



MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (CPSP) MEETING
HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021 AT 10.01 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Thomas Larkham, Armagh City, Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough Council (Acting Chair)

Councillors
Julie Flaherty
Peter Lavery
Tim McClelland

OFFICIAL PARTNERS: CVSP Geraldine Lawless
CVSP Gilbert Lee
DfC Simon Sloan
EA Paul Crooks
HSCB Sophie Lusby
Invest NI Ethna McNamee
Libraries NI Evelyn Hanna
NIHE Catherine McFarland
SHSCT Paul Morgan
Sport NI William Devlin
SRC Catriona Regan

APOLOGIES: CCMS Majella Corrigan
DfC Sorcha Hassey
Libraries NI Adrienne Adair
NIFRS Dermot Rooney
PHA Colette Rogers
PSNI Chief Inspector Bernard O'Connor
Tourism NI Martin Graham

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Roger Wilson, Chief Executive (Chair)
Olga Murtagh, Strategic Director (Place)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sharon O’Gorman, Strategic Director (Position)
Sharon McNicholl, Strategic Director (Performance)
Elaine Gillespie, Head of Department: Community Planning
Jennie Dunlop, Community and Strategic Planning Manager
Michelle Markey, Community Planning Officer
Patricia McParland, Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mura Quigley, Urban Scale Interventions
Khadidja Salamah Konate, Urban Scale Interventions

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Welcome

The Acting Chair, Councillor Larkham welcomed everyone to the twelfth meeting of the partnership. He explained that the Chair, Roger Wilson Chief Executive was unable to attend today's meeting so he would take the position of Chair. He welcomed Paul Crooks from the Education Authority to his first meeting of the partnership and explained that Paul had replaced Ruth Bell who had recently retired. He added that the Education Authority representative held the position of Vice Chair but as this was Paul Crooks' first meeting it was not deemed appropriate to ask him to Chair.

NOTED.

1.2 Apologies

NOTED: apologies were received and accepted from Roger Wilson Chief Executive and Olga Murtagh Strategic Director (Place) Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Majella Corrigan CCMS, Sorcha Hassay Department for Communities, Adrienne Adair Libraries NI, Dermot Rooney NIFRS, Chief Inspector Bernard O'Connor PSNI, Colette Rogers Public Health Agency and Martin Graham Tourism NI.

NOTED.

1.3 Introductions

All partners introduced themselves.

NOTED.

2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting on 19 November 2020

Minutes of the Community Planning Strategic Partnership (CPSP) meeting on 19 November 2020.

AGREED: on the proposal of Geraldine Lawless, seconded by Paul Morgan that the Minutes of the Community Planning Strategic Partnership (CPSP) meeting on 19 November 2020 having been previously circulated be confirmed and signed off as a correct record.

3. LEADERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

3.1 Update from Catherine McFarland, NIHE

- **Report CPSP/LESC-21-01**

Catherine McFarland guided partners through the report.

Geraldine Lawless stated that the Planning Group had held their meeting the previous day and they were very much committed to the work being done. They valued the input from the statutory partners and the Community Planning team including Elaine Gillespie, Jennie Dunlop and Michelle Markey.

AGREED: on the proposal of Catherine McFarland, seconded by Geraldine Lawless

- that the partnership hold an online launch of the Community Engagement Guide which will accompany the Community Engagement Strategy.
- that the partnership submit a response to the Programme for Government consultation, based on the partnership's learning on ways of working for an outcomes based wellbeing approach.

4. BETTER OUTCOMES SUBCOMMITTEE

4.1 Update from Sharon O’Gorman

- **Report CPSP/BOSC-21-01**

Sharon O’Gorman guided partners through the report.

The Acting Chair, Councillor Larkham asked which partners currently sat on the Better Outcomes Sub-Committee.

Elaine Gillespie advised that a nomination had been received from Southern Regional College and there were already representatives from the Department for Communities, Libraries NI and Community Voluntary Sector Partnership on the Sub-Committee. The limited membership meant that if one partner did not attend a meeting they were inquorate. She added that Officers would send a reminder email to partners asking for nominations.

