



# STATEMENT OF PROGRESS: 2019-2021

## PART 1: POPULATION INDICATORS

CONNECTED **A COMMUNITY PLAN**

for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough

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# FOREWORD



Today the world around us remains dominated by the impact that COVID-19 has had on our borough and many of us have been touched with a personal loss. It is a very different environment to four years ago when we published the borough's first community plan.



**Roger Wilson**

Chief Executive, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council  
Chair of Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Community Planning Partnership


We remain committed to our 2030 vision “We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning” and have continued to work hard together to bring our vision to reality while reacting to the need for help and support across all communities as the inequalities that existed before are further amplified by the pandemic.

It has created uncertainty in nearly every aspect of daily life with concerns around infection rates, the stability of the economy, job security, disruptions to education and childcare and the availability of food and household goods. As a partnership, our main role over this past 18 months has been to support our people, communities and businesses through one of the most challenging times that we all have experienced through the delivery of the COVID-19 Response & Recovery Plan.



The Community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors were central to our response and remain central to our recovery. Community groups, their staff and volunteers along with local businesses and the public sector have all worked incredibly hard to meet the needs of our communities during lockdown. For many of us that meant quickly changing our core activities to provide emergency food and other much needed support which included simply keeping people connected through telephone, the internet and of course the doorstep delivery conversations.

I would like to thank all the staff in partner organisations, volunteers within the community and voluntary sector and our local businesses. The collective focus on delivering better outcomes together is apparent and as Chair of the Strategic Partnership I would like to shine a light on how you have come together, on the leadership shown and collaborative work demonstrated over the last



year – whilst continuing to deal with a context of urgency, uncertainty and coming to grips with new ways of working.

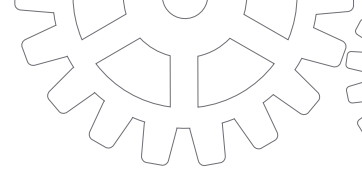
Times remain challenging and this year's Statement of Progress 2021-2021 is an important document for the partnership. We have met several key milestones which have laid the foundations which have laid the foundations for future work. Include in these milestones are the partnership's first participatory budgeting process, our first locality plan for Armagh City and completion of Carnegie UK Trust's Embedding Wellbeing in NI project.

The experience of the pandemic and its impact, particularly on the most vulnerable in society, will long be with us. The impact of COVID-19 and how the borough is performing in the round is detailed in part one of this statement.

Part two provides an overview of the Partnerships performance over the last 2 years and details our progress on delivering our outcomes through the 28 collaborative actions, detailed in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21.

Part three of the Statement focuses on the development of our partnership and the ways of working that are important for community planning. As a partnership we are making sure that our learning from Carnegie UK Trust's Embedding Wellbeing project influences our work into the future.

Community planning offers an opportunity to think differently. It means collaborating to removing the barriers which make it difficult for people to thrive. It means empowering people with the opportunity to participate meaningfully in local decision making. It means thinking long term and outside of our silos as we continue to work together to meet the needs of our community, economy and place.



# 01 CONNECTED

Connected is the first community plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Its purpose is to improve the wellbeing of the Borough and the lives of everyone who lives here through public services working together, and with communities, business and residents.

It sets out the vision and the nine long-term outcomes for the borough and three cross-cutting themes.

## CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Throughout the development of the community plan, there were three things that were so important that they could not sit on their own and these are the cross-cutting themes of the plan:



### CONNECTIVITY

We believe connectivity is integral to improving quality of life. Through our plan we will work to transform and connect all areas of our borough physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches



### EQUALITY

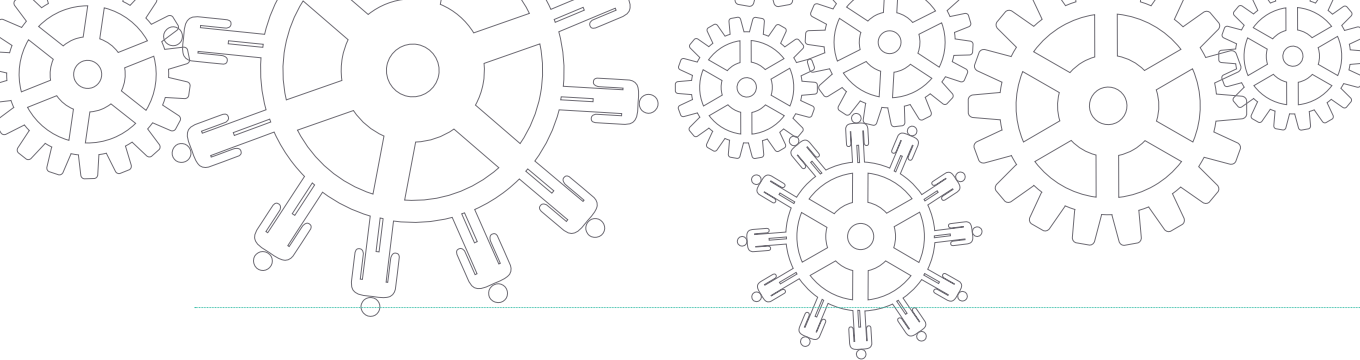
We are committed to promoting equality, good relations, and inclusion and believe them to be central to improving quality of life for everyone. A peaceful and inclusive society is vital to ensuring that we have a welcoming, confident and safe community.



### SUSTAINABILITY

We will work to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generations' ability to develop, grow and flourish. We will screen our plan to ensure our outcomes and actions are sustainable





## CONNECTED: SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND POPULATION INDICATORS

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	
<p><b>Confident Community:</b> Everyone has opportunities to engage in community life and shape decisions - we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of people who feel that they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood.</li> <li>• % of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.</li> <li>• No. of preventable deaths per 100,000 population.</li> <li>• Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall.</li> <li>• % of people who participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day a week.</li> <li>• % of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life.</li> <li>• % of people who see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life.</li> <li>• No. of accidental dwelling fires.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Healthy Community:</b> People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.</p>	
<p><b>Welcoming Community:</b> Our borough is a safe, respectful and peaceful environment.</p>	
<b>ECONOMY</b>	
<p><b>Skilled Economy:</b> Our borough is a centre for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses.</li> <li>• Business birth rates.</li> <li>• Survival rates of newly born businesses.</li> <li>• % of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above.</li> <li>• Employment rate (age 16-64).</li> <li>• No. of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enterprising Economy:</b> People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.</p>	
<p><b>Tourism Economy:</b> Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.</p>	
<b>PLACE</b>	
<p><b>Creative Place:</b> Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts and cultural experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year.</li> <li>• No. of buildings at risk saved.</li> <li>• No. of high quality parks/green spaces (those holding Green Flag Award Status®)</li> <li>• City and town centre vacancy rates.</li> <li>• Level of social housing need.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Enhanced Place:</b> Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy.</p>	
<p><b>Revitalised Place:</b> Our distinctive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life.</p>	



The background features a stone monument with a plaque that reads "OF HIS COUNTRY AND HIS GOD". The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent graphic of interlocking gears and stylized human figures. In the foreground, there are blurred purple and yellow flowers. A black stanchion with a chain is visible on the right side of the monument steps.

# **PART 1**

## **HOW THE BOROUGH IS DOING IN THE ROUND**







# 01 PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES

The Community Plan uses 19 population indicators to measure how we are doing over time and we report on these every two years.

Since the Baseline Report in 2016, there have been positive shifts in 15 population level indicators (75%). One population level indicator (5%) remains unchanged from the Baseline position. Four population level indicators (20%) have experienced negative shifts since the Baseline.

## POSITIVE CHANGE COMPARED TO 2017 BASELINE

### Fear of crime

**76%**

report fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life



### Sense of belonging



**91%**

feel a sense of **belonging** to their neighbourhood (ABC)

### Skill levels



The workforce in employment in the borough are qualified to Level 1+ 91% Level 2+ 78% Level 3+ 61% Level 4+ 40%

### Preventable Deaths

**294** per 100,000 population



### City and town centre vacancy rates



### No. of businesses

**8,930 VAT and/or PAYE businesses**

in the borough accounting for 10% of all businesses in Northern Ireland



### Buildings at risk

**21 buildings** at risk were saved



### Quality green spaces

**10**

parks/green spaces have been awarded the Green Flag Award @Status



### Business birth rates

10% of the population (age 18-54) have started or in the process of starting a business



### Physical activity

**47% of people** participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day per week



Where you see these symbols they denote a change in the overall trend since 2019

○ No Change compared to 2019 Statement of Progress

● Negative Change compared to 2019 Statement of Progress

● Positive Change compared to 2019 Statement of Progress



## POSITIVE CHANGE COMPARED TO 2017 BASELINE

### Health inequalities ⬆

Gap in MALE life expectancy at birth between most deprived areas and the borough overall

**Male 3.2 years**



### Employment rate

**72%**

(aged 16-64) in the borough are employed



### 5 year Business survival rate ⬆



Armagh **49%**  
Banbridge **42%**  
Craigavon **44%**

### Overnight trips from outside NI ⬆



**122,600**

overnight trips attributing to 4% of overnight visitors in NI and ranking 8th across all LGDs in Northern Ireland

### Accidental dwelling fires ⬆

**78**

accidental dwelling fires occurred in the borough



## NO CHANGE COMPARED TO 2017 BASELINE

### Arts & Cultural activities



**86%** of adults

had engaged in arts/cultural activities

\*Based on most recent data available from 2019. For more information and time series see Appendix 1.

## NEGATIVE CHANGE COMPARED TO 2017 BASELINE

### Social housing need

**646 units**

5 year social housing need 2020-2025



### Influencing decisions

**26%**

feel they have an influence on local decision making in their neighbourhood

### Safe & Welcoming Town Centres

**54%** see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life



### Health inequalities ⬆

Gap in FEMALE life expectancy at birth between most deprived areas and the borough overall

**1.6 years**



Where you see these symbols they denote a change in the overall trend since 2019

⬆ No Change compared to 2019 Statement of Progress

⬆ Negative Change compared to 2019 Statement of Progress

⬆ Positive Change compared to 2019 Statement of Progress

# 02 COVID-19: IMPACT ON THE BOROUGH

BY MIDNIGHT 23 SEPTEMBER 2021	NI (N)	BOROUGH (N)	BOROUGH RANK
Cumulative Individuals Tested	1,486,226	156,317	2nd/11
Cumulative Individuals Tested Positive	231,696	27,379	2nd/11
Cumulative Positive Tests per 100,000 of Population	12,235	12,663	4th/11
Cumulative COVID-19 Deaths	2,533	345	2nd/11
COVID-19 Hospital Inpatients*	373	93	2nd/5

\*At Midnight 23rd September, 2021

## COVID-19 INFECTIONS, HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS AND DEATHS ARE IMPACTED BY SOCIAL DEPRIVATION, GENDER, AGE AND GEOGRAPHY (NI).



### Older people

Infection rates higher in over 65s. Over 75s 9 times more likely to die from COVID than all other ages



### People who live in areas of deprivation

More likely to become infected with COVID, be admitted to hospital and die from the disease



### Men

Lower infection rates, but more likely to be admitted to hospital and die from the disease than women



### Women

Higher infection rates than men



### Urban areas

Double the death rate compared to rural areas

## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS PRESENTED UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES FOR THE PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES.



**119**  
classroom days lost

### 2019-2020 Waiting lists for SHSCT

Waiting lists for Inpatient/Day Case appointments **increased by 30.2% (4,446 more people)**

Waiting lists for Outpatient appointments **increased by 19.9% (8,602 more people)**





**BUSINESSES WERE SUBJECT TO MEASURES AIMED AT REDUCING THE TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS. THESE IMPACTED ON THEIR ABILITY TO OPERATE FULLY THROUGHOUT 2020 AND 2021.**

Employments furloughed in ABC peaked to **3 in 10 (28,800 employments)** in June 2020



At March 2020 the claimant count was 2,610. The number of claimants **peaked to 6,250 in August 2020**

Town centre footfall figures for the Borough during 2021 (77,121) are **25% lower than the same period in 2019 (102,943)**

**HEIGHTENED JOB INSECURITY AND FINANCIAL ANXIETY AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DESTABILISE LIVING STANDARDS AND INCREASE POVERTY.**

Pre-covid **23% of children** living in the Borough were in relative poverty

**Foodbank information**

In 2019/20 Armagh Foodbank issued **1,102 food parcels**. This increased to **1,700 in 2020/21 (+54%)**.

Craigavon Area Foodbank distributed **41,475kg of food in 2020/21 (+17% year on year increase)**.

Rising energy costs, **UC £20 reduction, higher national insurance contributions all coming this winter.**

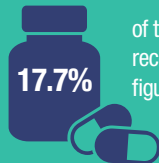
Via Wings Dare to Care Project supported **139 households in 2020 (+96% higher than the previous year)**.

The Storehouse, Banbridge also registered increase demand with an estimated **36% additional food parcels**.



**REDUCTION IN INCOMES, NEGATIVE LIFESTYLE CHANGES, ALONG WITH THE THREAT OF INFECTION AND EFFECTS OF THE VIRUS ITSELF, COULD HAVE A MAJOR LONG-TERM IMPACT ON POPULATION MENTAL HEALTH.**

In the Borough: **1,824 referrals to Links Counselling Services** & 45% of these were from schools (n813)



**17.7%** of the Borough's population (n38,627) received anti-depressants in 2020/21 (the NI figures remained unchanged during this period)

Source: DoH, 2021

Non-inpatient mental health referrals **decreased by 53% in the Southern Trust Area**; this is reported to be an indication of people not seeking help, rather than not needing help.

# 02 COVID-19: IMPACT ON THE BOROUGH

## CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE CAN ESCALATE WHEN FAMILIES FACE GREATER PRESSURE AND STRESS.

Reported Domestic Abuse incidents  
**increased by 6% in  
2020/2021**



Women's Aid received  
**549 referrals for women**  
living in the Borough in 2020/21:  
a year-on-year increase of 38%

In the Southern Trust area, there were  
**higher numbers of children** on the Child  
Protection Register\* and in Care between  
May-August 2021 than pre-COVID-19

**78**  
Accidental Dwelling  
Fires in the Borough



## THROUGH THE PANDEMIC, THERE HAVE BEEN MANY EXAMPLES OF RESILIENCE, RESOURCEFULNESS AND CREATIVITY.

**8,930 VAT and/or PAYE**  
registered businesses over the last year within  
the Borough (+n205; +2% compared to 2020).



**309 business cases**  
were approved through  
the Go For It programme -  
equating to 190 jobs created

Many local businesses and  
community organisations changed  
their core activities to respond to the pandemic,  
e.g. delivering food parcels and making PPE.



**4,400**  
homes receiving weekly  
food parcels during the  
first lockdown

## THERE HAVE BEEN POSITIVE IMPACTS UPON HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR SOME PEOPLE



**102 physical and active  
recreation programmes**  
were delivered by ABC Get Moving Partnership  
for those least likely to participate

**3,269**  
participants



The Protect Life Resource Service  
delivered mental health awareness  
and suicide & self-harm prevention  
training to **a total of 9,827 people**  
within the Borough.

**22 million outdoor visits**  
taken in November and December 2020  
during COVID-19 restrictions;



\* The child protection register is a confidential list of all children in the area who have been identified by the relevant agencies as being at significant risk of harm.





## REFLECTION FROM COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL MEMBERS

“An elderly woman called our helpline during covid to ask for help, but as the conversation progressed she admitted that she was OK for food, but hadn't had a conversation with anyone in almost 3 months (except for her cat, who was sick listening to her). We arranged for someone to call with a small food parcel several times, but with the added instruction to have a socially distanced conversation on the doorstep.

This type of story was a common experience for our volunteers as they met vulnerable and isolated people, particularly during Covid, who were lonely and struggling with their mental health due to isolation.”

“A man in his late twenties contacted the food bank to explain that he was working part-time but was unable to have his children to stay for the weekend, as not being their main carer he was unable to receive benefits. The food provided by the food bank enabled him to see his kids on a regular basis until his job circumstances changed.”

“A client confided that during the lockdown period, this was the first time we had enough to feed our family due to the emergency food parcels provided.”

“A Single man, whose partner passed away and therefore benefits coming into the house were reduced. He was struggling to make ongoing payments for the funeral and therefore couldn't afford basic food. Food parcels helped him until he had paid off the funeral.”

“A single man who was just getting by on benefits took in a friend who was homeless, he could not afford to feed himself and his friend, an emergency food parcel helped them while his friend got back on his feet.”



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