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1. Introduction

'Everyone has opportunities to engage in community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area' Connected – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Plan

Place shaping provides an opportunity for the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership to work together with local people and stakeholders, unlocking innovation and change, to improve the quality of life in our places across the Borough for the benefit of all. Participation of local people and local communities is essential in this place planning process.

This report summarises the engagement with the people of, and stakeholders in, Banbridge that has taken place throughout the Banbridge Place Plan. The Place Plan is a departure from traditional forms of master planning, towards a more hybrid, co-produced approach, at a local scale, which has a focus on well-being and places the people of Banbridge and their views at the centre of future planning. This aligns with recent theoretical evolutions towards more inclusive community engagement practices. This is based on a belief that co-designed outcomes will better take account of both the interrelationship between people and place and, specifically, the complexities and singularities of Banbridge. The place plan approach has been employed already in the Borough through the recent Armagh Place Plan (2022).

The Place Plan is not a statutory document, but it has the potential to set a framework of tangible projects and proposals for future development, to enable different stakeholders to work together to their mutual benefit and for the betterment of Banbridge, leading to more credible plans for a place that are more reflective of the people of that place. It is anticipated that the place plan will inform the Council's Local Development Plan, and will constitute a material consideration for the Council when deciding certain applications for planning or other types of consent within the settlement development limit for Banbridge.

2. The Team

Studio idir + Starling Start

The Banbridge Place Plan is developed by and facilitated by Dr Aisling Rusk and Amberlea Neely, long-time collaborators around matters of people, connection and space. Together we bring a wealth of experience to the brief presented 'to develop and produce a place plan for Banbridge'. We have previously been involved in the development of urban place plans through our work at *PLACE*, Northern Ireland's Architecture and Built Environment Centre, which has been described by Councillor Goodman at *Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council* as "*a step change in community engagement and good practice*". We have also done so through more recent urban analysis, engagement and planning across Belfast on both a neighbourhood scale, involving communities either side of a peace wall in North Belfast and Reimagining Elderhood in Ballyhackamore in East Belfast, and on a city wide scale analysing potential of spaces as part of a co-design process, involving a wide variety of stakeholders and creative engagement methods.

3. Purpose

“[T]he right to the city [or town] always implied more than the right of access to and use of the central city [or town] by those who could not afford to live there. It implied the right to influence the form and development of the city [or town] and the meaning of place (that is, the right to a voice) as well as the right to transgress bourgeois forms of urban life and to rebel against the rationalized and alienated patterns of everyday life dictated by the capitalist machine and to reassert the importance of play, spontaneity and festivity.”

Leonie Sandercock 2006

The purpose of the engagement was to ensure broad and inclusive opportunities that would help inform the Banbridge Place Plan. The local people, who live and work in and on Banbridge are the true experts of this place and must therefore have a voice in the place-planning process. And there are many voices. Planning theorists Leonie Sandercock (1998) and Yvonne Rydin (2007) have drawn valuable attention to the identification of multiple publics and knowledges, and the understanding that there are knowledges that the public and users have which ‘the experts’ do not. We, as architects and place-shaping experts are the ‘uninvited outsider’ Miessen (2010b: 191) in Banbridge - bringing a certain technical expertise that will not go far if not combined, through co-design, with the rich local knowledges of the people of Banbridge.

Early engagement was also an opportunity to build a shared understanding between stakeholders of what ‘place-shaping’ is, and what it offers for a particular place. The discovery phase engagement was therefore two-pronged: information gathering and also sharing. Our role has been to facilitate wide-reaching conversations, ask open questions, listen, learn and creatively illustrate and respond to the expertise that has been shared throughout this engagement process.

4. Approach

“Through my presence and my production [...] I can create involvement, implication, exchange, dialogue, confrontation, contact!”

Thomas Hirschorn, 2014

With an ethos of collaboration and co-creation and our understanding that local people are the experts of this place, we set about engaging with the people of Banbridge in the following ways:

- Being present in Banbridge
- Producing innovative and creative ways to participate and co-create
- Remaining agile, open and responsive to emerging needs and trends
- Having a goal of engaging widely with the population of Banbridge, to capture its diversity
- Developing relationships with partners
- Promoting and sharing
- Analysing and responding to the information collected

5. Development Phase Methodology

Surveys

Pre Development Survey [27 July - 10 August, 2022]

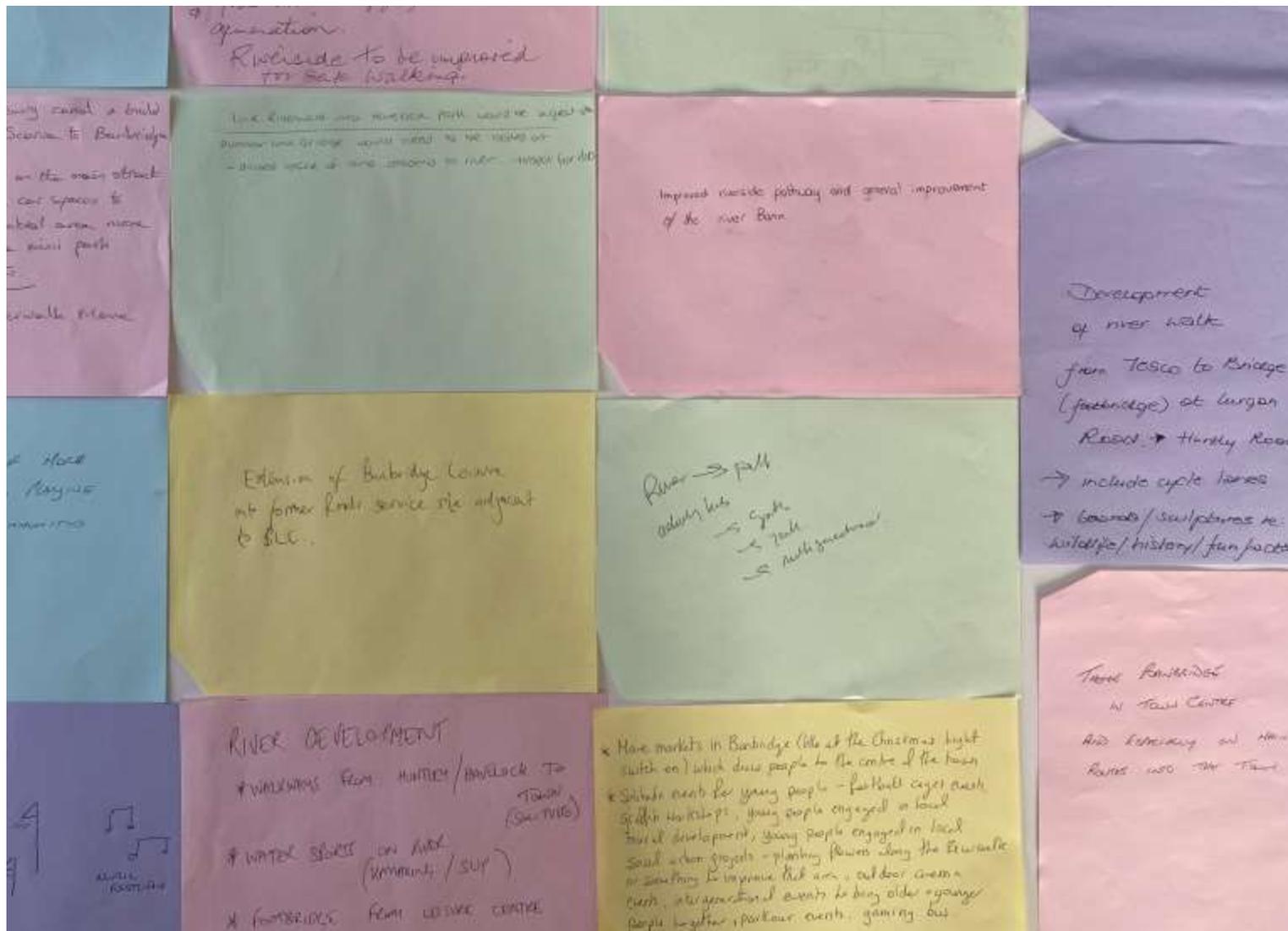
The Pre Development Survey, which had 166 responses (91.57% residents and 12.05% business owners), of whom 77 were from Banbridge, gauged initial options to inform the format and development phase engagement of the Place Plan. It asked 30 questions, including around current issues facing the town, their use of existing facilities, extent of walking, scoring of various priorities for Banbridge's future, potential regeneration sites and what they would like to see in the Place Plan.

Development Phase Survey [3 Feb - 20 March, 2023]

A development phase survey which was open for 6 weeks, 168 responses were received (include breakdown if wish between residents etc). The aim was to reach a wide range of Banbridge's public. Questions were a mixture of multiple-choice, tick-box quantitative questions, and qualitative text responses that, combined, sought to discover the ways in which people use Banbridge's various retail, cultural, heritage and leisure offerings at present, their frustrations with and aspirations for the town, and their views on as yet unfulfilled aspects of the former masterplan.

Schools Survey [December 2022 – January 2023]

The Community Planning Team also created a short school survey for primary and secondary school age children that was issued directly to all schools in the area to seek their views on, and ideas about, Banbridge. 54 responses were received.



Mapping

The purpose of engagement is to tap into counter-narratives of different user groups in Banbridge, so that the place plan can be informed by a deeper and richer understanding of the place. Mapping, specifically counter-mapping, can be a useful tool to access these narratives. The term refers to the use of maps, even a simple sketch on the back of an envelope, or lines hand-drawn over an official map, to delineate and formalise claims to place by non-dominant individuals or groups. Counter-maps can make present the language of the radical and often invisible other, that is too often absent from dominant discourses and official maps (Wainwright, 2011: 244). In drawing their maps, participants are tapping into potentially unfamiliar modes of communication that can unlock new creativity, and are illustrating important counter-narratives for that place (Peluso, 1995: 384).

Counter-mapping techniques included:

- Asking individuals to draw their own memory map of Banbridge, highlighting the areas they like and don't like, things that have gone that they miss and areas of potential.
- Tasking groups with illustrating the conversation we were having - marking each place that came up on a collective map
- Asking groups of stakeholders to 'wipe the slate clean' for Banbridge and start again. What would they keep from the centre and periphery? What new things would they add to the centre and periphery? Where was Banbridge's 'wow'?

Walking

"Walking is a mode of making the world as well as being in it". Rebecca Solnit (2000)

Walking with others in a place can be a powerful way to understand and connect spaces, situating discussions and ideas in a literal, physical sense. We see walking as a creative act: those undertaking it are writing, as they walk, their own spatial story about that place (de Certeau, 1984: 91), and in so doing they are having an impact. Walking changes, temporarily, the relationship between the places it connects, and provides an opportunity for conversations that are shoulder to shoulder, rather than face to face, in which different things can be said. The architect Louis Kahn famously said *"in a small room one does not say what one would in a large*

room", to which we add, in the enclosure of a room one does not say what one might in the great outdoors. We invited members of the public to take us on walks of Banbridge to explore leftover and forgotten spaces, sometimes with a particular focus, including challenging and testing the place plan as it took shape. When out on walks, we observed, chatted and laughed with residents that we met along the way, taking shortcuts and asking them about others, and sounding ideas off them, informally. We also carried out walking conversations around Banbridge with the Place Plan Project Board team.

Place Lab

Integral to our approach to engagement was the proposal to have a hub or high street presence that would both increase opportunities for engagement, and act as an information point for the status of the Place Plan. A high street presence helps break down barriers to engagement and create serendipitous opportunities for people to become involved - even the shop window display format can creatively engage passersby. We also intended to host consultation workshops in the Place lab, drawing consultees into the centre of the town to experience and talk about Banbridge. We hoped that it would become a drop-in presence in the town, which people could return to for an informal chat and to keep up to date with the evolving place plan. The Place lab was fitted out with maps, lego, books and we shared feedback from each of our workshops on the walls so that visitors could see what themes were emerging.

One Word, One Idea

In an effort to be concise and to hear something from all participants, we started and ended many of our conversations and workshops by asking everyone in the room to answer simple questions, using one word only, to both capture their impressions of Banbridge (at the start) and hear their big, or small, ideas for the town (at the end). This is an accessible format that ensures that all voices in attendance are heard. It acts as an ice-breaker and provides a basis for follow-on discussion and debate, and, sometimes, for strangers to find common ground. It allows space for dissonance and differences of opinion, which is important to foster genuine participant engagement.



Image: One word for Banbridge: word cloud of popular responses (size of words indicates frequency with which they were used)

Post-it SWOTs

Post-it notes were used in large meetings with stakeholders, as a way to help participants be concise when considering big questions. This is particularly useful in group sessions with experts and elected representatives where there is a lot of valuable expertise and opinion in the room, but not the time to go into depth with particular individuals or niche areas. We carried out SWOT analyses with these groups, giving participants a minute to answer questions on colour-coded post-its, which we could then gather, display and collectively review to find commonalities and outliers that generated and focussed the ensuing discussion. The SWOT table of all responses from various sessions with key stakeholders and the general public and others can be found below, and can be compared with the 2016 Masterplan in the Discover report.

SWOT responses

What's special about Banbridge (Strengths)	What are the challenges Banbridge faces (Weaknesses)?
<p>Main street Retail, town centre - independent traders (x3) Retail offering (x2) Range of shops - everything you need x(2) Urban quality of town centre Welcoming urban centre / cafe areas</p> <p>River Bann (x3) River walk Solitude park</p> <p>Easy connectivity Economic corridor Key hub location combining commercial opportunities and residential Links to Belfast Location on/links to A1 (x2) Transport link corridor</p> <p>Community / Relations (x2) Friendly Quality of life for residents & community (x2)</p> <p>Buns/Bread</p>	<p>Access - roads, hill steepness, difficult for active travel, infrastructure (x3) Anti social behaviour issues (x2) Church square traffic Commuters not locally invested Connectivity to town centre Expensive housing Future of retail Housing need in area Inclusive/shared town housing July flags Keeping people working here - lack of jobs (x3) Lack of free sports facilities Lack of larger park/walks Lack of manufacturing Lack of open space Lack of train (x2) Lack of vision and leadership Loss of nightlife, lack of teen spaces (x2) Old police station Perceptions of town Poor park size Proximity to Belfast and Dublin is an advantage & disadvantage Relationship with boulevard</p>

<p>Food & drink</p> <p>Belmont House</p> <p>Brontës</p> <p>Culture</p> <p>Tourism</p>	<p>Traffic</p> <p>Transport links</p> <p>Vacancy issues - bigger buildings, bank etc (x3) -</p>
<p>What are the biggest Opportunities that you think Banbridge could take advantage of in the coming years?</p>	<p>What external/global factors are working against Banbridge's progress? (Threats)</p>
<p>A1 Corridor development for commercial zoning - strategic location and Brexit opportunity (x7)</p> <p>Attract all the new dwellers in the new houses</p> <p>Belfast / Dublin opportunities, and proximity to other places (x3)</p> <p>Diversification - location for tourism, housing etc (x2)</p> <p>Expanded commercial opportunities</p> <p>FE McWilliam funding</p> <p>Game of Thrones and more international visitors coming out of Covid-19 (x3)</p> <p>Hub stations</p> <p>Independent retailers</p> <p>Industry</p> <p>Opportunities for investment/economic growth/business (x2)</p> <p>Lack of stigma compared to other towns</p> <p>Leisure/park</p> <p>Link boulevard and town centre better (x2)</p> <p>Make more of natural resources/river, river walks & improve place making around the River Bann, promote canoeing, etc. (x4)</p> <p>More public transport, more sustainable transport</p> <p>New library</p> <p>Night evening economy</p> <p>Quality of life</p> <p>Tourism & location for business development. Develop linen history</p> <p>Tourism (x3)</p> <p>Wider funding to enhance offer</p>	<p>Climate change / move away from car usage (x2)</p> <p>Connectivity, social isolation through technology</p> <p>Cost of living crisis. Impact on independent traders and businesses (x2)</p> <p>Death of retail - online shopping - needs a brand to prevent people by-passing it (x3)</p> <p>External economic pressures</p> <p>Focus on other areas by council</p> <p>Global factors working against</p> <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>International travel & visitors</p> <p>Is the boulevard good or bad for the town centre? (x2)</p> <p>Lack of affordable housing</p> <p>Lack of commercial/industrial land available for business (x3)</p> <p>Lack of jobs for graduates</p> <p>Lack of long term funding of transport and regeneration</p> <p>Land ownership, lack of other land, individuals owning lots of projects</p> <p>Loss of young people</p> <p>Perceptions of NI in general (political)</p> <p>Public perceptions of town (x3)</p> <p>Location on carriageway, people pass the town</p> <p>Social media negativity (x4)</p> <p>Traffic/public transport</p> <p>War - cost of living affecting business costs</p>

Questioning

We also framed specific questions at each workshop that were tailored to suit the particular groups we were working with.

