

Armagh City, Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)
of Review of Connected A
Community Plan

2024

Consultation

This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) report has been prepared mainly for the purposes of consultation. A final EQIA report, including a report on the consultation process and addressing the comments made, will be prepared in due course. The consultation period will last just over 13 weeks - 7th October 2024 to 12th January (extra time is given for the Christmas break)

As set out in the Council's equality scheme section 3.2.6 the consultation period will normally last for a minimum of twelve weeks and in this case, it will be just over 13 weeks.

The council is committed to making information available in alternative formats on request. Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

If there is any information in this report which is not clear or if you require further information, please contact: **Elaine Gillespie, Head of Department: Community Planning.**

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Overview/Executive Summary

The community planning strategic partnership is undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the review of the community plan because it is a significant, strategic document which will impact on a range of section 75 categories. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It will also be an opportunity to demonstrate likely positive outcomes of the plan and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The key ambition of the community plan is to improve services, and deliver better outcomes for service users, citizens and communities. Connected A community plan has been in place since 2017 and the long term overarching vision for the plan is.

“We have a happy, healthy & connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”

Our long term outcomes are grouped into three interrelated and interdependent strategic themes. Four outcomes have been changed in the revised plan and two outcomes have been replaced with new outcomes. Two population indicators have been removed and eleven new population indicators have also been added. Each of these themes has outcomes attributed to them.

- Community
- Economy
- Place

The plan is further brought together by three cross cutting themes that are at the heart of everything we do.

Our cross cutting themes are:

- Connectivity
- Equality
- Sustainability

These are integral to all of the strategic themes and their combined contribution will help to achieve our overall vision.

Further details of our strategic themes and cross cutting themes are outlined in stage one.

Overall, making a real difference to people's lives, through the ongoing delivery of the community plan, is likely to have a positive impact on Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly by contributing to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the borough.

The reviewed community plan has the potential to promote equality and good relations, this is reinforced through our cross cutting themes of equality/good relations/inclusion and connectivity that will underpin our processes.

In the preparation of this EQIA, data and research were gathered to help assess the likely impact on the nine section 75 equality groups. Quantitative and qualitative information were drawn from a number of sources:

- Data on population – statistics on the population of the borough from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) including 2021 Census, demography statistics, survey results and benefit statistics
- Feedback from partners and previous consultation and research undertaken by the partnership

This EQIA has been conducted at a strategic level addressing the reviewed community plan in a holistic way and does not include details of the equality impacts of every project undertaken as part of the ongoing implementation of the revised community plan. The issues identified as part of this EQIA will act as a focus for the partnership when they are reviewing and delivering their actions under the community plan. Any actions will if appropriate be screened by the partner who is leading on them.

This draft EQIA, will undertake a full formal consultation alongside the reviewed community plan.

- It will also be available on the Council's website at:

www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/consultations

All equality consultees will be notified by e-mail or post and a standard response form will be available to assist individuals and organisations to respond, but responses will be accepted in any format (eg. letter, e-mail, telephone).

The council is committed to making information available in alternative formats on request. Alternative formats may include Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

The consultation co-ordinator for this report is:

Elaine Gillespie, Head of Department: Community Planning.

The closing date for responses is: 12th January 2025

Introduction

The council is the lead partner in the community planning process and as such is conducting this EQIA on behalf of the partnership. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council is committed to implementing the statutory duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which require that the council, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, has due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Men and women generally;
- Persons with a disability and persons without;
- Persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, the council is also required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The council's equality scheme, approved by the Equality Commission in March 2015, sets out how it intends to fulfil its statutory obligations under section 75. This is available at www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/yourcouncil/equality. The council as lead partner is responsible for ensuring that the commitments set out in the councils equality scheme are applied in the development, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the community plan.

The community planning partnership is in the process of reviewing the community plan for the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon borough and this Equality Impact Assessment has been updated on behalf of the partnership. The primary function of an EQIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a policy upon the section 75 categories and to determine if the impact is an adverse one. It was agreed it was important and proactive to complete a full assessment due to the following reasons:

1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. The community plan is a high level policy and is likely to generate further policies, strategies or actions that are relevant to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

It was also recognised that the completion of an EQIA might have wider benefits, it is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a policy and to seek ways to more effectively promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

This EQIA will be conducted at a strategic level addressing the community plan in a holistic way and does not include details of the equality impacts of every project which may be undertaken as part of the implementation of the community plan. The issues identified as part of this EQIA will act as a focus for partners when they are developing actions under the community plan. Any actions will if appropriate be screened by the lead partner

The council will be conducting this EQIA in line with the Practical Guidance issued by the Equality Commission. It will follow the recommended 7 step process of:-

- Stage 1: Defining the aims of the policy;
- Stage 2: Consideration of available data and research;
- Stage 3: Assessment of impacts;
- Stage 4: Consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact or alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity;
- Stage 5: Formal consultation;
- Stage 6: Decision by public authority & publication of results of the EQIA;
- Stage 7: Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring.

This draft EQIA includes the first four stages.

Stage one - Aims of the policy

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 placed a new statutory duty on councils to act as a lead partner in a community planning process for its area. Community planning is “*a process led by councils in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared vision for their area, a long term vision which relates to all aspects of community life and which also involves working together to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives*”.

The first community plan, Connected, was published in 2017. It set out a shared vision and long-term objectives which will shape the area by responding to the long-term needs of local people and communities and deliver better outcomes.

The legislation places the responsibility on councils to “*initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate*” within a community planning partnership that will bring together a range of partners including statutory agencies, community and voluntary organisations, the business sector and local people in a bid to improve service delivery and bring decision making closer to the community.

The Community Planning Strategic Partnership (CPSP) for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough comprises of 16 partners some of whom have a statutory duty to take forward actions that contribute to the outcomes in their community plans and partners share an equal responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the plan. The CPSP has overall responsibility for the delivery of the community plan, but there is a wider partnership in place as well who contribute to delivery.

The partnership's current action plan has four priority themes for action and the Community Planning Strategic Partnership has established four sub-committees to deliver this Covid-19 Response and Recovery Action Plan. Each of the four sub-committee has broad membership from across the Community Planning partnership including action leads and members from the CPSP and the CVSP. The four sub-committees are- Promoting Good Mental Health and Wellbeing, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion, Place and Shared Leadership and Community Engagement.



The community plan is recognised as the sovereign planning document for the Borough, providing the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all partners. The community plan creates a two way link between community plans at a local government level and any Programme for Government and it sets out a clear, long term vision for the borough in 2030. It will impact on all people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough as well as future generations.

