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

DRAFT

Mid-Point Review 2024-25

Engagement & Consultation Report

April 2025

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1. Context and Background

This report is a summary of the feedback from the public engagement that took place over a thirteen-week period from 7th October 2024 to 12th January 2025 to inform the review of *Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030*.

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.

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. This subsequently led to a draft plan being developed and then put out for public consultation.

The scope of the public consultation was:
1. Changes to Connected, the community plan for the borough
2. Updated Equality and Rural Impact Assessments
3. Suggested actions the partnership will take forward

An online survey was open throughout the period, there were a series of public workshops, meetings with government departments and other stakeholders and Section 75 & rural focus groups and meetings. These were delivered both in person and online. Council and its statutory partners are required to seek the views of the community, encourage them to express their views, and take their views into account in the community planning process. The community planning process includes the production and review of the community plan. All partners were encouraged to be involved in consulting with local people about the review.

Opportunities to take part in the consultation were widely promoted through postcards, social media, email networks, local newspapers, attendance at events and posters.

Some headline figures demonstrate the extent of participation:
- 151 people from 43 organisations fed into the consultation
- 25 consultation events comprising
    - 6 workshops
    - 7 meetings
    - 12 focus groups
- 69 people responded to the online survey
    - 70% (49) responded on behalf of themselves
    - 30% (21) responded on behalf of an organisation or group

This report provides an overview of the feedback provided through the public consultation process. It will be used by the partnership to assess support for changes to the community plan and its associated impact assessments. The partnership will use this report to make any additional changes to the plan and it will inform its action plan to be developed later in the year.

The Community Planning Team in ABC Council would like to thank all partners, organisations and members of the public who have enthusiastically taken part in the review of Connected sharing their broad knowledge, lived experiences and opinions.

2. Strengths and challenges for ABC

As part of the workshops and in our online survey we asked people what the strengths and weaknesses of the Borough were. Below is a summary of the responses.

Strengths in ABC

In summary people told us: Community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations were found to be the biggest strength in the ABC Borough with more people ranking this highly as one of their top three. Green spaces and Heritage were the next biggest strengths identified.

Below we have highlighted some direct quotes from the feedback and summarised points which came up repeatedly

"Local employment is good for the economy – by integrating services, especially integrating other cultures and responding to local economic needs and delivering better outcomes at lower costs; good for people – with more personalised, joined-up and responsive services; and good for employers – by delivering a locally rooted, demand-led and integrated approach."

"Being involved in the section of volunteering ; we agree strongly that volunteering connects you to others, helps you make new friends and contacts and increases your social and relationship skills. Volunteering increases self-confidence. Volunteering is good for your health at any age, but it's especially beneficial in older adults."

"Belonging to a community can help shift unhelpful beliefs about oneself and provide a sense of purpose. Many people struggling with mental health may also experience a sense of low self-worth."

- Local people are the centre of every community and need to be involved in what is going on in their community and take responsibility.
- The value of where ABC is situated on the Dublin- Belfast corridor with excellent transport links needs to be utilised .
- New business are excellent for the economy, but they need to be supported, especially in the first few years trading.
- We have a multicultural diverse society which needs to be appreciated and integrated into all communities.
- PB is an excellent example of local people making decisions on who gets funding for their projects in their area.
- ABC has an excellent sporting reputation and lots of sports clubs and different levels and varieties of sports which need to be accessible to all.
- The community plan starts with the end in mind, the long-term outcomes and works back to what needs to be done to get there.
- Excellent heritage, museums and theatres within the borough.
- People have a sense of pride about where they come from and this needs to be instilled in everyone.

- Older people are a great asset in our communities and need to be recognised for what they can offer.
- SLLC is an asset in the borough.

Challenges in ABC

In summary people told us: Access to services was found to be the biggest challenge in ABC, closely followed by mental health and wellbeing followed by drugs and alcohol

Below we have highlighted some direct quotes from the feedback and summarised points which came up repeatedly

"The spiralling costs of household necessities, rising energy costs are hitting households hard, especially those on low income– this could contribute to an increase in the number of people being threatened with homelessness and thus having a direct impact on people's mental health. There are a high percentage using the local food banks and as a service volunteer group we see this especially as Christmas time."

