

Community Places report on review of FO Community Planning Governance Structure

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the outcome of the review of the Governance Structure and Framework which the Strategic Partnership Board (the Board) agreed should be undertaken at its meeting in May 2021. A revised Framework is recommended to the Board for approval together with other recommendations arising from the review

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1. A Governance Framework and Guidance Document was agreed in May 2015 by the Board and subsequently reviewed in November 2017 with an updated structure introduced in 2018. Following the review of the Community Plan and the move to a more targeted approach against identified priorities, the learning and experiences of COVID 19 implications, the proposed move towards place shaping/locality planning, the Board decided to review the Governance Structure and Framework.

The review was facilitated by Community Places and provided opportunities for all the partners to participate in two virtual workshops. The first was held on 29th June 2021 from 10.00am until 12.30pm. The objectives were:

- To re-visit the Governance Framework and Guidance for FO Community Planning Partnership
- To consider the suitability of the current structure in light of Community Plan 2020 Priorities and delivery of Actions.
- To identify issues for further consideration at a second workshop.

The second workshop was held on 26th July 2021 from 2.00pm to 3.00pm and focused on draft proposed changes and additions to the Governance Framework in response to the issues and suggestions arising from the first workshop. It also considered proposals for responding to issues associated with the Governance structure.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Participants in the workshops were largely content with the current Governance Framework while identifying a number of issues which should be considered for inclusion in a revised document. These included:

- the need to focus more on delivery of the Community Plan Outcomes and the integration and alignment across partner organisations required to achieve this.
- the benefits of the Community Plan setting an overarching vision for the whole of the Council area and of the delivery of the Plan Actions being reflected at all levels of Government.
- the benefits of the Board focusing on both formal governance issues and strategic, cross-cutting issues and challenges.
- the challenges posed for senior representatives participating in person in the Governance structure and whether learning from the COVID 19 experiences can be applied going forward.
- the need for more emphasis on sharing resources, data and information to achieve delivery.

- the need to and benefits of reducing the volume of administration and documentation to that essential to achieving the Outcomes.
- introducing ways of providing more opportunities for Partners to be involved and for the sharing of information on progress and achievements within and across partner organisations.
- learning from the experience of ‘doing business’ during the COVID crisis and responding creatively to it by being more agile and flexible in delivering the Plan Actions.
- ensuring that opportunities are provided for all sectors and organisations which can directly contribute to the development and delivery of Outcomes to participate and, where appropriate, be represented on the Board.
- improving internal and external communications so that staff within partner organisations and the wider community have a better understanding of what the Community Plan aims to and is achieving.

4. RESPONSES TO KEY ISSUES

4.1 The revised Framework attached responds to the key issues by introducing additions and refinements which:

1. place greater emphasis on delivery and present the Community Plan as the overarching vision for the Council area.
2. provide for discussion of cross-cutting strategic issues at Board meetings following conclusion of the agenda business.
3. enable the Board to facilitate the sharing of resources by partners for Plan delivery and require Departments to acknowledge and recognise the commitments made to delivery by each of the statutory partners.
4. enable Partner representatives to attend Board meeting in person or by video link (with a requirement that they attend a minimum of 50% in person each year) and to contribute to forming the Board agenda.
5. rename the ‘exception report’ as a Progress report which will be the basis of a new Progress Briefing for communications within all Partner organisations and more widely in the community.
6. require reporting through the Performance Report Cards on a minimum of 50% of all Actions at each Board meeting with Action Leads providing the data required and being in attendance (in person or virtually).
7. require each Action to be reported to the Board at least twice during each year with Performance Report Cards in the future being accessible for Board meetings by hyperlink to the Community Plan website hosted by the Council.
8. ensure draft Board minutes are circulated to Partner organisations for information only within five working days of meetings.
9. reactivate the Joint management Team and Action Leads Forum with their roles explicitly focused on furthering delivery and integration and alignment.
10. enable the Action Groups to exercise agility and flexibility in delivering Actions (through for example the use of short-term Task and Finish Groups) while remaining accountable to the Board for delivery as planned.

