



Active Together

A strategy for leisure in Fermanagh and Omagh

Our Vision for Leisure

"Opportunities for all to be 'Active Together' and to enjoy improved wellbeing"

What is Leisure?

Leisure means different things to different people.

Leisure is free time away from work and other responsibilities; it can be spent enjoying quality time with family and friends, going outdoors for a walk, going to a local football match, or taking part in sports, community or social activities.

Whatever the motivation, this strategy aims to deliver quality experiences and accessible opportunities for people to take part and be more active.

What is Wellbeing?

"Wellbeing is about people and creating the conditions for us all to thrive. It's quality of life and prosperity, positive physical and mental health, sustainable thriving communities. Wellbeing is a measure of social progress and, arguably, the goal of good government and charitable activity." (What Works Wellbeing)

Achieving wellbeing goes well beyond being active and improving physical and mental health. These are, however, key components of wellbeing and this strategy sets out the approach which the Council, in partnership with others, including citizens themselves, will take towards supporting people to become more active.

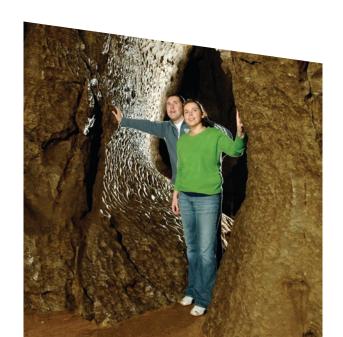
"I have always believed exercise is a key not only to physical health but to peace of mind."

Nelson Mandela

Contents

1.	Introduction		5
	1.1	Links to other strategies	7
	1.2	Where We Are Now	8
2.	Visio	on, Themes and Outcomes	17
	2.1	Vision	17
	2.2	Themes and Outcomes	17
	2.3	Wellbeing Pledge	18
3.	The	me 1 – Active People	20
4.	The	me 2 – Active Places	22
5.	The	me 3 – Active Partners	24
6.	Effe	ctive Communication and Promotion	27







1. Introduction

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council presents its first Leisure Strategy – 'Active Together'; which will cover the period from 2019 to 2030. This district wide, long-term strategy has been developed following a review of leisure services covering the programmes, activities, facilities and venues currently provided together with linkages to other sectors such as sporting bodies and community groups. It has also drawn on the engagement which has taken place with a wide range of stakeholders across the district in relation to the priorities for public service delivery in Fermanagh and Omagh.

The strategy identifies the current context in which services are provided and the key future needs, trends, opportunities and constraints which must be considered and addressed.

It recognises that physical inactivity is one of the biggest challenges to achieving wellbeing.

We ask you to consider our Wellbeing Pledge to ensure that we work together to make our district more active and healthy. There is strong evidence of the link between physical activity and health/wellbeing. Put simply, increased levels of physical activity are related to better health and wellbeing, both in terms of physical and mental health and increased social interaction.

Ways to Wellbeing

Adapted from Public Health Agency model



The 'Active Together' strategy will take account of changing lifestyles and how people wish to participate in leisure activities in the coming years.

For many, informal active recreation is their preferred means to achieving a healthier lifestyle, others prefer to access formal activities and provision and, for some, a mix of both is desirable.

The strategy will also consider the issues around management of limited resources and the identification of priorities with regard to facilities, services, and programming to ensure that we achieve greatest impact from the resources available to us.

This will include prioritising areas where health and wellbeing are significantly lower than the district average recognising that there is strong evidence that health outcomes are worse in deprived areas.

As a provider of leisure, recreation and sports opportunities, the Council needs to evolve and adapt to community needs and will need to explore new models of service delivery in order to meet the demands and challenges ahead. This will necessitate the establishment of new partnership arrangements, including with our community planning partners.

What do we mean by 'leisure provision'?



The great outdoors



Community based activity



Leisure Centres



Walking and cycle paths



Sports



Parks and play areas

The publication of this strategy is not an end in itself but a step along the road to developing leisure opportunities based on identified need and increased participation across the district in partnership with others and with local people.

