



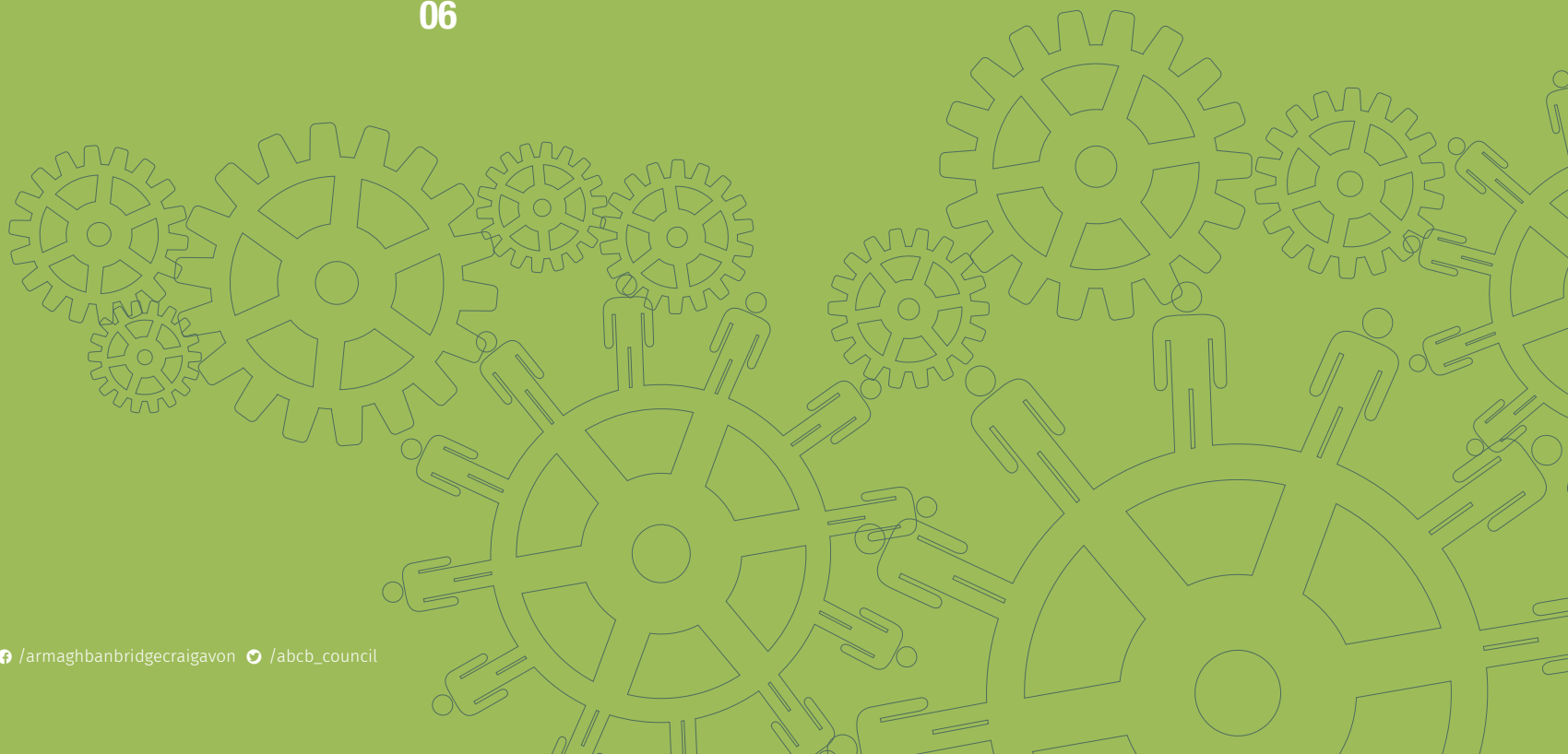
STATEMENT OF PROGRESS: 2019-2021

PART 2: PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE

CONNECTED **A COMMUNITY PLAN**
for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough

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A MESSAGE FROM

THE CHAIR BETTER OUTCOMES SUB-COMMITTEE



Adrienne Adair
Head of Service,
Libraries NI

“ COVID-19 had a major impact on the delivery of Connected during 2020 as all community planning partners turned their attention to dealing with the pandemic. Our partnership working and collective efforts didn't stop during the pandemic, rather we came together as an outcome of the relationships built over the years. The collaboration and partnership across sectors played a key role in our response.