"Good mental health is an asset that helps us to thrive. This is not just the absence of a mental health problem, but having the ability to think, feel and act in a way that allows us to enjoy life and deal with the challenges it presents. The mental health and wellbeing is decreasing in communities especially in the young people. Help is needed to build a sense of belonging and self-worth and therefore give them an opportunity to share positive experiences and provide emotional support; maybe more safe hubs for these age groups to meet and support each other."

"Housing is a massive issue but getting access to services to help tackle the spike in drug and alcohol issues especially within youth is a key area as both are lined to mental health concerns for the population."

"Waiting lists are long and services such as support with mental health are not always easily accessible."

- Environmental issues need addressed as they reflect badly on the community and initiatives must be found to tackle them.
- Lack of services and safe spaces for women, there is no women's refuge in ABC
- CVS are integral in our communities but their self-care and mental health and that of volunteers needs to be addressed.
- Isolation needs to be addressed, alongside acknowledging that it can happen at any age and is not exclusively older people.
- Rural transport and access to services in rural areas is a challenge as many areas have now lost their post office and doctors surgeries.
- Women's Safety – potential to improve women's safety through the Place Plans, e.g. lighting, cameras, car parks, walks e.g. Lakes well lit, potential for sensor lighting. Concerns for women walking alone at night.
- Domestic Violence – underreporting, women afraid of consequences of reporting, i.e. poverty, moving house, relocating children, breakup of the family, immediate consequences and action by PSNI and no women's shelter in the borough

- Addiction and mental health are key issues. This is not just drug and alcohol addiction but also rising rates of gambling online. There is also a rise in the misuse of prescription medication.
- Need for respect for both men and women, healthy relationships education in schools, SRC and with youth groups in order to inform ideas of what is acceptable behaviours.
- Older people need to be considered in terms of digital communication and alternative methods of communication considered and in terms of accessibility to shops, parking spaces, venues and heritage sites and also toilet facilities and untreated roads and footpaths, especially in Winter.

3. Feedback on changes to Community theme - outcomes, indicators and actions

Connected Community: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

Within the community theme, the first long term outcome was to have a confident community. As part of this review the partnership proposed to change the name of the outcome from Confident to Connected Community and include a new indicator to measure progress towards achieving this outcome.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
COMMUNITY	
Connected Community: Everyone has opportunities to **contribute to** community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.	- Percentage of people who feel that they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood. - Percentage of people who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. - Percentage of people who feel lonely at least some of the time (new indicator).

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was broad agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 95% of survey respondents (53) either agreed (64.3%) or strongly agreed (30.4%) with the proposed changes to the Connected Community outcome statement

- Four respondents (3.6%) didn't know
- One disagreed with the proposed changes.

Changes to the indicators

There was consensus on the changes to the indicators. Just over 91% of survey respondents (51) either agreed (66.1%) or strongly agreed (25%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Connected Community Outcome.

- Three respondents (5.4%) didn't know
- Two disagreed with the proposed changes to the indicators.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback:

Barriers: Poverty, rural transport (CVS Panel), CVS funding, sector burnout, social isolation, lack of investment in town centres, poverty, lack of funding, environmental issues, affordable housing, additional funding needed for early years, accessibility.

Enablers: Strong CVS, CVS Panel, PB, CVS collaboration, PB, Resilience, volunteering to connect people, PEACEPLUS funding, excellent tourist attractions throughout the borough , RAISE programme, intergenerational programmes, community arts theatres and programmes are excellent but there needs to be more.

Healthy Community: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

Within the community theme, the second long term outcome was to have a healthy community. As part of this review the partnership proposed to keep the name of the outcome the same and include a new indicator to measure progress towards achieving this outcome.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
COMMUNITY	
Healthy Community: People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.	- Preventable deaths per 100,000 population. - Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall. - Percentage of people who participate in sport or physical activity on at least one day a week. - Prescription rate for medication for mood and anxiety disorders (new indicator).

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was broad agreement with the outcome statement remaining the same from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 93% (52) respondents either agreed (66.1%) or strongly agreed (26.8%) with the Healthy Community outcome statement.

- One respondent (1.8%) didn't know
- Three disagreed with the Healthy Community Outcome statement.

Changes to the indicators

There was a definite agreement with the changes to the indicators with almost 95% (53) respondents either agreed (71.4%) or strongly agreed (23.2%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Healthy Community outcome.