- We asked SRC Students 'what would make you stay in Banbridge after your studies?'
- We asked Older people what they loved about Banbridge and what could make it easier and more enjoyable for them to use it

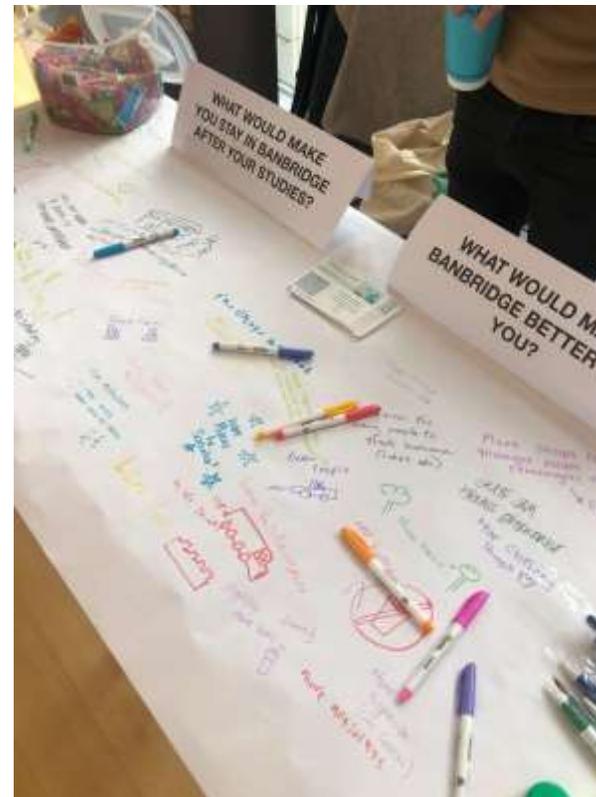
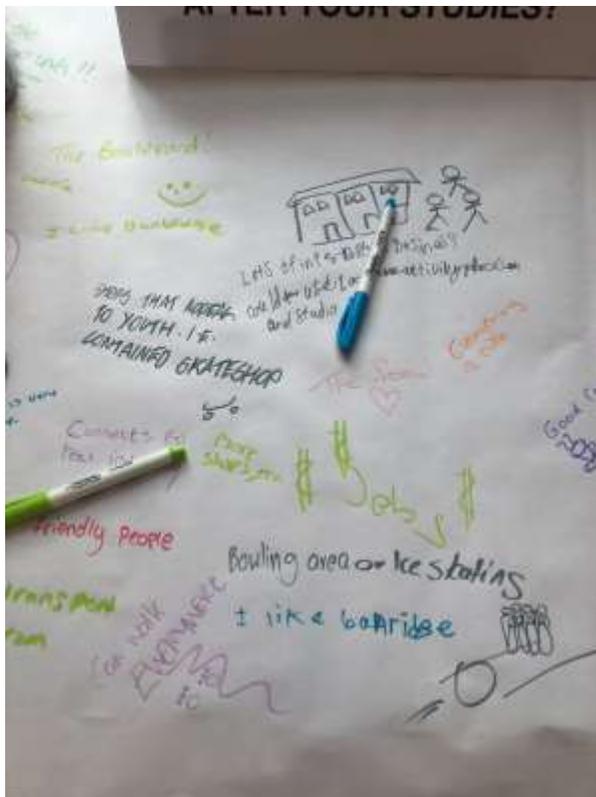
- We asked visitors to the Solitude Park for St. Patrick's Day Celebration about their big (or small) idea for the town
- We asked teenagers what part of Banbridge they used and felt safe in, and what parts they didn't

Community Event Pop-ups

To maximise engagement with a wider range of Banbridge residents, opportunities were sought to meet people where they already are, by piggybacking off the large attendances at community events happening during the discovery engagement period. To that end, we attended planned community events, hosting stalls offering information about the place plan, activities, conversation and pointing people to the online survey and various ways to get involved. These events encouraged lots of people to give us quick opinions on their thoughts for the future of Banbridge. We hosted pop-up stalls at:

- Wellness Event at the Southern Regional College
- St Patrick's Day festival at Solitude Park
- Keep Safe, Keep Well Conference for older people at the Belmont Hotel

It was also arranged to have a busker, Matty Rea, playing on the 330 Banbridge busybus in advance of Buskfest Festival on 17 June, 2023, both to promote the festival and act as a catalyst to *'[highlight] this valuable bus service that transports locals to and from the Boulevard and the town centre'* (Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Alderman Margaret Tinsley).



Images: Graffiti sheet at SRC pop-up, 1 March 2023, R. Community workshop



*Buskfest Promotion on **330** Busybus, by Edward Byrne Photography*

Public Events, Community Events and Workshops

During the development phase we held one public workshop event online and one in person, along with a workshop for community and church groups and one with teenagers at Banbridge Youth Resource Centre. These events were a vehicle for 2-way discussion where people could learn about the Place Plan process and also have their own thoughts heard. We applied the methods outlined above, encouraging participants to create their own alternative maps to describe Banbridge and tell us their ideas.

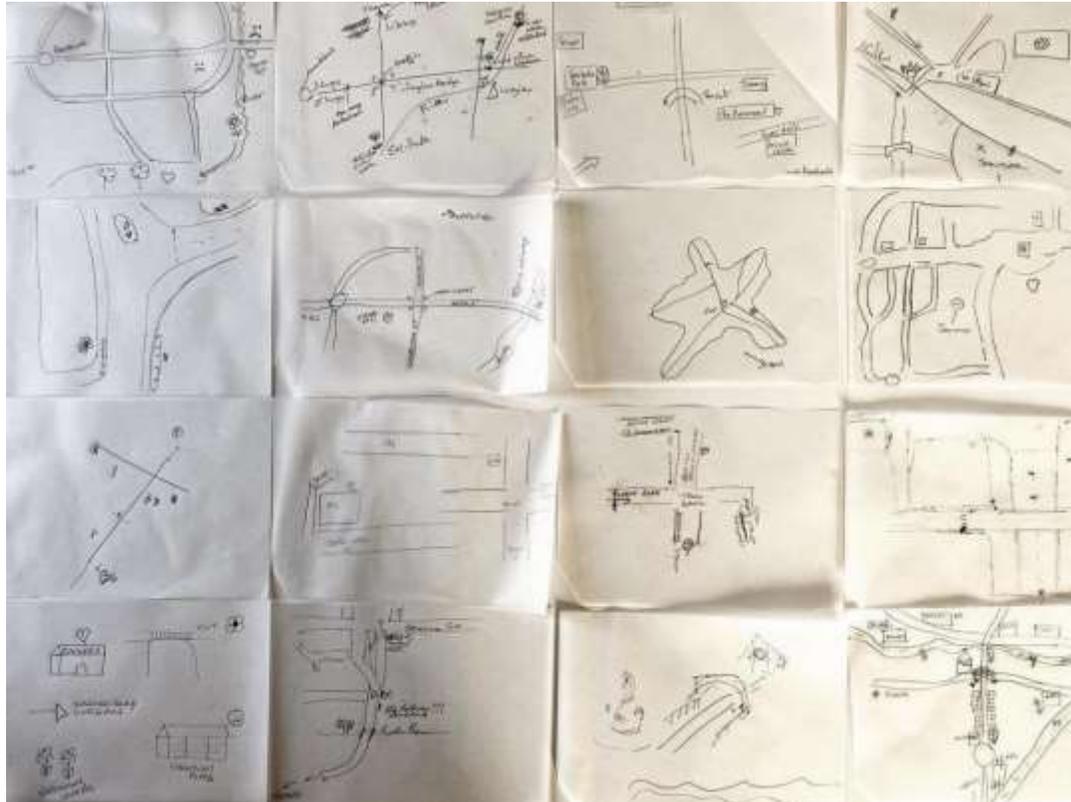


Image: participant's memory maps of Banbridge, created during the public workshop, 13 Feb, 2023

Stakeholder Workshops and Drop Ins

We developed and facilitated a range of workshops with groups of invited stakeholders: including specific sessions for Traders, Churches & Groups, public sector and agencies and an open drop in day for the local business sector. We also discussed future plans and known challenges with elected representatives and council officers. We used a range of individual mapping and group mapping techniques to begin conversations and to focus on what was strong and what could be better. We also asked participants about their organisational aspirations. Finally participants were invited to share their big (or small) idea for the future of the town. A list of the ideas that were shared can be found in Section 8).

Stakeholder Meetings

We conducted meetings with key relevant organisations to discuss strategic relevance and opportunities for the future of Banbridge. These took the form of semi-structured interviews, where a template list of questions were prepared and agreed in advance, but were tailored to each organisation and their remit in Banbridge. This provided some focus and structure to the interviews, but also the structure to steer back, where necessary, towards the relevant areas, allowing the meetings to remain focussed. Questions did not have to be asked in any particular order, or at all, and other questions can also be asked, seeking to question in a way that does not interrupt the flow of the interview, remaining available to wander off-course and pursue fruitful digressions (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007). Interviews were scheduled to last 30 minutes to one hour, where interviewees could afford the time.

Section 75

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act places a statutory obligation on Public Authorities to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and good relations in respect of religious belief, political opinion, gender, race, disability, age, marital status, dependants and sexual orientation. Workshops have been held online and in-person, on different days of the week and times of the day.

Of the 168 survey respondents, 13% considered themselves to have a disability; 25% were unionist generally and 20.24% nationalist generally, 9% were gay, lesbian or bisexual, with a further 5% preferring not to say, and there was representation from a good cross-section of the community in respect to religion, political opinion, gender, etc. as can be seen, for example, in the survey analysis. A focused engagement session was attended by representatives from RNIB, IMTAC, the Guide Dog Association and TADA to directly focus on issues facing these groups.



6. Engagement Summary

Group key: * a. Wider Public, b. Younger People, c. Older People, d. Other groups with protected characteristics, e. Community/ Voluntary Sector, f. Public Sector, g. Private Sector

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
27 July – 10 August 2022	Open Survey (pre-development)	General Public	Citizen Space	77	a	Survey in general corroborated opinions gathered in other engagement activities.
28 October 2022	Meeting	Boulevard Manager, Chris Nelmes	Boulevard	2	g	Introductory meeting to explain the Banbridge Place Plan project's aims and objectives and hear about the Boulevard.
28 October 2022	Meeting	Ciaran Cunningham Banbridge Enterprise Centre	Banbridge Enterprise Centre	1	g	Introductory meeting to explain the Banbridge Place Plan project's aims and objectives and hear about the business needs and demands in the Banbridge area.
December 2022 - January 2023	School Survey	School Children	In Schools	54	b	<p>Responses from St Patricks College (13), Abercorn Primary (20) and Bridge Integrated Primary (21)</p> <p>Primary age respondents like shops, park, pool, cinema; secondary age like Boulevard and shops in town, enjoy twilight market and Christmas light events, and many of both ages engage in sporting activities</p> <p>Would like more football pitches and shops, equestrian centre, bowling alley and waterslides</p> <p>Under half of secondary level respondents reported feeling safe in Banbridge.</p>
3 February	Open Survey	General	Citizen Space	168	a	Survey in general corroborated opinions gathered in other

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
- 20 March 2023		Public				<p>engagement activities.</p> <p>Respondents were divided over pedestrianisation and need for more car parking. Strong negative reaction against new Scarva Street junction.</p>
19 January 2023	Discussion	Place Internal Working Group	Craigavon Civic Centre	10	f	<p>Discussed: Integration of Boulevard and issues with buses / routes; Active Travel agenda (normalising walking up the hill); renting policy for SRC hall; civic centre grounds not being open; commuter town; participatory budgeting funding; FE McWilliam expansion, empty to occupy and building revitalisation scheme after public realm works; public realm Phase 1 & 2 (could Phase 2 be more ambitious and less car-focused? Revisit moving Crozier monument with HED?)</p> <p>Issues / defining the need: housing; lack of allocated land for business growth and lack of incubation spaces for start-ups; health service, etc.; evening economy and the importance of walkability; potential spike in ageing population; lack of cycling infrastructure; future of cinema and Tesco in town.</p> <p>Opportunities: GOT cruise tourists (only half day) coming to Banbridge for a market town experience - need for a market strategy; Church Square opportunities eg. Old Police Station and Masonic Hall; river activities; need for more hotels in the region.</p>
25 January 2023	10min Workshop within broader Meeting	Place Board Sub Committee of Community Planning Partnership	Seagoe Hotel, Portadown	17	e & f	<p>Liked independent retail and café experience, river, strategic location on A1. Keen to better link boulevard to town centre.</p> <p>Highlighted challenges including traffic, steep hills making active travel difficult, loss of night activity and lack of activity for youth</p> <p>Opportunities included the strategic location, better links between town centre and Boulevard and GoT, improved links to the river</p> <p>Raised local concerns like traffic and land ownership and more global factors like climate action and online retailing.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
30 January 2023	Discussion	Banbridge DEA	Civic Centre Banbridge	6	f	<p>What's special: independent traders and range of shops, community, strategic location</p> <p>Challenges the town faces: lack of housing, small parks, lack of jobs, lack of development land</p> <p>Opportunities: A1 corridor, Game of Thrones, extend river walk/loop walk</p> <p>Threats: Lack of jobs, negative perceptions of town. Elected representatives expressed surprise at high ASB statistics in Banbridge.</p>
30 January 2023	Interview	Housing Executive	Teams	2	f	<p>5 year projected need of 170 units will not be met with planned new housing in pipeline - need a robust new housing strategy for the town</p> <p>See good potential for town centre living, above shops - can be done if appetite is there.</p> <p>Would like to see mixed-tenure, mixed identity development near town centre in Place Plan - maybe Commercial Rd site (Arbor, 59 units) would work</p>
6 February 2023	Discussion	Banbridge Steering Committee	Teams	11	e, f & g	<p>Participants each drew and shared their own maps of Banbridge, identifying the best place, worst place, something good that has been lost, and an area for growth.</p> <p>Best places included the river, the Cut, Havelock pitches, the hotel and the shops; worst included new traffic lights and roundabout, areas of potential focused on the river / possible footbridges and Solitude Park; and good things lost included Fusco's ice cream, Woven and other closed shops.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
8 February 2023	Interview	Chair of Banbridge Chamber of Commerce	Civic Centre, Banbridge	1	g	<p>Would like to see proper theatre, 24-hour defibrillator, a lovely square with monthly food market, museum (for all the literary connections), bike lane to Scarva.</p> <p>Signage could be better in town: <i>'Banbridge has the dirtiest signs in Northern Ireland'</i> . Would like posters at Boulevard saying 'Visit Banbridge'.</p> <p>Thriving independent retail, not chains. <i>"Two street town"</i> – Bridge Street for solicitors and hairdressers, Newry Street for retail. Could reduce Newry Street to one lane instead of two.</p> <p>Parking is too cheap. Pedestrianisation will kill the butcher, baker, greengrocer and people want to drive, as has apparently happened in other town centres.</p>
8 February 2023	Interview	Banbridge Youth Resource Centre	Civic Centre, Banbridge	1	b	<p>Youth talked about living here and it's not positive but it's about exploring that. Community mapping - eg. where do you feel safe: youth centre. Unsafe: Solitude, playpark</p> <p>Lack of footpath and parking at Huntly Wood: how can you connect the entire route? Would like to see space around river used and more biodiversity.</p> <p>Youth centre has new sensory room, offers barista training. People in Banbridge don't know about the centre/what's going on.</p> <p>Ideas: bring back teenage market in Solitude; Enterprise labs in town hall; Community foundation (Youth Bank); Community enterprise idea.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
9 February 2023	Interview	Local Full Fibre Network	Teams	1	f	<p>Staying competitive as a region. Digital Information Flexible Fund, providing vouchers for businesses to hook up to super fast broadband - starting infrastructure for cable capability. Public realm scheme in Banbridge is exciting and digitally future-proofed.</p> <p>Education opportunities: Utilising the GoT attraction and an education centre around media - digi based training. SRC have based their visual centre of excellence in Banbridge. Good argument for council to follow suit.</p> <p>Discussed: Council grants to create jobs in start-ups; Social enterprise hubs (funded by DFC) worked well; Smart Towns strand of council policy / Smart Cities call</p>
9 February 2023	Workshop	General Public	Zoom	5	a	<p>Participants loved the shops and cafes in Banbridge as well as the Cut as a local landmark that should be celebrated. They felt that traffic was 'overwhelming' and thought that making connections to green spaces and the river for longer walks would enhance their experience of the town.</p> <p>Areas of opportunity were identified at Castlewellan Road Tesco and Courthouse/ Commercial Road.</p>
10 February 2023	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	0	a	<p>Initial set up of Place lab resources, materials, library of local books, maps, information and interactive feedback methods to maximise engagement.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						Need great teachers to put together educational material that takes advantage of GOT studio...big believer in collaboration...Potential for engagement with local schools.
13 February 2023	Interview	Boulevard and Retail Park	Management Suite, Boulevard	5	g	<p>Transport links to and from Boulevard for staff were not good with most staff taking taxis or lift sharing. Impacts staff. Recruitment is difficult.</p> <p>Visitors to the Boulevard ask about Banbridge and there's nowhere to point them to. No tourist information place. A lot of visitors from outside the area. Untapped potential from Southern Irish trade. Not taking trade away from the town centre.</p> <p>Participants mentioned a good relationship with Chamber and town centre retailers. They recognise that the Boulevard is easy to access by car. Would like to see longer Sunday trading hours in the town centre to complement the Boulevard as it's their biggest trading day. Suggestions of a loyalty scheme – exclusive discounts for locals.</p>
17 February 2023	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	10	a	<p>Visit of the Lord Mayor to the Place Lab to highlight and promote consultation. Engagement with the public was via the creation of maps, discussion, contributing to the feedback wall with ideas and challenges for Banbridge and the children used lego to get creative about their town.</p> <p>Main issues raised focussed on using the river Bann as an asset - a walking trail from Lindsay's bridge to Huntly wood; utilising the buildings and unused places along the river creatively as part of a river walk; challenges of traffic and parking; better connections and relationship with the Boulevard and Game of Thrones centre required to help boost visitors to the town centre.</p> <p>Banbridge is viewed as a safe and friendly town.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
23 February 2023	Drop in session + Evening Workshop	Businesses	Upstairs, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	20	g	<p>Increase, diversify and capitalise on events in the town / later opening of shops, evening economy</p> <p>Expand river paths/ walks / River as green energy source/ Increase greening of town</p> <p>Using underutilised spaces, improve physical appearance where needed, improve accessibility.</p> <p>Improve pedestrian and bus links between town and Boulevard area, car parking reconfiguration to free up space, capitalise on GoT tourism, increase draw to Banbridge from A1</p> <p>Use underused spaces innovatively, development sites/ restore heritage.</p>
24 February	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	1	a	<p>Views from a local walking group were brought forward and discussion focussed on: River Walk from Old Police Station to Lindsay's Bridge; Greenway to Scarva - railway connection - walking/ cycling and the canal; plaza would be a great space to sit and chat.</p> <p>Need to concentrate on independent shops/ offering to attract people. Need to be interesting and unusual in this. Murals - no consultation on what went up - great idea but needs to be locally consulted on. E.g Involve kids in this - cross-community work - need plaques and a joined up story throughout town. Need for an education/ awareness campaign on littering.</p> <p>Traffic roads and parking: Pedestrianise the top of the bridge, and bring back the fountain from the Civic Building - well-being improved if not having to avoid traffic. Provide easy free parking elsewhere to remove traffic, as less traffic improves well-being. Town centre road surfaces are ok, but roads and lanes around the town can be bad.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<p>Since amalgamation - Armagh gets prioritised - there is a perception that Banbridge is treated less favourably. E.g. Bronte church was closed as a music venue.</p> <p>Banbridge as a less sectarian town - should be used as an example. Good interchurch cooperation.</p> <p>Nighttime economy - need to fill the void the Coach closing has left, and for coffee-shops to open late, as an alternative to bars.</p>
1 March 2023	Pop up at SRC Wellbeing Event	Students	SRC Campus, Banbridge	40	b	<p>Asked "What would make you stay in Banbridge after your studies?" and 'What would make Banbridge better for you?' on a 'graffiti sheet' participants responses included: 'Love Banbridge: it's "cleaner than Lurgan", "better than Newry", easy transport system, friendly people, lots of interesting businesses, good food and cafes, the Boulevard</p> <p>Would like: skate shop and more shops for youth; bowling area or ice-skating; more things to do and places to socialise, less litter.</p> <p>They felt SRC connects to real industry and has brilliant teachers.</p>
2 March 2023	Workshop + Walk	General Public	Banbridge Leisure Centre + Riverside Walk	7	a	<p>They felt that traffic was 'overwhelming' and thought that making connections to green spaces and the river for longer walks would enhance their experience of the town.</p> <p>Lots of neighbourhood watch schemes in Banbridge, building a "sense of community" They felt that neighbourhoods offered good community, but that cleanliness was in decline.</p> <p>There were opposing views on public art – some participants liked the new street art, whilst others described them as being "too garish for this town". The River artwork near the bus station was also cause for debate with one person describing it as</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<p>“Totally unimaginative and unattractive”, whilst others appreciated it.</p> <p>No members of the public elected to attend the walk. Members of the Project Team walked the river walk until Dunbar’s footbridge, then crossed and walked along the former GNR Branch Line, Scarva - Banbridge, between the river Bann and Havelock Park. We observed the listed ruins of a former bridge and milepost at the end and discussed the potential of a new bridge that could connect Havelock, Huntly Wood and this peninsula, offering a variety of walking routes, and perhaps forming part of a future greenway to Scarva.</p>
2 March 2023	Workshop	Public sector	Banbridge Leisure Centre	17	f	<p>Organisations attending included: DFI Roads, PSNI, Libraries, Housing Executive, ABC Council, Translink, NI Water, Invest NI and DFC.</p> <p>Climate action – prepare for future - increase electric vehicle infrastructure. Free bikes, Bus routes, pedestrian focus, SUDS, Cycle routes. More free off-street carparking on periphery of town, rail link</p> <p>New footbridges, river walk, links to Boulevard and signposted walks, heritage trail, gateways on A1; Living over the shops; more Integrated schools; Central place to advertise everything that’s on; need for a focus on disability; Increased wifi</p> <p>More programmed activities - Night time activities, Markets, festivals and cultural spaces such as Museum, Theatre.</p> <p>Libraries as a model of innovation - Library - extended opening hours after hours, when no staff. People can come later - print, use computers, run a book group or have a poetry group, meeting with friends, etc.Group drew maps in chalk on black paper (see below).</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
3 March 2023	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	0	a	No members of the public attended.
7 March 2023	Interview	Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor	Teams	1	f	<p>Strategy for Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor approved by 8 councils (ABC Council inc) - action plan has just been signed off. Staff in place after easter. Roll out delivery of actions plan over next few years. First 6 months are about building relationships. Staff will reach out to councils.</p> <p>Not limited to roads and rail. Here to do things that others are not doing - here to fill the gaps where things are not being delivered. Can challenge delivery on existing topics. Can lobby for trains etc. Good time to be engaging with the corridor in its infancy.</p> <p>Shared island funding application for the development of innovation zones along the corridor - led by Fingal Council. Appointed a team but no update yet. Looking at opportunities - range of sectors/ infrastructure / sites - open book. Done by September 23.</p>
7 March 2023	Workshop	Teenagers and youth workers [from 'Banbridge Local Youth Voice' & Girls' Duke of Edinburgh Group]	Banbridge Youth Resource Centre	19	b	<p>In a round-table format, with a large sheet on the floor, pens were distributed for willing volunteers to draw a map of Banbridge summarising the areas young people used and places that came up in discussion. They were asked where they felt safe and unsafe in Banbridge, and where they liked to hang out. What would make them stay when they grow up? What would they like to add to Banbridge?</p> <p>They don't use: The library (hardly any); cycling - "Girls can't ride bikes", feel people would laugh; the river - you don't go near it; Solitude Park - especially when getting dark. Intimidating young people who "think Solitude is theirs" Pop-up cinema in amphitheatre was fantastic.</p> <p>They use: Games cafe on Lurgan Rd. Almost all walk by the shortcut to the Boulevard, as the busy bus doesn't accept card</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<p>and you have to have correct change. Prefer cinema in Boulevard but restaurants in town.</p> <p>They would love: inexpensive sit in pizza restaurant, more places to hang out without spending money (currently just have to layer up and sit at the pitch), under 18s disco, charging ports at pitches, pool/snooker hall, escape rooms, extended buskfest /surrounding events and places for bands to gig here; fresh garbage shop, swap shop, would love a train station/to take the train.</p>
8 March 2023	Pop up at Keep Safe Keep Well	Older People	Belmont Hotel	40	c	<p>Informal conversations were held with participants, and notes taken. They were asked what they liked and didn't like about Banbridge, and what they went there for. Old photographs were shared in a digital slideshow to spark conversation and jog memories.</p> <p>People liked the hotels, old buildings, charity Shops, leisure centre, shops being close together and the busy bus to the Boulevard.</p> <p>They didn't like the steep hill, new traffic lights on Scarva Street and traffic and wanted more places to go, more parking and accessible spaces, parking closer to the shops</p> <p>Ideas included a community hall/hub (for over 65s) and more indoor activities for kids, more trees, wildflowers along the A1 verges, more greenways, extended riverwalk with good lighting, cycle lanes, a hardware shop and cultural events</p>
10 March 2023	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	0	a	This session was cancelled by ABC Council due to adverse weather conditions
15 March 2023	Meeting	Foodbank and Grace Generation Church	Foodbank and Grace Generation Church, Church Square	2	e	<p>The Storehouse building runs 2 different projects - Banbridge Community Foodbank and the Bridge Pantry (Social Supermarket).</p> <p>Runs on a referral system from partners, serving needs of people living in crisis, predominantly single parents and elderly.</p>

