**Beartas Gaeilge**

**Irish Language Strategy**

**2022-2027**

# Introduction

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) recognise that Irish Language forms a valuable part the District’s shared cultural heritage and celebrates the rich diversity of linguistic traditions that has helped shape the history of the District.

The FODC Irish Language Strategy (the Strategy) is focussed on enhancing, developing and growing the Irish Language and sets out a vision for language use and development in a practical, sustainable way. Imperative to the Strategy is the aspiration of Irish Language as a language which is shared, respected and owned by all members of the community.

The Strategy, which has been co-designed with those with an interest in Irish Language, will provide a roadmap for Council service provision in regard to Irish Language activity, support and growth within the Council area. It will provide a framework for future annual delivery plans and set forth longer-term priorities to work towards.

# Working in Partnership

Crucial to successful implementation of the Strategy is Council working in collaboration with the Irish Language sector, at both local and regional level, to advance Irish Language throughout the Fermanagh and Omagh District and further afield. Figure 1 includes all lead organisations working directly in the development of Irish Language with support from Foras na Gaeilge. Other organisations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann also do notable work in the promotion of the Irish Language within local communities.

Lead Organisations in Irish Language Sector

* Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta –Irish medium education/ Immersion Education and Irish Medium Preschool
* Gael Linn –Education in the English language sector and adult education, and opportunities for use for school pupils
* Glór na nGael –Community and economic development
* Oireachtas na Gaeilge Opportunities which support the use of Irish and establishing networks for adults
* Conradh na Gaeilge – Raising awareness, language and representation (on behalf of the language with state authorities)
* Cumann na bhFiann – The development of opportunities for the use of Irish and networks for young people.

Council also recognise an established, vibrant and ever growing Irish Language community within the District and seek to work in partnership with all local organisation to help continue the

development and growth of the Irish Language. Table below provides an insight into some of the organisations within the District, broken down by District Electoral Area (DEA), who have availed of FODC support to develop Irish Language within their communities.[[1]](#footnote-1)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organisation | DEA |
| An Charraig Mhor, Colmcille, CLG, | Mid Tyrone |
| Creggan Education & Research Services | Mid Tyrone |
| Tattyreagh Youth and Community Group | Mid Tyrone |
| Glór an Tearmainn | Mid Tyrone |
| Greencastle Youth Club, Omagh | Mid Tyrone |
| Oidhreacht Mhuintir Luinigh | Mid Tyrone |
| Mountfield Community Association | Mid Tyrone |  |
|  | |
| Pobal ar a'n Iúl, Omagh | Omagh |
| Ógras na hÓmaí | Omagh |
| Culmore O'Kane Residents Association | Omagh |
|  | |
| Dromore CCÉ | West Tyrone |
| Dromore GFC | West Tyrone |
| Fintona CCE | West Tyrone |
| Trillick Arts & Cultural Society | West Tyrone |
| Drumquin Wolfe Tones GFC | West Tyrone |
|  | |
| Cairde Bhunscoil an Traonaigh, Lisnaskea | Erne East |
| Derrygannon Community Association | Erne East |
| Knocks Community Association | Erne East |
| Knocks Grattans Hurling Club | Erne East |
| Newtownbutler First Fermanagh's GAA | Erne East |
| Roslea Shamrocks GFC | Erne East |
| Tús Nua | Erne East |
| St Patrick's GFC | Erne East |
|  | |
| Cavanaleck Community Association | Enniskillen |
| Enniskillen Gaels GFC | Enniskillen |
| Erne Gaels G.A.C | Enniskillen |
| Fermanagh GAA | Fermanagh DEAs |
| Hillview & Kilmacormack II Community Association | Enniskillen |
| Sruth na hÉirne | Enniskillen |
|  | |
| Derrylin O'Connells GAA | Erne West |
| Mullymesker PTFA | Erne West |
|  | |
| St Joseph's GAC, Ederney | Erne North |
| St Molaise GFC, Irvinestown | Erne North |

# Strategy Overview

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will enable, encourage and empower communities to learn, share and grow the Irish Language; promote the visibility and use of the Irish Language throughout the District; and work towards meeting the needs of existing and emerging Irish Language communities and networks.