- Three respondents (5.4%) didn't know whether the indicators were right to measure progress towards achieving the healthy community outcome.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback:

Barriers: Unaffordable activities, sports clubs need more support to offer a bigger range of programmes, mood and anxiety disorders may inhibit people from engaging.

Enablers: healthy environment can have benefits for both physical and mental health, great access to open green spaces, volunteering-sense of identity and purpose and has a positive impact on mental and physical health, healthy cooking classes, access to nature were all seen as enablers.

Welcoming Community: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

Within the community theme, the third long term outcome was to have a welcoming community. As part of this review the partnership proposes to add in inclusive to the outcome and include a new indicator to measure progress towards achieving this outcome.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
COMMUNITY	
Welcoming Community: Our borough is a safe, **inclusive,** respectful and peaceful place.	- Percentage of people reporting that fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life. - Number of accidental dwelling fires. - Number of hate motivated incidents (new indicator). (Percentage of people see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life moved to Place).

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was broad agreement with the outcome statement remaining the same apart from the addition of the word "inclusive" from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Just over 89% (50) respondents either agreed (53.6%) or strongly agreed (35.7%) with the proposed changes to the Welcoming Community outcome statement.

- Three respondents (5.4%) didn't know.
- Three respondents either disagreed (3.6%) or strongly disagreed (1.8%)

Changes to the indicators

There was a definite agreement with the changes to the indicators with 87.5% (49) respondents who either agreed (57.1%) or strongly agreed (30.4%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Welcoming Community outcome.

- Three respondents (5.4%) didn't know
- Four respondents (7.1%) disagreed with using these indicators to measure progress towards achieving the Welcoming Community outcome.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback:

Barriers: violence against women and girls, lack of understanding and appreciating diversity, death by suicide numbers increasing, increasing drug use, no refuge in ABC for women and children escaping abuse, criminal gangs, rural crime increasing, empty properties being used would make town centres more inviting, more local businesses are needed in town centres, lack of parking spaces in town centres

Enablers: signs in different languages to promote inclusivity, targeting social isolation for all ages, celebration of cultural events, town centre investment for all, Lurgan Park and South Lakes leisure centre are an asset, townscape heritage scheme has improved town centres in ABC, consistency in shared education approaches.

Feedback on Community Actions

Respondents were provided with a list of actions relevant to the three outcomes in the community theme of welcoming, healthy and connected communities. Almost 95% (53) respondents either agreed (62.5%) or strongly agreed (32.1%) with the partnership actions that were most relevant to the Community theme.

- One respondent disagreed and one strongly disagreed
- One didn't know

Respondents were also asked if they believe that there are any actions missing. There were 23 respondents who chose not to answer this question so of the 46 valid responses, almost one quarter (23.9%) stated that there were some actions missing while just over three-quarters (76.1%) believe there are no actions missing.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback on actions:

Barriers: Not enough promotion of the assets in the borough, **place plans** need to be rolled out to other areas, rural **isolation, bureaucracy** with accessing grants, **violence** against women and girls and **sectarianism**.

Enablers: **Strong connections** between rural groups and council and other agencies, **opportunities** for young people in terms of employment, **strengthening** school links, build **resilience** in communities, **shared responsibility** and shared resources, supporting local clubs in the community, **libraries** with extended opening hours and extended services.

5. Feedback on changes to Economy theme - outcomes, indicators and actions

Enterprising Economy: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

There are no proposed changes to the enterprising economy outcome, but there is a proposal to remove the number of VAT and / or PAYE registered businesses as an indicator and include a measure of productivity as a new indicator for measuring progress towards achieving this outcome.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
ECONOMY	
Enterprising Economy: Our borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.	- Business birth rate. - Survival rate of newly born businesses. - Productivity – Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (new indicator). (Number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses – removed and replaced with productivity).

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was broad agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 90% of survey respondents (34) either agreed (63.2%) or strongly agreed (26.3%) with the proposed changes to the Enterprising Economy outcome statement.

- Three respondents (7.9%) didn't know
- One disagreed with the proposed changes.

Changes to the indicators

Almost 87% of survey respondents (33) either agreed (68.4%) or strongly agreed (18.4%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Enterprising Economy Outcome.