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						Receive welcome support and donations from local traders & council. Plans to open a community café; have a toy library; benefits of working in collaboration with other churches in town to coordinate youth activities - would like to see more collaboration in the town. A community hub in the area would be of added social benefit.
18 March 2023	Pop up at St.Patrick's Day Event	General Public	Solitude Park	63	a	<p>People of all ages were asked what their big or small ideas for Banbridge were, and their answers generally fell into the following categories:</p> <p>Better public spaces for play/play parks and walking routes: Cycling infrastructure & greenways for dog walking including extending the river walk and for existing parks to be better maintained. Also extended opening hours for the parks, public toilets at Solitude Park - 24/7 disability accessible public toilets needed. Dog fouling an issue that needs addressed, and litter - perhaps a reward scheme for litter collection.</p> <p>Transport & connectivity: Improved traffic management/reduction of traffic and more/better parking, inc traffic lights at Scarva St. Plus railway connections.</p> <p>Things to do: Kids' ideas included trampoline park, bowling alley, BMX pump track, ice rink, soft play; teens wished for more places to go (sports, Basketball courts) especially at night, e.g. midnight soccer etc. and more clothes shops for their age group; adults requested more bars/ wine bars/ cocktail bars, nightlife, a theatre, and seasonal events. A community hub was suggested, with a programme of activities, including for those with learning difficulties.</p>
24 March 2023	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	4	a	Member of local walking group and a parent with a young child. Banbridge people are engaged, but often lack a voice in plans. Discussed: Needing more use of the river for leisure, too much litter and dog poo, plaza as a space for traders and seating, supporting unusual independent shops, missed opportunity to involve locals and youth in new public art/explain meanings,

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						Greenway to Scarva for rail and canal connections Pedestrianising the top of the Cut and bringing back the fountain from the new town hall. Low levels of sectarianism and good interchurch cooperation. Lack of night time economy - could coffee shops bring an alternative to bars? A real need to include spaces for children in plans - the library is a good example of activities for parents and children.
24 March 2023	Interview	Dfl Rivers	Teams	1	f	Discussed flood risk mapping and modelling within Banbridge area, fluvial hazards and permissible development (riverwalks ok, and bridges, ideally buttressing outwith flood zone). Impact of climate change to be considered and new models put in place.
31 March 2023	Drop in session	General Public	Place Lab, Old Town Hall, Banbridge	6	a	Discussed how to make Solitude Park more active. Could we plant a hedge along the Bann in Solitude Park as a natural defence? Idea mooted to establish an Evening Economy Community led Positive Action Group (PAG) to engage with evening economy businesses and groups to build a new offering for Banbridge. Parents of young children highlighted lack of places to go in Banbridge if you have young children, for example soft play and pram friendly spaces as well as the need to improve cycling infrastructure, have a Park Run, improve A1 crossings, increase biodiversity and planting, improve a night-time cultural offering and make more use of outdoor spaces with events for families and markets.
3 April 2023	Workshop	Section 75 Groups	Teams	4	d	Representatives of RNIB, IMTAC, Guide Dog Association and TADA attended the open meeting. Discussed: threat of isolation for people in rural areas; broadband issues, cost of living crisis, the need for reduced car dependency in 5-10 years, keeping pavements free of dangers and obstructions, need for climate action central to place plan, need to safeguard Scarva/Banbridge greenway against building.

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
3 April 2023	Meeting	Translink	Teams	1	f	Discussed looking at no.66 Scarva bus timetabling and train times to crossover; how to promote the 330 c and other busy buses - buskers on the bus? Opportunity to add in a stop on the 330c FE McWilliam (will do a risk assessment and speak to the schedulers.); future levelling up opportunities; cashless payments could be in operation by autumn.
4 April 2021	Meeting	CPSP		12	3	Update on the Banbridge Place Plan was presented to members including engagement carried out and feedback received to date.
18 April 2023	Meeting	Banbridge Sports Groups	Teams	6	e	Discussed need for Shared Club House/Sport Hub, concrete table tennis tables in solitude, walking tracks around pitches, how clubs could support green agenda/net zero carbon etc.eg. litter picking and golf course considering capturing surface rain water, storage of water and water reuse, need for more free play green areas and a free MUGA / dome.
27 April	Meeting	Internal Officer Meeting	Banbridge Leisure Centre	13	f	Attendees were briefed on the engagement feedback to date. Discussion took place regarding: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that were currently being delivered or planned for Banbridge. • Green / Biodiversity • Various schemes available eg Empty to Occupy Grants available eg FAP, Small Floral Grant
18 May		Age Friendly Group	Old Tech Building	17	e	Concerned about Health & Safety of general public accessing Huntly Woods on foot as no footpath. Suggested ramps be installed to slow down traffic to aid people crossing the road from Banbridge Golf Club to Wood. <p>Would like to see the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Busy Bus 330c evening service to enable cinema/restaurant visits ○ More friendship/social groups, entertainment for the less able ○ Hub for young people to meet up and socialise ○ Open Market in town

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Events in FE McWilliam Gallery o Dunbarton Bridge to be accessible for wheelchairs and mobility scooter so can access Havelock Park o Review of Solitude Park opening hours o More activities in the evening time o Tap into visitors coming to GOT
24 May	Meeting	Planning Office, Banbridge		2	f	Meeting to discuss the actions coming forward in the Place Plan
25 May		Banbridge Board Sub Committee	Lough Neagh Discover Centre	16	f	Presentation of draft actions, clustered action and outcomes for feedback
26 May	Meeting	Internal Officer Meeting	Online	3	f	Update meeting to discuss actions emerging from engagement to date.
1 June		Manager, Tesco Castlewellan Road		1	g	<p>Discussion around Tesco contribution to Banbridge such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Donating produce to Foodbank o Staff time by supporting community initiatives such as schools and clean neighbourhoods o Community Grants Tesco Community Grants o 2nd hand book shelf – People can donate or take books o Meeting room available for community to use. Small room holds about 12 people. <p>Anti-social behaviour in store – Youth lingering around foyer and toilets. Some vandalism has occurred within toilet/baby changing area. Verbal abuse to staff.</p> <p>Car Park – Overflow car park at the petrol station, can be opened and used at large town centre events.</p> <p>Have on site 3 x EV charging points and encourage customers to recycle eg. batteries etc</p>
6 June	Discussion	Banbridge DEA	Civic Centre Banbridge	6	f	Councillors liked the welcoming nature of the vision put forward. They urged us to try to capture the uniqueness of Banbridge. Banbridge as a commuter town: its strength is also its

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<p>weakness.</p> <p>Other specific points included encouraging facilities such as doctors, dentists etc. to facilitate town centre living, Importance of free play/pitches.</p> <p>Further suggestions were: Late night Thursdays for shops/eateries? Restaurant week, like in Belfast? Could there be an autumn Buskfest? Making Dunbar footbridge wheelchair and buggy friendly. Showcasing local musicians on a Friday night in the amphitheatre in summer. Would be great for people to be able to stand-up paddleboarding in the Bann, but it's overgrown.</p>
17 June	Busker on the bus	Buskfest organisers, and the no.330 bus passengers	330 Busy bus	6 (1 busker + 5 passengers)	a	<p>A former winner of Buskfest, Matty Rea, busked on the busybus, while passengers travelled around the town. In a Press Release the Lord Mayor, Alderman Margaret Tinsley, commented that this would <i>'give the passengers a taste of what's in store for the town this weekend during BuskFest 2023 and highlighting this valuable bus service that transports locals to and from the Boulevard and the town centre.'</i></p> <p>https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/banbridge-busy-bus-moves-to-the-beats-of-buskfest/</p>
TOTAL				696		

* a. Wider Public, b. Younger People, c. Older People, d. Other groups with protected characteristics, e. Community/ Voluntary Sector, f. Public Sector, g. Private Sector

7. Engagement Findings by Group

a. Wider Public

Public Survey Findings

1. Pre-Development Survey

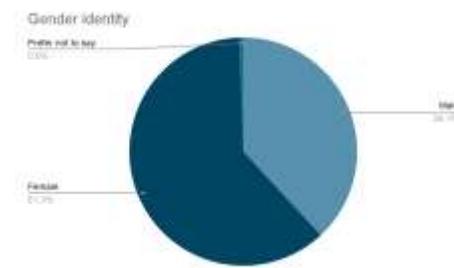
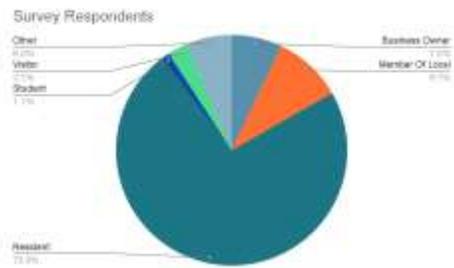
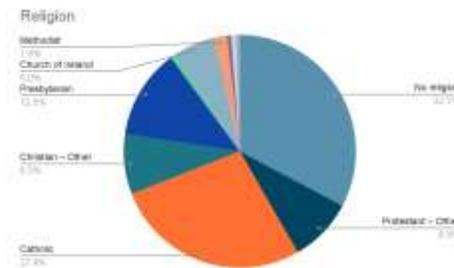
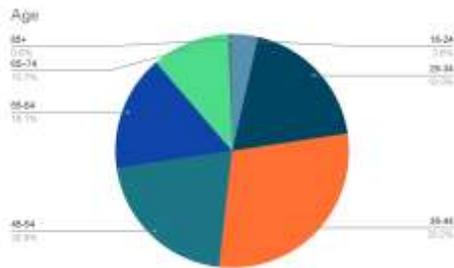
During the pre-development survey in July-August 2022 covering Banbridge and Dromore, respondents rated the following priorities, from a given list, as the five most important: involving people in decisions about their town (60.84% strongly agreed), creating jobs and employment (58.43%), regeneration (56.02%), improving health and wellbeing (53.61%) and connecting the town socially (48.8%). They were also generally in favour of bringing nature into the town, digitally and physically and socially connecting, investing in play spaces, and heritage. They expressed desires for more things for kids to do, community spaces, train station, support for small businesses, nightlife, a taxi rank, a hotel, removal of shop shutters, to see the old police station regenerated, spaces above shops used, support for local artists and more to be made of the river. The full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix 2.

