



Engagement Notes

Stage one: Environmental Theme

Community planning engagement notes containing a synopsis of results; Identifying issues relating to environmental concerns following stage one of the community involvement process

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COMMUNITY PLANNING

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: STAGE ONE, ENVIRONMENTAL THEME

1.0 Introduction

Part 10, Section 73 of the *Local Government (NI) Act 2014* outlines that the council and its partners must ensure community involvement in the development, implementation and review of its community plan and ‘*seek the participation of and encourage the person’s mentioned in subsection (2) to express their views, and take those views into account in connection with – (a) community planning (b) the production of a community plan for the district; and (c) the review of community plans*’. The persons outlined at section (2) are ‘*(a) persons resident in the district: (b) persons who are not resident in the district but who receive services provided by the council or one of its community planning partners: (c) representation of relevant voluntary bodies: (d) representatives of persons carrying on businesses in the area: (e) other persons who, in the opinion of the council, are interested in the improvement of the district’s social, economic and environmental well-being.*’

In facilitating the **community involvement** requirement contained in the Local Government (NI) Act at Section 73, a series of engagement methods were adopted and implemented by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. The purpose of was to collate the views of the persons outlined in the legislation at subsection (2) and to ensure representation from the new Fermanagh and Omagh District in the identification of priority issues representing all section 75 groups outlined in the NI Act 1998 . Section 75 representations were monitored by the completion of Equality Monitoring Forms (*Appendix 1*) to assist in identifying gaps where more specific engagement may be required in stage two and three of the process.

The engagement will be undertaken over three stages; stage one to present and discuss the data analysis and identify key issues; stage two during the month of September, to present the initial findings and to prioritise the issues which have emerged and which are evident in data findings; stage three during the month of October, to agree what long term outcomes might look like and how progress and performance will be measured.

2.0 Engagement Process



The contents of this report reflect the community planning engagement process of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, in relation to the social issues identified during stage one consultation. Public workshops were held to seek participation from interested members of the community in relation to community planning on 29th June 2015 in Derrygonnelly Community Centre and on the 29th July in Owenkillew Centre, Gortin. In addition, an event took place on 10th July in Community House, Omagh with key stakeholders, specifically in relation to social issues. Public workshops were open to all to attend and were promoted and advertised through a wide variety of media. 53 participants took part in total at public events. An additional public workshop which combined social, economic and environmental issues was held 29th July in the Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown, and 38 participants took part in the discussion.

The results presented below also take into consideration the outcomes of an online survey through the Council's website and social media pages, which ran during the same period as the public events; 50 surveys were received and validated. In addition four road shows took place; two of which were held at both Asda's in Omagh and Enniskillen from 9.00am until 5.00pm during the month of June; and the other two at both agricultural shows in Omagh and Enniskillen during the months of July and August. The road shows generated 121 survey responses. Some respondents submitted additional supplementary emails following public meetings which have also been considered.

3.0 Public Events

3.1 What is Community Planning?

Ensuring consistency in approach, attendees were informed at all public events what community planning in NI should look like and what the legislation requires. Members were advised that the NI definition of Community planning states ‘a council must – (a) initiate: and (b) having done so, maintain, facilitate and participate in, community planning for the district. Community planning for a district is a process by which the council and its community planning partners – (a) identify long-term objectives for improving –(i) the social well-being of the district; (ii) the economic well-being of the district; and (iii) the environmental well-being of the district ; (b) identify long-term objectives in relation to the district for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in NI; and (c) identify actions to be performed and functions to be exercised by the council and its community planning partners’. Attendees were given a brief overview of the process to develop and agree a community plan adopted by Fermanagh and Omagh District alongside a timeline for implementation.

3.2 Data Summary

Smart Region collated data and statistics on behalf of the Council which identified priority areas in relation to employability skills, jobs/ support for businesses, infrastructure and the economy in relation to the economic theme. The initial findings attached at <http://www.fermanaghomagh.com/communityplanning/community-planning-data-gathering> were presented to attendees before breakout sessions progressed to discuss key issues.

Attendees were then asked to break into discussion groups, where trained facilitators asked three specific questions relating to high priority concerns that the statistical data had identified, attendees were encouraged to question the validity of the statistics based on personal experience and local knowledge and to identify the key issues which they felt the data identified or which they felt were relevant to the area. The online survey also directed respondents to the data sheets before allowing completion of the survey.

The diagram below outlines the high level topics identified and the questions used.