- Four respondents (10.5%) didn't know
- One disagreed with the proposed changes .

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback:

Barriers – lack of understanding around PAYE, productivity being misunderstood, high rent and rates costs in town centres, local shops disappearing, people going to Rushmere instead of local shopping, lack of support for small businesses, particularly rural.

Enablers- Matching courses for people to the right employers, helping businesses to stay open, agri food sector is thriving, farming stats need to be considered, opportunity for BPA to become more involved, local pharmacies are excellent but are disappearing, excellent transport infrastructure but A1 economic corridor needs to be utilised, more support for rural SME's.

Inclusive Economy: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

The second outcome in the economy theme was originally Tourism Economy, however as part of this review it is proposed that this outcome is replaced with Inclusive Economy, where everyone has a decent minimum living standard. As this is a new outcome, each of the indicators will also be new. We are also proposing that the original measure for tourism is moved to the Place theme.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
ECONOMY	
Inclusive Economy: Everyone has a decent minimum living standard (new outcome). **(Tourism Economy** Our borough is a destination of choice for international visitors, replaced by Inclusive Economy)	▪ Percentage of children living in low-income households (new indicator). ▪ Employment gap for disability (new indicator). ▪ Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) (new indicator). ▪ (Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland moved to Place)

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was overall agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

More than 97% (37) of respondents either agreed (63.2%) or strongly agreed (34.2%) with including the new Inclusive Economy outcome in the community plan.

- Just 1 respondent (2.6%) didn't know.

Eighty four percent (32) of respondents either agreed (63.2%) or strongly agreed (21.1%) that Tourism Economy outcome and population indicator should be moved into the Revitalised Place Outcome.

- There were three respondents (7.9%) who didn't know
- Three also disagreed with this move

Changes to the indicators

More than 97% (36) either agreed (67.6%) or strongly agreed (29.7%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Inclusive Economy outcome.

- Just one respondent (2.7%) selected don't know.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback:

Barriers – too much focus on tourism, late life diagnosis for disability needs to be realised and supported, unpaid carers, lack of affordable childcare, hidden disabilities not recognised, working people having to access foodbanks.

Enablers- real living wage needs consideration, inclusion of SEN in employment gap for disability indicator.

Skilled Economy: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

There are no proposed changes to the Skilled Economy outcome and just one change has been proposed to the indicators for measuring progress towards achievement of this outcome. This new indicator was first included as a measure of Skilled Economy in the 2021-23 Statement of Progress.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
ECONOMY	
Skilled Economy: People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.	▪ The proportion of the workforce in employment qualified to level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above, and level 4 and above ▪ Employment rate (age 16-64) ▪ GCSE attainment levels for students entitled to free school meals (new indicator)

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was overall agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 95% (35) respondents either agreed (75.7%) or strongly agreed (18.9%) that the Skilled Economy outcome should remain the same.

- Two respondents (5.4%) selected don't know.

Changes to the indicators

Almost 92% (34) respondents either agreed (73%) or strongly agreed (18.9%) that the partnership should use these population indicators to measure progress towards the Skilled Economy outcome.

- A total of 3 respondents (8.1%) selected don't know.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback

Barriers – Stigma around FSM and academic attainment, some families not claiming FSM when entitled and others just slightly short of the threshold but living in poverty,

Enablers- Upskilling could be more widely available, education is a key factor in economic growth, school leavers going into agri/farming, local larger companies could support LMP particularly in terms of disability and getting women back into the workplace, technology for upskilling people, local apprenticeships need to be readily available,

Feedback on Economy Actions

Respondents were provided with a list of actions relevant to the three outcomes in the economy theme of enterprising, inclusive and skilled economies. Just over 92% of survey respondents (35) either agreed (65.8%) or strongly agreed (26.3%) with the partnership actions that were most relevant to the Economy theme.

- Two selected 'don't know' (5.3%)
- Just one respondent disagreed

Respondents were also asked if they believed that there were any actions missing. Almost one quarter (23.9%) stated that there were some actions missing while just over three-quarters (76.1%) believe there were no actions missing.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback on actions:

Barriers-Lack of quality **housing** for the elderly and expensive care homes

Enablers- **Shared partnerships** could identify those vulnerable and less fortunate residents who may not have the means, ability or knowledge to reach out for help, support and advice. **Strengthened Partnerships** with the ability to share relevant data will enhance this action, particularly in terms of businesses, schools, enterprise centres and training providers to ensure young people are equipped with the relevant skills. **Targeted support** is needed in order to ensure the support to be directed at the right people.

