

## ***Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council***



### **Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report**

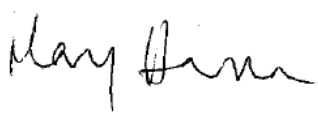
**Contact:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and Equality Scheme</li></ul>	Name: Mary Hanna Telephone: (028) 3752 9600 Email: mary.hanna@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Action Plan</li></ul>	As above x Name: Telephone: Email:

Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/equality/>

**Signature:**

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary Hanna'.

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2019 and March 2020**

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

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

- 1** In 2019-20, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

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

Following the launch of the Borough's first Community Plan- Connected in May 2017 a number of thematic action planning teams were set up during the previous reporting period and six plans were also developed. During this reporting period the implementation of the Enhanced and Revitalised Place Action Plan commenced. One of the measures included in this plan was to further develop 'friendly' places across the borough, e.g. age, autism dementia, loneliness, child and make recommendations on how to integrate and build on this work to ensure the borough is inclusive and accessible to everyone. A number of partners are involved in delivering this measure. The Community Plan has three strategic themes of Community, Economy and Place from which nine long term outcomes have been identified. The plan is underpinned by three cross cutting themes of equality, connectivity and sustainability.

In December 2019 the first Community Planning Statement of progress was produced. It provides an overview of the nine long term outcomes and associated action plans.

In February 2020 the Council launched a public consultation on its Performance Improvement Plan 2020-2021. A cross directorate working group informed the development of this plan which included the Council's Policy & Diversity Officer. Six draft performance improvement objectives were agreed. Each objective is linked to the relevant borough community plan strategic theme and relevant Council priority.

The objectives include;

1. We will improve the availability of more inclusive services for those with Autism and their carers.
2. We will increase the number of people participating in leisure activities and work with partners to enable everyone to get moving more.
3. We will reduce the time it takes to pay Suppliers.
4. We will reduce the average number of days sickness absence lost per employee.
5. We will increase the number of Council service areas with service standards as an evidence base to inform future improvement objectives.
6. We will implement recommendations from our Building Control and Planning Service Reviews.

The first measure in particular reflects the measure included in the Community Plan described above and the Council's commitment to its equality duties.

During the reporting period an Autism Friendly Borough Task and Finish Group was formed. As well as representation from a number of Council departments, there is representation from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust – Autism Services. This group is tasked with developing a programme of staff training and to consider other measures that will assist in making Council services more inclusive and the borough more Autism Friendly.

The departmental business plans include where appropriate measures which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the objectives included in the annual performance improvement plan and the Corporate Plan.

The cross directorate Customer Care Project Team was set up to take a lead role in developing a Customer Care Strategy and oversee the implementation of an associated Customer Care Action Plan. The Customer Care Strategy was launched in September 2017. The Customer Care Action Plan 2019/20 was agreed during the reporting period and a number of equality measures were included in this plan. These included the delivery of equality and disability training, awareness raising of the telephone interpreting service, the ongoing review and monitoring of the benefits of the "AccessAble" and "Jam Card" initiatives and the development of the Accessible Communications and Events policies.

In October 2019 a revised Disability Action Plan, Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan were issued for consultation. A Notice was placed in four local newspapers. The Audit of Inequalities was reformatted. Many of the inequalities and supporting statistics identified in the Borough Community Plan were included as this was the starting point for the development of the Audit and Plan.

In January 2020 the Council endorsed the Equality and Diversity Group's Equality and Diversity Framework. The purpose of the Equality & Diversity Group is to prioritise and influence equality, good relations and diversity initiatives across local government. The Group attempts to bring together the equality, good relations and diversity practices across the sector and in so doing seeks to integrate the priorities of the Group with the ongoing work of individual councils.

The membership of the Equality and Diversity Working Group is drawn from stakeholder bodies across the local government sector and includes Chief Executives, Diversity Champions, Equality Officers, Good Relations Officers and HR Officers in Councils, trade union Officers and Staff Commission members, as well as representatives from external stakeholder groups.

The Council's Policy & Diversity Officer is a member of this group.

The Equality and Diversity Framework is designed to assist Councils to meet their equality and diversity obligations and to demonstrate their compliance with them by endorsing 5 Principles:

Principle 1: Ensuring we work in a non-discriminatory environment, promote

equality and model best practice in equality and good relations.