11. require partner communications officers and the Community Planning Team to review delivery of the Communications Plan annually and to enhance communications about the Plan internally and externally.
12. recognise that the Business and Community and Voluntary sectors have particular challenges due to their diversity and lack of resources for engagement in the formal Governance structure

4.2 The workshops emphasised the invaluable role that new forms of working and new partnership style groups performed during the COVID crisis and also that a deeper understanding of social issues and needs has emerged. It was noted too that new initiatives by Government Departments (including the setting up of Labour Market Partnerships) might usefully be considered as part of the discussion on Governance. It was acknowledged that an overall view of these developments is needed to inform decisions in this area. It is thus recommended that the Board undertake an analysis of these developments with a view to identifying whether there are opportunities to engage other organisations in the governance structure (including the Board itself) that could make a meaningful contribution to the development and delivery of the Community Plan.

4.3 The workshops also noted that while information and data is shared by partners this is not achieved in a systematic, ongoing way. The current Governance Framework provides for the sharing of data and information. Furthermore, the legislation for Community Planning provides a statutory basis and requirement for partnership working to deliver Outcomes. It is recommended that the Board explore the potential for developing a data sharing agreement within the context of the Governance Framework and legislative requirements.

4. RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDED: that the Partnership Board agrees:

- 1. to approve and adopt the revised Governance Framework and Guidance attached.**
- 2. to undertake an analysis of the membership of and participation in all aspects of the Governance structure to identify any gaps in membership and how these may be addressed to support the development and delivery of the Community Plan and make recommendations to the Board.**
- 3. To undertake a feasibility study to identify the benefits, challenges and potential content of a Data Sharing Agreement between all or some Partners.**

Appendix 1: revised Governance Framework and Guidance

Workshop Invitation List

Title	First Name	Surname	Organisation
Cllr	Diana	Armstrong	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Alwyn	Barton	PSNI
	Margaret	Bell	Libraries NI
	John	Boyle	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Barry	Boyle	CVS
	Michael	Burns	Education Authority NI
	Alison	Chambers	Department for Education
	Patricia	Cooney	Education Authority NI
	Majella	Corrigan	CCMS
	Kevin	Corrigan	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Cllr	John	Coyle	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Damien	Dean	Department for Communities
	Shirley	Devlin	Invest NI
	David	Doherty	NI Fire & Rescue Service
Ms	Oonagh	Donnelly	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Fiona	Douglas	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Cllr	AnneMarie	Fitzgearld	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Alison	Forbes	CVS
	Martin	Graham	Tourism NI
	Mairead	Harvey	CCMS Schools
	Sorcha	Hassay	Department for Communities
	Ailbhe	Hickey	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Cllr	Eamon	Keenan	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Marcella	Kinsella	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Liz	Loughran	Department for Infrastructure

Title	First Name	Surname	Organisation
	Priscilla	Magee	Western Trust
Cllr	Emmet	McAleer	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Brian	McAleer	
	Frances	McAuley	
	Siobhan	McAuley	
	Oonagh	McAvinney	
	Patrick	McCaffrey	
	Celine	McCartan	
	Alison	McCullagh	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (CE)
Cllr	Barry	McElduff	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Robert	McGowan	PSNI
	R	McHugh	Tourism NI
	Kim	McLaughlin	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Ciaran	McManus	
	Kate	McMichael	
	Ethna	McNamee	Invest NI
	Paula	McSparron	
	Karen	Meehan	
	Alan	Mitchell	
	Teresa	Molloy	Western Trust
	John	News	Sport NI
	Georgina	O'Brien	TUSLA
	Siobhan	O'Donnell	Western Trust
	Catherine	O'Flanagan	
Cllr	Thomas	O'Reilly	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Steven	Ormsby	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Title	First Name	Surname	Organisation
	Siobhan	Peoples	Community Advice Fermanagh
	Helen	Sheils	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Mary	Slevin	Invest NI
	Richard	Tanswell	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
	Fiona	Teague	Public Health Agency
Cllr	Errol	Thompson	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Gerard	Tracy	DAERA
	Trisha	Ward	Libraries NI
Mrs	Kim	Weir	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Margaret	Bell	Libraries NI
Cllr	Bert	Wilson	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
	Claire		Easilink



Community Planning Governance Framework and Guidance



08 September 2021

1. Introduction

“Community Planning aims to improve the connection between regional, local and neighbourhood levels through partnership working and more integrated use of resources, with a focus on collaboration between organisations for the benefit of citizens” (Statutory Guidance for the Operation of Community Planning: October 2015)

This document sets out the community planning governance arrangements which apply in the Fermanagh and Omagh district. It outlines the mechanisms of the partnership and the role and remit of the various structures within the partnership.