1.1 Links to other strategies

This strategy has been developed in line with other regional and local strategies and priorities and follows the Outcomes Based Approach (OBA) adopted by the draft Programme for Government, the Community Plan for the district and the Council's emerging Corporate Plan 2019-2024.

Programme for Government

Outcome 4: We enjoy long, healthy, active lives

Other Regional Strategies and Programmes

eg. Every Body Active 2020; Making Life Better; Physical Activity Referral Scheme; Move More NI

'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030'

Outcome 1: Our people are healthy and well - physically, mentally and emotionally

'Active Together'

Leisure Strategy for Fermanagh and Omagh

There are also close links with other Council strategies and plans. For example, Countryside Recreation Strategy, Tourism Development Plan, Sports Facility Strategy, and our Local

Biodiversity Action Plan and we will work across other Council services and wider partners to ensure seamless alignment across these.

1.2 Where We Are Now

(i) Current Provision

Leisure, recreation and sport is currently provided through leisure centres (both those directly provided by the Council and those supported by the Council), through structured, community-based activity and through the provision of a range of other infrastructure for casual leisure use.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has invested in leisure provision across the district, including through:

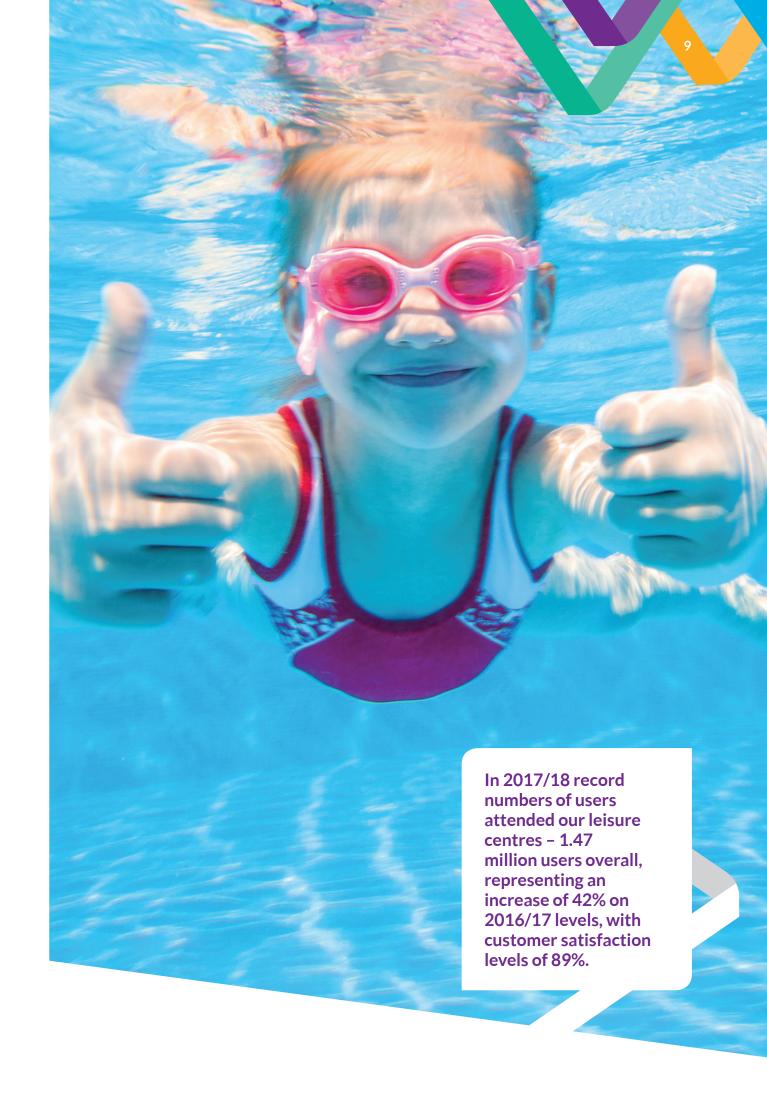
- Two flagship centres Fermanagh Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen and Omagh Leisure Complex

