industrial sites; and • acquire and service new industrial development land, particularly at Omagh³⁵. 	FODC Invest NI	Creation of new serviced Industrial land, particularly in Omagh.
	2.2b) Develop enterprise space (similar to the Enniskillen Workhouse initiative) that will support the formation of sectoral clusters to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business incubation space; • increased SME collaboration and innovation; and • provision of mentoring support and business advisory services. 	FODC Invest NI Enterprise NI Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd Omagh Enterprise Ltd	Creation of at least 1 new enterprise development space in the district.

³⁵ Omagh Land Needs Assessment, 2022 has identified that 23 acres of serviced land is required to support business growth to 2030.

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
<i>Objective: Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
2.2 Create capacity for economic growth through the provision of Industrial land & enterprise spaces (cont).	2.2c) Scope the potential to develop smart villages & innovation hubs to expand enterprise development facilities into the most employment and income deprived areas in the district, removing the digital divide in rural enterprise access to full fibre broadband and delivering productivity centres that offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shared office space; • fibre broadband connectivity; • meeting rooms and video conferencing facilities; • training and development facilities; and • virtual office facilities. 	FODC Invest NI Enterprise NI DAERA CVS partners	Scoping study completed with actions identified

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
<i>Objective: Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
2.3 Support the sustainable development of the region.	<p>2.3a) Building on the adoption of the Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy 2030 which sets out a strategy for sustainable growth of the area, develop and agree a Local Policies Plan which will include local policies, including site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings that are sensitive to the natural environment and that provide greater clarity and certainty to investors and businesses to support their business planning processes.</p> <p>Engage with partners in a regional Planning Improvement Programme and implement a local Planning Improvement Programme to deliver a more streamlined and efficient planning system to support more responsive decision making.</p>	<p>FODC DfI</p>	<p>Development of Local Policies Plan</p> <p>Implementation of streamlined and efficient planning system that supports sustainable growth.</p>
2.3 Support the sustainable development of the region (cont).	<p>2.3b) Council to scope the potential to generate income, eg, establish a visitor-invested regenerative tourism fund, to support investment in regenerative tourism projects that will enhance the tourism offering whilst protecting/enhancing the region's biodiversity and wealth of natural assets and watercourses.</p>	<p>FODC Waterways Ireland Tourism NI</p>	<p>FODC Regenerative Tourism fund.</p> <p>Visitor- invested funding of the sustainable enhancement of the local tourism offering.</p>

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
<i>Objective: Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
	2.3c) Invest in the development of new public greenways and active travel routes that connect places by active travel (e-biking, cycling and walking), providing opportunities to develop new local enterprises in accommodation, food, retail, facilities & services e.g. the proposed Sligo to Enniskillen SLNCR greenway ³⁶ .	FODC DfI	At least 1 new public greenway that connects places in the district.
2.4 Support town & rural community renewal	2.4a) Delivery of the Place Shaping Plans for Omagh and Enniskillen to deliver stronger and more vibrant urban centres that play a key role in attracting businesses and people to the region	FODC DfC DfI + multiple partners	Implementation of the Place Shaping Action Plans. Increased footfall to urban centres.
	2.4b) Encourage the use of community assets as venues to grow social and community enterprises to support community needs, with a particular focus on opportunities in areas of income and employment deprivation in the district.	FODC DfC DAERA	Improved social and community enterprise facilities in disadvantaged areas.

³⁶ SLNCR refers to the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway – the former railway track route which the proposed greenway will roughly follow.

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
Objective: <i>Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
	2.4c) Work with communities to identify opportunities for community events and festivals to animate and drive footfall to the region's towns and villages, including seasonal events, farmers markets and speciality food fairs.	FODC CVS DfC DAERA	Increase in the number of events held annually across the district and an increase in town and village footfall.