A refresh of the community plan was required by its fourth anniversary, but due to covid only the actions and partnership structures were reviewed at this time. The CPSP decided to undertake a review of the full community plan in 2024. As part of this review of the community plan, the actions plans for delivery will also be reviewed to check that they are still relevant.

The chairs and vice-chairs of the community planning partnership, its sub-committees and Community and Voluntary Sector Panel looked at the long-term outcomes and population indicators in the community plan and made some suggested changes. These were the starting point for a series of discussions across the partnership, led by the chairs, about the review of the community plan.

A workshop on the review was led by the Community & Voluntary Sector Panel for the wider CVSE on 22nd May. This was followed by three workshops open to members of all the community planning structures and any partnerships reporting into the community plan. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the CPSP held meetings with members of the CPSP to discuss the review. ABC Elected Members also had the opportunity to feed in at a workshop in June. At

this stage of the review 105 people from 32 organisations have taken part in the review process, this includes workshops and 121 meetings.

The reviewed community plan has been informed by a robust statistical evidence baseline.

The community plan is built around three strategic themes and nine long term outcomes.

The council and its partners have made a commitment to deliver on in order for our borough to have realised its vision in to 2030 in that-

“We have a happy, healthy & connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”

Our long term outcomes have been grouped into three interrelated and interdependent strategic themes. Each of these themes have three outcomes and this review has suggested the outcomes be revised to ensure that they reflect the aspirations for the borough, given the significant changes that have occurred since its publication in 2017 and the changes suggested are presented below:

- Community;
- Economy;
- Place.

Community

Our three long-term outcomes under the community strategic theme are:

- ***Connected Community (previously Confident)***

Everyone has opportunities to contribute (previously engage in) to community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.

- ***Healthy Community***

People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better able to cope with life’s challenges.

- ***Welcoming Community***

Our borough is a safe, inclusive (new addition), respectful and peaceful environment.

Economy

Our three long-term outcomes under the economy strategic theme are:

- ***Enterprising Economy***

Our borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.

- ***Skilled Economy***

People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy.

- ***Inclusive Economy*** replacing ***Tourism Economy***

Everyone has a decent minimum living standard, replacing - Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.

Place

Our three long-term outcomes under the place strategic theme are:

- ***Creative Place***

Our borough is an inspirational and creative environment offering quality inclusive arts, heritage (new addition) and cultural experiences.

- ***Sustainable Place*** replacing ***Enhanced Place***

People understand the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We value and protect our biodiversity and natural assets. Our borough is on track to become net zero by 2050 replacing - Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy.

- ***Revitalised Place***

Our distinctive, inclusive (new addition) and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life.

The plan is further brought together by three cross cutting themes that are at the heart of everything we do.

The cross cutting themes are:

- Connectivity
- Equality
- Sustainability

These are integral to all of the strategic themes and their combined contribution will help to achieve our overall vision. We will continue to take coordinated action as partners to tackle the cross cutting issues that affect us all.

Connectivity

We believe connectivity is integral to helping us achieve our outcomes. We will work to transform and connect all areas 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 the 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 work to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish.

During the public consultation period we will also work with the Sub-Committees to refresh our Covid-19 Response and Recovery action plan to support delivery of the refreshed community plan.

Stage two - Consideration of Data and Research

Data and research were gathered to help assess the likely impact on the nine section 75 equality groups. Quantitative and qualitative information were drawn from a number of sources and some of this information is presented in stage three of this impact assessment:

- Data on population – statistics on the population of the borough from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) including 2021 Census, demography statistics, survey results and benefit statistics
- Partnership engagement report stage 1
- Armagh and Banbridge Place Plans
- Armagh and Banbridge Place Plan engagement reports
- Dromore engagement plan to date
- Life and Time Survey and Young Life and Times Survey
- Equality Commission report- key inequalities in employment
- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's (NIHRC) report
- National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-2027
- The Public Health Agency good practice guide for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups
- Department of Education statistics 2020/21
- Department for the Economy's Migrant Workers report
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)
- Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024/25
- The Labour Force Survey 2020
- Northern Ireland Poverty Income Inequality Report 2022/23
- Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021
- Experience of Crime and Perceptions of Crime and Policing and Justice, 2021/22
- Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey (NISCTS)

Data on Population

Religious Belief

The 2021 Census showed that 43.8% of the population in the borough were either Catholic or brought up as Catholic and 46.7% belonged to or were brought up in Protestant, other Christian or Christian-related denominations. A further 1.2% belonged to or had been

brought up in other religions, while 8.2% neither belonged to, nor had been brought up in, a religion.

Religion or religion brought up in	Number	Percentage
Catholic	95,868	43.8%
Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)	102,063	46.7%
Other religions	2,697	1.2%
None	18,028	8.2%
All usual residents	218,656	100%

Table 1. Religion or religion brought up in, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 2021. Source: 2021 Census, NISRA.

Political Opinion

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has 41 elected members. A breakdown of results of the Local Government Election in May 2023 for the borough are as follows:

- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) – 13
- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) – 6
- Sinn Fein – 15
- Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) – 1
- Alliance – 4
- Independent – 1
- Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) - 1

A total of 87,684 votes were polled in the borough from an eligible electorate of 155,625 giving a turnout of 56.34%. This breakdown is taken as an approximate representation of the political opinion of people within the borough.

Racial Group - Ethnicity

Results from the 2021 Census showed that 96.7% of the usually resident population of the borough were white and 3.3% were from minority ethnic groups. The main ethnic minorities were Mixed (1,652 individuals), Black African (1,132 individuals) and Chinese (683 individuals).

Ethnicity	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	%
White	211,429	96.69%
Irish Traveller	534	0.24%
Roma	205	0.09%
Indian	617	0.28%
Chinese	683	0.31%
Filipino	406	0.19%
Pakistani	278	0.13%
Arab	116	0.05%
Other Asian	581	0.27%
Black African	1,132	0.52%
Black Other	519	0.24%
Mixed	1,652	0.76%
Other ethnicities	506	0.23%
Total	218,658	100%

Table 2: Ethnic group of residents in Armagh City,

Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Table: MS-B01 Ethnic Group, Census 2021, NISRA.

Racial Group - Country of Birth

Results from the 2021 Census show that 85.5% of residents in the borough were born in Northern Ireland. The borough had 8.6% of residents, or 18,836 individuals, who were born outside the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland.

Country of Birth	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	%
Northern Ireland	186,924	85.49%
England	7,003	3.20%
Scotland	1,419	0.65%
Wales	332	0.15%
Republic of Ireland	4,142	1.89%
Other EU countries	13,490	6.17%
Other non-EU countries	555	0.25%
Africa	1,114	0.51%
Middle East and Asia	2,520	1.15%
North America, Central America and Caribbean	622	0.28%
South America	246	0.11%
Antarctica, Oceania and Other	289	0.13%
Total	218,656	100%

Table 3: Country of birth of residents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Table MS-A16 Country of Birth, Census 2021, NISRA.

