ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Appendix 1 Equality Screening Form

Policy Scoping

Policy Title: Connected A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017- 2030 (updated 2025) action plan

Brief Description of Policy (please attach copy if available). Please state if it is a new, existing or amended policy.

Amended strategy for delivery following the mid-point review of Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 (updated 2025).

ABC Community Planning Strategic Partnership undertook a mid-point review of Connected the community plan in 2024-2025. At the time of the mid-point review an EQIA was undertaken during the 13 week consultation period and the findings then fed into the reviewed Connected, community plan and the action plan for delivery.

Following the changes to Connected: A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 in that there are now two new outcomes and eleven new population indicators and given that the Connected Response and Recovery action plan was written in 2022 the next stage in the process was to review the action plan for delivery.

The review of the action plan began in 2025 following completion of the mid-point review of Connected and completed in Spring 2026. Some of the actions from the Connected Response and Recovery action plan have remained; some have changed focus and there are also some new actions to reflect the findings from the mid-point review of Connected. The actions in the plan have been devised through collaborative working with community planning partners from statutory and voluntary sector partners.

Intended aims/outcomes. What is the policy trying to achieve?

Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 action plan.

There are 9 long term outcomes in Connected the community plan and these have been revised following engagement and consultation during the mid-point review. The revised outcomes are-

1. **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.
2. **Healthy Community:** People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.
3. **Welcoming Community:** Our borough is a safe, inclusive, respectful and peaceful environment.

4. **Enterprising Economy:** Our borough is a productive centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.
5. **Inclusive Economy:** Everyone has a decent minimum living standard.
6. **Skilled Economy:** People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.
7. **Creative Place:** Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts, cultural and heritage experiences.
8. **Sustainable 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.
9. **Revitalised Place:** Our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life.

The cross cutting themes of the plan remain connectivity, equality and sustainability and are embedded in Connected, our community plan and its action plan.

The reviewed Connected action plan's priorities for action remain as follows-

- Promoting Good Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion
- Place
- Shared Leadership & Community Engagement

Policy Framework

Has the policy been developed in response to statutory requirements, legal advice or on the basis of any other professional advice? Does this affect the discretion available to The Council to amend the policy?

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

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 places a duty on community planning partners to take forward collaborative actions to realise the outcomes in the community plan.

While this equality screening form applies to the action plan as a whole, the organisation leading on each action is responsible for ensuring equality duties are met for the individual action.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, please outline.

All Section 75 groups should benefit from the implementation of the revised Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 action plan.

Who initiated or wrote the policy (if The Council decision, please state). Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

Who initiated or wrote the policy?	The reviewed Connected action plan was initiated by the Community Planning Strategic Partnership. It was written by the chairs of each sub-committee in collaboration with the wider community planning partnership and with support from the Community Planning Team in council.
Who is responsible for implementation?	The Community Planning Strategic Partnership is responsible for its delivery through its four sub-committees. There are action leads for each action. Each lead organisation will be responsible for meeting equality responsibilities for their individual actions.

Are there any factors which might contribute to or detract from the implementation of the policy (e.g. financial, legislative, other)?

The reviewed Connected: A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 action plan is dependent on buy in, commitment and resources of community planning partners and strategic and community partners who will be required to help deliver the plan.

Main stakeholders in relation to the policy

Please list main stakeholders affected by the policy (e.g. staff, customers, other statutory bodies, community or voluntary sector, private sector)

The community, which is defined in its broadest sense in the community planning statutory guidance and includes:

- residents;
- service users;
- voluntary body representatives whose activities benefit our borough;
- businesses; and
- other persons interested in the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the area.

- Community Planning Partners
- Community and Voluntary Sector Panel member
- Business Partnership Alliance
- Elected Members
- Government departments

Are there any other policies with a bearing on this policy? If so, please identify them and how they impact on this policy.