Key Priorities

* Develop and grow Irish Language;
* Increase visibility of and accessibility to Irish Language;
* Empower Irish Language speakers and communities;
* Showcase and celebrate Irish Language in the District.

**Council Policy and Service Provision**

1.1 Embed Irish Language throughout all aspects of heritage and tourism, highlighting the unique Irish Language history and culture of the area including placenames, cultural heritage, built and literary heritage.

1.2 Council, working in partnership with other relevant organisations (voluntary and business), will highlight the Irish Language as a key feature in terms of promoting and developing linguistic-based activities and tourism opportunities within the District.

1.3 Establish links between Irish Language speakers/ organisations and other cultural groups from different backgrounds, to encourage shared understanding and appreciation for different linguistic traditions and cultures.

**Language Acquisition and Transmission**

2.1 Visibility of Irish Language will be increased across the District and the language will be embedded across Council Services, with Irish speakers and learners better able to access Council services through the Irish Language.

2.2 Council staff will have improved skills and understanding of Irish Language which will empower and facilitate visitors to communicate in Irish.

2.3 Support and promote development and protection of Irish Language across the District by influencing positive change, continuing to work collaboratively with all relevant statutory and community partners, to ensure that the needs of the Irish Language community are met.

**Capacity Building**

3.1 Build capacity of local organisations to educate and empower them to further develop and grow Irish Language within local communities – leading to a stronger and more sustainable Irish Language community within the District.

3.2 Promote and facilitate networking opportunities, encouraging Irish Language speakers and organisations to connect, learn and share best practice – leading to more connected Irish Language community within the District.

3.3 Recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the work of the Irish Language community, showcasing the breadth and richness of activity being carried out across the District.

**Language and Culture**

4.1 Irish Language will be promoted as a shared language, reducing intolerance and raising awareness of Irish as part of the District’s broader linguistic and cultural heritage.

4.2 Facilitate opportunities across the District for individuals and communities, from all backgrounds, to develop, learn and use Irish Language. This will include formal and recreational opportunities, encouraging growth and use of the language within people’s daily lives and the intergenerational transmission of the language.

4.3 Engage with families, schools, community groups and sporting organisations to encourage, support and promote awareness of Irish Language in their daily life, work and activities.

# Our Commitment

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will enable, encourage and empower communities to learn, share and grow the Irish Language; promote the visibility and use of the Irish Language throughout the District; and work towards meeting the needs and objectives of existing and emerging Irish Language communities and networks.

The Irish Language Strategy will underpin the aims of the Irish Language Policy which sets out the guiding principles that demonstrate FODC’s commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion, protection and use of the Irish Language. Furthermore, it is accompanied by a 3-year Implementation Plan which will outline

a delivery model for Irish Language within the FODC area. Further, the Irish Language Strategy functions within the broader context of FODC’s Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Corporate Brand Identity, Linguistic Diversity Policy and Good Relations Strategy.

The Strategy meets priorities and contributes towards delivering on the obligations and guidelines set out by the following:

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998, The Joint Declaration 2003, Saint Andrews Agreement 2006, Northern Ireland Act 1998, Programme for Government, European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, New Decade, New Approach 2020, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities, European Convention on Human Rights.

# Values

In line with the Corporate Plan 2020-2024, FODC has adopted the following six values which will guide the implementation of this Strategy.

**Leadership** – effectively representing the needs of our District and all its people, building strong leadership and using evidence to determine priorities and focus on what matters most.

**Integrity** – acting with honesty and impartiality, treating all in an equitable and respectful manner.

**Accountability** – acting in an open and transparent manner, providing clear and accessible information on decisions and performance.

**Innovation** – achieving excellence through identifying new ways of working to continuously improve services and deliver on priorities.

**Sustainability** – taking decisions which are in the long-term interests of the District and its people, supporting vibrant urban and rural communities and always mindful of resources.

**Engagement and Involvement** – listening to, understanding and putting the evidence-based needs of our people across rural and urban communities at the heart of what we do to create solutions together.