Racial Group - Language

Results from Census 2021 show that 6.6% of residents in the borough aged 3+ years (13,947 individuals) spoke a language other than English or Irish as their main language. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough in 2021, the most prevalent main languages other than English or Irish were Polish (1.7%) and Lithuanian (1.2%).

Main Language	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	%
English	196,026	93.17%
Polish	3,551	1.69%
Lithuanian	2,611	1.24%
Irish	429	0.20%
Romanian	768	0.37%
Portuguese	1,777	0.84%
Arabic	234	0.11%
Bulgarian	1,469	0.70%
Chinese (not otherwise specified)	183	0.09%
Slovak	375	0.18%
Hungarian	357	0.17%
Spanish	116	0.06%
Latvian	468	0.22%
Russian	322	0.15%
Tetun	269	0.13%
Other languages	1,447	0.69%
Total (Aged 3+)	210,402	100%

Table 4: Main language of residents aged 3+ in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Table MS-B12 Main Language, Census 2021, NISRA.

Age

The population of the borough was estimated to be 218,656 on Census Day 2021, the profile of which is shown below.

Age Group	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	%
0 – 15 years	48,243	22.06%
16 – 24 years	21,774	9.96%
25 – 49 years	72,023	32.94%
50 – 64 years	41,626	19.04%
65 and over	34,990	16.0%
Total	218,656	100.0%

Table 5: Age profile of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough at Census Day 2021. Source: Table MS-A06 Age Structure, Census 2021

The age profile of the borough is projected to change between 2020 and 2043 with an ageing population. It is projected that in 2033, the proportion of older people in the borough (those aged 65 and over) will be higher than the proportion of children (those aged 15 and under). The proportion of those aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 15.7% in 2020 to 22.1% in 2043. The proportion of those aged under 16 is projected to decrease from 22.5% in 2020 to 18.9% in 2043.

Marital Status

The 2021 Census provides information on the marital and civil partnership status of those aged 16 and over. Almost half of residents aged 16+ in the borough were married (49.0%) while just over 35% were single (never married or never in a registered same-sex civil partnership).

Marital and Civil Partnership Status	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	%
All usual residents aged 16 and over	170,411	100.0%
Single (never married or never registered civil partnership)	60,075	35.3%
Married	83,523	49.0%
In a civil partnership	307	0.2%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)	5,833	3.4%
Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	10,253	6.0%
Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership	10,420	6.1%

Table 6: Marital and civil partnership status of residents aged 16+ in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Marital and Civil Partnership Status – Table MS-A30, Census 2021, NISRA.

Sexual Orientation

The question on sexual orientation was new for the 2021 Census and was asked of all people aged 16 and over. However, while completing the census is a legal obligation, there was no statutory penalty for those people who failed to provide an answer to the question on sexual orientation.

Just 1.5% of the population aged 16 and over in the borough identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) while 90.5% identified as straight or heterosexual and 8% did not provide an answer to the question.

	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	
	Number	%
All usual residents aged 16 and over	170,413	100.0%
Straight or heterosexual	154,259	90.5%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+)	2,497	1.5%
Gay or lesbian	1,378	0.8%
Bisexual	901	0.5%
Other sexual orientation	218	0.1%
No sexual orientation stated	13,657	8.0%
Prefer not to say	8,290	4.9%
Not stated	5,367	3.1%

Table 7: Sexual Orientation of residents aged 16 and over in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland, 2021. Source: Table MS-C01, Census 2021.

Gender

The 2021 Census showed that in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 49.5% (108,268) of usual residents were male and 50.5% (110,388) were female.

Gender	Number	Percentage
Males	108,268	49.5%
Females	110,388	50.5%
All usual residents	218,656	100%

Table 8. Usual resident population, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 2021. Source: 2021 Census, NISRA.

Disability

According to the 2021 Census, more than one in five people in the borough (22% or 48,726 individuals) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability.

Census 2021 results are disaggregated by broad age bands and the results show the prevalence of a limiting long-term health problem or disability is related to age¹. Almost 57% of the population aged 65+ in the borough had a limiting long-term health problem or disability compared to 6% of those aged between 0-14.

	Population	With a limiting long term health problem or disability	Percentage
0-14	45,420	2,759	6.1%
15-39	67,700	7,367	10.9%
40-64	70,547	18,715	26.5%
65+	34,990	19,885	56.8%
All ages	218,657	48,726	22.3%

Table 9: Limiting long-term health problem or disability by age band, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Table MS-D02, Census 2021.

Benefit statistics from the Department for Communities showed that as of May 2024 there were:

- 3,030 or 6.2% of under 16 eligible population and 4,490 or 13.3% of pension age eligible population claiming Disability Living Allowance.
- 6,480 or 19.1% of 66+ population claiming Attendance Allowance.
- 21,340 Personal Independent Payment claims in payment (experimental statistics).

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) provides a non-contributory, non means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of severely disabled people who can claim help with those costs before the age of 16.

¹ [Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland - Statistical bulletin - Health \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/census-2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-statistical-bulletin-health)

Claimants who were 65 or over at the time of introduction of PIP in NI (June 2016) and who were receiving a life-time award will continue to receive DLA, providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

Attendance Allowance (AA) provides a non-contributory, non-means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of severely disabled people who are of State Pension Age and over when they claim help with those costs. It can be awarded for a fixed or an indefinite period.

Personal Independent Payment (PIP) provides a non-contributory, non means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of people aged over 16 who claim help with those costs. Claimants who were 65 or over at the time of introduction of PIP in NI (June 2016) and who were receiving a life time award continue to receive DLA, providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

Dependants

Persons with a dependant are generally classified as persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

The 2021 Census showed that 32% or 27,192 households in the borough contained dependent children.

Respondents to the 2021 Census were asked whether they provide any unpaid help or support to anyone because of long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 12% of the population aged 5 years old and over (or 24,743 individuals) provided unpaid care. Of those who provided unpaid support:

- 46% provided 1 – 19 hours per week
- 24% provided 20 – 49 hours per week
- 30% provided 50+ hours per week.

Benefit statistics from the Department for Communities show that in February 2024, there were 8,240 people (4.8% of eligible population) claiming Carer's Allowance in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Carer's Allowance (CA) is a non-contributory benefit for people:

- who look after a severely disabled person for at least 35 hours a week
- who are not gainfully employed (i.e. not earning more than £128 per week after certain deductions)

- who are not subject to immigration control
- who are not in full-time education
- are aged 16 and over

The severely disabled person must be getting either the highest or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance care component, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Attendance Allowance, or a Constant Attendance Allowance at the maximum rate under the War Pensions or Industrial Injuries Scheme.