6. Feedback on changes to Place theme outcomes, indicators and actions

Creative Place: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

Within the place theme, the first long term outcome is to have a creative place and there is only one small change proposed to the wording of this outcome. There are no proposed changes to the indicators which we use to measure progress towards achieving this outcome.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
PLACE	
Creative Place: Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts, cultural and heritage experiences.	▪ Percentage of people (aged 16+) engaging with arts/cultural activities in the past year ▪ Number of heritage at risk saved (moved from Enhanced Place)

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was overall agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 96% (46) respondents either agreed (62.5%) or strongly agreed (33.3%) with the Creative Place outcome statement.

- However, there were 2 respondents (4.2%) who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Changes to the indicators

Almost 92% (45) respondents either agreed (65.3%) or strongly agreed (26.5%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Creative Place Outcome.

- There was one respondent (2%) who didn't know
- Two (4.1%) who disagreed and
- One (2%) who strongly disagreed with the proposed changes to the indicators.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback

Barriers – Excessive cost to access cultural/heritage activities in ABC, engagement barriers need to arts and cultural activities, current issues with Lough Neagh.

Enablers- More local cultural events to give a stronger sense of community, heritage sites- the potential for old buildings to be turned into housing ,inclusion of all heritage sites in ABC, especially rural, heritage could include sporting events such as Tandragee 100, GAA, Rugby etc, potential to promote a cultural, creative, heritage and centre for wellbeing, importance of stories from older people to enrich our heritage, River Bann heritage, City of Culture excellent for ABC.

Revitalised Place: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

Within the Revitalised Place outcome, there is only one suggested change to the wording of this outcome. However, we are now proposing the inclusion of two additional indicators as a measure for this outcome. Both of these indicators have previously been reported on and have just been moved from other outcomes as detailed in the table below.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
PLACE	
Revitalised Place: Our distinctive, **inclusive** and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life.	- Level of social housing need - City and town centre vacancy rates - Percentage of people who see town centres as safe welcoming places for people of all walks of life (moved from Welcoming Community) - Number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland (moved from Tourism Economy).

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was overall agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 90% (44) respondents either agreed (55.1%) or strongly agreed (34.7%) with the Revitalised Place outcome statement.

- Two respondents (4.1%) who didn't know,
- Two who disagreed (4.1%) and
- One (2%) who strongly disagreed with the statement.

Changes to the indicators

Just over 87% (43) respondents either agreed (59.2%) or strongly agreed (28.6%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Revitalised Place Outcome.

- There were five respondents (10.2%) who didn't know and
- One (2%) who strongly disagreed with the proposed changes to the indicators.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback

Barriers – More investment in town centres to make them more appealing, social housing crisis, rural areas forgotten about, lack of accommodation affecting tourism in ABC, social housing age restrictions, no night- time economy.

Enablers- Protecting our tourist attractions and monuments by including them in places of interest for visitors, town centre work is great but more needed, widening of Place to include parks and open spaces and sports clubs and facilities, consideration of rural vacancy rates, low crime levels make ABC an attractive area to live if they are remaining low, helping women feel safe in our town centres, townscape heritage-more of a visual appeal to town centres, empty properties- could they be rented cheaply to not for profit organisations, could Council free up land for social housing.

Sustainable Place: Changes to Outcomes and Indicators

The effects of climate change are becoming more evident with the increase in the number of extreme weather events we have experienced in recent years. In addition, the legislation and policy around environmental sustainability is ever changing and so as part of this review we are proposing to include an outcome linked to environmental sustainability within the place theme. The sustainable place outcome will replace enhanced place and will result in a number of new indicators being introduced to measure progress in achieving this outcome.

OUTCOME	POPULATION INDICATORS
PLACE	
Sustainable Place: We value and protect our climate, biodiversity and natural assets. People understand the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change and 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 (replaced by Sustainable Place)).	- Household concern for the environment (new indicator). - River Quality – Soluble Reactive Phosphorus (SRP) in rivers (new indicator). - Per capita Greenhouse Gas Emissions (new indicator). (Number of heritage at risk saved - moved to Creative Place) (Number of high-quality parks/green spaces – removed and replaced with river quality).

