

# COMMUNITY PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE REPORTS

## PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES THEME



## Introduction and Overview

The Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan Action Plan 2024-2028 was agreed at the Community Plan Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) in February 2024. The Action Plan sets out 7 core priorities and 20 actions across the 'People and Communities', 'Economy Infrastructure and Skills', 'the Environment' and 'Partnership and Governance' themes.

The Action Plan identified a Thematic Lead and proposed delivery groups to oversee the delivery of and report on progress against the actions.

Progress will be reported for each core priority in the Community Plan Action Plan, on a thematic basis.

This Progress Update Report covers the period October 2024 – March 2025 for the People and Communities Theme. The theme is lead by the Director of Community and Wellbeing, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. The theme includes the following core priorities and delivery groups<sup>1</sup>:

Core Priorities	Delivery Groups
Improve Citizen Wellbeing	Integrated Wellbeing Network Age Friendly Alliance Western Areas Outcomes Group Anti-Poverty & Inequality Network ( <i>to be established</i> )
Inclusive and Empowered Communities	Community Support Working Group

The Progress Update Report below provides an update on the key achievements, outcomes and challenges of achieving the core priority over the past 6 months, with an overview of planned activities for the next 6 months.

The Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan Action Plan is available at:

<https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/app/uploads/2025/01/FO-2030-Community-Plan-Action-Plan-2024-2028-1.pdf>

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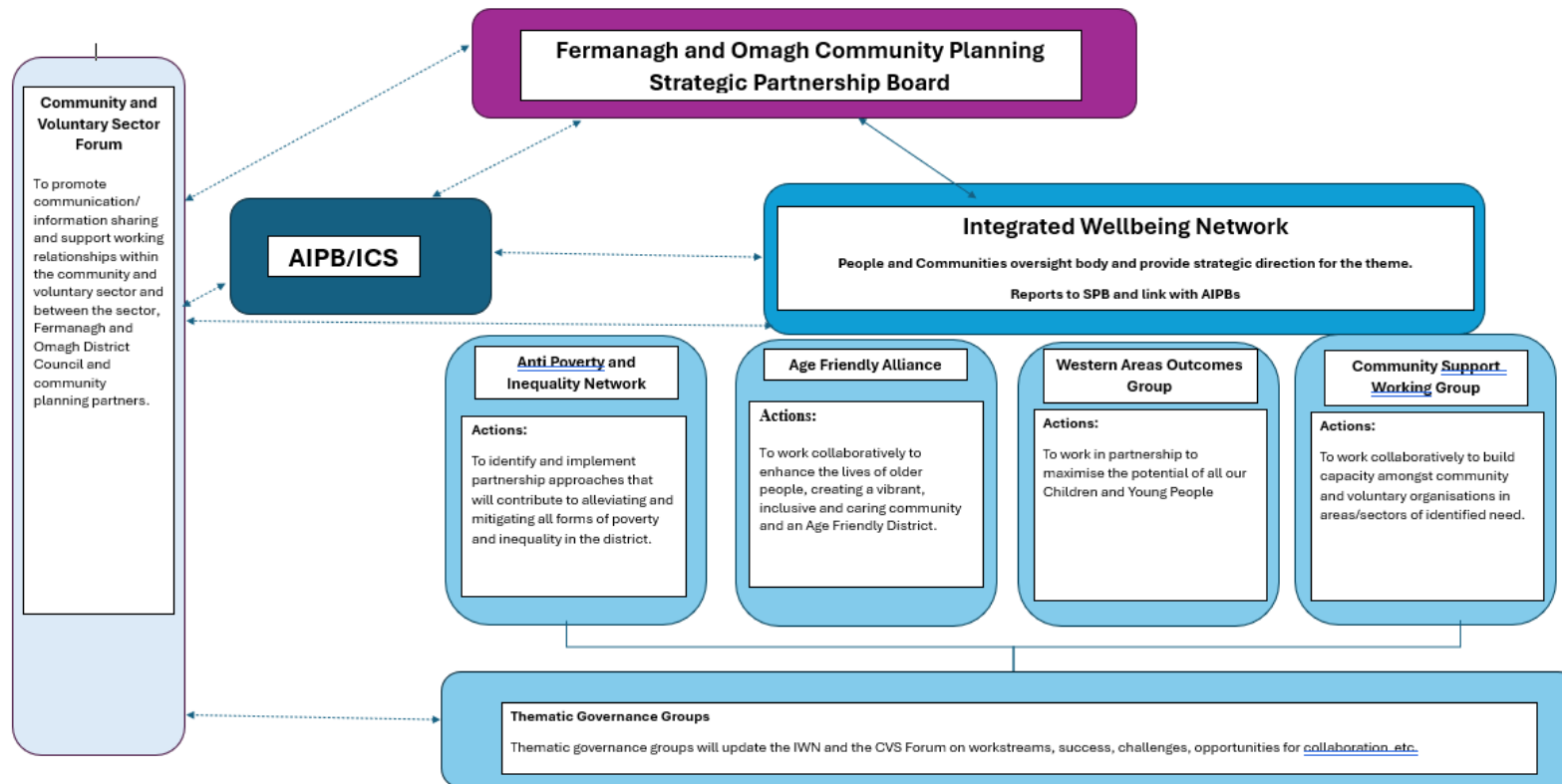
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<sup>1</sup> The core priorities will remain consistent over the duration of the plan, but the delivery groups may change.