Some claimants are entitled to receive Carers Allowance, because they satisfy the conditions listed above, but do not actually receive a payment. This is because they receive another benefit (e.g. Incapacity Benefit for people of working age, or State Pension for people of State Pension age) which equals or exceeds their weekly rate of Carers Allowance. Where the overlapping benefit paid is less than the weekly rate of CA, only the amount of CA which exceeds the amount of the overlapping benefit is paid. Carers who are on low income and entitled to Carer's Allowance (whether in payment or not) may receive extra money with their Income.

Data on those Engaged in the Process

The council and its partners have been actively seeking the involvement from sub-committee members, action leads, elected members, community and voluntary sector organisations and the community and voluntary sector panel for their views in shaping the reviewed community plan. At this stage of the review 105 people from 32 organisations have taken part in the review process, this includes workshops and 121 meetings.

The community planning process embraces fairness through the council's equality scheme and we have engaged with many individuals, community and voluntary groups and organisations. Throughout our engagement process we held a workshop with the CVSE, three workshops open to community planning structures and partnerships reporting into the community plan, 121 meetings with partners and an elected member workshop.

Stage three - Assessment of Impact

The next stage of the EQIA process is to assess the differential impact on people in one or more of the section 75 groups, and then to determine the extent of differential impact and whether that impact is adverse. These sections set out conclusions based on the information detailed above.

Feedback from the engagements sessions held and 121 meetings, along with baseline data and other research reports were analysed to provide an insight into the potential impacts of the three strategic themes in the revised community plan on people in the various section 75 categories.

The nine categories as listed in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are:

1. Religious Belief
2. Political Opinion
3. Racial Group
4. Age
5. Marital Status
6. Sexual Orientation
7. Gender
8. Disability
9. Dependants

Much of the general research relates to Northern Ireland as a whole, but wherever possible data at borough level has been included.

The assessment is presented under the headings of the nine section 75 categories. However, these headings simply provide a framework. It is acknowledged that the effect of the revised plan will not necessarily relate to a specific section 75 characteristic.

Overall Impacts

The main purpose of this EQIA is to ensure that, in identifying and taking forward projects under the revised community plan, the council and its partners give due regard to the need to promote equal opportunity by addressing the inequalities within and between section 75 groups. It is therefore important to clearly identify the key inequalities that the revised community plan has the potential to address. This is summarised in the following paragraphs.

The community plan is a strategic document that sets out the vision for our borough in 2030. The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will contribute and deliver positive outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough as well as future generations. In the revised community plan some of the outcomes have been revised and eleven new population indicators have been added in and two have been removed, these will be used as an evidence base to reflect the changes that have happened in Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon since the first community plan was written in 2017.

However, we must be mindful that there are several pre-existing inequalities in Northern Ireland and within our borough. While we have not identified any adverse differential impacts that may result from the development of the revised plan, there may be an opportunity for us and our partners to reduce any pre-existing inequalities. Successfully, fulfilling the vision of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough in 2030 in that **“We have a happy, healthy & connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”** The paragraphs below highlight the inequalities that currently exist under each section 75 category within our strategic themes.

Religious Belief/Political Opinion

We believe that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will benefit and deliver favourable outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough as well as affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their religious belief or political opinion.

Under the strategic themes the following inequalities currently exist and whilst it is important to note these are not a result of the revised plan but an opportunity for council and its partners to address.

Community

- Results from the 2021 Census showed that there were self-reported differences in general health according to religion belonged to or brought up in. Those who were or had been brought up as Catholics were typically more likely than those who belonged to or had been brought up in Protestant denominations to assess their general health as either 'bad' or 'very bad'. The relative differences were more noticeable in the older age groups. For example, among those aged 45-64, 13% of Catholics,

compared with 10.2% of Protestants, were in either 'bad' or 'very bad' general health. In addition, among those aged 65 and over, 19.6% of Catholics compared with 15.1% of Protestants were in either 'bad' or 'very bad' general health.

- The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey states that for the combined years of 2020, 2021 and 2022, 36.6% of respondents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years' time. Almost 43% of respondents in the borough believe relations will be about the same as they are now while 11.6% believe that relations will be worse in 5 years' time.

Economy

- The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland states that just over a third (37.9%) of Protestant boys with FSME achieved five GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent including English and maths, compared to 46.7% of their Catholic counterparts. This highlights Protestants persistently have lower levels of attainment than Catholics at GSCE level.
- Results from LucidTalk's NI-wide attitudinal poll (on behalf of the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) have revealed that 54% of people living in the [Armagh](#), Banbridge and Craigavon council area believe Integrated Education, which sees children of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures educated together, side by side every day, should be the main model for our education system.

Place

- The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's (NIHRC) report on the impact of public spending shows that the social housing stock is highly segregated by religious community background, with around 90% of social housing estates being single identity. Therefore, where social housing developments are restricted in areas of deprivation due to wastewater and sewerage constraints, this may impact on religious belief linked to economically deprived areas.
- During the engagement for the Banbridge Place Plan in terms of inclusivity and diversity, (39%) of people thought that the town was good, and less (33%) felt it was fair or poor. 67% felt it was good, very good or excellent in terms of cross-community integration. Though during the engagement for the Armagh Place Plan young people surveyed were concerned with the provision of shared and welcoming space and territorial markings, flags and emblems in the city.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their religious belief or political opinion.

Racial Group

The council believes that the revised community plan will deliver favourable outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough as well as affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their racial group.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-2027 outlines that Travellers are three times as likely to have poor health or some type of difficulty or disability than the non-Traveller population in the 35-54 age group. The Traveller community continue to experience severe health inequalities, reflected in a shorter life and a poorer quality of health. Overall, there is a gap of up to 13 years in life expectancy between Travellers and the general population.
- In ABC there were 289 hate motivated incidents in 2022/23 - 95 of these incidents were racist, 120 sectarian, 39 homophobic, 11 disability, 22 transgender and 2 faith/religion.
- In ABC 49% of people see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life.
- In ABC 84 % of people feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.
- The Public Health Agency good practice guide for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups (2010) describes how BME communities have strong cultural beliefs and practices, many of which promote health and wellbeing. However, some health issues and risk factors for disease and ill health are more prevalent in certain nationalities and cultures. People from Black African, African Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes from the age of 25. This is much younger than the white population, as their risk increases from 40. Lithuania has the highest rate of suicide in Europe (2019); Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of Lithuanians resident in the region per head of population compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Economy

- According to Department for Education statistics for 2020/21, attainment of A-levels at grades A to C are relatively consistent regardless of ethnic background. However, there is a more pronounced difference at GCSE with 72.8 per cent of school leavers from a minority ethnic background attaining 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) compared to 77.8 per cent of white school leavers. School leavers from a minority ethnic background are also more likely to leave school without any formal qualifications (2.4 per cent compared to 0.6 per cent of white school leavers).
- Findings from the Department for the Economy's Migrant Workers report
- in 2019 highlights that 55% of EU26 workers were employed in lower skilled occupations such as processing and elementary occupations. A further 16% were in skilled trades occupations.