Connected: A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 (updated 2025)
Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (ABC) Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027
Community planning partners' corporate plans
Rural Policy Framework NI
Sustainability for the Future – DAERA's plan to 2050
Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031
Making Life Better-Strategic Fraemwork for Public Health
People & Place- Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal
Active Living-Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for N.I
Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030
Draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for NI
Racial Equality Strategy
NIHE Local Housing Investment Plan
Heritage Places Strategy
Labour Market Partnership action plan
Place Plans
Lough Neagh Action Plan
Get Moving ABC Framework 2020-2030
Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2025
Mid-South West Regional Economic Strategy
ABC Good Relations Strategy
Local Development Plan for the ABC Borough

Available Evidence

The Council should ensure that its screening decisions are informed by relevant data. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories. For up to date S75 Borough Statistics

The following evidence was considered to develop the reviewed Connected: A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 action plan for delivery-

- Findings from the review of Connected: A Community Plan for ABC 2027-230 (updated 2025) and associated EQIA and RNIA
- 2021 NI Census
- Meetings and workshops with community planning partners

<table>
<tr><th>Section 75 category</th><th>Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td>Religious belief</td><td>The 2021 Census showed that 43.8% of the population in the borough were either Catholic or brought up as Catholic and 46.7% belonged to or were brought up in Protestant, other Christian or Christian-related denominations. A further 1.2% belonged to or had been brought up in other religions, while 8.2% neither belonged to, nor had been brought up in, a religion.
<table>
<tr><th>Religion or religion brought up in</th><th>Number</th><th>Percentage</th></tr>
<tr><td>Catholic</td><td>95,868</td><td>43.8%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)</td><td>102,063</td><td>46.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other religions</td><td>2,697</td><td>1.2%</td></tr>
<tr><td>None</td><td>18,028</td><td>8.2%</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

	All usual residents	**218,656**	**100%**

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

Political opinion	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has 41 elected members. A breakdown of results of the Local Government Election in May 2023 for the borough are as follows: • Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) – 13 • Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) – 6 • Sinn Fein – 15 • Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) – 1 • Alliance – 4 • Independent – 1 • Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) - 1 A total of 87,684 votes were polled in the borough from an eligible electorate of 155,625 giving a turnout of 56.34%. This breakdown is taken as an approximate representation of the political opinion of people within the borough.
Racial group	Racial Group - Ethnicity Results from the 2021 Census showed that 96.7% of the usually resident population of the borough were white and 3.3% were from minority ethnic groups. The main ethnic minorities were Mixed (1,652 individuals), Black African (1,132 individuals) and Chinese (683 individuals).

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

Table 2: Ethnic group of residents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Table: MS-B01 Ethnic Group, Census 2021, NISRA.

Racial Group - Country of Birth

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

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

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

Racial Group - Language

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

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

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

<table>
<tr><td>Age</td><td>The population of the borough was estimated to be 218,656 on Census Day 2021, the profile of which is shown below.

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

Table 5: Age profile of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough at Census Day 2021. Source: Table MS-A06 Age Structure, Census 2021
The age profile of the borough is projected to change between 2020 and 2043 with an ageing population. It is projected that in 2033, the proportion of older people in the borough (those aged 65 and over) will be higher than the proportion of children (those aged 15 and under). The proportion of those aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 15.7% in 2020 to 22.1% in 2043. The proportion of those aged under 16 is projected to decrease from 22.5% in 2020 to 18.9% in 2043.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marital status</td><td>The 2021 Census provides information on the marital and civil partnership status of those aged 16 and over. Almost half of residents aged 16+ in the borough were married (49.0%) while just over 35% were single (never married or never in a registered same-sex civil partnership).

Table 6: Marital and civil partnership status of residents aged 16+ in Armagh
<table>
<tr><th>Marital and Civil Partnership Status</th><th>Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon</th><th>%</th></tr>
<tr><td>All usual residents aged 16 and over</td><td>170,411</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Single (never married or never registered civil partnership)</td><td>60,075</td><td>35.3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Married</td><td>83,523</td><td>49.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>In a civil partnership</td><td>307</td><td>0.2%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)</td><td>5,833</td><td>3.4%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved</td><td>10,253</td><td>6.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership</td><td>10,420</td><td>6.1%</td></tr>
</table>
Table 6: Marital and civil partnership status of residents aged 16+ in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Marital and Civil Partnership Status – Table MS-A30, Census 2021, NISRA.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sexual orientation</td><td>The question on sexual orientation was new for the 2021 Census and was asked of all people aged 16 and over. However, while completing the census</td></tr>
</table>

is a legal obligation, there was no statutory penalty for those people who failed to provide an answer to the question on sexual orientation.
Just 1.5% of the population aged 16 and over in the borough identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) while 90.5% identified as straight or heterosexual and 8% did not provide an answer to the question.