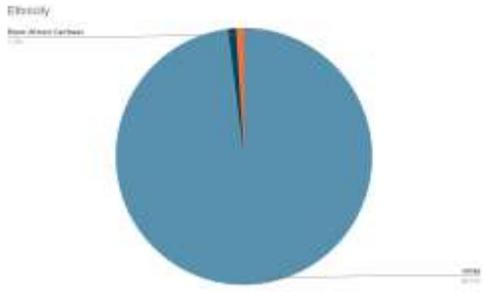
2. Second Survey

The second public survey, in Feb-March 2023, asked participants 52 questions (including general stats such as age, and equality monitoring). These ranged from graded multiple choice questions (for example yes/no questions, or rating from excellent to poor) to one word boxes and more descriptive answers. They gauged people's opinions on ideas from the last masterplan, their views on traffic, parking, pedestrianisation, heritage, the river, modes of transport, leisure activities, quality of life, travel times, public services, work, etc. The 168 responses represented a good cross-section of the inhabitants of Banbridge, including age, religion and political persuasion. In brief, respondents expressed a desire for more opportunities for play and things to do for young people, to see

something done with the police station and vacant buildings, for better public transport and cycling infrastructure, digital connectivity, improved evening economy and better pedestrian routes/walks. Responses are illustrated in the sections below, and the full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix 3.

Who answered the second survey?





Rating Banbridge

The word most frequently used to describe Banbridge by survey respondents was 'friendly', with home, community and busy close behind. Most rated the town fair to very good for inclusivity, green infrastructure, arts and culture and accessibility, but few found it to be excellent in any area, so there is plenty of opportunity for improvements.

Banbridge is:

What makes you feel connected to Banbridge?

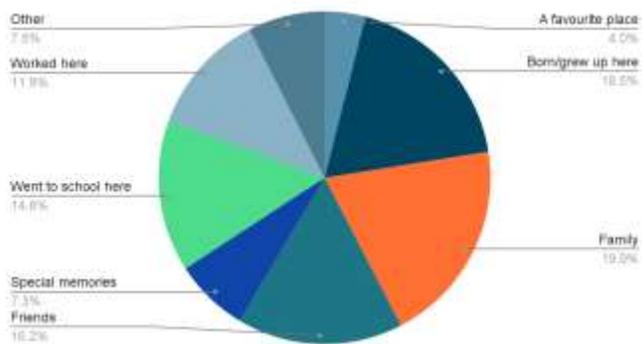
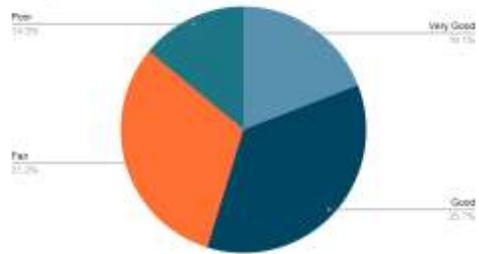


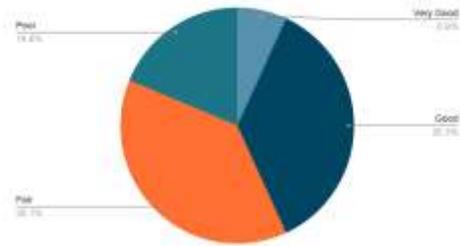


Image: three words to describe Banbridge, from the public survey responses to question 4 (word cloud of all words that appear more than once, sized according to frequency)

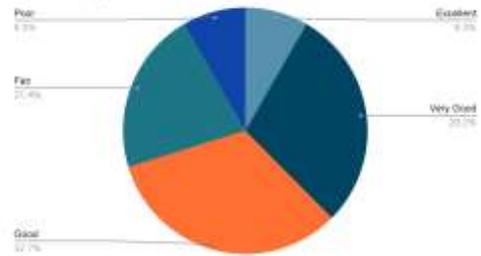
Being inclusive and diverse



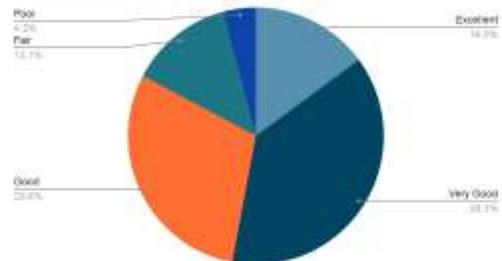
Arts & Culture



Accessibility

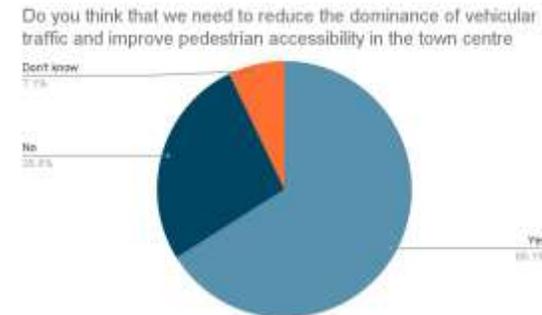
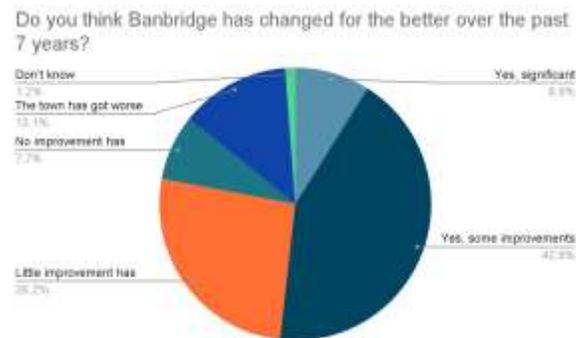


Green infrastructure - walking and cycling



Reflecting on the Banbridge Town Centre Masterplan 2016

Most respondents (59.1%) felt that Banbridge has improved some or little since the Banbridge Town Centre Masterplan, which is positive, while a further 8,9% felt those changes had been significant. However a significant minority of over 20% felt the town had stayed the same or got worse.

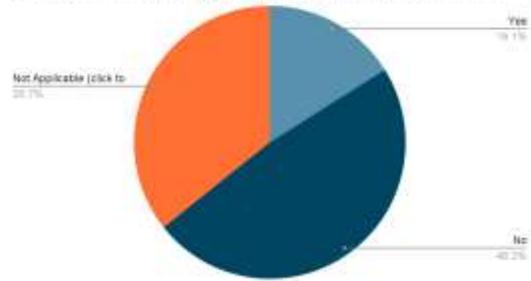


Vehicular and foot traffic

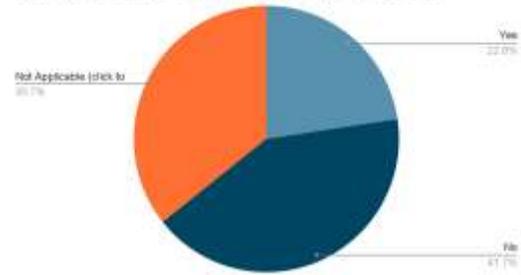
Whilst 66.1% of people thought there was a need to reduce the dominance of vehicular traffic and improve pedestrian accessibility, respondents were divided over the question of pedestrianisation, with 40.48% or respondents feeling there was a need for areas of the town centre to be pedestrianised, and 48.81% feeling the opposite. This suggests a balanced approach will be required.

Living in town centre

Would you consider living in an apartment in the town centre?



Would you consider living in a house in the town centre?



Vacant sites and areas of opportunity identified:



Quotes

“Have VISION. Think outside of the box and DO NOT follow what other towns are doing. You need to make Banbridge DIFFERENT to other towns that way people will come for a different experience that can not be had elsewhere.”

“I live alone. Something needs to be done to combat loneliness. I’ve lived here 6 years and I still don’t feel connected to anyone or any groups here. I work in Belfast and commute everyday. I have no friends here and struggle to see any way of breaking in to the community to build a support network for myself - I’m not old! I’m a very young 50 .. so nifty 50’s and armchair aerobics does not appeal!”

Survey Overview

Survey responses revealed that most people’s connection to Banbridge is more due to their family (50% of respondents), friends (41%) and/or having grown up there (47%) than a particular place (only 17%) or memory.

Getting around: 52% of respondents lived in Banbridge, and 60% travelled in and out by car. Cycle lanes would make 34% more likely to cycle their commute, while 66% wished for better pedestrian accessibility, however when asked about pedestrianising parts of the town centre this was unpopular, with 49% voting against and a further 10% unsure. Most felt that existing walking and cycling infrastructure was only fair (40%) or poor (25%). While Banbridge has a reputation as a commuter town, and 18% do indeed drive over 20 miles to work, interestingly 22% of respondents are working from home (at least some of the time). 20% would like to work in Banbridge, and don’t already, which suggests that there is a demand for more job opportunities in the town, which could be created if there was more space for businesses to expand and new ones to start. When asked about the train, over half of respondents wanted to be able to travel by train for leisure, while under 12% thought they would use it for work.

When asked about living in a house in the town centre, 77% of respondents were not interested in this, or felt that it was not applicable to them, and this increased to 88% for living over shops. However perhaps these forms of accommodation could attract

different new inhabitants to Banbridge, potentially making the town centre more vibrant and reducing car dependency. Most (74%) felt existing housing in Banbridge was good, very good or excellent.

Over half of respondents visit Banbridge once or twice a week, 88% of whom stay for under two hours, and 56% felt there was insufficient short-stay (under 2 hours) car parking. All respondents also visited the Boulevard, but less often, with the most common frequency being 1-3 times a month (35%) and again mainly for under two hours (87%). Their main reasons for visiting the town include shopping (75%), eating out (over 60%) and banking and post office (57%). Under 10% of people felt the town's connection to the river was very good or excellent, indicating that there is room for improvement there.

Over half (53%) of respondents rated Banbridge very good or excellent in terms of the friendliness of its people. Over 70% of respondents felt that accessibility was good, very good or excellent in Banbridge, interestingly increasing to 80% of those respondents who identified as having a disability (although none of these rated the town's accessibility as excellent). In terms of inclusivity and diversity, the most common (39%) answer was that the town was good, and more (33%) felt it was fair or poor than very good or excellent (27%). 67% felt it was good, very good or excellent in terms of cross-community integration. It is worth noting that the diversity of respondents was a good cross-section of religion and age, however 98.81% of respondents identified as white. This is representative of the Banbridge population, which was 98.95% white at the time of the 2011 Census, but the minority who are not white could have a different experience of diversity and inclusion in the town that the survey responses, alone, are not capable of capturing.

Over half (54%) of respondents felt that arts and culture in Banbridge was poor or only fair.

Perceptions of how innovative the town is are moderate, with the most common answers being that it is good (44%) or fair (27%).

In terms of development, over half of respondents felt that Banbridge had improved somewhat or significantly, in recent years.

A majority (64%) felt that tourist accommodation was not good (fair or poor) in Banbridge.

Ideas for the Future

- Banbridge could be a leading town for social activities. Craft, big and small events, day and night time activities
- Better connection between Boulevard / FE McWilliam and the town - bus and walking
- Better lighting in the town and more planting / trees in town centre
- Better promotion of flower market, more stalls and markets
- Better public transport in and around Banbridge, eg. bus to Rathfriland, also cycle lanes, busy bus timetabling, Scarva train station
- Better use of the River Bann and better links to (and through) the town centre, and extending the river walk to Huntly Woods. Also somewhere for dogs to swim in the river, use the river to connect heritage sites
- Big luxury hotel
- Bring back the Bann 10k run and create a Park Run
- Celebrate the 'heritage' of Banbridge including notable people, linen, arts
- Enhanced day, night activities eg more entertainment / restaurants / cafes open at night
- Green net zero planning to attract green businesses
- Improvements to accessibility, making footpaths smoother to be truly accessible
- More niche retail - 'Boutique Banbridge' initiative to promote them through social media, etc.
- More street benches
- Ring road with a new bridge at Lurgan Road
- Social spaces for families to meet and eat out / play, use spaces better
- Theatre / visitor centre / local arts venue
- There were many suggestions for more activities for kids and young people / Saturday morning creche facilities / soft play / free pitches for kids to kick about

Public Workshops

Quotes:

“Unique due to [independent] retailers”

“Development opportunity for me is the Castlewellan Road Tesco area. Big space, good access to the dual carriageway - says business hub to me.”

“Driving through the Cut means I’m home now”

“People don’t associate [Solitude] park with a nice space they could come and do their fun days.”

Overview:

Public workshops were held online and in person. After introductions and a one word answer to describe Banbridge, participants were asked to make their own individual map of Banbridge, to explore perceptions of place and to highlight that each person will have their own perception, connection, needs and aspirations. The maps considered personal memories; homes; favourite things; worst things; and areas for growth or opportunity. An open group discussion allowed time for sharing and in some cases healthy debating.

Participants loved the shops and cafes in Banbridge as well the connection to the Boulevard. They felt that traffic was ‘overwhelming’ and thought that making connections to green spaces and the river for longer walks would enhance their experience of the town. One participant suggested pedestrianising the town. Lots of neighbourhood watch schemes in Banbridge build a “sense of community”. They felt that neighbourhoods offered good community, but that cleanliness was in decline.

There were opposing views on public art – some participants liked the new street art, whilst others described them as being “too garish for this town”. The River artwork near the bus depot was also cause for debate with one person describing it as “Totally unimaginative and unattractive”, whilst others appreciated it.

Participants liked the architectural heritage of Banbridge, describing it as 'anchors around the town'. The Cut is a local landmark that should be celebrated. They appreciated the council offering such as the leisure centre and FE McWilliam Gallery, but they felt that Solitude Park was underutilised. People felt like there was little to offer for a day out in the park unless events were being programmed. The events culture in the town has decreased, and people felt like there were too many barriers for non-council groups to programme events in the park.

Ideas for the future:

- Areas of opportunity were identified around the town
- Signage and interpretation that: highlights the walking route to Boulevard; highlights the Cut, signposts trails around the town.
- Spaces above shops that could accommodate more homes or offices.
- The amphitheatre in Solitude Park could be programmed.
- A pop up café in the park would be great. Enhanced marketing of programmed events and activities is needed.
- Local genealogy service
- Intergenerational activities
- Improve markets offering (choice and frequency)
- Better promotion of current flower market.
- Improving accessibility to Huntly Wood

Pop Ups and Place Lab

Quotes

"The river use is an indicator of overall well being"

"It's vital for people to really believe they have an input"

Overview

There were 6 weekly Place labs (with one further cancelled due to snow) during the development phase. They took place in the Old Town Hall on Friday mornings for one hour. Across the 6 Place labs, 13 adults and 8 children attended and were able to view the growing body of engagement material, such as maps and post-its, from workshops and meetings and add their own, peruse books on placemaking and build a Lego model of Banbridge. To ensure better attendance, the Place lab would ideally be more widely publicised in advance, with perhaps open longer hours, during future stages of engagement.

Participants emphasised the friendliness of Banbridge and the people who live here and felt that more volunteering and community involvement in the future of Banbridge was a good thing. They repeatedly highlighted the need to make much more use of the river, parks and the natural assets of Banbridge, to provide longer and joined up walks, spaces for exercise and pram and child-friendly routes and spaces for outdoor play and recreation. They wanted to see a more active Banbridge, with improved cycling infrastructure, 5/10k runs, walking connections and town to town transport, including the Scarva Greenway. They were interested in a more lively evening economy as well as creative use of the outdoor spaces in the town for diverse programming - cultural, farmers/food markets, something for all the family. They wanted to see pedestrian spaces in the town, Church Square and Jingler's Bridge especially and a celebration of the town's history and culture.

Those who had young children felt Banbridge could do more for parents with young children with activities, spaces for play and somewhere to go when it rains like soft play.

Ideas for the Future:

- A joined up, pram-friendly trail from Lindsay's bridge to Huntly wood
- Make good and creative use of the buildings, parks and underutilised places that the river navigates
- Easy free parking elsewhere to remove traffic, as less traffic improves well being, some pedestrianisation at Church Square, Jingler's Bridge

- Improved cycling infrastructure
- Open up Scarva greenway
- Night-time coffee-shops opening as an alternative to bars, along with live performance in bars and cafes more nights of the week. Potential for a night-time local group to drive and promote things to do.
- More usage of Solitude Park, potential hedgerow as a natural safety barrier along the river
- Farmer's and Food Markets
- Indoor Soft Play for young children



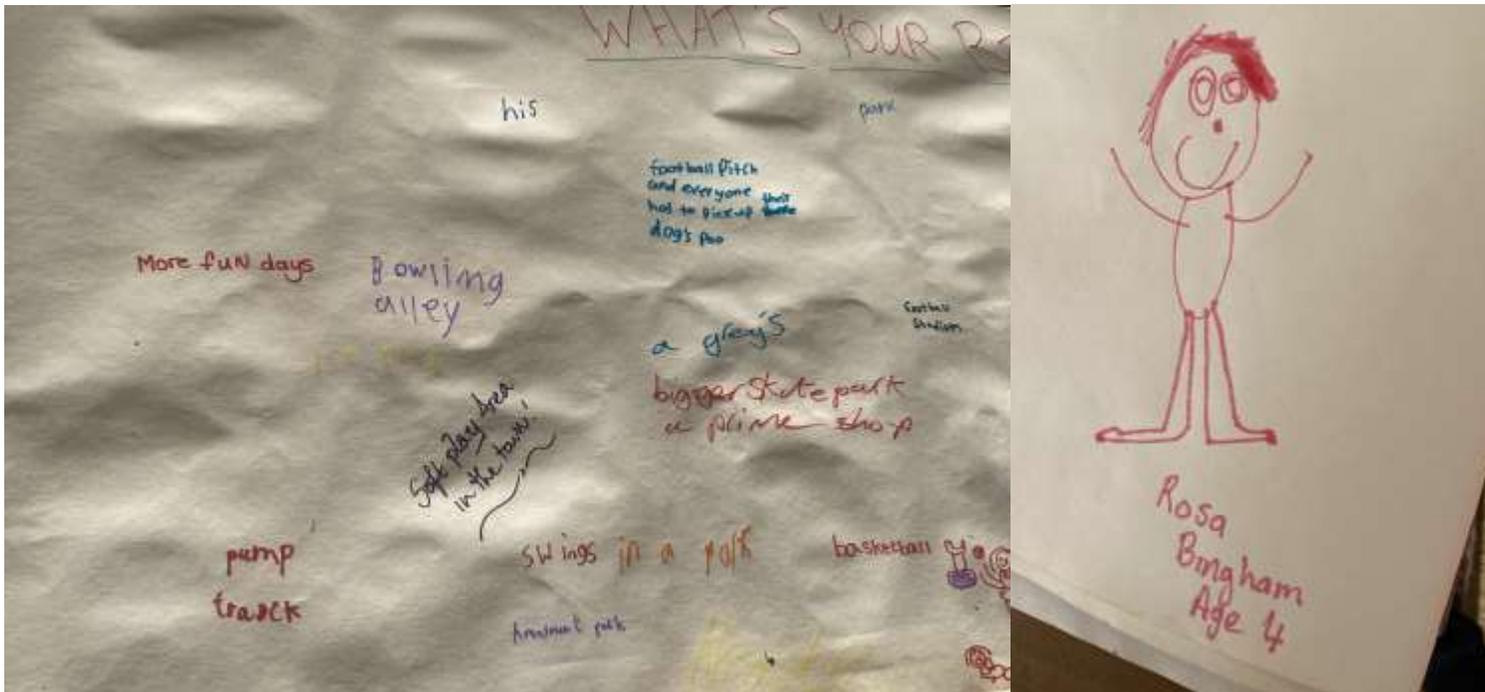


Image: What's your Big (or small) Idea for Banbridge? Graffiti poster at St Patrick's Day event, Solitude Park, 18 March

b. Younger people

Quotes:

“I don’t have £30 to spend on a pizza!”