Place

- Findings from the Equality Commission's report, *Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Travellers' Accommodation in Northern Ireland*, was published in March 2018 and highlighted 13 systemic issues. These included resource availability; provision of a sufficient level of culturally adequate Travellers' accommodation; and the adequacy of Travellers' accommodation in Northern Ireland, including a lack of adequate stopping sites.

During the engagement sessions the changing demographics in our borough was raised and the growing population of foreign nationals with different ethnicities and different needs was recognised as the participants felt that newcomers have so much to give in our society and that we should have an inclusive programme for everyone which requires more education around cultural awareness.

The CVS engagement session highlighted bureaucratic barriers & lack of access to interpreters for ethnic minorities with people being referred to advice services who do not have access to interpreters. The issue was also raised about children being taken out of school to interpret for parents. This is damaging to the children's education and the children are not able to provide a professional interpreting service.

At a recent Promoting Good Mental Health and Wellbeing subcommittee meeting the need to reduce the negative connotations around asylum seekers and refugees was discussed and the new preferred terminology suggested - people in need of international protection.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their racial group.

Age

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their age.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- The Young Life and Times and the Life and Times Surveys showed that in Northern Ireland in 2023, 68% of young people and 81% of adults felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods. For people to feel like they belong to their community, it is important that they feel like they have an influence when it comes to decisions made in their neighbourhood. In 2023, 10% of young people and 20% of adults in Northern Ireland felt they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood. In ABC 19% of people felt that they had an influence when it comes to any local decisions made in their neighbourhood.
- During the last PB Tak£500+ Process children aged 8 and over were encouraged to put forward an idea for funding and anyone over the age of 8 could cast a vote. During the voting events 19.9% of the voters came from the 8-15 age group which shows an appetite to be involved in decision making in their community .

During the engagement process for the Banbridge Place Plan 113 children and young people were involved in the process and school engagement packs were designed aimed at the younger audience .

The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan for ABC states that loneliness and isolation were already issues, but they were made worse by the pandemic. Nearly a third of people surveyed said that they often felt lonely, and half said that they sometimes felt lonely. During the engagement workshops it was highlighted that loneliness affects everyone regardless of age and that more and more young people are feeling lonely, in particular in the aftermath of covid .

Economy

- Information on levels of entrepreneurship is available from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), which measures entrepreneurial activity of people who have started or are in the process of starting a new business – called Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA). The rate of Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in Northern Ireland in 2023 is 9.7%, up from 8.7% in 2022. This figure is just slightly lower than a figure of 10.7% in the UK overall and 10.8% in England in 2023. The TEA for the younger age group is (18-24 year olds) has increased considerably from 10.5% in 2022 to 13% in 2023. The proportion of non-entrepreneurial working age adults in Northern Ireland who expect to start a business within the next three years is 18.9% in 2023, a slight increase from its value of 18.1% in 2022. For the UK, this figure also increased from 18.5% in 2022 to 19.7% in 2023.
- In ABC 58% of FSME school leavers achieved 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths.
- In ABC 18.8% of children live in low-income households.
- The Labour Force Survey 2020 showed between 2016 and 2020, there has been a general increase in the proportion of working age adults with qualifications, where 87.0% held a qualification in 2020 (and 13.0% reported having no qualifications). The proportion of people aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training (as measured by the lifelong learning indicator) in NI was consistently lower than the UK. Those aged 50 to 64 were the least likely to participate in education or training, and for those who did engage, the highest participation rate was for those qualified to Level 6 and above (equivalent to first degree or higher).
- The Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024/25 states that, ABC has the lowest percentage of young people leaving school with 2 + A Levels in 2021 compared with Local Government Districts and is almost 10% below the NI average- 48.9% (ABC), 57.8% (NI). In 2022/23, 35.5% of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough entered Higher Education Institutions which is 3.9 percentage points less than the previous year though the percentage continuing on to Institutes of Further Education has increased from 37.4% in 2021/22 to 39.4% in 2022/23.
- Results from the Household Below Average Income 2019/20 report released by the Department for Communities show that children (22%) are more likely to be in relative poverty than working-age adults (14%) (before housing costs). Approximately 18% of pensioners in Northern Ireland are living in relative low income.

- Results from the Northern Ireland Poverty Income Inequality Report 2022/23 show that 24% of children live in relative low income (before housing costs) compared to 16.8% of working-age adults and 16.4% of pensioners. Approximately 19% of the population in Northern Ireland are living in relative low income in 2022/23 .

Place

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2022/23 show that in Northern Ireland 90% of households had access to the internet at home and 87% of households had home broadband access which is among the lowest in the UK.
- In 2020, as part of the LFS, ONS collected data on internet usage and the results show that in NI in 2020, 88% of persons aged 16 and over had used the internet in the last 3 months compared to 92.1% in the UK overall. Just over 10% of persons aged 16+ in Northern Ireland had never used the internet compared to 6.3% in the UK overall. Usage by age group is only available for the UK but shows that usage decreases as age increases with just over half of persons aged 75 and over using the internet in the last 3 months.
- During the engagement for the Armagh and Banbridge Place Plans young people felt that public transport could be improved with later and more frequent buses and older people felt that there should be more accessible parking spaces and more pedestrianised areas within town centres where possible.

During the engagement workshops the provision of accessible toilets was raised and the access to these toilets when available.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their age.

Marital Status

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their marital status.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- Findings from the Experience of Crime and Perceptions of Crime and Policing and Justice, 2021/22 Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey (NISCTS) suggest that 3.2% of single parent adults living with their children were victims of burglary while 2.4% were victims of violent crime.
- With regards perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' , 12% of single parent adults with children at home were greatly affected by fear of crime while approximately 13% of adults living in social rented accommodation were greatly affected by fear of crime. Almost 1 in 5 persons living in areas with self-perceived high anti-social behaviour are also greatly affected by fear of crime.

Economy

Women typically earn lower wages per hour and work fewer paid hours over their lifetimes, while also facing income loss due to caregiving responsibilities. Although this wage gap may be offset by the earnings of male partners in dual income (and mixed sex) households, it leaves single women, pensioners, and especially single parents in precarious financial situations, susceptible to poverty-level incomes. The Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024/25 states that employers are finding that the pandemic has exacerbated skills gaps with the reduced availability and higher cost of childcare creating a barrier to employment.