## Review of Governance Arrangements and Actions

Following a review of Governance arrangements within the People and Communities Theme, the Integrated Wellbeing Network will become the oversight group providing a strategic steer for the People and Communities Theme, supported by thematic delivery groups.

Revised structure is outlined below.



## Core Priority: Improve Citizen Wellbeing

### Overview and Key Achievements to date (Oct 24 – Mar 25)

The core priority, Improving Citizen Wellbeing has four broad actions which aim to create the conditions for all citizens to enjoy long, healthy, creative and valued lives.

The actions are as follows:

- Identify and implement partnership approaches to tackle poverty and disadvantage through targeted programmes of Poverty Support.
- To adopt collaborative practise and planning amongst health care professionals, key statutory service providers and the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) to improve access to services, improve health outcomes and address inequalities in the district.
- Continue to develop Fermanagh and Omagh as an Age Friendly District.
- Work in partnership to maximise the potential of our Children and Young People.

The following actions relating to Poverty and Inequalities will be taken forward by an Anti-Poverty and Inequality Network (to be established)

- *Identify and implement partnership approaches to tackle poverty and disadvantage through targeted programmes of Poverty Support.*
- *To adopt collaborative practise and planning amongst health care professionals, key statutory service providers and the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) to improve access to services, improve health outcomes and address inequalities in the district.*

Significant progress has been made within Reporting Period 1 across all areas.

Strategies and initiatives, launched during the reporting period, at both regional and local level, have strengthened actions and will impact the priority throughout the duration of the Community Planning Action Plan 2024-2028, including, the Programme for Government 2024-2027, the RAISE Programmes (DE) and Pathways Out of Poverty Strategy (FODC).

Improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities is a priority. Health inequalities are a significant challenge, impacting the well-being and quality of life of many of our residents.

The District Electoral Areas (DEA'S) of Erne East and Omagh were previously selected as priority areas where several key focused partnership interventions would be planned and delivered, improving health outcomes across the area.

Between November and March a 'Community Conversation' has been undertaken by Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations in both areas.

There was significant engagement, 6 focus groups were held with 139 residents attending, additional meetings were held with Travellers, diabetes patients, an addiction support group; a support group for families affected by suicide and parents of young children.

In addition, 130 surveys were completed.