“Girls can’t ride bikes [...] If I rode my bike to school I’d be pushed off it...”

“The dance zone [in Solitude Park] is a drink zone now”

Overview:

- A. Survey worksheets were completed by pupils from 3 local schools, asking what they liked and used in Banbridge, where they shop, eat and connect to nature, what they leave Banbridge to do elsewhere and what they would like to have in the town. Most travelled to school by car and bus and the most popular places to spend time, eat and shop were the parks, The Boulevard, McDonalds and Castlewellan Rd Tesco. Only 43% of secondary school children felt safe in Banbridge. Half of them thought the town would offer employment opportunities in future. Primary school aged respondents offered lots of creative ideas for things to do in Banbridge, including equestrian centres and a dinosaur museum. The full list of questions from the worksheets can be found in Appendix 3.
- B. A stall with a DIY graffiti ideas page, asking what would make them stay in Banbridge after their studies and what would make the town better, was hosted at a wellness event at the SRC on 1 March, 2023.
- C. A workshop with mapping exercises was conducted at the Banbridge Youth Resource Centre on 7 March, 2023 mapping the places they like, use and feel safe in, and the ones they don’t.

The spatial experience of younger people differs to other groups in a number of interesting ways. Most notably, teenagers more than any other group report walking regularly to the Boulevard via the shortcut through Bannview Road because the busy bus doesn’t take card, or give change for bank notes, and they feel it is expensive. They feel safe walking there in groups. The transport provision is otherwise considered good, and the idea of having a train station in Banbridge is very popular, especially to take trips to Portrush.

Most travel to primary school by car and secondary by bus, with a small number walking to both. The secondary aged girls do not ride bikes, even though they did when they were younger.

Young people expressed a desire for more fun things to do, and also places to spend time that don't involve spending money. The Banbridge Youth and Resource Centre remaining open more hours was suggested, but young people would have to treat it with respect. Teenage participants told us they do not use the library much, if at all.

Solitude Park, and especially the skate park, are popular with primary-aged children, as well as play parks, and the pop-up cinema in the past, but teenagers no longer feel safe there due to intimidating young people acting like they own the place. At primary age all respondents felt safe in Banbridge, but only 40% (5/13) of secondary level respondents did. Teens now enjoy spending time at the Games Cafe on Lurgan Road, local eateries and cafés. They prefer to eat in Banbridge, and go to the cinema at the Boulevard.

Ideas for the future:

- places to hang out without spending money
- under 18s disco
- charging ports at pitches
- pool/snooker hall
- escape rooms
- extend the buskfest programme and create venues for new local bands to gig in
- more football pitches and football shops
- equestrian centre
- bowling alley, ice-skating and waterslides
- shops for young people such as skate shops, fresh garage, swap shops
- affordable pizzeria chain

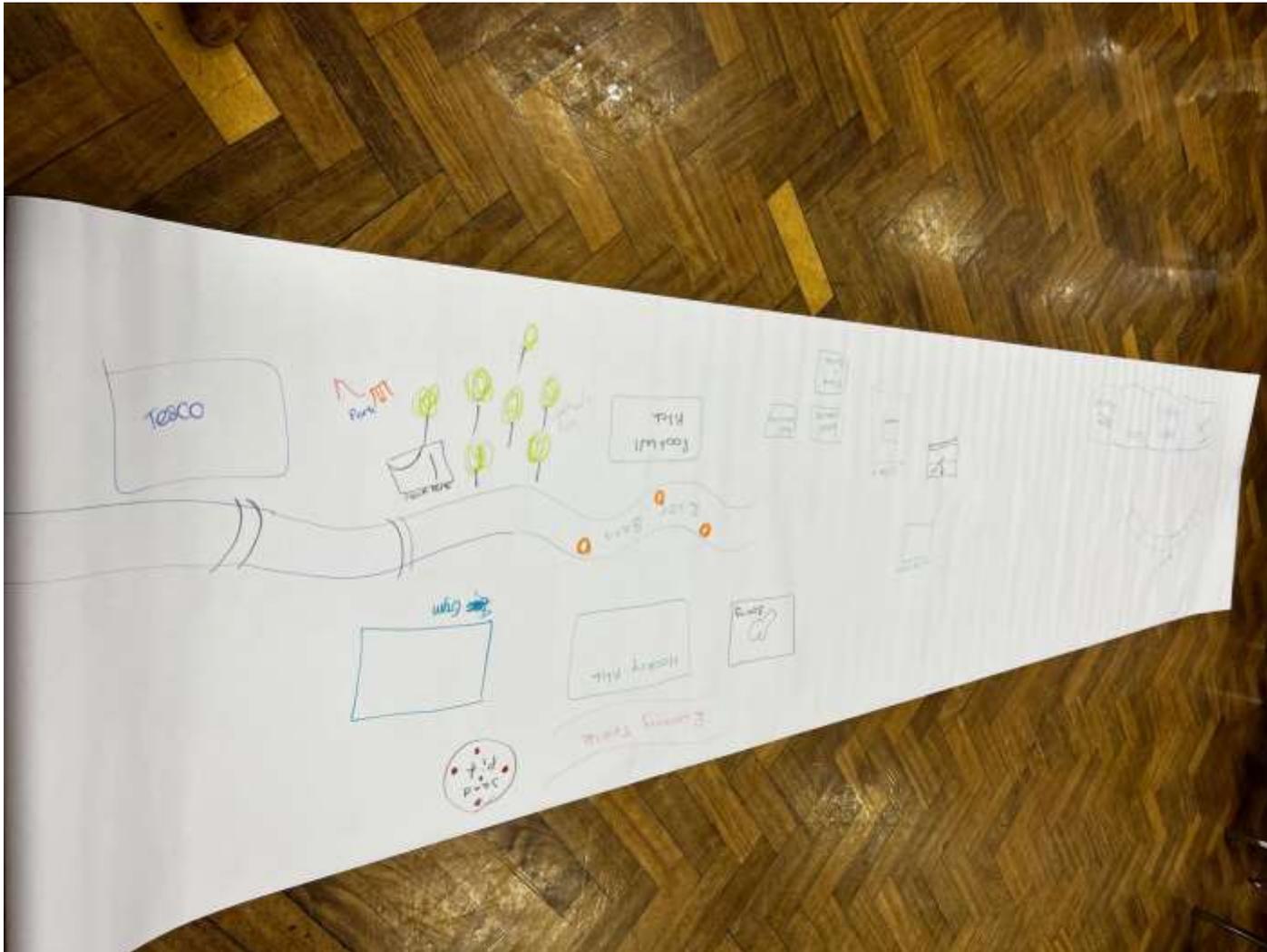


Image: collective map of younger people's Banbridge

c. Older People

Quotes:

“We need places to go other than the leisure centre”

“You should research and celebrate the real women from Banbridge who made a difference, with sculptures and plaques”

“Better to have art that is visually clear what it’s about”

Overview:

A pop-up stall was hosted at the Keep Safe Keep Well conference on 8 March 2023, displaying old photos of Banbridge and asking what people like about Banbridge, the barriers they face and their big or small ideas for the town. Data for this section is also drawn from the public survey and older participants at public workshops. Eighteen people in the 65-74 age category and one aged 85+ completed the survey, and their comments are also taken into account here.

In general, older people found Banbridge to be friendly and safe, although a ‘fear factor’ for older people was mentioned in the public workshop, and there were requests for more police on the streets. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this group used and enjoyed public transport more than others, including the Boulevard busy bus, and had suggestions for additional routes/services. They were the most regular users of the flower market, and particularly liked the hotels, old buildings, charity shops, leisure centre and the friendliness of the town, with its helpful shopkeepers. Someone asked for a new hardware shop in town.

Traffic and the steep hill was an issue, especially one section which one person suggested was too steep for a mobility scooter (although this has not been verified). They appreciated the proximity of shops to each other but wished for more seats in town and cleaner streets (both of which may be addressed by the public realm scheme). They wanted to park closer to the shops, for free, and wished there were generally more parking spaces, especially accessible spaces. They did not like the bright colours of the new public art (murals) in the town, and wished for art that they understood, and also art that focused on local women in history. (One of

the new murals is of the lady who sold apples on Jingler's bridge, and whose jingling of coins gave it its name, but there has perhaps been a missed opportunity to convey the stories, thought and meaning behind this new art.)

Their desires were otherwise generally for more nature and leisure spaces, more places to go and more events including those specifically for elderly/retired people, lecture series, theatre, music and arts.

Ideas for the future:

- Shopmobility
- Community Hall / Community Hub for over-65s / more community services / indoor activities for children (ABC to explore better promoting the Community Hall facility within the Old Tech building)
- More venues/events doing golden oldies music
- More greenway space for cycling and walking, including along old railway lines and extended river walk with good lighting
- Cycling friendly town - cycle lanes for safety
- Speed bumps to calm traffic
- Pedestrianise Jingler's bridge, and widen and resurface footpaths, especially at Seapatrick
- Cultural events, story-telling, poetry and creative writing, and sculptures/plaques to celebrate the historical women of Banbridge
- Wildflowers on verges of dual carriageway

d. Other groups with protected characteristics

Quotes

“Let our pavements be free of dangers”

“Removing funding for existing transport goes against everything. Encourages social isolation.”

“Walking/ Wheeling/ Public transport will need to be enhanced.”

“Main issue is that bills are going up. Groups are folding.”

“Anything to bring better accessibility to the town is a big fat YES from more. Just please remember to make it not only accessible but comfortable for wheelchair users. [...] Sadly, because of how uncomfortable the town paths are, I don't get to enjoy the town like I used to.”

Overview

Conversations focused on funding cuts to essential services in Banbridge, climate action and difficulties negotiating Banbridge town centre. In particular roundabouts were seen as complicated, and not very pedestrian friendly. Participants felt there was a need for more public transport within the town centre and in rural areas, an observation that was also made by survey respondents who identified as having a disability.

Survey respondents with disabilities requested a wider range of events and that they are made accessible. They also wanted more seating, including smart benches in the town. Several expressed concern for the environment, requesting plastic reduction measures, less traffic, more green spaces and planting. A wheelchair user highlighted the need for footpath surfaces to be smooth to ensure a comfortable journey. They were unable to participate in walks with their family as there was not a smooth route they could take. Uneven paving is a particular problem. They felt the need to encourage people of all abilities to the town centre, to sustain a healthy community. One said they used to love shopping in town and attending events, but in the last decade have rarely made a shopping trip into the town centre because it's too uncomfortable in a wheelchair.

Ideas for the Future

- Prepare for reduction in car dependency and increase priority for pedestrians and cyclists in town
- Introduce regulations to keep e-scooters off the pavements
- 15 minute neighbourhoods -design places for these.
- Look to guidance such as 'new approach to travel places and streets' and RNIB inclusive street design documents
- Tactile maps and signage and audible announcements for public transport passengers.
- Fully inclusive including changing place facilities.
- Inclusive and accessible play facilities. When we are building new facilities, make them gold standard.

e. Community and Voluntary Sector

Quotes:

“Love the main street. If it is pedestrianised it would be much better.”

“You take your life in your hands every time you use that roundabout on the Newry Road. ”

“Banbridge hasn’t moved ahead in 25 years, for the size of it.”

“If this was France, people would be sitting fishing and using the river.”

“We go to Armagh for entertainment - you look in the paper and see all these shows happening around other places, but people travel out of the town for them.”

“A strength in this community is the multi-generational connections you have”

Overview:

We carried out one-to-one interviews with some key organisations and individuals. Example questions that were used to guide discussion in one-to-one interviews can be found in Appendix 5.

Participants at the workshop in the Old Town Hall on 13 February were given a clipboard with formal questions about the needs and aspirations about their organisation and its connection to Banbridge. Each person introduces their organisation or group and were asked to give one word to describe the town. The workshop session consisted of individual map making with people thinking about the individual need of their organisation. The maps considered memories and connection; special things; worst things; and areas for growth or opportunity. A facilitated discussion followed, allowing time for sharing and debating as a group.

Participants liked the river and natural environments, the great range of coffee shops and independent clothes shops (that are far wider reaching than Banbridge with their online sales), and cultural offerings like FE McWilliam Gallery. It was felt that signage and gateway public art would welcome people to the town.

They thought that both the river and solitude park could be better utilised for leisure activities. River walks and a greenway to Scarva would be well utilised.

Lots of discussion around connections and transport. Not enough buses. People don't want to pay for parking. They discussed old plans for a multi storey car park.

Discussion around making heritage stories relevant for today.

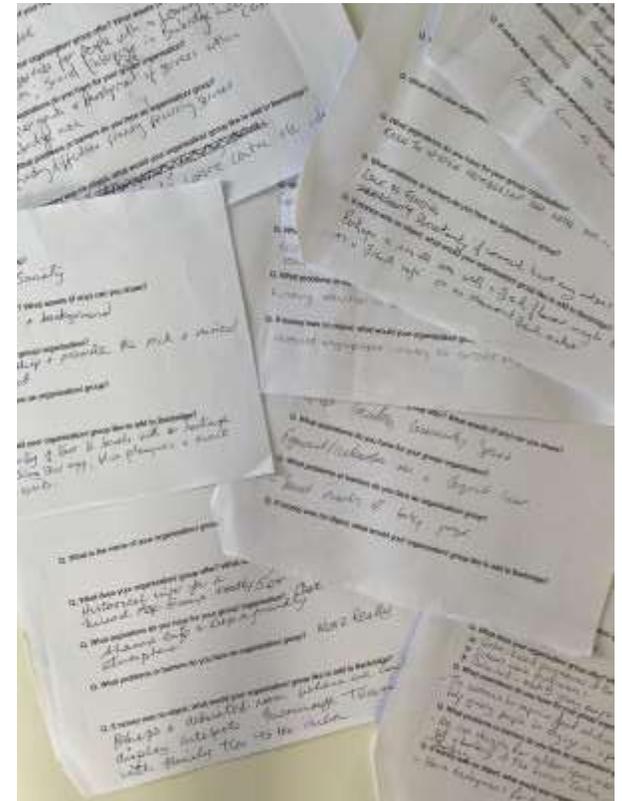
Barriers were raised by the group, including:

- Insufficient space for all activities. Struggle for outdoor space and it can be difficult to get a booking at the leisure centre
- Marketing the town twinning link
- Lack of funding and access to funding
- Red tape inhibiting volunteer activities

Ideas for the future:

- Less traffic, more space for seating outside
- Shared venue to support local groups and societies such as Banbridge musical society
- Tidy up the river and walks
- Christmas market right up main street. How do those types of events feed in to local businesses rather than taking away?
- Plays in Schools – Create more opportunities for young people to get involved in Banbridge musical society
- Ideas for the old police station: Live music venue; boutique hotel; museum

- Discussion with NI Water regarding future uses of their site along the river Bann - could that be incorporated into further development within the leisure centre site?
- MUGA
- Telling local heritage stories
- Seize Game of Thrones studio as an opportunity
- Do more in Solitude park so young people can be using the facilities better there. Bring back 'Theatre in the Park'. Make the park more accessible and bookable for local community groups. Solitude park was purpose built with the tiered seating for outdoor events.
- Multi-storey Carpark



f. Public Sector

Overview:

Participants at the workshop in the leisure centre on 2 March were given clipboards with open questions to gather information about their organisation or department. After a round of introductions where each person introduced their organisational plans, participants were asked to work in small groups to apply blue sky thinking to Banbridge. Given that not everyone was from Banbridge, each group was asked to ‘wipe the slate clean’ by starting the town again and creating a new map for the town using chalk and black card. They were asked to illustrate what they would keep, what new things they might introduce, what the ‘wow’ for their Banbridge was, and how their organisation strategy might feed into this.

We also carried out one-to-one interviews with some key organisations and individuals. Example questions that were used to guide discussion in one-to-one interviews can be found in Appendix 4.