Principle 2: Ensuring all our decisions are based on evidence to assess the likely impact of a policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

Principle 3: Providing access to services, facilities and information

Principle 4: Recruiting and employing people fairly

Principle 5: Responding to and learning from complaints and incidents in a positive pro-active way.

Policy screening reports were issued in June and December 2019.

During the reporting period the concept designs for Banbridge Public Realm were developed. The Banbridge Public Realm Scheme aims to improve the quality and connectivity between streets and car parks in the town, improve accessibility in the town centre and create an attractive civic space. The scheme will focus on building a safe streetscape that focuses on safe pedestrian circulation and accessibility for all, while preserving and enhancing the character of the town centre.

During the reporting period a number of section 75 User Group Meetings were held. The Council's Regeneration Officers, Policy & Diversity Officer, Play Development Officer and the Design Team also attended. Written submissions were also received from RNIB, Guide Dogs NI and Mae Murray Foundation. Feedback from the stakeholders would help to inform the equality screening exercise.

During the reporting period the Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide, the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide, the Transgender Guidelines and the Translation and Interpretation Procedure were made available to staff.

The Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide advises our staff on how to communicate with a diverse range of customers taking into account their specific communication needs. The Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide is for staff who are involved in organising events (both indoor and outdoor). It provides practical advice on how to address accessibility at events. The Transgender guidelines help support employees to ensure transgender people using services or visiting Council facilities can do so without fear of prejudice, discrimination or harassment. The Translation and Interpretation Procedure advises our staff on how to access the Translation and Interpretation service. It also includes provision for sign language interpreting and information in alternative formats.

These documents were made available on the Council Intranet. The Policy & Diversity Officer also attended a number of team meetings to brief staff on these guides and she also attended a number of Facility Managers meetings to update them on the equality workstream.

In November 2019 staff were reminded that it had been a year since the Council had launched the "Jam Card" initiative. The Jam Card- which stands for Just A Minute – is a

social innovation from the NOW Group, an organisation that supports people with learning difficulties and autism into employment. The card or app can be used to alert staff in leisure centres or community centres for example that the person needs a little bit of patience and understanding when interacting with you.

Staff were reminded that they or their team could still avail of training. This information was placed on the Council Intranet and included in the staff magazine.

The AccessAble contract was renewed for another year. The Council has agreed to fund the review of the detailed Access Guides on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) relating to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Working with over 350 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) and the AccessAble App. The Access Guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements. During the reporting period a number of marketing materials were produced such as Flyers, a Banner Stand and a screen image. The Policy & Diversity Officer met with the Partnerships Manager and the Partnerships Manager also met with the ABC Seniors Network to further publicise the initiative. It was agreed that the South Lake Leisure Centre would be added to the annual review.

During the reporting period the All Out Trekking Project was launched at Gosford Forest Park.

The Department for Communities and Sport NI invested £250,000 into this new project. The initiative was delivered by Disability Sport NI and the Council and provides an inclusive opportunity for people of all abilities (12 years and above) to access the forest's walking and mountain biking trails together. The project is the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and Ireland with the battery-operated Terrain Hopper and Quadrix all-terrain vehicles that are particularly suitable for people with a disability, long term health condition or restricted mobility to access off-road terrains.

Hosting the launch. Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, Councillor Mealla Campbell said,

“Gosford Forest Park is a fantastic facility and with this new initiative it brings a unique outdoor experience for people with a disability to enjoy the already popular walking and biking trails with family and friends.

We are thrilled this is the first project of its kind in Northern Ireland and we hope Gosford will act as a hub to bring local people and visitors to experience this wonderful inclusive facility.

We are delighted to work in partnership with Disability NI to deliver this project but it could not be made possible without the funding, support and vision from the Department of Communities and Sport NI who have invested significantly in this project.”

Following engagement with the Alzheimer's Society, the Market Place Theatre hosted its first Dementia Friendly Screening in September 2019 and went on to have a total of four screenings during the reporting period. These screenings are different from standard screenings in the following ways;

- Numbers are limited to accommodate wheelchair users and carers
- The studio theatre is set out cabaret style with tables and chairs. This eases access for those with mobility problems
- House lights are illuminated and doors remain open.
- Subtitles are displayed for those who have hearing difficulties
- Refreshments are provided throughout the screenings
- Only staff that have completed Dementia Friendly Training can work at these events.

