Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030

Mid-Point Review 2024

Partnership Feedback Report

June 2024

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1. Background

This report brings together the ideas and feedback from conversations across the ABC Community Planning Partnership to inform the review of *Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030*.

ABC Community Planning Strategic Partnership decided to undertake a mid-point review of the community plan to ensure that the plan reflects the aspirations for the borough, given the significant events and changes that have occurred since its publication.

The community plan sets out the long-term vision and is the overarching plan for the borough. Its purpose is to make life better by improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing and it creates a two way link between community plans at a local government level and any Programme for Government.

A lot has happened since Connected was developed in 2016. The borough has experienced the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to respond to increased demand for crisis support as a result of the current cost of living crisis. The legislative and policy context around environmental sustainability has changed, leading to increased duties and ambition to reduce greenhouse gases. During the pandemic the partnership's priorities for collaboration also changed. Although much of the ambition and measurements in Connected remain relevant, the partnership decided that, given these events, the time was right to revisit the plan as some changes were likely to be necessary.

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 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 all members of the CPSP to discuss the review. ABC Elected Members also had the opportunity to feed in at a workshop in June. Detailed background papers were composed by the Community Planning Team for these workshops and the links to the papers under each theme can be found at the links below:

- **Background Paper for Community Theme**
- **Background Paper for Economy Theme**
- **Background Paper for Place Theme**

The Community Planning Team in ABC Council would like to thank all partners who have enthusiastically taken part in this stage of the review. 105 people from 32 organisations have joined the conversation, sharing their broad knowledge, lived experience and opinions. The input from partners that is brought together in this report will inform the draft version of Connected, that will go the CPSP and individual partners for their agreement before a public consultation from October. We hope to launch the reviewed community plan in April 2025, along with a revised action plan.

2. Strategic Context

There was consensus that it is the right time to review the community plan given the changes that have taken place since the plan was published in 2017.

There was also wide agreement that the Community & Voluntary Sectors had stepped up during the pandemic and need to be acknowledged for the role in responding to crises and challenges while strengthening communities.

- **What are the challenges from within and outside the borough?**

Poverty and inequalities persist despite some positive data: Economic population indicators in the statement are all green, but we know women and people with a disability face additional barriers to qualifications and employment. We're also hearing about educational attainment for those entitled to free school meals and poverty. Things are not improving for areas with more deprivation. Are the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer? There are many people with a job who are in poverty. Some people can't afford the electricity to cook or may not know how. Partners are coming across teenagers who have never tasted strawberries. How to raise aspirations? Would an indicator on the Real Living Wage be more useful than % of people below median income?

Even when are population statistics are looking steady, we are still not making a dent on inequalities, will things get worse?

Importance of the language we use: Language around disadvantage and deprivation can be condescending and self-fulfilling. Some language is technical and is used with the data, e.g. deprivation, but the CVS has challenged that language. Many people and communities are working hard to progress and some language doesn't reflect this. Community groups are supporting people to break the cycle and it can be dangerous to label an area.

Lack of affordable housing and homelessness: These are increasing in the borough and are driving much of the use of food banks.

Community & Voluntary Sector challenges with funding, succession, volunteers and participation: After covid many groups lost volunteers who haven't returned and some groups have been wiped out, particularly in rural areas. Also some people don't want to be running to activities as much during the week. No succession planning for older volunteer profile e.g. credit unions, and young people are too busy with study and work to take part. At the same time, CVS organisations are having increase emergency support with cost-of-living crisis. The sector is exhausted. The CVS needs recognition for what they have been through over the past few years and in particular at the minute in terms of lack of funding. There needs to be counselling and support services in place for all volunteers.

Ability to influence decisions that affect us: Only 19% of people feel they can influence local decisions, challenge for the partnership, need CVS.

Impact of pandemic on young people's mental health: In relation to covid, young people have seen heightened anxiety and as a result are not attending school or youth clubs the same way as the would have previously and increasingly are isolating in their rooms. This is borne out by school attendance figures.

Climate change: We are seeing the impact locally with recent flooding. Illegal dumping and invasive species like Himalayan Balsam are damaging rural areas.

Rural issues: Exacerbated by insufficient public transport and loneliness among older people. Most services and interventions are focused on towns.

Childcare: Huge need for affordable quality childcare.

Importance of accessible toilet facilities in town centres: Public toilets make town centres more accessible. Some toilets have been closed due to drug use. Changing Places policy in place in council and some funding from DfC has enabled more to be opened.

Financial climate getting worse: Less money available to deal with urgent issues such as climate, poverty, housing, mental health and deepening inequalities. Need for collaboration to end duplication and make resources go further. Many people did not expect a global pandemic and there may be future events which will exacerbate these issues, like further recessions.

Lack of Programme for Government: Not having a Programme for Government with shared outcomes has made working across government departments more challenging. Departments and ALBs are not mandated to do cross-cutting work.

How to be strategic and look to the longer-term when responding to the cost of living crisis? There is an opportunity cost when many organisations are working hard to meet people's basic needs for food and heat. That energy and resource could be directed towards early intervention and prevention. One year budget cycles make long-term action even harder. Money is often received in January and must be spent by end of March.