Environmental Theme	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial strategy/ planning • Waste management • Recycling • Sustainable development / natural resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thinking of what you have heard today, what do you see as the main issues? 2. What currently works well? 3. What, collectively, needs to happen to bring about improvements?

3.3 Key Issues Identified through engagement process in relation to environmental issues:

Outlined below is a synopsis of the issues raised in relation to environmental concerns during stage one of the engagement process.

<p>1. Based on the evidence presented, the following main issues were identified:</p>	<p>Spatial Strategy / Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure re. The roads network and mobile telecommunications needs improved. • There were suggestions around introducing green transport initiatives for local communities and the improvement of pedestrian and cycle access at rural locations. • Housing remained a priority topic both rural housing policy and housing for the elderly in urban areas. Also development requires improvement generally in commercial enterprises. • Potential avalanche of wind farms/ individual turbines in the area. Statistics of load area to be in global targets.
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Noise issues /lack of community benefit –large companies have got away with it. Needs to have community buy-in to help local community.

- Commercial have more influence –single operators should get more priority.
- Community owned energy needs to be looked at. Wind farm problems- sucking money out of community- Whereas community energy keeping money in the locality. Community to share profits-planning to facilitate and enable community schemes – problem - licence to Hydraulic fracturing – planning permission removed from local council- How can our council get the power to deal with the strategic applications?
- Major issues for health.
- Electric bill states what produced from renewable sources but District away behind standards.
- Community accommodation for the elderly in local towns – Council should look at where these types of accommodation can be sustained – PPS 21 has hampered a lot of development. Against development around lough. Need a balance between tourists not shopping in local towns –going to larger supermarkets – not supporting the local community
- Need overall strategy for the whole area for wind farms.
- Need the roads to improve connectivity to bring future business.

Waste Management/ Recycling

- It was felt that there needed to be clearer guidance and education on responsibilities by Council and other Government Departments.
- Waste from Hydraulic Fracturing and absence of specifics referring to it.
- Who deals/monitors with waste from goldmining.
- Local democracy for waste licences /waste products handed to local people rather than Belfast/NIEA.

- What can our Council do? How can communities be proactive to protect our local environment?
- Why no brown bins in Fermanagh? Can a video be produced to show what can be included in brown bin?
- Roadside littering a huge issue as well as illegal dumping near rivers.
- Green bins should be unified with rest of region/council should have a policy to review every six months and add one new item that can be recycled
- Rural waste sites being closed down- not the way forward
- Landscapers should not be charged for collection of green waste- can grass /trees not be recycled ?

Sustainable Development and Natural Resources

- Not enough being done to promote tourism in the region based on its natural resources.
- Not enough attractions to encourage visitors to the area.
- A clear link between sustainable tourism and traditional farming methods.
- Tourism signage on roads should be improved.
- Visitor accommodation is inadequate and needs to be improved.
- Desire to protect the natural environment better, including fish stocks, wild birds and natural habitats as well as cultural and built heritage.
- A better educational approach to the environment should be undertaken and that schools and children should be encouraged to promote ownership of the environment.
- Concerns raised around **wind turbine development** both large wind farms and increasing numbers of individual wind turbines.
- Large wind farms providers benefitted more than individuals or communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind farms should benefit the communities directly through investment and community programmes in the areas they have been developed and where they are proposed. • Strong objection to heavy mining and extraction industries such as hydraulic fracturing proposals and mining due to a range of impacts e.g. on environment, health, future of district –short term goals.
<p>2. It was felt that the following approaches/ initiatives currently work well</p>	<p>Spatial strategy/ planning; Waste management; Recycling and Sustainable development / natural resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The marketing and branding for the Fermanagh and Omagh District has a lot of potential but needs further development. • Community Funding and Development to date has worked well but more funding required for developing the area. • Interactive education and Council based training schemes and information seminars have been welcome. • Building on the pride in the area has also worked well. • Quality of life deemed to be of quite a high standard and the social links between family and friends were deemed to be of high importance and high quality. • The sense of community was deemed to be important and was well regarded. • Transportation links, roads network, waste management/recycling services it was noted that there was room for improvement and better service. • Cycle paths were deemed to have been popular and a request for an expansion of the cycle network was made. • The current Council position on not supporting hydraulic fracturing was welcome.