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

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

Men and women generally

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

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

Table 8. Usual resident population, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 2021.

Source: 2021 Census, NISRA.

Disability

According to the 2021 Census, more than one in five people in the borough (22% or 48,726 individuals) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability.
Census 2021 results are disaggregated by broad age bands and the results show the prevalence of a limiting long-term health problem or disability is related to age[1]. Almost 57% of the population aged 65+ in the borough had a limiting long-term health problem or disability compared to 6% of those aged between 0-14.

	Population	**With a limiting long term health problem or disability**	**Percentage**
0-14	45,420	2,759	6.1%
15-39	67,700	7,367	10.9%
40-64	70,547	18,715	26.5%

[1] Census 2021 Main statistics for Northern Ireland - Statistical bulletin - Health (nisra.gov.uk)

	65+	34,990	19,885	56.8%
	All ages	218,657	48,726	22.3%

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

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

- 2,940 or 3% of under 16 eligible population and 4,570 or 6.8% of pension age eligible population claiming Disability Living Allowance.
- 6,380 or 18.8% of 66+ population claiming Attendance Allowance.
- 20,940 Personal Independent Payment claims in payment (experimental statistics).

Dependants

Persons with a dependant are generally classified as persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.
The 2021 Census showed that 32% or 27,192 households in the borough contained dependent children.
Respondents to the 2021 Census were asked whether they provide any unpaid help or support to anyone because of long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 12% of the population aged 5 years old and over (or 24,743 individuals) provided unpaid care. Of those who provided unpaid support:

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

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

- who look after a severely disabled person for at least 35 hours a week
- who are not gainfully employed (i.e. not earning more than £128 per week after certain deductions)
- who are not subject to immigration control
- who are not in full-time education
- are aged 16 and over

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information gathered above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories in relation to this particular policy/decision?

Section 75 category	Needs, experiences and priorities
Religious belief	Feedback from the EQIA undertaken for the review of Connected would suggest that Protestants persistently have lower levels of attainment than Catholics at GSCE level.

Political opinion	There is no data to suggest that people of different political opinion marital status have different needs, experiences and priorities in relation to the action plan
Racial group	In ABC there were 289 hate motivated incidents in 2022/23 - 95 of these incidents were racist, 120 sectarian, 39 homophobic, 11 disability, 22 transgender and 2 faith/religion. At the action planning day and follow up meetings with sub-committee's and Chairs the underlying reasons for hate motivated incidents – education, engagement, societal came up as an issue.
Age	The issues of mental health and wellbeing, poverty, public transport, housing, safety at night and drugs & alcohol were raised by the Youth Voice during the public consultation for the review of the community plan. Like other council areas our borough has an ageing population. However, the number of those aged over 65 is projected to increase by 62.5% in ABC, which is a bigger increase than is projected for NI (50.5%).
Marital status	There is no data to suggest that people of different marital status have different needs, experiences and priorities in relation to the action plan.
Sexual orientation	During the consultation the need to promote understanding of and respect towards LGBTQIA+ people in the borough.
Men and women generally	Violence against Women and Girls came up during the consultation for the review of Connected.
Disability	People with a disability have a lower employment rate than those without in the borough. There is a 42.8% gap between those with a disability and those without. The partnership has adopted this statistic as a population indicator to measure progress towards the Inclusive Economy outcome in the plan. The need for day activities for SEN young people 18 + was also raised through action planning.
Dependants	The needs of carers were raised during the action planning process, in terms of carers currently not accessing the full range of support services available to them.

Screening Questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 categories?