Data for some population indicators not available: Some research to show that participation in sport is increasing. There may be a different indicators for tourism that would be more in line with sustainable tourism priority in the Draft Tourism Strategy.

Changing demographics: Growing population of foreign nationals with different ethnicities and different needs. They have so much to give in our society and we need an inclusive programme for everyone.

Expectations matter: If people have low expectations and no aspirations then how do you change their mindset?

- **What are the opportunities from within and outside the borough?**

Strong engaged partnership. ABC Community Planning Partnership is genuine collaboration. There is a willingness to support and work together to make the best of what we do have. Many partners involved to share the load. Community planning has brough great connectivity in the borough, whereas there was more silo working before covid. In ABC community planning partnership there is an equal playing field for the CVSE sectors that we can build on over the next two years.

Ability to influence together: We have more influence collectively than as individual organisations. Funding follows strategy. Opportunity to influence how resources are allocated through the community plan. We need to think about where we can influence and can we work collectively to do that. Can influence up to government departments together as a partnership and now there is a government. How can we collectively influence adoption of an anti-poverty strategy?

A new Programme for Government?: opportunity to link in with a new PfG. There hasn't been one since community plans were published in 2017. New Minister for Economy's priority is regional balance, all areas with equal share of wealth. There will be some money for pilots coming out of the new sub-regional economic strategy.

Strong CVSE sectors in the borough: Community & Voluntary Sector Panel now have opportunity to access statutory agencies who are starting to listen.

Models of collaboration have come out of recent crises: Collaboration and resource sharing between organisations involved in cost of living support and previously Covid-19 response. This is a model that could be replicated across the partnership. We have become good at collaborating in crises to meet people's basic needs, how do we look at more structural issues together. Community planning is a forum about what's best for the place and its people, rather than what's best for each partner.

Service improvement: With a wide range of partners at the table, we can improve services by 'joining the dots', connectivity at point of need.

Prevention: Services are no longer able to meet local needs due to financial constraints. Some partners are putting resources int early intervention and prevention. For example, the Southern Trust is training people to become community health trainers through the Verve Healthy Living Centres, which are being expanded across the borough.

Participatory Budgeting: great experience and learning for partners involved. Helps partners to deliver their own work by building links into communities, including people not involved in a formal community or voluntary sector organisation.

Place Plans: opportunity to surface local issues.

People & Place review: the partnership can feed into the review and the work coming out of the revised strategy can link in with community planning.

Volunteer recruitment: Opportunity to promote family volunteering. Parent and younger people aged 13-15 years. Older teenagers have less time with

Mid-South West Growth Deal: projects to increase automation in food production and attract better paid jobs.

Insights through sharing partner service data: Family Support Hub data would be made available for the council locality areas. Learning from each other in terms of sharing case studies

3. Community & Voluntary Sector Panel Workshop

The Community & Voluntary Sector Steering Group hosted an engagement session with the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel and wider community sector on Wednesday 22nd May 2024 in Seagoe Hotel, Portadown to feed into the Mid-point review of Connected.

The purpose of the session was to:
- Strengthen participation and connections with Community and Voluntary Sector panel members (members), and the Steering Group (SG) and Community Planning Team (CPT)
- Bring members up to date with the Connected Plan framework (Connected), the Statement of Progress and the Connected mid-point review
- Capture the thoughts, experiences, ideas members to help shape and inform the Connected mid-point review.

The workshop was structured around two sessions .1) Strategic Context and Midpoint Review and 2) What does good look like? Informing Review of Outcomes and Indicators

Session one Strategic Context and Mid-Point Review

1. What struck you about what you have just heard about the Connected Plan and statement of progress?

Eary intervention & prevention and the value of early years services for children.

Importance of education
- Familiar with some of the statistics as they are used for funding applications.
- Importance of access to homework and breakfast clubs for children entitled to Free School Meals – especially to support mums to get into work after e.g. mental health breakdown. Schools, employers and voluntary organisations can work together to support.
- Education is so important for life chances and early years education is so important for children and also for early intervention and to support parents. Not all families who need Surestart have access to it because of their postcode.
- Early intervention and prevention is important, we should be investing in services that prevent issues such as substance use, crime, mental ill health.
- The plan needs an indicator for children aged 0-5 years as these years are critical in development.
- Parents need to be supported to participate in children's education to break cycles of poverty.

Confident Community indicator – sharp decline in no of people who feel can influence decisions – this has declined from 26% to 19% since the base year.

- Lack of government and no PfG may have contributed to this decline. recognition that Participatory B will have helped people locally have a say in how resources are allocated and the theme based around the 5 steps to well-being will have made an impact on peoples mental health. How do we harness the success of Tak£500+ in an unstable financial climate – the growing success of PB and huge influx in applications being received has seen a decline in the number of applications being funded from 90% in year 2 to 70% in year three.

Community & Voluntary Sector succession, volunteers and participation

After covid many groups lost volunteers who haven't returned and some groups have been wiped out. Also some people don't want to be running to activities as much during the week. No succession planning for older volunteer profile e.g. credit unions, and young people are too busy with study and work to take part. At the same time, CVS organisations are having increase emergency support with cost-of-living crisis.