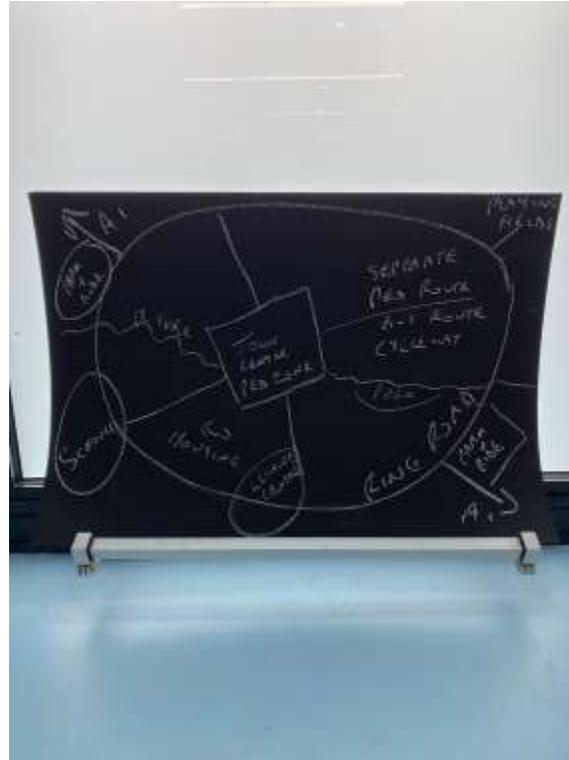
Presentations and discussion from each group followed:

	Keep	Add	Wow
1	Library, bridge and the Boulevard	Climate future proofing with electric vehicle and cycling infrastructure, enhanced green spaces. Enhanced marketing and increased wifi.	Activities for young people such as an escape room
2	River and parkland	Pedestrianisation of town centre with new bus, cycle and walking routes and a ring road for the town to the A1. More free off street car parking on periphery of town	The pedestrianisation
3	Old buildings and the independent traders	Better layout, more open space and improved public transport. Add nightlife, festivals and markets	Living over the shops

4	Boulevard with new gateway features and reconnect Church Square to town centre.	Better connections, more green spaces and pedestrianise the cut for public space	Train station
5	Huntly Wood, the river, the cut	Footbridges, river walk, links to Boulevard & signposted walks, heritage trail, gateways on A1	New connections to the river

Ideas for the future:

- Climate action – prepare for future - increase electric vehicle infrastructure
- Libraries as a model of innovation - *Library - out of hours - it will be open with no staff. Anyone at work all day, etc. can come later - print, use computers, can run a book group or have a poetry group, meet with friends, etc.*
- Free bikes, Bus routes, pedestrian focus, SUDS, Cycle routes
- More free off-street carparking on periphery of town, rail link
- More programmed activities - Night time activities, Markets, festivals
- Cultural spaces to celebrate local heritage
- Living over the shops
- Add footbridges, river walk, links to Boulevard & signposted walks, heritage trail, gateways on A1
- More Integrated schools
- Central place to advertise everything that's happening - e.g online community noticeboard/something/like Timeout in London
- More opportunity for green space and walks
- Focus on disability - *Wheelchair buddy scheme...pushing people up hills?*
- Mobility scooters - Bridge St - free/hire
- Increase wifi
- Adaptive street lighting



Library	More corporate Museum!
Bridge	Theatre
Boulevard	Drive in cinema/bowling
Wifi in town (free)	Get rid of one way system & WOW
History sites	Activity/escape room
preparing for fibre-optics etc	
Disabled vehicles	route around area
Busy buses - min bus	
shuttle bus from other areas	
electrons into hub	
More green spaces	walking areas
pedestrianisation	WOW market
bicycle lanes	
free bikes	
EV charging system	

g. Private sector findings

Quotes:

“Loyalty of people supporting local”

“Would like to expand but in the current climate and with limited support that is not possible”

“It is a lovely town, one of the best.”

“Better lighting needed in alleys and walkways connecting to main street”

“Shopmobility to improve access to ‘hilly’ part of town for those with mobility issues”

“The last [busy] bus is 17.50 but we [Boulevard] close at 6 - it doesn’t work”

“Bus needs to stop at FE McWilliam too. And have longer hours and be more frequent.”

“Boulevard took over 2 million visitors last year.”

“Needs to be attractive to walk.” to Boulevard from Banbridge town centre

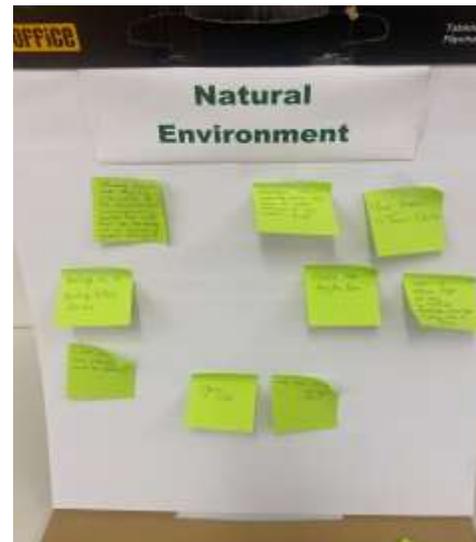
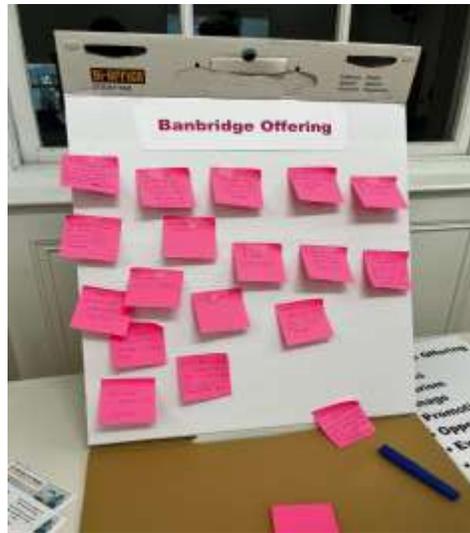
‘If you could drive your car into the shop and put one leg out the window, the customer would.’

Overview:

Traders Drop-in and Workshop at Old Town Hall

Town centre businesses and property owners were given the opportunity to attend a drop in session or a workshop in the Old Town Hall on 23 February 2023. Participants were asked to fill in a short structured open ended survey where they could highlight opportunities and potential concerns for their businesses. At each session, facilitated conversations were held around a range of topics: Built environment; Banbridge offering; Growth and investment; Traffic/ transport; and natural environment. People were asked to provide feedback using post-its and these formed the basis for subsequent discussions.

1. Regarding Banbridge offering, ideas included improved lighting and railings in public realm, coffee mornings, the desire to trial late night shopping on Thursday and Friday nights, desired cafe culture at the Plaza, heritage walks and programmed events in Solitude Park and other pockets of space in the town centre, including using the Old Town Hall, and closing the Cut for festivals.
2. On Natural Environment, input focused around more trees, river walkways, green walls and the river as a source of green energy.
3. Built Environment discussions sought better use of the space above shops, digital connectivity, shopmobility to improve access to hill and the fixing up of dilapidated buildings once public realm works complete.
4. Suggestions around Traffic/transport included better pedestrian and bus links to the Boulevard, digital carpark signs indicating available spaces and complaints about congestion at the new Scarva Road junction.
5. On Growth and Investment, themes included finding innovative ways to use underused spaces such as incubation facilities for new businesses in town centre in vacant units, potential development sites to attract new businesses or for an existing business to expand and restoration of heritage, and digital bus stop signs advertising town centre offering.



Round table at the Boulevard

A round table discussion was also held at a meeting in The Boulevard to include traders at Banbridge retail park on 13 February 2023. This discussion allowed for conversation about the opportunities and concerns for businesses.

Participants remarked on the great location of Banbridge, being on the A1, and as a town to serve the local rural community. However, travel connections between the town centre and Boulevard could be improved. Transport links to and from Boulevard for staff were limited with most staff taking taxis or lift sharing, impacting staff and making recruitment difficult. A lot of visitors came from outside the area and it was felt that there was untapped potential from Southern Irish trade. Participants mentioned a good relationship with Chamber and town centre retailers.

Participants suggested making it easier to walk, expanding river paths and walks, and increased greening of the town. Participants discussed the river as a green energy source.

Participants listed rates, price increases and access to parking as barriers to their business. It was felt that there was little room to grow or expand business in the town. Suggestions included using underutilised spaces and improving accessibility.

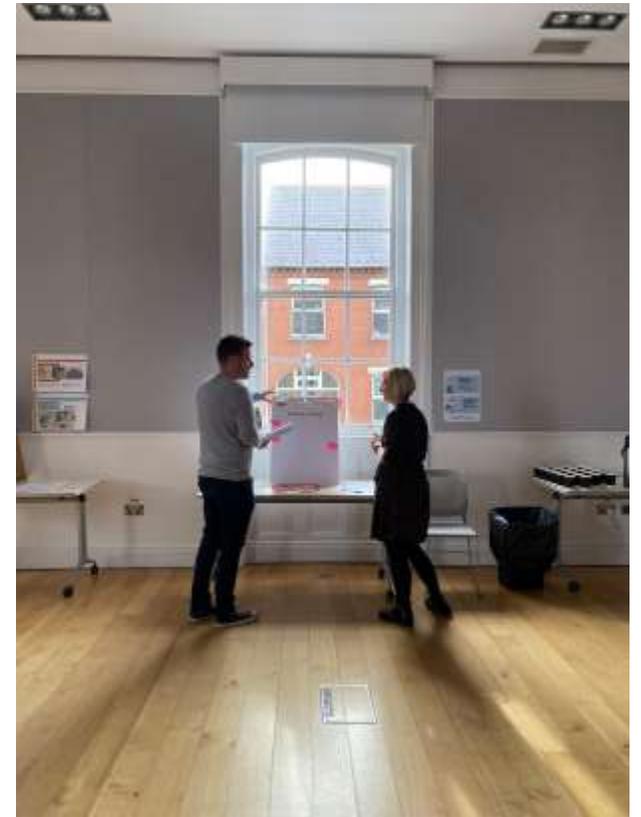
Visitors to the Boulevard ask about BB and there's nowhere to point them to. No tourist information place.

There was a focus on events: increase, diversify and capitalise on events in the town; later opening of shops, longer trading and focus on the evening economy.

Ideas for the future included:

- grants to convert properties over shops into flats; grants to bring vacant buildings back to life
- land that can be developed for affordable housing or shops
- an increase on town zoning limits to incorporate land that fits naturally within the settlement lines

- increased publicity for Banbridge
- motivators for increased civic pride and wellbeing
- town centre multi use support/ advice hub
- a restriction on free car parking and better access to neighbouring streets from Bridge Street car park
- Coffee mornings
- Late night shopping
- An ABC Busking Strategy
- More trees in town centre
- Green walls
- Investment in river walkways
- A hydro scheme for green power from the river
- Digital connectivity, broadband
- Better use of above the shop spaces
- Better lighting needed in alleys and walkways connecting to main street
- Shopmobility to improve access to 'hilly' part of town for those with mobility issues
- Longer Sunday trading hours in the town centre to complement the Boulevard as it's their biggest trading day.
- Suggestions of a loyalty scheme – exclusive discounts for locals.



8. Big (or small) Ideas

Throughout the Place Plan lots of interesting and creative ideas were put forward by the people of Banbridge. These were catalogued into a longlist, and cross-referenced with pre-existing ideas from the last Masterplan, which had been re-tested in the survey to make sure anything that was still applicable and needed from previous plans would be taken forward. It was from this long list of ideas that and the actions and outcomes of the 2023 Banbridge Place Plan emerged. These are summarised below and set out in full detail in the Place Plan.

We didn't want to then lose the full panorama of the diverse and colourful ideas, big and small, that had been shared with us through the engagement to inform these Actions and Outcomes that were agreed to be taken forward. Instead they have been collected and collated, and are set out as part of the Place Plan in an impressive list below. It is hoped that everyone who participated in the engagement, will find some of their own aspirations and ideas for Banbridge reflected in the table that follows. Not all of them can be actioned now, but one day in the future - with some new energy, or funding stream, or priority that emerges, or business that moves to the area - perhaps someone in Banbridge will pick up on one or another of these wonderful ideas and take it forward to make it a new reality for future Banbridge.

99 Ideas for Banbridge

These ideas, offered shared through multiple strands of engagement by the residents and representatives of Banbridge, are set out below, arranged within 5 thematic clusters that are set out further in Section 9. Working in a ground up way, starting these diverse ideas have provided the foundations from which the outcomes, themes and strategic actions of the place plan have emerged.

Arts, Heritage and Leisure

Big ideas:

1. Meanwhile project with social/ play element/ licensed cafe/ outdoors/ containers. Designed to be accessible for wheelchair users. Like Trade Market in Belfast
2. MUGA (multi-use games area) and multi-use play space / more playing facilities Consider Sports Dome to enable indoor sports in the winter – e.g. Colin Glen / Lisburn

3. Explore theatre/ concert venue idea (in an existing building), working in partnership with local venues and property owners as additional offering.
4. Explore idea for a museum or archive, working in partnership with local library / venues and property owners as additional offering.

Medium ideas:

5. Artists/ makers shared workspace / studios and artist in residence scheme
6. Linen story - promote a creative town celebrating the linen heritage. Also Ferguson mill as tourist attraction/ contemporary look at linen story
7. A local genealogy programme, perhaps could be linked to FE McWilliam
8. Light festival similar to Hillsborough Castle, in Solitude Park
9. Outdoor theatre, pop-up cinema & concert programme in Solitude Park amphitheatre
10. Strategic plan for Annual Events Programme, including occasional events in the Cut (closing it to traffic), bringing back the arts and fashion show, a stage summer school and a French festival / market / event to celebrate twin town linkage
11. Busking strategy for developing/ expanding Buskfest over the year
12. Cohesive Public Art Programme and Study for public spaces that can be animated (eg. The Mall)
13. Larger outreach programme at FE McWilliam Gallery, to engage people of BB
14. Activity centre - high ropes, climbing walls, go-karts, trampolines, snooker/ pool, bowling alley
15. Explore providing shared grass pitches for clubs to use, including for GAA competitive matches
16. Soft play (perhaps at the Leisure centre?)
17. Concrete table tennis tables in Solitude Park

Small ideas:

18. Scavenger hunt around town centre

19. Weekly Park Run
20. Old town hall as a small event and recital / drama space - a shared community hub
21. Marketing Initiative and online notice board - Visit Banbridge?
22. Polar bear heritage trail (inc. Crozier monument)
23. Develop in partnership with local groups a portfolio of walking trails; discovering the heritage, culture and biodiversity of the area. Develop and implement associated trail infrastructure such as signage, interpretation panels.

Green Innovation:

Big ideas:

24. Reduce car dependency within 10 years
25. Educational hydro turbine/scheme in river
26. SUDS - open green space, swales, ponds to enhance the environment

Medium ideas:

27. Green net zero planning to encourage sustainability and new Green businesses to start here.
28. Provide Infrastructure and training for competitive digital network
29. Explore green/ sustainability educational partnership with GOT and their eco site
30. Golf course surface rain water capture, storage and re-use.
31. Review opportunities to establish EV Charging points, on road and off road and including new neighbourhoods within the area and at key locations
32. A bandstand somewhere central with weekly performances over the summer months, or indeed using the Solitude Park amphitheatre for these.
33. Turn some of the NIW land by the riverwalk into a rewilded/ green space

Small ideas:

34. Pollinator-friendly wildflower seed-bombing of disused sites and verges
35. Native Wildflower planting (A1 verges, riverwalk, disused sites, etc.)
36. Residents toolkit about climate action tips (inc. growing food, litter collection, saving water, etc.) and Banbridge in Bloom initiative
37. Don't mow, let it grow / No mow May initiatives
38. Tree protection, native tree/hedge planting and possible green walls

Living Here:

Big ideas:

39. Utilise and maintain current green spaces for free, non-structured play. Scope out new opportunities for creating new green, free play spaces.
40. Support for community groups who are facing further funding cuts, including possible shared clubhouse/sport hub – for meetings, fundraising and meeting space. A shared base for clubs.

Medium ideas:

41. Local people decide on how to allocate public money. Groups of at least 3 people aged 8 and over can apply for up to £1,000 to bring to life the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing public health message.
<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/take500plus/>
42. A taxi rank in the town centre

43. Establish a cycling network in and around Banbridge with segregated paths where possible. Including Infrastructure such as cycling parking, maintenance points, signage, cycling hubs at key locations, potential for cycle hire facilities. Explore the opportunity of a Sustrans route and connecting with same
44. More public facilities such as toilets and Changing Place Toilets and drinking water fountains.
45. Link in with local sports clubs to see if the council can link in and become a partner on their strategic planning journey.
46. Review of car parking rates favouring short-stay in prime locations.
47. A new playpark that's bigger but not zoned, so easier to keep an eye on kids. Also with sections for older kids, building on what has been done at the skate park and consulting with young people about this.
48. A sensory garden for neurodiverse children and adults
49. Allotments and community gardens.
50. Phone charging at hang-out points/ Rolling advertising podium free information and charge points on mobile phones.
51. Design, production, and installation of two Audio trails and a Braille and Tactile Map in Solitude Park.
52. Sensory Pod in Banbridge Leisure Centre.

Small ideas:

53. Fob hill-climbing challenge with rewards for diff. ages - fun, for example, 1 month annually
54. Library better promotion/ awareness scheme and addition of Little free libraries around the town
55. Young person's event programme, designed by young people, to include a football academy, Young Enterprise. Dragons den style market for young people and regular under-18s disco
56. Saturday morning town centre creche facilities for shopping parents
57. Opening the EA Youth and Resource Centre longer hours for drop-ins
58. Free mobility scooter hire to help with hill and/or wheelchair/pushchair buddy scheme - create a culture of helping those that need it on the hill
59. Banish A Boards from footpaths "Let our pavements be free of dangers".