 which comprise of swimming pools, indoor facilities (multi-use sports halls, fitness suites and studios), running tracks and pitches, soft play and activity rooms
- Centres at Castle Park Leisure Centre, Lisnaskea and the Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown comprising a range of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, including sports halls, fitness suites, soft play facilities, activity rooms, specialist facilities and a selection of pitches (both grass and 3G).
- Council support for community owned provision at Dromore Sports Complex, Trillick Enterprise Leisure Centre and the Ecclesville Centre, Fintona,
 - Provision of facilities such as the 37 Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), outdoor gyms, over 100 play areas, parks and open spaces, including 47 quality listed walkways, throughout the district.
 - A team of highly experienced, trained and competent staff and coaches.
 - Direct provision and support for leisure, recreation and sporting opportunities in the community currently, this is delivered in partnership with Sport NI, through the Every Body Active 2020 programme and through local sports and community organisations. Disability Inclusive Activities in partnership with Disability Sport NI, the Healthy Towns Programme in partnership with the Public Health Agency and Move More NI in partnership with MacMillan Cancer Support.
 - The Council recognises the sporting success of individuals and teams across the District through the work of the Sports Forum and other celebratory events.

Challenge:

in a world of limited resources, widespread expansion of facilities is unlikely. The focus will be on utilising the facilities already available, delivering key projects and working in partnership to continue delivering accessible and inclusive leisure, recreation and sport opportunities.





(ii) Geography and Demography

The Fermanagh and Omagh district is the largest geographically of all 11 Council districts in Northern Ireland, covering 3,000km². It also has the smallest population (116,289 in 2017), with over 66% of the population living outside the two main population centres (Enniskillen and Omagh). The area is intersected by Lough Erne giving rise to further issues in terms of travel times and distances across the district which also has a limited public transport network.

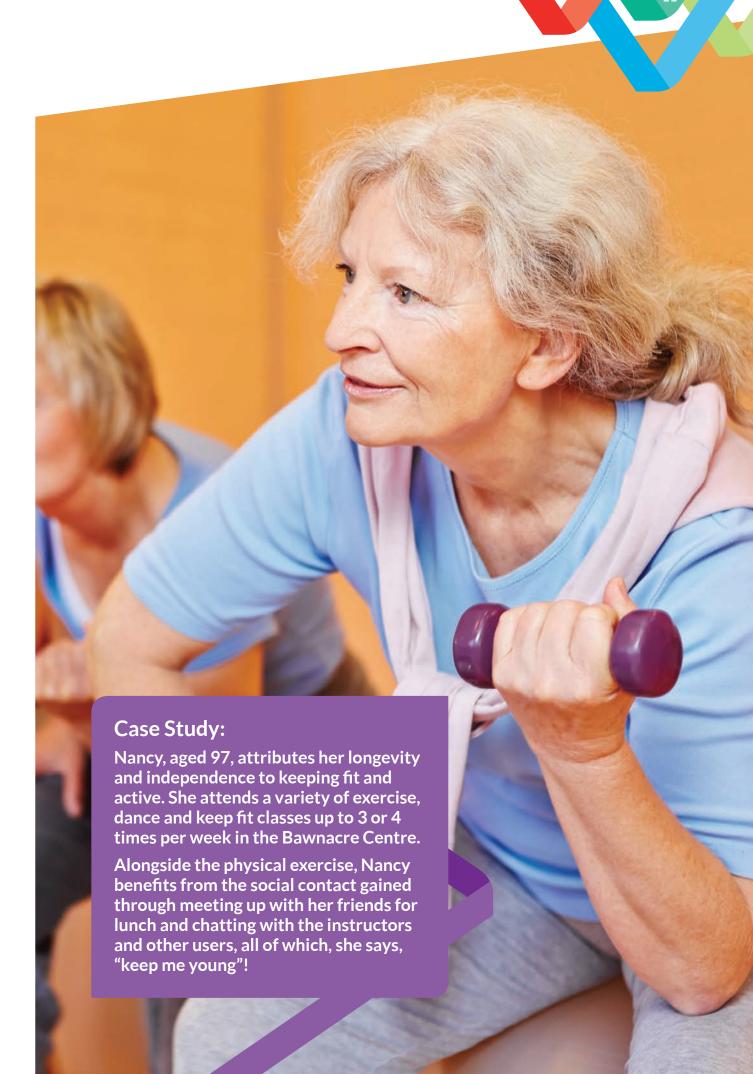
Currently, approximately 16% of the population is aged 65 years or older. This is projected to increase to 22% by 2030. Conversely, the number of children (aged 15 years or younger) and the number of working age people (16 – 64 years) are projected to fall. These demographic changes are not necessarily unique to Fermanagh and Omagh, but are a change from what has been experienced over the past 30 years. The urban/rural profile of the district is not showing signs of significant change.