Category	Policy Impact	Level of impact (Major/minor/none)
Religious belief	Effective implementation of the action plan will have a positive impact on all S75 groups, but no specific impact on equality of opportunity for those of different religious belief.	None
Political opinion	Effective implementation of the action plan will have a positive impact on all S75 groups, but no specific impact on equality of opportunity for those of different political opinion.	None
Racial group	Through the action to- *Develop a coordinated action plan of programmes, projects and events across the Borough to build cultural awareness, celebrate diversity and strengthen good relations*. We believe that this will have a positive impact on equality of opportunity.	Minor positive
Age	The partnership has included the following priorities in its action plan that will have a positive impact on children and young people: *Deliver a Youth Voice project for the Borough and involve them in the partnerships' decisions* *Inform and influence the work of the Partnership and others to ensure needs are met, particularly for priority groups including young people 16 to 25, and that*	Minor positive

	opportunities to collaborate are embraced. We believe that this will have a positive impact on younger people and their access to support for individual wellbeing. Through our action to- *Deliver the age friendly strategy for the borough.* We believe that this will have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for older people.	
Marital status	Effective implementation of the action plan will have a positive impact on all S75 groups, but no specific impact on equality of opportunity for those of different marital status.	None
Sexual orientation	Effective implementation of the action plan will have a positive impact on all S75 groups, but no specific impact on equality of opportunity for those of different sexual orientation.	None
Men and women generally	Effective implementation of the action plan will have a positive impact on all S75 groups, but no specific impact on equality of opportunity for men and women generally. Although violence against women and girls was raised as an issue during the development of the plan, partners felt that work was happening elsewhere to address this and did not feel that there was a specific role for the partnership.	None
Disability	Effective implementation of the action plan will have a positive impact on all S75 groups, but no specific impact on equality of	Minor positive

	opportunity for those of with a disability. The partnership will look for opportunities to deliver programmes for SEN young people 18 + .	
Dependants	A priority under our action to- *Increase awareness of and access to support and services to prevent and mitigate poverty* is to *Create links with organisations supporting carers, including young carers, to ensure they can access all support services available*. We believe that this will have a positive impact on equality of opportunity.	Minor positive

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief	Equality screening of individual actions and discussions at partnership meetings will identify further opportunity to promote equality of opportunity for all section 75 categories.	
Political opinion		
Racial group		
Age		
Marital status		
Sexual orientation		
Men and women generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?

Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact (major/minor/none)
Religious belief		None
Political opinion		None
Racial group	Through the action to- *Develop a coordinated action plan of programmes, projects and events across the Borough to build cultural*	Minor positive.

	awareness, celebrate diversity and strengthen good relations. We believe that this will have a positive impact on good relations between people of different racial groups.	

4. **Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief	Equality screening of individual actions and discussions at partnership meetings will identify further opportunity to promote good relations.	
Political opinion	Equality screening of individual actions and discussions at partnership meetings will identify further opportunity to promote good relations.	
Racial group	Equality screening of individual actions and discussions at partnership meetings will identify further opportunity to promote good relations.	

Multiple Identity

Generally speaking, people fall into more than one Section 75 category (for example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; young lesbian, gay and bisexual people). Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant s75 categories concerned.

Consultation for the review of the community plan generated information mostly relating to individual S75 groups, however, the following points were raised:

- safety concerns for young women at night in town centres
- increasing numbers of “newcomer” pupils from different countries attending special school

Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006

Is there an opportunity for the policy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

Yes, the Community Planning Strategic Partnership involves representatives from a cross section of organisations, and partners will continue to inform how the actions contained within the plan can promote positive attitudes towards disabled people through their delivery.

Is there an opportunity for the policy to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

Yes, actions in the plan such as Participatory Budgeting, the development of place plans, the Community & Voluntary Sector Panel and the Youth Voice will provide opportunities for participation by disabled people in public life

Screening Decision

A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY

Please identify reasons for this below

N/A

B: MINOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AS IMPACT CAN BE ELIMINATED OR MITIGATED

Where the impact is likely to be minor, you should consider if the policy can be mitigated, or an alternative policy introduced. If so, an EQIA may not be considered necessary. You must indicate the reasons for this decision below, together with details of measures to mitigate the adverse impact or the alternative policy proposed.