In April, June and July 2019 four sessions of Equality and Disability Training were delivered. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 62 staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that it was informative and the use of video clips helped to further explore real life scenarios

In May and October 2019 and in January 2020 four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered to Heads of Department and Managers. This training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. There is an interactive session which looks at examples of investigations conducted by the Equality Commission. A total of 39 staff members attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that participants had a better understanding of the subject matter and appreciated the case study examples provided.

A range of other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents and customers and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Traveller awareness training was provided to 19 leisure centre staff. This training was facilitated by 2 members of the Traveller community and covered the role of Traveller Support Services, Traveller Culture and facts and myths in relation to Irish Travellers.

5 staff members attended Dementia and ADHD training. A further 23 attended Dementia Awareness training. 11 attended Autism and Social Stories, 10 attended Communication and Makaton training and a further 44 attended Makaton Language training.

In December 2019 a free Autism Awareness training session for local businesses was delivered by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust in Portadown Town Hall. Businesses received information on reasonable adjustments that can be made and received an Autism Aware badge to display.

Lord Mayor Mealla Campbell who attended the training said

“As a council we are committed to becoming a more autism friendly borough and to achieve this we all need to work together with our council facilities and services and our local businesses to support people with autism and their carers.

While recognising this is a busy time of year, I’m thrilled with the response particularly from our local businesses who attended this free awareness training.

We are delighted to work with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the trust for the work they have done in developing this awareness training.

The Council will continue to drive forward our commitment in 2020 to becoming a more autism friendly borough and I encourage all businesses to avail of these services.”

Denise Carroll, Autism Services, Southern Health and Social Care Trust said,

“We are delighted to have coproduced the Autism Awareness training for local businesses in partnership with our young people and families. We hope this training will go from strength to strength and we welcome the support of the ABC council in delivering this training to the borough.”

During the reporting period the roll out of Customer Care Training commenced. This training incorporates references to the Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide and the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guidance.

In October 2019, the Council hosted its annual local democracy event. 32 young people from local post primary schools participated in a mock planning committee on a proposed housing scheme by taking on the roles of applicant/agent, supporter, objector, Planning Case Officer and Councillor. Councillors and Officers assisted the students to prepare their arguments.

Lord Mayor of Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon, Councillor Mealla Campbell said, “I am delighted to see so many young people attend this event and take such a great interest in local democracy and their Council area.”

“It’s a great way to get our young people engaged with us so they can see how Council works and how we as elected members work on behalf of the local community. The students have shown great interest and enthusiasm and have really embraced the challenge and the debate has been lively.”

Councillor Sam Nicholson chaired the meeting as the students took up their positions in the Chamber, Councillors McClelland, Lavery and McNally also joined them. The students were very convincing in their roles and they certainly did not disappoint! The arguments ranged from environmental matters through to road safety. In the end, following a vote they agreed to accept the Planning Officer’s recommendation that the application be refused. However, as the chair pointed out the decision could still be appealed!

Included in the Council’s ‘Discover Your Christmas’ events extravaganza 2019 were two events organised for children with autism and special educational needs.

'Christmas Wishes' which was based in McCrum's Court in Armagh City included a more relaxed Santa's Magical Workshop allowing the children to experience Santa's Magical Workshop in a cosy, calm setting away from the hustle and bustle of the town centre.

'A Relaxed Christmas' was hosted at Millennium Court Arts Centre, Portadown. Upon arrival, families were warmly greeted by the North Star elf who guided them to Santa's grotto on the first stop of their journey where they received a gift and had their photograph taken.

After this, families were invited to enter a sensory room to enjoy a range of activities including arts and crafts, multi-sensory installations, virtual reality headsets and storytelling with Mrs Claus.

Children were able to write and post their own letter to Santa through the North Star mailbox and make reindeer food while enjoying complimentary hot chocolate and sweet treats.

The Council organised events to mark International Women's Day.

On 5 March 2020, a staff workshop was held in Craigavon Civic Centre. Facilitated by Doreen Ritchie, Life and Executive Coach, the workshop was based on her Queen's University Course "Change Your Mind-Change Your Life"

The 'Inside Out' way of thinking clears up the misunderstanding that circumstances, situations or people around us can cause our feelings at any given moment.

During the workshop participants learned how our mind works; how to combat stress; worry and anxiety caused by personal or workplace issues; how to deal with criticism or negativity in the workplace; and how thinking from the inside-out dramatically increases our resilience and self-confidence.