The following were highlighted as concerns for those living within these localities:

- Access to health services
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Substance Misuse
- Limited recreational activities and shared spaces
- Poverty
- Isolation and transport difficulties
- Lack of affordable childcare

Considering these findings, along with prevalence data in the selected areas the Integrated Wellbeing Network has agreed an immediate partnership focus on:

- Obesity
- Mental Health
- Substance Misuse

In addition, improving traveller health, increasing health literacy, self-harm prevention among young girls and supporting adults with learning disabilities are additional areas of focus, throughout the district. A mapping exercise is currently underway to determine the level of activity currently ongoing with respect to these priorities.

Over the last 6 years, the rate of relative poverty has averaged 23% in Fermanagh and Omagh. Reports from the community and voluntary sector organisations working “on the ground” would suggest the reality is even more stark.

The Pathways Out of Poverty Strategy was developed in collaboration with many statutory and community and voluntary organisations and was launched in December 2024.

Actions from the Strategy undertaken during this reporting period include:

The delivery of a Poverty Support Programme, this programme funded by the Department for Communities, Social Supermarket Fund (£166,300) and The Public Health Agency, Fuel Poverty Support Fund (£12,800).

The programme is delivered by a consortium of six community and voluntary sector organisations, Fermanagh Rural Community Network, Omagh Forum for Rural Associations, Arc Healthy Living Centre, Oak Healthy Living Centre, Lakeland Community Care and The Courthouse Kesh.

The programme has been named Western Response and Action on Poverty (WRAP).

Provisional figures for the 24/25 delivery period are provided below.

- 203 households benefited comprising of 288 adults and 266 children.
- 7 WRAP Practitioners completed NEA/City and Guilds Level 3 Energy Awareness training which resulted in 191 Energy household assessments undertaken (with support from the PHA)
- 7 WRAP practitioner also completed the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) Money Guiders Foundation Level training.
- Households received £64,000 in support by way of supermarket vouchers with many households also benefiting from financial support from Bryson Energy
- 59% of households were from a rural area
- 70% of participating households reported a disability or health condition.
- Over 30 organisations referring into the programme, including WHSCT, NIHE, schools, health visitors, Women's Aid, SVP, Action for Children and Sure Start.  
\*Provisional figures and may be subject to change

During this reporting period, Council also provided additional cost of living support for residents. Delivered by CVS partners, fuel, food and discretionary support was made available, targeted at those most impacted by the ongoing cost of living increases. Following an in-year review of budgets, a one-off support fund of £60,000 was financed.

The fund enabled £45,000 of fuel support delivered by St Vincent de Paul; £5,000 towards food support through local foodbanks and South West Age Partnership (SWAP); and a £10,000 allocation to Action for Children to enable a discretionary support fund for families via the Omagh and Fermanagh Family Support Hubs.

## **Age Friendly**

***Continue to develop Fermanagh and Omagh as an Age Friendly District.***

The Age Friendly Alliance is currently developing a new Age Friendly Strategy for the district. A draft strategy which will be issued for consultation shortly focuses on four key themes:

- Infrastructure
- Participation and Access
- Tackling Isolation
- Health and Wellbeing

Key to the success of the strategy will be the active engagement of all stakeholders including the Age Friendly Alliance, South West Age Partnership, and partners across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors. SPB members will have the opportunity to contribute their views during the public consultation.

Over 300 older people participated in Positive Ageing Month, with a diverse range of activities being held to encourage older people to take part, including, exercise taster sessions, wreath making, financial planning, healthy eating, falls prevention, home safety, free swim sessions for those over 60 and governance training for older people's groups.

A Local Democracy Event took place providing older people with the opportunity to visit the Council Chamber and engage with their elected representatives and provided clarity on the issues that are affecting our local older people.

WHSCT have been working with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council regarding the development of an Older People's Hubs within an FODC Community Facility in the Omagh area. The purpose of the hub will be to reduce levels of frailty within the district, through providing support services and initiatives for older people, outside of a health focused facility.

South West Age Partnership delivered Flourish and Thrive across four areas of the district Carrickmore, Fintona, Maguiresbridge and Belleek. The programme was funded by the Public Health Agency as part of their Age Friendly Funding to FODC with over 70 participants taking part in programmes promoting the Take Five Steps to Wellbeing campaign.