Challenge:

Ensuring access to leisure opportunities across the urban and rural areas; and providing opportunities for physical activity to maintain wellbeing across all life stages.







(iii) Health Trends (including activity levels)

Self-reported health in Fermanagh and Omagh is generally good, with over four out of five residents stating that their health is either very good or good. However, this masks some of the prevalent health issues in the district.

Challenge:

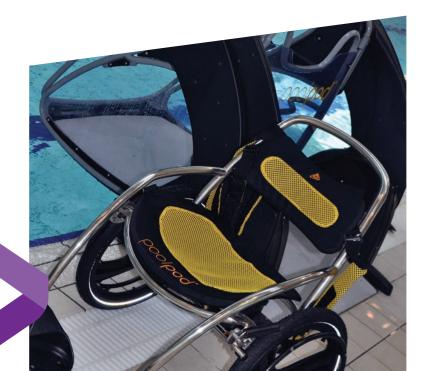
Raising awareness of the benefits of physical activity in relation to physical and mental health; inspiring people to take action in pursuit of their own wellbeing and ensuring that there are opportunities for them to do so. Hypertension and obesity are the two most common health issues, with 141 out of every 1,000 patients and 124 out of every 1,000 patients respectively receiving treatment from their GP. In addition, childhood obesity is high, with 6% of Primary 1 age children classed as obese, rising to 8% of children in Year 8. Mental health is also a common health issue, albeit complex to measure. Current statistics show that 189 out of every 1,000 patients is prescribed treatment for mood or anxiety.

Deprivation is an issue that cross-cuts health and wellbeing. Health outcomes are much lower for people living in deprived areas. For example, a life expectancy of 2.7 years less; a higher change of contracting cancer; the prescription rate for mood and anxiety disorders is 20% higher; admission rates to hospital for alcohol related issues is 91% higher; and childhood obesity rates are higher.

Almost one third of residents in Fermanagh and Omagh do not undertake 30 minutes of physical activity on any day of the week; 75% do not do the recommended level of physical activity in a week. This is likely to be higher in deprived areas.

The data presented above is only a snapshot of the information available on health and wellbeing. Research suggests a link between physical activity levels and health outcomes. This is recognised as important contextual information from which the Active Together strategy is developed and will be implemented.

Pool pods have been supplied to Omagh Leisure Complex and Fermanagh Lakeland Forum by Disability Sport NI to help those with restricted mobility so that they can have easy access to the pool.





(iv) Community Involvement

The success of leisure, recreation and sports opportunities in Fermanagh and Omagh – as anywhere – is dependent on the involvement of a number of partners, of which the community is key.

Challenge:

Community involvement, from all facets of the district. is important and will remain important in the future. The Council is committed to providing opportunities for inclusive leisure. recreation and sport activities to support wider social inclusion and improve health outcomes. The community is central to this.

A range of vibrant sporting leagues and formal activity is underpinned by significant and regular community effort. Evidence suggests that over one-in-five residents in Fermanagh and Omagh undertake volunteering effort in life, with this likely to be underreported.