On 6 March 2020 an event was held at the Belmont Hotel in Banbridge for everyone in the community. The event brought together four renowned inspirational speakers – Gail Redmond, Mary Montague, Aderonke Adolmoisili and Dr Patricia McCloskey who each shared their unique and motivational stories. Covering interesting and thought provoking issues, the speakers also engaged in a panel and answer session.

On 12 March 2020 over 80 students from across the borough attended an event held at Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre. They came together to celebrate women and their achievements as well as hearing how they can play their part in driving a gender equal world.

Compered by journalist Sarah Travers, the event brought together a diverse range of guest speakers including Dr Kathy Ruddy from Trinity College Dublin, Vessie Ivanova, Musical Director and Wilma Erskine, OBE. Collectively, the speakers stressed the importance of new experiences, using your networks, self-belief as well as working hard, while highlighting how we all have a role to play to ensure equality.



- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2019-20 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Positive Action Measures a stated in the Council's Equality Action Plan

1. Development of a performance management framework that reflects the requirements of section 75 of the N.I Act 1998.

In February 2020 the Council launched a public consultation on its Performance Improvement Plan 2020-2021. A cross directorate working group informed the development of this plan which included the Council's Policy & Diversity Officer. Six draft performance improvement objectives were agreed. Each objective is linked to the relevant borough community plan strategic theme and relevant Council priority.

The objectives include;

1. We will improve the availability of more inclusive services for those with Autism and their carers.
2. We will increase the number of people participating in leisure activities and work with partners to enable everyone to get moving more.
3. We will reduce the time it takes to pay Suppliers.
4. We will reduce the average number of days sickness absence lost per employee.
5. We will increase the number of Council service areas with service standards as an evidence base to inform future improvement objectives.
6. We will implement recommendations from our Building Control and Planning Service Reviews.

The first measure in particular reflects the measure included in the Community Plan – (Further develop 'friendly' places across the borough eg. Age, autism, dementia, loneliness, child and make recommendations on how to integrate and build on this work to ensure the borough is inclusive and accessible to everyone) and the Council's commitment to its equality duties.

2. Inclusion of equality and good relations into the Council's Departmental/operational Plans and service plans

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

3. All Council strategies, plans, projects and services to be screened for equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Equality Scheme.

During the Council's shadow period, the Council developed guidelines for the development of Council policies and all policies are required to have a completed screening form attached before they are considered by the relevant Council Committee. The Committee reporting template also includes a section – Equality or Good Relations Implications. This ensures that any equality or good relations implications are brought to the elected members' attention. Equality Impact Assessments are conducted where it is considered proportionate to do so in order to further examine the policy for equality impacts, mitigation and/or opportunities to promote equality of opportunity. Staff members are regularly reminded to adhere to these guidelines. During the reporting period a number of policies were screened as part of the policy development process. Policy screening reports were issued in June and December 2019.

#### 4. Delivery of Equality and Disability Training to elected members, line managers and employees

In April, June and July 2019 four sessions of Equality and Disability Training were delivered. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 62 staff attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that it was informative and the use of video clips helped to further explore real life scenarios.

To further comply with the Council's Equality Scheme duties, in May and October 2019 and in January 2020 four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered to Heads of Department and Managers. This training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. There is an interactive session which looks at examples of investigations conducted by the Equality Commission. A total of 39 staff members attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that participants had a better understanding of the subject matter and appreciated the case study examples provided.

A range of other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents and customers and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Traveller awareness training was provided to 19 leisure centre staff. This training was facilitated by 2 members of the Traveller community and covered the role of Traveller Support Services, Traveller Culture and facts and myths in relation to Irish Travellers.

5 staff members attended Dementia and ADHD training. A further 23 attended Dementia Awareness training. 11 attended Autism and Social Stories, 10 attended Communication and Makaton training and a further 44 attended Makaton Language training.

#### 5. Section 75 groups will be targeted during the recruitment of members for the Community Panel

Section 75 groups were targeted and 10 panel members were recruited during the reporting period.

6. Clear Guidelines to be developed for staff members working with Transgender customers.

During the reporting period the Transgender Guidelines were made available to staff. The guidelines help support employees to ensure transgender people using services or visiting Council facilities can do so without fear of prejudice, discrimination or harassment. The guide was made available on the Council Intranet. The Policy & Diversity Officer also attended a number of team meetings to brief staff on this guide.