Belleek – Age Friendly Village, was a pilot project with a range of community and statutory organisations working together to build on Belleek Village's ambition to be an Age Friendly/ Disability Friendly Village. Working in partnership with all the businesses in the village an Age Friendly checklist was developed and 18 businesses completed it. In addition, a competition was held with the 3 local primary schools to design a logo, this sticker was given to anyone who completed the checklist and can be seen on shop windows around the village. The businesses were also given the opportunity to register for Jam Card Training with 7 availing of this training. A walkability study was completed involving DFI with some of the older residents in Belleek to identify any needs, such as a new disability parking space.

### **Work in partnership to maximise the potential of our Children and Young People.**

Children and young people are a vital part of any society and supporting them to reach their potential is crucial not only for their individual success but also for the prosperity of the community as a whole. An action plan has been developed by the Western Areas Outcomes Groups to support children and young people within the District and the priorities identified include:

- Early Intervention/Early Help Family Support for All
- Early Intervention Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
- School Disruption
- Poverty/Cost of Living

Work is ongoing within Locality Planning Groups to develop localised actions plans based on these priorities, reflecting the needs of children and young people within Fermanagh and

Omagh. Alongside continuing to build linkages between organisations and consult with families, additional key actions within this district include, networking events, parenting programmes, scams awareness and scoping the feasibility of autism cafes in rural areas.

The RAISE Programme, an initiative developed by the Department of Education seeks to deliver on the mission, set by the report 'A Fair Start' to ensure all children and young people regardless of background are given the best start in life, with the strategic objectives of:

- Raising achievement and addressing educational disadvantage; and
- Raising aspirations through a whole community approach to education.

Five Super Output Areas (SOA's) have been selected for the RAISE programme within the District and £406,402 has been allocated over a 2 year period, the SOA's are: Castlecoole 1, Devenish, Erne, Irvinestown and Lisnaskea. The development of a Strategic Area Plan is currently ongoing, with key themes being identified.

Challenges during the Reporting Period:

- Resource constraints continue to impact progress.
- Scope the potential of a 'Shared Resources Protocol' which would support with delivery of objectives.

#### Plans for the next 6 Months (Apr 25 – Sept 25)

The following activities are planned for Reporting Period 2:

- Completion of the Health Inequalities Mapping Exercise determining where interventions are currently in place with respect to obesity, mental health, substance misuse, traveller health, health literacy, self-harm amongst young girls and adults with learning disabilities.
- Development of a Health Inequalities Action Plan
- Establishment of the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Network\*
- Implement the Debt Advice Partnership Programme
- Consult on the draft Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan\*
- Support with the implementation of RAISE within the District.
- WHSCT and FODC, working in partnership to further the development of an Older People's Hub in the Omagh area.

\*Photographs available post event

## Core Priority: Inclusive and Empowered Communities

### Overview and Key Achievements to date (Oct 24 – Mar 25)

Action: Work collaboratively to build capacity amongst community and voluntary organisations in areas / sectors of identified need.

The core priority 'Inclusive and Empowered Communities' hosts one action and aims to enable safe, empowered, resilient and connected communities. Within Reporting Period 1, particular emphasis has been placed on networking, building relationships and developing joint working and communication protocols. To support with capacity building, training opportunities have been identified and are being progressed.

A review of the purpose and key aims of the CVS Forum identified the need to develop a Collaborative Working Culture and Practice Protocol. A draft Collaborative Working Culture and Practice Protocol has been developed and has established key principles for collaborative working to foster inclusive decision-making, pool resources and expertise and ensure sustainable and impactful community development initiatives.

### Plans for the next 6 Months (Apr 25 – Sept 25)

The following activities are planned for Reporting Period 2:

- Establishment of the '*Community Support Working Group*'
- Networking event on 10<sup>th</sup> June between CVS Forum Representative and SPB Members\*
- NISRA Data Dashboard Training

\*Photographs available post event