# Key priorities

* Develop and grow Irish Language;
* Increase visibility of and accessibility to Irish Language;
* Empower Irish Language speakers and communities;
* Showcase and celebrate Irish Language in the District.

# Outcomes

This Strategy will contribute to the following outcomes;

* Increase visibility and use of Irish Language throughout the District – both in spoken and written language.
* Irish Language community and those new to the language are better equipped and supported to develop and grow the language.
* Improved accessibility and experience of using Irish Language within FODC services.
* A stronger, more cohesive and connected Irish Language sector both within the District and regionally.
* Best practice is achieved and statutory obligations met in relation to the protection, growth and development of Irish Language.

# Strategy themes

The Strategy encompasses 4 themes which provide vision and direction. These themes are as follows:

1.Council Policy and Service Provision – Increasing visibility and use of Irish Language within Council by encouraging the protection, promotion, accessibility and use of the language and ensuring the needs of the Irish Language community are met within Council facilities and services.

2.Language Acquisition and Transmission – Developing, growing and strengthening the use of Irish Language throughout daily life within the District.

3.Capacity Building – Empowering and nurturing local organisations, helping them reach their potential and supporting them to contribute to a vibrant and sustainable Irish Language community.

4.Language and Culture – Promoting and showcasing the rich, diverse linguistic and cultural diversity and heritage which is unique to the District.

# Themes and objectives

Theme 1 Council Policy and Service Provision

Increasing visibility and use of Irish Language within Council by encouraging the protection, promotion, accessibility and use of the language and ensuring the needs of the Irish Language community are met within Council facilities and services.

Key Objectives

1.1 – Visibility of Irish Language will be increased across the District and the language will be embedded across Council Services, with Irish speakers and learners better able to access Council services through the Irish Language.

1.2 – Council staff will have improved skills and understanding of Irish Language which will empower and facilitate visitors to communicate in Irish.

1.3 – Support and promote development and protection of Irish Language across the District by influencing positive change, continuing to work collaboratively with all relevant statutory and community partners, to ensure that the needs of the Irish Language community are met.

Theme 2 Language Acquisition and Transmission

Developing, growing and strengthening Irish Language throughout daily life within the District.

Key Objectives

2.1 – Irish Language will be promoted as a shared language, reducing intolerance and raising awareness of Irish as part of the District’s broader linguistic and cultural heritage.

2.2 – Facilitate opportunities across the District for individuals and communities, from all backgrounds, to develop, learn and use Irish Language. This will include formal and recreational opportunities, encouraging growth and use of the language within people’s daily lives and the intergenerational transmission of the language.

2.3 – Engage with families, schools, community groups and sporting organisations to encourage, support and promote awareness of Irish Language in their daily life, work and activities.

Theme 3 Capacity Building

Empowering and nurturing local organisations to help them reach their potential and contribute to a vibrant and sustainable Irish Language community.

Key Objectives

3.1 – Build capacity of local organisations to educate and empower them to further develop and grow Irish Language within local communities – leading to a stronger and more sustainable Irish Language community within the District.

3.2 – Promote and facilitate networking opportunities, encouraging Irish Language speakers and organisations to connect, learn and share best practice – leading to more connected Irish Language community within the District.

3.3 – Recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the work of the Irish Language community, showcasing the breadth and richness of activity being carried out across the District.

Theme 4 Language and Culture

Promoting and showcasing the rich, diverse linguistic and cultural diversity and heritage which is unique to the Fermanagh and Omagh District.

Key Objectives

4.1 – Embed Irish Language throughout all aspects of heritage and tourism, highlighting the unique Irish Language history and culture of the area including placenames, cultural heritage, built and literary heritage.

4.2 – Council, working in partnership with other relevant organisations (voluntary and business), will highlight the Irish Language as a key feature in terms of promoting and developing linguistic-based activities and tourism opportunities within

the District.

4.3 – Establish links between Irish Language speakers/ organisations and other cultural groups from different backgrounds, to encourage shared understanding and appreciation for different linguistic traditions and cultures.

1. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of Irish Language focussed organisations, but only those which have received FODC funding within the past 5 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)