Theme 2: Building a place for sustainable business			
<i>Objective: Create a Place that attracts and sustains businesses and people in our communities.</i>			
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
<p>2.5 Promote Fermanagh and Omagh district as a great place for business.</p>	<p>2.5a) Council to develop an investment/proposition prospectus for the region that confidently promotes the region to both indigenous and offshore investors as a great place to do business, highlighting key selling points, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the border location and ease of dual market access to UK and the EU; • the academic success and qualifications of young people from the region; • the opportunity to acquire affordable development land; • opportunities afforded through the MSW Growth deal; and • the natural environment and the ability to attract employees with a better work/life balance. <p>Include case study profiles of the most successful businesses in the region to evidence the success enjoyed by businesses in the region.</p> <p>Develop and use a suite of marketing materials and leverage the resources of key partners to effectively promote the region to (i) indigenous and overseas investors; and (ii) to the wider population as a great place to live and work.</p>	<p>FODC Invest NI</p>	<p>Regional investment / proposition prospectus.</p> <p>High profile business case studies.</p> <p>Marketing strategy to promote the region.</p> <p>Increase in the value of business investment in the region.</p> <p>Increase in working age population.</p>

Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce			
Objective:		<i>Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
3.1 Promote an Industry-led skills agenda.	3.1a) Build closer links with the captains of industry in the region by establishing a Business Partner Network in collaboration with SWC. Interface this network with key skills and capacity building structures including the F&O Labour Market Partnership and the Enniskillen Workhouse to ensure the region builds on the successes to date to meet industry needs.	FODC SWC F&O LMP Enniskillen Workhouse Industry leads	Industry-led business partner network formed.
3.2 Work to support inclusive skills development.	3.2a) In partnership with the F&O LMP and REAP, work with training partners to explore opportunities for more flexible delivery of education and training courses including off-campus/community-based learning, particularly in areas of high deprivation in the district, including Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.	FODC F&O LMP REAP SWC Private training providers	Increased community-based learning opportunities in deprived areas.
	3.2b) Lobby for increased funding and expansion of community transport options to overcome transport barriers to learning, especially for participants from rural areas.	FODC DfI Fermanagh Community Transport Easilink	Increased community transport service provision.

Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce			
Objective:		<i>Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
3.2 Work to support inclusive skills development. (cont).	3.2c) Seek funding opportunities to support increased access to lower cost training provision for adult learners to support life-long learning and reskilling opportunities for FODC's aging population.	FODC DfE	Increased support to life-long learning in FODC.
	3.2d) Work with delivery partners to design skills academies that are tailored to meet the needs of participants with disabilities.	FODC F&O LMP SWC & training partners Partner agencies e.g. Employers for Disability	Disability friendly skills academies. Increased disability employment.
	3.2e) Lobby for increased funding and course options to support participants whose first language is not English.	FODC F&O LMP DfE PEACEPLUS Partnership	Improved availability of courses for ethnic minorities.
	3.2f) Supported by F&O LMP, collaborate with employers, schools, colleges and universities to explore development opportunities (e.g. apprenticeships) for young people who are seeking an alternative career path to traditional further education routes.	FODC F&O LMP Schools, SWC & Universities	Improved availability of alternative career & skills pathways.

Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce			
Objective:		<i>Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
3.3 Foster greater diversity in the workplace	3.3a) Promote the development of increased childcare provision in the region to support female participation in business and the labour market.	FODC F&O LMP DfC	Improved childcare capacity. Increased female economic activity.
	3.3b) Promote disability employment supports to both businesses and workforce participants to ensure available supports are fully leveraged, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Work (NI) • Condition Management Programme • Workable NI 	FODC Jobs & Benefits Offices DfC	Increased disability employment.
	3.3c) Develop an age-inclusive employment plan for FODC based on the Age at Work programme ³⁷ that supports businesses to be more age-inclusive in their approach to retaining, retraining and recruiting older workers, and supports mature workers to remain in or return to work.	FODC DfC Business in the Community NI Age NI	Reduction in economic inactivity in FODC's 50 – 64 age group.

³⁷ A collaboration between Business in the Community and Age NI.

Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce			
Objective:		<i>Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
3.3 Foster greater diversity in the workplace (cont).	3.3d) Work with education partners and local employers to create new apprenticeship opportunities for participants from FODC's most income and employment deprived areas.	FODC SWC Local employers	Increase in apprenticeships in FODC.
3.4 Develop world class strategic business leadership in the district.	3.4a) Collaborate with Invest NI to promote programmes that support F&Os business leaders with strategic leadership skills development, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest NI Leader Programme • Non-Executive Director (NED) Scheme 	FODC Invest NI	Increased uptake in strategic leadership training by F&O business leads.
	3.4b) Collaborate with South West College to develop and promote strategic leadership development programmes, which for example might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILM Level 7 certification in strategic management and leadership; • Collaboration with the William J Clinton Leadership Institute to deliver approved executive programmes from SWC campuses. 	FODC SWC The William J Clinton Leadership Institute	Increased uptake in strategic leadership training by FODC business leads.

Theme 3: Developing an Inclusive Skilled Workforce			
Objective:		<i>Meet the current and emerging skills needs of the local labour market and support greater diversity and inclusivity in the workforce.</i>	
Aims	Actions	Delivery partners	Outputs
3.5 Address the district's emerging skills gaps.	3.5a) Collaborate with SWC, the F&O Labour Market Partnership and education partners to address the emerging skills gaps in FODC, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills gaps in trade & technical professions; • climate mitigation and decarbonisation capacity building; • productivity analysis and lean manufacturing techniques; and • robotics and automation programming, maintenance, servicing. 	FODC F&O LMP SWC Training providers	Increased capacity building and supply of skilled resource to FODC businesses. Better paid jobs.
	3.5b) Collaborate with education partners and universities to promote degree level and higher-level apprenticeships as an alternative career development path that stand a better chance of developing and retaining qualified talent within F&O's businesses.	FODC SWC Universities Local employers	Increase in degree and higher-level apprenticeships in FODC.

7. IEAP Delivery, Monitoring and Reporting

7.1. A Partnership Approach

219. This Inclusive Economy Action Plan requires leadership and action from partners across Fermanagh and Omagh’s statutory partners, businesses and community/voluntary sector. The Council will play a lead role in bringing partners together to collectively target the challenges and deliver on the opportunities identified, but the Council cannot achieve an inclusive economy on its own.
220. Working alongside the Community Planning Partnership, the Council will convene an Inclusive Economy Network to progress delivery of this IEAP linking into existing delivery mechanisms such as the Labour Market Partnership and the Visitor Experience Development Plan Partnership. A key consideration for the work across all of the strands will be sourcing and securing partnership funding.

7.2. Monitoring and Reporting - Indicators and Measures

221. The IEAP contributes towards achievement of the six shared outcomes identified in the Community Plan for the district. Progress towards the Community Plan is monitored and measured using the following Population Indicators with the aim of achieving improvement over the longer term:

Reference	Population Indicator
Outcome 1: Our people are healthy and well - physically, mentally and emotionally	
1a	Healthy Life Expectancy
1b	Avoidable Mortality
1c	Mental Health - Low Self-Efficacy
Outcome 2: Older people lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives	
2a	Adult Social Care Outcomes Toolkit
2b	Over 75s Hospitalised due to a fall
Outcome 3: Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient and empowered	
3a	Relative poverty
3b	Cultural identity
3c	Life Satisfaction - People with disabilities
Outcome 4: Our children and young people have the best start in life	
4a	Children who are overweight or obese
4b	Children on the child protection register
4c	Educational attainment
Outcome 5: Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking	
5a	The number of jobs
5b	Economic Inactivity
5c	Productivity

Reference	Population Indicator
Outcome 6: Our outstanding natural and built environment is sustainably managed and, where possible, enhanced	
6a	Carbon emissions
6b	Heritage at Risk
6c	Commercial Vacancy Rates
6d	Woodland

222. Reporting on progress of the IEAP will be undertaken on a six monthly basis to the Community Planning Partnership and to the Council's Regeneration and Community Committee. It is recommended that progress against the plan is publicly communicated at least annually. The following IEAP performance measures will be monitored throughout the timeframe of plan delivery:

Reference	Performance Measure
Emissions	# tCO2e of Council's Scope 1 and Scope 2 CO2e emissions
Trees	# of trees planted
Biodiversity	# of hectares of land managed for biodiversity
Wellbeing	# of people Council helped through Community Wellbeing Plans
Volunteering	# of volunteers supported through Council grant and sponsorship programmes
Support	# of households receiving wraparound support to alleviate poverty
Target Groups	# of participations in FODC physical activity programmes from target groups
Community	# of community groups, clubs and organisations working in partnership with FODC through the Community Support Team
Advice	# of advice enquiries provided through Council supported 'Generalist Advice Service'
Jobs	# of jobs promoted through business startup activity
Employment	% participants on Council supported employability programmes who have a positive outcome following the programme
Business Growth	# of businesses supported through the Council's business growth and scaling programmes
Business Sustainability	# tourism businesses who participated in sustainable tourism business clusters and associated activities
Capital	£ expenditure on Council capital projects
Planning 1	# The average processing time of major planning applications
Planning 2	# from average processing time of local planning applications
Planning 3	% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks
Visitors	# visitors (footfall) to the Council's key tourism attractions
Investment	£ Level of grant/investment income secured for the district

Appendices

8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix 1 – Participating stakeholder organisations

1. Age NI
2. Cuilcagh Lakeland Sustainable Business Network
3. Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs
4. Department for Communities
5. Department for Infrastructure
6. Disability Action
7. Enniskillen BID Ltd
8. Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership
9. Fermanagh Community Transport
10. Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd
11. Food NI
12. Forum for Adult Learning NI
13. ICBAN
14. Intertrade Ireland
15. Invest NI
16. Lough Erne Landscape Partnership
17. Manufacturing NI
18. Mid South West Regional Growth Team
19. NI Careers Service
20. NI Food and Drink Association
21. NIUSE
22. Omagh Chamber of Commerce and Industry
23. Omagh Enterprise Company Ltd
24. Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
25. Prince's Trust
26. Regional Jobs and Benefits Office
27. Rural Action
28. Rural Community Network
29. Social Enterprise NI
30. South West College
31. The Workhouse, Enniskillen
32. Sperrins Partnership
33. The National Trust
34. Tourism Ireland
35. Tourism NI
36. Waterways Ireland

8.2. Appendix 2 – Glossary

A Level	:	Advanced Level qualification
AMIC	:	Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre
CAFRE	:	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
CIDRA	:	Centre for Industrial Digitalisation, Robotics and Automation
COVID	:	Coronavirus Disease
CVS	:	Community and Voluntary Sector
DAERA	:	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DfC	:	Department for Communities
DfE	:	Department for the Economy
DfI	:	Department for Infrastructure
EU	:	European Union
F&O	:	Fermanagh and Omagh
FODC	:	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
GCSE	:	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GDHI	:	Gross Disposable Household Income
GHG	:	Green House Gas
i4C	:	i4C Innovation and CleanTech Centre
IEAP	:	Inclusive Economy Action Plan
INI	:	Invest Northern Ireland
LGD	:	Local Government District
LMP	:	Labour Market Partnership
MLA	:	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MSW	:	Mid South West
NI	:	Northern Ireland
NIO	:	Northern Ireland Office
NRA	:	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
NZ	:	Net Zero
PfG	:	Programme for Government
RES	:	Regional Economic Strategy
REAP	:	Rural Economic Accelerator Programme
RoI	:	Republic of Ireland
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	:	Small to Medium sized Enterprise
SOA	:	Super Output Area
SRG	:	Sustainable Ruminant Genetics Limited
SWC	:	South West College
SWOT	:	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
UK	:	United Kingdom
UN	:	United Nations
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UUEPC	:	Ulster University Economic Policy Centre
VEDP	:	Visitor Experience Development Plan
WHST	:	Western Health & Social Care Trust

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