To what extent did respondents agree with the changes?

Changes to the outcome

There was overall agreement with the changes to the outcome statement from survey respondents and those who attended consultation events.

Almost 88% (43) respondents either agreed (59.2%) or strongly agreed (28.6%) with the new Sustainable Place outcome statement.

- Three respondents (6.1%) didn't know
- One disagreed (2%)
- Two (4.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Changes to the indicators

Eighty eight percent (44) respondents either agreed (62%) or strongly agreed (26%) that the partnership should use these indicators to measure progress towards the Sustainable Place Outcome.

- Four respondents (8%) didn't know
- One (2%) who disagreed and one who strongly disagreed with the proposed changes to the indicators.

Below is a summary of what come through strongly through feedback:

Barriers – destruction of Lough Neagh, too much reliance on cars and not enough public transport or bicycles,

Enablers- The three R's – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle need to be widely promoted and people need educated on it, carpooling and more cycle paths could help with pollution, investment in Lough Neagh, promotion of our assets such as Oxford Island, learn from past mistakes, more rigorous monitoring of the use of herbicides and pesticides, protection of green spaces, zero waste programme in school's needs rolled out,

Feedback on Place Actions

Respondents were provided with a list of actions relevant to the three outcomes in the Place theme of creative, revitalised and sustainable places. Almost 88% (43 respondents) either agreed (61.2%) or strongly agreed (26.5%) with the partnership actions that were most relevant to the Place theme.

- One respondent (2 %) strongly disagreed
- Five selected 'don't know' (10.2%).

Respondents were also asked if they believe that there are any actions missing. There were 28 respondents who chose not to answer this question so of the 41 valid responses, just less than 10% (4 respondents) stated that there were some actions missing while more than 90% (37 respondents) believe there are no actions missing.

Below is a summary of what came through strongly in the feedback on actions:

Barriers- place needs to mean more to people, **sustainability** targets hard to achieve by dates.

Enablers- recognise the role of community groups, **strengthen** and build **community partnerships**, cross sectoral working and relationship building, **accessibility** and **inclusivity** promotion, sporting events are important to place, and need included, place means different things to different people, more places plans for smaller places in the borough.

7. Feedback on Equality and Rural impact assessments

Equality- The mid-point review of Connected public consultation phase involved consulting on equality of opportunity for people in the groups below.
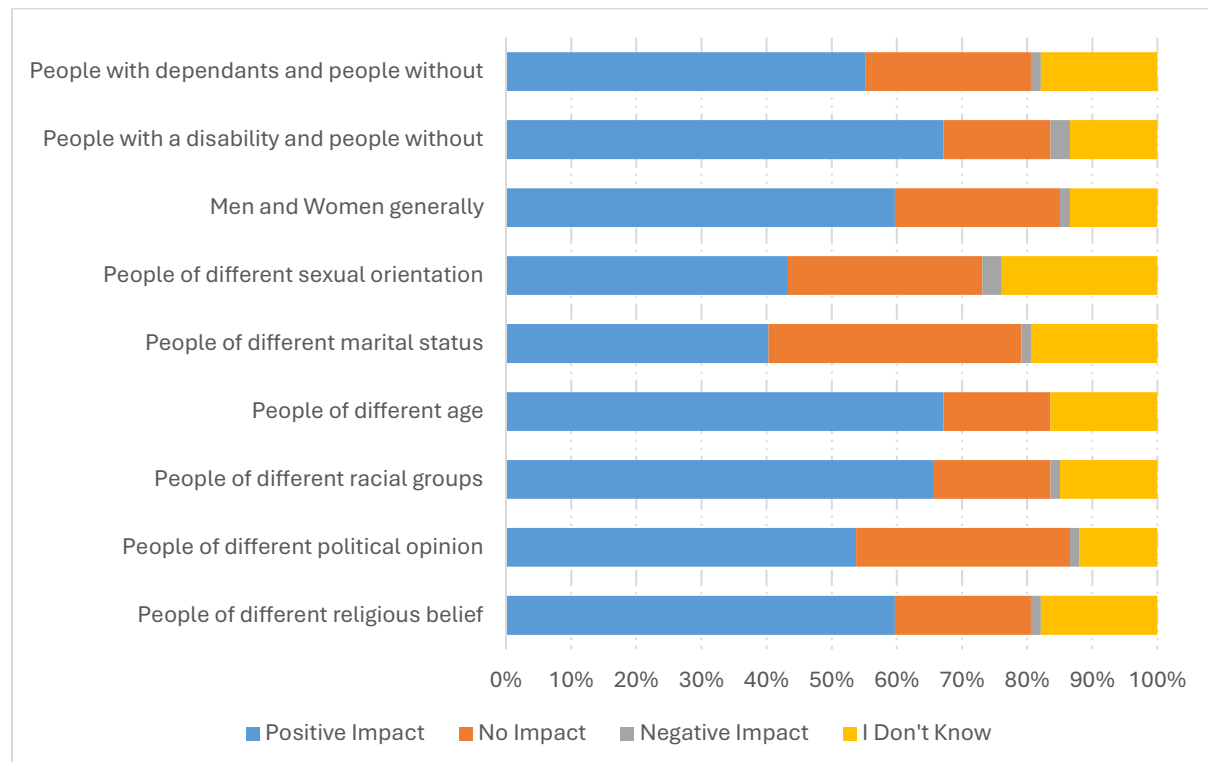
On the whole respondents felt that the Connected community plan would have a mainly positive impact on the section 75 groups. Approximately 57% felt that Connected would have a positive impact on equality of opportunity with just over 1.7% believing that it would have a negative impact.