It is recommended the Connected A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017- 2030 action plan will not be subject to an EQIA. Where there is an impact identified, it is a minor positive impact on equality of opportunity for people from different racial backgrounds, older/younger people and carers. A minor positive impact on good relations between people of different racial groups has also been identified. This is a high level action plan and, as stated above, each action lead will be responsible for ensuring equality and good relations duties are met for individual actions. The Community Planning Team in council has a role in identifying opportunities for partners to increase equality of opportunity for S75 groups throughout the delivery of the action plan.

C: MAJOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA REQUIRED

If the decision is to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/A

Timetabling and Prioritising

If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment, please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3 with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Policy Criterion	**Rating (1-3)**
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	

The total rating score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the Council in timetabling its EQIAs.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? If yes, please give details.

Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help the authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy. It is recommended that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced to mitigate adverse impact, monitoring be undertaken on a broader basis to identify any impact (positive or adverse).

Further information on monitoring is available in the Equality Commission's guidance on monitoring (www.equalityni.org).

Identify how the impact of the policy is to be monitored

As per Council's Equality Scheme, the policy will be reviewed every 5 years, or sooner as necessary, to ensure that it remains up-to-date with legislative advancements etc.

Further to this, the reviewed Connected: A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 action plan will be supported by comprehensive governance, scrutiny and accountability arrangements.

Monitoring of the actions in the Community Plan will be undertaken every 6 months and reported to the CPSP.

Membership at all levels in the CP structure will be made up of Elected Members from the Council, representatives from Statutory Partners and others, plus the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Approval and Authorisation

A copy of the screening form for each policy screened should be signed off by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The screening recommendation should be reported to the relevant Committee/The Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Emma O'Carroll	Community Planning and Evidence Officer	
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date
Jennie Dunlop	Community & Strategic Planning Manager	01/03/2026

A copy of the completed screening form should be signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The completed screening form should be attached to the relevant Committee paper when the policy is submitted for approval.

Following approval by Council please forward a copy of the completed approved policy and screening form to:

Equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

The policy and completed screening form will be made available on the Council's website.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

SECTION 1
Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough The Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Connected A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 (updated 2025) action plan

1C Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to:

Developing a	*Choose an item.*
Adopting a	*Choose an item.*
Implementing a	*Choose an item.*
Revising a	**Plan**
Designing a Public Service	☐
Delivering a Public Service	☐

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above

Connected A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 (updated 2025) action plan.

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 action plan.

There are 9 long term outcomes in Connected the community plan and these have been revised following engagement and consultation during the mid-point review. The revised outcomes are-

10. **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.
11. **Healthy Community:** People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.
12. **Welcoming Community:** Our borough is a safe, inclusive, respectful and peaceful environment.
13. **Enterprising Economy:** Our borough is a productive centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.
14. **Inclusive Economy:** Everyone has a decent minimum living standard.
15. **Skilled Economy:** People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.
16. **Creative Place:** Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts, cultural and heritage experiences.
17. **Sustainable 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.
18. **Revitalised Place:** Our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life.

The cross cutting themes of the plan remain connectivity, equality and sustainability and are embedded in Connected, our community plan and its action plan.

The reviewed Connected action plan's priorities for action remain as follows-

- Promoting Good Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Tackling Poverty & Social Exclusion
- Place
- Shared Leadership & Community Engagement

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition	☒
Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below)	☐
A definition of 'rural' is not applicable	☐

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

SECTION 2
Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes ☒ **No** ☐ **If response is No go to 2E**

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The reviewed Connected: A Community Plan is the overarching plan for the borough and works in two ways, firstly as a monitored plan at population level and then through influencing our partners in their service delivery through collaborative actions taken forward by the partnership. The plan can broadly be viewed as presenting positive action measures designed to enhance and improve the quality of the lives of people in the borough, irrespective of their identity, and including those in rural areas.

Our action plan for delivery of Connected has now been updated and during the engagement period rural needs were taken into consideration. We engaged with a wide range of organisations, including TADA rural support network, community transport providers and DAERA who all sit on the wider community planning partnership. We also held engagement activities in rural areas to ensure that rural needs were highlighted throughout the development of the action plan.

Through our Connected Community, Healthy and Welcoming Community outcomes our partnership wants to ensure that our borough is safe, inclusive and that everyone can contribute to community life regardless of where they live in the borough.

Through our Enterprising, Inclusive and Skilled Economy outcomes our partnership will endeavour to attract residents onto programmes and training opportunities from both urban and rural areas.

Through our Creative, Revitalised and Sustainable Place outcomes our partnership will ensure that our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life.

While the action plan is a high-level document, and includes other strategies and programmes, each action lead organisation is responsible for ensuring that any rural needs duties are met.

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

The proposals contained within the action plan will be beneficial to both urban and rural dwellers. There are some actions that will have a specific impact on people in rural areas.

An action within our action plan that may have a specific focus on rural dwellers is that of- *Continue to roll out Place Plans*. These plans for urban areas take into consideration how people in our surrounding rural areas use their towns. In addition, the roll out of place plans for rural settlements will be commenced.

Another action under Revitalised Place is that of -*Research infrastructure needs in the borough. Identify priorities and advocate for resources to deliver them*. Through this the action lead and partners will develop a collaborative infrastructure strategy for the borough bringing together research, engagement and priorities for waste water and connections for development, blueways and greenways, public transport, roads and rail connectivity, broadband and rural transport. This will have a positive impact on people living in rural

areas.

The *Shaping Sustainable Places Programme* action will work with partners to identify needs and be project ready when funding become available and to deliver projects in rural and urban areas. The action also includes a priority to respond to developments in regional rural policy and to implement in partnership.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	☒
Rural Tourism	☒
Rural Housing	☒
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	☒
Education or Training in Rural Areas	☒
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	☒
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	☒
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	☒
Poverty in Rural Areas	☒
Deprivation in Rural Areas	☒
Rural Crime or Community Safety	☒
Rural Development	☒
Agri-Environment	☒
Other (Please state)	

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

SECTION 3
Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes ☒ **No** ☐ **If response is No go to 3E**

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	☒
Consultation with Other organisations	☒
Published Statistics	☒
Research Papers	☐
Surveys or Questionnaires	☒
Other Publications	☐
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below)	☒

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

- NISRA stats
- Partnership engagement and public consultation report for the review of Connected
- Action Planning day feedback
- Rural statistics on the internet
- Multiple deprivation statistics
- Partner feedback
- Participation or rural community groups during the action planning such as TADA Rural Support network and also DAERA.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

The needs of the whole borough were considered but the rural needs have also been considered as the results from the 2021 Census show that just over half of the borough's population (51.5%) lived in urban areas while just under half (48.5%) lived in rural areas.

This is based on the 2015 Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements which recommended a default urban-rural classification, with the boundary at a settlement population of 5,000 (Bands A – E are urban Bands F – H are rural), to be used in the absence of a programme specific definition. Essentially settlements larger than 5,000 people / Band E or above could be considered Urban. Craigavon Urban Area (which includes Central Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown), Banbridge, Armagh and Dromore are the four urban areas within the borough, all other settlements are classified as rural according to the NISRA default classification. In Northern Ireland overall, 63% of the population are classed as living in urban areas and 37% in rural areas.

NISRA also provides the classification at Super Output Area (SOA), 36 out of the borough's

87 SOAs are classified as rural with a further 9 being mixed urban/rural. The rural areas cover a large part of the borough.

The Access to Services domain is particularly relevant to rural areas; this measures the extent to which people have poor physical and online access to key services. The borough has 9 Super Output Areas (10% of the total 87 SOAs in the Borough) in the top 100 most deprived in NI on the Access to Services domain, each of these are defined as rural on the default NISRA classification. 3

The Access to Services domain consists of three indicators:

- Service-weighted fastest travel time by private transport
- Service-weighted fastest travel time by public transport
- Proportion of properties with broadband speed below 10Mb/s

The borough has areas within the top 100 most deprived in NI on each of these three indicators. For example, Bannside SOA in the Borough is the second most deprived SOA in NI in terms of proportion of properties with broadband speed below 10Mb/s.