7. Organise an International Women's Day Event.

The Council organised three events to mark International Women's Day.

See section 1

8. Organise an annual consultation event to be held with consultees. (AccessAble initiative, formerly Disabled Goo) Explore additional ways of raising awareness of the initiative with members of the Customer Care Project Team.

The AccessAble contract was renewed for another year. The Council has agreed to fund the review of the detailed Access Guides on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) relating to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Working with over 350 partners AccessAble produces Access Guides to places people want or need to visit, publishing them on [www.AccessAble.co.uk](http://www.AccessAble.co.uk) and the AccessAble App. The Access Guides are for anyone with accessibility requirements. During the reporting period a number of marketing materials were produced such as Flyers, a Banner Stand and a screen image. The Policy & Diversity Officer met with the Partnerships Manager and the Partnerships Manager also met with the ABC Seniors Network to further publicise the initiative. It was agreed that the South Lake Leisure Centre would be added to the annual review.

9. Explore opportunities to work with the NOW Group to raise awareness of the JAM Card Project

In November 2019 staff were reminded that it had been a year since the Council had launched the "Jam Card" initiative. The Jam Card- which stands for Just A Minute – is a social innovation from the NOW Group, an organisation that supports people with learning difficulties and autism into employment. The card or app can be used to alert staff in leisure centres or community centres for example that the person needs a little bit of patience and understanding when interacting with you.

Staff were reminded that they or their team could still avail of training. This information was placed on the Council Intranet and included in the staff magazine. The Policy & Diversity Officer also attended a number of team meetings.

10.A policy to be developed (on organising events) which takes into account the needs of different racial groups, disabled people as well as older and younger people.

The Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide was made available to staff. The Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide is for staff who are involved in organising events (both indoor and outdoor). It provides practical advice on how to address accessibility at events.

11.Guidance to be developed on communicating with disabled people, older people, younger people and different racial groups which will take into account the views of the working group and disability organisations.

During the reporting period the Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide was made available to staff. The Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide advises our staff on how to communicate with a diverse range of customers taking into account their specific communication needs.

#### 12.Organise a Local Democracy Event

In October 2019, the Council hosted its annual local democracy event. 32 young people from local post primary schools participated in a mock planning committee on a proposed housing scheme by taking on the roles of applicant/agent, supporter, objector, Planning Case Officer and Councillor. Councillors and Officers assisted the students to prepare their arguments.

See section 1

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                       No (go to Q.4)                       Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

Embedding the process for policy development has been extremely important. Staff members have been regularly reminded of the duty to equality screen all new and revised policies and to ensure that this is clearly documented when presenting policies for Council approval.

Following the launch of the Borough's first Community Plan- Connected in May 2017 a number of thematic action planning teams were set up during the previous reporting period and six plans were also developed. During this reporting period the implementation of the Enhanced and Revitalised Place Action Plan commenced. One of the measures included in this plan was to further develop 'friendly' places across the borough, e.g. age, autism dementia, loneliness, child and make recommendations on how to integrate and build on this work to ensure the borough is inclusive and accessible to everyone. A number of partners are involved in delivering this measure. The Community Plan has three strategic themes of Community, Economy and Place from which nine long term outcomes have been identified. The plan is underpinned by three cross cutting themes of equality, connectivity and sustainability.

In February 2020 the Council launched a public consultation on its Performance Improvement Plan 2020-2021. The first measure is that we will improve the availability of more inclusive services for those with Autism and their carers. This is a clear reflection of the Council's Equality Scheme commitments. During the reporting period an Autism Friendly Borough Task and Finish Group was formed which will assist with the implementation of this measure.

As well as representation from a number of Council departments, there is representation from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust – Autism Services. This group is tasked with developing a programme of staff training and to consider other measures that will assist in making Council services more inclusive and the borough more Autism Friendly.

The Customer Care Action Plan 2019/20 was agreed during the reporting period and a number of equality measures were included in this plan. These included the delivery of equality and disability training, awareness raising of the telephone interpreting service, the ongoing review and monitoring of the benefits of the "AccessAble" and "Jam Card" initiatives and the development of the Accessible Communications and Events policies.

During the reporting period the concept designs for Banbridge Public Realm were developed. The Banbridge Public Realm Scheme aims to improve the quality and connectivity between streets and car parks in the town, improve accessibility in the town centre and create an attractive civic space.