3. It was suggested that the following collectively needs to happen to bring about improvements

Spatial strategy/ planning

- The feedback suggested Councillors were now in a difficult position with the increased responsibility from transferred powers
- Improved roads network and particularly links to the Republic of Ireland and to the East were requested.
- Development of air-transport links via St Angelo airport was raised as an important issue.
- Role of planning and the implementation of legislation were criticised.
- Inappropriate planning permission granted in sensitive areas for development that was unsuitable with the environment where approved.
- Concern about the loss of heritage and that more needed to be done to protect the built heritage and to preserve the cultures relating to historical areas.
- Rural housing and community development in rural locations were identified as being a priority.
- More defined legislation regarding renewable energy – where is it coming from, reality of reduction in fossil fuels.

Waste management/ Recycling

- Waste management/recycling services could be improved and better services.
- Litter picks (along road sides) by community groups.
- Executive should fine companies who don't take back their own empties reuse rather than recycling.
- Current recycling figures within the area need to be improved.
- Chicken houses – which organisation/ body controls wastes and monitors them. There is an issue.
- Needs to be more collaboration between DARD and NIEA.

Sustainable development / natural resources

- Council engagement on hydraulic fracturing is a high priority.
- The community felt that their local views on the issue were not represented currently.
- It was felt that the Council should lobby for an outright ban on hydraulic fracturing and could do more to resist the proposals, with health and environmental damage concerns being cited as the main objection.
- Telecommunications and specifically mobile phone coverage and broadband were of grave concern.
- A major improvement required to the telecommunications infrastructure in order to develop the area.
- Criticism around the enforcement of legislation in relation to natural and built heritage.
- Desire to have better protection in place for natural environments and habitats.
- Visitor accommodation was suggested as inadequate and needed to be improved.
- The promotion and an incentive led approach to rural development and community group development was proposed as the way forward.
- Planning permissions destroying our lakes and biodiversity and action required.
- Fishing was perceived as working well but it was acknowledged more support was required to and develop it.
- Bog restoration in area.

Other Issues

It was felt there was need for greater young people facilities and night time economy needs improvements.

Community felt disempowered and only consulted on problems.

It was also suggested that more needed to be done to highlight the region as a brand.

Improvement of tourism attractions was deemed necessary to promote tourism. Tourism and visitor commerce was suggested as being poor and needs developed.

Appendix 1 Equality Monitoring Form

(COPY)

Monitoring Questionnaire

Thematic Working Group

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- ◆ Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- ◆ Between men and women generally;
- ◆ Between persons with disability and persons without;

In addition, without prejudice to its obligations above, the Council shall, in carrying out its functions, powers and duties, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

In order to help assess if representatives from all Section 75 categories are availing of the opportunity to participate in the community planning engagement and working groups, you are asked to complete the following questionnaire:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate box and/or providing details as required.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Which part of the District do you live in?

Fermanagh and Omagh Urban

Fermanagh and Omagh Rural

If you not sure; please specify town, village or area

- 3. Family Status:** No caring responsibilities Care for children
Care for other relative Other
..... (Please specify)

If you have indicated that you have caring responsibilities, please confirm the number of hours per week.

1 – 19 hours 20 – 49 hours 50+ hours

- 4. Marital Status:** Married Single Divorced/Separated
Widowed Partner Civil Partnership
Other (Please specify)

5. Ethnic Origin/Race:

Bangladeshi Black African Black Caribbean

Chinese Indian Irish Traveller

Pakistani White Mixed Ethnic Group

Other (*please specify*)

Nationality (*please specify*)

6. Disability :

Under the Disability Discrimination (NI) Act 1995 a disabled person is defined as a person with:

“A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out a normal days activities.”

Having read this definition, do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes **No**

If yes, please give details of the type of disability

Visual impairment Hearing impairment Mobility disability

Communication difficulties Other please specify

In relation to the above questions, do you have any support needs which could impede your attendance which the Council may be able to address? Please provide details:

.....
.....

7. Perceived Religious Affiliation/Community Background

For most of us in Northern Ireland we are perceived to be from either the Protestant or Roman Catholic community. Please indicate the community to which you belong by ticking the box below

Protestant **Roman Catholic**
Other (please specify)

8. Which category best describes your age?

Under 16 16-25 26-65 65+

Optional Questions – You do not have to answer these questions

9. Please indicate your political opinion by ticking the appropriate box.

Unionist generally Nationalist generally

Other (please specify)

10. Please indicate your sexual orientation:

I am gay or lesbian (homosexual) I am heterosexual or straight

I am bisexual Other (Please specify).....

Thank you for your cooperation