2. Since Connected's implementation in 2016, identify up to 3 things that:

(i) you have noticed/think have changed for the better

- **Tak£500+ Participatory Budgeting**
- **Free activities for older people – senior citizens walk & talk**
- **Age Friendly and Loneliness Network**
- **Impact of green spaces and being outdoors in towns**
    - Tree planting
    - In Portadown a billboard has been taken down to reveal a small green space. It has made a big difference and makes the town feel friendlier.
    - Café culture, more outdoor seating in Portadown has improved the town.
    - Get Active ABC- Walk and Talk programmes
    - MUGA activities are great but they should be more spread out e.g none at Bleary

(ii) haven't changed for the better

- **Access to interpreters, access to services and service standards**
    - Bureaucratic barriers & lack of access to interpreters: for someone who doesn't have much English, JBO supposed to provide interpreters, but they don't. Instead refer people to advice services who do not have access to interpreters. People are looking for work, but don't have access to information on benefits and requirements to keep them. They get their benefits cut because they don't fulfil the requirements and end up utilising food banks. Vicious circle. JBO, advice services and food banks are part of/funded by DfC.
    - Issue of children being taken out of school to interpret for parents. This is damaging to the children and children are not able to provide a professional interpreting service.

- **Mental Health**
    - People experiencing mental health crises: impossible to contact a GP, have had to abandon a client at Bluestone. A&E is packed with people who need urgent mental health treatment/support.

- **Drugs**
    - The situation is getting worse and there is no coherent plan in place.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour & Criminality**

- **Increase in Road Traffic Collisions – linked to drugs and alcohol**

3. What do you think are:

(i)   challenges or things that hold us back?

- **Lack of funding for CVSE and also the CVSE sector being given credit for what they have been through**
- **Red tape**
- **Lack of early intervention & prevention services for children and young people**
    - Providing opportunities for young people to undertake positive activities. There are no activities for young people aged 13-20 years.
    - Support for children from low income families – brain is developed by age 5.
    - Cut in health visiting is having an impact. Increase need for Speech & Language Therapy and increase in children with SEN.
    - Increase in children not attending school.
    - Issues with transition from child disability living allowance to PIP at 16 years. Children with disability need support to access PIP at 16. Need to provide money advice in schools.
    - Lack of CVS led autism services in the borough
    - Cost of transport to access services
    - Cutbacks to home visiting, especially health visitors, people are being forgotten about

- **No women's refuge in the borough.**

- **Cost of Business Rates** the increased cost of business rates has impact on economy and businesses closing

(ii)   opportunities to help us do better.

- **Place**
    - Need to talk about place, traffic accidents, ASB etc
- **Indicator 0-5 years**
    - There should be a population indicator in the plan on children aged 0-5 as these years are crucial for future development of a child.
- **Administrative data – why good here and not here?**
    - Opportunity to use partners' administrative data to understand why outcomes are better in some places.
- **Collaboration – could be better early years – e.g. of food hub**
    - Not enough networking and collaboration for early years sector. The sector itself has two different categories which are overseen by two different bodies: EA or SHSCT.
    - ABC Food Hub is a great model for collaboration and cooperation.

4. Fast forward to 2030, what does good look like for you, and the community you come from/live in/represent? How would you measure success?

COMMUNITY
- Inclusive & accessible.
- Safe.
- Clean.
- Need grass cut, roundabouts look messy.
- Low cost or no cost opportunities to for young people from different backgrounds to connect through sport.
- Accessible community services to take pressure off NHS. Could GPs and other services open into the evening?
- Hybrid working- flexibility
- Creches in workplaces.
- Interactive and collaborative sports programmes- these will break down barriers
- Mental health services for communities - counselling needs to be accessible.
- Address light pollution – sensors for street lights?

ECONOMY
- Equal access to all services – well paid job, education and health no matter where you live.
- Vibrant local economy.
- Town centres need to be reenergised.
- Housing – people can't afford to buy so rent, rent increasing and low paid jobs. Unable to afford rent.
- Fair job for a fair wage and feeling valued.
- Closure of food banks or less reliance on foodbanks for .
- Childcare strategy.
- Intergenerational impact
- Early intervention-SEN

PLACE
- Social Housing.
- Sunshine.
- Positive places for young people.
- Sports hub.
- Clean air and water.
- 3rd level education.
- Flowers and wildflower meadows- more aesthetically pleasing #
- Sports clubs with everything under one roof

4. Proposed Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

The conversations were extremely useful for testing the Chairs and Vice Chairs proposed changes to the outcomes and indicators. There is broad agreement that the changes are appropriate and partners made some additional suggestions for wording and indicators. Partners also provided important information on what is currently happening within the borough around the themes.

The discussions and feedback from the workshops and meetings can be found below and are presented under the three themes of Community, Economy and Place.

COMMUNITY

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
~~Confident Community~~ **Connected Community:** Everyone has opportunities to ~~engage in~~ **contribute to** community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.	• 19% of people feel that they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood. • 84 % of people feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. • 22% of people who feel lonely at least some of the time.

Discussion & Feedback

There is no Loneliness Strategy and to access funding a strategy is needed. Loneliness can affect people of all ages and should not be thought of as just "older" people and the recovery from Covid has seen loneliness levels rising across the borough. Young people are amongst one of the highest groups being affected by loneliness and some of this id sue to social anxiety after Covid in terms of attending sports events, social events and even school. Loneliness can also be an issue for people who have had to work from home since the pandemic.