Place

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2021 shows there was very little difference found between the proportion of single (90%) and married/ civil partnership (88%) who engaged with the arts within the previous year. However, both groups were more likely to have attended than separated/ divorced people (79%). Widowed people were the marital group least likely to have engaged with the arts within the previous year (69%).
- In 2023/24 in the Southern area just over 17% of homeless presentations were for relationship/martial breakdown with the number of single lets not meeting the demand.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their marital status.

Sexual Orientation

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their sexual orientation.

- The 2021 NI Census data indicates that 2.1% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. The Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.
- One of the key issues for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people is the promotion of community safety across the Borough. Findings from the PSNI Hate Crime Offences show that in our borough homophobic motivated incidents have increased since 2020/21 by 56% in 2022. In Northern Ireland there was also an increase of 26.2 % in 2021/22.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their sexual orientation.

Gender

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their gender.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20 shows that a higher proportion of males (61%) than females (51%) participated in sport.
- Male life expectancy at age 65 in the borough is 18.9 years for 2020-22 compared to 18.3 years in Northern Ireland. Female life expectancy at age 65 is higher at 21.0 years in the borough and 20.6 years in Northern Ireland. The standardised avoidable death rate per 100,000 population in 2018-22 was 240 in Armagh City, Banbridge

and Craigavon Borough. The borough and Northern Ireland overall had both shown decreases between 2010-14 and 2015-19 but since then rates have been increasing again in both areas.

- Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall: Female 1.3 years & Male 3.2 years

Economy

- Looking at women's participation in local government, almost a third (29%) of elected members (12 out of 41) of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council are female.

Pay parity between males and females was raised at the engagement sessions and barriers into employment was discussed, in particular the low paid jobs that women sometimes find themselves taking in the caring sector.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough had the third highest unemployment rate of the eleven LGD's and was 0.5 percentage points above the Northern Ireland average. ABC remains below the NI average for the economic inactivity rate with 18.4% male and 26.9% female being economically inactive in the borough. Although ABC is performing at a favourable rate with regards to economic inactivity vs the NI average, the LMP in ABC feel that this still requires continued intervention to maintain the positive levels and further reduce those economically inactive within the Borough, focusing on women as a priority group.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their gender.

Disability

The council is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, the revised community plan takes full account of the needs of people with disabilities. This includes ensuring compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone whether they have a disability or not.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- In NI the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20 found that those aged 16 and over who have a disability were less likely to have taken part in sport at least once within the last year (38%) compared with those who do not have a disability (64%). A similar disparity was found when participation rates over the last four weeks were considered, where over a quarter of those with a disability (28%) were found to have taken part in sport compared to over half of adults who do not have a disability (52%). Fifteen per cent of adults with a disability were members of a sports club, a lower proportion than the 30% of those who do not have a disability. Rates of participation in sport for adults who have a disability have remained fairly consistent at around a third of adults since 2011/12 (32%), aside from a slight decrease to 26% in 2012/13.
- In 2016 the YLT (Young life and Times) and KLT (Kids Life and Times Survey) both asked how many times during a normal week would respondents spend at least 60 minutes during a day playing sports or doing some physical activity. The target set by the Public Health Agency and Department of Health for young people under 18 years of age is 60 minutes every day. Results from the KLT show that almost a third (32%) of primary 7 children in the borough meet this target, just below the overall results for Northern Ireland (36%). The proportion of 16 year olds meeting the target is considerably lower, just 6% in the borough and 8% in Northern Ireland overall. The reasons given for not taking part in sport or physical activity more often by respondents in the borough were at similar levels to Northern Ireland respondents overall. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon poor health and disability was identified by 7% of 16 year olds and 8% of primary 7 pupils.
- In a recent workshop held in the southern region young people felt that they missed out on learning due to their physical and mental health. The Mental health of Children and Parents in Northern Ireland Prevalence Study 2020 revealed that 1 in 8 children and young people in Northern Ireland experience emotional difficulties, 1 in 10 conduct problems and 1 in 7 problems with hyperactivity .
- At the recent CVS engagement workshop held to inform the review of the community plan the issue was raised with transition from child disability living allowance to PIP at 16 years. Children with disability need support to access PIP at 16 and this is not always readily available.

Economy

- Findings from the Labour Force Survey from January-December 2022 in Northern Ireland shows people without a disability were more than twice as likely to be in employment (81.5%) than those with a disability (39.1%).
- According to the 2021 Census, more than one in five people in the borough (22% or 48,726 individuals) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability. Benefit statistics from the Department for Communities showed that as of November 2022 there were: 2,510 or 5.2% of under 16 population and 5,030 or 15.2% of pension age eligible population claiming Disability Living Allowance. There were also 5,930 or 17.9% of 66+ population claiming Attendance Allowance. 18,540 Personal Independent Payment claims in payment (experimental statistics).
- In ABC there is a 47.8% gap in economic inactivity rate for disability.

Place

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20 show that in Northern Ireland adults who have a disability were less likely to have engaged with the arts (77%) than those who do not have a disability (90%).
- Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021. In 2021, just under one fifth (19%) of persons aged 16 and over, who were surveyed, reported having a mobility difficulty. On average, those with a mobility difficulty made 519 journeys in 2021, 44% less than those without a mobility difficulty (929 journeys per year).
- Continuous Household Survey 2021-22. In 2021-22, 67% of all respondents said that they were satisfied with walking conditions in their area. The figure for those with a disability was 64%, which was significantly lower than those without a disability (69%). In 2021/22, less than half (46%) of respondents said they were satisfied with cycling in their area. There was no significant difference between the results for those with or without a disability (44% and 47% respectively).
- Almost 8 in 10 (79%) respondents said they were 'satisfied' with public transport facilities in their area. There was no significant difference between responses for those with a disability (78%) and those without a disability (80%).

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of having a disability or not.

Dependants

The council is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, the revised community plan takes full account of the needs of people with or without dependants. The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone whether they have a dependant or not.

Community

- People with dependants are likely to face additional barriers to a range of life experiences, including employment, sport and art activities and access to health.

Economy

- The Equality Commission published a Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland in 2018 found that women experience a lower employment rate and a higher economic inactivity rate when they have dependants. Women are more likely to be in part-time employment than men. Lone parents with dependent children are more likely to be in employment on a part-time basis. In addition, carers who provide less than 49 hours of unpaid care are more likely to work part-time. While part-time working is one of a number of means by which women, lone parents, and carers balance employment with caring responsibilities, it can negatively influence progression in employment, with women, lone parents and carers sometimes perceived negatively for asking for flexible working.