AGREED:

- That additional partners nominate themselves to the Better Outcomes Sub-Committee

5. LOCALITY PLANNING: Place Shaping Plan for Armagh

5.1 Presentation from Mura Quigley and Khadidja Salamah Konate, Urban Scale Interventions (USI)

Elaine Gillespie explained that there had been discussions in relation to Place Shaping for some time and DfC, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Council were funding a pilot and Armagh had been chosen as the area to begin. It was an important milestone for the partnership as it was the start of the Locality Planning and it would involve a spatial element.

She emphasised the importance of the partnership approach with all partners present.

She introduced Mura Quigley and Khadidja Salamah Konate from Urban Scale Interventions who would guide partners through the Presentation.

Mura Quigley went through the Powerpoint Presentation elaborating briefly on the following points:

- Getting Armagh in Shape
 - Agenda
 - Purpose of the Plan
 - Discover Phase
 - USI
 - What is Armagh Place Shaping Plan About
 - Placing culture at the heart of doing things differently
 - The Plan Process
 - History and Evolution
 - What is Armagh’s Story today?
 - City Centre Health Check
 - Liveability

- Town Centre Activity
- Connectivity
- Demographic Change
- Challenges for an equitable city
- Policy Analysis
- Armagh City Centre Masterplan
- What are the various policies and strategies saying?
- Green infrastructure
- Climate change
- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainable Growth
- Connectivity
- Questions
 - Are these the right policy priorities?
 - Are there other critical strategies to take into account?

Elaine Gillespie pointed that through the engagement which had been carried out to date, the uniqueness of Armagh and its learning culture had been highlighted and she gave the example of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium and the Robinson Library. The themes of learning and innovation had come through and work would continue to see how these needed to be incorporated in policy priorities.

Councillor Lavery remarked that the Presentation was excellent and he felt that the five priorities were essential. He stressed the importance of preparing for green infrastructure and climate change which involved future proofing the city as a whole as further restrictions in relation to carbon outputs were imposed. He highlighted that as a Member of Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Committee he was aware that the Local Development Plan would be shaped in the next two years and he understood that the current Plan for Armagh dated back to 2004. He understood that the Preferred Options Paper included a substantial proposal to zone more land for industrial development in Armagh which would feed into sustainable growth in the city, particularly in terms of the congestion of the road network. He felt that a priority for sustainable growth was the construction of the Armagh East Link road which would have to be delivered to create jobs in Armagh. He remarked that as Mura Quigley had stated, the aim was to encourage people to live and work in Armagh in a sustainable way. He added that the Presentation was very positive, he looked forward to seeing work continue in the forthcoming months and he reiterated the importance of the environmental element.

Councillor McClelland agreed with many of the points made by Councillor Lavery. He referred to the issue of green infrastructure and pointed out that whatever was put in place had to be practical and had to function. He was glad to see that the issue of connectivity was included and as a Member of the Board of East Border Region, he was aware that there were various potential funding opportunities coming along during the next number of years in relation to "Smarter Towns" and "Smarter Villages". He continued that these plans were at an early stage, however he felt that there was potential for synergy in relation to connectivity. He welcomed the Presentation and he hoped that plans could be rolled out in a practical way which would make a difference to the day to day lives of the people who lived in or around Armagh City.

Ethna McNamee congratulated Mura Quigley on the Presentation which she felt had hit key areas in terms of policy priorities, green infrastructure and climate change. She highlighted the link to sustainable growth which she felt presented many opportunities. She remarked that Armagh was a beautiful city and the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day was an all-Ireland event, yet the key assets were situated in Armagh. She stressed the importance of finding ways of developing the borough and linking to the critical part of the place in terms of entrepreneurship, innovation and investment. She was aware that development of industrial land would be critical in increasing new opportunities for business as well as developing the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, she remarked

that businesses were looking at the need for staff to be located closer to where they came from. She concurred with the policy priorities and looked forward to working with others to deliver them on the ground.

Sharon O’Gorman thanked Mura Quigley for the Presentation. She agreed that themes which were merging as priorities were sound. She highlighted the importance of preserving, maintaining and building on Armagh’s uniqueness and looking at how it could be brought forward in the future in terms of modernity. The issues of innovation, learning, land and infrastructure were key to that. She added that as mentioned by Councillor McClelland, there was a lot of scoping work ongoing by East Border Region in relation to potential Peace Plus opportunities and Officers would explore these further. She commended USI on their work to date.