Our Community Plan ‘**Fermanagh and Omagh 2030**’ is an overarching strategy for the district which sets out our belief that we can improve services and quality of life for all in our district by getting the public, private and community/voluntary sectors working together better towards our agreed Vision and six long-term outcomes.

Our Shared Vision

Our Vision is of 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.





People & Communities

1. Our people are healthy and well – physically, mentally and emotionally
2. Older people lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives
3. Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient and empowered
4. Our people have the best start in life with lifelong opportunities to fulfil their potential



Economy, Infrastructure & Skills

5. Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking



Environment

6. Our outstanding and culturally rich environment is cherished, sustainably managed and appropriately accessible



2. Our Governance Structure

The following governance structure was agreed in March 2018 to oversee and manage community planning in Fermanagh and Omagh:



[NB: A Joint Management Team, while not referenced in the above structure, will meet at least once per year (see below), and may be convened on an ad hoc basis, if required.]

Aims of the governance structure:

- Ensure effective use of partners' time and resources.
- Maximise integration and alignment across Partners' Business Planning for the delivery of the Community Plan Outcomes.
- Establish and maintain clear reporting arrangements and a separation of strategic and operational roles and responsibilities.
- Provide transparency and accountability.
- Facilitate the development and delivery of the Community Plan as the overarching vision for the Council area.

Partner commitments:

The Partnership is a joint working arrangement where the partners are otherwise independent bodies who commit to:

- Ensure strategic and operational commitment of their organisation to the community planning process.
- Lead or support work to deliver the agreed outcomes and actions.
- Facilitate the sharing of information and resources to support the delivery of community planning activities.
- Ensure their organisation has mechanisms in place to allow effective communication and information sharing on community planning between its members, departments or services as appropriate. As a minimum these mechanisms will include regular reports at a senior management level, distribution of community planning information and updates to members of staff.
- Ensure any agreed community planning budget and resource requirements are included as part of their annual budget and resource planning process.
- Departments of Government to ensure their strategic and business plans incorporate relevant partners' commitments to Actions in the Community Plan.
- Appoint a representative(s) in accordance with the agreed partnership structures with appropriate authority to contribute to and seek to implement decisions made by the Partnership. In respect of the Strategic Partnership Board, this will be Chair or person of Chief Executive status or their senior nominee.
- Attend each Partnership Board meeting and, if this is not possible, a named substitute of sufficient seniority should deputise.
- Support capacity building initiatives aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skills of partner representatives in respect of community planning.

3. Partner Roles and Responsibilities:

3.1 - Lead Partner

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is the lead partner with responsibility for:

- Facilitating and managing the process, including putting in place appropriate governance and management structures and arrangements.
- Ensuring that the commitments set out in the Council's Equality Scheme are applied in the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the Community Plan.
- Working collaboratively with community planning partners and identified support partners to reach consensus on the content of the Community Plan and publication of the Plan.
- Working with community planning partners and identified support partners to implement, monitor and review the Plan.
- Preparing a Progress Briefing after each SPB meeting and providing it to Partners for distribution to staff within their organisations; and
- Ensuring that community involvement is an integral part of the full community planning process.
- Ensuring that statutory processes are fulfilled, eg, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Rural Needs Impact Assessment.
- Ensuring that the statutory link between the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan is effectively managed.

3.2 - All Partners

All partners will work on the following aspects:

- Development of the Community Plan
- Delivery of agreed tasks identified in the Community Plan.
- Taking a lead role on delivery where actions are appropriate to the responsibilities of their organisation.
- Chairing Thematic/Action Groups where appropriate
- Monitoring and review of the Community Plan
- Seeking community participation in the community planning process, including production and review of the Community Plan.

4. Community Planning Strategic Partnership Board

Board Role/Remit:

The Strategic Partnership Board's role is to reach agreement on the Community Plan and to:

- Provide strategic leadership in Community Planning by developing, clearly communicating and driving change through the Vision and intended outcomes

for the benefit of the people who live, work and visit in Fermanagh and Omagh.