During the reporting period a number of section 75 User Group Meetings were held. The Council's Regeneration Officers, Policy & Diversity Officer, Play Development Officer and the Design Team also attended. Written submissions were also received from RNIB, Guide Dogs NI and Mae Murray Foundation. Feedback from the stakeholders would help to inform the equality screening exercise.

During the reporting period the Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide, the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide, the Transgender Guidelines and the Translation and Interpretation Procedure were made available to staff.

During the reporting period the All Out Trekking Project was launched at Gosford Forest Park.

The Department for Communities and Sport NI invested £250,000 into this new project. The initiative was delivered by Disability Sport NI and the Council and provides an inclusive opportunity for people of all abilities (12 years and above) to access the forest's walking and mountain biking trails together. The project is the first of its Kind in the United Kingdom and Ireland with the battery-operated Terrain Hopper and Quadrix all-terrain vehicles that are particularly suitable for people with a disability, long term health condition or restricted mobility to access off-road terrains.

Following engagement with the Alzheimer's Society, the Market Place Theatre hosted its first Dementia Friendly Screening in September 2019 and went on to have a total of four screenings during the reporting period. These screenings are different from standard screenings in the following ways;

- Numbers are limited to accommodate wheelchair users and carers
- The studio theatre is set out cabaret style with tables and chairs. This eases access for those with mobility problems
- House lights are illuminated and doors remain open.
- Subtitles are displayed for those who have hearing difficulties
- Refreshments are provided throughout the screenings
- Only staff that have completed Dementia Friendly Training can work at these events.

PART A

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

Please provide any details and examples:

The commitment to improve the availability of more inclusive services for those with Autism and their carers will ensure that our services are accessible to a greater number of our residents and customers. This commitment is reflected in both the Borough Community Plan and the Council's Performance Improvement Plan.

During the reporting period the concept designs for Banbridge Public Realm were developed. The Banbridge Public Realm Scheme aims to improve the quality and connectivity between streets and car parks in the town, improve accessibility in the town centre and create an attractive civic space. Engagement with the disability sector will influence the equality screening of this policy and ensure the final design improves the accessibility of the town centre.

During the reporting period the Accessible Communication and Inclusive Language Guide, the Inclusive and Accessible Events Guide, the Transgender Guidelines and the Translation and Interpretation Procedure were made available to staff. All of these guides will ensure that our staff are able to provide a better service to our residents and customers mindful of their individual needs.

The All Out Trekking Project is the first of its Kind in the United Kingdom and Ireland with the battery-operated Terrain Hopper and Quadrix all-terrain vehicles that are particularly suitable for people with a disability, long term health condition or restricted mobility to access off-road terrains. This has ensured that Gosford Forest Park can offer facilities for disabled customers.

Following engagement with the Alzheimer's Society, the Market Place Theatre hosted its first Dementia Friendly Screening in September 2019 and went on to have a total of four screenings during the reporting period. This has ensured that the Market Place Theatre can offer facilities for its customers with Dementia.

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

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

The Banbridge Public Realm Scheme will be subject to an equality screening Exercise. Consultation with disability groups has already been undertaken as part of that process.

PART A

- As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details)*:
  
- As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details)*:
  
- x As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details)*:  
  
The guides mentioned above, the All Out Trekking Project and the Dementia Friendly screenings all improve access to Council services.
  
- x Other *(please specify and give details)*:  
  
The objective included in the Performance Improvement Plan to improve the availability of more inclusive services for those with Autism and their carers reflects the equality scheme commitment to integrate objectives and targets relating to the statutory duties into our strategic and operational plans

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

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

- 4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*
- Yes, organisation wide
  - x Yes, some departments/jobs
  - No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
  - No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
  - Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:



PART A

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2019-20 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

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

Please provide any details and examples:

In February 2020 the Council launched a public consultation on its Performance Improvement Plan 2020-2021. A cross directorate working group informed the development of this plan which included the Council's Policy & Diversity Officer. Six draft performance improvement objectives were agreed. Each objective is linked to the relevant borough community plan strategic theme and relevant Council priority.

The objectives include;

1. We will improve the availability of more inclusive services for those with Autism and their carers.
2. We will increase the number of people participating in leisure activities and work with partners to enable everyone to get moving more.
3. We will reduce the time it takes to pay Suppliers.
4. We will reduce the average number of days sickness absence lost per employee.
5. We will increase the number of Council service areas with service standards as an evidence base to inform future improvement objectives.
6. We will implement recommendations from our Building Control and Planning Service Reviews.

