

# STATEMENT OF PROGRESS: 2021-2023

## PART 3: PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

CONNECTED **A COMMUNITY PLAN**

for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough





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# 01

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE SHARED LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE



**Catherine McFarland**  
Director of Finance, Audit & Assurance, Northern Ireland Housing Executive



The Shared Leadership and Community Engagement Sub-committee was formed in January 2020. It continues to be a key component in the refreshed Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan as one of four priorities for action for the Community Planning Partnership.

The work of this Sub-Committee centres on the partnership's agreed "ways of working" that are necessary for a community planning approach focusing on how we involve local communities in decisions, work together practicing shared leadership and how we use evidence.

Over the past two years we have seen further development of the partnership's ethos of shared leadership. Partners have been supported to step into chair and

vice-chair roles and it is important that the members of the Community & Voluntary Sector Panel are included in the leadership of the partnership.

A strong partnership is necessary if we are to realise the ambitions in the community plan. Therefore we are committed to monitoring our own Partnership so that we can build on its strengths and address any issues that could hold back progress. To this end we have undertaken our third Partnership Health Check, the results of which are summarised in this Part 3 of the Statement of Progress.

Involving communities in decisions is important to the partnership, both as an outcome itself and also as a way to realise other outcomes in the community plan. As a partnership

we are committed to delivering a Participatory Budgeting (PB) grants process every year and to explore options for mainstreaming PB.

Over the last year we enabled residents to commission and deliver health and wellbeing services through an investment in the TAK£500+ Participatory Budgeting project. We have completed a Learning and Evaluation Report to disseminate the learning from this project and to reach out to new partners for future projects.

In the year ahead, we will make further progress with embedding our Community Engagement Strategy with a roll out of training building our skills and knowledge to ensure we bring more people into our processes.





**MEMBERS OF THE SHARED LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE ARE:**

**Catherine McFarland (Chair)**

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

**Donna Stewart (Vice-Chair)**

Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau and  
Community and Voluntary Sector Panel.