Gilbert Lee referred to the point in the Presentation in relation to changing demographics and the ageing community. He was concerned for the future and he referred to recent news reports in relation to the “Brain Drain” from Northern Ireland which meant that many potential future leaders and business were being lost to overseas countries. He highlighted that if current trends continued, the population would decline in future decades and he asked how this strategy would help that.

Elaine Gillespie advised that this question would be answered as USI moved through the Presentation.

Paul Morgan remarked on the excellent Presentation and stated that he had no issue with the policy priorities. As someone who had previously worked in Armagh, he believed that part of the challenge was that it was seen as an old market town to some people but yet had the brand of a city. He was concerned in relation to the health and wellbeing agenda, particularly in relation to young people leaving the city. He felt that consideration needed to be given to why they were leaving and he highlighted that the historical element of the city was very positive and suggested that it should perhaps be explored further. He pointed out that the Department for Communities had developed a Poverty Strategy and he felt that this needed to be taken into account in the context of the policy priorities and how they applied to Armagh City. He was also aware that Sport NI were developing a strategy in relation to community spaces accessibility which he felt was also important. He added that it was vital to harness young people and connect them back into their local area.

Ethna McNamee stated that Council had developed a strategy in relation to people and place and excellent work had taken place including production of a video which connected people back. She noted that Mura Quigley’s Presentation had referred to the diaspora and she felt it was critical that the people who lived in other parts of the world but were originally from Armagh were connected back to the city. She suggested that a key way to attract young people back would be to get some of the people who had already come back to talk about their experiences. The old market town could become a feature as the old nature could be very attractive and she would like to see this explored further. She continued, that there was also a link to the Growth Deal which included the three Councils working together to shape the Mid-South West Region and Armagh was central to that. She explained that innovation, skills and training were all factors and she was aware that within the Growth Deal, Council was looking at how to make the green economy work. She reiterated that it was critical to have a link to the Growth Deal and that issues such as road infrastructure and connectivity were considered.

Sharon McNicholl remarked that the Presentation had been very useful and thought provoking. She referred to the eventual realisation of plans and outcomes and linking these with the strategy documents which drove funding and resource allocation. She highlighted the unique and special qualities of Armagh which had been referred to in the Presentation and had clearly come through during the engagement process. She agreed with the themes and stressed the importance of bringing through the uniqueness and individuality of the city.

Simon Sloan stated that he had recently met with some Department colleagues from the Regeneration and Arts and Culture Division who were particularly interested in the work of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium and future proposals around this. He pointed out that there were lots of valuable legacy historical links to a learning city which was a unique aspect of Armagh. He highlighted that Jocelyn Bell Burnell from Lurgan discovered the Pulsar and her father was an architect who had been involved in the design of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium. He highlighted that Armagh had the only Planetarium in Ireland, he felt that this element was currently undervalued and he hoped it would be considered during the place shaping process. He added that he would feed back to his colleagues in other Divisions to ensure that they were part of the conversation.

Mura Quigley thanked partners for their feedback. She highlighted that some of the key priorities could now be teased out. As a consultancy she explained that their role was to look at urban futures and part of the process involved looking at trends and highlighting the potential to shift the trajectories and how we wanted the city to be. Some of the issues highlighted included young people leaving the area and consideration needed to be given to what was needed to encourage them back to set up home and families. She referred to the beautiful heritage, culture and assets of Armagh and stressed the importance of using those well. It was also about challenging some pre-existing solutions that people had in their heads and exploring those further. She referred to the type of lifestyle which young people wanted for example to live well, to work and have a good life and she asked if this was a commuting lifestyle or a 15 minute city lifestyle. This was the vision which they wanted to tease out and put in place to ensure the right shaping of Armagh.

Mura Quigley explained that as Urban Designers and Place Makers, they had gone out to get to know the place and what it was about. They started to see some emerging themes which brought all the work together. There were six key themes.

Khadidja Salamah Konate continued the Powerpoint Presentation outlining the six key themes:

1. It's not about filling leftover spaces with cars – it's about designing for an active city.
2. It's not about designing better access to services – it's about designing a liveable city.
3. It's not about designing for an ageing population – we are getting old, how can we remain active?
4. It's not about designing tourist attractions – it's about designing for meaningful. Tourism is changing – we are connecting people to places in new and exciting ways.
5. It's not about protecting the natural and built environment. Climate change is happening.
6. It's not about coming up with readymade solutions for a place, it's about shaping the tools.