- 60. Pop-up cafe cart in Solitude Park
- 61. Intergenerational activity programme to foster connections between age groups
- 62. Loyalty scheme with traders/ businesses - discount cards for locals
- 63. Repair Cafe/ Swap shop
- 64. Pop Up Play

Spaces, Places and Natural Environment:

Big ideas:

- 65. New footbridge linking Havelock Park to Huntly Wood
- 66. Banbridge to Scarva Greenway proposal - Cycle path infrastructure connecting Banbridge with neighbouring villages to encourage active travel
- 67. Move water fountain from civic centre grounds back to its original location
- 68. New directional, orientation and wayfinding signage across the town centre, highlighting key attractions and locations.
Signage to be located across town centre and at key arrival points – bus station, A1, Boulevard etc.
- 69. Edenderry terrace restoration (gateway to town)
- 70. Create a Loop walk (link across town centre, etc.) and walking tracks around all pitches (through Sport NI funding)
- 71. Pedestrianisation of Rathfriland St / the top of the Cut

Medium ideas:

- 72. Townscape Heritage scheme to incentivise repair of historic buildings and monuments
- 73. Revitalisation scheme for shop fronts and town centre properties.
- 74. Improve the physical connection between Boulevard and Town Centre. Explore Improvements to busy bus service coverage and promotion between Town Centre - FE McWilliam Gallery - Boulevard and new neighbourhoods

- 75. Extend public realm works to Newry Road and Scarva Road shops and Rathfriland Street to better connect them to town centre and make BB more walkable
- 76. Parklets
- 77. Empty to Occupied future rounds - restoring vacant units to stimulate the economy and activate street frontages.
- 78. Lighting Strategy for Banbridge to include enhancements/ Lighting key building/ motion sensor lighting/ Lighting schemes on the Cut and bridge over Bann - thematically coloured, etc. (BCC Have a lighting strategy <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/luminous-city-a-lighting-strategy-for-belfast>)
- 79. Hilltop viewpoints around housing estates to encourage walking & exploring, culture & history
- 80. Explore turning old railway shed into community building/resource
- 81. more public seating - covered

Small ideas:

- 82. River activities - launch points and paddle boarding, fishing, etc
- 83. No flags, or flags should be restricted to the week of the 12 of July only and not weeks before and remain weeks after - no flags should be permitted along main roads into town

High Street and Investing:

Big ideas:

- 84. Mixed tenure housing development in town centre
- 85. Revisit and deliver Bowbreaker Public Art at FE McWilliam Gallery
- 86. Ring road around the town, including diverting traffic from Lurgan Road over a new road bridge
- 87. Bring a train station back to Banbridge
- 88. Additional tourist accommodation in the town. Suggestions included. big luxury hotel / boutique Hotel / contemporary tourist apartments

89. Enhancements at key locations including car parks, arrival points and arterial routes into the town. Various – police station, council car parks, Tesco roundabout

Medium ideas:

90. Scope out and support opportunities to develop an Enterprise Hub or similar space for startups, micro businesses and co working space. This could be used to bring empty units and upper floors back into use.

91. Remove shop shutters

92. Feasibility Study for Innovation Zone with Dublin/ Belfast Economic Corridor

93. Engage with landowners, property developers and statutory bodies to encourage town centre living opportunities

94. Foster relationships between local schools, colleges and employers, to meet the skills gaps, and encourage school leavers and graduate to work local.

Small ideas:

95. Tumbleweed Tuesdays for cafes - live music to get people out more nights of the week

96. Add more markets (bringing back the market town - benefiting locals and tourism) and better promote existing ones (links to actions from recent ABC Market Strategy)

97. Extended Sunday Trading

98. Diversify the economic base of Banbridge: Encourage and support interesting/niche retail and businesses. Ideas included music or hobby shops, or second hand bookshops, escape rooms, distillery.

99. A strategy that showcases the local businesses within the town. Perhaps 'Boutique Banbridge' - bringing together all boutiques to promote through social media. (Urban ABC maybe the means to achieve this)

9. Emerging Actions and Outcomes

Outcomes:

- 1. Bridging Banbridge - a connected and accessible town**
- 2. Green Banbridge - an environmentally friendly, sustainable and biodiverse town**
- 3. Healthy Banbridge - an active town**
- 4. Creative Banbridge - an innovative and digital town**
- 5. Growing Banbridge - an economic hub**

Thematically Clustered Strategic Actions:

Strategic actions, all of which deliver on one or multiple of the above outcomes, are grouped within the following five thematic clusters (which have also been used to categorise the 99 big (and small) ideas for Banbridge in the preceding section, and have been colour-coded for easy identification there.

- 1. Arts, Heritage and Leisure**
- 2. Green Innovation**
- 3. Spaces, Places and Natural Environment**
- 4. Living Here**
- 5. High Street and Investing**

10. Public Engagement on the Draft Place Plan

A further round of creative engagement took place in October - December 2023, where the ideas put forward in the Place Plan were put out for feedback and discussion among the people, businesses and organisations of Banbridge. This section of the report summarises that second round of engagement.



Drop-in event in Banbridge Library

Summary of Engagement Events

The summary below covers the second round of engagement, along with notes on additional meetings with relevant stakeholders carried out between August and December 2023.

Group key: * a. Wider Public, b. Younger People, c. Older People, d. Other groups with protected characteristics, e. Community/ Voluntary Sector, f. Public Sector, g. Private Sector

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
Aug-Nov 23	Summary of written feedback provided by Community Planning Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Authority • Tourism NI • DFC - Climate Change Division • DFI • DFC/HED • NIW • Housing Executive • Health & Recreation, ABC Council • DFC, Regional Development 	N/A	9	f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EA is managing authority and owner of Banbridge High School and can be a partner on new pitches • EA through the Youth Service can partner on sharing what's on in Banbridge Youth Centre, and identifying skills gaps • The draft Banbridge Place Plan aligns well with Tourism NI's draft five year 'Embracing Outdoor Tourism' framework. • Tourism NI can provide support for businesses seeking to create or develop visitor experiences through the TNI business support hub as well as Outdoor Tourism (and Culture & Heritage) toolkits. • DFC Climate Change Division welcome the emphasis on a "Green Banbridge - An environmentally friendly, sustainable and biodiverse town" • Keen to ensure new homes are as carbon neutral as possible in their design, construction and use. • DfI is facing resourcing shortfalls but may be able to provide support as a delivery partner for areas that align with their priorities, such as active travel, rewilding, net zero solutions etc. but not traffic studies, public realm works etc. • DfC's Historic Environment Division, Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) and Regeneration teams would be happy to input across many of the actions and outcomes mentioned in section 8. To note also the Architectural Heritage Fund (the AHF), the National Churches Trust (NCT) as potential partners, and Ulster Architectural Heritage in particular regarding vacancy and finding solutions to heritage at risk.

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In addition to the listed buildings in Banbridge, there is an Historic Park/Garden at Brookfield House, a small number of defence heritage sites of note, a number of scheduled raths located on the outskirts of the development limits, and there are a great number of industrial heritage sites. ● As more details are provided on location of development lands NI water would be in a position to comment on the available infrastructure within these areas. ● Housing Executive are supportive of the actions they are partners on and welcome in particular the references to positive cross-community and intergenerational relations in the town and to the promotion of mixed tenure housing development and the re-use of existing buildings in the Town Centre. ● Health & Recreation don't feel junior Park Run or coffee cart is achievable, suggested some sports documents to refer to and asked not to mention specific sports as someone always gets left out ● Note gold club own Huntly Wood
6 Oct – 4 Dec 23	Open Survey on Draft Place Plan	General Public	Citizen Space	90	a	Survey in corroborated outcomes and actions developed from initial engagement.
16 Oct 23	Meeting	Section 75 Groups	Online	6	d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connectivity – how do we get people to FE McWilliam (how will the plan connect people to places if they do not have access to a car) ● Digital Inclusion – some people with disabilities struggle with digital. Colum Delaney is very happy to come to speak further about inclusive design.
16 Oct 23	Meeting	Stakeholders / Public Sector Organisations	Online	12	f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cycleways and Active travel are key interests in Dfl currently, and they could potentially be involved regarding the footbridges and boardwalks ● PHA, SHSCT and ABC (Community Development / Health Inequalities workers) can support Junior Parkrun development ● Opportunity to build some BB Place Plan actions into the newly announced HLF funding opportunities for council

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic management suggested preparing an active travel list as a focus area - hierarchy from pedestrians to cyclists, public transport, cars then lorries. • Emphasise the impact the environment has on the health and wellbeing on people
17 Oct 23	Drop-in	Students from St Patrick's College & staff from Banbridge Youth Resource Centre	Banbridge Civic Building	4 adults 23 students	b,f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in accessible spaces • Several walk the short cut to the Boulevard • Like art but feel nowhere really to get creative
17 Oct 23	Drop-in	Businesses, Traders & Shoppers	Old Town Hall	9	g, a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure Centre has ability to have tiered seating in Main Hall • Good to see heritage and biodiversity (walks and river) in the plan
17 Oct 23	Meeting	Banbridge Chamber of Commerce	Old Town Hall	7	d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement with options • Discussion around how businesses could work together to better promote the offering together, eg. a "Shopping Day" – to promote and attract people to BB on a particular day and offer discounts • Interested in boosting the evening economy and a variation of offer
24 Oct 23	Drop-in	General public	Banbridge Civic Building	0	a	N/A
25 Oct 23	Pop-up	General public	Banbridge Library	7 (+15 hard copy surveys handed out)	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • welcoming emphasis on environment, growing, allotments and tackling climate emergency • Banbridge should focus on making what it already has better • would welcome support promoting Banbridge Community Chamber Orchestra's performances. Keen to get involved in making Banbridge better

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alliance Party representatives were supportive of the plan, and in particular the creativity and extensiveness of the public engagement
27 Oct 23	Drop-in	General public	The Boulevard	13	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People do not like events held in Banbridge being promoted via Visit Armagh website. Should be a Tourist Information Centre in Town Centre Would like a museum, more active travel routes, a dog park
30 Oct 23	Meeting	Banbridge Twinning Association	Telephone conversation	1	e	Requested more reference to BTA in Place Plan, and in the town itself - eg. french garden/cafe/dimension in gallery.
31 Oct 23	Drop-in	General public	Banbridge Civic Building	2	a	Interest expressed in community and town centre regeneration and heritage preservation.
2 Nov 23	Pop-up play	Children - general public	Banbridge Leisure Centre	0	b	N/A
6 Nov 23	Meeting	Community & voluntary sector	Online	0	e	N/A
7 Nov 23	Drop-in	General public	Banbridge Civic Building	2	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest expressed in men's shed, community cinema and a proper theatre with orchestra pit, backdrop poles, changing rooms, lights to meet the needs of Banbridge Musical Society and others. Active Travel - Could Ballygowan Road/Scarva Road footpaths be adapted to have a combined cycle lane
7 Nov 23	Stories of Banbridge Historic People	General public	FE McWilliams Gallery	12	a	<p>Discussions and agreement around riverside walk, nature and environment, historic plaza, improving traffic flows, incorporating children's outdoor play to FE McWilliams expansion project, need for more joined up thinking among organisations, agencies and council to deliver plan, environmentally friendly developments in Banbridge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ulster History Circle – how many blue plaques are in BB catchment area for the place plan?

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banbridge twinning relationship should be celebrated more. Old buildings, including churches, should be revitalised and used Tourist office should be brought back to the Old Town Hall
10 Nov 23	Drop-in	General Public	Tesco, Castlewellan Rd	5 (+32 leaflets handed out)	a	<p>People were in agreement with the following points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackle Loneliness EV Charging points Better connection between Boulevard and Town Centre Town Centre living – living approve shops Share Whats On – important as will feed into tackling loneliness Adapt and reuse old buildings – Fantastic to see heritage buildings preserved <p>A few people had mixed opinions regarding the FE McWilliams Gallery & Studio extension and the Public Realm works currently underway in town.</p>
13 Nov 23	Meeting	SRC	SRC	1	f	Support for Place Plan and discussions around the many actions SRC could partner on.
14 Nov 23	Drop-In	General Public	Banbridge Civic Building	0	a	N/A
15 Nov 23	Email	General Public		1	a	Email correspondence, providing feedback on the draft Place Plan re Tourist Information Centre being moved out of the town centre, Twinning and tourism.
15 Nov 23	Meeting	Councillor and member of public	Online	2	a, f	Discussion with residents about Huntly Wood bridge - concerned that this could lead to ASB in Huntly wood. Access would need to be managed (e.g bridge closed at night)
21 Nov 23	Drop-in	General Public	Banbridge Civic Building	2	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need of a theatre /Community Cinema Ideas to tackle loneliness Suggestions for active travel
28 Nov 23	Drop-in	General public	Banbridge Civic Building	3	a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns expressed around dog fouling, the new plaza, weeds in memorials, murals and new art happening without public consultation, and that Banbridge is being forgotten

Date	Activity	Invited Participants Attending	Venue	No of Participants	Group *	Key points
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like footbridge ideas Desire for a 300-seat theatre
30 Nov 23	Meeting	DBEC Team	Banbridge Civic Building	2	d	Discussed the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor project and alignment with actions within the Place Plan.
TOTAL				213		

* a. Wider Public, b. Younger People, c. Older People, d. Other groups with protected characteristics, e. Community/ Voluntary Sector, f. Public Sector, g. Private Sector

Survey on the Draft Plan: summary of findings

A short survey was prepared to gauge opinion on each of the strategic actions emerging from the Draft Place Pla. It ran from 6 October 2023 to 4 December 2023. The full list of questions can be found in Appendix 6.

A full report on the survey findings follows below, but in summary, 97% of people agreed that the outcomes are relevant and central to Banbridge, and within the thematic clusters:

- Arts, Heritage and Leisure Actions had an agreement rate of 77%
- Green Innovation Actions had average agreement rate of 75%
- Spaces, Places and Natural Environment actions had average agreement rate of 83%
- Living Here actions had average agreement rate of 82%
- High Street and Investment Actions had average agreement rate of 80%

Survey Findings

The Second Survey identifies a strong majority of support for all actions put forward within the Banbridge Place Plan. There are no major areas of concern or discord.

This report ranks the support (from highest to lowest) for the actions within each of the 5 Outcomes of the Place Plan as identified by the 90 respondents to the third survey. Key comments are drawn out from each question. Those with which the most respondents disagreed are also noted.

Of all actions, AHL13 Develop Trails and Activities was the most popular (with 94.45% of respondents agreeing), and there is also an undeniably persistent enthusiasm for a theatre in the town, as has been the case throughout all of the Place Plan engagement.

AHL1 FE McWilliams Gallery expansion was met with the greatest resistance. (There is perhaps work to be done in better connecting the gallery to the town as part of the expansion works, and demonstrating to the people of Banbridge that this gallery is for them, as well as the wider region).

Q. 3 Are you responding as... Majority of respondents were residents: 68.89%

Q. 4 Do you agree that these outcomes are relevant and central to Banbridge's future growth and prosperity? 97.78% said Yes

'The 5 outcomes seem really progressive and relevant to the residents in Banbridge.'

'I think the bridge from havelock to Huntly woods is by far the best idea I have seen. It would provide a decent walk amongst nature and could also be a cycle route. The river walk also starts at the leisure centre which needs to become a greater hub for the community especially the retired and older members of the community.'

'Ex-resident, moved out of Banbridge a few months ago to Craigavon area (for more affordable housing &) the lifestyle reasons discussed as part of the plan, of which this area has more to offer, so am delighted to see these plans.'

'Linking riverside walkways and cycling routes and using the river more would be very beneficial for everyone'

Q. 5 Do you agree that the Arts, Heritage and Leisure actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

Ranking of actions from most to least agreed with:

ARTS, HERITAGE AND LEISURE ACTIONS	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
AHL13 Develop Trails and Activities	94
AHL2 More Sports and Activity Opportunities	90
AHL8 Review and Promote Annual Events Programme	90
AHL12 Share What's On	89
AHL6 Celebrate the Town's Heritage	82
AHL11 Restore and Repair Built Heritage	79
AHL10 New Pitches	78
AHL5 Facilitate Community Theatre	75
AHL4 Support Artists and Creative Industries	72
AHL3 Historic Plaza in Church Square	67
AHL9 Strategy for Art in the Public Realm	63
AHL1 Extend F.E. McWilliam Gallery & Studio	61
AHL7 Family Tree Programme	61
Average Agreement for AHL:	77

17.78% of people disagreed that the FE actions would contribute to positive change in Banbridge:

The art centre at the roundabout I didn't even know existed until recently and most people from outside of the area are the same.

Please don't spend any further funds on the café in the FE McWilliam Gallery. This is not a family friendly atmosphere or menu.

F.E Gallery bizarrely seemed to get too much airtime in the document.

More on the town itself rather than this one building on the edge of town.

The town needs a theatre. Bring the gallery long term into the town and incorporate a theatre with it.

11 comments included suggestions for a theatre:

I don't think it's enough that theatre groups should just be encouraged to use existing spaces, I think the council should start making plans to develop a theatre with proper facilities.

Other comments on artist support and trails:

Banbridge is lagging behind in many ways. I am a local artist and have never felt supported/promoted by my council.no funding opportunities (not a group/charity). I tried Investni never heard back! I see other Council areas promote their local artists but we are forgotten about in Banbridge

Trails and activities top priority please. We need better ways for people to enjoy spending time outside on fresh air!

Q. 6 Do you agree that the Green Innovation actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

Ranking of actions from most to least agreed with:

GREEN INNOVATION ACTIONS	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
GI9 Harness the River	88
GI5 Opportunities for Businesses to Invest in Sustainability Energy and Promote Good Practice	80
GI4 Implement Smart Infrastructure	80
GI3 Facilitate Digital Infrastructure Support Programmes	76
GI1 Collaborative Sustainable Transport Audit	74
GI2 Banbridge as an EV Charging Point Stop-Off Hub	74
GI7 Biodiversity Audit and Strategy	73
GI6 Public Bodies as Change Champions	70
GI8 Implement ABC Net Zero Road Map Analysis	62
<i>Average Agreement for GI:</i>	75

12.22% of people disagreed that Implement ABC Net Zero Road Map Analysis would benefit Banbridge

Every household and family needs to be greener and do their bit. I work in the motor trade and welcome more EV points, every home should have one. As well as in our community.