Things had changed and the partnership needed to take stock of the changing context and adjust our actions accordingly. The partnership agreed to pause the delivery of the six Thematic Action Plans and bring partners together to develop a new one year COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan. The plan was based on feedback and research undertaken by partners, on how people and businesses were supported and connected with during COVID.

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan incorporates 5 priorities with 28 collaborative actions that collectively contribute to the Borough's response and recovery from the pandemic.

- Maximise community response and partnership working to reduce the impact of the virus on our Borough as we emerged from lockdown.
- Support Mental, Physical and Emotional Health and Wellbeing



- Grow Business, Employment and Skills
- Target Hardship, Poverty and Inequality
- Tackle Social Isolation and Loneliness.

It wasn't an easy task to reconfigure the partnership's actions when the world around us was continuously changing and we are proud of what we have achieved.

Key projects include:

- Continuing to embed **Take 5 Ways to Wellbeing** through the development of a Take5 video and resource for communities and, TAK£500, our first Participatory Budgeting process rolled out across the whole borough
- Establishment of the ABC Loneliness Network and Age Friendly Strategic Alliance
- Greater coordination of emergency food support across the borough
- The establishment of a local Labour Market Partnership to devise local solutions to skills and employment issues.

- Boost our Borough Campaign to encourage people to shop local as we emerged from lockdown
- Development of the Armagh Place Plan, the first locality plan for the partnership

I'd like to thank all the partners involved in the development and delivery of the plan for their work over the last 18 months. Your active contribution demonstrates the commitment that is the hallmark of partnership working – it is what brings us together and keeps us all working to make ABC a good place to be.

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PROGRESS TOWARDS OUTCOMES



	ACTIONS	GREEN	AMBER	RED	NO RTN
PART A	7	6	1	0	0
PART B	21	13	4	1	3
TOTAL	28	19	5	1	3

The full Response & Recovery Plan is available online at www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/resident/covid-19-response-and-recovery-plan/

RAG Rating:

GREEN [action completed/on track] **AMBER** [action on track, some concerns] **RED** [action not on track, major concerns]



02 COVID-19 RESPONSE & RECOVERY PLAN 2020-2021

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY WELLBEING?

Connected is the first community plan created for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. This plan sets out our shared vision and long-term ambitions for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the borough, and ultimately delivering real improvements that will have a positive impact on the lives of local people. Community planning is a relatively new function for local government and statutory agencies in Northern Ireland, introduced with the Reform of Local Government in 2015.

Everyone is able to have a good life

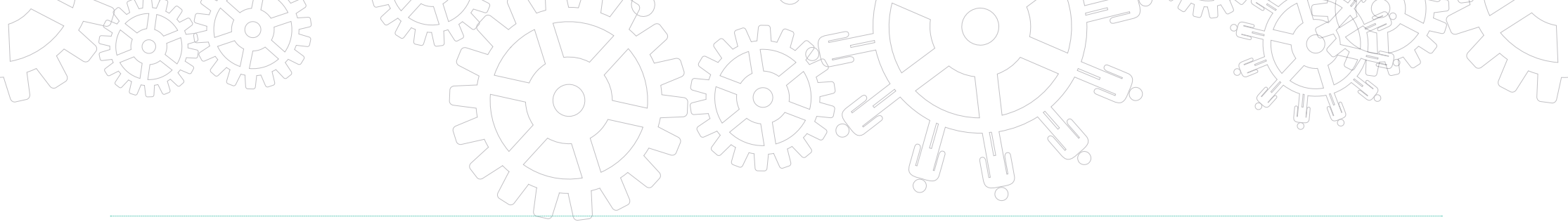
“Societal wellbeing means everyone having what they need to live well now and in the future. More than health and wealth, it includes having friends and loved ones, the ability to contribute meaningfully to society and the ability to set our own direction and make choices about our own lives.”¹ Put simply it means that everyone is able to have a good life.

This requires a new goal for governments

More and more governments are realising that, as social problems become more complex and inequalities are increasing, a view of progress that is broader than economic growth is required, as is a joined up approach.

Carnegie UK Trust talk about the four domains of wellbeing: social, economic, environmental and democratic outcomes, and through addressing these together, we can work towards and measure the societal wellbeing impact on individuals quality of life.





An outcomes based approach

If wellbeing is the goal, then we need to move away from measuring inputs to outcomes. An outcomes based approach starts with the aspiration we want to achieve and works back to what needs to be done to realise it. This approach means that we measure the effect a policy or programme has on people's lives, rather than simply how much we spent on a policy or a programme.

For example, rather than measuring how much was spent on a community building, what impact has it had on the people who use it?