Question

Do you agree with the emerging themes? How would they help your organisation to meet its objectives?

Partners then moved to three separate breakout rooms to consider the questions above from 11.12 am to 11.26 am.

Feedback was given from Break-out Rooms as follows:

Elaine Gillespie gave feedback from Break-out Room 1

- Tools
- Learning and Innovation
- Special-ness and uniqueness of Armagh – how to we draw that out
- Young people – how do we make them stay?
- Organisation and how we support that

- Linkages across organisations and facilities

Sharon O’Gorman gave feedback from Break-out Room 2

- Use of what we already have – we should be opening up our schools for a greater use at different times of day
- We have a vast amount of facilities – it’s about looking at what we have and using it better
- Armagh Planetarium – innovative interactions – what could make this place stand out in the region? What is unique?
- The Mall is a real asset
- We need the communities to be enthused about this. Importance of bringing everyone along with this as part of this
- Bringing in vested interests is really important – we need to get them to step outside of their fixed ideas and look at how that fits into the wider city?
- Addressing tensions between different players who are all trying to work on their own projects, investment plans, strategies etc.

Jennie Dunlop gave feedback from Break-out Room 3

- It is difficult to think about inclusion it without including the older population (consider less mobile people)
- There are no services in the city centre – health services might be accessible in the daily walk
- Armagh is the biggest unknown gem, tourism
- Trivia question “What is the only city that has not a train station?”
- It is about a walkable city
- Young people wants to live in a vibrant city (heritage can be attractive but you need to build right services around it
- Use accessible spaces to the maximum (eg the mall)
- Can we change the use of some spaces? eg housing to bring people back to town centres
- People go outdoor more – how do you utilise more of the town centre
- The city is underutilised

Mura Quigley continued the Powerpoint Presentation elaborating briefly on the following points:

- Discover Phase – Engagement Plan
- Engagement
- Invite – Getting Armagh into Shape
- We are finding out young people’s experience of living in the city
- We are holding 1 to 1 stakeholder interviews and a community wide survey
- Question – What do you see your role being in helping to deliver a Place Shaping Plan for Armagh?

Catriona Regan asked if engagement with young people in college had taken place. She pointed out that a lot of young people would be interested in giving an opinion on what they wanted to see in the town centre and what would encourage them to go to the town centre at lunchtime. She suggested contacting the engagement team at Southern Regional College who could facilitate a conversation.

Ethna McNamee suggested that some conversations with new small businesses took place. As had been mentioned previously, Armagh was typically a retail centre and she felt it would be worthwhile speaking to the owners of some service businesses located in the enterprise agency or in homes to see what would attract them move their business to the city centre. Invest NI could assist with connecting with some businesses.

Paul Morgan highlighted that he worked with disadvantaged children, some of whom did not attend youth clubs. There were a number of young people's support groups for children with autism, children with disabilities and there were children in the care system. As Chair of Southern Outcomes Group which focussed on children and families and multi-agency work, they had recently set up a group for young people to inform their plans for the future, He suggested linking in with some of those groups in Armagh City and he would liaise with Mura Quigley in relation to this.

Gilbert Lee highlighted that in some cases local people were not aware of their own assets. He explained that he was involved in Town Twinning and when he had approached Council for funding approximately three years ago he had been told it would have to be spent inside the borough. This meant that he had focussed on assets in the area which he had not been aware of including a museum in Laurencetown. He suggested asking the community what was in the area. He was aware that Armagh had a large number of historic assets which he suggested could be used to bridge gaps between the perceived two parts of society in Northern Ireland to benefit all. He gave the example of The Palace in Armagh.

Paul Crooks stated if there were any issues in relation to schools he would be available to assist Mura Quigley. He highlighted that approximately 500 Education Authority staff were based in Armagh which included a cross-section of ages. He suggested that it may be useful to engage with them also.

Catriona Regan referred to public transport and the walkable city element, she had been involved in work in relation to looking at Mullinure as a potential location for a new leisure centre and she was aware that investigations had taken place in relation to green routes. She felt that there was real potential to make Armagh a cycle city and she outlined many locations within a small area within the city which could be connected by cycle lanes. She felt that this would be an asset worth investing in.

Mura Quigley remarked on the excellent points and welcomed the opportunity to link in with college students. She explained that there was an interactive online board for young people to complete which would allow them to provide information on how they travelled around the city. In relation to businesses, she advised that they had linked in with the Business Partnership Alliance and she felt that the conversation needed to focus on breaking down barriers, being innovative and trying new ideas. She was happy to engage with the Young People's Forum. In relation to Gilbert Lee's point regarding bridging the gaps and creating shared spaces, she advised that an engagement session earlier in the week had highlighted the high priority that people gave to spaces for the community to come together and the type of public realm that was wanted in Armagh which engendered social interaction. She highlighted that in areas where there were car dominated streets and neighbourhoods, there was a breakdown in social cohesion and evidence showed this. She felt it was important to challenge some things that had been accepted in the city and to take forward some solutions. In relation to the number of Education Authority staff located in Armagh, she had not been aware of this and she would contact Paul Crooks in relation to engagement with them. On the issue of the cycle city, she explained that she had engaged with some cycling groups around the city and was aware that there was a diverse type of cycling people. Opportunities in relation to that would be looked at. There needed to be a conversation in relation to how public space was divided up for different types of movement uses and activities and whether public spaces were being used in the best way possible. It was important to put Armagh on a sound and sustainable footing for the future. She explained that they would be holding more engagement and interactive sessions and it was hoped that some of these could take place face to face during the summer. She thanked partners for their input and asked them to help communicate the plan and opportunities for engagement. The website www.shapingarmagh.com would provide more information as the plan progressed.

The Acting Chair, Councillor Larkham thanked Mura Quigley and Khadidja Salamah Konate for the excellent engagement with partners. He highlighted the thorough discussion and looked forward to seeing the work progress.

NOTED.

6. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PLAN

6.1 Update from Jennie Dunlop, Strategic and Community Planning Manager

- **Report CPSP-21-02**

Jennie Dunlop guided partners through the report highlighting the scope of the first review of the community plan:

- Changes to the Community Planning Structure
- Actions – Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy

AGREED: on the proposal of Councillor Lavery, seconded by Councillor Flaherty that the partnership approve the first review of Connected, the Community Plan and agree that the plan continues to meet the needs of the local community.

7. PROGRAMME OF WORK

7.1 Verbal update from Elaine Gillespie, Head of Department

Elaine Gillespie guided partners through the Powerpoint slide elaborating briefly on the following points:

- Leadership and Engagement
 - Evaluation of Carnegie Work
 - Community Engagement Guide Launch
- Better Outcomes
 - Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan implementation
 - Connected Newsletter
- Community and Voluntary Sector Panel
 - Review of terms of reference and structure
- Locality Planning
 - Armagh Place Shaping Plan – engagement and draft plan
- Statement of Progress
 - Population indicators and Covid-19 impact
- Partnership Meetings
 - Community and Voluntary Sector Panel – April
 - ABC Peer Network – May
 - Leadership and Engagement Sub-Committee – June
 - Better Outcomes Sub-Committee meeting – April and June
 - Community Planning Strategic Partnership meeting – 30 June 2021 at 10.00 am

NOTED.

8. AOB

8.1 Locality Planning: Place Shaping Plan for Armagh

Elaine Gillespie advised that the Powerpoint Presentation from USI would be circulated to partners for reference. The survey would also be shared with partners and she encouraged those who had colleagues who worked in Armagh to promote it internally.

NOTED.

8.2 Role of CVSP

Gilbert Lee referred to CVSP input into the Community Planning process and he recalled that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, most representatives were included in TAP teams and felt very involved. Whilst he understood the need for and supported the new structure in the current climate, he felt that going forward it would be important to involve community representatives in the future decision making process. He was concerned that some CVSP representatives may feel disenfranchised and lose interest in the process.

NOTED.

8.3 Programme for Government

Gilbert Lee suggested that as the Programme for Government was finalised that consideration could be given to whether the structure needed to be changed to reflect this. Following his visit to Wales, he remarked that the structure there was driven down from central government to local authority to communities whereas the opposite was the case locally. He felt that a conversation needed to take place at a future meeting in relation to this.

NOTED.

9. CLOSE

The Acting Chair, Councillor Larkham thanked everyone for their attendance, highlighting that he was greatly encouraged by the partnership working that had taken place and he wished everyone well.

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 30 June 2021.

The business having been completed, the meeting concluded at 12.02 pm.