The partners were happy with the addition of an indicator on loneliness.
Is it possible to measure the number of people who are involved in community/sports groups instead of loneliness? Would that help to drive resources where they need to be? But people can feel lonely when they are surrounded by people. (EH & CD)

Potential for a Directory of Services that is kept up to date with information in order to stay Connected. This should be available in different languages and all formats to make it user friendly.

Contribute to community life and shape decisions is the preferred option and an indicator around volunteering was discussed and there are statistics available from Volunteer Now and C&B Volunteer Bureau, there has been a large increase in volunteering numbers in the borough but in other Council areas this is not the case and this could be down to varying recruitment methods in the different localities.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
Healthy Community: People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.	163 preventable deaths per 100,000 population. - Female 1.3 years & Male 3.2 years: Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall. 56 % of people who participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day a week. 214 people per 1,000 population prescribed medication for mood and anxiety disorders (included in Statement 21-23). *Also considered suicide and self-harm stats.*

Discussion & Feedback

Sometimes people can't afford to make "healthy " lifestyle choices or lack the education to do so. This needs a programme to educate people that they can live healthy for less than they think.

Many organisations are struggling to get qualified instructors to take programmes and this is reducing the number of exercise programmes on offer. Health data should be available at Council level and should be "meeting Chief Medical Officer guidelines for physical activity?"

'Resilient' is the preferred option in the wording- though there was discussion about whether or not 'equipped' was the correct word as it may infer that some-one needs to have a piece of equipment in order to cope with life's challenges.

Current programmes should be utilised and publicised, especially in terms of international programmes. There are now many groups and organisations looking at sustainability in terms of community gardens and groups can work together and learn from each other.

Social prescribing should be higher up on the agenda. There should be multi-disciplinary teams in place in terms of referring people to counselling services, addictions services.

The mood and anxiety disorder prescriptions may not be accurate as those medications can be prescribed for other disorders and are then recorded as mood and anxiety disorder medications when they are to treat another ailment. Nervous about any indicator that measures number of people on a treatment programme as higher numbers can be good as people are getting treated.

Would how many people access mental health services/counselling waiting lists be a better indicator?

Hoarders and people involved in ASB have mental health and addiction issues and it is hard to get support.

There is an economic impact to mental ill health from staff absences. Link also between mental ill health and housing affordability.

Individual wellbeing is an important aspect of health and reflected in regional planning policy.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
Welcoming Community: Our borough is a safe, **inclusive,** respectful and peaceful environment.	• 73% of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life. • 63 accidental dwelling fires 2021/22. • 289 hate motivated incidents 2022/23 *Also considered domestic abuse stats.* *~~49% of people see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life. – moved to Place~~*

Discussion & Feedback

'Inclusive' is a welcome addition to Welcoming Community. There was discussion about the potential of using the number of Changing Places w/c's as an indicator or accessible w/c's?

Consensus around the indicator- % of people see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life should be moved under Place?

The reduction in community policing is influencing people going into town centres as they do not see them inclusive for the fear of groups of people hanging about in large groups.

The newcomers into our communities are living above shops which is great is great for making the town centres more welcoming places, on the other hand the increase in the diverse population is creating barriers in terms of perceptions and lack of understanding of the language. There needs to be more education around cultural awareness in the borough.

Opening times for cafes and restaurants needs to be addressed as there is no night time economy and the reduced hours happened during Covid-19 and many businesses have not reintroduced later opening times.

Consensus around adding hate motivated incidents as a new indicator, could domestic abuse stats be added in if data were to be obtained from Women's Aid/other domestic abuse agencies? NI has the highest per capita rate of domestic homicide in Europe.

Would hate motivated crimes be a more useful indicator than hate motivated incidents?

Is there a population indicator on disability?

Not sure if domestic abuse stats would be useful at a population level as an indicator.

ECONOMY	
OUTCOME	**POPULATION INDICATORS**
Enterprising Economy: Our borough is a centre for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.	• 9,390 VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses. • 11% business birth rate. • 45% survival rates for newly born businesses. OR *£29.17 Gross Value Added per hour worked. Productivity indicator to replace one of the other indicators above?*

Discussion & Feedback

Large companies are often providing low paid jobs for those who live nearby and people may be travelling into the borough for high value jobs. Can we measure how much people are earning?

In terms of productivity, we are lagging behind every other LGD. We need a cultural shift. A productivity shift. The productivity institute last week said that the only way to get money is through businesses doing better. Businesses are now the only ones that can make a difference.

While there were some questions asked about the reliability of the productivity data, there was a suggestion to drop the No. of VAT and / or PAYE registered businesses and include the measure of productivity.

Is 'green' missing from the wording in the outcome. Regional policy direction, inclusion, sustainability and innovation. There was discussion about businesses using 'green procurement' moving forward.

Productivity is a useful indicator. Does it sit better as a proxy for Skilled Economy?

Refer to MSW Growth Deal and Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

Is the amount of FDI or local investment available as a population indicator? This could be a performance measure if there was an action included in the revised action plan.