Much activity is delivered through a network of community halls to widen the opportunity for participation, which is vital in a district of over 3,000 km².

The Council works in partnership with a range of organisations to deliver leisure, recreation and sport opportunities. For example, the Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS), a health promotion programme in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and Move More NI in partnership with Macmillian Cancer Support. These programmes work to help people affected by such conditions as diabetes, obesity, mental health, coronary heart disease (CHD) and cancer. More than 1,500 people have been referred to the PARS scheme by their doctors and the results show that the programme is a success. The Council, through the local Sports Forum, provides funding and grants to clubs and individuals for sporting activities and endeavours.

Hundreds of people participate in Omagh and Enniskillen Parkruns which are free weekly 5k timed walk, run or jog events, run by volunteers - this hugely popular international fitness initiative has been a run away success locally!



Case Study:

Working in partnership with the Autism NI Fermanagh Group, the Castle Park Leisure Centre in Lisnaskea provides weekly exclusive use soft play sessions for children with autism.

By making a number of small adjustments, eg, turning off music and dimming lighting, the children have access to a safe and secure play environment, including use of specialist equipment such as a 'squeeze machine'.

The Group's Chairperson and parent of three autistic children. highlighted the benefits for both parents and children: "These play sessions are so needed and welcomed by our families. In particular, the kids love rolling through the squeeze machine, the pressure of the massive hug it gives them really helps them if over stimulated or anxious. We can't thank you enough".



2. Vision, Themes and Outcomes

2.1 Vision

The Council's Vision for leisure in Fermanagh and Omagh is

"Opportunities for all to be 'Active Together' and to enjoy improved wellbeing".

2.2 Themes and Outcomes

To support delivery of the Vision, the following three themes and five outcomes have been identified:



Active People

- 1. We have access to opportunities to support active, healthy lifestyles
- 2. We develop and invest in a network of leaders, coaches and volunteers



Active Places

3. We benefit from our unique natural and built environment with access to a range of quality, accessible facilities and services



Active Partners

4. We work in partnership with agencies and communities to make best use of our limited resources

Effective Communication and Promotion

Each of the themes will be supported by a programme of communication and promotion aimed at engaging widely, ensuring that leisure opportunities are actively promoted and that clear messages in relation to the benefits of physical activity are communicated and understood.

2.3 Wellbeing Pledge

The Council is committed to working towards delivering the Vision and Outcomes set out above, but we recognise that we cannot achieve this without the support of others.

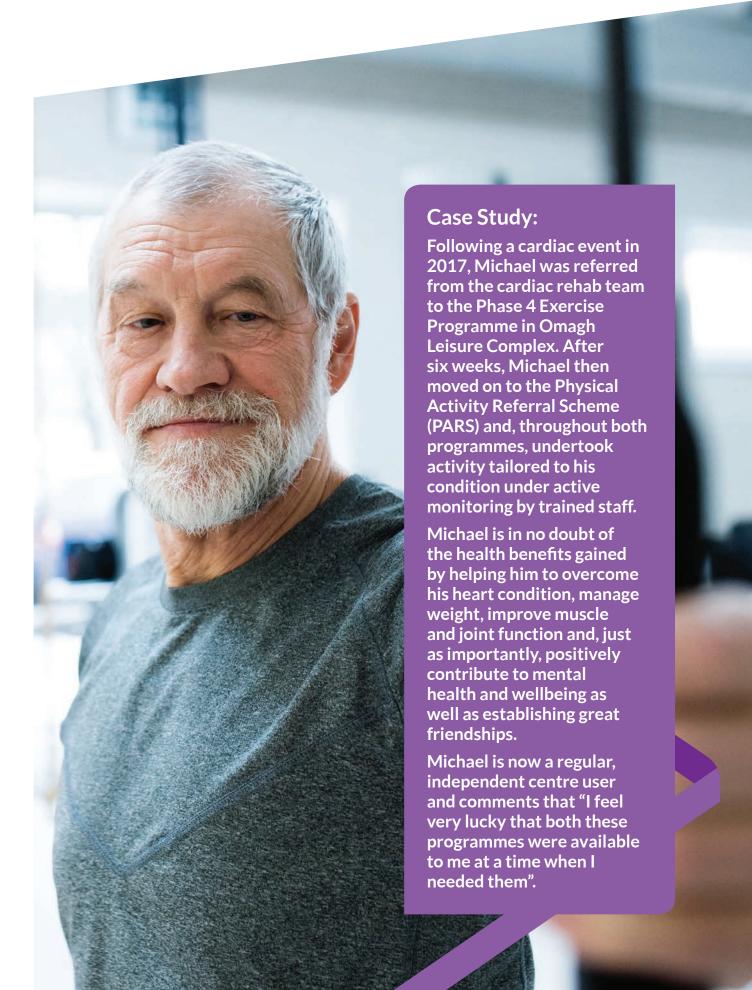
Achieving success will require commitments from citizens, communities and partner organisations - alongside the Council – ensuring everyone takes responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.