Community planning takes an outcomes based approach. Connected is made up of nine long-term outcomes that we want to realise together by 2030. We will use 19 population statistics, or indicators, to measure progress over the long-term. We will also measure and report on the impact of what we do, answering the question, is anyone better off as a result?

Bringing decision making closer to communities

Community planning works at a local government level and is led by local councils. Local government is the level of government closest to communities, which gives opportunities to involve local people in designing solutions to local issues, building on knowledge of local strengths and assets.

Link to NI Programme for Government

The draft Programme for Government is a regional wellbeing framework whose purpose is to improve wellbeing for all by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth. It takes an outcomes based approach and is made up of 12 long-term outcomes. There is a two-way link between community plans and the draft Programme for Government, and they each influence each other. In developing our community plan we selected outcomes that reflect the aspirations of the borough, but there is much overlap with the outcomes set out in the draft Programme for Government.

WHAT DOES THE LEGISLATION SAY?

Community planning legislation¹ requires local councils and statutory partners to:

- Publish a plan setting out the vision and long-term aspirations for the area.
- Take actions to realise the long-term aspirations in the community plan.

In doing this they are required to:

- Form a partnership.
- Listen to communities, including groups that are traditionally under-represented including children and young people and people with a disability.
- Gather relevant statistics and other evidence.
- Develop a view of the social, economic and environmental needs of the area.
- Get consensus on the vision and aspirations in the community plan.
- Develop short-term actions to achieve the aspirations.
- Monitor and review progress towards achieving the aspirations in the plan.

The community plan should:

- Improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the district.
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
- Tackle poverty, social exclusion and patterns of deprivation.

What you can expect as a result:

- Statutory agencies working together more - joined-up services and thinking to solve problems and make the most of our assets.
- Increased opportunities to be involved in the decisions that affect you.
- Transparent processes and decisions based on evidence.
- A clear link between the aspirations in the community plan and the local development plan - sets out how land will be used in the borough.
- Public services that are always improving.
- A report every two years detailing progress towards the outcomes in the community plan.

¹ Department of the Environment, 2015, Statutory guidance for the operation of community planning, Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014



1. LEARNING ABOUT THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Lead Partner: ABC Community and Voluntary Sector Panel



The people of the borough came together in an extraordinary way, responding to the challenge of the COVID 19 pandemic, which has had such a devastating impact on the lives of so many. Communities acted quickly and creatively to support each other - helping the most vulnerable members of our community through the provision of food parcels, prescription deliveries, good morning calls and making PPE.

To learn more about the sector's response to the COVID-19 crisis the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel undertook a Food Initiatives survey following the first lockdown in June 2020. The survey showed that the sector's ability to adapt had been swift, impactful and collaborative. Most survey respondents had not provided food assistance before the crisis.

Shaped by local knowledge and experience, groups were able to identify people's needs and really got to the heart of the communities which needed support.

The Community and Voluntary Sector has worked in partnership with each other, local businesses, schools, mental health services, social care, statutory agencies like the council, NI Housing Executive, the local health trust and PSNI and government departments. The crisis has broken down barriers, but more collaboration is needed in order to meet future need.

2. INCREASED COORDINATION OF FOOD SUPPORT POST-LOCKDOWN

Lead Partner: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council



Despite the different challenges that COVID-19 brought, many organisations responded to the emerging needs through creating flexible, dynamic and collaborative approaches to working together.

Learning from initial lockdown there was a clear need and desire from all sectors to increase coordination of food support.

With the support from the Department for Communities funding, we worked closely alongside local community and voluntary organisations to deliver essential services to individuals and families financially impacted by COVID-19. This included providing crisis food and fuel, assistance with travel, provision of advice and support in relation to benefits and accessing funds via Advice Services and a community helpline.

There was a fantastic community response with 47 groups registered to support with food distribution during lockdown. Additionally, local community and voluntary organisations took the opportunity to support over 500 Food, Financial and Connectivity projects through the Financial Assistance Programme.

A crisis response service was developed with local foodbanks, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, Southern Health Trust, Public Health Agency, PSNI, Advice Services, DART, ART and a wide range of community, sports and voluntary organisations throughout the Borough.

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This included 3,246 journeys delivering essential food parcels and transporting vulnerable people to COVID-19 vaccination centres, which was a source of comfort to those in greatest need, especially those living in rural areas.

Additional funding also helped provide increased connectivity between organisations and improved access to home learning equipment for those children and young people most in need. Through innovation, collaboration and a collective response to the issues, there was is now an opportunity for growth and to build on these new ways of working and provide practical help to those who are suffering the most.