List of large businesses in the narrative may need to be updated, a newer list is in the corporate plan.

It would be useful to know the number of micro businesses as well as VAT/PAYE registered.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS

Skilled Economy: People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.	92% of the workforce in employment qualified to below level 2, level 3 an 83% to level 2 and above, 64% to level 3 and above, 47% to level 4 and above. 75% employment rate (age 16-64). 58% of FSME school leavers achieved 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths (included in Statement 21-23).

Discussion & Feedback

There is an interest in knowing more about tertiary education levels and specifically more detailed information about apprenticeships given that this has become an increasingly popular route for some young people.

Can we provide education opportunities or upskilling opportunities for women in caring professions where wages are typically low? Some suggestions for creche's for new business ideas given the issue of childcare in the Borough.

What are the green skills that we need to deliver on Sustainable Place?

School attendance should be focussed on. Given the increase in the number of children missing school due to mental and other ill health particularly since covid. This has also been noted as an area of concern by the CYSP. It also has an impact on future skills (BPA).
Is there any way of measuring the support for parents of children with mental or other ill health?

Some organisations struggle to get data points and how effective their work can be. For example, they work with a child to get them through exams but they have no 'data' to know if the child could have got the qualifications without their help.

Issue with FSME is that not everyone who is eligible claims for them.

There is almost full employment and a low claimant count for unemployment related benefits. People who are economically inactive can face barriers to work including lack of childcare, they are providing childcare for grandchildren, disability.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
Inclusive Economy: Everyone has a decent minimum living standard. ~~Tourism Economy~~ ~~Our borough is a destination of choice for international visitors.~~	• 18.8% of children live in low-income households (included in Statement 21-23). • 47.8% gap in economic inactivity rate for disability. *Also considered homelessness, economic inactivity rate gender/, gross disposable household income.* • ~~1,266 overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland (4% of NI)~~ moved to Revitalised Place.

Discussion & Feedback

As a definition this is broad and what we need.

Some issue with the indicator we're using for poverty – would prefer data on the living wage however as this is not something that is available at LGD level, perhaps this is something we should include at NI level within the report.

Would be useful to include information on a reasonable wage and access to services if possible.

Wellbeing is impacted by your disposable income – how much money is in the pocket to spend - GDHI would be a useful indicator.

Recommendation to use Disability Employment Rate as opposed to the Economic Inactivity data which is more difficult to understand.

Private rent is driving homelessness. Housing and homelessness are very important and need to be included in the CP. Some favoured the inclusion of an indicator on housing as housing affordability was driving a lot of problems and 'is the key to everything' and others felt community or place themes were a better fit for a housing indicator. Tracking the cost of private rental could provide a population indicator for this outcome. Housing Market Analysis may be useful.

A lot of the jobs are through an agency – people are being taken advantage of with poor conditions and poor pay.
Equality – everyone should have the same access to schools etc and expect a reasonable standard of living.

Discussion & Feedback

Equality – everyone should have the same access to schools etc and expect a reasonable standard of living.
Big push on GREEN economy so might be worth building this into the outcome.
Faith based organisations play a huge role in the community and deserve specific mention.

We need to be careful about wording and how we interpret the data. Sometimes certain language can be vilifying people such as disabled or unemployed people so need to be careful how we explain things.

No objections to moving the tourism indicator to revitalised place. Recommendation that visitor spend would be a better indicator to use. The idea now is to get people to stay for longer and spend more. By encouraging more and more visitors it means more planes, trains etc which all affects the carbon footprint so goes against the whole green agenda.

Need a housing indicator against to measure Inclusive Economy as having a place central to minimum living standard.

Useful to unpick low income households indicator to understand what it's measuring and different current increase in prices has on it.

Important to have good quality affordable housing and a sufficient wage to have a decent minimum living standard.

Lack of affordable childcare is a barrier for many women to work. People with a disability have lower qualification and employment levels.

Contribution of newcomers to society including the economy through employment and starting businesses. Barriers to utilising their overseas skills.

PLACE	
OUTCOME	**POPULATION INDICATORS**
Creative Place: Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts, cultural and heritage experiences.	• 64 % of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year. • 2 buildings at risks saved 2022 (30 buildings at risk saved since 2006 Heritage/buildings at risk saved)

Discussion & Feedback

General Consensus that the Creative Place outcome should remain the same. Those attending agreed that heritage to ref the wording on heritage to this outcome to incorporate the Enhanced Place Outcome and Indicator being moved here.

If funding is being cut arts is one of the areas that is most affected as well as heritage.

The borough has great art facilities but not as accessible to those from rural areas. – is there an opportunity to link in with schools as a possible venue.

There is a generational shift as more young people are getting into music and seen as a positive impact.

The cost of living crisis and covid has had an impact on this indicator in terms of

Data – Young people involved in Arts and Culture is there a relationship to investment and participation as regional investment reduced.

Linked to Tourism as people outside the borough experience the place

Important people are exposed to arts, culture and heritage and should be encouraged through schools – when schools are looking at end of year trips etc they should consider what is on their doorsteps

Discussion & Feedback

Through the Place Plan engagement process people have expressed the importance of arts, culture & heritage.