Additional feedback

- The needs of men and women are different in terms of safety, and risk factors need to be taken into consideration in the community plan.
- Integration needs to happen in our diverse society including having a welcoming and inclusive community
- The ability to access services should be inclusive and at the same level in all areas
- We need to maximise the existing assets in order to best serve those with disabilities and transport challenges.
- Awareness and education, especially from a young age needs to be considered

- Different groups face different challenges and need different solutions to those challenges a community plan cannot effect change if it creates a one size fits all solution.
- Creating a positive ethos, a culture, of good relations and recognising the need to promote positive relations within and between communities.
- Communication and networking are key, alongside dispelling the myths

Targeted workshops also took place with some of the section 75 groups and the following is a summary of the key feedback given:

- Rural transport for older people is problematic as some older people cannot get from their home to their bus stop and also cannot get to hospital appointments and doctors' surgeries.
- Lack of promotional materials that are user friendly for older people, especially those with visual impairment and having printed copies instead of everything being online.
- Accessibility needs to be taken into consideration during the development of Place Plans in terms of parking spaces, signage and wheelchair access.
- Trans people are being treated the way lesbian and gay people were treated in 70s & 80's – high levels of discrimination and conversion therapy etc.
- Community plan needs to mention LGBTQ people – suggestion – including in narrative the need to understand the needs of LGBTQ people in the borough.
- Some LGBTQ people may move out of the borough to Belfast or other cities – perception that area might not be welcoming.
- There is a need for somewhere for disabled people to be creative- disability arts
- Dimmer streetlights are causing safety concerns in terms of visual impairment and wheelchair users.
- More integration needs to happen intergenerationally
- Important to raise awareness of hidden disabilities – value of training from Autism NI etc & sunflower lanyard.
- Access to sport & other activities important for neurodiverse people. Adjustments required e.g. quiet times
- SEN needs to be recognised and highlighted in the community plan