A central food storage facility supporting collection of food donations and surplus and distribution to foodbanks.

3. AGE FRIENDLY ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE & CRAIGAVON BOROUGH

Lead Partners: ABC Age Friendly Alliance led by ABC Council and ABC Seniors Network



Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon has an ageing population. Indeed, the numbers of older people aged 65+ yrs. Are projected to grow by 65.6% and those aged 85+ yrs. by 125.8% by 2030. Older people must feel valued and respected within our society. As more people live longer, we need to ensure the public services and places designed today will still be relevant to our future population. In March 2021, the ABC Age Friendly Alliance was formed to provide a participatory approach to achieving World Health Organisation's Age Friendly status.

36 people attended the Alliance's launch with representatives from public, community and voluntary sectors and most importantly, older people, agreeing to work together to develop the borough's Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan. In July 2021, an Age Friendly survey sought the views of residents aged 50+ about what was working in their area to promote active ageing and what actions were needed to improve. 593 responses were received to include older people aged 85 and over and those living in urban and rural areas.

We now know that improved access to GPs, the public realm and strengthening older people's voice are important issues that the Alliance will examine further. 68% of the respondents were female, therefore we need to hear from more men.. A full analysis of the survey is available ([here](#)). Over the next few years we will deliver an Age Friendly Strategy to improve the lives of older people in the borough and to prepare for our growing ageing population.

TAKE 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

Using Take 5 as a framework the partnership is actively supporting the Public Health Agency message to take five simple steps to help maintain and improve your wellbeing on a daily basis through its actions.

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing are:



Connect

With the people around you, family, friends, colleagues and neighbours and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance - even a short 10-minute walk can improve mental alertness and wellbeing.



Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group.



Take notice

Of the world around you, how you are feeling, what matters to you and reflect on your experiences.

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4. TAKE 5 - VIDEO AND INTERACTIVE RESOURCE

**Lead Partner:
Southern Health and
Social Care Trust**



Partners have been working together to continue to embed the Take 5 Ways to Wellbeing through the development of a Take 5 Video and interactive resource. The video is a way to highlight some of the many things we can do to Take Five Steps to improving our health and wellbeing around the beautiful Armagh City, Craigavon and Banbridge council area.

The interactive resource provides a simple and informal platform to help people incorporate the steps and find out what is happening in their local area. Developed using Prezi software the interactive resource can be embedded into partner websites via a link or web code.

It will also be available as an app by downloading the Prezi app and we can download offline to be used in remote locations .

5. TAKE£500 - YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE!

**Lead Partner: Armagh City, Banbridge &
Craigavon Borough Council PB Working Group**

The Community Planning Partnership see Participatory Budgeting (PB) as an exciting and practical method of engaging people and strengthening local democracy.

The 'TAKE£500 Participatory Budget Fund' was launched in September 2020 and gave local people the opportunity to decide how public funds were used to address needs in their area. Communities were able to apply for up to £500, with local residents deciding which projects to fund.

Communities from every corner of the borough put forward ideas that would have a positive impact on their area, with 107 applications being received and getting through to the video stage. 84 videos highlighted a variety of ideas that addressed the 5 Ways of Wellbeing. The initiative had a positive response from the local community, with 4,604 residents casting votes to decide on the funding allocation.

Sixty-six projects gained funding. These ranged from walking programmes, creating sensory spaces, play equipment, kindness projects, mentoring programmes,

TAKE£500
YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE!

outdoor, gardening and nature programmes and so much more. All of the projects invested in programmes which helped to promote the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

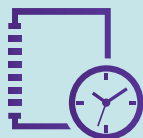
Take£500 has been delivered through strong partnership working. This has supported the pooling of resources - money, time, communications, local knowledge, and people power. The success of the project lies in the heart of the collaboration, commitment, enthusiasm and excitement of the partners involved in the PB working group to do things differently.