The first measure in particular reflects the measure included in the Community Plan described above and the Council's commitment to its equality duties.

6 In the 2019-20 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs

PART A

- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2019-20 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The Borough Community Plan has three strategic themes of Community, Economy and Place from which nine long term outcomes have been identified. The plan is underpinned by three cross-cutting themes of equality, connectivity and sustainability.

These three cross-cutting themes are also included in the Corporate Plan.

The departmental business plans include where appropriate measures which specifically promote equality and good relations. These are linked to the objectives included in the annual performance improvement plan and the Corporate Plan.

The Equality Action Plan links the relevant Community Planning Theme and relevant Corporate priority to each of the measures included in the plan

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2019-20 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:	10	Actions ongoing:	5	Actions to commence:	1
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Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2019-20 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

In October 2019 a revised Audit of Inequalities and Equality Action Plan were issued for consultation. The Plan is for the period 2020-2023. The Plan was not finalised before the end of the reporting period.

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2019-20 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

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



Other (please specify):

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

The consultation on the Banbridge Public Realm Scheme detailed in q.11 used these methods of consultation.

**13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)

x Yes                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Consultees are frequently advised of the Council's equality duties throughout the Community Planning Process. Section 75 consultees were contacted as part of the consultations on the Performance Improvement Plan and Equality and Disability Action Plans. A Notice was placed in four local newspapers. As stated above a range of consultees were engaged as part of the consultation on Banbridge Public Realm.

Consultation exercises are placed on the Council's new Consultation Hub. The consultation on the Performance Improvement Plan included the equality screening as part of the consultation. E-mails and hard copies of documentation are forwarded to potentially interested groups.

The Policy & Diversity Officer attended a number of team meetings and Facility Managers meetings to advise them of new Council policies, provide a reminder of the Council's equality duties or simply update them on current equality initiatives.

**14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2019-20 reporting period? (tick one box only)

Yes                      x No                       Not applicable – no commitment to review

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

<https://www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk/council/equality/>

PART A

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

13
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- 16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2019-20:

1	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

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

The Performance Improvement Plan was issued with a screening assessment presented. The Council's section 75 stakeholders were consulted.

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

Yes                      x    No concerns were raised                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

- 19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

Yes                      x    No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

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

PART A

**20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2019-20 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes  No, already taken place  
 No, scheduled to take place at a later date  Not applicable

Please provide any details:

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

- Yes  No  Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**22** Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2019-20 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

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

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

**24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2019-20, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

In April, June and July 2019 four sessions of Equality and Disability Training were delivered. This training covers the section 75 duties and the Disability Action Plan, anti-discrimination legislation with further emphasis on the Disability Discrimination Act and communicating with people with a range of disabilities. A total of 62 staff attended. Evaluation of the

training revealed that it was informative and the use of video clips helped to further explore real life scenarios.

In May and October 2019 and in January 2020 four sessions of Policy Screening, Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment Training were delivered to Heads of Department and Managers. This training covers an outline of the equality and good relations duties, when and how to screen and when to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. There is an interactive session which looks at examples of investigations conducted by the Equality Commission. A total of 39 staff members attended. Evaluation of the training revealed that participants had a better understanding of the subject matter and appreciated the case study examples provided.

A range of other training was delivered to ensure Council staff have a better understanding of the needs of our residents and customers and to further promote equality of opportunity.

Traveller awareness training was provided to 19 leisure centre staff. This training was facilitated by 2 members of the Traveller community and covered the role of Traveller Support Services, Traveller Culture and facts and myths in relation to Irish Travellers.

5 staff members attended Dementia and ADHD training. A further 23 attended Dementia Awareness training. 11 attended Autism and Social Stories, 10 attended Communication and Makaton training and a further 44 attended Makaton Language training.

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

The Training programmes delivered have the job performance objectives outlined at the beginning of the training and the programme is again reviewed and summarised at the end. An evaluation sheet is issued at the end of the training. The information received in the evaluation forms is used to inform further developments to the training programmes.