- Agree strategic indicators and associated baselines and targets to enable assessment of the achievement of outcomes and ensure improvements in service delivery.
- Approve Action Plan(s) and provide oversight through the management and publication of agreed performance measures and reports.
- Share budget planning assumptions and promote and facilitate the sharing and aligning of resources and ensure that the Partnership deploys finance and resources to achieve agreed outcomes.
- Ensure that the requirement to review the Community Plan every 4 years and to publish a Performance Report every 2 years is met.
- Promote and demonstrate commitment to partnership working at Board level, across the Partnership and in partner organisations.
- Ensure the engagement and involvement of the wider community.
- Ensure effective governance, accountability and challenge arrangements across the Partnership.
- Advocate and lobby on behalf of the Community Plan.

Membership:

In line with the Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (NI) 2016, the Board will consist of representation from each of the 13 statutory partners alongside representatives of Government Departments.

NB: representatives will be expected to speak authoritatively for their organisation and to be of sufficient seniority to be able to agree and commit their organisation to a course of action in line with the role and responsibilities of the Strategic Partnership Board.

The Community Voluntary (CV) Sector Forum and the Business Community will also be represented. It is recognised that the CV and Business sectors have particular challenges in participating in Governance due to their diversity and lack of resources for this role.

Where new partnership or other structures emerge which can contribute directly to the delivery of the Plan Outcomes the SPB may invite those organisations to become a member and send a representative to Board meetings.

Reporting:

Each agenda will include a Progress Report identifying progress made on the agreed Actions (with a hyper-link to Performance Score Cards on 50% of the Actions). The Progress Report will be based on information provided by Action Leads and collated by the Community Planning Team.

The Action Leads for the actions being reported on will be invited to be in attendance at the relevant SPB meeting (attendance may be in person or by video link).

Each partner will report to their own management board/committee on key decisions.

The Strategic Partnership Board will report to the Department for Communities and to the broader public every two years through a Performance Statement.

Meetings, Agenda and Minutes

The Strategic Partnership Board will meet a minimum of two times per year.

Members may attend meetings in person or by video link and will attend 50% of meetings in person each year.

All members will be invited to propose items for inclusion on the agenda for each meeting.

Following the conclusion of the agenda discussions there will be a workshop discussion on a strategic issue. These discussions will be led by one or more Partners. These strategic issues will be of a cross-cutting nature requiring an integrated approach and will be identified by the JMT for the Board's consideration.

Draft minutes will be circulated (on a 'for information only' basis) to Partners within 5 working days of each SPB meeting to facilitate sharing of information within each partner organisation.

Chair

The Strategic Partnership Board is chaired by a member of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, representing the Council's lead role in respect of community planning.

The Board will appoint a Vice-Chair from amongst the other partner organisations.

5. Joint Management Team

Role/Remit:

The Joint Management Team will meet at least once per year (see below) and otherwise on an ad hoc basis, if required, to consider and review any matters referred to it which need to be agreed upon by the Strategic Partnership Board and to prepare reports on such matters for agreement by the Strategic Partnership Board.

Membership:

Membership will consist of senior representation from the 13 statutory partners alongside Government Departments, the Community Voluntary Sector Forum and the Business Community.

Reporting:

The Joint Management Team will report to the Strategic Partnership Board.

Meetings

The JMT will meet each year in February-March to consider the integration and alignment of Actions in Partners' Business Plans for the coming financial year and to identify strategic, cross-cutting issues for discussion at SPB meetings. It may meet more often if it decides to do so.

Chair

The Joint Management Team will be chaired by the Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

6. Action Leads' Forum

Role/Remit:

- To facilitate greater integration across themes and actions and exchange of information, ideas and approaches.
- To manage reporting to and from the Strategic Partnership Board through the performance scorecards.
- To consider approaches to improving integration of community planning with partners' delivery plans.

Membership:

Membership will consist of those officers from across a range of partner organisations who have been appointed as '**Action Leads**' for community planning actions.

Community planning actions depend on the active contribution of a range of partners – an Action Lead cannot be solely responsible for achievement of an action. The role of an Action Lead primarily relates to co-ordination and reporting, ie:

- Co-ordinate contributions of partners to define and agree detail of each action, performance measures and involvement of each partner.
- Report to CP Strategic Partnership Board on progress using identified performance measures.
- Ensure obligations in relation to statutory processes are undertaken.
- Act as key point of contact for CP Partnership in relation to that action

Meetings:

The Forum will meet during October-November each year to consider progress made on the delivery of Actions and to identify issues and challenges to delivery, integration and alignment for consideration by the JMT. The Forum may also suggest to the JMT and SPB cross cutting issues for strategic discussion at SPB meetings.

The Forum may meet more often if it decides to do so.

Chair:

Meetings will be chaired by the Council's Head of Place Shaping.

7. Action Groups

Role/Remit:

Action Groups will be established to take forward the agreed Plan Actions.

The Action Groups will meet to discuss and review progress of specific actions and to liaise in respect of the development, progression, update and ongoing review of Performance Scorecards related to specific actions.

Membership:

Membership will include Action Leads and identified representatives of partner organisations who are contributing to the delivery of actions related to the relevant outcomes. Membership may be revised and updated in line with revisions to actions.

Reporting:

The Action Leads will report through the Progress Report and the ongoing updates to Performance Scorecards to the Strategic Partnership Board.

Meetings:

Meetings will be convened by Action Leads as necessary. Groups will operate flexibly and meet as often as they consider appropriate and may form short-term 'Task and Finish Groups' to progress specific work pieces.

At least one meeting will be held in advance of the Action Leads' Forum meeting in October-November to identify issues for consideration by the Forum.

Chair:

Meetings will generally follow a workshop format and will be chaired by a member of the Group (usually the Action Lead).

8. Policy and Performance Support Forum

Role/Remit:

To support policy and research development across the community plan themes and outcomes and to ensure that due consideration is given to the agreed shared values and principles. In addition, to oversee the effectiveness of arrangements for:

- Performance monitoring and reporting
- Community engagement
- Communications
- Data sharing.

Membership:

Membership will be drawn from the statutory community planning partner organisations and the Department for Communities alongside a Community Voluntary Sector and Business Community representative.

Reporting:

The Forum will report direct to the Strategic Partnership Board.

Meetings:

Meetings will be held as required.

Chair:

A Chair will be appointed by the Forum from within its membership.

9. Partnership Support

Partnership support for the Partnership is co-ordinated by the Community Planning and Performance Section, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. This includes:

- Partnership and policy support across all partnership structures
- Research and information including highlighting emerging strategic issues to the Partnership
- Community engagement and communications
- Data Sharing and access to information requests
- Preparing and issuing the notice and agenda for meetings of the Partnership
- Programme managing the Partnership's Action Plans
- Performance management and monitoring.

10. Communications

The SPB will agree a Communications Plan. Progress on the Plan will be reviewed annually by officers responsible for communications across all of the Partner organisations.

The Community Planning Team will provide a 'Plain English' Progress Briefing after each SPB meeting which communications officers will distribute to all relevant staff within their organisations. The Team and the communications officers will also promote progress through their social media and internal communications platforms. The Team will, as appropriate, issue information to local media on progress and achievements.

Operation of Strategic Partnership Board and Joint Management Team Meetings

(i) Absence of Chair

If neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair is present at a meeting, then a Chair for that meeting will be appointed by those members present.

(ii) General Conduct of Meetings

Conduct should correspond to the shared values and principles set out at para 2.2.

Representatives should abide by any Code of Conduct applicable within their own organisation.

(iii) Decision Making

It is the duty of the Chair to ensure that decision making is clear, open, transparent and founded on consensus.

Whilst it is anticipated that the Partnership will achieve consensus on priorities and issues, in the event of a vote being necessary each partner organisation will be entitled to exercise one vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair will exercise a casting vote.

(iv) Notice of Meetings of the Partnership

a) Notice and Agenda

At least five clear days' notice in writing (via email) will be given of forthcoming meetings, including time and place, and a list of all agenda items.

b) Papers

Electronic copies of papers will normally be issued by email alongside the notice and agenda; hard copies can be made available upon request.

On occasion it may be necessary to issue papers with less than 5 days' notice, however, this will be kept to a minimum.

c) Quorum

No business will be conducted by the Partnership unless at least 40% of the members are present (rounded up to the next whole number).

(v) Substitutes

All Statutory and Support partners may nominate a substitute to attend a meeting in their absence. Substitute members should be fully briefed and be of sufficient seniority from within their respective organisations.

(vi) Tenure

Members of the Strategic Partnership Board and other community planning governance structures will generally represent their organisation for the duration agreed by their organisation. An exception to this rule is elected member representation on the Strategic Partnership Board.

(vii) Admission to Strategic Partnership Board Meetings

Meetings of the Strategic Partnership Board will be open to the public unless the Chair decides that an item of business is confidential. Papers for such meetings will be publicly available through the Council website.