A crisis response service was developed with local foodbanks, St Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, Southern Health Trust, Public Health Agency, PSNI, Advice Services, DART, ART and a wide range

TAKE 5 PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGE

49%

of voters stated they would incorporate Take 5 into their daily routine



83%

of voters felt of what was happening in their local area and more involved in their community



CONNECT

81%

of successful groups strongly agreed/agreed their project had created new connections in their community

BE ACTIVE

87% of successful groups

strongly agreed/agreed their project had improved mental and physical health & wellbeing



KEEP LEARNING

73%

of successful groups strongly agreed/agreed they had learned new skills

GIVE

83%

of successful groups strongly agreed/agreed they had provided an opportunity to give to others

TAKE NOTICE

87%

successful groups strongly agreed/agreed they had become more mindful

“It’s great to find out what is going on in the local area and projects in one area could easily be repeated in another area. We can certainly learn from each other and improve our own areas”
VOTER

“It was a great confidence builder for the young people and it made them realise that all their hard work and efforts had been worth it. It also showed them that what they were looking to achieve through the Take£500 grant was looked upon by the community as a positive and well worth idea. Overall a great success.”
SUCCESSFUL GROUP

For more information on PB and to see how the groups benefitted from the project visit armaghbanbridgescraigavon.gov.uk/Take500

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6. ABC LONELINESS NETWORK

Lead Partner: Southern Health and Social Care Trust

The ABC Loneliness Network was launched in June 2021. There were 78 attendees from community, voluntary and statutory organisations at the launch to hear key note addresses from Mental Health Champion Professor Siobhan O'Neil, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Koulla Yiasouma and the Commissioner for Older People, Eddie Lynch.



Loneliness is not a new concept. We know there will be a large number of people feeling lonely and isolated long before the pandemic and will continue to feel this way as restrictions are lifted. There may also be those who will have lost confidence and need support to re-connect with society.

The organisations and people that we come into contact with through our day to day lives play an important role in tackling loneliness. Working in partnership across all sectors allows us to be more innovative, reach more people and to increase our knowledge of what is locally available.

Members have heard from other areas that have already set up Loneliness Networks. Learning from others' experiences can help embed best practice and assist Network members to identify when someone is lonely.

Moving forward there are plans to implement Chatty Benches across the Borough, develop a Loneliness Awareness training session and carry out a training needs assessment. A database of information is being developed, this will enhance partnership working, increase awareness of what is available to address loneliness in the Borough and identify gaps.

"The service users I engage with daily, referred for many reasons, consistently expressed feelings of loneliness and social isolation, notwithstanding broad variations in age, medical condition, marital status, race religion etc. With such a diverse set of people expressing the same feelings I began to consider the health implications of loneliness during the current world wide pandemic."

"The Chatty Benches will provide a place for people to come together, chat and connect, I can't wait to see them popping up across the borough!"



Be active

7. GET MOVING ABC

Lead Partner: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council



Get Moving ABC is a Borough wide targeted initiative, with a collective effort by a range of local organisations and groups to motivate and support as many people as possible to work towards and achieve the recommended physical activity levels.

The Get Moving ABC Partnership's target is to get more of our population moving and become the most physically active Borough in Northern Ireland. The focus is on increasing sport and physical activity within homes, communities,

workplaces and schools, with a view to motivating and encouraging as many people as possible to meet and exceed the recommended levels of physical activity in line with government guidance as well as develop more positive attitudes towards being active.

Couch to 5k

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Small changes can make a big difference if they are sustained over time and can improve your quality of life.

This action is building on the increased awareness during lockdown of the importance of physical activity for health and wellbeing by providing opportunities for people to get moving and stay moving. For example, as a member of the Get Moving ABC Partnership, during the pandemic Council delivered seven virtual physical and active recreation activity programmes including running and cycling. There were 935 participants, 79% of whom had 'no prior experience' or 'very limited experience'

before signing up to the programme and 32% of participants progressed from Virtual C25K programme to the 5-10km programme.

One participant is quoted as saying "I really enjoyed both the Virtual Couch 25k and 5-10k programmes. I feel like I have actually achieved something worthwhile to remember during this exceptional pandemic period. Before I started the programmes, I couldn't run 1k and now I feel fitter, healthier and a bit lighter too! My daughter surprised me at the end of my first 10k on Sunday with a poster and teddy outside South Lake Leisure Centre. This was a very special moment I will always remember with it also being Father's Day".

Age Friendly Physical Activity Packs

Get Moving ABC Partnership distributed a total of 500 Age Friendly Physical Activity Packs to the Borough's older and most isolated residents. This was thanks to a collaborative effort from a range of community planning partners and organisations including funders Sport NI and PHA, SHSCT, Disability Sport NI, ABC PCSP, British Gymnastics Foundation and Table Tennis Ulster. The packs ensured that residents could remain active safely at home and included an

instant ping pong pack, an interactive 'Move with Mary' DVD, strength and balance exercise booklets, as well as dementia friendly seated gymnastics and co-ordination activities.