I am the manager of Gilford Community Centre and we have just started an initiative to rejuvenate the section of river beside the Leisure centre to offer world class kayaking. We are currently in the planning stage. This plan and team could be used to develop other parts of the river.

Given the changes to Net Zero policies and also the fact that public transport infrastructure in Northern Ireland is woefully underfunded it seems redundant carrying out traffic audits in order to have less cars on the road because the alternatives just aren't there.

Q7. Do you agree that the Spaces, Places and Natural Environment actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

Ranking of actions from most to least agreed with:

SPACES, PLACES AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACTIONS	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
SP1 Link Riverside Walk to Church Square and Solitude Park	92
SP6 Enhance Public Amenities	89
SP7 Meanwhile Use of Underutilised Spaces	89
SP4 Enhance Solitude Park	88
SP2 Bridge Havelock Park to Huntly Wood	87
SP5 Shine a Light on Banbridge	83
SP9 Implement Findings of ABC Car Parking Strategy, 2023	79
SP8 Open Up Civic Building Grounds	76
SP3 Implement New Gateway Features	71
Average Agreement for SP:	83

The action which had the highest percentage of disagreement (7.78%) was SP8 Open Up Civic Building Grounds, although comments are only positive around this topic and the need for more green space: *‘The civic building grounds could be used as an open space for people much like how Belfast city hall operates. Perhaps with a large screen or two that could broadcast important events and sport.’*

Please see Belfast city Hall grounds screen for example. Notably there was no disagreement noted for SP5 Shine a Light on Banbridge.

Key comments:

- General enthusiasm for new bridges, links and greenways, and requests to see these worked through in detail and delivered.
- *'This [bridges and extended riverwalk] will be the game changer. The river focus- opens up Park Run opportunities, outdoor cafe with the barracks, links with the leisure centre.'*
- *'Linking solitude to river walk would be amazing- it would mean I would stop driving 20mins out of banbridge every time I want to go on a walk with the pram. It would also mean I would stay in banbridge and spend money here (as opposed to neighbouring towns with nice walks)'*
- Nice ideas around following desire lines and letting young people codesign and create the spaces for them.

Q8. Do you agree that the Living Here actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

Ranking of actions from most to least agreed with:

LIVING HERE ACTIONS	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
LH10 Tackle Loneliness	91
LH12 Accessible Banbridge	91
LH5 Places to Play	90
LH2 Cycling Infrastructure Including the Delivery of Banbridge to Scarva Greenway Proposal	86
LH9 Small Grants	86
LH11 Food for All	85
LH6 Encourage Collaboration	83
LH3 Places to Grow Together	80
LH8 Community Led Programming	77
LH4 Town Centre Living	76
LH1 Living Here	74
LH7 Climate Action Toolkit	70
<i>Average Agreement for LH:</i>	<i>82.41</i>

The actions which had the highest percentage of disagreement (albeit only 4.44%) were LH2 Cycling Infrastructure Including the Delivery of Banbridge to Scarva Greenway Proposal, LH11 Food for All, LH4 Town Centre Living and LH7 Climate Action Toolkit (with just 1 respondent strongly disagreeing with each of the latter 3). There was no disagreement noted for actions around LH10 Tackle Loneliness or LH12 Accessible Banbridge.

Key comments:

- Concerns raised about new housing. Suggested any new should be very environmentally friendly and appeal to Belfast/Newry/Dublin commuters with young families.
- Various comments about improving existing housing stock. *'People should have grants to tidy/spruce up their homes and neighbourhoods. Keep the town well kept and loved. I think Banbridge should look like Hillsborough and Malahide in Dublin. People encouraged to paint their houses pretty colours, hang plants and window boxes. Personality and love.'*
- Request for a *'fenced dog off lead area in park.'*
- Several requests for extra space for youth/teens. *'Teens also need places outdoors & indoors to socialise in constructive and positive ways.'*
- Greenway to be for equestrians, too

Q9. Do you agree that the High Street and Investing actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

Ranking of actions from most to least agreed with:

HIGH STREET AND INVESTING ACTIONS	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
HSI10 Adapt and Reuse Vacant Properties	88
HSI7 Maximise Belfast to Dublin Economic Corridor Opportunities	88
HSI12 Support Banbridge Businesses	84
HSI5 Deliver Town Centre Support, Revitalisation and Regeneration	82
HSI9 Identify Skills Gaps and Promote Local Opportunities	81
HSI2 Develop Evening Economy	80
HSI13 Further Places to Stay	80
HSI3 Further Investment in Public Realm	79
HSI6 Enhance Market Offering	78
HSI11 Assess Development Land and Need	78
HSI8 Explore Business Improvement District (BID)	77
HSI1 Digital Creative Innovation Hub	74

HSI4 More Enterprise Hubs	73
Average Agreement for HSI:	79

The actions which had the highest percentage of disagreement (albeit only 4.44%) were HSI13 Further Places to Stay (1 of which was a strongly disagree) and HSI6 Enhance Market Offering (none strongly).

Key comments:

- *Need more and better facilities for hybrid working - noted that this would boost local hospitality*
- *Old Police Station could be developed like Cutter's Wharf in Belfast*
- *More evening and Sunday food offering*
- *Suggestions for vacant spaces over shops as holiday accommodation, and use of incentives for tourists to use local shops*
- *Across several comments there is enthusiasm for a vibrant, revitalised high street with a range of quality shops*
- *Multiple requests for a multi-purpose theatre / arts space to support evening economy and attract Dublin-Belfast commuters*

Q.10 Do you have any further comments on the design proposals in the draft Banbridge Place Plan in relation to the equality screening and the rural needs impacts assessment?

- Enthusiasm expressed to get involved and volunteer further on the ongoing projects.
- *'I think that Banbridge should be a community that reaches marginalised people (refugees, addicts, unemployed, ex-offenders) in a positive, inclusive and restorative way.'*
- *'I propose a similar idea [to the Storyhouse in Chester] for Banbridge, a library, cinema, cafe and performance space all in one. Maybe a refurb of the Iveagh?'*

Appendices

1. List of Abbreviations

ABCBC	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
ACNI	Arts Council Northern Ireland
AHF	Architectural Heritage Fund
ASB	Anti social behaviour
ATU	Atlantic technological University
BID	Business Improvement District
BPA	Business Partnership Alliance
CPSP	Community Planning Strategic Partnership
CVSP	Community Voluntary Sector Panel
DEARA	Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DFC	Department for Communities
DFI	Department for Infrastructure
EA	Education Authority
GoT	Game of Thrones
HED	Heritage Environment Division
IMTAC	Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
NMNI	National Museums Northern Ireland

PCSP	Policing and Community Safety Partnerships
PRONI	Public Records Office Northern Ireland
QUB	Queen's University Belfast
SRC	Southern Regional College
UAHS	Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
UU	Ulster University

2. Pre-development Survey 01 Questions

Question 1: I confirm and understand I have been informed about the survey on the welcome pages. I have been given the 3 opportunity to ask questions and I agree to take part voluntarily. I consent to my response being used in this study. I agree to the privacy notice. Please indicate your agreement before continuing the questionnaire?

Question 2: What is your postcode?

Question 3: What is your email address?

Question 4: Are you responding as a: Resident, business owner, etc.

Question 5: Where do you live?

Question 6: Where do you work?

Question 7: Where do you study?

Question 8: How far do you travel to work or school?

Question 9: What mode of transport do you use to travel to work?

Question 10: How close do you live to the town centre?

Question 11: What do you think is good or positive about your town?

Question 12: What are the current issues you think are facing your town?

Question 13: On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate your level of agreement for each of the following priorities for your town.

- Bringing nature into the town
- Connecting the town digitally (wifi, 8 fibre, 5G, etc)
- Connecting the town physically (footpaths, pavements, road, parks, etc)
- Connecting the town socially
- Connection to play spaces
- Creating a walkable town
- Creating jobs and employment
- Heritage of the place
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Light Pollution
- Local people being involved in decisions about their city
- Meeting the housing need
- Reducing inequality
- Regeneration
- Safer Streets
- Tackling climate change

In addition to the above listed priorities, do you have any more to add or any comments on a particular priority?

Question 14: How often do you walk around your town?

Question 15: Which of the following usual goods and services do you get in your town?

- Goods and services (groceries, pharmacy, banking, clothing, healthcare, etc)
- Banking services
- Butcher/Bakery - Fresh goods
- Hair & Beauty treatments
- Clothing
- Hardware / DIY
- Library Medical services
- Newspapers / magazines
- Professional services
- Weekly grocery shop

If no, what are you unable to get and where do you go to get it?

Question 16: Do you participate in the evening economy listed below in your town?

- Bar/Pub
- Live Music
- Local Productions
- Meal Out/Dine out
- Movie

- Night Out
- Night time Café
- Take Away
- Other - specify below
- What else is available in the evenings in your town? and what can you not do from the list above in your town?

Question 17: If there was one thing in the place shaping plan for your town centre that you would like to help deliver, shape, promote, or see happen, what would it be?

Question 18: Is there a site(s) that you feel need to be regenerated?

Question 19: Is there anything else you think is important for the place shaping plan for your town centre?

Question 20: If you would like to be involved and stay informed about the development to the place plan(s) please enter your email below.

Question 21: What age are you?

Question 22: Please indicate your gender:

Question 23: What is your marital status:

Question 24: What is your ethnic origin or race?

Question 25: What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?

Question 26: Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, a disabled person is defined as a person with "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities." Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Disability Discrimination act?

Question 27: What nationality are you?

Question 28: How would you describe your sexual orientation? My sexual orientation is towards someone is:

Question 29: Please indicate your political opinion by ticking the appropriate box.

Question 30: Do you have caring responsibilities?

3. Second Survey Questions – Get engaged, get involved Banbridge Place Plan 2 Feb to 20 Mar 2023

INTRODUCTORY

1. Agree to terms

I confirm that I understand and have been informed about the study. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions that I have had and have agreed to take part voluntarily. I consent to my responses being used in the study outlined above. Please check the box below to confirm.

YES

NO

2. Postcode

3. Age category

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

4. Responding as:

- resident
- business owner
- elected member
- member of local club/group
- visitor
- other

5. How do you travel to Banbridge?

- Bike
- Drive
- Live in Town
- Public Transport
- Taxi
- Walk

6. What would encourage you to walk or cycle more often?

7. How long is your commute to work/education?

- Work from Home
- Less than 1km
- 1-5 km
- 6-10 km
- 11-15 km
- 16-20 km

- 20+ km

8. How often do you visit Banbridge Town Centre? (~~Daily/Weekly/Monthly, etc.~~)

- Every day
- 2 or more times per week
- Weekly
- 1-3 times per month
- Rarely
- Never

9. How often do you visit the Boulevard

- Every day
- 2 or more times per week
- Weekly
- 1-3 times per month
- Rarely
- Never

10. How long do you usually stay in Town/Boulevard

- Less than an hour
- Between 1 and 2 hours
- Between 2 and 4 hours
- Over 4 hours

11. Three words that best describe Banbridge to you

12. What makes you feel connected to Banbridge

13. Would you consider living in one of the main streets of Banbridge Town Centre in one of the following

	Yes	No
House		
Apartment		
Living above a shop		

COMMUNITY

14. How would you rate Banbridge out of 5 for the following qualities/facilities:

- Leisure and recreation services
- Social connection
- Friendliness
- Quality of life
- Town centre living
- Shared space
- Public Health Services eg Dental, Opticians, Doctors
- Inclusive Place
- Democracy: Banbridge people having a say in decisions about their town

15. Are you a member, or do you attend, any groups, clubs or organisations in Banbridge?

- Yes
- No

- If so, which?

Town

16. How would you rate Banbridge out of 5 for the following Offerings:

- Education
- Tourism
- Arts and Culture
- Jobs
- Entrepreneurship / innovation
- Retail
- Restaurants
- Night life
- Hotels

17. How often do you shop in Banbridge, and where?

- Daily
- weekly
- monthly

18. What do you go to Banbridge for

- Work
- Shop
- Play

- Meet
- Learn
- Live
- Relax
- Getting to and from somewhere else
- Other

Or

- Meet with Friends and Family
- Food Shopping
- Eat / Dine
- Socialise
- Banking and Post Office
- Hair and Beauty
- Retail
- Professional Services
- Health
- Getting to and from somewhere else
- Other

19.

Banbridge

20. How would you rate Banbridge out of 5 for the following qualities/facilities:

- Accessibility and ease of use
- Amenities
- Arts and culture
- Connectivity – Broadband, Mobile data
- Infrastructure – cars/ parking/ public transport
- Heritage
- Housing
- Maintenance – Litter, bins, graffiti, building condition
- Public realm
- River
- Safe streets at night
- Safe streets during the day
- Variety and diversity
- Walkability, parks and green space

21. What public facilities do you use

- Cinema
- FE McWilliam Gallery & Studio
- Green Spaces
- Leisure Centre
- Library
- Play Parks
- Public Toilets
- Tennis Courts
- Town Hall

22. Do you think Banbridge Town has changed for the better over the last seven years

- Yes, significant improvements have been made
- Yes, some improvements have been made
- Little improvement has been made
- No improvement has been made
- The Town has got worse
- Don't know

23. What would you like to see in the empty sites and derelict buildings if redeveloped?

Comment

24. Do you use the Outdoor Market in town on a Friday or Saturday

- Yes
- No
- Didn't know there was an Outdoor Market

25. Do you think there is sufficient availability of quality commercial space in Banbridge to aid business growth or expansion ie land, property space and buildings (Sam to provide)

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

26. Would you like to see more of the town centre pedestrianised?

- Yes
- No

- Why?

SUMMARY

27. How could Banbridge be improved?
28. What would you like to see more of in Banbridge?
29. What would you like to see less of in Banbridge?
30. Please tell us one idea, big or small, that would create positive change in Banbridge:
31. Any other comments? (Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important for this plan?)
32. If you would like to stay informed, please leave your contact details below.
33. Equality monitoring questions

4. School survey Questions

1. Question 1: My first name is
2. Question 2: My age is
3. Question 3: I live in (town)
4. Question 4: Name of School
5. Question 5: How do you get to school
6. Question 6: List something fun about Banbridge
7. Question 7: Where do you go in town to meet up and spend time with your friends?
8. Question 8: Where do you go to find nature?
9. Question 9: Please list events that take place in Banbridge that you like to attend
10. Question 10: What clubs/classes/sports do you go to in Banbridge?
11. Question 11: Where do you go with your family to eat in town?
12. Question 12: Where do you like to shop in town?
13. Question 13: Do you feel safe in Banbridge?
14. Question 14: What else do you like to do but have to travel to another town. Please complete the sentence - I travel to (name place) so I can
15. Question 15: What would you love Banbridge to have? Please complete the sentence - I would like Banbridge to have because

5. Interview Questions

Interview Questions - General

1. What is your connection to Banbridge?
2. How long have you lived/worked here?
3. What does your organisation/line of work offer to the town of Banbridge?

4. What do you think is distinctive/unique about Banbridge? - What are its strengths?
5. What doesn't work? - What would you change if you could change one thing about Banbridge?
6. Do you feel there are any obvious missed opportunities in Banbridge?
7. Does your organisation work collaboratively with other organisations? What would make that easier?
8. What does your organisation/line of work need more of to thrive?
9. How sustainable and environmentally friendly do you think Banbridge is and what more could it do?
10. Do you think Banbridge could be more pedestrian focused? If so, how?
11. [Where relevant] How do you feel Banbridge's offering is in terms of culture and tourism, and what could make it better?
12. What do you think would make more people visit Banbridge?
13. How well connected do you think Banbridge is? What would improve connections between local hubs (such as the parks, river and town centre and Boulevard)?
14. What big opportunities do you see in Banbridge that haven't been fully explored or grasped yet?
15. What would be a successful outcome of the Banbridge Place Plan, for you/your organisation?

Voluntary Sector Questions

- Q. What is the name of your organisation/ group?
- Q. What does your organisation/ group offer? What assets (if any) can you share?
- Q. What aspirations do you have for your group/ organisation?
- Q. What problems or barriers do you face as organisation/ group?
- Q. If money was no object, what would your organisation/ group like to add to Banbridge?
- Q. What is your Big or small idea for Banbridge

Private Sector Questions

- Q. What works well about Banbridge as a setting for your business?
Participants talked about the benefits of the location.
- Q. What problems or barriers do you face as a business?
- Q. What (if any) are the aspirations for the growth of your business?
- Q. Share you big or small idea for Banbridge

6. Questions in the Survey on the Draft Plan: 6 October – 4 December 2023

1: Please indicate your agreement to the privacy notice before continuing the questionnaire

2: What is your postcode?

3: Are you responding as

- Business Owner
- Elected Member
- Member of Local Club/Group
- Resident
- Student
- Visitor
- Other

4: Do you agree that these outcomes are relevant and central to Banbridge's future growth and prosperity?

- Yes
- No

5: Do you agree that the Arts, Heritage and Leisure actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

(Actions under Arts, Heritage and Leisure were listed)

6: Do you agree that the Green Innovation actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

(Actions under Green Innovation were listed)

7: Do you agree that the Spaces, Places and Natural Environment actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

(Actions under Spaces, Places and Natural Environment were listed)

8: Do you agree that the Living Here actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

(Actions under Living Here were listed)

9: Do you agree that the High Street and Investing actions will contribute to positive change in Banbridge?

(Actions under High Street and Investing were listed)

10: The plan was developed with a broad engagement base and findings have been included in the policy forms.

- Do you have any further comments on the design proposals Banbridge Place Plan in relation to the equality **screening and** the rural needs impact assessment?

- Yes
- No

11: If you would like to stay informed, please leave your contact details below.



INTERESTED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BANBRIDGE,

for further information or
to get involved with the
delivery of an action?

We want to hear from you.

Please contact the **Community
Planning Department** at
Armagh City, Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough Council

☎ 0300 0300 900

✉ communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

🌐 armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk