

**Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council**



**Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties**

**Annual Progress Report**

**Contact details:**

|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:                                                             | <a href="#">Equality   Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council</a>                                                                                                  |
| Signature:                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission. It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2025 and March 2026**

## **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**

### **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1 In 2025-26, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

#### **Council Plans**

##### **Community Plan**

During the reporting period the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was finalised. An Equality Impact Assessment and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were completed. The Community Plan serves as the main framework for the Borough, aiming to enhance social, economic, and environmental well-being while connecting local government community plans with the new Programme for Government as a model for funding and investment.

Connected- A Community Plan has been in place since 2017 and the long term overarching vision for the plan is

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

The long term outcomes are grouped into three interrelated and interdependent strategic themes. Following the mid-point review four outcomes have been changed in the revised plan, and two outcomes have been replaced with new outcomes. Two population indicators have been removed, and eleven new population indicators have also been added. Each of the three themes has outcomes attributed to them.

- Community
- Economy
- Place

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

The cross-cutting themes are:

- Connectivity
- Equality
- Sustainability

Potential adverse impacts were identified in the EQIA for ‘at risk’ groups. The duty to consider these will reside with community planning partners, sub-committees and action leads, through appropriate engagement with key stakeholders. The following actions were also agreed:

- An explicit commitment to meet section 75 duties for the duration of the project to include appropriate monitoring arrangements;

- A recognition of the need for diverse means of communication and engagement to access marginalised and hard to reach groups and communities.
- An acknowledgement of the varying levels of educational attainment, including literacy, numeracy and digital skills among the population and taking these into consideration during the design and implementation of action plans.
- Take into account the needs of disabled people, including those with hidden disabilities in the delivery of projects.
- Identify and address barriers to employability and work among underrepresented sections of the population.
- A recognition that longstanding structural inequalities may make particular initiatives or enterprises more or less accessible to particular section 75 groups and communities.
- The need to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to managing good relations within the borough.

A Community Plan statement of progress was produced for the period 2023-2025.

### **Performance Improvement Plan**

The annual Performance Improvement Plans are central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives (PIO's) have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is considered.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2026-2027 was issued for consultation in February 2026. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

PIO1 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability, for example by offering additional support/advice to staff including Health & Wellbeing initiatives.

PIO4 relates to improvements to cemeteries services, and this has the potential to positively impact on religious, racial groups, where customers will have improved accessible information on council services, and an inclusive service.

Following the consultation on the 2025-2026 plan feedback was received on PIO1 "We will reduce the number of days sickness absence lost per employee".

Suggestions included better access to healthcare professionals including mental health support, as review of the Absence Policy and inclusion of a Disability Passport.

The Council has rolled out various health and wellbeing initiatives to positively support staff with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. The mental health first aiders will continue to be promoted to staff. Council also has a section on the intranet dedicated to Health & Wellbeing for all staff.

### **Equality Scheme Five Year Review**

A five year review of the Council's Equality Scheme was commenced. Following a report to the Executive Management Team about the proposed changes to the Equality Scheme, these were then forwarded to the Equality Commission for advice on whether

they qualified as substantive changes and would therefore require a formal consultation with stakeholders prior to finalisation.

### **Policy Screening Reports**

Policy screening reports were issued in April, September and December 2025.

Details of all Council policies are located on a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved and new policies. During the reporting period a Smartsheet for Strategies was further developed to also include approval dates, equality screening and automated review dates. The Heads of Department have viewer access and during the reporting period were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

### **Policy Development and Policy Screening**

#### **Dromore Place Plan**

This plan was launched following an extensive engagement and research exercise conducted in the previous reporting period. An equality screening exercise and section 75 monitoring questionnaire were completed and analysed.

The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility and movement around the area.
- Transportation

These are reflected in the actions in the plan, and the plan commits the partnership to ongoing dialogue with section 75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

#### **Draft Heritage Places Strategy**

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Heritage Strategy is a new strategy for the Borough. It identifies a series of strategically aligned objectives and actions to support heritage in all its forms; Built, Natural and Cultural. It will mean better places, with buildings, parks and landscapes maintained, reused, and brought back to life. It will also mean wider participation, where volunteers are supported, young people are engaged, and a broader range of inclusive stories is shared.

Section 75 groups were engaged in a variety of ways during the development of the draft Heritage Places Strategy. E-mails, invitations to complete surveys and attend workshops were sent to organisations and people for a range of section 75 groups. The Strategy was issued for consultation in December 2025. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

### **Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans**

Council is leading on the development of the Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans on behalf of the ABC Community Planning Partnership.

This initiative will look at how these three areas could be improved for its people. Every effort is being made to create a shared vision for each of the town's future growth and development that is as broad as possible and informed by strong community engagement. Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown each have their own identity, progressing the Place Plans together allows us to look at the bigger picture, identifying collective opportunities while championing the individual strengths, challenges and ambitions of each place. These plans will be shaped by the voices, ideas and lived experience of local people and key organisations.

Just before the end of the reporting period section 75 groups were invited to attend an online meeting. Children and young people were specifically targeted in a social media post to complete a survey.

### **Cemetery Service Consultation**

The Council developed a draft Cemetery Strategy for the Borough. This strategy together with a questionnaire was issued for consultation in March 2026. Questions on disability access were included in the questionnaire. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with relevant section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise was attached to the consultation.

### **Stakeholder Engagement – Disability Action Plan**

An action is included in the Council's Disability Action Plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event.

Two events were held, one in Banbridge Leisure Centre on 27 November 2025 and one in Brownlow Hub on 3 December 2025. Due to low uptake the event in Armagh was cancelled. Our Deputy Lord Mayor and Diversity Ambassador Cllr Jessica Johnston opened the events by welcoming everyone and encouraging them to engage with the Team. The Council's section 75 consultees, members of the Inclusive ABC Working Groups, (operational and strategic) and all Council staff were advised of these events. The Age Friendly Officer and colleagues within Community Planning and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) were also advised to issue to their relevant contacts. Details were widely shared on social media.

During these events participants were advised of the work Council has undertaken to make our services more inclusive and were provided feedback on the 2024 engagement sessions and what changes had been made as a result.

At the sessions in 2025, participants were again asked the following questions.

- What's working well?
- Where can we do better?

There was positive feedback in relation to the following services.

- The Mobile Accessible Toilet
- The wide range of Heath and Recreation activities offered such as snow tubing, inclusive cycling, wheelie boats, craft activities.
- The friendly staff in South Lake and Banbridge Leisure Centres
- The AccessAble Initiative
- The Council's promotion of accessibility
- Improved accessibility at the new play parks

In response to the question "Where can we do better?" several comments were made, as detailed below.

- Improve access to information on what activities/classes are available.
- More family inclusive activities/swims
- Have more quiet hours before roller skating/soft play activities.
- Address issues with disabled parking at South Lake Leisure Centre
- Promote AccessAble initiative with residents, community & voluntary sector.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team contacted relevant Council Departments for feedback and as a result the Council has

- Improved the Inclusive ABC page and made it more user-friendly and easier to navigate.
- Increased promotion of all Inclusive programmes across social media channels
- Added extra quiet hour swim sessions in Banbridge, Orchard and South Lake Leisure Centres for up to 5 family members.
- Increased the number of quiet soft play sessions.
- Explored improvements to disability car parking at South Lake Leisure Centre
- Worked with the Communications and Branding Team to ensure there is greater promotion of the AccessAble initiative with residents, community & voluntary sector.
- Engaged with the Southern Trust Autism Team to share some of Council's programmes on their social media channels.

Participants were advised of the outcome of these stakeholder events and the steps Council had or was planning to take to address their concerns. This information was also made available on the InclusiveABC page of the corporate website.

### **Communication**

Throughout the reporting period staff were advised via the internal online staff magazine 'The Inside Line' of the various equality initiatives e.g. International Women's Day Event for staff, the Diversity Ambassador initiative and the Disability Stakeholder Engagement Events. They were also advised of the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Neurodiversity in the Workplace modules.

Residents were advised of events, initiatives and inclusive programmes via a range of social media channels. This included the range of accessible Council facilities, the access arrangements in place for Georgian Day and other Christmas Events, inclusive health and recreation programmes and the Inclusive Information page which also hosted this information.

### **Equality Initiatives and Events**

In June the Council launched a new female entrepreneur initiative, Spark it ABC, aimed at supporting women across the borough who are ready to take their first steps into the world of business.

Funded by the council and delivered in partnership with Women in Business NI, the programme will support up to 25 women who are exploring the idea of becoming an entrepreneur or have started a business within the last six months. Designed to ignite entrepreneurial thinking, Spark it ABC combines in-person events across the borough with engaging online workshops, mentoring, and inspiration from established female business ambassadors.

Men's Health Week ran from 9-15 June. Throughout this week GetActive ABC provided information, advice and inspiring stories of men who connect with sport and exercise for better health and wellbeing.

During the summer, young people aged eight to sixteen across the borough got hands-on with creativity and technology through two exciting council-led programmes: the STEAM Summer Programme and Digital Connections.

Delivered by the Council, both programmes offered three action-packed days of coding, animation, digital art, Minecraft, film, design challenges and more – all designed to build skills in a fun, engaging way. Workshops were held in Keady, Craigavon, Banbridge and Armagh. These programmes were funded through The Executive Office District Council's Good Relations Action Plan.

A wide range of health and recreation activities were offered to young people over the summer months. The annual campaign delivered both indoor and outdoor events and activities, and programmes. Examples included the Inclusive Summer Scheme which offers inclusive sports and physical activity programmes for children with a disability, along with siblings and friends. This scheme was held in the Orchard Leisure Centre and Banbridge Leisure Centre. Other examples included Teen Gym, Water Sports Activity Days. Family Snow Tubing, Multi Sports Camps, Gymnastics and Dance.

All out Trekking was made available at Gosford Forest Park. This is an inclusive outdoor recreation programme using battery powered all terrain buggies, open to disabled and non-disabled people enabling inclusive participation in a beautiful parkland setting.

The All-Stars Summer Scheme is a three-week programme organised and delivered by the Council's Sports Development team and supported by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. It brings together young people with disabilities aged between 7 and 17 to enjoy a range of inclusive physical and sporting activities through a series of week-long sessions during July and August.

Based at Gilford Community Centre, the scheme brings young people together to experience everything from outdoor play, nature walks, football, dance, boccia, Kurling and clay modelling to an away day at South Lake Leisure Centre for cycling, swimming canoeing and the wheelie boat.

As part of LoveParksWeek 2025 and in celebration of National Play Day (6 August) the Council hosted an action-packed, fun-filled day at Loughgall Country Park. Local children enjoyed a series of engaging and creative play opportunities in the great outdoors. The event was facilitated by Playboard NI.

Local groups and organisations across the Borough put together an exciting programme of community and cultural events for Good Relations Week 2025. The programme of events ran from Monday 13 to Sunday 19 October 2025 as part of a region-wide programme co-ordinated by the Community Relations Council and supported by The Executive Office under the Together: Building a United Community strategy.

Throughout the week there were workshops, lectures, panel discussions, podcasts, storytelling, digital content, exhibitions, and more. These events highlighted how communities are working together to break down barriers, celebrate diversity, and create opportunities for a more inclusive society. The events also highlighted positive efforts to address challenges such as sectarianism, racism, gender inequality, health and wellbeing, poverty and education.

An evening of student-led drama and celebrating cultural diversity was held at Armagh City Hotel as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week (11-18 October) and Good Relations Week (13-19 October)

Organised by the Council's Policing and Community Safety Partnership, Community Development team and Tourism, Arts and Culture department, along with Ark Housing and Southern Regional College, the event encouraged empathy, understanding and amplifying the community voice to speak up about hate crime issues.

SRC Performing Arts students delivered a powerful Theatre in Education production called 'Speak Up', which tackled the issue of hate crime by jumping into the shoes of others and bringing to life the hard-hitting impacts of hate crime. The production has also been delivered to almost 700 pupils from 13 primary schools across the borough.

The event at the hotel also showcased various foods, costumes, art and information to acknowledge the different cultures, identities and backgrounds of those living in the ABC borough.

In November the Council re-launched its Stalking Awareness Campaign to mark the start of the international 16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence – a global campaign to raise awareness and encourage action to end violence against women and girls.

Research shows that almost one in four women (23%) in Northern Ireland have experienced stalking at some point in their lives, often alongside other abusive behaviours such as domestic violence.

The video shares vital information on putting personal safety measures in place to protect yourself, how to report stalking and to signpost victims to organisations for help and support.

The Relaxed Christmas events were held again in Bleary Community Centre. This experience is designed to provide a memorable and enjoyable festive environment for families with children who have autism or Special Educational Needs and offers a range of seasonal activities to give them the opportunity to spend quality time together in a truly magical atmosphere. Over 300 families attended these events, and this initiative is a key part of our inclusive ABC commitment, ensuring that everyone can experience festive joy in a way that feels comfortable accessible.

In January residents aged 50+ were offered the chance to build confidence and develop essential skills on digital devices with the free Digital Support programme. The

programme ran for 5 weeks in Brownlow Hub, Richhill Recreation Centre and Banbridge Leisure Centre.

The beginner-friendly programme aimed at helping older people make the most of mobile phones, laptops and tablets included getting familiar with digital terms, learning to use a digital service, emails, online shopping, online booking forms, navigating websites and staying safe online.

In February an 'All about YOUth' conference held in Craigavon Civic Centre was organised by the Council, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, the Education Authority and funded through The Executive Office District Council Good Relations Fund.

More than 100 professionals supporting children and young people attended the event. The conference provided an opportunity for youth workers, teachers, community representatives, volunteers and partner organisations to connect, learn and share best practice in supporting their health and well-being as they continue to deliver invaluable services to children and young people across the borough.

Speaking at the conference, Lord Mayor Alderman Moutray said: "In this rapidly changing world, it's imperative that children and young people have access to support networks that are strong, connected and responsive. Therefore, this conference is an invaluable opportunity for professionals to learn about supporting their health and well-being, so they are best placed to face challenges experienced by children and young people in areas such as mental health, digital well-being, inclusion and community safety."

In February the Autism Reality Experience (ARE) bus completed a tour of the Borough, in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The bus offers an immersive and hands on training which has been developed to give neurotypical people an opportunity to enter the neurodiverse world and experience the sensory processing difficulties faced by people on the autism spectrum.

The bus, facilitated by Training2Care and funded by the Public Health Agency travelled to four Council facilities. These included Brownstown Jubilee Community Centre, Gilford Community Centre, Brownlow Community Hub and Cathedral Road Recreation Centre, Armagh.

In March the Council organised various events to celebrate International Women's Day.

Over 100 local secondary school students gathered at Craigavon Civic Centre and Conference Centre for an event which brought together young people, guest speakers, and elected members for a morning of inspiration, conversation and learning all centred on this year's theme, Give to Gain.

Pupils from Royal School Armagh, St. Ronan's College, Lismore College, St. John the Baptist College, City of Armagh High School, St. Patrick's High School Keady and Banbridge Academy took part in the event, hearing from an inspiring line-up of speakers. The programme featured Laura O'Neill from Belfast Harbour, Philippa McShane of Armagh's McShane Packaging Ltd, and local comedian Emer Maguire, with award-winning Irish country singer Lauren McCrory guiding the morning as host.

Speaking after the event, Lord Mayor Alderman Moutray said:

"I was delighted to join colleagues, speakers and students at this year's International Women's Day event. As Lord Mayor and one of the council's diversity ambassadors, I am incredibly proud of the talented women who contribute to our organisation and to communities right across this borough.

"The theme, Give to Gain, reminds us of the importance of an inclusive, equitable society where everyone can thrive. Seeing so many young women engaging with our speakers was inspiring, and I hope the event encourages them to pursue their ambitions with confidence."

On 9 March the Council hosted its annual staff International Women's Day event, which welcomed over 70 female and male colleagues from across the organisation. Held at South Lake Leisure Centre the event embraced this year's theme of 'Give to Gain' by encouraging a mindset of generosity and collaboration as well as reminding us that when women thrive, we all rise. Attendees got to hear from two inspiring guest speakers – Elizabeth Reaney (Director of Regulatory Services, Facilities and Assets) and Belinda O'Neill (Leadership Facilitator, Executive Coach and Author) - who both shared their personal journeys, achievements, lessons learned and words of advice.

A further event organised by the Council in partnership with ABC Community Network and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust was held on 12 March in Seagoe Hotel, Portadown. It was a free event open to the community which included health and wellbeing information stands, health checks and panel discussions.

Later that month over 40 girls from seven different schools joined forces at the Girls Active Primary Inspiration at Dromore Community Centre. Through interactive workshops and activities, the girls learned about leadership, marketing and planning to support their mission to get more girls active.

Speaking at the event, Lord Mayor Alderman Stephen Moutray said: "Initiatives such as girls Active are so important to ensure girls are actively engaged with the design and delivery of activities that will lead to improved opportunities that appeal to all girls. I congratulate everyone involved and wish all the girls every success in their roles as Girls Active Leaders".

'Girls Active' is an initiative developed by the Youth Sport Trust, in partnership with the Council.

The Council has been consistently campaigning for an end to violence against women and girls (EVAWG) On 23 March the Council hosted a second conference aimed at supporting local organisations in addressing EVAWG issues and really making a difference in their communities. The conference looked at the 'manosphere'- a network of online communities, blogs, websites, forums, podcasts and social media pages that promote harmful views about women which is shaping the beliefs of young men and boys worldwide.

Speaking ahead of the event, Lord Mayor Alderman Moutray said:

"Violence against women and girls has no place in our society. It often happens out of sight, but its impact on individuals, families and communities is deeply felt. As a Council, we are committed to challenging harmful attitudes and supporting our communities to tackle this issue.

The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group met 6 times during the reporting period. It considers a range of issues that may affect our disabled customers. The group also informs the actions included in the Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans.

The Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group which includes elected members as well as the Officers from the Operational group met three times and reported to the Governance, Resources and Strategy Committee. Topics of discussion included how to achieve a total communications approach, Communication Access UK Training, Communication Boards for Indoor Leisure, Radar Key Map and Disability Stakeholder Engagement Feedback.

The Operational Working Group is a subgroup reporting into the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group.

Throughout the reporting period the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team attended a number of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Forum meetings which are co-ordinated by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. This forum includes health care professionals and representatives from organisations that provide services for children and adults on the Autism Spectrum.

In July 2025 the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager met with the Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor about the Diversity Ambassador Initiative and their role as Diversity Ambassadors. She also shared the Terms of Reference for the Diversity Ambassador Network. The Officer Ambassadors attended events arranged by the Local Government Staff Commission to assist them in their role.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended the regional Equality & Diversity Group meetings. This Group was established to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across local government and contribute to the development of the regional equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy. The membership of this group is drawn from stakeholder bodies across the local government sector and includes Chief Executives, Diversity Ambassadors, Equality Officers, Good Relations Officers and HR Officers in Councils, trade union Officers and Staff Commission members, as well as representatives from external stakeholder groups.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream of the Our People programme met throughout the reporting period to progress the actions included in the plan agreed in the previous reporting period. The plan includes actions to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Key achievements included:

- Development of the Council's first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy
- An EDI Training Plan
- An update to the Council's recruitment pack with information on what to do to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion for staff with a disability.
- Hosted a session with staff to determine how best they can be supported around disability issues in the workplace.
- Raising awareness of the agreed calendar of events

The Council has a contract with AccessAble. The Council funds the review of the detailed Access Guides on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) relating to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Working with over 150 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) and the AccessAble App. The access guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements. The annual review of surveyed venues was carried out, and the review report was produced.

A number of survey updates were detailed in the report. During the reporting period AccessAble provided an online awareness session of this initiative for Council staff.

### **Translation and Interpretation and Access to Information and Services**

During the reporting period the Council provided Translation & Interpretation in a number of service areas which included the following:

- New residents' guides were translated into Polish, Bulgarian, Arabic and Romanian

### **Community Support Hub**

- Bulgarian Interpreting was provided on six occasions at the various Community Support Hubs

### **Environmental Health Department**

- Officers availed of the telephone interpreting service on seven occasions. There was interpretation provided from English to Portuguese, Bulgarian and Slovak

### **Strategy & Performance Department**

- A Portuguese interpreter attended a Disability Stakeholder Engagement event in Brownlow Hub.