**Sorcha Hassay**

Department for Communities

**Geraldine Lawless**

Tada RSN and Chair of Community  
and Voluntary Sector Panel

**Karen Ross**

PSNI

**Colette Rogers**

Public Health Agency

**Elaine Gillespie**

Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

**Emma O'Carroll**

Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

**Jennie Dunlop**

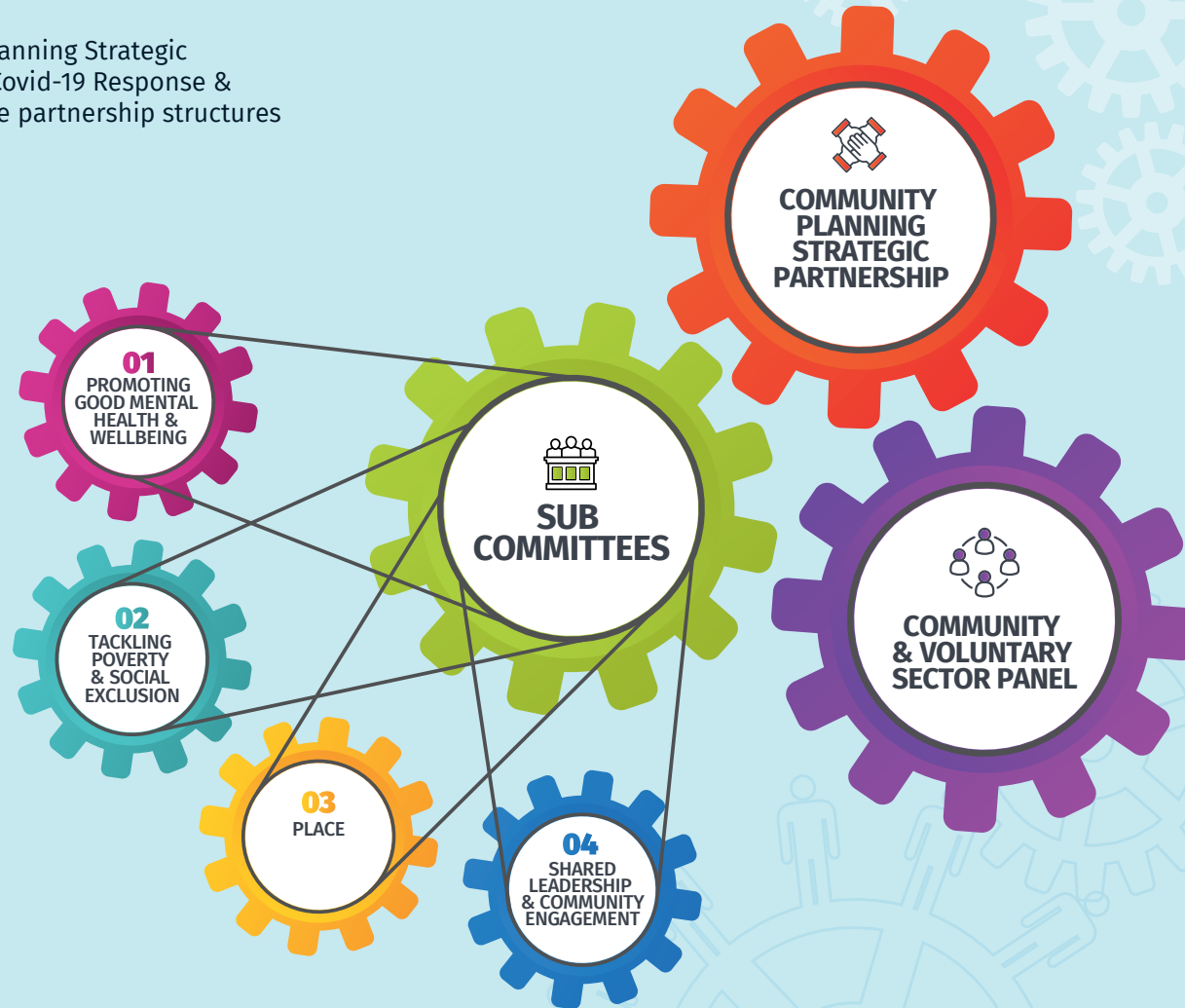
Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

**Michelle Markey**

Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

## ABC COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

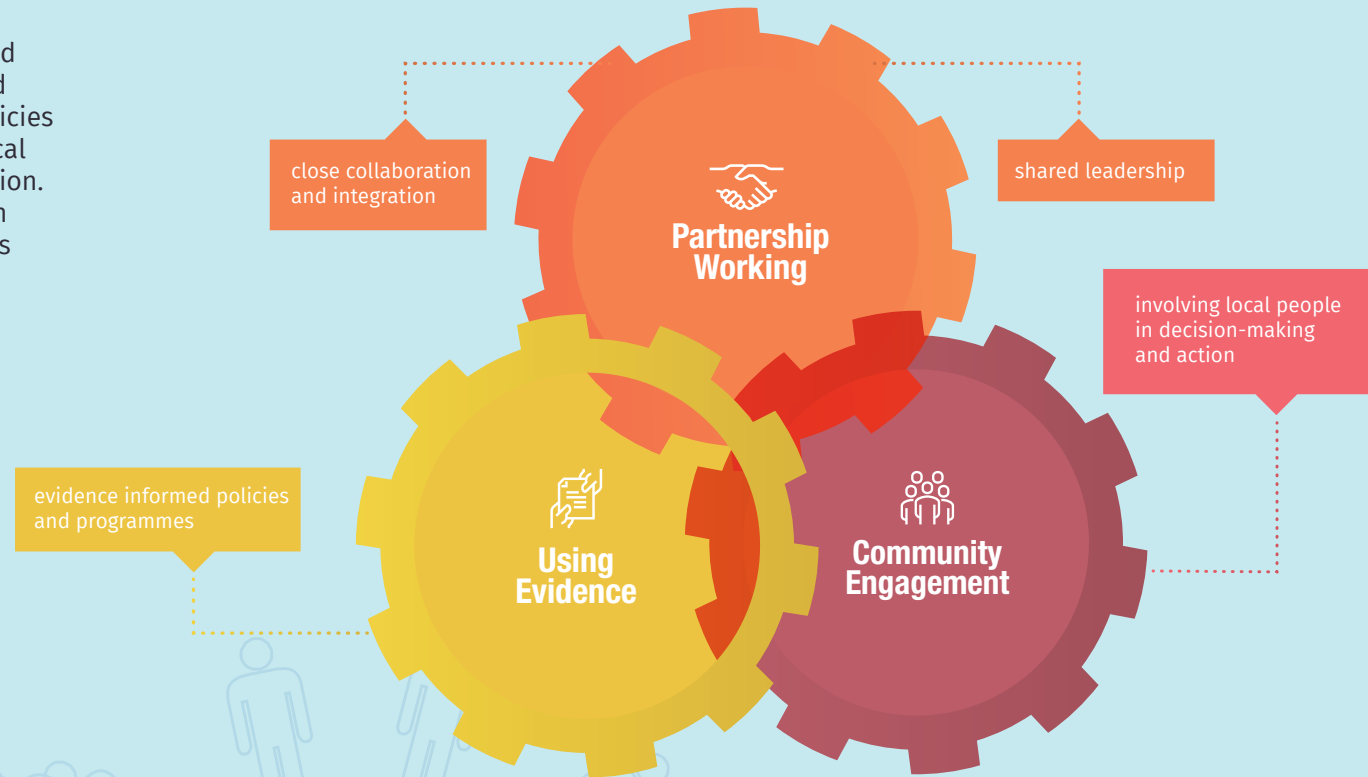
In March 2022, the Community Planning Strategic Partnership agreed a refreshed Covid-19 Response & Recovery Plan and changes to the partnership structures to drive delivery of the plan.



