

Annual Report 2015/16



Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Comhairle Ceantair Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

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1. Foreword and Introduction

In April 2015 Fermanagh and Omagh District Council published its Corporate Plan for 2015/19. The Corporate Plan is our blueprint for implementing our Vision and programme of action for service delivery on your behalf, focusing on delivering and improving:

- Quality of life
- Quality places, and
- Quality services.

In line with the new performance improvement statutory duty the Council published, in June 2015, its first annual Corporate Improvement Plan. This document identified improvement objectives for the 2015-16 year which were closely aligned to the programme of delivery against our Corporate Plan. In the 2015/16 year the eleven newly established councils were subject to limited introduction of the new performance duty and, as the remaining provisions come into effect, it is likely that our future Improvement Plans will be more closely aligned to the new Community Plan and will focus on specific improvement objectives alongside identified projects. Similarly, future Annual Reports will also incorporate a Performance Report against the agreed improvement objectives.

Now that we have completed the first year of the Corporate Plan's four year timeframe, it is timely to review our position in relation to the progress made to date. The first year of our Corporate Plan and our first Corporate Improvement Plan involved a significant amount of transitional change as we worked to further establish the new Council for our area – the Fermanagh and Omagh district. We also welcomed the transfer of employees from the former Department of the Environment Planning Service, including the Regional Property Certificate Unit, to local government.

This Annual Report 2015/16 provides an overview of the progress made by the new Council within its inaugural year. The progress made is detailed in terms of the 3 strategic themes contained within both the Corporate Plan 2015-19 and the Corporate Improvement Plan 2015-16. It also includes an overview of the Council's financial performance for 2015/16 and provides detail on how we performed against a number of performance indicators.

This has been a year of significant change in a difficult financial climate, however, the Council is committed to continuing to provide quality services to deliver on its Vision and building stronger partnerships with others through our community planning arrangements.

We hope that you find this report informative and useful and that it will give you a sense of how we are working, on your behalf, to deliver strong community and civic leadership, to manage our finances well, to be accountable to the people we serve and to engage effectively with our communities.

Councillor Mary Garrity Council Chair Brendan Hegarty Chief Executive

2. What are we aiming to achieve in Fermanagh and Omagh?

Our Vision:

'Fermanagh & Omagh, the place of choice – where people, communities and businesses prosper'.

Our Vision for the new Fermanagh & Omagh district is to establish a cohesive area, building on our strengths to make it:

- A place where people choose to live
- A place where businesses choose to invest
- A place where visitors choose to spend time.

Our district will be recognised for its unique and beautiful natural environment; for its quality facilities and services; for the talents, skills and creativity of its people; and as a place where quality of life is promoted and valued.

Our Mission:

'Leading and serving our community, working with others to promote quality of life, quality places and quality services for all'

Our Priorities:

Theme 1

The Council wants all of its people to enjoy the highest possible quality of life and has identified a number of priorities aimed at improving quality of life for all those who live, work, and visit our area.

Our priorities within this theme are to:

• address identified need through the delivery of high quality, accessible services to all our people;

- create the conditions which support employment, entrepreneurship and innovation;
- continue to work to attract inward investment and jobs into our district as well as supporting local and indigenous businesses;
- promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all our residents and visitors;
- enrich lives by supporting opportunities for creativity;
- work with communities to enable and empower them to be more active in improving quality of life for individuals, families and communities.

Theme 2

The Fermanagh and Omagh district is recognised as a beautiful and largely unspoilt natural area.

Our priorities within this theme are to:

• protect and enhance the local natural and built environment and heritage so as to provide quality places where people will wish to live, work and visit;

• grow our tourism industry by providing and promoting desirable locations, together with a wide range of quality outdoor and cultural activities and experiences based around our natural and built environment and heritage;

- encourage people and communities to take pride in their neighbourhoods;
- work with our communities and with other partners to improve areas, improve our infrastructure and to achieve balanced and sustainable development.

Theme 3

The Council will work to establish the new Fermanagh and Omagh District Council as a unified, inclusive and accessible organisation delivering high quality services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Our priorities within this theme are to:

• Provide strong civic leadership, lobby and influence key decision makers for the good of our district and to champion the needs of rural areas;

- Ensure openness and transparency in our decision making and in communicating our performance;
- Engage with residents and service users to ensure that we have listened to their needs and are delivering services based on local priorities;

• Successfully transition to a single new organisation, to deliver continuous improvement in the way we work and be open to new and innovative approaches including sharing services with other partners where these can deliver improvements;

• Be open to opportunities to take advantage of the General Power of Competence, where appropriate.



3. What we have done (Key achievements)

In 2015/16 we contributed to the completion of the plan through achievements across each of the themes.

Theme 1- Within 2015/16 we achieved 95% of the actions programmed for that year, these include:

- Community Planning evidence base developed; strategy review completed; extensive public engagement process completed involving over 900 participants; work underway with partners to develop a draft Community Plan for the district in line with the statutory timeframe.
- Equality Action Plan and Disability Plan in place; corporate systems established to embed principles of equality, diversity and inclusivity across all functions; 3 EQIAs commenced; Corporate Health and Safety Policy agreed. Irish language and Ulster Scots policies and action plans agreed.
- Funding from the Public Health Agency for access and inclusion secured for 2016/17, an increase of £15k.
- 1,573 births, 996 deaths and 715 marriages registered, 915 certificates issued and 230 civil ceremonies performed within GRO guidelines and statutory requirements.
- 303 winter warm packs, containing eg fleece blankets and thermal vests distributed to adults and children deemed to be living in fuel poverty, through FODC Home Assessment Officers, and partner organisations such as St Vincent de Paul, British Red Cross and Women's Aid.
- Completion of 213 Home Safety Assessments (Falls Prevention programme) on behalf of MARA for vulnerable rural dwellers living in, or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- 393 home safety visits undertaken in households with an adult over 65. Safety equipment such as carbon monoxide alarms distributed, if necessary. 294 home safety visits were carried out to those households with a child under 5, and a range of home safety equipment, eg, stair gates distributed if a need was identified.
- Completion of 830 surveys of homes under Affordable Warmth scheme and forwarded to NIHE for energy efficiency measures. Households targeted were those identified as being most at risk from fuel poverty.
- Policy developed and adopted on Postal naming and numbering, including dual languages.
- Funding secured through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for the super connect broadband voucher scheme.
- Pilot superfast satellite broadband scheme delivered in rural areas of County Fermanagh.

- Secured £6.8 million under Priority 6 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.
- 262 jobs promoted through business start-up activity.
- 901 Planning Applications approved, with an approval rate of 92%.
- Funding secured to support the development of 3,100 ft² of workspace units in Roslea and 2,840 ft² of workspace units in Kinawley July 2015.
- ASPIRE Employability Programme launched in September 2015.
- National and International festivals supported- Enniskillen International Beckett Festival, Wilde Weekend, the Royal Scottish Pipe Band All-Ireland Championship, Ulster Fleadh, ongoing International coverage for the Marble Arch Caves and the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.
- Local events delivered including Halloween Fireworks and family entertainment, St Patrick's Day Carnival Parades, Omagh Summer Carnival, Christmas Lights Switch On events and support provided towards Ben Kiely Omagh's Literary Festival.
- Holocaust Memorial Day programme undertaken involving 624 students from Post Primary schools.
- 1916 events undertaken as part of a 4 year project.
- Work commenced on satellite museum provision in Omagh's Strule Arts Centre.
- Outdoor Gym programmes delivered over 12 weeks in Belcoo/Derrylin/ Derrygonnelly/Lisbellaw and Lisnaskea.
- Completion of Active Communities Project a physical exercise programme which was delivered over a 4 year period to 5,696 participants.
- Strathroy Multi Sports Pitch refurbished (November 2015).
- Approximately 800 participants took part in the Enniskillen 10k race.
- As part of the healthy towns initiative, approximately 450 people took part in programmes such as Men on the Move; Chi-Me; outdoor gym programmes etc.
- Approximately 300 people involved in the Physical Activity Referral Programme.
- 20 people counters are installed at various locations throughout the district and, from these counters, 478,499 walkers were recorded as using the walks in the 2015/16 year. This provides a snapshot of the high numbers of local people and visitors availing of the opportunities to access the countryside throughout the district.
- 763,223 users of the 4 leisure centres across the district, namely: Omagh Leisure Complex; Bawnacre Centre, Lakeland Forum; and Castle Park Centre.
- Agreements in place with Omagh Independent Advice Centre and Fermanagh Citizens Advice Bureau for the delivery of advice services.
- Public consultation undertaken for draft Community Development Strategy, Economic Development and Tourism strategies.

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- Approximately 450 participants in summer schemes partaking in a range of activities such as soccer and MUGA activities.
- BIG lottery money secured for North Fermanagh Valley, for the provision of shared space to the value of £1 million.
- Policing and Community Safety Partnership constituted in June 2015.
- The Fermanagh Community Safety Wardens Scheme commenced in Enniskillen.
- Streetsafe project delivered in Omagh Town on Friday and Saturday nights with a significant positive impact on the level of safety within the town centre.
- Enniskillen retained Purple Flag status for fourth consecutive year.
- 3 calls for funding delivered with 626 Letters of Offer issued.

Of the work programmed for 2015-16, delays were experienced in the completion of the Economic Development Strategy due to the inclusion of additional consultation. Some delays were also experienced in the development of a Cultural Plan and a Leisure, Recreation and Sports Strategy. All of these tasks will be carried forward for completion in the 2016/17 year.

Theme 2- Within 2015/16 we achieved 85% of the actions programmed for that year, these include:

- Work underway to prepare a Local Development Plan with completion of position papers and adoption of a statement of community involvement.
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) Foundation Phase (Enniskillen) completed in June 2015.
- Fermanagh Heritage Gateway developed to interlink key built environment and heritage assets through signposting within the Hub in Enniskillen Castle.
- £4.5m OASIS project completed in Omagh and launched in June 2015.
- Enniskillen Castle Basin (Riverside Walk) Public Realm Project ((£1.7m) officially launched October 2015.
- Hospital Road MUGA Improvements completed June 2015.
- Facilitating South West College £24m new College Project through transfer of part of the former Erne Hospital Site as part of the Enniskillen Masterplan.
- Omagh Awarded Best Kept Town 2015.
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan launched and implementation underway.
- Declaration of Councils second Local Nature Reserve, Creggan Bog Local Nature Reserve in March 2016.
- FODC achieved a 45.49% recycling rate (2015/16).
- Joint Waste Management Plan in place with neighbouring areas.

- Expansion of Brown Bin service throughout the District completed and commencement of a separate Food waste collection.
- Tullyvar Landfill Site awarded Biodiversity Project of the Year at the Sustainable Ireland Awards 2015.
- Introduction of the Bin Ovation App across the district.
- Completion of the Refurbishment of Kesh Recycling Centre. Opening of garages at Killyvilly and Gortrush.
- Opening of new council garages at Killyvilly and Gortrush.
- European funding secured through Border Uplands for the development and promotion of the Marble Arch Caves Geopark.
- Marble Arch caves celebrated its 30th anniversary in May 2015 and was awarded 4-Star Quality Assurance Award by Tourism NI for a second consecutive year.
- UNESCO status for Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark confirmed in March 2015.
- Boardwalk on Cuilcagh Mountain achieved national and international media on its launch- July 2015.
- Hosted the All Ireland Pipe Band and Drum Major Championships July 2015
- Delivery of Outdoor Events: Angling events, Play Event, Lough Erne Festival, Enniskillen 10K, Irish Canoe Polo Championships, Walking Festival.
- Angling Strategy developed to promote angling.
- All Quality Walks accredited in partnership with Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB).
- New play area opened at Drumbeg.

Of the work programmed for 2015-16, delays were experienced in progressing strategic development opportunities linked to the Rural Development Programme due to the non-availability of funding strands in the 2015/16 year. The completion of the Tourism Strategy and associated funding programme was also delayed due to the inclusion of additional consultation and input sessions. All of these tasks will be carried forward for completion in the 2016/17 year.

Theme 3- Within 2015/16 we achieved 86% of the actions programmed for that year, these include:

- Successful transition to one new organisation on 1st April 2015, with the bringing together of the legacy Councils of Fermanagh District Council and Omagh District Council, and the transfer of employees from the Planning Service and Property Certificate Unit into a single organisation with an agreed organisational design.
- Council logo and branding agreed with programme of signage underway.

- 160 Chairman's engagements; 39 Vice Chairman's engagements; and 13 Chairman's Receptions hosted recognising a range of achievements
- Establishment of new Council governance arrangements with all Council and Committee meetings open to the public and papers available on Council website
- Council Constitution agreed and publicly available on Council website, including a scheme of delegation.
- Council Audit Panel established and independent members appointed.
- Fermanagh and Omagh Health Support Group established with 4 meetings held
- Good Relations Audit complete. Good relations Action Plan developed and implemented.
- Corporate Improvement Plan published and performance framework in place.
- A suite of corporate strategies developed and either agreed or being consulted upon, ie, Customer Services Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Communications and Engagement Strategy,
- Emergency Planning arrangements in place alongside a business continuity framework.

Of the work programmed for 2015-16, some delays were experienced in implementing the agreed organisational structure. Final consultation with Trade Unions was due for conclusion in April 2016 with population of structures to be complete by October 2016. Due to the heavy HR operational workload, the development of an HR Strategy and Action Plan has been delayed. Work to complete the development of a Customer Services Strategy, a Communications Strategy and an Engagement Strategy will be progressed following public consultation. Work is ongoing to develop and embed effective project management arrangements to support capital projects and to commence development of an Estates Strategy. All of these tasks will be carried forward for completion in the 2016/17 year.



4. Financial Report 2015/16

Financial Report and Summary Financial Statements 2015-16

Introduction

The summary financial statements as outlined below have been extracted from the audited accounts of the Council as presented to the Audit Committee in September 2016. Fully audited and detailed accounts will be available on the Council website from 1 October 2016 at www.fermanaghomagh.com.

Financial Performance

The Council budgeted to breakeven in 2015-16 with only a small allocation required from General Reserves. The final year end position showed a surplus of £99k. This is after transferring £4.1m from revenue in year to finance capital schemes and increasing the levels of other funds.

The General Fund balance was £2,965,577 at 31 March 2016 which is within the limits recommended for reserve balances of authorities of this size. The Council has a duty under legislation to maintain a prudent level of General Reserves and the current level of the General Fund equates to 9.1% of net operating expenditure.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure represents money spent by the Council for the purposes of purchasing, upgrading or improving assets such as buildings, land, plant and machinery. The main distinction is that the council will benefit from capital expenditure over a longer period of time. The Council spent £7.034m during the year to finance various capital expenditure programmes. A summary of the main elements of expenditure is shown below:

Project	
Enniskillen Castle Development	£2.6m
Enniskillen Castle Basin and Walkway	£864k
MUGA Development	£200k
Extensions and Improvements to Works Depots	£618k
Purchase of Lands	£761k
Completion of OASIS Project	£317k
Omagh Bowling Green Pavilion	£174k

Revenue Expenditure: Cost of Council Services

The revenue account represents the cost of running Council services between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 and shows where the money came from to finance those costs along with the surplus at the year end.

	Gross Exp	Gross Income	Net Exp
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Culture & Heritage	2,358	333	2,025
Recreation & Sport	8,515	2458	6,057
Tourism	1,848	646	1,202
Community Services	1,004	253	751
Cemetery	385	37	348
Environmental Health	3,432	1623	1,809
Public Conveniences	591	0	591
Licensing	109	71	38
Other Cleaning	1,787	7	1,780
Waste Collection	4,480	249	4,231
Waste Disposal	4,360	189	4,171
Other Community Assets	975	35	940
Minor Works	462	119	343
Community Planning	197	1	196
Economic Development	2,273	764	1,509
EU Rural Development	280	212	68
Urban Development and Community	1,052	257	795
Development			
Planning Policy	643	2	641
Development Control	1,138	1064	74
Building Control	1,216	855	361
Environmental Initiatives	123	3	120
Off Street Car Parking	474	909	(435)
Democratic Representation and Management	1,412	10	1,402
Corporate Management	1,251	0	1,251
Non Distributed Costs	1,274	0	1,274
Central Services to the Public	820	565	255
Net Cost of Services	42,459	10,662	31,797



Other Operating Income	(6)
Investment Property Income	(349)
Bank & Investment Income	(62)
Other Expenditure	
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	696
Revenue Contribution to Capital Projects	1,194
Transfer to Capital Fund, Repairs & Renewals fund & Other Reserves	2,958
Less Capital Accounting Adjustments	(2,368)
Pension and Employee Benefit Adjustments	(935)
Amount to be met from General Grant & District Rates	32,925
Financed by:	
Revenue Grants	(3,416)
District Rates Income	(29,608)
Total Income	(33,024)
Net Surplus for the Year	(99)
General Fund as at 1 April 2015	(2,867)
General Fund as at 31 March 2016	(2,966)



Balance Sheet: Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2016

	31-Mar-16
	£000's
Property, Plant and Equipment	124,732
Stock	402
Cash in Bank	13,780
Money owed to the Council	4,829
Money owed by the Council	(5,920)
Borrowings	(11,728)
Provisions	(3,693)
Other long term liabilities	(14,877)
Net Assets	107,525
Non distributable reserves	97,389
Distributable reserves*	10,136
Net Worth	107,525
Distributable Reserves comprises the following balances:	
General Fund	2,966
Capital Receipts Reserve	165
Capital Grants Unapplied Account	420
Repairs & Renewals Fund	1,941
Earmarked Reserves	3,505
Capital Fund	1,139
	10,136



5. Performance Information

Statutory Indicators

The table below outlines our statutory indicators and how we have performed against them:

Ref	Statutory Indicator	Standard to be met (annually)	2015/16
ED1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity (Business start-up activity means the delivery of completed client led business plans under the Department for the Economy Regional Start Initiative or its successor programmes.)	170	262
PS1	The average processing time of major planning applications. [An application in the category of major development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015(a)]	Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks.	70.2 weeks
PS2	The average processing time of local planning applications. [Local applications means an application in the category of local development within the meaning of the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under that Act)]	Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 15 weeks.	14.4 weeks
PS3	The percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks. [Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control under Part 5 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or under any orders or regulations made under that Act). (b).]	70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.	63.8% in 39 weeks

W1	The percentage of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for reuse). [Household waste is as defined in Article 2 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997(a) and the Controlled Waste and Duty of Care Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013(b)]	In line with NILAS targets (Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme) Baseline to be determined in 2015/16	45.49%
W2	 The amount (tonnage) of biodegradable Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste that is landfilled. [Local authority collected municipal waste is as defined in section 21 of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003(c)] 	17,360 tonnes	17,299 tonnes
W3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings. [Local authority collected municipal waste arisings is the total amount of local authority collected municipal waste which has been collected by a district council]	In line with NILAS targets (Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme) Baseline to be determined in 2015/16	53,980.64

With reference to the Statutory Planning Indicators (PS1-PS3), the following points are noted:

PS1-3 (inclusive):

- The Council continues to issue a greater number of decisions than applications received, thus reducing the live caseload. Of the eleven councils, Fermanagh and Omagh had the third highest number of decisions issued in 2015/16.
- Of the 498 legacy cases, ie, applications which transferred from the Department of the Environment to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council on 1 April 2015, only 64 remain. Officers are focusing on processing these older applications and this has had an impact on the processing targets.

PS1: Major Applications

• The Council did not meet the target of 30 weeks for the processing of major applications. Delays largely arose during quarter four when ten major applications were processed. Of the ten processed, six were applications transferred from the DoE Strategic Projects team and were already outside of the processing target time at the

point of transfer. Of these applications, one was received in 2008, two in 2011 and two in 2012.

 The combination of the small number of major applications received and the number of existing legacy applications already beyond 30 weeks means that this target is difficult to achieve. The Council did, however, issue more decisions on major applications than it received, with 30 applications processed (including 2 withdrawn) and 9 applications received.

PS2: Local Applications

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• Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is one of only three Councils to meet the local processing target of 15 weeks with a processing rate of 14.4 weeks for local applications

PS3: Enforcement

• The Council is making ongoing efforts to improve performance on enforcement targets, including an Improvement Project in the current year aimed at identifying opportunities for shared working arrangements between Planning and Building Control.