Interested to look into arts and culture questionnaire, as definition is so wide, but people may be answering in the negative because they don't identify their activity with arts and culture e.g. reading .

Does the question include heritage activities?

Wider view of heritage in Creative Place welcome as fits with wider policy direction from funders.

Some felt heritage may be lost in this outcome as it is something that makes the borough unique and special.

Important to reference World Heritage bid for Navan.

Refer to Heritage Places project and the 5 Conservation Areas: Lurgan, Armagh, Richhill, Loughgall, Dromore.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
Sustainable, Responsible or Climate Focused 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. ~~Enhanced Place:~~ ~~Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy.~~	• 75% of households are household concerned for the environment. • Biodiversity/natural assets? • Greenhouse Gas Emissions: 11 tCO2e per capita. *Also available are air quality, land use, active travel stats, municipal waste, water quality. Not all are available at council district level.* ~~*No. of buildings at risk saved*~~ *- moved to Creative Place* ~~*No. of high quality parks/green spaces (those holding Green Flag Status*~~

Discussion & Feedback

Welcomed the proposal of a new outcome and suite of indicators for sustainability. Felt that the Green Flag Status wasn't the right indicator to be used and agreed with the suggestion to replace it.

Energy ratings of households/energy efficiency could be an option for an indicator this is collected through the Housing Condition Survey and is across all tenure.

Sustainability is a must for a priority. Water quality in Lough Neagh is a high profile issue. Rivers are another important asset that we must be stewards and custodians of them.

Collaboration between organisations is important and sharing of information best practice

Education regarding climate is so important and must start in schools with children and also involve and include businesses on how they can do their part
- Are there any environmental groups that gather statistics that we could tap into?
- DAERA are encouraging farmers to look into biodiversity
- Statistics that are specific to the Borough may be best

How will businesses pay for the transition?

Active travel is important for this outcome. Does ABC have the highest rate of bicycle ownership?

Reference relevant Place Plan actions e.g. active travel above.

MSW Growth Deal

Air Quality figures available across the borough as a population indicator. I.e. % of locations in the borough with improved air quality year on year.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
Revitalised, Thriving or Vibrant Place Our distinctive, **inclusive** and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life.	• 1,101 additional social housing units needed. • City and town centre vacancy rates: Armagh 18%, Banbridge 17%, Craigavon 11%, Lurgan 20% & Portadown 21%. • 49% of people who see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life. – moved from Welcoming Community • No. of overnight visitors (4% of NI) moved from Tourism Economy.

Discussion & Feedback

There were differing views around the name of the outcome with
- Revitalised - some thought this had a negative connotation – does it suggest still more work to do rather than aspiration of where we would like to be by 2030
- Thriving – some thought this related more to the economy
- Vibrant – was already in the outcome statement and does it exclude the rural places – more emphasis on town centres
- Appealing – fits with vision
- Enhanced
- Appealing and Vibrant Place

It was expressed that people want to visit a place to have an experience – to see and do. Golf events encourage visitors outside of Northern Ireland and should be capitalised on. Welcomed the recommendation to move the tourism indicator to this outcome. Some discussion that visitor spend would be a better indicator to use if data was available.

Tourism indicator may not be best indicator to fir with current policy direction.

Welcomed the recommendation to move the Town Centre indicator from Welcoming Community to this outcome. Covid and the changing demographics could have impacted this indicator shift. Are we able to breakdown who feels unsafe – is it older people, females – is this after a certain time. More opportunities to connect together with all communities to increase sense of belonging.

Discussion & Feedback

Housing is a huge issue and will continue
- Ageing population – homes should be adapted for the future
- More one bedroom houses required for single households.
- Consideration should be given to an indicator on need as well as or instead of supply – is there an indicator for homelessness/no of repossessions.

Not surprised that people do not see town centres as safe and welcoming. Cleanliness is important. Small things like fairy lights and murals can make a big difference to the feeling of a place.

An increase in the population of the borough would be positive for the economy and will be achieved through the borough being a great place to live.

During the engagement for the place plans people have reported low levels of satisfaction with the night time economies in the town centres.

Footfall figures may be a useful population indicator, but if given the choice, vacancy rates may be the better of the two. However, vacancy rates are a negative measure, it would be useful to be able to track the levels of investment into towns.

Cross-Cutting Themes

AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO ARE OUR THREE CROSS-CUTTING THEMES:

CONNECTIVITY   EQUALITY   SUSTAINABILITY

Partners considered the following the questions:

1. **How do the proposed changes further embed the cross-cutting themes of Connectivity, Equality & Sustainability?**
2. **What else could we do to further embed the cross-cutting themes?**

Discussion & Feedback

Agreed equality and sustainability was more embedded in the outcomes but felt more needed to be done to embed connectivity. In all aspects of linking people to places and places to people.

Agreed that with them being more embedded in the outcomes and through the indicators that when the action plan is being revised there will be greater opportunity to ensure they are included within the actions.

Craigavon well connected – but there is a large industry around Carn but not easily accessible.

It might be a good idea to see how many actions in the Connected Action Plan are contributing to the Cross Cutting Themes.

Agreed connectivity would become more prominent with the recommended changes to the community plan.

Agreed that the in terms of sustainability that the CVS should be supported as they are crucial to the infrastructure.