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

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2019-20, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

Following engagement with the Alzheimer's Society, the Market Place Theatre hosted its first Dementia Friendly Screening in September 2019 and went on to have a total of four screenings during the reporting period. These screenings are different from standard screenings in the following ways;

- Numbers are limited to accommodate wheelchair users and carers
- The studio theatre is set out cabaret style with tables and chairs. This eases access for those with mobility problems
- House lights are illuminated and doors remain open.

- Subtitles are displayed for those who have hearing difficulties
- Refreshments are provided throughout the screenings
- Only staff that have completed Dementia Friendly Training can work at these events.

### Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2019-20?

Insert number here:

1
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

In May 2019, the Council received a complaint and was requested by the complainant to consider it in accordance with its Equality Scheme Complaints procedure. In accordance with its procedure the Council provided a response and advised the complainant that it did not believe it had failed to comply with its Equality Scheme. The complainant contacted the Equality Commission regarding the complaint. The Council has not received any further update.

### Section 3: Looking Forward

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

The Equality Scheme was reviewed during the reporting period

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

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

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2019-20) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

Employment

Goods, facilities and services

Legislative changes



PART A

- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

**5**

Fully achieved

**2**

Partially achieved

**2**

Not achieved

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

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

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>			
Local <sup>v</sup>			

PART B

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

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Equality and Disability Training was delivered to staff in April, June and July 2019	A total of 62 staff members attended	Evaluation of the training revealed that it was informative and the use of video clips helped to further explore real life scenarios.  This training will improve the customer service offered to both adults and children with disabilities
2	Although not included in the plan Dementia and ADHD training was delivered as well as Dementia Awareness	A total of 28 members attended	
3	Communication and Makaton training and Makaton Language training was also delivered	A total of 54 staff members attended	
4	Autism and Social Stories was delivered	A total of 11 staff members attended	

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

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Ensure strapline advising that documents can be obtained from the Council in alternative formats is included in all external publications	The strapline is included on all publications. On the Home page of the Council website there is an accessibility section where customers are advised to	It is intended that publications will be accessible to a wide range of people

PART B

		contact the Council if they require a publication in a different format.	
2			

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

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Junior Sports Awards September 2019 (not an action within the plan)	One of the nominations is for sports person with a disability	The event celebrates the achievement of sports people within the Borough and as a result raises awareness of disability in sport.
2			

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

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Policy screening – ongoing implementation of screening requirements in relation to new and amended policies (screening form includes questions relating to the disability duties)	The completed screening forms will address the disability duties	All new or amended policies will incorporate the disability duties where appropriate.

PART B

2	Develop and deliver a range of inclusive sport and physical activity programmes and events, which will increase the skills, knowledge and confidence of people with a disability, to enable them to access sport and physical activity opportunities in their local community	The target of 1500 people with a disability engaged in a sport or physical activity annually was exceeded  3 clubs supported to become more inclusive of people with a disability, annually.	More people with a disability accessing sport and physical activity opportunities independently.
	Prepare annual report on the implementation of the plan	To monitor and report on progress	

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

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1	Raise awareness among staff of the role of the Diversity Champions. In 2015 the Council appointed three Officer Diversity Champions and one elected member Champion. They include the Policy & Diversity Officer, HR Officer, Community Sport Active Inclusion Officer and the Council's Lord Mayor.	This has been incorporated into relevant Lord Mayoral speeches and press releases	Raising the profile of disability within the organisation	This is an ongoing measure. Further opportunities to raise awareness of the initiative need to be explored.
2	Appoint Disability Sport NI to conduct an access audit of the new South Lake Leisure Centre	Disability Sport NI was appointed and the building is being audited as the build progresses	It is anticipated that the centre will be inclusive for children and adults with a range of disabilities.	Once the Audit is completed there will be an application to achieve ISF accreditation.

PART B

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

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Develop a work placement policy/strategy	This measure will be reviewed
2	Provide equality and disability training for elected members	Training was scheduled to take place at the end of March but had to be cancelled due to the Lockdown restrictions

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

(a) Qualitative

The plan was made available in November 2017 following consultation with Officers and local disability consultees. The staff equality working group also considered the content of the plan. The equality working group also considered this plan again before developing measures for the 2020-2023 plan

(b) Quantitative

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

PART B

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

Please select

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

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

In October 2019 a revised Disability Action Plan was issued for consultation. A Notice was placed in four local newspapers. A number of new measures were added but the plan was not approved before the end of the reporting period.

## PART B

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- <sup>i</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.
- <sup>ii</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.
- <sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
- <sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
- <sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.