Through the consultation for the reviewed community plan and the action planning process various rural needs arose such as rural transport, lack of housing and accessibility.

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

SECTION 4
Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

The following issues were considered in relation to the needs of residents in ABC in both urban and rural areas. Through the outcomes listed below our action leads, with the support of the community planning team, will consider the social and economic needs of our borough, including those in both urban and rural areas.

- **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.
- **Healthy Community**: People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better equipped to cope with life's challenges.
- **Welcoming Community**: Our borough is a safe, inclusive, respectful and peaceful environment.
- **Enterprising Economy**: Our borough is a productive centre for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.
- **Inclusive Economy**: Everyone has a decent minimum living standard.
- **Skilled Economy**: People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the dynamic economy.
- **Creative Place**: Our borough is an inspirational and creative place offering quality, inclusive arts, cultural and heritage experiences.
- **Revitalised Place**: Our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural places are at the heart of community and economic life.
- **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.
- The cross-cutting themes of the community plan are **connectivity, equality and sustainability.**
- Our **Community Voluntary Sector Panel** includes members from rural community organisations who advise the partnership on rural issues.
- Following the public consultation for the review of Connected, the community plan and subsequent engagement during the action planning process some of the issues that arose are wider than just rural issues and affect people in both rural and urban areas. These issues include - **social isolation and loneliness**- for people of all ages, particularly in rural areas. The need for more **integrated public transport,** especially in terms of **rural transport** provision in order to provide **access to services** in particular **rail and road links** for those in rural and urban areas, **lack of late night and early morning buses** to allow those in rural areas to get to work was an area for concern.
- **Lack of community venues and provision of programmes** in both urban and rural areas was highlighted as an issue as was **employment and access to jobs and opportunities and affordable and accessible housing**.

SECTION 5
Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes ☒ **No** ☐ **If response is No go to 5C**

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

Consideration of borough statistics have been utilised when undertaking this review of the action plan for delivery of Connected, our community plan and rural needs will be taken into consideration in all actions taken forward to ensure that rural needs will be met.

Through the engagement for the action plan- consultation and development took place with rural groups & specific actions were prioritised such as the inclusion of rural transport in the infrastructure strategy for the borough.

The following actions are specifically targeted to rural areas:

- An action within our action plan that may have a specific focus on rural dwellers is that of- *Continue to roll out Place Plans*. These plans for urban areas take into consideration how people in our in surrounding rural areas use their towns. In addition, the roll out of place plans for rural settlements will be commenced. These place plans for rural settlements will include research and consultation on needs in these rural settlements.
- Another action under Revitalised Place is that of -*Research infrastructure needs in the borough. Identify priorities and advocate for resources to deliver them*. Through this the action lead and partners will develop a collaborative infrastructure strategy for the borough bringing together research, engagement and priorities for waste water and connections for development, blueways and greenways, public transport, roads and rail connectivity, broadband and rural transport. This will have a positive impact on people living in rural areas.
- The *Shaping Sustainable Places Programme* action will work with partners to identify needs and be project ready when funding become available and to deliver projects in rural and urban areas. The action also includes a priority to respond to developments in regional rural policy and to implement in partnership.

With all of the actions outlined in our action plan it is the responsibility of the organisation leading to consider rural needs and the Community Planning team in council will support and look for opportunities to ensure rural needs are met.

If the response to Section 5A was YES go to 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

SECTION 6

Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

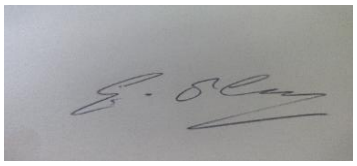
I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained, and relevant information compiled. ☐

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by: Emma O'Carroll

Position: Community Planning and Evidence Officer

Department / Directorate: Community Planning, Policy and Research

Signature:



Date: *Click or tap to enter a date.*

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by: Jennie Dunlop

Position: Community & Strategic Planning Manager

Department / Directorate: Community Planning, Policy & Research

Signature: Jennie Dunlop

Date: 12th March 2026 *Click or tap to enter a date.*