One participant is quoted as saying "The pack has increased my physical activity and lifted my mood. I now play table tennis with the grandchildren and I love the Keeping Well at Home booklet. The pack raised much more awareness about home safety and we have now installed an alert system". Get Moving ABC is all about working together to make life better for people. It's about creating the conditions for people to make well-informed choices about their lifestyle and health. It's about organisations across all sectors making the best use of resources to achieve this.

The Framework was launched in December 2020, you can view the launch video here - [🌐 https://youtu.be/XAZYMlaNnno](https://youtu.be/XAZYMlaNnno)

You can view the Framework here - [🌐 https://getactiveabc.com/getmovingframework](https://getactiveabc.com/getmovingframework)

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8. PROJECT RE:BOOT TEAM:UP

Lead Partner: Sport NI

Project Re:Boot Team:Up was launched in February 2021. This new funding programme was part of Supporting Sport to Build Back Better, a multi-strand approach to support the sporting system in response to the impact of COVID-19 on sport across Northern Ireland. It was designed to enable grant investment in new and innovative projects intended to support the engagement and re-engagement of participants into sport from 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022 with a focus on partnership and engagement aimed at sports clubs and organisations enabling sport.



Afrimeripean Futsal Club

Afrimeripean Futsal Club, based in Richhill delivers 'Futsal Fusion', bringing together a range of people to coach and play futsal in a multi-sport environment. This is an environment to make friendships and unite, regardless of their race, religion, social class, ethnicity and language. The project specifically encourages children and young people and women from a variety of backgrounds to try a new sport as we emerge from COVID-19. The project has been working with ABC BC and the IFA grassroots development officer and enables children and women additional opportunities to be fit and active through futsal. It reduces mental health issues among children and young people and increases confidence in playing sport and interacting with others again. The diverse range of coaches' originate from Portugal, Israel, Northern Ireland, Guinea Bissau and USA. Afrimeripean Futsal Club kicked off their funding programme with their first sessions in Craigavon Senior High School for Y11 & 12 girls and, will work with the boys over half term. The club are also working with Presentation Primary School and Millington Primary School in Portadown.

9.VOLUNTEERS WEEK

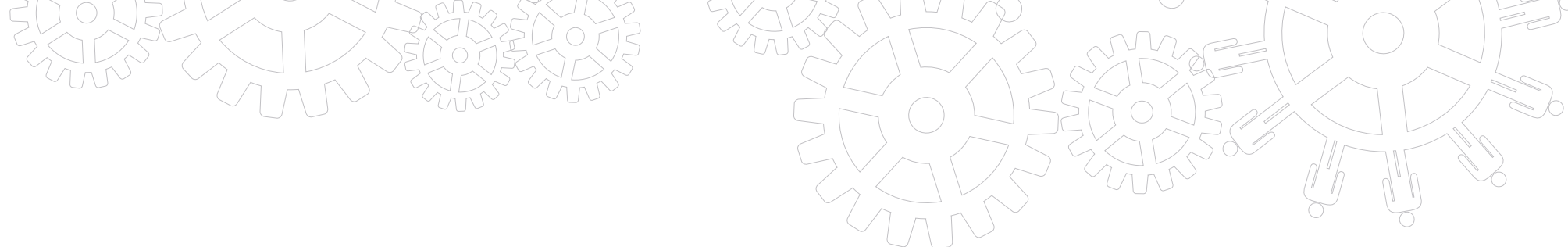
Lead Partners: Volunteer Now and Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau

Despite all the challenges that the pandemic has posed to volunteers and the organisations, groups and communities they support, the willingness of people to step up and give their time freely has been a core part of the COVID-19 crisis response. Volunteers Week provides a great opportunity to recognise the outstanding commitment of the thousands of volunteers who give time, energy, skills, fun and dedication at a local level. The two volunteer bureaus for the council area - Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau and Volunteer Now assisted organisations to recognise over 1200 volunteers with "Thank you" goodie bags supported by the Council and Department, with many more receiving certificates, pin badges and bunting to supplement their virtual and face-to-face celebrations.



Being on the frontline has been a heavy burden on many volunteers. Resources from Mind have been distributed to help safeguard the mental and emotional wellbeing of our volunteers, providing organisations with the tools to give support when needed.

Volunteer Now is also delighted to be part of wider UK research (Mobilising Voluntary Action) into the impact of covid on volunteering. Findings will be presented at the virtual conference 'Learning from today, Prepared for Tomorrow'. We continue to work with organisations to support them to develop further opportunities, recruit new volunteers and to consider the additional steps that they need to embrace to ensure that their volunteering offering is safe for all involved. If you are interested in volunteering opportunities at www.volunteernow.co.uk



10. SUPPORT RECOVERY AND STRENGTHENING OF EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Lead Partner: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council



Strengthening employment and skills remains a key priority for recovery and growth of the local economy and in creating a place where every person is valued and supported to reach their full potential.

Industries including hospitality, tourism and retail have been hardest hit by the pandemic and other sectors, including advanced manufacturing, food production and health and life sciences continue to struggle to recruit people with appropriate skills to meet their business needs.

Council, in collaboration with key partners including Invest NI, The Department for Communities, The Department for the Economy, Southern Regional College, Business Alliance Partnership our local enterprise partners, local businesses and community representatives responded quickly and joined together to deliver a number of initiatives to help local citizen's access information on improving their skills and qualifications, employment and training opportunities.

Employment Events

Two employment events - a virtual Jobs Fair and a Big Apprenticeship Event were well received by both employers and citizens seeking new jobs and training opportunities.

At the Job Fair in May, over 50 employers participated promoting over 400 jobs – of which 220 jobs were in the Borough. 247 local people attended virtually and 100 percent of employers participating stated they would participate in a future Job Fairs.

The virtual Big Apprenticeship Event in 2021, was also a great success, involving high-profile large employers and smaller local businesses

all promoting around 60 apprenticeship opportunities. A total of 542 students from grammar and secondary schools across the Southern Region attended. The week-long event offered a mix of engaging online sessions including, busting the myths of apprenticeships, the role of apprenticeships within science sector in NI, the life of an apprentice and the many benefits from an employer's perspective of having an apprentice in their business. The online delivery enabled the Southern Regional College to offer a live space for students to engage directly with employers and to talk informally and gather information to help make informed decisions about their future careers choices and education options.

Post-event, 34 first choice applications were received by the Higher Level Apprenticeships Programme with 34% of applicants had attended the Big Apprenticeship sessions. 94% of attendees said they could consider applying for an Apprenticeship and would recommend the Big Apprenticeship Event to a friend or family member.

Labour Market Partnerships

Labour Market Partnerships are a new approach

to helping unemployed individuals get back into work. Addressing local challenges relating to employability and skills, developing the skills pipeline and creating a positive effect on the borough and will ensure that the right skills are available for industry both now and in the future. Most importantly, the LMP creates a unique opportunity to change lives and help people living in the Borough to achieve their full potential.

Partners continue to attend regional co-design meetings with DfC and are working to develop an innovative Action Plan for Year 1. The Action Plan will be aligned to key strategic objectives and most importantly it will be focused on addressing local need.

The LMP will focus on understanding what the specific needs are from an employer and participant standpoint to ensure any interventions. The Labour Market Partnership have identified the following local priorities:

- Unemployed young people
- People who have been made redundant
- Women

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11. BOOST OUR BOROUGH CAMPAIGN

Lead Partner: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Post the initial lockdown in June 2020 Council championed the importance of local residents supporting local businesses, to help sustain employment, and revive the regional economy by launching a public awareness campaign entitled 'Boost our Borough' or 'BOB', in conjunction with local businesses, elected members, and business chambers.

This campaign was designed to be family friendly and proved hugely popular, with 'Bob' leading the way in encouraging residents, and people from outside the borough, to show their support for businesses in the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.

Bob's simple shop local, dine local, and stay local messages, showcased all aspects of the Borough's economy in a fun and engaging way, creating significant local interest and business support, with the campaign slogan to #BeLikeBob trending to encourage people to spend in, and promote, their local businesses.

The campaign had a number of different aspects such as, digital animations, billboards, press advertorials and a popular discount scheme. It was promoted on-line and via social media with 57 businesses signing up to and benefiting from its promotional activities. In addition, over 300 businesses got behind the campaign by displaying large 'BOB' stickers in their shop windows.



12. COVID 19 REVITALISATION GRANT SCHEME

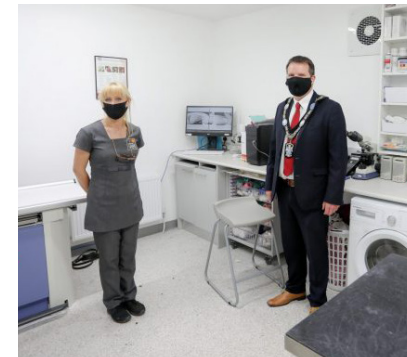
Lead Partners: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

In recognition of the challenges that the COVID-19 trading restrictions were posing to businesses, Council, in partnership with DfC and DAERA, developed a scheme designed to provide direct financial support. This was intended to enable the start of recovery effort, by increasing capacity and promoting safe trading.

The scheme was open to all businesses across the Borough and provided capital funding for new infrastructure investment, equipment and technology to enable them to respond better to the challenges of the pandemic. Council supported businesses and social enterprises across a range of sectors, ranging from hospitality, food and drink through to retail, professional services and hair and beauty. Receiving 1,000 applications, the COVID-19 Revitalisation and Recovery Grant Scheme has invested over £1.1 million into local rural and urban businesses to date – awarding 125 grants to help fund projects and equipment to support safe trading and social distancing requirements.

The Town Vet, Lurgan

Securing funding of over £5,000, the William Street vet clinic invested in an outdoor awning, three free-standing sanitisers and a tablet – helping them not only ensure the safety and wellbeing of their employees and customers but also further complementing additional self-funded renovation works at their Lurgan premises.



Wings Café, Dromore

Securing a grant award of over £7,000, the café used the cash injection to invest in new tables, chairs, an awning and a patio heater; helping the charitable company continue to provide a Covid safe, comfortable and welcoming environment for its customers and employees.

“A huge benefit of the grant is the addition of a safe and sheltered outdoor area which has been used for mentoring, art therapy, Recycled Teenagers, Mini Wings, afterschool club, staff training, a volunteer event to celebrate our Queen’s Award for volunteering services. It has meant we can welcome the community back into our courtyard and maintain crucial person-to-person contact with service users, volunteers and young people.”

Gail Redmond from Wings Café



Autobits Motorstore, Armagh

“We were delighted to receive funding from council’s COVID-19 Revitalisation and Recovery Grant Scheme. Supporting the implementation of innovative working practices at Autobits Motor Store, the investment has been instrumental in helping us ensure a Covid safe and comfortable environment, protect and safeguard jobs as well as sustain our current business and prepare us to take advantage of any future business growth opportunities.”

Mairead McDonagh from Autobits Motor Store



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13. ARMAGH PLACE PLAN

Lead Partners: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department for Communities

The draft Armagh Place Plan is the community planning partnership's first locality plan. Over 400 people were involved in developing the draft plan, which will go out for public consultation from November 2021 to January 2022.

By combining the energy and knowledge of local people with the wide range of powers and functions of community planning partners, the draft plan has brought forward four ambitions, or outcomes, for the city and a series of collaborative actions to improve the quality of life.

The plan includes actions to develop people-centred streets and public spaces, bring the alleyways and back lands to life, increase green and blue infrastructure in the city and invest in green jobs.

People in Armagh value the city's rich and unique heritage and culture. There are actions to further protect and enhance Armagh's heritage and an ambition for the city, along with the rest of the borough, to become the UK City of Culture 2025.

The plan will require a wide range of people from statutory, private and voluntary sectors to work alongside the people of Armagh to deliver realise the aspirations. The partnership will capture the learning from this pilot planning process and apply it to any future place plans.

Plan Outcomes

 A CONNECTED CITY	 A GREEN CITY
Outcome: Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially.	Outcome: Armagh is leading the way in sustainable and green thinking; including reducing its air pollution and building climate resilience.
'PEOPLE GO AND RIGHTLY SO... BUT WHEN THEY COME BACK...'	'ARMAGH AS LUSH AS ITS APPLES'
 AN ENGAGING CITY	 A HEALTHY CITY
Outcome: Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it.	Outcome: Armagh is an inclusive and healthy city
'LET'S UNLEASH THE GIANT'	'BUILDING GOOD BONES'

WELCOME TO ARMAGH

THE FIRST PLACE

LET'S BID FOR A CREATIVE CITY!

← BENBUBURG

START-UPS

CAFES

HEALTH SHOPS

REPURPOSE BUILDINGS

THE BAKERY

LOCAL G.P.

FESTIVAL OF THE BARK

IDEAS FACTORY

INNOVATION

COLLABORATION

CREATIVITY

ASPIRATION

CIDER STATION

BELFAST, LURGAN & PORTADOWN

LET'S CREATE A PLAYFUL CITY!

NAVAN FORT

HIDDEN RIVER

FESTIVAL
MUSIC
MARKET'S
FAMILY EVENTS

A PLACE TO
USE, NOT TO
LOOK AT!

← MOLLAGHAN,
GANNAN & FEADY

NEWRY &
DUNDALK →



COMMUNITY PLANNING TEAM

Civic Building
Downshire Road
Banbridge BT32 3JY

+44 (0)28 4066 0644
communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/communityplanning