# 02

## COMMUNITY PLANNING APPROACH

Community planning requires ways of working that include shared leadership, close collaboration and integration; evidence informed policies and programmes; and involving local people in decision-making and action. These ways of working overlap with each other and our partnership has adopted them as an approach to our work.



# 03

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Involving Local People in Decision Making

Community planning is about bringing decisions closer to communities and giving local people a greater say in how services are delivered and their area is planned. Better community engagement leads to better decisions and increased levels of trust in government and services. Latest figures show that only 19% of people in ABC feel they have an influence on decisions made in their neighbourhood<sup>1</sup>. Our Partnership is committed to creating opportunities for people to take part in local decisions that are meaningful to them.

### Embedding Our Community Engagement Strategy

The Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy takes the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation as its framework and adopts the Scottish Community Engagement Standards to ensure quality engagement processes.

There are three challenges identified in the strategy: ensuring inclusion & diversity, quality dialogue & deliberation and showing the link to policy and decision making.

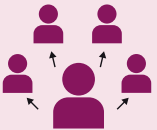
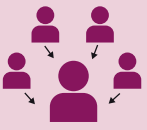



The Partnership has delivered training on the spectrum and standards, continues to evaluate our engagement activities against the standards and has piloted Participatory Budgeting, a technique that addresses the challenges listed above.



Graffiti sheet at SRC Pop Up Event for Banbridge Place Plan

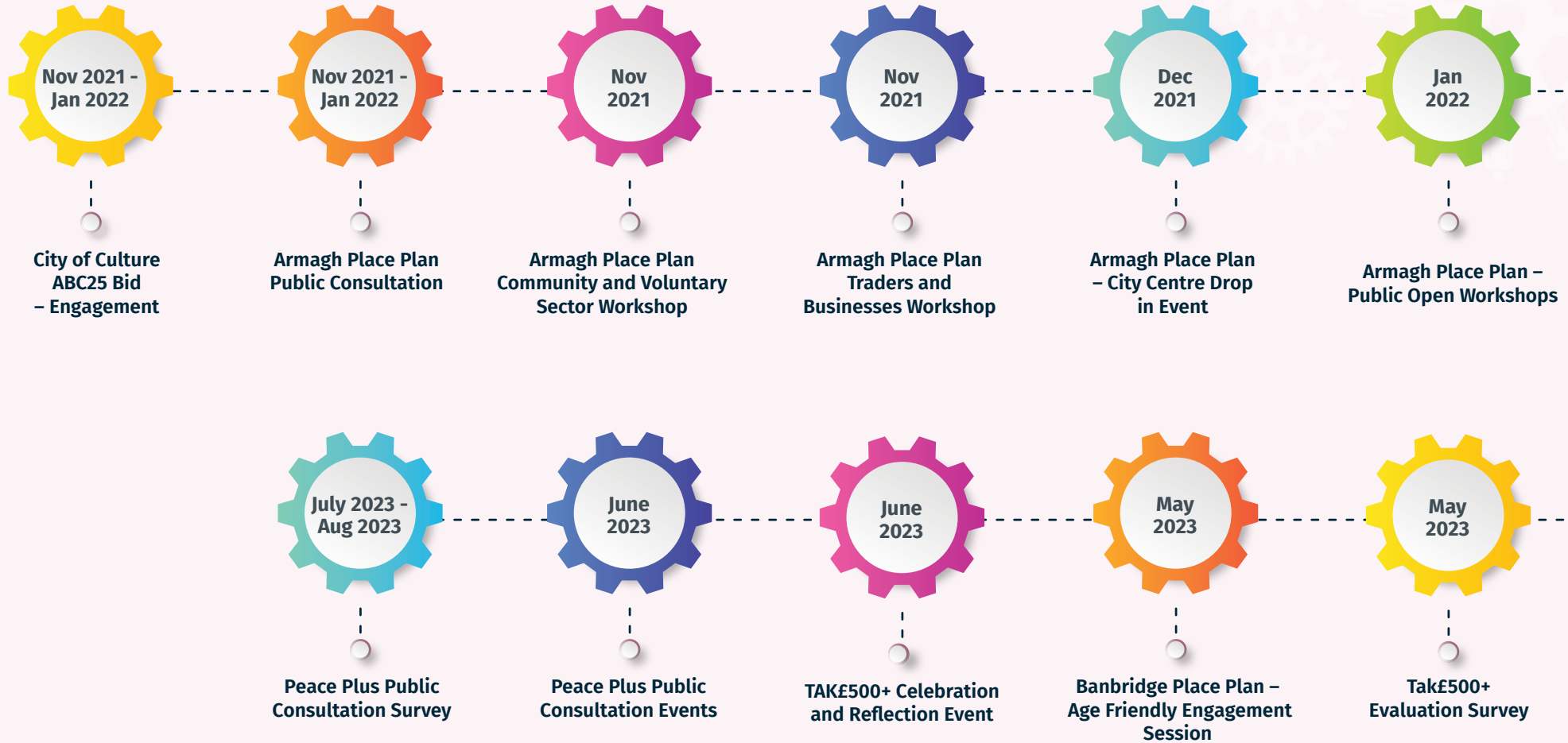
<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey(ARK) 2020-2022

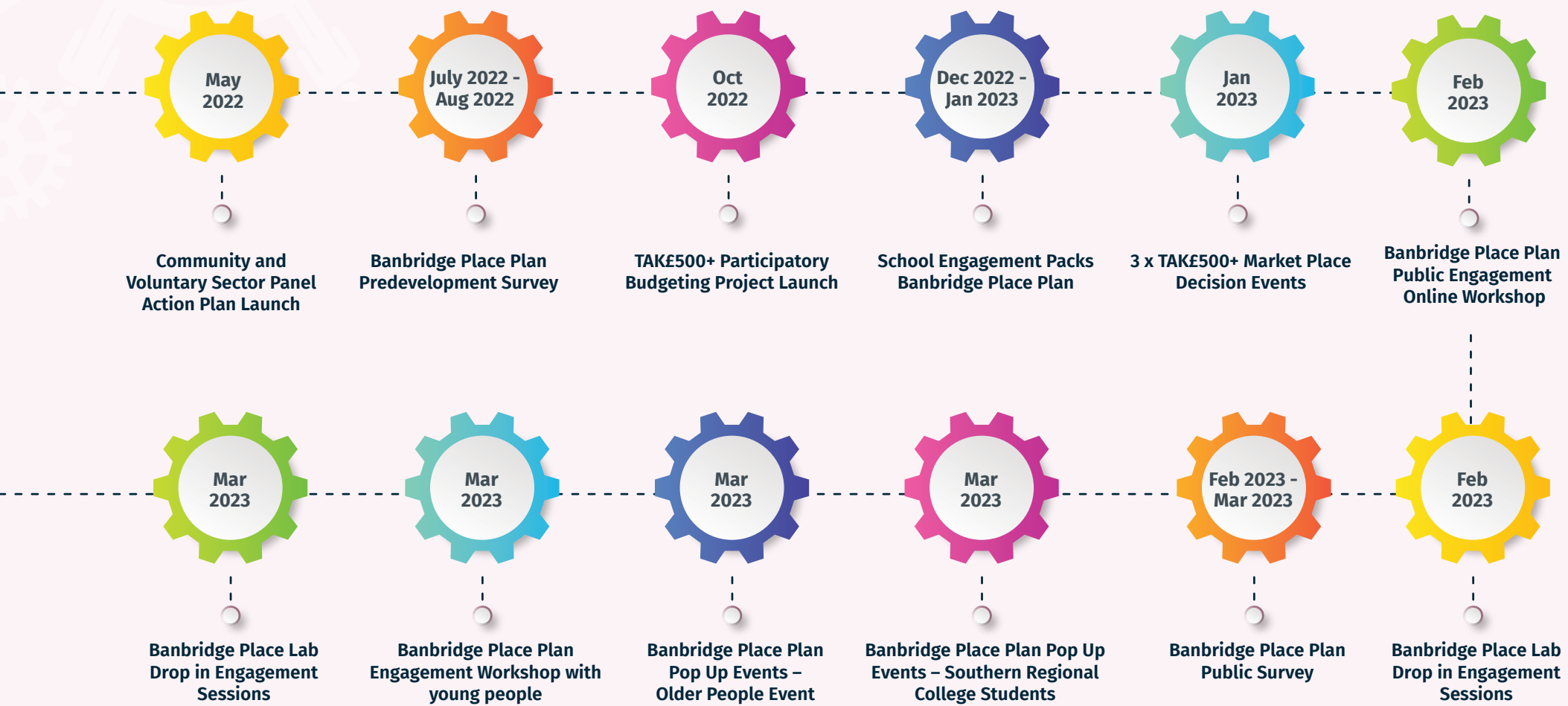


	 <b>INFORM</b>	 <b>CONSULT</b>	 <b>INVOLVE</b>	 <b>COLLABORATE</b>	 <b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide

© The International Association for Public Participation ([www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org))

## Community Engagement 2021 to 2023 Timeline





## Participatory Budgeting In ABC

The Community Planning Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy in 2019 identified PB as a method that overcomes some of the challenges to engagement where the public has more of an influence in the final decisions.

Following the first PB process the Partnership hosted a two-part roundtable "A Way Forward for PB in ABC: Lessons from Home, Scotland and Beyond" to determine the strategic direction and next steps for PB in the borough. Delivered virtually, 53 people attended one or both of the sessions.

Our Partnership is committed to PB as a way for people to get involved and have a direct say on how local money is spent and in 2022-23 we took forward a second PB project, Tak£500+.

The project was delivered by the partnership's PB Working Group with a shared purpose:

- To empower communities and support a sense of ownership for investment and decision-making
- To better meet needs – as defined by the local community
- To strengthen partnership working
- To promote innovation and community connections
- To promote the Take 5 public health message

3,770 people from across the borough attended the decision making events and voted to allocate £76,412 to 81 local projects which they wanted to see happen.

For more information see:

🌐 <https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/take500plus/>



Groups hosting information stalls at Craigavon PB Decision Making Event

## PB Working Group

The PB Working Group includes members from 15 community planning partners from statutory, community and voluntary sectors.

The group have demonstrated and role modelled strong partnership working throughout the design and development of the project. Having a wide partnership has enabled the partners to benefit from the pooled expertise, resources and willingness around the table. All decisions taken have been through consensus and this has helped build trust and mutual respect. The extensive reach of the partners has ensured applications were received in each area.



Lord Mayor Margaret Tinsley with members of PB Working Group at PB Celebration Event

“Great to be part of an interdisciplinary group working through a process with a shared purpose and desire to empower the wider community to action. It was satisfying to know that the process has made an impact by supporting community groups to deliver programmes around the 5 pathways to wellbeing, when it is much needed!”

(PB Working Group member)

## Participatory Budgeting

### What is PB?

Participatory Budgeting, in which people decide together how a portion of public funds is spent, is a proven way to give decision-making power to people. It enables citizens to play an active role in shaping their community and creates more transparent governments and services. It is important for people to share in the decisions that affect them in order to create vibrant, inclusive communities.

### There are two types of PB:

**Grant making** – funds are distributed in the form of small grants. A wide pool of people openly reviews and scores funding proposals for local projects, which are then usually delivered by community-based organisations.

**Mainstreaming PB** – public services routinely offer PB for mainstream budget choices. Communities determine their priorities. There is an interim ‘deliberative’ stage where technical issues including legality, feasibility and need are worked through. The decision is based on a finalised community budget plan with residents choosing from a menu of options that may be delivered by public authorities.

## Children and Young People

The Community Planning Partnership aims to increase opportunities for everyone to have a meaningful say in decisions that affect their lives.

The Tak£500+ process was designed to promote inclusion and participation. Any group of three people or more aged 8 and over were encouraged to put forward an idea through the application process and anyone aged 8 and over could cast a vote. The three voting events were well attended and the voice of younger people was elevated as the majority of voters came from the age 8-15 bracket (24%).



Young People voting at Armagh Decision Making Event

“It was great that younger people in the community were also given a voice as to where the funds should be allocated”.

Younger children under the age of 8 who were not able to vote in the Tak£500+ process were asked for comments and views through an interactive dot-mocracy process.

To date, 113 children/young people have been involved in the engagement process for developing the Banbridge Place Plan.

These activities included:

- schools engagement pack,
- Youth focussed workshops held in the YMCA via the Education Youth programme.
- A Wellness Event for Southern Regional College Students

Young people have identified the need for structured and unstructured play as a priority as well as a space to meet with friends. From conversations ideas included smart furniture where young people could meet and charge their devices.

“It was wonderful to have the students of our school take part by talking about our project to the community and to receive encouragement and support from the wider community”.

# 04 SHARED LEADERSHIP

From our participation in the Carnegie UK Trust Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Programme we have learned that partners valued the leadership support offered to them to enable them to work closer together on shared outcomes. Working towards shared outcomes in a broad multi-sectoral partnership requires people to share power, resources and decision making horizontally and vertically, both within their own organisations and across partners.

Our Partnership has now adopted 'shared leadership' as a way of working and over the last two years we have continued to provide development opportunities to our partners. Several partners have stepped up into roles such as leading on collaborative actions in the plan or chairing the various partnership structures.

Between July 2021 and June 2023 25 people from 13 organisations across our partnership received this support over 54 sessions.

This support has included:

- Individual Shared Leadership sessions for Action Leads
- Shared Leadership sessions for sub-committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs
- Group Shared Leadership sessions for newly established Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group
- Support for a collaborative project – Take 5 interactive resource

“Availing of the shared leadership support has enhanced opportunities for me to lean into my strengths and develop my confidence in contributing to strategic planning processes, as well as being more able to contribute meaningfully to co-design opportunities”.

# 05

## COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL



### CVSP Steering Group

A new Community & Voluntary Sector Panel Steering Group was formed in September 2021 following a review. During the reporting period. The steering group members are:

- Geraldine Lawless, TADA Rural Support Network (Chair)
- Colin Loughran, Action Mental Health (Vice-Chair)<sup>2</sup>
- Brendan Mac Partlin, Migrant Support Service
- Chris Leech, Craigavon Area Foodbank
- Donna Stewart, Craigavon & Banbridge Volunteer Bureau
- Laura Wylie, Links Counselling
- Martin Stevenson, The Salvation Army

The Steering Group have benefitted from shared leadership and mentoring which has supported them to step into leadership roles within the new subcommittee structure.



Steering Group Members at Launch of CVS Action Plan Event

<sup>2</sup> Vice Chair from September 2021-June 2023 – has since left CVSP



## CVSP Action Plan Launch Event

The partnership's Community & Voluntary Sector Panel launched their action plan in May 2022 in Craigavon with a turnout of over 70 people.

The action plan sets out how the sector intends to work together to contribute to the outcomes in the community plan and is closely aligned to the wider partnership's Covid-19 Response & Recovery Plan. It has five themes:

- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Anti-Poverty
- Place and Locality Planning
- Climate Action & Environmental Sustainability
- Strengthening the CVSE Sector

To view the Action Plan and watch videos from the launch event click here:

[🌐 Community and Voluntary Sector Panel - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \(armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk\)](https://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)



Participants at the Launch of the CVS Action Plan Event

# 06

## PARTNERSHIP HEALTH CHECK 2021-2023

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

#### COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS



**41**  
meetings

**158**  
people from 84  
organisations

**5** Community Planning  
Strategic Partnership  
(CPSP)

**3** Chairs' Group

**13** PB Working  
Group

**15** Community Planning  
Strategic Partnership  
Sub-Committees

**4** Community  
& Voluntary  
Sector Panel

**1** ABC Peer  
Network

“The meetings are in the main extremely well run and managed .The main partnership is well chaired, effective and efficient and enjoyable”.

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

#### PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**68**  
people from 28  
organisations



**54**  
shared leadership  
support sessions

**2**  
learning events



“Thank you for all the work on CP, the support and resources available via ABC Community Plan are exceptional”.

## HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

### PARTNER PARTICIPATION

#### ATTENDANCE



Statutory Partner CPSP meeting attendance rate

#### LEADERSHIP ROLES



Chair & Vice-Chair Roles

7 held by 5 Statutory Partners

4 held by Community & Voluntary Sector Partners

#### LEADING ACTIONS



Actions in the Covid-19 Response & Recovery Plan



Action Leads from 4 Statutory Organisations and 4 Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations



Actions led or jointly led by ABC Council

#### DELIVERY



**90%**  
of actions are on track

“Our focus is on provision of front line support to those in need, which can put a squeeze on the time available for strategic committee work”.

<sup>3</sup> Some actions have joint Action Leads

## PARTNER SATISFACTION<sup>4</sup>

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP



**92% agree**  
meetings are well run

**89% agree**

papers for the meeting are clear and include relevant information



**81% agree**

the partnership has a **shared purpose** that is understood by all members

**67% agree**

they have **clear roles & responsibilities**



**70% agree**

there are **clear lines of accountability**

**72% agree**

**communication** across the partnership is effective



“Any meetings I am involved with are working well, are relevant to community needs and now we are back to face to face again, provides more opportunities for networking”.

“I have found the meetings useful, it helps to consolidate our plans and support each other in targeting our approach”.

“You are involved, you get minutes and updates, you can find working in partnership can save time and money and you have a better understanding of what is happening elsewhere and you can expand your contact network”.

<sup>4</sup> 36 partners responded to an online survey administered between 27 June 2023-31 July 2023

## IS ANYONE BETTER OFF? IMPACT OF THE PARTNERSHIP

### BENEFITS



**92% agree**

agree that the benefits of the partnership outweigh the costs

"Better awareness and understanding of the role of other organisations and opportunity to raise awareness of work in the Borough"

"I have developed relationships with other organisations which has led to a collaborative approach to working within the CVS."

"Shared best practices and learning about the service delivery of other organisations"

## BIGGEST BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP TO DATE



**28%**

shared learning & networking

**25%**

collective thinking and problem solving



**24%**

raising awareness of issues/organisations



**23%**

making a positive impact on the borough



**86%**

agree the partnership is a learning environment

**89%**

have developed or deepened relationships

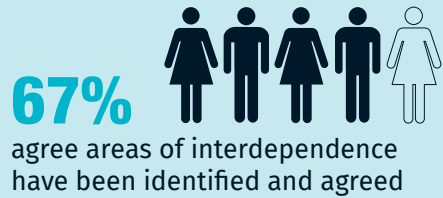


**64%**

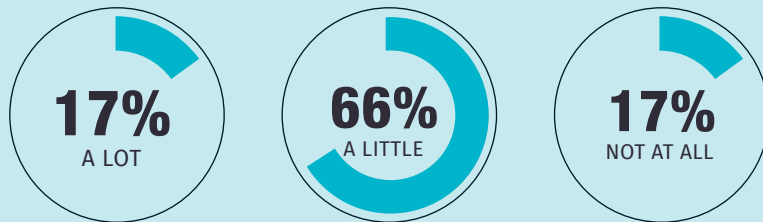
have developed or deepened relationships with those working in a different sectors



## INFLUENCING RESOURCE ALLOCATION



**83%** of Partners whose resource allocation has been influenced by the partnership and its action plans



“The Place Board is a working group which is not replicated in any of the other CP Partnerships I am involved with. All members are involved in looking holistically at the importance of a place to the people who reside there and challenged to think about how these places can be improved. I believe that this group will achieve meaningful outcomes and will be the exemplar for action focused partnership working”.

“Great to be able to join the dots to enhance service provision”.

“The relationships across Departments have given me a very strong sense of the interconnectedness of all the work that is done across government and the need to focus on a much more joined up approach”.

Making direct links with the right people within organisations makes everything move quicker with better outcomes for all.

“A broader understanding of issues, ways of working, and possibilities for action”.

“The relationships have produced cross fertilization of ideas, education for all stakeholders and an improved outcome for our citizens”.

## PARTNER CONSULTATION

### FINANCIAL CLIMATE



**64%**

of partners surveyed are delivering activities in direct response to the cost of living crisis.



**50%**

of partners are planning to reduce or stop activities because of funding or budget cuts.

To enable community planning to really deliver impactful outcomes regarding community wellbeing requires NI Executive/Central government to properly fund/resource.

### ISSUES FOR THE BOROUGH

Poverty and mental health remain the issues identified by the biggest number of partners surveyed:

**57%**



**Cost of Living/Poverty**

“Cost of living and increased deprivation is having an impact on people’s wellbeing and mental health”.



**20%**

**Mental Health**

Other issues identified include:

**13%**



**Access to Services**



**13%**

**Lack of Funding**



**13%**

**Social exclusion/  
Loneliness**

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

“Helpful to work together as much as possible through the various crisis’ of the past 3 years, however crisis seems to be the new norm and we need to get used to that reality and figure out how to remain strategic in the midst of it”.

“Continue to provide space and time for effective cross Departmental conversations”.

## Meet the Community Planning Team in ABC Council's Community Planning, Policy and Research Department

The Community Planning, Policy & Research Department sits within the Strategy & Performance Directorate within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

The core responsibilities of the Department are detailed below:

- Registration of Deaths Births & Marriages
- Community Planning
- Place Shaping & Corporate Planning

The Community Planning team facilitates the Community Planning Partnership and along with the Place Shaping team lead on seven actions in the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan.

It is responsible for a series of Council corporate strategies and projects and provides data analysis and GIS support in the Council.

The Team includes:

**Elaine Gillespie**

Head of Department

**Jennie Dunlop**

Community & Strategic Planning Manager

**Lissa O'Malley**

Place & Strategic Project Manager

**Jennifer McKibben**

Project Officer

**Michelle Markey**

Community Planning & Engagement Officer

**Noreen O'Callaghan**

Community Planning & Engagement Officer

**Emma O'Carroll**

Community Planning & Evidence Officer

**Jessica Bennett**

Data Analyst

**Emma Wilson**

Corporate GIS Officer



## Community Planning Partners







# INTERESTED IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

in the Armagh City,  
Banbridge and  
Craigavon Borough  
Council area?

## We want to talk to you

Please contact the Community Planning, Policy & Research Department at Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

☎ 0300 0300 900

✉ [communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

🌐 [armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/communityplanning](http://armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/communityplanning)

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