We are asking all citizens to show their support by committing to

the **Wellbeing Pledge** so that, together, we can make Fermanagh and Omagh an active and healthy place to live.

Our Part	Your Part
Provide inclusive opportunities for people to be more active.	 Keep active, take up opportunities and encourage others, including children
Work with communities to help them to provide opportunities in local areas.	Get involved, consider volunteering, encourage others to volunteer.
Invest in a range of quality leisure provision.	Make use of facilities provided; treat them with respect.
	 When in the outdoors - respect our natural environment and adopt 'leave no trace' principles.
Work with partners to provide accessible information on improving physical and mental health and wellbeing.	Take information on board – make appropriate lifestyle choices.
 Identify opportunities to work with others to support quality leisure provision. 	Embrace partnership working, engage and support.





3. Theme 1 - Active People

What do we want to achieve?

Outcome 1:

We have access to opportunities to support active, healthy lifestyles

Outcome 2:

We develop and invest in a network of leaders, coaches and volunteers

How will we measure progress over the long-term?

	Data	Baseline	Source
	Life expectancy - deprivation gap	2.7 years differential	HCIMS Regional Inequalities
(0	Number of residents suffering from hypertension and obesity	Hypertension: 143 per 1,000Obesity: 124 per 1,000	Quality Outcomes Framework
ndicators	Percentage of children who are obese	• P1: 5.7% • Y8: 7.8%	HSCIMS Regional Inequalities
- Dul	Physical activity levels	 O days: 32% Less than recommended: 43% Recommended or above: 25% 	Fermanagh and Omagh Residents' Survey
	Volunteering Levels	22%	Fermanagh and Omagh Residents' Survey

Note: indicators also in the community plan are shaded

Why does this outcome matter?

(i) Active, healthy lifestyles

The health benefits of physical activity are well known and, these days, we are inundated with information about the benefits of activity in managing weight and preventing the onset of chronic illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes. Despite this, the numbers of adults undertaking regular exercise is still low. The ways in which

people are choosing to participate are also changing with many people now using activity and fitness technology and apps to support their fitness programme and, for children, the importance of 'free play', i.e., unstructured, voluntary, child-initiated activity that allows children to develop their imaginations while exploring and experiencing the world around them, is increasingly apparent.

The relationship between physical activity and mental or emotional health is becoming better understood with growing evidence that physical activity enhances positive mood and may reduce the harmful effects of stress. Increased levels of activity, whether it be physical, social or creative activities, often result in increased levels of social

contact and social interaction which have been shown to improve wellbeing and mental health. This is one of the reasons why social isolation and loneliness, as often seen in the older population, can be so detrimental to wellbeing. The Council will work to structure services and programmes to meet needs, using available evidence to inform decisions.

(ii) A network of leaders, coaches and volunteers

The provision of affordable and inclusive access to leisure opportunities across our wide geography and rural area will require innovative approaches and partnership working with a range of agencies and sectors, including the community and voluntary sector. The Council, in partnership with others, will explore opportunities for community use of facilities such as the schools' estate alongside wider use of existing community facilities.

The sustainable development and use of a network of leaders, coaches and volunteers will be essential to developing and maintaining leisure opportunities across the district, for example, walk leaders or fitness coaches. The importance of continued investment in the development of this network and in ensuring access to ongoing support for community leaders, coaches and volunteers is recognised by the Council as a key enabler in making this happen and will be promoted through the 'Wellbeing Pledge'.

Action:

- 1 Review provision to seek to provide a balance in terms of urban/rural access to leisure activities (direct and indirect) across the district.
- 2 Develop and deliver programmes for groups with lower than average participation levels or those where targeted interventions have been identified, including:
 - Areas of high social need
 - Older persons
 - Disabled people with health conditions
 - People with disabilities
 - Children and young people.

- 3 Explore opportunities to build an online active community using new developments in technology.
- 4 Work in partnership to help develop sustainable sports clubs and encourage the delivery of a range of sports, including minority sports.
- 5 Work with the Community/ Voluntary Sector to identify, develop and provide ongoing support to a network of leaders, coaches and volunteers.



4. Theme 2 - Active Places

What do we want to achieve?

Outcome 3:

We benefit from our unique natural and built environment with access to a range of quality, accessible facilities and services

How will we measure progress over the long-term?

	Data	Baseline Figures	Source
	Leisure Centre Throughput	1.47m total figure for users in 2017/18	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
ndicators	Usage of walkways	1,236,587 recorded users	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Inc	Participants in outreach programmes	8,031 participants including Healthy Towns, Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) and Everybody Active 2020	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council/Sport NI
	Leisure time spent outdoors	Once per week or more: 62%Less than once per week: 23%Never: 15%	Continuous Household Survey

Note: indicators also in the community plan are shaded

Why does this outcome matter?

The Council has supported the ongoing development and management of activities and programmes across the district through use of both natural and built assets and facilities, often in partnership with community organisations,

sporting and governing bodies and other stakeholders. In doing so, the Council recognises that quality leisure experiences positively influence wellbeing and that this investment contributes to delivering healthy and sustainable places and communities.

Supporting physical activity, whether it be leisure, sport or other recreational pursuits, is often dependent on the provision of appropriate opportunities. In Fermanagh and Omagh we are extremely fortunate in terms of the wealth of natural resources on our doorstep providing unrivalled opportunities for outdoor activities such as walking, sailing, rowing and others. Likewise, use of the natural environment must be undertaken in a sustainable way, ensuring that the landscape

or resource is protected for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Whilst many of our facilities are excellent, we have identified some deficiencies in older buildings and we will be working to develop and deliver projects to ensure that all facilities offer a welcoming, quality, accessible environment to encourage active participation.

Action:

- 1 Provide a range of activities within accessible, inclusive and sustainable Council facilities.
- 2 Maximise the use of community facilities to provide locally accessible and inclusive activities.
- 3 Maximise the potential of our existing natural assets to encourage greater uptake of outdoor leisure.
- 4 Develop and deliver a prioritised investment programme to improve leisure facilities across the District.
- 5 Develop and deliver a sustainable action plan for play spaces across the District.







5. Theme 3 - Active Partners

What do we want to achieve?

Outcome 4:

We work in partnership with agencies and communities to make best use of our limited resources

How will we measure progress over the long-term?

ndicators

Data	Baseline Figures	Source
Number of partnership programmes/ projects delivered	To be identified in 2019/20	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council/partners
Number of participants programmes/ projects delivered	To be identified in 2019/20	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council/partners
Number of Disability/ Inclusive programmes/ projects delivered	To be identified in 2019/20	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council/partners

Why does this outcome matter?

The Community Plan for the district 'Fermanagh and Omagh 2030' brings together a range of statutory and other partners, including the community and voluntary sector, to work together to make a real difference to people's lives.

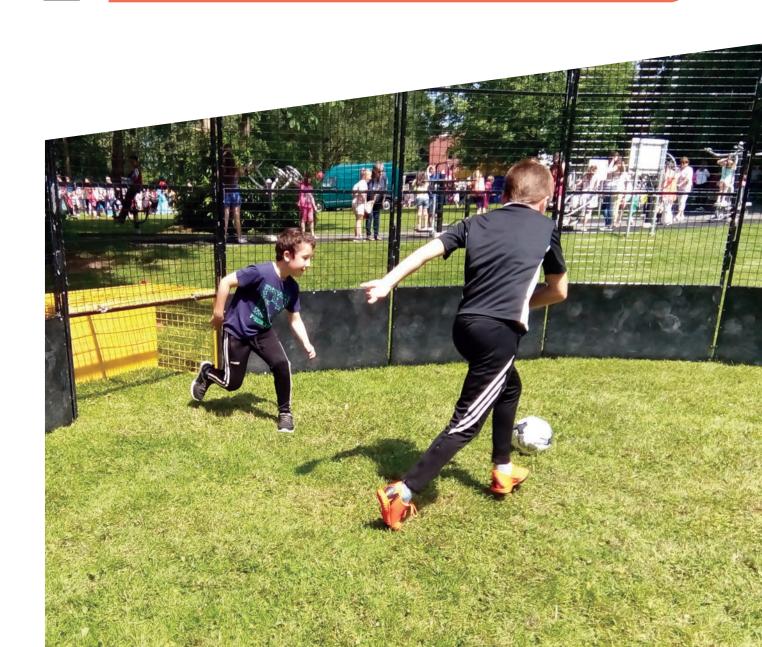
Improved health and wellbeing is a key outcome which community planning partners, including the Public Health Agency, Western Health and Social Care Trust, Health and Social Care Board, Sport Ni and the Education Authority amongst others, are committed to working towards. The Council's commitment to delivering on the health and wellbeing outcome is reinforced through the development of the 'Active Together' strategy.

The role of the community and voluntary sector in supporting 'Active Together' cannot be overstated. Community and sporting partners have a vital part to play in encouraging and facilitating participation, helping to reach out to under-represented groups and supporting volunteering opportunities.

Leisure opportunities will, in some cases, be delivered directly by the Council and, in other cases, by other agencies or partnerships. As a public service provider, the Council must ensure that its services are sustainable and achieve value for money. This will increasingly require us to explore innovative and partnership approaches to meet needs and expectations.

Action:

- 1 Work with partners to develop activity infrastructure including walks, cycle paths, Greenways and Blueways.
- 2 Work with health partners to promote activity programmes.
- 3 Work with communities to provide locally based activities and community champions.
- 4 Work with education partners to promote increased community use of educational facilities.
- 5 Work with Sport NI, Governing Bodies and Clubs to promote the uptake of sports.





6. Effective Communication and Promotion

The achievement of the outcomes identified will be supported through a programme of communication and promotion which will be aimed at ensuring:

- (i) Our people understand and appreciate the benefits of being active
- (ii) Opportunities to be active and participate in leisure activities are widely promoted and information is easily accessible to all.

This is important because good physical and mental health benefits individuals and wider society with evidence showing that increased levels of physical activity contribute to improved health and wellbeing. Overall, we are living longer but many are not enjoying those extra years in good health and, for some, lifestyle changes may contribute to a longer healthy life expectancy.

We are committed to work to ensure a more co-ordinated and joined up approach and will work closely with our various partners to take advantage of opportunities for cross-promotion of messages and activities. Ultimately, successful communication should result in a greater uptake of activity.

Managing Performance

The identified actions set out in 'Active Together' will be delivered over the lifetime of this strategy and there will be ongoing engagement with partners and other stakeholders as we progress the detail of these.

Progress will be monitored through the Council's corporate performance management framework. The actions will be included in the appropriate annual Council service delivery and improvement plans and will be monitored and reported on to Council on a six monthly basis.

Progress reports on indicators will be provided publicly through the Council's Annual Report and/or the Community Plan Performance Statement.