Equality should be at the forefront in all actions taken forward.

6. Ideas for Action

The partnership will be revisiting its actions during the public consultation period. The following ideas for action were raised during all discussions.

Community

- Addressing domestic abuse, addiction and educational attainment,
- Support for parents to take part in their children's education.
- More Participatory Budgeting.
- Provide access to counselling and mental health crisis support.
- Support the CVS with resourcing and mental wellbeing.
- Increase access to interpreters.
- Community and Voluntary led Autism services.

Economy

- Real Living Wage.
- Support for business to increase productivity.
- Understanding poverty in the borough – action not started because of continued crisis support.
- Childcare.

Place

- Conversations about the public estate e.g. co-location.
- Promoting the borough as a great place to live, borough ambassadors.
- Reading towns and cities as an action in the Place Plans to promote reading.
- Borough wide creative campaign similar to the Sewing Bee to encourage people to take up a new craft but as a way to connect people together.
- Encourage schools to teach about local heritage on their doorsteps.
- Promotion of Night Time economy – Café Culture
- Town Centre Living

Ways of Working

- Using food support partnership working as a model for collaboration for the wider partnership.
- Data sharing to inform each partner's service planning.
- Embedding a trauma-informed approach to services across the borough.
- Improving services through tracking service user journeys.
- Standardising performance reporting required across government departments and within them e.g. DfC.
- Moving beyond response to crisis and addressing more structural issues together.
- More evaluation to understand why things work
- A role for the partnership in lobbying and advocacy and feeding into regional policy
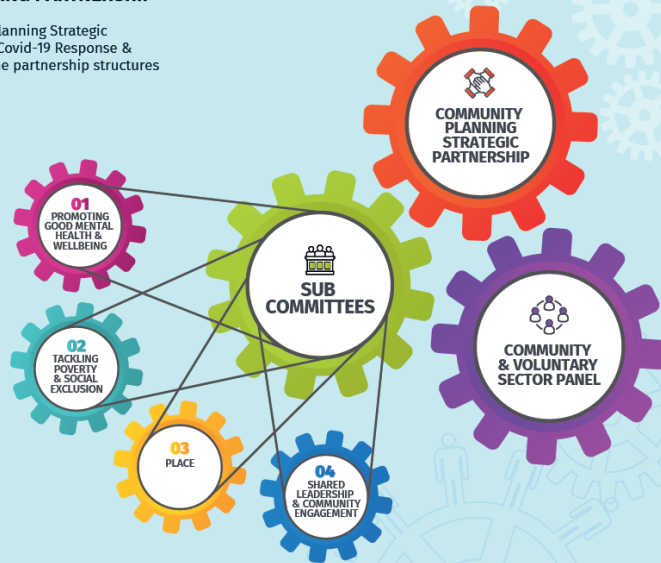
Appendix one : Our Partnership

Partners were asked to use one word to describe how we want to be known as a partnership. Shown below is the results.
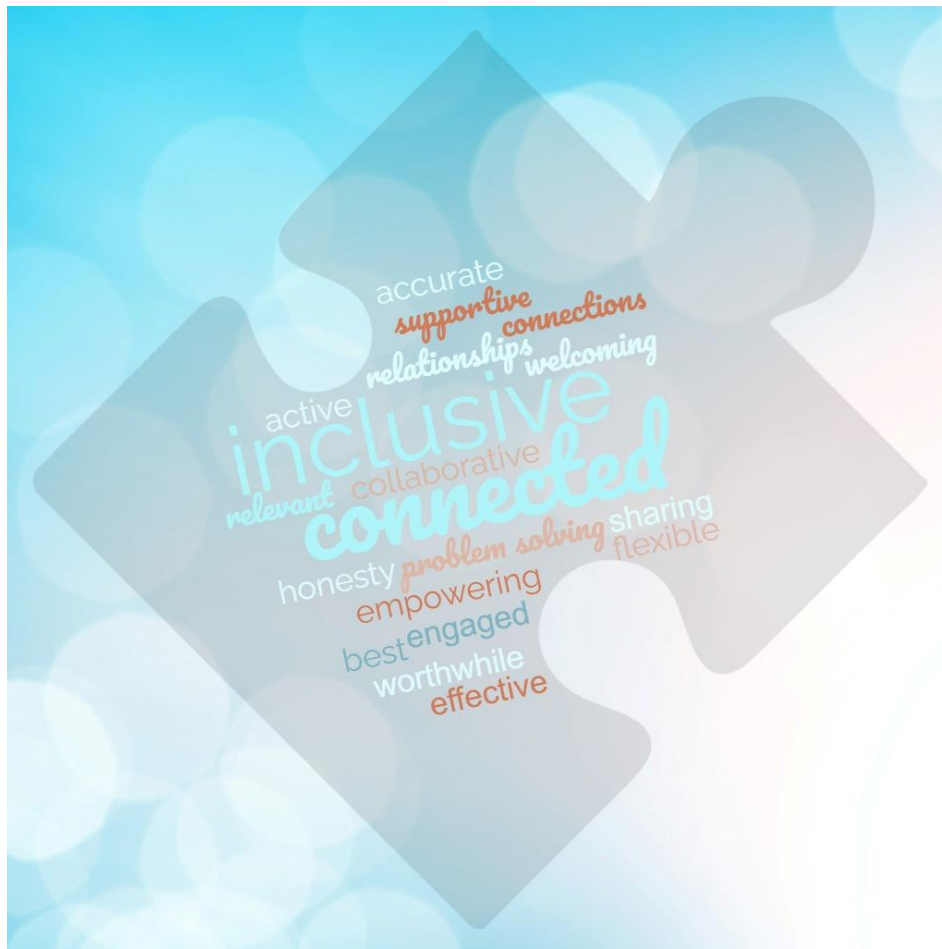
ABC COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

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.

COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

SUB COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

01 PROMOTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

02 TACKLING POVERTY & SOCIAL EXCLUSION

03 PLACE

04 SHARED LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Appendix two: Progress Towards Outcomes To Date

During the workshops partners were asked to consider how they felt our partnership was progressing towards the outcomes to date through their own observations by placing a coloured sticker on an A3 Sheet.

Green = on track to realise outcome	
Amber = unsure if it will be realised,	
Red = probably won't be realised.	

	Green	Amber	Red
Community			
Confident Community	🙂	😐😐😐😐😐😐 😐😐😐	☹️☹️
Healthy Community	🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂 🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂	😐😐😐	
Welcoming Community	🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂 🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂🙂	😐😐😐😐😐😐	☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️ ☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️
Economy			
Enterprising Economy		😐😐😐	
Skilled Economy		😐😐😐	
Tourism Economy		😐😐😐	
Place			
Creative Place	🙂	😐	
Enhanced Place	🙂🙂	😐😐😐	
Revitalised Place		😐😐😐	☹️☹️

Appendix three: Workshop Attendees

50 attendees from 27 organisations including 16 from Community and Voluntary Sector.

1. Colette Rogers, Public Health Agency, Chair of Community Planning Strategic Partnership
2. Elaine Gillespie, ABC Council, Vice Chair of Community Planning Strategic Partnership
3. Anne Garvey, Ulster GAA
4. Avril Sharkey, Department for Communities
5. Brendan MacPartlin, Migrant Support Services
6. Brendan Osbourne, Department for Communities
7. Brian McAleenan, Department for Communities
8. Briege McCreanor, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
9. Caroline Elizabeth Caesar, Community Advice Craigavon
10. Catherine O'Hanlan, Department for Communities
11. Claire McCartan, Walk Leader Southern Trust
12. Claire Patience, LLTCA
13. Clive Bowles, Portadown Rugby Club and ABC Road Safety
14. David Curley, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
15. David Hammerton, ABC Seniors Network
16. Donna Stewart, C&B Volunteer Bureau, Vice Chair of Community and Voluntary Sector Panel
17. Eileen McGivern, Clan na Gael Wellbeing Committee
18. Elaine Devlin, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
19. Emma Beggs, Craigavon Area Foodbank
20. Emma O'Carroll. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
21. Ethna McNamee, Invest NI
22. Evelyn Hanna, Libraries NI
23. France Kerr, ABC Community Network
24. Frances Haughey, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
25. Geraldine Lawless, TADA Rural Support Network, Chair of Community and Voluntary Sector Panel
26. Gillian Dewart, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
27. Jennie Dunlop, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
28. Jennifer McKibben, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
29. Jessica Bennett, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
30. Karen Ross, PSNI
31. Lisa McAliskey, Southern Health and Social Care Trust
32. Lissa O'Malley, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
33. Lynette Cooke, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
34. Mark Doran, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
35. Mark O'Neill, Department for Communities
36. Martin Graham, Tourism NI
37. Martin Stevenson, Salvation Army
38. Mary Hanna, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

39. Michael Devine, Southern Health and Social Care Trust
40. Michelle Markey, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
41. Paula Tally, Southern Health and Social Care Trust
42. Raquel Rodrigues Keenan
43. Sarah Aiken, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
44. Silean Kelly, Fitzone Foundation
45. Simon Sloan, Department for Communities
46. Sinead Collins, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Chair of Place Board
47. Stephanie Cardwell, Epworth Playgroup
48. Stephanie Rock, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
49. Tracey Powell, Southern Health and Social Care Trust
50. Valerie Maxwell, Children and Young People Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)

Appendix four: Workshops and Meetings

- **Community and Voluntary Sector Panel, Connected Mid-point Review** - Wednesday 22 May, 6.00pm, Seagoe, Parish Centre, Portadown
- **Connected Mid-point Review** – Wednesday 22 May, 9.30am, South Lakes Leisure Centre, Craigavon
- **Connected Mid-point Review** – Wednesday 29 May, 9.30am, South Lakes Leisure Centre, Craigavon
- **Connected Mid-point Review** – Thursday 30 May, 9.30am, South Lakes Leisure Centre, Craigavon
- **Elected Members Meeting** - Thursday 27th June, 5:30pm, online

121 meetings took place with-

- Education Authority
- Sport NI
- Libraries NI
- Tourism NI
- NIHE
- SRC
- Business Partnership Alliance
- SHSCT
- Invest NI
- DfC
- NIFRS
- PSNI
- Children Young People Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)
- ABC Council