### **Community Planning Department**

- A BSL Interpreter was provided for the Participatory Budgeting Celebration Event as a local Deaf Club was in attendance.

A number of access arrangements were in place for Georgian Day, Saturday 29 November 2025 which included

- Mobile Accessible Toilet from 12noon-9pm, Mall East
- Accessible portable toilets from 12noon -9pm, Mall East
- Quiet Space from 12noon-9pm Market Place Theatre
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 6pm, The Mall
- Quiet hour at Shambles Yard Funfair with discounted rates during that period
- Disabled Parking within City Centre Car Parks
- Disabled access on the Park & Ride Coaches
- Light Show pre-bookable Accessible Platform, Sensory areas, disabled parking

These services facilitated 181 people using the accessible and sensory areas. Carers and family members were also accommodated. 13 wheelchair users were accommodated on a viewing platform and offered accessible parking at the upper level of the Market Place Theatre. Feedback was very positive.

Access arrangements for the Home of St. Patrick Festival were widely advertised.

### **Open Air Concert**

- Accessible toilet and baby changing facility in the Market Place Theatre
- Accessible viewing area
- Quiet Space
- Carers tickets
- Accessible parking

- Mobile Accessible Toilet

### **Funfairs at the Shambles Yard (Armagh) and Solitude Park (Banbridge)**

- Quiet Hour sessions – 12.00pm to 1.00pm – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

### **The FE McWilliam Gallery**

University of Atypical carried out an accessibility audit of F.E. McWilliam Gallery. It gathered relevant information on various aspects of the organisation. This information fell under 3 broad categories: physical space, information, and processes and practices. The information was used to identify potential barriers that could exist for d/Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people. The Gallery committed to carrying out actions to address these barriers and these were outlined in an Improvement Implementation Plan. A number of year 1 objectives were achieved which included accessible written communication on site, printed venue maps/floor plans at the entrance, an accessibility information page on the website. Work had also commenced on improving the accessibility of social media posts.

### **Market Place Theatre**

Adjustments in the Market Place Theatre include:

- Dementia Friendly Screenings – the films are carefully selected, and the layout of the venue is changed to suit more people with mobility problems. All audience members receive a cup of tea/coffee & biscuits.
- Accessible Performances for Pantomime – 2 relaxed performances were organised, 1 for the public and 1 for school audiences. There is a BSL signed performance and a captioned performance.
- Relaxed film screenings help those who may benefit from a more relaxed environment.
- Many activities/workshops are aimed at specific age groups such as young people and older people.
- One performance of “Moonlight Dream” by Maiden Voyage Dance was specifically held for children with additional needs.

### **Access Audits**

There was further implementation of access audit recommendations for Ashgrove Community Centre, Portadown Town Hall and Lurgan Town Hall.

### **Equality Training**

During the reporting period twelve sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. Ten of these were delivered at corporate induction. One was delivered to the All Stars Summer Scheme staff and the other one was delivered online. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of One hundred and thirty one staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found it useful and informative. An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. Eight members attended.

Two hundred and forty two people completed the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (E-Learning) module which was launched in February. This was 35% of those registered. This module is mandatory for all employees and includes:

- The differences between equality, diversity and inclusion
- Section 75 groups and equality of opportunity
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Inclusive Language and why it matters.
- Stereotypes and Unconscious bias.

The Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance (E-Learning) module was also launched February. This module is mandatory for all managers and is based on the Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance and is designed to support anyone who is neurodivergent as well as colleagues and managers who work alongside neurodivergent team members. Two hundred and forty five people completed this module which was 37% of those registered. It includes:

- What neurodiversity is and the legal obligations surrounding it.
- The challenges neurodivergent employees may face and practical ways to support them.
- How to create a neuro-inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.

One hundred and twenty two staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality Training.

Four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. A total of forty three staff attended. Evaluation of this training revealed that staff found the breakout rooms and the case studies most useful as they discussed relevant examples and it helped explain the equality duties.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager delivered a 30-minute presentation to Managers on equality and section 75 as part of the Core Management Programme.

Other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents, customers, and employees and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Nine people attended Neurodiversity Awareness, and three people attended Autism Awareness Training.

Nine staff completed Communication Access UK's online module – Inclusive Communication for all.

Inclusive Language Training was delivered to Heads of Department and sixteen attended.

Two staff members attended Inclusive Climbing.

Sixty Four staff members attended the Unconscious Bias training.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered three sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included staff from the Armagh County Museum, FE McWilliam Gallery and Navan Centre. The training covered advice on how to become more

## PART A

disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2025-26 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

1. **Undertake activities to provide opportunities for people from all section 75 groups to take part in community planning such as Participatory Budgeting. A minimum of 1 activity to be delivered annually.**

Two Targeted sessions for the Tak£500+ Participatory Budgeting Process. One for older people and one for the Youth Voice

3585 people aged 8 and over voted to allocate £114,100 to 116 community projects. Many of the projects were targeted at s.75 groups. 47% related to age friendly and there were projects for children and young people, children with a disability and sport for women.

2. **Under the 3 overall objectives of Mental Health & Wellbeing, Suicide Prevention and Physical Health & Wellbeing – work with people in the top 30% deprived areas of the Borough to deliver programmes that will tackle Health Inequalities. Annual Action Plan delivered. (Gender, Age, Disability. Dependants, Race, Religion/Political Opinion.)**

During the year a total of 1158 participants attended a variety of sessions aimed at improving their mental health and physical health and wellbeing. Examples included Take 5, Take 5 Ambassador, Strength and Balance programmes, Chair Yoga, Chi Me and Tai Chi for Health programmes as well as Independence and DrumTastic. The Council's Health Improvement Team delivered these as well as facilitating a number of tea dances across the Borough. The majority of participants on these programmes reside in deprived areas and include people from ethnic minority groups as well as a number with learning or physical difficulties. A small percentage of people with Dementia also participated in the programmes.

The Health Improvement Team continue to promote, share and signpost to the Minding Your Head website as a first-step resource for positive mental health.

3. **Delivery of Sporting programmes to improve health & wellbeing across the categories of Age, Gender and Dependants. A target of 10 will now be amended to a target of 275 sports activities to be delivered annually.**

327 targeted programmes were delivered across the categories of Age, Gender and Dependants

4. **Peace Plus Local Community Action Plan submitted to SEUPB for approval in August 2024. Action Plan to be delivered.**

The letter of offer for the Programme was received by Council in July 2025 and then completed, signed and returned to the Special EU Programmes Body. The

Action Plan includes 43 social, community, cultural and capital projects across the three themes – (i) Local Regeneration and Transformation, (ii) Thriving and Peaceful Communities and (iii) Building Respect for Culture and Identity.

The Action Plan is designed to promote peace and reconciliation throughout the Borough through a series of capital, community, social and cultural projects. PEACEPLUS Local Co-Designed Action Plan was launched at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre in September 2025. There were a number of capital projects being progressed through procurement. Tender processes were being prepared for other projects.

**5. Delivery of Holistic Male Health Programmes. 3 programmes to be delivered annually.**

Armagh 10 week Men's Health Programme – Tandragee January 2026

16 men registered for the programme and 12 completed. Talks included: Healthy Eating, Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing; Cancer Awareness, Heart Health and Health Checks, as well as various weekly physical activities. 100% of participants reported they were more motivated to participate in exercise now compared to the beginning of the programme and 100% believed it was a worthwhile experience, tackling loneliness and giving men a sense of belonging.

Craigavon 10 week Men's Health & Lifestyle Programme – April 2025

15 men benefited from the programme. Talks included: Drugs & Alcohol; Healthy Eating; Cancer Awareness; Slow Cooker; Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing; Money Advice; Health Checks as well as various weekly physical activities. Evaluation of the programme showed that 100% reported a positive change in lifestyle and 100% agreed this was a very worthwhile experience and would continue to keep up these healthy habits.

Gilford 10 week Men's Health & Lifestyle Programme – March 2026

13 men completed this programme. Talks included: Drugs & Alcohol; Healthy Eating; Cancer Awareness; Slow Cooker; Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing; Money Advice; Health Checks as well as various weekly physical activities. Evaluation of the programme showed that it had a positive effect on the men attending, tackling loneliness and giving men a sense of belonging.

**6. Support the annual Male Health Conference in partnership with Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group. Conference delivered annually.**

A successful event aimed at supporting older men with the transition into later life was delivered by the Southern Area Men's Health Steering Group at the Dromantine Conference Centre in Newry on 12 March 2026.

Over 80 attendees took part in 'The Next Chapter: Life After the Alarm Clock' seminar, which explored key themes such as men's sense of identity, social connections, participation in community life, health and wellbeing, financial planning and the importance of strong support networks during this stage of life.

Keynote speaker and newly appointed Commissioner for Older People Siobhan Casey, set the tone for the day by offering valuable insight drawn from her experience with Age NI and the Good Vibrations initiative, as well as her role in championing the rights and needs of older people.

The men attended workshops which included 'Bend don't Break' on resilience, Banbridge Men's Shed delivered a birdbox making workshop in addition to a number of health organisations, who provided valuable information and signposting advice.

## **7. Organise and Deliver Local Democracy Event, Event delivered annually**

Post primary pupils from schools across the Borough gathered at Portadown Town Hall on Friday 17 October for a unique and engaging event titled 'A Day in the Life of a Councillor.' Held as part of both Local Democracy Week and Good Relations Week 2025.

Hosted by the Council, the event brought together young people and elected representatives to explore the important role of local government. They heard directly from councillors across the political spectrum, council officers from the Community Development and Democratic Services departments, and participated in real-life local issues.

Throughout the morning, students took part in a series of interactive breakout sessions facilitated by local councillors. Discussions focussed on topical community issues, allowing students to explore the decision-making processes behind local government and debate real-life challenges affecting their areas.

## **8. Report on the actions achieved under the Age Friendly Action Plan. Action Plan delivered annually. In 25/26 the following actions were achieved**

| <b>Focus Area</b>            | <b>Activities &amp; Outputs</b>                                                                                          | <b>Outcomes &amp; Impact</b>                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Health &amp; Wellness</b> | 1000+ participants in health and wellbeing activities. 550 Tea Dance participants, 1000+ in physical activity programmes | Improved health and wellbeing- Increased access to information. More opportunities for participation. Increased physical activity. Reduced feelings of loneliness |

|                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Communication</b>                   | 541 older people receiving regular age friendly updates. 135 older groups receiving support and information. 117 Connect Well Live Well Members. (Replaces ABC Loneliness Network) 6500 ABC Seniors Newsletter recipients                                                                         | Older people better informed. Increased knowledge of services. Greater inclusion. Improved skills and resilience. Reaching isolated people.                  |
| <b>Valued &amp; Respected</b>          | 550 Kindness Christmas Cards sent in Partnership with Southern Health and Social Care Trust to Care Homes<br>196 Positive Ageing Month activities. 163 new volunteers aged 50+. 129 members of ABC Intergenerational Network. Participatory Budgeting Fund applications, 46% of projects aged 50+ | Increased intergenerational opportunities. Older people feel valued. Increased respect and inclusion. Stronger voices for older people.                      |
| <b>Independence</b>                    | 404 attended older persons conferences. 178 Good Morning Calls per day. 152 home safety checks. 200+ referrals to partner agencies Age Friendly Housing Report produced through Age Friendly Network NI.                                                                                          | More accessible spaces. Building support networks. Support for independent living. Older people safe, well and connected. Prevention of falls and accidents. |
| <b>Partnership &amp; Collaboration</b> | Quarterly Age Friendly Alliance meetings. Weekly calls with Centre for Ageing Better UK – Age Friendly Consultative Forum. 135 service providers engaged.                                                                                                                                         | Planning for ageing population. Age Friendly consultations. Increased knowledge of services. Enhanced co-design and co-delivery. Good Practice Sharing.      |

**9. Women Returners Programme, Disability Employment Programme (12 people), Migrant Workers Support, Get Future Ready Programme – Economic Development Labour Market Partnership, Programmes Delivered annually.**

The programmes that ran in 25/25 are detailed below. Additional funding was provided in November 2025, so programmes were extended and recruitment into these programmes occurred throughout the year so some of the participants had yet to complete the relevant programmes.

| <b>Project Name</b>                                                               | <b>Participants<br/>(Target and Actual)</b> | <b>Completers<br/>(Target and Actual)</b> | <b>Became<br/>employed<br/>(Target and Actual)</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Young People<br/>in Looked<br/>After Care<br/>Programme</b>                    | <b>20 14</b>                                | <b>13 10</b>                              | <b>5 10</b>                                        |
| <b>Return to<br/>Work<br/>Programme<br/>(Particular<br/>Focus on<br/>Females)</b> | <b>45 45</b>                                | <b>36 11</b>                              | <b>23 11</b>                                       |
| <b>Disability<br/>Employment<br/>Programme</b>                                    | <b>75 51</b>                                | <b>60 51</b>                              | <b>32 14</b>                                       |
| <b>Disability<br/>Upskilling<br/>Programme</b>                                    | <b>18 11</b>                                | <b>15 4</b>                               |                                                    |

- 10. Undertake an audit of existing information systems within Council departments to identify opportunities to use section 75 monitoring data to inform decision making and service delivery.**

In the previous reporting period the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager held discussions with Tier 4 Managers and Business Support Officers across most departments to identify data currently collected and consider the potential to collect more detailed section 75 data. The Policy, Equality and Diversity Team continues to work with the Customer Relations Officer to ensure section 75 monitoring forms are issued alongside consultations where appropriate and the results are subsequently analysed. Surveys that are hosted on the Hub have also included questions relating to accessibility which ensures relevant information is being collected to help inform new policies, strategies or plans.

- 11. Review of the Accessible Communication & Inclusive Language Guide, Inclusive & Accessible Events Guide and Translation and Interpretation Procedure to ensure staff can support customers effectively.**

These guides were updated during the previous reporting period and will be kept under review.

- 12. Council's Diversity Ambassadors (Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager and Organisational Development and Performance Manager) to participate in the Diversity Ambassador**

**Programme and explore networking opportunities across the 11 Councils. Attend 4 workshops.**

Only two workshops were held during the reporting period. These were attended by at least one Diversity Ambassador.

A Diversity Ambassador Workshop was held in May, and a further workshop was held in February.

**13. All new and amended policies screened before Council approval and implementation, ongoing 2024-2027**

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager attended Head of Department meetings during this period advising on the feedback from the Disability Stakeholder Events and the 5 year review of the Equality Scheme.

Details of all Council policies are located on a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved and new policies. During the reporting period a Smartsheet for Strategies was further developed to also include approval dates, equality screening and automated review dates. The Heads of Department have viewer access and during the reporting period were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

All policies are required to have completed screening form attached before the relevant Council committee consider them. The Committee reporting template also includes a section – Equality, Rural Needs or Good Relations Implications. This ensures that any equality and good relations implications are brought to the elected members' attention. Equality Impact Assessments are conducted where it is considered proportionate to do so in order to further examine the policy for equality impacts, mitigation, and/or opportunities to promote equality of opportunity. Staff members are regularly reminded to adhere to these guidelines. During the reporting period 31 policies were screened as part of the development process. An EQIA on the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was finalised. Policy screening reports were issued in April, September and December 2025.

**14. Mandatory Induction Training for all new employees, which includes Equality & Diversity training. 80% of new staff to complete Induction Training within first three months of employment**

**75%** of new staff completed Induction Training within the first 3 months of employment.

**15. Provide Equality and Diversity Training for all staff. 3 sessions to be delivered annually**

During the reporting period twelve sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. Ten of these were delivered at corporate induction. One was delivered to the All Stars Summer Scheme staff and the other one was delivered online. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of one hundred and thirty one staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found it useful and informative.

**16. Provide Equality and Diversity Training for Elected Members. 1 session to be delivered annually.**

An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. Eight members attended.

**17. Encourage Tier 4 Managers to support staff completion of corporate eLearning modules – Equality and Diversity in the Workplace and Autism Awareness. Attend three Team meetings and one meeting of the Tier 4 Managers Keeping Connected Network.**

Two hundred and forty two people completed the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (E-Learning) module which was launched in February. This was 35% of those registered. The target set for year 1 was 40%. This module is mandatory for all employees and includes:

- The differences between equality, diversity and inclusion
- Section 75 groups and equality of opportunity
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Inclusive Language and why it matters.
- Stereotypes and Unconscious bias.

The Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance (E-Learning) module was also launched in February. This module is mandatory for all managers and is based on the Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance (2025) and is designed to support anyone who is neurodivergent as well as colleagues and managers who work alongside neurodivergent team members. 245 people completed this module which was 37% of those registered. It includes:

- What neurodiversity is and the legal obligations surrounding it.
- The challenges neurodivergent employees may face and practical ways to support them.

- How to create a neuro-inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.

As the modules were launched in February, further opportunities to engage with staff to encourage uptake of these modules will be explored in the next reporting period.

**18. The Council's Emerging Issues Working Group will explore and develop options for progression on the arrangements around flags and emblems. Timeframe to be agreed with Working Group.**

The Working Group meets when required and it deals with emerging issues which includes bonfires and flags.

**19. Promotion of Health & Wellbeing activities and awareness raising for categories of Gender, Age, and those with dependants. Activities delivered annually**

16 activities relating to the categories of Gender, Age and those with dependants were delivered during the reporting period.

The following activities were delivered:

- Tapping for Success workshops
- Men's Cancer NI Keeping well vans
- NILGOSC online information session – Pension Awareness, Scheme and benefits and approaching retirement
- Introduction to Social Supermarkets
- Suicide Awareness Training
- Chair Yoga
- All Things Menopause workshop
- Pay Attention to your pension with Money Matters
- DrumTastic
- Orienteering
- Plan Ahead with Compassionate communities NI
- Tai Chi
- Carers Coffee Morning
- Slow Cooker sessions
- Heads Together delivered: Workplace health and wellbeing sessions for everyone and managers
- Action Mental Health delivered: Provoking Thought Workshop for carers

**20. Organise International Women's Day Events during the month of March for post primary schools, staff, and promote using Council's social media platforms. 2 events delivered annually**

In March 2026, the Council organised various events to celebrate International Women's Day

Over 100 local secondary school students gathered at Craigavon Civic Centre and Conference Centre for an event which brought together young people, guest speakers, and elected members for a morning of inspiration, conversation and learning all centred on this year's theme, Give to Gain.

Pupils from Royal School Armagh, St. Ronan's College, Lismore College, St. John the Baptist College, City of Armagh High School, St. Patrick's High School Keady and Banbridge Academy took part in the event, hearing from an inspiring line-up of speakers. The programme featured Laura O'Neill from Belfast Harbour, Philippa McShane of Armagh's McShane Packaging Ltd, and local comedian Emer Maguire, with award-winning Irish country singer Lauren McCrory guiding the morning as host.

Speaking after the event, Lord Mayor Alderman Moutray said:

"I was delighted to join colleagues, speakers and students at this year's International Women's Day event. As Lord Mayor and one of the council's diversity ambassadors, I am incredibly proud of the talented women who contribute to our organisation and to communities right across this borough."

"The theme, Give to Gain, reminds us of the importance of an inclusive, equitable society where everyone can thrive. Seeing so many young women engaging with our speakers was inspiring, and I hope the event encourages them to pursue their ambitions with confidence."

On 9 March the Council hosted its annual staff International Women's Day event, which welcomed over 70 female and male colleagues from across the organisation. Held at South Lake Leisure Centre the event embraced this year's theme of 'Give to Gain' by encouraging a mindset of generosity and collaboration as well as reminding us that when women thrive, we all rise. Attendees got to hear from two inspiring guest speakers – Elizabeth Reaney (Director of Regulatory Services, Facilities and Assets) and Belinda O'Neill (Leadership Facilitator, Executive Coach and Author) – who both shared their personal journeys, achievements, lessons learned and words of advice.

A further event organised by the Council in partnership with ABC Community Network and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust was held on 12 March in Seagoe Hotel, Portadown. It was a free event open to the community which included health and wellbeing information stands, health checks and panel discussions.

Later that month over 40 girls from seven different schools joined forces at the Girls Active Primary Inspiration at Dromore Community Centre. Through interactive workshops and activities, the girls learned about leadership, marketing and planning to support their mission to get more girls active.

Speaking at the event, Lord Mayor Alderman Stephen Moutray said: "Initiatives such as girls Active are so important to ensure girls are actively engaged with the design and delivery of activities that will lead to improved opportunities that appeal to all girls. I congratulate everyone involved and wish all the girls every success in their roles as Girls Active Leaders".

'Girls Active' is an initiative developed by the Youth Sport Trust, in partnership with the Council.

**21. Establish a section 75 baseline for the Council's staff in partnership with the Local Government Staff Commission.**

Monitoring questions were agreed, however the survey has been postponed until the Council acquires a new HR system. The first two phases will be rolled out in the next reporting period.

- 3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No (go to Q.4)

☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

### **Community Plan**

During the reporting period the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was finalised. An Equality Impact Assessment and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were completed. The Community Plan serves as the main framework for the Borough, aiming to enhance social, economic, and environmental well-being while connecting local government community plans with the new Programme for Government as a model for funding and investment.

Potential adverse impacts were identified in the EQIA for 'at risk' groups. The duty to consider these will reside with community planning partners, sub-committees and action leads, through appropriate engagement with key stakeholders. The following actions were also agreed:

- An explicit commitment to meet section 75 duties for the duration of the project to include appropriate monitoring arrangements.
- A recognition of the need for diverse means of communication and engagement to access marginalised and hard to reach groups and communities.
- An acknowledgement of the varying levels of educational attainment, including literacy, numeracy and digital skills among the population and taking these into consideration during the design and implementation of action plans.
- Take into account the needs of disabled people, including those with hidden disabilities in the delivery of projects.
- Identify and address barriers to employability and work among underrepresented sections of the population.
- A recognition that longstanding structural inequalities may make particular initiatives or enterprises more or less accessible to particular section 75 groups and communities.
- The need to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to managing good relations within the borough.

### **Performance Improvement Plan**

The annual Performance Improvement Plans are central to ensuring we are delivering on our vision and meeting the needs of a range of stakeholders in the Borough many of whom will fall within the nine section 75 categories. Council strategies, plans, projects, and services linked to draft performance improvement objectives (PIO's) have been or are required to be equality screened in order to ensure that the Council's statutory duty to promote equality and good relations is considered.

The Performance Improvement Plan 2026-2027 was issued for consultation in February 2026. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

PIO1 relates to sickness absence, and this has the potential to positively impact on Disability, for example by offering additional support/advice to staff including Health & Wellbeing initiatives.

PIO4 relates to improvements to cemeteries services, and this has the potential to positively impact on religious, racial groups, where customers will have improved accessible information on council services, and an inclusive service.

Following the consultation on the 2025-2026 plan feedback was received on PIO1 “We will reduce the number of days sickness absence lost per employee”.

Suggestions included better access to healthcare professionals including mental health support, as review of the Absence Policy and inclusion of a Disability Passport.

The Council has rolled out various health and wellbeing initiatives to positively support staff with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. The mental health first aiders will continue to be promoted to staff. Council also has a section on the intranet dedicated to Health & Wellbeing for all staff.

### **Policies and Strategies**

Details of all Council policies are located on a Smartsheet with all relevant dates added to include approval date, equality screening and automated review dates. This has created a more efficient procedure for policy review, and it has a traffic light system in place for all ABC Council approved and new policies. During the reporting period a Smartsheet for Strategies was further developed to also include approval dates, equality screening and automated review dates. The Heads of Department have viewer access and during the reporting period were provided with regular reports detailing the status of policies and strategies and when they were due for review.

### **Policy Development and Policy Screening**

#### **Dromore Place Plan**

This plan was launched following an extensive engagement and research exercise conducted in the previous reporting period. An equality screening exercise and section 75 monitoring questionnaire were completed and analysed.

The research showed that children and young people; older people; people with a disability and carers are affected by the current urban form, layout and engagement that happens in the town. Common themes identified were:

- Skills and employment
- Accessibility and movement around the area.
- Transportation

These are reflected in the actions in the plan, and the plan commits the partnership to ongoing dialogue with section 75 groups to ensure that their needs are addressed in its implementation.

### **Draft Heritage Places Strategy**

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Heritage Strategy is a new strategy for the Borough. It identifies a series of strategically aligned objectives and actions to support heritage in all its forms; Built, Natural and Cultural. It will mean better places, with buildings, parks and landscapes maintained, reused, and brought back to life. It will also mean wider participation, where volunteers are supported, young people are engaged, and a broader range of inclusive stories is shared.

Section 75 groups were engaged in a variety of ways during the development of the draft Heritage Places Strategy. E-mails, invitations to complete surveys and attend workshops were sent to organisations and people for a range of section 75 groups. The Strategy was issued for consultation in December 2025. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

### **Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans**

Council is leading on the development of the Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans on behalf of the ABC Community Planning Partnership.

This initiative will look at how these three areas could be improved for its people. Every effort is being made to create a shared vision for each of the town's future growth and development that is as broad as possible and informed by strong community engagement. Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown each have their own identity, progressing the Place Plans together allows us to look at the bigger picture, identifying collective opportunities while championing the individual strengths, challenges and ambitions of each place. These plans will be shaped by the voices, ideas and lived experience of local people and key organisations.

Just before the end of the reporting period section 75 groups were invited to attend an online meeting. Children and young people were specifically targeted in a social media post to complete a survey.

### **Cemetery Service Consultation**

The Council developed a draft Cemetery Strategy for the Borough. This strategy together with a questionnaire was issued for consultation in March 2026. Questions on disability access were included in the questionnaire. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with relevant section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise was attached to the consultation.

### **Stakeholder Engagement – Disability Action Plan**

An action is included in the Council's Disability Action Plan to facilitate an annual stakeholder engagement event.

Two events were held, one in Banbridge Leisure Centre on 27 November 2025 and one in Brownlow Hub on 3 December 2025. Due to low uptake the event in Armagh was cancelled. Our Deputy Lord Mayor and Diversity Ambassador Cllr Jessica Johnston opened the events by welcoming everyone and encouraging them to engage with the

Team. The Council's section 75 consultees, members of the Inclusive ABC Working Groups, (operational and strategic) and all Council staff were advised of these events. The Age Friendly Officer and colleagues within Community Planning and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) were also advised to issue to their relevant contacts. Details were widely shared on social media.

During these events participants were advised of the work Council has undertaken to make our services more inclusive and were provided feedback on the 2024 engagement sessions and what changes had been made as a result.

At the sessions in 2025, participants were again asked the following questions.

- What's working well?
- Where can we do better?

There was positive feedback in relation to the following services.

- The Mobile Accessible Toilet
- The wide range of Heath and Recreation activities offered such as snow tubing, inclusive cycling, wheelie boats, craft activities
- The friendly staff in South Lake and Banbridge Leisure Centres
- The AccessAble Initiative
- The Council's promotion of accessibility
- Improved accessibility at the new play parks

In response to the question "Where can we do better?" several comments were made, as detailed below.

- Improve access to information on what activities/classes are available
- More family inclusive activities/swims
- Have more quiet hours before roller skating/soft play activities
- Address issues with disabled parking at South Lake Leisure Centre
- Promote AccessAble initiative with residents, community & voluntary sector

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team contacted relevant Council Departments for feedback and as a result the Council has

- Improved the Inclusive ABC page and made it more user-friendly and easier to navigate
- Increased promotion of all Inclusive programmes across social media channels
- Added extra quiet hour swim sessions in Banbridge, Orchard and South Lake Leisure Centres for up to 5 family members
- Increased the number of quiet soft play sessions
- Explored improvements to disability car parking at South Lake Leisure Centre
- Worked with the Communications and Branding Team to ensure there is greater promotion of the AccessAble initiative with residents, community & voluntary sector
- Engaged with the Southern Trust Autism Team to share some of Council's programmes on their social media channels

Participants were advised of the outcome of these stakeholder events and the steps Council had or was planning to take to address their concerns. This information was also made available on the InclusiveABC page of the corporate website.

### **Communication**

Throughout the reporting period staff were advised via the internal online staff magazine 'The Inside Line' of the various equality initiatives e.g. International Women's Day Event for staff, the Diversity Ambassador initiative and the Disability Stakeholder Engagement Events. They were also advised of the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Neurodiversity in the Workplace modules.

Residents were advised of events, initiatives and inclusive programmes via a range of social media channels. This included the range of accessible Council facilities, the access arrangements in place for Georgian Day and other Christmas Events, inclusive health and recreation programmes and the Inclusive Information page which also hosted this information.

### **Inclusive ABC Working Groups**

The Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group met 6 times during the reporting period. It considers a range of issues that may affect our disabled customers. The group also informs the actions included in the Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans.

The Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group which includes elected members as well as the Officers from the Operational group met three times and reported to the Governance, Resources and Strategy Committee. Topics of discussion included how to achieve a total communications approach, Communication Access UK Training, Communication Boards for Indoor Leisure, Radar Key Map and Disability Stakeholder Engagement Feedback.

The Operational Working Group is a subgroup reporting into the Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group.

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream**

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream of the Our People programme met throughout the reporting period to progress the actions included in the plan agreed in the previous reporting period. The plan includes actions to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Key achievements included:

- Development of the Council's first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy
- An EDI Training Plan
- An update to the Council's recruitment pack with information on what to do to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion for staff with a disability
- Hosted a session with staff to determine how best they can be supported around disability issues in the workplace.
- Raising awareness of the agreed calendar of events

### **Improvements to Service Delivery**

A number of access arrangements were in place for Georgian Day, Saturday 29 November 2025 which included

- Mobile Accessible Toilet from 12noon-9pm, Mall East
- Accessible portable toilets from 12noon -9pm, Mall East

- Quiet Space from 12noon-9pm Market Place Theatre
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 6pm, The Mall
- Quiet hour at Shambles Yard Funfair with discounted rates during that period
- Disabled Parking within City Centre Car Parks
- Disabled access on the Park & Ride Coaches
- Light Show pre-bookable Accessible Platform, Sensory areas, disabled parking

These services facilitated 181 people using the accessible and sensory areas. Carers and family members were also accommodated. 13 wheelchair users were accommodated on a viewing platform and offered accessible parking at the upper level of the Market Place Theatre. Feedback was very positive.

Access arrangements for the Home of St. Patrick Festival were widely advertised.

### **Open Air Concert**

- Accessible toilet and baby changing facility in the Market Place Theatre
- Accessible viewing area
- Quiet Space
- Carers tickets
- Accessible parking
- Mobile Accessible Toilet

### **Funfairs at the Shambles Yard (Armagh) and Solitude Park (Banbridge)**

- Quiet Hour sessions – 12.00pm to 1.00pm – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

### **The FE McWilliam Gallery**

University of Atypical carried out an accessibility audit of F.E. McWilliam Gallery. It gathered relevant information on various aspects of the organisation. This information fell under 3 broad categories: physical space, information, and processes and practices. The information was used to identify potential barriers that could exist for d/Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people. The Gallery committed to carrying out actions to address these barriers and these were outlined in an Improvement Implementation Plan. A number of year 1 objectives were achieved which included accessible written communication on site, printed venue maps/floor plans at the entrance, an accessibility information page on the website. Work had also commenced on improving the accessibility of social media posts.

### **Market Place Theatre**

Adjustments in the Market Place Theatre include:

- Dementia Friendly Screenings – the films are carefully selected, and the layout of the venue is changed to suit more people with mobility problems. All audience members receive a cup of tea/coffee & biscuits.
- Accessible Performances for Pantomime – 2 relaxed performances were organised, 1 for the public and 1 for school audiences. There is a BSL signed performance and a captioned performance.
- Relaxed film screenings help those who may benefit from a more relaxed environment.

- Many activities/workshops are aimed at specific age groups such as young people and older people.
- One performance of “Moonlight Dream” by Maiden Voyage Dance was specifically held for children with additional needs.

### Access Audits

There was further implementation of access audit recommendations for Ashgrove Community Centre, Portadown Town Hall and Lurgan Town Hall.

- 3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

Engagement with section 75 groups has ensured that actions within the relevant plans have considered their needs. Examples include the mid-point review of the Community Plan, the Performance Improvement Plan, the Dromore Place Plan, the draft Heritage Places Strategy, the Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans and Cemetery Services

The stakeholder engagement events held in November/December offered a valuable opportunity to find out where improvements could be made and steps were taken to address concerns and improve access to council services.

The improved process for reviewing policies and strategies will ensure that screening is undertaken and in a timely manner so that all equality and good relations implications are considered.

The Inclusive ABC Strategic and Operational Working Groups ensure that issues affecting our disabled customers are discussed and subsequent improvements made to service delivery. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workstream achieved several actions to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

The other service delivery changes referenced in 3 will improve access to services for disabled customers and the communication of these changes will ensure greater awareness among residents of these changes.

- 3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☒ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

The Performance Improvement Plan, the draft Heritage Places Strategy and the Cemetery Strategy were screened and subject to public consultation

☒ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (*please give details*):

The mid-point review of the Community Plan was subject to an EQIA. Potential adverse impacts were identified in the EQIA for 'at risk' groups. Other actions were also agreed.

☐ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact (*please give details*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

☒ As a result of changes to access to information and services (*please specify and give details*):

Examples of changes to services to make them more inclusive includes quiet sessions, the relaxed Christmas experience, adjustments made at the Market Place Theatre and FE McWilliam Gallery such as dementia friendly screenings, BSL signed and captioned pantomime performances, printed venue maps and floor plans and improving the accessibility of social media posts. Various adjustments are made to leisure programmes and facilities, and the Mobile Accessible Toilet is available at several large outdoor events.

☒ Other (*please specify and give details*):

Engagement with stakeholders and follow up discussion with the members of the Inclusive Strategic and Operational Working Groups which subsequently leads to changes in policy and service delivery

## **Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures**

### **Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

**4** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2025-26 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes, organisation wide

☒ Yes, some departments/jobs

☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment

☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Strategy, Policy & Equality Support Officer post was advertised during the reporting period

- 5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☐ Yes, organisation wide
- ☒ Yes, some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The section 75 duties are most clearly reflected in the Strategy and Performance Department's Business Plan

- 6 In the 2025-26 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☒ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- ☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's corporate plan
- ☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2025-26 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The departmental business plans include where appropriate actions which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the objectives included in the annual Performance Improvement Plan and the Corporate Plan

### **Equality action plans/measures**

- 7 Within the 2025-26 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

17

PART A

Actions ongoing:

3

Actions to commence:

1

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2025-26 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The target for the Delivery of Sporting programmes to improve health & wellbeing across the categories of Age, Gender and Dependants was originally set at 10. This will now be amended to a target of 275 sports activities to be delivered annually.

- 9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2025-26 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- ☒ Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- ☐ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- ☐ Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- ☐ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

**Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)**

- 10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: (*tick one box only*)

- ☐ All the time
- ☒ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

- 11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2025-26 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has

been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

### **Community Plan**

During the reporting period the mid-review of the borough Community Plan was finalised. An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted and during the previous reporting period an online survey and a series of workshops and meetings with section 75 groups were held. The consultation documents were placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. The Equality Impact Assessment and section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

Potential adverse impacts were identified in the EQIA for 'at risk' groups. The duty to consider these will reside with community planning partners, sub-committees and action leads, through appropriate engagement with key stakeholders. The following actions were also agreed:

- An explicit commitment to meet section 75 duties for the duration of the project to include appropriate monitoring arrangements.
- A recognition of the need for diverse means of communication and engagement to access marginalised and hard to reach groups and communities.
- An acknowledgement of the varying levels of educational attainment, including literacy, numeracy and digital skills among the population and taking these into consideration during the design and implementation of action plans.
- Take into account the needs of disabled people, including those with hidden disabilities in the delivery of projects.
- Identify and address barriers to employability and work among underrepresented sections of the population.
- A recognition that longstanding structural inequalities may make particular initiatives or enterprises more or less accessible to particular section 75 groups and communities.
- The need to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to managing good relations within the borough.

### **Performance Improvement Plan**

The Performance Improvement Plan 2026-2027 was issued for consultation in February 2026. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

Following the consultation on the 2025-2026 plan feedback was received on PIO1 "We will reduce the number of days sickness absence lost per employee".

Suggestions included better access to healthcare professionals including mental health support, as review of the Absence Policy and inclusion of a Disability Passport.

The Council has rolled out various health and wellbeing initiatives to positively support staff with mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. The mental health first aiders will continue to be promoted to staff. Council also has a section on the intranet dedicated to Health & Wellbeing for all staff.

### Draft Heritage Places Strategy

Section 75 groups were engaged in a variety of ways during the development of the draft Heritage Places Strategy. E-mails, invitations to complete surveys and attend workshops were sent to organisations and people for a range of section 75 groups. The Strategy was issued for consultation in December 2025. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise and a section 75 monitoring questionnaire were attached to the consultation.

### Cemetery Service Consultation

The Council developed a draft Cemetery Strategy for the Borough. This strategy together with a questionnaire was issued for consultation in March 2026. Questions on disability access were included in the questionnaire. It was placed on the Consultation Hub, shared with relevant section 75 stakeholders, and advertised on social media. An equality screening exercise was attached to the consultation.

### Stakeholder Engagement – Disability Action Plan

Two events were held, one in Banbridge Leisure Centre on 27 November 2025 and one in Brownlow Hub on 3 December 2025. During these events participants were advised of the work Council has undertaken to make our services more inclusive and were provided feedback on the 2024 engagement sessions and what changes had been made as a result. As a result of the discussions at the 2025 sessions, Council departments either made or agreed to make further changes to the services offered.

Participants were advised of the outcome of these stakeholder events and the steps Council had or was planning to take to address their concerns. This information was also made available on the InclusiveABC page of the corporate website.

- 12** In the 2025-26 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- ☒ Face to face meetings
- ☒ Focus groups
- ☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- ☒ Questionnaires
- ☒ Information by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- ☐ Internet discussions
- ☐ Telephone consultations
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*: Click or tap here to enter text.

PART A

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

As described in response to question 11 the Council used a range of consultation methods in order to engage section 75 groups in the development of its plans and strategies.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Section 75 consultees were contacted in relation to the consultations described above in response to q.11. The screening exercises and one EQIA were included on the consultation hub. Section 75 monitoring questionnaires were also included in the consultation exercises for the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan, the Performance Improvement Plan and the Heritage Places Strategy.

E-mails and hard copies of documentation are forwarded to potentially interested groups.

Residents were advised of events, initiatives and inclusive programmes via a range of social media channels. This included the range of accessible Council facilities, the access arrangements in place for Georgian Day and other Christmas Events, inclusive health and recreation programmes and the Inclusive Information page which also hosted this information.

During the reporting period staff were reminded of the Council's equality duties as training was made available to staff throughout the year. This was advertised via e-mail and in the staff newsletter. They were also advised of the various equality initiatives e.g. International Women's Day Event for staff, the Diversity Ambassador initiative and the Disability Stakeholder Engagement Events as well as the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Neurodiversity in the Workplace modules.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

[\[Equality | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council \]](#)

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

31

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2025-26:

Click or tap here to enter text. Policy consultations conducted with **screening** assessment presented.

3

Policy consultations conducted **with an equality impact assessment** (EQIA) presented.

0

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

0

- 17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

The consultations that included an equality screening exercise were the Performance Improvement Plan, the Heritage Places Strategy and the Cemetery Services Consultation. The policy screening exercises were placed on the Consultation Hub.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes

☒ No concerns were raised

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

During the reporting period the EQIA on the mid-point review of the borough Community Plan was finalised and published.

**Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

- 20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2025-26 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No, already taken place

☐ No, scheduled to take place at a later date

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details:

In the previous reporting period the Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager held discussions with Tier 4 Managers and Business Support Officers across most departments to identify data currently collected and considered the potential to collect more detailed section 75 data. The Policy, Equality and Diversity Team continues to work with the Customer Relations Officer to ensure section 75 monitoring forms are issued alongside consultations where appropriate and the results are subsequently analysed. Surveys that are hosted on the Hub have also included questions relating to accessibility which ensures relevant information is being collected to help inform new policies, strategies or plans.

- 21** In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Click or tap here to enter text.

- 22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2025-26 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Section 75 monitoring questionnaires were issued alongside consultation exercises, and these are also issued to participants of a number of funded programmes. Analysis of these questionnaires has previously shown under representation by some section 75 groups such as younger people. As a result, these groups were engaged in different ways in order to get their input.

#### **Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)**

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2025-26, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

During the reporting period twelve sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. Ten of these were delivered at corporate induction. One was delivered to the All Stars Summer Scheme staff and the other one was delivered online. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of One hundred and thirty one staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found it useful and informative. An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. It also covered information on the section 75 duties. Eight members attended.

Two hundred and forty two people completed the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (E-Learning) module which was launched in February. This was 35% of those registered. This module is mandatory for all employees and includes:

- The differences between equality, diversity and inclusion
- Section 75 groups and equality of opportunity
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Inclusive Language and why it matters
- Stereotypes and Unconscious bias

The Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance (E-Learning) module was also launched February. This module is mandatory for all managers and is based on the Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance and is designed to support anyone who is neurodivergent as well as colleagues and managers who work alongside neurodivergent team members. Two hundred and forty five people completed this module which was 37% of those registered. It includes:

- What neurodiversity is and the legal obligations surrounding it.
- The challenges neurodivergent employees may face and practical ways to support them
- How to create a neuro-inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.

One hundred and twenty two staff attended Code of Conduct and Equality Training.

Four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered online via Microsoft Teams to staff members responsible for policy development. The training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. A total of forty three staff attended. Evaluation of this training revealed that staff found the breakout rooms and the case studies most useful as they discussed relevant examples and it helped explain the equality duties.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Manager delivered a 30-minute presentation to Managers on equality and section 75 as part of the Core Management Programme.

Other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents, customers, and employees and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Nine people attended Neurodiversity Awareness and three people attended Autism Awareness Training.

Nine staff completed Communication Access UK's online module – Inclusive Communication for all.

Inclusive Language Training was delivered to Heads of Department and sixteen attended.

Two staff members attended Inclusive Climbing.

Sixty Four staff members attended the Unconscious Bias training.

The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered three sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included staff from the Armagh County Museum, FE McWilliam Gallery and Navan Centre. The training covered advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.

- 25** Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

The training programmes have the objectives outlined at the beginning of the training and the programme is again reviewed and summarised at the end. An evaluation sheet is issued at the end of the training. The information received in the evaluation forms is used to inform further developments to the training programmes. Feedback received for training delivered during the reporting period is detailed in response to question 24 above.

### **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)**

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2025-26, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Access arrangements for Georgian Day are evaluated every year and as a result further adjustments are made. A number of access arrangements were in place for Georgian Day, Saturday 29 November 2025 which included.

- Mobile Accessible Toilet from 12noon-9pm, Mall East
- Accessible portable toilets from 12noon -9pm, Mall East
- Quiet Space from 12noon-9pm Market Place Theatre
- Quiet Space from 12noon – 6pm, The Mall
- Quiet hour at Shambles Yard Funfair with discounted rates during that period
- Disabled Parking within City Centre Car Parks
- Disabled access on the Park & Ride Coaches
- Light Show pre-bookable Accessible Platform, Sensory areas, disabled parking

These services facilitated 181 people using the accessible and sensory areas. Carers and family members were also accommodated. 13 wheelchair users were accommodated on a viewing platform and offered accessible parking at the upper level of the Market Place Theatre. Feedback was very positive.

Access arrangements for the Home of St. Patrick Festival were also widely advertised.

### **Open Air Concert**

- Accessible toilet and baby changing facility in the Market Place Theatre
- Accessible viewing area
- Quiet Space
- Carers tickets
- Accessible parking
- Mobile Accessible Toilet

### **Funfairs at the Shambles Yard (Armagh) and Solitude Park (Banbridge)**

- Quiet Hour sessions – 12.00pm to 1.00pm – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March.

### **The FE McWilliam Gallery**

University of Atypical carried out an accessibility audit of F.E. McWilliam Gallery. It gathered relevant information on various aspects of the organisation. This information fell under 3 broad categories: physical space, information, and processes and practices. The information was used to identify potential barriers that could exist for d/Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people. The Gallery committed to carrying out actions to address these barriers and these were outlined in an Improvement Implementation Plan. A number of year 1 objectives were achieved which included accessible written communication on site, printed venue maps/floor plans at the entrance, an accessibility information page on the website. Work had also commenced on improving the accessibility of social media posts.

### **Market Place Theatre**

The Market Place Theatre has continued to offer workshops/programmes that are suitable for a range of section 75 groups and has offered adjustments where appropriate.

Adjustments in the Market Place Theatre include:

- Dementia Friendly Screenings – the films are carefully selected, and the layout of the venue is changed to suit more people with mobility problems. All audience members receive a cup of tea/coffee & biscuits.
- Accessible Performances for Pantomime – 2 relaxed performances were organised, 1 for the public and 1 for school audiences. There is a BSL signed performance and a captioned performance.
- Relaxed film screenings help those who may benefit from a more relaxed environment.
- Many activities/workshops are aimed at specific age groups such as young people and older people.

One performance of “Moonlight Dream” by Maiden Voyage Dance was specifically held for children with additional needs.

### **Access Audits**

There was further implementation of access audit recommendations for Ashgrove Community Centre, Portadown Town hall and Lurgan Town Hall.

### **Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

- 27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2025-26?

Insert number here: 0

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

Click or tap here to enter text.

### **Section 3: Looking Forward**

PART A

**28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

A five year review of the Council's Equality Scheme was commenced and was finalised just beyond the reporting period.

**29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

The Council will remain focussed on all of the above and will continue to offer support and training to staff in relation to the equality and good relations duties.

**30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Goods, facilities and services
- ☐ Legislative changes
- ☐ Organisational changes/ new functions
- ☒ Nothing specific, more of the same
- ☐ Other (please state):

Click or tap here to enter text.

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans****1. Number of action measures** for this **reporting period** that have been:

|                                  |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 21                               | 5                                | 2                                |

**2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved** in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

| Level                   | Public Life Action Measures                                                                                     | Outputs <sup>i</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>                                     |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| National <sup>iii</sup> | Click or tap here to enter text.                                                                                | Click or tap here to enter text.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Click or tap here to enter text.                                    |
| Regional <sup>iv</sup>  | Click or tap here to enter text.                                                                                | Click or tap here to enter text.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Click or tap here to enter text.                                    |
| Local <sup>v</sup>      | Link with external organisations/schools/colleges to promote work experience/placement opportunities in Council | <p>The target was to engage with 5 organisations annually and the Council engaged with 10.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Craigavon High School – Indoor Leisure Attendant (SLLC) May/June</li> <li>2. Lismore Comprehensive – Indoor Leisure Attendant (SLLC) June</li> <li>3. City of Armagh High School – Living History Interpreter 16.10.25-23.11.25</li> <li>4. Southern Regional College Armagh – Animal Husbandry – December '25 unable to support</li> </ol> | These placements will increase the likelihood of further employment |

PART B

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. NOW Group, Indoor Leisure Attendant – 29.01.26-26.02.26, Thursdays 9-5pm throughout the period</li> <li>6. St. Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh – Stage Technician. February 26. Able to support but withdrew request</li> <li>7. Newbridge Integrated College – Indoor Leisure Attendant – 20.02.26-27.03.26, 1.30pm-4.00pm Fridays. Did not complete placement in full</li> <li>8. South Eastern Regional College Lisburn – Indoor Leisure Attendant – 09.03.26-13.03.26</li> <li>9. Clanrye, Animal Husbandry – March '26. Unable to support</li> <li>10. The Cedar Foundation, Admin, Environmental Services. Agreed but due to commence next reporting period.</li> </ol> |  |
|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

|   | Training Action Measures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Outputs                                                                                                         | Outcome / Impact                 |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Mandatory Induction Training for all new employees, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Equality Scheme and Disability Action Plan</li> <li>• Examples of barriers faced by disabled people.</li> <li>• Appropriate language and etiquette</li> <li>• DDA and reasonable adjustments</li> </ul> | 75% completed Induction Training within the first 3 months of employment which is just below the 80% target set | Click or tap here to enter text. |

PART B

|   |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                      |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council's Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policies and procedures</li> </ul>                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                      |
| 2 | Provide Equality and Diversity Training for all staff                                                                                                | During the reporting period twelve sessions of Equality and Diversity Training were delivered to staff. Ten of these were delivered at corporate induction. One was delivered to the All Stars Summer Scheme staff and the other one was delivered online. A total of One hundred and thirty one staff attended.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Evaluation of the training revealed that staff found it useful and informative.      |
| 3 | Provide Equality and Diversity Training for Elected Members                                                                                          | An online workshop was organised for the Council's elected members. Eight members attended                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Elected members will have increased awareness of the equality and disability duties. |
| 4 | Encourage Tier 4 Managers to support staff completion of corporate eLearning modules – Equality and Diversity in the Workplace and Autism Awareness. | <p>Both modules were updated during the reporting period and they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (eLearning) module</li> <li>Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance (eLearning) module</li> </ul> <p>Two hundred and forty two people completed the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (e-Learning) module which was launched in February. This was 35% of those registered just 5% below the target of 40% set for Year 1.</p> <p>Two hundred and forty five people completed the Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance (eLearning) module which was 37% of those registered just 3% below the target of 40% set for Year 1.</p> | The training will improve the customer service offered.                              |

PART B

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                           |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5 | <p>Provide training on specific disabilities or general disability awareness where need identified.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health First Aid</li> <li>• Autism Awareness</li> <li>• Disability Awareness Training</li> </ul> | <p>Nine people attended Neurodiversity Awareness, and three people attended Autism Awareness Training</p> <p>Nine staff completed Communication Access UK's online module – Inclusive Communication for all.</p> <p>Inclusive Language Training was delivered to Heads of Department and 16 attended.</p> <p>The Policy, Equality &amp; Diversity Team delivered three sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included staff from the Armagh County Museum, FE McWilliam Gallery and Navan Centre. The training covered advice on how to become more disability aware and highlighting the business case for promoting accessible services. The Managers were advised of the 'Every Customer Counts Access Checklist' which they can conduct on their own facility and may assist them in making reasonable adjustments for their disabled customers.</p> | <p>The training will improve the customer service offered to customers with a range of disabilities and support employees</p>             |
| 6 | <p>Review of training materials for Induction and Equality and Diversity Training</p>                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Training materials were updated throughout the year</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Staff are advised of the most up to date position in relation to disability legislation and how best to remove barriers to access.</p> |

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

|  | Communications Action Measures | Outputs | Outcome / Impact |
|--|--------------------------------|---------|------------------|
|--|--------------------------------|---------|------------------|

PART B

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Have a database of images for use in Council publications that display positive images of disabled people                                                                                                                                           | Images of disabled people were used in Council publications/social media posts/website throughout the year to advertise health and recreation activities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Visibility of disabled people across a range of areas reflected in Council marketing/promotional materials                                                                              |
| 2 | Develop and update an Inclusive section on the Council's main corporate website bringing together information from Corporate, GetActive ABC and Tourism websites into one area for customers. Add appropriate links to Council affiliated websites. | As a result of customer feedback, some of which was received at the disability stakeholder events, the Inclusive ABC page has been improved making it more user friendly, easier to navigate and more visually appealing. Images have been added to welcome visitors to the page, and a selection of tabs were added to the top of the page to improve user navigation. Relevant sections were reviewed and updated throughout the year to add new events, facilities and activities. Details on the outcome of the stakeholder engagement events held in November/December were also added. A section called 'Accessible & Inclusive ABC' has been added to the Age Friendly ABC page, directing users to the InclusiveABC page. An inclusive page was added to the GetActiveABC website. Other improvements were made to ensure customers can find what they want in as few clicks as possible. | Collective approach to promotion of inclusive activities/events/support services in ABC. Increased awareness of the range of accessible facilities, activities, and events available    |
| 3 | Advertise inclusive facilities, activities, and events on social media as and when required                                                                                                                                                         | There were 23 Inclusive/disability related social media posts on ABC Council's Facebook page in 25/26 above the target of 12 set. In addition, there were 28 Inclusive/disability related posts on the getactiveabc Facebook page. Where suitable, there is cross channel promotion on InclusiveABC on the ABC and getactiveabc social platforms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Collective approach to the promotion of inclusive activities/events/support services in ABC. Increased awareness of the range of accessible facilities, activities and events available |

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2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others**' to promote the two duties:

|   | Encourage others Action Measures                                                                                        | Outputs                                                          | Outcome / Impact                                                                                                                                                         |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Junior Sports Awards – Health and Recreation Department in partnership with Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Sports Forum | Annual Junior Sports Award for a Sports Person with a disability | This event was held on 3 October and celebrates the achievement of sports people within the Borough. A Sports Person with a Disability Award was presented on the night. |
| 2 | Senior Sports Awards – Health and Recreation Department in partnership with Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Sports Forum | Annual Senior Sports Award for a Sports Person with a disability | The event was held on 27 March and celebrates the achievement of sports people within the Borough. A Sports Person with a Disability Award was presented on the night.   |

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

|   | Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)                                               | Outputs                                                                                                                                                                      | Outcomes / Impact                                                                                    |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Engage with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Forum for shared learning                        | The Policy, Equality & Diversity Team attended 2 meetings of the SH&SCT ASD Forum. An update was provided to the group for the other meeting that the team could not attend. | Sharing of good practice in order to inform changes to service provision for customers with Autism   |
| 2 | Build on partnership with AccessAble to improve the visibility of Council Facilities and other private sector facilities in the Borough | Access Guides reviewed annually                                                                                                                                              | Improved information for disabled people visiting our facilities/participating in Council activities |

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|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | Facilitate a Disability Stakeholder engagement event in partnership with AccessAble                                                                       | 2 events were held in December                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Improved access to Council Services                                                                                                                                     |
| 4 | Maintenance of Autism Impact Award in the Navan Centre and Market Place Theatre                                                                           | 2 Awards maintained                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Improved access to Tourism, Arts & Culture facilities for people who are neurodivergent and their families                                                              |
| 5 | Deliver a range of inclusive summer schemes and other programmes in partnership with external providers                                                   | 51 annual accessible sports programmes were delivered which exceeds the target of 30 set                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Accessible Sports Programmes available for a wide range of customers                                                                                                    |
| 6 | Provision of Inclusive Swimming lessons                                                                                                                   | 9 weekly inclusive disability group swim sessions delivered by Orchard Leisure Centre and South Lake Leisure Centre<br><br>3 Quiet Hour swim sessions across the Borough which exceeds the target of 2 set. Further sessions were rolled out just beyond the reporting period                                                                              | Improved access to swimming and improvement health outcomes for disabled customers                                                                                      |
| 7 | Develop membership of Inclusive ABC Working Group to include elected members and all Council departments reflecting all areas of direct service provision | 3 Inclusive ABC Strategic Working Group meetings were held, and 6 Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group meetings were held exceeding the target of 5. 9 departments are represented on the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group check                                                                                                                 | Collective approach to the sharing of best practice in the areas of disability access and inclusion. Improved awareness internally on how to meet customer access needs |
| 8 | Provision of Quiet spaces for Council activities and events to support the needs of Neurodivergent citizens & families                                    | The target of 3 Quiet spaces facilitated throughout the year was met.<br><br>South Lake Leisure Centre and the Market Place Theatre have quiet rooms. Quiet spaces were provided at Georgian Day and the St. Patrick's festival open air concert. Quiet hour sessions were offered at Funfairs at the Shambles Yard (Armagh) and Solitude Park (Banbridge) | Inclusive activities facilitated for all                                                                                                                                |

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|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|   |                                                                                                 | Summer programmes organised by the Community Development Team ensure that children who require regular breaks or a quiet space can be accommodated |                                               |
| 9 | The Mobile Accessible Toilet will be made available at 12 large scale Council events each year. | The Mobile Accessible Toilet was available at 14 large scale Council events                                                                        | Improved access at large scale Council events |

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

|   | Action Measures partly achieved                                                                                    | Milestones/ Outputs                                                                                                                                                               | Outcomes/Impacts                                                                                                             | Reasons not fully achieved                                                                                                               |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Sharing of Equality Commission Training opportunities quarterly with Tier 4 Managers & Inclusive ABC Working Group | Information was shared with relevant staff as considered necessary                                                                                                                | Increased disability awareness for Tier 4 managers supporting disabled employees and meeting the needs of disabled customers | Information wasn't always available quarterly                                                                                            |
| 2 | Provision of Inclusive Gym sessions                                                                                | There was an increased number of gym sessions delivered to include:<br><br><b>Gym Tour/Induction</b> (included 4 week programme)<br><br>4 people<br><br><b>Inclusive Teen Gym</b> | Improved access to gym activities and improved health outcomes for disabled customers                                        | The target was to have 2 weekly inclusive gym sessions but the centres responded to specific requests and provided the programmes listed |

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|   |                                                                                                                                                    | <p>4 programmes/3 centres = 1- participants, 18 sessions total</p> <p><b>Donard Programme –</b><br/>Banbridge Leisure Centre</p> <p>7 young men, 8 week programme</p>                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                  |
| 3 | Maintain Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) Accreditation for SLLC and obtain for the other 2, Tier 1 Council Leisure Centres in Armagh and Banbridge | <p>ISF accreditation was maintained at SLLC. Improvements are currently being made to the other Tier 1 Leisure Centres in Armagh and Banbridge</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Annual accreditation obtained for 1 Tier 1 Leisure Centre                                                                                            | Increased participation of Disabled People in Sport and Leisure Activities       |
| 4 | <p>Non-fixed inclusive play programmes such as</p> <p>Play in the Community, Play Through the Ages and Forest Schools</p>                          | <p>While these exact programmes did not run. Love Parks week ran in July/August, and this included opportunities for inclusive play.</p> <p>Activities included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mucky Pups Forest School</li> <li>• Play in the Park-Spaces for Play</li> <li>• Skatepark</li> <li>• Bug Hunts</li> <li>• Story Telling</li> </ul> | <p>These activities are developed to ensure outdoor play opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their needs and abilities</p> | Different options will be considered regarding non fixed play                    |
| 5 | Work in partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Council's Economic Development                                       | As stated in section 2(b) above the Policy, Equality & Diversity Team delivered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | More accessible services for disabled people throughout the Borough                                                                                  | Training was provided to retail businesses 2 years ago. Further sessions will be |

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|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Services Department to raise awareness of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts initiative with staff and retail businesses | three sessions of 'Every Customer Counts' training. This included staff from the Armagh County Museum, FE McWilliam Gallery and Navan Centre. |  | delivered to retail businesses where there is sufficient demand |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------|

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

|   | Action Measures not met                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Reasons                                                                                                                                      |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 42 play parks completed as part of a 5 year Capital programme 2                                                                                                                                                                    | There was committee approval to progress with the second Capital Programme. The target is for a further 29 playparks to be completed by 2028 |
| 2 | Work with the Department of Health and other stakeholders to update the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts Accessibility checklist to ensure the needs of people who are neurodivergent are included | The Department of Health did not arrange any further meetings. The Council had provided feedback on early drafts of the Checklist            |

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Before the plan was finalised a new action was added which was to facilitate a Disability Stakeholder engagement event annually in partnership with AccessAble. The two events held in November/December provided an opportunity for feedback on the accessibility of Council services and helps inform the action plan. Staff on the Inclusive ABC Operational Working Group are reminded of the actions in the plan and to report back on progress throughout the year.

(b) Quantitative

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Click or tap here to enter text.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

If yes please outline below: Not applicable

|   | Revised/Additional Action Measures | Performance Indicator            | Timescale                        |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Click or tap here to enter text.   | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 2 | Click or tap here to enter text.   | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

Click or tap here to enter text.

<sup>i</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g.

Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

<sup>ii</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

<sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments

<sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level

<sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.