At the engagement sessions childcare and the lack of affordable and suitable childcare was highlighted as a barrier, in particular for women, when it came to them accessing employment in the borough and this is something that will be targeted through the LMP and taken into consideration in any programmes over across our action plans.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of whether they have a dependant or not.

Multiple Identity

The council recognises that none of the section 75 groups operates as a silo and that people have multiple identities. It is aware that organisations representing any one or more of the section 75 categories will benefit from a policy which has as one of its overarching principles the need to be inclusive and fair. Therefore this is one of our cross cutting themes in the community plan.

Stage four – Consideration of Measures

Community planning seeks to be an inclusive process which takes active consideration of the needs of all sections of the community, actively engaging local people in defining local needs and priorities. Equality, good relations and inclusion are placed at the core of our work as a partnership, as we work towards achieving a shared future for all.

The vision of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon in 2030 is

“We have a happy, healthy & connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.”

The revised community plan is likely to have a positive impact on all section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly. The original 9 outcomes have been revised to be more inclusive of our ever changing society and new population indicators have been added that are more reflective of the partnership’s priorities in 2024. The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver positive outcomes to all members of the community. Whilst we recognise that there are a number of inequalities that already exist within our borough as well as Northern Ireland wide, we must mention that any of the actions that will be delivered will take these into account.

Given the strategic focus of the revised community plan 2017-30, the equality impacts of action plans, projects and programmes are not specifically considered as part of this EQIA. But as stated above in the Executive Summary and Stage one the issues identified as part of this EQIA will act as a focus for the partnership when they are delivering actions under the community plan and revising actions under the action plan review. Any actions will if appropriate be screened separately.

The partnership through the provision of support and the delivery of services, will work to prevent individuals and communities experiencing inequalities and take action and use our influence to undo the root causes of inequalities.

The sub-committees will deliver action plans for the delivery of our outcomes.

Community

Projects aimed at people, communities and neighbourhoods will help to support community cohesion, promote inclusion and integration as well as improve an individual's sense of community and quality of life.

The purpose of our community plan is to improve outcomes for residents in the borough and we are aware of inequalities in our population indicators that we can't measure as we cannot access the section 75 data at a borough level. We will however look at other ways to get evidence for section 75 through engagement and practitioner knowledge. Equality is one of our cross cutting themes at the heart of our community plan and everything that we do and we have increased the number of equality indicators in our community plan with the information that we can find available for the borough. The population indicators relevant to section 75 under the theme of community currently being measured are listed below-

1) Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall.

This currently sits at -Female 1.3 years & Male 3.2 years.

2) Number of hate motivated incidents (new indicator). In ABC there were 289 hate motivated incidents in 2022/23 this includes race, sexual orientation, sectarian faith/religion, disability and transgender.

- Projects currently being delivered through our action plan under the community theme include the following- Take 5, develop and promote Take 5 and mental health first aid resources and projects, Be Active- Deliver Get Moving ABC Framework, Give- Promote, champion and sustain Volunteering, Connect- Support and Grow the Loneliness Network, Promote self-care of staff and volunteers within the CVSE sector, Emergency Need- Continue to provide food, energy and wraparound support to people experiencing poverty, Housing-Enhance mix of tenure, and improve accessibility and affordability across the Borough's Housing, Labour Market Partnership- Implement the LMP scheme, Age Friendly Borough- Create a Borough that is welcoming, accessible and friendly borough for people of all ages, People and Place Strategy- Create a Borough that is welcoming, accessible and friendly for people of all ages, PEACEPLUS-Delivery of the ABC Community PEACE action plan, Place Plans- Implement, develop and roll out Place plans across the Borough, Tak£500+ PB-Further develop participatory budgeting across the Borough, Further Embed the Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy, Support CVSE Panel, Use of data and evidence and Shared Leadership Support.

- In 2021 the NIHE published its Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy 2021-2026, The aims of the strategy are to address the range of accommodation needs of Irish Travellers and ensure the provision of adequate and suitable accommodation for Irish Travellers that meets their needs, promotes their equality of opportunity and promotes good relations among Traveller households and between Travellers and other members of the community and this will be delivered through 12 key actions.
- Get Moving ABC is a borough wide targeted initiative delivered by a range of statutory bodies and organisations who have a collective goal in motivating and supporting residents to achieve the recommended physical activity levels and to develop positive attitudes towards being active. Between April 2022 and March 2023 there were 21 inclusive sport and leisure programmes delivered with 865 participants in ABC. Some of the programmes delivered included the inclusive sport and leisure initiative targeted at those with a disability, walking football aimed at older people who may be unable to run, programmes for women and girls and an inclusive cycle scheme which provided sports wheelchairs, hand cycles and tandem bikes. Get Moving ABC promote age-friendly, all-ability environments that are welcoming and inclusive to all and will achieve this through cross-sector awareness raising and a commitment to enhanced staff training. We will continue to support Get Moving ABC to deliver upon their action plan through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Plan.
- The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan is aimed at those in ABC aged 50 and over and is delivered through 5 outcomes and supporting actions. In the short term, these will support the age-friendly themes of- Social participation, Respect and social inclusion, Outdoor spaces and buildings, Community support and health services, Communications and information, and in the long term, these will also build foundations to support changes in Transportation, Housing and Civic participation and employment. We will continue to support the Age Friendly Alliance to deliver upon their strategy and action plan through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Plan.
- PEACEPLUS will deliver on £6,759,997 of funding in the ABC area. This will be delivered under three themes and some of the actions under these themes will be- expanding communal spaces to break down tangible and perceived barriers, fostering cross-community connections among children and youth to enhance community inclusivity, equal opportunities for children and young people in terms of play, providing support for newcomers to integrate and initiatives to alleviate isolation and loneliness, and implementing age-friendly projects and promoting cross-

community and cross-border programmes. We will continue to support PEACEPLUS to deliver upon their action plan through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan.

- The People and Place Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is currently being reviewed and designed through a co-design process and aims to start delivery in Spring 2025. Issues that have become evident during the co-design process have included access to mental health services, in particular for men, youth involvement in decision making processes, suitable housing for older people, lack of understanding of cultural backgrounds and diversity. We will continue to support DfC in the designing and delivery of the revised People and Place Strategy through our action plan and also address the issues through our actions of Take 5, Loneliness Network, Participatory Budgeting, Emergency Need and through the Community Voluntary Sector Panel.

Investment in health and wellbeing will help address health inequalities within the borough, to do this effectively we will continue to work collaboratively with our health partners and community and voluntary organisations and public consultation will inform the review of the partnership's actions.

Economy

We will continue to work closely with our key partners to develop projects to support employability and skills development to ensure our potential workforce will have the essential skills required to begin their career pathways.