Rural- The mid-point review of Connected public consultation phase involved consulting on the impact of the plan on the needs of people living in rural areas
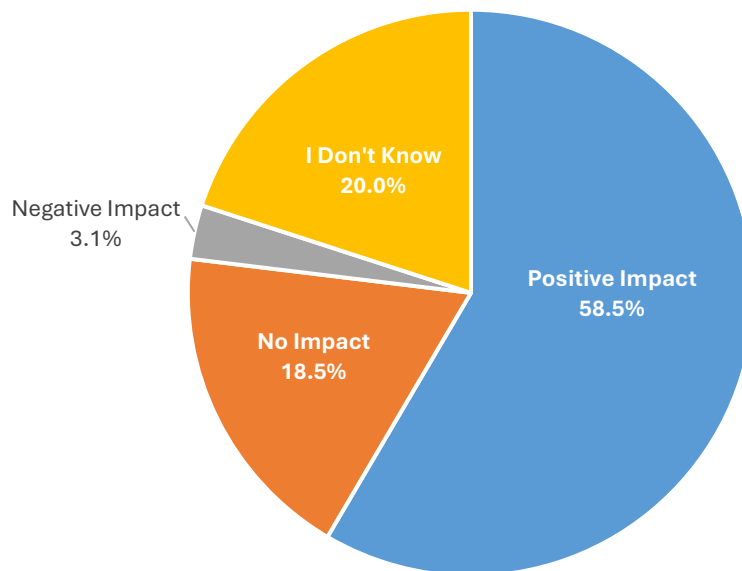
Of the survey respondents 58.5% felt that Connected the community plan would have a positive impact on the needs of people living in rual areas. Another 20% didn't know and 18.5% thought that it would have no imapct. A very small marign, 3.1% felt that it would have a negative imapct.

Additional feedback

- Connections are vital for people in rural areas in order to combat social isolation
- Public transport and broadband connectivity needs reviewed
- Rural communities feel left behind compared to those in urban areas
- Young people in urban areas need to have the same opportunities as their counterparts in towns.
- Decentralising the points of contact and improving public transport would enable rural areas to develop.
- Access to natural surroundings and open spaces in rural areas can have positive effects on mental wellbeing, promoting relaxation and a sense of connectedness to nature.
- Stronger sense of community: Rural communities tend to be tight knit, as there are fewer people, but it can foster a stronger sense of community and social support, which can positively influence mental health.

24th March 2025	Chairs group meeting to review public consultation report and Connected review
26th March - 23rd April 2025	Connected review out to partners for sign off and to Design team
w/c 31st March 2025	Elected member workshop to review Connected
9th April 2025	GRS committee
29th April 2025	Final changes to design
2nd May 2025	Final version of Connected back from Design
w/c 6th or w/c 13th May 2025	CPSP meeting to approve engagement report, reviewed Connected plan, action performance updates and start action planning conversations
Summer 2025	Launch of reviewed Connected

9. Appendices

Appendix one: list of organisations who submitted a response

21 organisations submitted a response to the survey-

1. Banbridge Lions Club
2. Armagh City Netball
3. Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
4. Northern Ireland Housing Executive
5. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
6. Gilford Crusaders
7. Banbridge Town FC (Juniors)
8. Keady Celtic Football Club
9. Women's Aid Armagh Down
10. Love Lurgan CIC
11. Drumballyroney Heritage CIC
12. Mullavilly Brownies
13. Saint Anthony's P.S. and Nursery Unit
14. AE George Russell Society Lurgan
15. Richmount Rural Community Association
16. Aeon Community Arts
17. Loughshore Care Partnership
18. St. Mary's GAC Aghagallon
19. Rathfriland District LOL No.3
20. REACT
21. Mourneview & Grey Estates Community Association

9. Appendices

Appendix two: Dates of workshops

- **Community and Voluntary Sector Panel, Connected Mid-point Review** – Monday 14th October 2024, Seagoe Hotel, Portadown
- **Connected Mid-point Review public workshop**– Tuesday 19 November 2024, Banbridge Civic Building
- **Connected Mid-point Review public workshop**– Thursday 14th November 2024, Armagh City Hotel
- **Connected Mid-point Review public workshop** – Wednesday 20th November 2024, Seagoe Hotel, Portadown
- **Connected Mid-point Review online workshop** – Monday 25th November, online
- **Connected Mid-point Review online workshop** – Thursday 28th November, online
- **Connected Mid-Point Review workshop- Youth Voice-** Tuesday 3rd December 2024, Banbridge Civic Building
- **Elected Members Meeting** - ???

Targeted workshops also took place with the following-

- TEO
- Business Partnership Alliance
- Cara Friend
- Women's Resource and Development Agency
- Chrysalis Women's Centre
- Age Friendly Alliance
- Departments of Community, Economy & Finance
- Disability Action
- Donard Special School Partnership
- Wa Hep
- DAERA
- Children Young People Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)
- ABC Council
- Loughbrickland Luncheon Club
- ABC Seniors Network
- SDACT
- DfI
- Here NI
- PB Working group