Corporate Indicators

The table below outlines our corporate indicators and how we have performed against them:

Ref	Corporate Indicator	Standard to be met	2015/16
C1	Net cost of council services per head of population	Will not exceed estimated cost of £281.43	£276.95
C2	% of net expenditure v budget	98%	103%
C3	Residents' overall satisfaction	70% Satisfied	Survey not undertaken in 2015/16 - Liaising with other Councils with a view to identifying if a collaborative survey can be progressed on a regular basis
C4	Average number of working days per employee lost due to absence	11 days pa	11.37 days pa

With reference to the Corporate Indicators (C2 and C4) the following points are noted:

Corporate Indicator C2 - % of net expenditure -v- budget

• the Council transferred £1.7m of additional transfers to reserves in 2015/16. If this additional transfer was excluded from the calculations then the target of 98% would have been achieved.

Corporate Indicator C4 – Absence figures

the Council did not meet its target for 2015/16 of 11 days, narrowly exceeding this at 11.37 days. Whilst it is acknowledged that the first year of the transition to the new Council creates additional stress and workload, the Council is not complacent about its performance and Officers are investigating how absence management processes can be improved to ensure that our absence rate is reduced. An absence target of 10.5 days has been set for the 2016/17 year.

Contact Us

Elected member contacts

• Speak to your local Councillor who will be able to pass on your comments. Contact details for councillors can be found at <u>www.fermanaghomagh.com</u>

Key officer contacts

- Performance
- Democratic and Customer Services
- Finance

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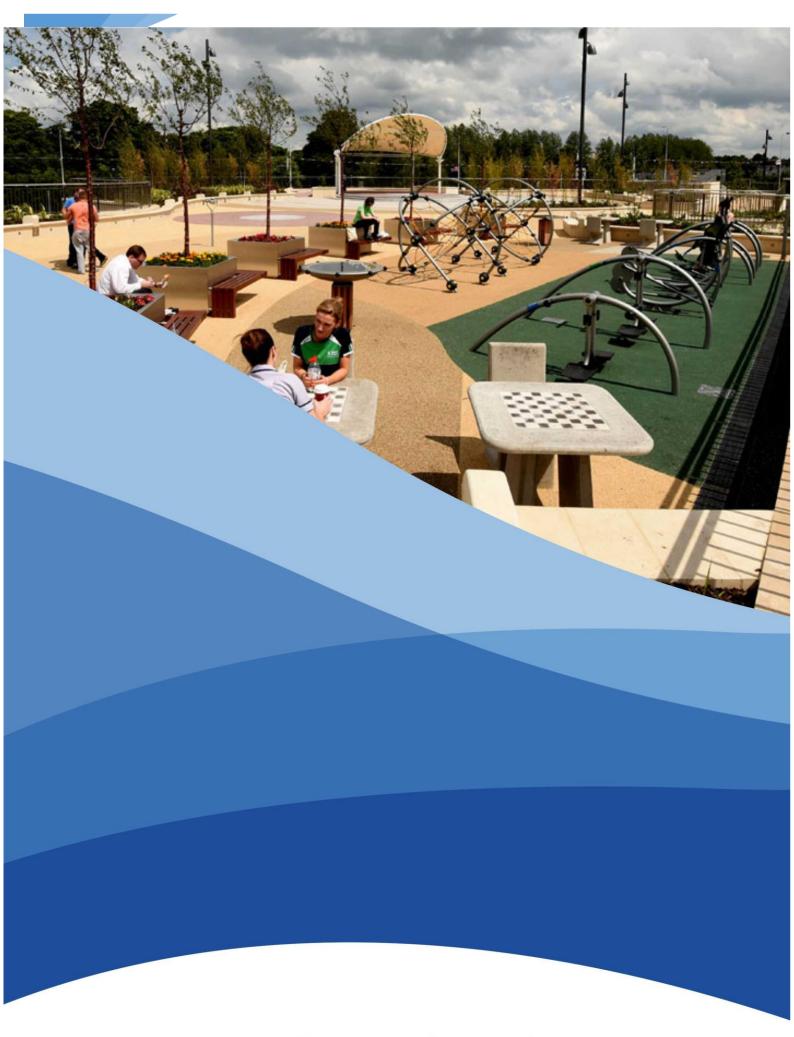
Finance: catherine.leonard@fermanaghomagh.com

In writing: Community Planning and Performance Team, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, The Grange, Mountjoy Road, Omagh BT79 7BL

Further Information

• For more information please visit our website- www.fermanaghomagh.com

This document is available in a range of formats upon request. Please contact us with your requirements, through the above contact details



www.fermanaghomagh.com