The purpose of our community plan is to improve outcomes for the residents in the borough and population indicators relevant to section 75 under the theme of economy currently being measured are-

1) Percentage of children living in low-income households (new indicator). In ABC 18.8% of children live in low-income households.

2) Employment gap for disability (new indicator). 47.8% gap in economic inactivity rate for disability.

*3)GCSE attainment levels for students entitled to free school means (new indicator)
58% of FSME school leavers achieved 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths.*

- Projects currently being delivered through our action plan under the economy theme include the following- Labour Market Partnership- Implement the LMP scheme, Housing- Enhance mix of tenure, and improve accessibility and affordability across the Borough's housing, Emergency Need - Continue to provide food, energy and wraparound support to people experiencing poverty, People and Place Strategy- Create a Borough that is welcoming, accessible and friendly for people of all ages, PEACEPLUS- Delivery of the ABC Community PEACE action plan, Place Plans Implement, develop and roll out Place plans across the Borough, Further Embed the Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy and Use of data and evidence.
- Under PEACEPLUS The Youth Catalyst Programme will be delivered which aims to equip young people from different communities in ABC with the knowledge, skills and resources needed to become successful entrepreneurs. This will include encouraging participants' originality, creativity and fostering innovation. The Youth Catalyst programme will be delivered on a cross community basis between young people from different communities. By offering a platform for dialogue, the programme aims to reduce tensions and promote peace. Participants will form groups/ project teams with people from different communities to develop potential business ideas which they will have the opportunity to share to potential investors at the end of the programme. We will continue to support PEACEPLUS during delivery of their action plan through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan.
- The Labour Market Partnership will run a disability employment programme aimed specifically at supporting those with disabilities to secure sustained employment. It will also deliver a female returners programme which will support women who wish to return to the Labour Market following an absence due to other responsibilities or circumstances. A disability upskilling programme will also be delivered which will upskill people with disabilities to help them progress to new or higher paid jobs. A 50+ Reskilling Academy which also take place under LMP which will support those in the 50+ age bracket who have become disengaged with the labour market.
- During the People and Place review engagement sessions the need for better access to work placements in rural areas was highlighted, along with the need for more affordable childcare, making it more accessible for parents. These will be addressed

during the delivery of the People and Place Strategy and we will continue to support DfC during their delivery through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan.

- We will also continue our work to combat poverty with a potential to moving away from crisis support to more preventative actions.

Place

Promotion of shared services and space will contribute to building positive relationships between different sections of the community. Promotion of greater access to open spaces will remove barriers to participation and encourage a sense of belonging.

The purpose of our community plan is to improve outcomes for the residents in the borough and population indicators relevant to S75 under the theme of place currently being measured are-

1) Percentage of people who see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life. In ABC 49% of people see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life.

- Projects currently being delivered through our action plan under the place theme include the following- Place Plans- Implement, develop and roll out Place plans across the Borough, City of Culture- Advance Bid for UK City of Culture 2025, Housing- Enhance mix of tenure, and improve accessibility and affordability across the Borough's Housing, People and Place Strategy- Create a Borough that is welcoming, accessible and friendly for people of all ages, PEACEPLUS- Delivery of the ABC Community PEACE action plan, Age Friendly Borough- Create a Borough that is welcoming, accessible and friendly borough for people of all ages, Shared Leadership support, Further Embed the Partnership's Community Engagement Strategy, Tak£500+ PB- Further develop participatory budgeting across the Borough and Use of data and evidence.
- Place Plans are currently being delivered for Armagh and Banbridge and engagement for the Dromore place plan is well underway. These place plans have included wide engagement with S75 groups including children, older people and disability groups. During the engagement for the Armagh place plan 591 people were involved and this included 172 young people. During the engagement for the Banbridge place plan of the 168 survey respondents, 13% considered themselves to

have a disability; 9% were gay, lesbian or bisexual and a focused engagement session was attended by representatives from RNIB, IMTAC, the Guide Dog Association and TADA. To date in the engagement for the Dromore place plan 248 people have been involved which includes young people and older people with more S75 engagement sessions planned during the coming months.

- Through PEACEPLUS The Community Advantage Programme will create investment in local Capital Projects across the Borough. The key aim is to develop and deliver local strategic capital projects (collaboratively working with community groups, sports clubs and/or partnerships) that “create a more cohesive society through the development of transformative shared space and services, which will support and embed peace and reconciliation”. We will continue to support PEACEPLUS in their delivery through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan
- The NIHE continue to deliver social housing and between April 2022 and March 2023 a total of 38 units of social housing were completed in ABC Council area. In March 2023 there were five new build social schemes on site which will deliver a further 99 units including nine wheelchair accessible units. A further six new build schemes are currently included on the 3-year Social Housing Development Plan which will deliver approximately 186 units. We will continue to support the NIHE in their delivery through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan.
- Place Plans for Armagh and Banbridge are currently being delivered and Dromore Place Plan is at engagement stage and due for delivery in 2025. Under the Armagh Place Plan St Malachy’s Court housing scheme has been completed with mixed tenure which includes 1 bedroom apartments and wheelchair accessible apartments.
- Through the Banbridge Place Plan it is hoped to link Riverside Walk to Church Square and Solitude Park and bridge Havelock Park to Huntly Wood and this will increase connectivity and accessibility between these areas with smooth wheelchair walks and pathways.
- DfI is currently preparing an Active Travel Delivery Plan that is expected to be published for public consultation in Autumn 2024. In addition DfI will prepare an ABC Sub Regional Transport Plan that will consider the local traffic movements within the council area. This will consider accessibility for section 75 groups in the borough. The Place Board will continue to work alongside DfI to support delivery of the Active Travel plan through our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan.

Clear Communication and Engagement

Our engagement and participation process aims to be as inclusive and innovative as possible, it is essential to utilise a range of methods of communicating information. Mutual understanding leads to better connection with people. We will ensure communication is clear and, in a format, suitable for everyone. To be most effective it will often combine a range of complementary methods bespoke to the audiences we are trying to reach. We have developed a community engagement strategy and through this we have adopted methods of engagement with a people focused approach and encouraged active participation throughout our sub committees. We will continue to use a range of innovative methods during the lifespan of our community plan and beyond.

Partnership Working

We believe in strong, shared and collaborative approaches and are committed to collectively working with our partners from all sectors and communities to develop innovative practices to realise our full potential for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. We have put in place robust governance structures that encourage and promote participation in joint decision making to encourage a more joined up approach to service delivery.

Our Covid 19 Response and Recovery Action Plan will be revised in Autumn 2024 which will support the delivery of our revised community plan and will take into account performance indicators, clear lines of accountability for delivery and monitoring and review processes.