

Armagh City, Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)
of Review of Connected A
Community Plan

FINAL DECISION REPORT

APRIL 2025

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1. Introduction

Between 7 October 2024 and 12th January 2025, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council carried out a 13-week public consultation, accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), on the draft, reviewed Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030. During the consultation period a Draft EQIA Consultation Report was made available on the Council's website together with a questionnaire on Citizen Space, alongside the Connected review document, designed to facilitate responses. Targeted workshops took place during the consultation period with section 75 groups. A total of eight written responses were obtained from the consultation process. This EQIA Final Decision Report sets out:

- the initial findings from the draft EQIA report;
- the results of the consultation process;
- conclusions;
- recommendations for monitoring any adverse impacts.

The EQIA Final Decision Report has been prepared in order to provide the Council with all available information on which to base a decision when bringing forward the reviewed Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030.

2. Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030

The key ambition of the community plan is to improve services, and deliver better outcomes for service users, citizens and communities. Connected A community plan has been in place since 2017 and the long term overarching vision for the plan is.

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

Our long term outcomes are grouped into three interrelated and interdependent strategic themes. Four outcomes have been changed in the revised plan and two outcomes have been replaced with new outcomes. Two population indicators have been removed and eleven new population indicators have also been added. Each of these themes has outcomes attributed to them.

- Community
- Economy
- Place

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

Our cross cutting themes are:

- Connectivity
- Equality
- Sustainability

These are integral to all of the strategic themes and their combined contribution will help to achieve our overall vision.

Overall, making a real difference to people's lives, through the ongoing delivery of the community plan, is likely to have a positive impact on Section 75 groups, both directly and indirectly by contributing to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the borough.

The reviewed community plan has the potential to promote equality and good relations, this is reinforced through our cross cutting themes of equality/good relations/inclusion and connectivity that will underpin our processes.

Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 (updated 2025)

In 2024, the Council and its community planning partners began the process of reviewing and refreshing Connected. There were two stages in this process. During the summer of 2025 a third stage will take place which will comprise of a review of the priority themes for action delivered by the four sub-committees.

- Stage 1 engaged 105 people from 32 organisations through a series of workshops. (A list of the organisations can be found at appendix 1). These included CVSE, community planning structure members, partnerships feeding into the community plan and Elected members. This then informed the draft review of Connected.
- During Stage 2, the draft review of Connected was available through an online survey and there were a series of public workshops, meetings with government departments and other stakeholders and Section 75 & rural focus groups and meetings. These were delivered both in person and online, with an understanding that the final draft Connected would be reviewed considering the findings of the public. During this stage 151 people from 43 organisations fed into the consultation and this was over 25 consultation events comprising of 6 workshops, 7 meetings, 12 focus groups, 69 people responded to the online survey- 70% (49) responded on behalf of themselves and 30% (21) responded on behalf of an organisation or group. (A list of the organisations who responded to the survey can be found at appendix 2)

The Community Planning Strategic Partnership (CPSP) for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough comprises of 16 partners some of whom have a statutory duty to take forward actions that contribute to the outcomes in their community plans and partners share an equal responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the plan. The CPSP has overall responsibility for the delivery of the community plan, but there is a wider partnership in place as well who contribute to delivery.

The partnership's current action plan has four priority themes for action and the Community Planning Strategic Partnership has established four sub-committees to deliver this Covid-19 Response and Recovery Action Plan. Each of the four sub-committee has broad membership from across the Community Planning partnership including action leads and members from the CPSP and the CVSP. The four sub-committees are- Promoting Good

Mental Health and Wellbeing, Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion, Place and Shared Leadership and Community Engagement.



The community plan is recognised as the sovereign planning document for the Borough, providing the overarching strategic policy framework for the delivery of services by all partners. The community plan creates a two way link between community plans at a local government level and Programme for Government 2024-2027 ‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’

The community plan is built around three strategic themes and nine long term outcomes. The council and its partners have made a commitment to deliver on in order for our borough to have realised its vision in 2030 in that-

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

Our long term outcomes have been grouped into three interrelated and interdependent strategic themes. Each of these themes have three outcomes and this review has suggested the outcomes be revised to ensure that they reflect the aspirations for the borough, given the significant changes that have occurred since its publication in 2017 and the changes suggested are presented below:

- Community;
- Economy;
- Place.

Community

Our three long-term outcomes under the community strategic theme are:

- ***Connected Community*** (previously *Confident*)

Everyone has opportunities to contribute (previously engage in) to community life and shape decisions – we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.

- ***Healthy Community***

People are making positive lifestyle choices. They are more resilient and better able to cope with life's challenges.

- ***Welcoming Community***

Our borough is a safe, inclusive (new addition), respectful and peaceful environment.

Economy

Our three long-term outcomes under the economy strategic theme are:

- ***Enterprising Economy***

Our borough is a centre of excellence for entrepreneurship, innovation and investment.

- ***Skilled Economy***

People are better equipped to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by our dynamic economy.

- ***Inclusive Economy*** replacing ***Tourism Economy***

Everyone has a decent minimum living standard, replacing - Our borough is the destination of choice for international visitors.

Place

Our three long-term outcomes under the place strategic theme are:

- ***Creative Place***

Our borough is an inspirational and creative environment offering quality inclusive arts, heritage (new addition) and cultural experiences.

- ***Sustainable Place*** replacing ***Enhanced Place***

People understand the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We value and protect our biodiversity and natural assets. Our borough is on track to become net zero by 2050 replacing - Our rich and varied built heritage and natural assets are protected, enhanced and expanded for current and future generations to enjoy.

- ***Revitalised Place***

Our distinctive, inclusive (new addition) and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life.

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

The cross cutting themes are:

- Connectivity
- Equality
- Sustainability

These are integral to all of the strategic themes and their combined contribution will help to achieve our overall vision. We will continue to take coordinated action as partners to tackle the cross cutting issues that affect us all.

Connectivity

We believe connectivity is integral to helping us achieve our outcomes. We will work to transform and connect all areas physically, digitally and socially through shared collaborative approaches.

Equality

We are committed to promoting equality, good relations and inclusion and believe them to be central to improving the quality of life for everyone. A peaceful and inclusive society is vital to ensuring that we have a welcoming, confident and safe community.

Sustainability

We work to improve everyone's quality of life economically, environmentally and socially, without compromising our future generation's ability to develop, grow and flourish.

Following the review we will also work with the Sub-Committees to refresh our action plan to support delivery of the refreshed community plan.

3. Consideration of Data and Research

Data and research were gathered to help assess the likely impact on the nine section 75 equality groups. Quantitative and qualitative information were drawn from a number of sources and some of this information is presented below:

- Data on population – statistics on the population of the borough from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) including 2021 Census, demography statistics, survey results and benefit statistics
- Partnership engagement report stage 1
- Armagh and Banbridge Place Plans
- Armagh and Banbridge Place Plan engagement reports
- Dromore engagement plan to date
- Life and Time Survey and Young Life and Times Survey
- Equality Commission report- key inequalities in employment
- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's (NIHRC) report
- National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-2027
- The Public Health Agency good practice guide for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups
- Department of Education statistics 2020/21
- Department for the Economy's Migrant Workers report
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)
- Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024/25
- The Labour Force Survey 2020
- Northern Ireland Poverty Income Inequality Report 2022/23
- Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021
- Experience of Crime and Perceptions of Crime and Policing and Justice, 2021/22
- Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey (NISCTS)

Data on Population

Religious Belief

The 2021 Census showed that 43.8% of the population in the borough were either Catholic or brought up as Catholic and 46.7% belonged to or were brought up in Protestant, other Christian or Christian-related denominations. A further 1.2% belonged to or had been brought up in other religions, while 8.2% neither belonged to, nor had been brought up in, a religion.

Religion or religion brought up in	Number	Percentage
Catholic	95,868	43.8%
Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)	102,063	46.7%
Other religions	2,697	1.2%
None	18,028	8.2%
All usual residents	218,656	100%

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

Political Opinion

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has 41 elected members. A breakdown of results of the Local Government Election in May 2023 for the borough are as follows:

- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) – 13
- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) – 6
- Sinn Féin – 15
- Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) – 1
- Alliance – 4
- Independent – 1
- Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) - 1

A total of 87,684 votes were polled in the borough from an eligible electorate of 155,625 giving a turnout of 56.34%. This breakdown is taken as an approximate representation of the political opinion of people within the borough.

Racial Group - Ethnicity

Results from the 2021 Census showed that 96.7% of the usually resident population of the borough were white and 3.3% were from minority ethnic groups. The main ethnic minorities were Mixed (1,652 individuals), Black African (1,132 individuals) and Chinese (683 individuals).

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

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

Racial Group - Country of Birth

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

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

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

Racial Group - Language

Results from Census 2021 show that 6.6% of residents in the borough aged 3+ years (13,947 individuals) spoke a language other than English or Irish as their main language. In

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough in 2021, the most prevalent main languages other than English or Irish were Polish (1.7%) and Lithuanian (1.2%).

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

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

Age

The population of the borough was estimated to be 218,656 on Census Day 2021, the profile of which is shown below.

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

Table 5: Age profile of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough at Census Day 2021. Source: Table MS-A06 Age Structure, Census 2021

The age profile of the borough is projected to change between 2020 and 2043 with an ageing population. It is projected that in 2033, the proportion of older people in the borough (those aged 65 and over) will be higher than the proportion of children (those aged 15 and under). The proportion of those aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 15.7% in

2020 to 22.1% in 2043. The proportion of those aged under 16 is projected to decrease from 22.5% in 2020 to 18.9% in 2043.

Marital Status

The 2021 Census provides information on the marital and civil partnership status of those aged 16 and over. Almost half of residents aged 16+ in the borough were married (49.0%) while just over 35% were single (never married or never in a registered same-sex civil partnership).

Marital and Civil Partnership Status	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	%
All usual residents aged 16 and over	170,411	100.0%
Single (never married or never registered civil partnership)	60,075	35.3%
Married	83,523	49.0%
In a civil partnership	307	0.2%
Separated (but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership)	5,833	3.4%
Divorced or formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	10,253	6.0%
Widowed or surviving partner from a civil partnership	10,420	6.1%

Table 6: Marital and civil partnership status of residents aged 16+ in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. Source: Marital and Civil Partnership Status – Table MS-A30, Census 2021, NISRA.

Sexual Orientation

The question on sexual orientation was new for the 2021 Census and was asked of all people aged 16 and over. However, while completing the census is a legal obligation, there was no statutory penalty for those people who failed to provide an answer to the question on sexual orientation.

Just 1.5% of the population aged 16 and over in the borough identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (LGB+) while 90.5% identified as straight or heterosexual and 8% did not provide an answer to the question.

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

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

Gender

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

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

Table 8. Usual resident population, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 2021. Source: 2021 Census, NISRA.

Disability

According to the 2021 Census, more than one in five people in the borough (22% or 48,726 individuals) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability.

Census 2021 results are disaggregated by broad age bands and the results show the prevalence of a limiting long-term health problem or disability is related to age¹. Almost 57% of the population aged 65+ in the borough had a limiting long-term health problem or disability compared to 6% of those aged between 0-14.

	Population	With a limiting long term health problem or disability	Percentage
0-14	45,420	2,759	6.1%
15-39	67,700	7,367	10.9%
40-64	70,547	18,715	26.5%
65+	34,990	19,885	56.8%
All ages	218,657	48,726	22.3%

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

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

- 3,030 or 6.2% of under 16 eligible population and 4,490 or 13.3% of pension age eligible population claiming Disability Living Allowance.
- 6,480 or 19.1% of 66+ population claiming Attendance Allowance.
- 21,340 Personal Independent Payment claims in payment (experimental statistics).

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) provides a non-contributory, non means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of severely disabled people who can claim help with those costs before the age of 16.

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

Claimants who were 65 or over at the time of introduction of PIP in NI (June 2016) and who were receiving a life-time award will continue to receive DLA, providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

Attendance Allowance (AA) provides a non-contributory, non-means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of severely disabled people who are of State Pension Age and over when they claim help with those costs. It can be awarded for a fixed or an indefinite period.

Personal Independent Payment (PIP) provides a non-contributory, non means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of people aged over 16 who claim help with those costs. Claimants who were 65 or over at the time of introduction of PIP in NI (June 2016) and who were receiving a life time award continue to receive DLA, providing they continue to meet the eligibility criteria.

Dependants

Persons with a dependant are generally classified as persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; the care of a person with a disability; or the care of a dependant older person.

The 2021 Census showed that 32% or 27,192 households in the borough contained dependent children.

Respondents to the 2021 Census were asked whether they provide any unpaid help or support to anyone because of long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 12% of the population aged 5 years old and over (or 24,743 individuals) provided unpaid care. Of those who provided unpaid support:

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

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

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

- who are not in full-time education
- are aged 16 and over

The severely disabled person must be getting either the highest or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance care component, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Attendance Allowance, or a Constant Attendance Allowance at the maximum rate under the War Pensions or Industrial Injuries Scheme.

Some claimants are entitled to receive Carers Allowance, because they satisfy the conditions listed above, but do not actually receive a payment. This is because they receive another benefit (e.g. Incapacity Benefit for people of working age, or State Pension for people of State Pension age) which equals or exceeds their weekly rate of Carers Allowance. Where the overlapping benefit paid is less than the weekly rate of CA, only the amount of CA which exceeds the amount of the overlapping benefit is paid. Carers who are on low income and entitled to Carer's Allowance (whether in payment or not) may receive extra money with their Income.

4. Consideration of impacts

In accordance with the EQIA process, having gathered information on the policy and those affected by it, the Council must then assess whether there is a differential impact within one or more of the Section 75 categories, determine the extent of that differential impact and whether that impact is adverse.

Differential impact suggests that a particular group has been affected differently by the policy (either favourably or unfavourably), while adverse impact is an indication that the effect is less favourable (i.e. negative) and is potentially unlawful.

In order to determine whether the policy has any adverse differential impact, it is necessary to consider the people affected by the policy, their needs and experiences and the identity categories to which they belong.

The following section summarises the assessment of impacts as set out in the Draft EQIA Consultation Report based on the evidence available at that time.

Through the three themes of community, economy and place and its outcomes, the reviewed Connected- A community plan for ABC 2017-2030 has at its core the aim of improving the wellbeing of the residents in the borough. The plan will actively promote equality of opportunity, good relations and inclusivity whilst addressing issues of exclusion and marginalisation.

Feedback from the engagement sessions held and 121 meetings, along with baseline data and other research reports were analysed to provide an insight into the potential impacts of the three strategic themes in the revised community plan on people in the various section 75 categories. This has subsequently been updated following the 13 week consultation period which included focus groups with older people, younger people, women's sector, minority ethnic community, those with a disability and LGBTQ+ groups.

The nine categories as listed in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are:

1. Religious Belief
2. Political Opinion
3. Racial Group
4. Age
5. Marital Status
6. Sexual Orientation
7. Gender
8. Disability
9. Dependants

The paragraphs below highlight the inequalities that currently exist under each section 75 category within our strategic themes.

Religious Belief/Political Opinion

We believe that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will benefit and deliver favourable outcomes to all members of the local community

including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough as well as affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their religious belief or political opinion.

Under the strategic themes the following inequalities currently exist and whilst it is important to note these are not a result of the revised plan but an opportunity for council and its partners to address.

Community

- Results from the 2021 Census showed that there were self-reported differences in general health according to religion belonged to or brought up in. Those who were or had been brought up as Catholics were typically more likely than those who belonged to or had been brought up in Protestant denominations to assess their general health as either 'bad' or 'very bad'. The relative differences were more noticeable in the older age groups. For example, among those aged 45-64, 13% of Catholics, compared with 10.2% of Protestants, were in either 'bad' or 'very bad' general health. In addition, among those aged 65 and over, 19.6% of Catholics compared with 15.1% of Protestants were in either 'bad' or 'very bad' general health.
- The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey states that for the combined years of 2020, 2021 and 2022, 36.6% of respondents in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in 5 years' time. Almost 43% of respondents in the borough believe relations will be about the same as they are now while 11.6% believe that relations will be worse in 5 years' time.

Economy

- The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland states that just over a third (37.9%) of Protestant boys with FSME achieved five GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent including English and maths, compared to 46.7% of their Catholic counterparts. This highlights Protestants persistently have lower levels of attainment than Catholics at GSCE level.
- Results from LucidTalk's NI-wide attitudinal poll (on behalf of the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) have revealed that 54% of people living in the [Armagh](#), Banbridge and Craigavon council area believe Integrated Education, which sees children of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures educated together, side by side every day, should be the main model for our education system.

Place

- The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission's (NIHRC) report on the impact of public spending shows that the social housing stock is highly segregated by religious community background, with around 90% of social housing estates being single identity. Therefore, where social housing developments are restricted in areas of deprivation due to wastewater and sewerage constraints, this may impact on religious belief linked to economically deprived areas.
- During the engagement for the Banbridge Place Plan in terms of inclusivity and diversity, (39%) of people thought that the town was good, and less (33%) felt it was fair or poor. 67% felt it was good, very good or excellent in terms of cross-community integration. Though during the engagement for the Armagh Place Plan young people surveyed were concerned with the provision of shared and welcoming space and territorial markings, flags and emblems in the city.

During the consultation period it was acknowledged that it might be an idea to remove the physical interfaces between different communities to encourage communities to move forward, along with education at a young age about those from a different religious belief or political opinion. We will take on board the consultation feedback in our revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow and through this we hope that they will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their religious belief or political opinion.

Racial Group

The council believes that the revised community plan will deliver favourable outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough as well as affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their racial group.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-2027 outlines that Travellers are three times as likely to have poor health or some type of difficulty or disability than the non-Traveller population in the 35-54 age group. The Traveller community continue to experience severe health inequalities, reflected in a shorter life and a poorer quality of health. Overall, there is a gap of up to 13 years in life expectancy between Travellers and the general population.

- In ABC there were 289 hate motivated incidents in 2022/23 - 95 of these incidents were racist, 120 sectarian, 39 homophobic, 11 disability, 22 transgender and 2 faith/religion.
- In ABC 49% of people see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people of all walks of life.
- In ABC 84 % of people feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood.
- The Public Health Agency good practice guide for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups (2010) describes how BME communities have strong cultural beliefs and practices, many of which promote health and wellbeing. However, some health issues and risk factors for disease and ill health are more prevalent in certain nationalities and cultures. People from Black African, African Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes from the age of 25. This is much younger than the white population, as their risk increases from 40. Lithuania has the highest rate of suicide in Europe (2019); Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of Lithuanians resident in the region per head of population compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Economy

- According to Department for Education statistics for 2020/21, attainment of A-levels at grades A to C are relatively consistent regardless of ethnic background. However, there is a more pronounced difference at GCSE with 72.8 per cent of school leavers from a minority ethnic background attaining 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths) compared to 77.8 per cent of white school leavers. School leavers from a minority ethnic background are also more likely to leave school without any formal qualifications (2.4 per cent compared to 0.6 per cent of white school leavers).
- Findings from the Department for the Economy's Migrant Workers report
- in 2019 highlights that 55% of EU26 workers were employed in lower skilled occupations such as processing and elementary occupations. A further 16% were in skilled trades occupations.

Place

- Findings from the Equality Commission's report, Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Travellers' Accommodation in Northern Ireland, was published in March 2018 and highlighted 13 systemic issues. These included resource availability; provision of a sufficient level of culturally adequate Travellers' accommodation; and the adequacy of Travellers' accommodation in Northern Ireland, including a lack of adequate stopping sites.

During the engagement sessions the changing demographics in our borough was raised and the growing population of foreign nationals with different ethnicities and different needs was recognised as the participants felt that newcomers have so much to give in our society and that we should have an inclusive programme for everyone which requires more education around cultural awareness.

The CVS engagement also session highlighted bureaucratic barriers & lack of access to interpreters for ethnic minorities with people being referred to advice services who do not have access to interpreters. The issue was also raised about children being taken out of school to interpret for parents. This is damaging to the children's education and the children are not able to provide a professional interpreting service.

At a recent Promoting Good Mental Health and Wellbeing subcommittee meeting the need to reduce the negative connotations around asylum seekers and refugees was discussed and the new preferred terminology suggested - people in need of international protection.

The number of hate motivated incidents has increased in the borough year on year and we have now included a new indicator in our community plan to measure this in the hope through working with our partners on targeted programmes delivered through our action plans that we can reduce this figure. Through this we believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their racial group.

Age

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their age.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- The Young Life and Times and the Life and Times Surveys showed that in Northern Ireland in 2023, 68% of young people and 81% of adults felt a sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods. For people to feel like they belong to their community, it is important that they feel like they have an influence when it comes to decisions made in their neighbourhood. In 2023, 10% of young people and 20% of adults in Northern

Ireland felt they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in their neighbourhood. In ABC 19% of people felt that they had an influence when it comes to any local decisions made in their neighbourhood.

- During the last PB Tak£500+ Process children aged 8 and over were encouraged to put forward an idea for funding and anyone over the age of 8 could cast a vote. During the voting events 19.9% of the voters came from the 8-15 age group which shows an appetite to be involved in decision making in their community .

During the engagement process for the Banbridge Place Plan 113 children and young people were involved in the process and school engagement packs were designed aimed at the younger audience .

The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan for ABC states that loneliness and isolation were already issues, but they were made worse by the pandemic. Nearly a third of people surveyed said that they often felt lonely, and half said that they sometimes felt lonely. During the engagement workshops it was highlighted that loneliness affects everyone regardless of age and that more and more young people are feeling lonely, in particular in the aftermath of covid .

Economy

- Information on levels of entrepreneurship is available from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), which measures entrepreneurial activity of people who have started or are in the process of starting a new business – called Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA). The rate of Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in Northern Ireland in 2023 is 9.7%, up from 8.7% in 2022. This figure is just slightly lower than a figure of 10.7% in the UK overall and 10.8% in England in 2023. The TEA for the younger age group is (18-24 year olds) has increased considerably from 10.5% in 2022 to 13% in 2023. The proportion of non-entrepreneurial working age adults in Northern Ireland who expect to start a business within the next three years is 18.9% in 2023, a slight increase from its value of 18.1% in 2022. For the UK, this figure also increased from 18.5% in 2022 to 19.7% in 2023.
- In ABC 58% of FSME school leavers achieved 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths.
- In ABC 18.8% of children live in low-income households.

- The Labour Force Survey 2020 showed between 2016 and 2020, there has been a general increase in the proportion of working age adults with qualifications, where 87.0% held a qualification in 2020 (and 13.0% reported having no qualifications). The proportion of people aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training (as measured by the lifelong learning indicator) in NI was consistently lower than the UK. Those aged 50 to 64 were the least likely to participate in education or training, and for those who did engage, the highest participation rate was for those qualified to Level 6 and above (equivalent to first degree or higher).
- The Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024/25 states that, ABC has the lowest percentage of young people leaving school with 2 + A Levels in 2021 compared with Local Government Districts and is almost 10% below the NI average- 48.9% (ABC), 57.8% (NI). In 2022/23, 35.5% of school leavers in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough entered Higher Education Institutions which is 3.9 percentage points less than the previous year though the percentage continuing on to Institutes of Further Education has increased from 37.4% in 2021/22 to 39.4% in 2022/23.
- Results from the Household Below Average Income 2019/20 report released by the Department for Communities show that children (22%) are more likely to be in relative poverty than working-age adults (14%) (before housing costs). Approximately 18% of pensioners in Northern Ireland are living in relative low income.
- Results from the Northern Ireland Poverty Income Inequality Report 2022/23 show that 24% of children live in relative low income (before housing costs) compared to 16.8% of working-age adults and 16.4% of pensioners. Approximately 19% of the population in Northern Ireland are living in relative low income in 2022/23 .

Place

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2022/23 show that in Northern Ireland 90% of households had access to the internet at home and 87% of households had home broadband access which is among the lowest in the UK.
- In 2020, as part of the LFS, ONS collected data on internet usage and the results show that in NI in 2020, 88% of persons aged 16 and over had used the internet in the last 3 months compared to 92.1% in the UK overall. Just over 10% of persons aged 16+ in Northern Ireland had never used the internet compared to 6.3% in the UK overall. Usage by age group is only available for the UK but shows that usage decreases as age increases with just over half of persons aged 75 and over using the internet in the last 3 months.

- During the engagement for the Armagh and Banbridge Place Plans young people felt that public transport could be improved with later and more frequent buses and older people felt that there should be more accessible parking spaces and more pedestrianised areas within town centres where possible.

During the engagement workshops the provision of accessible toilets was raised and the access to these toilets when available. Targeted consultation with older people raised accessibility issues in town centres in terms of parking and wheelchair access which we will look at through our Place Plans. Access to transport was also raised for older people with this being inaccessible for some, alongside communications being made available in different formats and not just online.

Young people consulted with felt that shared education approaches need to be consistent and that there should be more opportunities to work/meet with older people. They also felt that public transport needs to be considered in terms of late night buses.

We will take the consultation findings into consideration in our revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow and through this we will have a plan that will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their age.

Marital Status

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their marital status.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- Findings from the Experience of Crime and Perceptions of Crime and Policing and Justice, 2021/22 Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey (NISCTS) suggest that 3.2% of single parent adults living with their children were victims of burglary while 2.4% were victims of violent crime.
- With regards perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime', 12% of single parent adults with children at home were greatly affected by fear of crime while approximately 13% of adults living in social rented accommodation were greatly affected by fear of crime.

Almost 1 in 5 persons living in areas with self-perceived high anti-social behaviour are also greatly affected by fear of crime.

Economy

Women typically earn lower wages per hour and work fewer paid hours over their lifetimes, while also facing income loss due to caregiving responsibilities. Although this wage gap may be offset by the earnings of male partners in dual income (and mixed sex) households, it leaves single women, pensioners, and especially single parents in precarious financial situations, susceptible to poverty-level incomes. The Labour Market Partnership Action Plan 2024/25 states that employers are finding that the pandemic has exacerbated skills gaps with the reduced availability and higher cost of childcare creating a barrier to employment.

Place

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2021 shows there was very little difference found between the proportion of single (90%) and married/ civil partnership (88%) who engaged with the arts within the previous year. However, both groups were more likely to have attended than separated/ divorced people (79%). Widowed people were the marital group least likely to have engaged with the arts within the previous year (69%).
- In 2023/24 in the Southern area just over 17% of homeless presentations were for relationship/martial breakdown with the number of single lets not meeting the demand.

We believe that the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their marital status.

Sexual Orientation

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their sexual orientation.

- The 2021 NI Census data indicates that 2.1% of the household population in Northern Ireland identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. The Continuous Household Survey 2022 records 0.7% of participants as gay/lesbian, 0.6% bisexual, 0.3% Other, 1% undetermined and 97.3% heterosexual.

- One of the key issues for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people is the promotion of community safety across the Borough. Findings from the PSNI Hate Crime Offences show that in our borough homophobic motivated incidents have increased since 2020/21 by 56% in 2022. In Northern Ireland there was also an increase of 26.2 % in 2021/22.

Feedback received during targeted consultation with the LGBTQ+ community found that trans people are being treated the way lesbian and gay people were treated in 70s & 80's with high levels of discrimination. There needs to be a greater understanding of the needs of those in the LGBTQ+ and education offered to young people from an early age in order to dispel the myths.

This feedback will be taken into account in the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow and through this we feel that this will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their sexual orientation.

Gender

The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone, irrespective of their gender.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20 shows that a higher proportion of males (61%) than females (51%) participated in sport.
- Male life expectancy at age 65 in the borough is 18.9 years for 2020-22 compared to 18.3 years in Northern Ireland. Female life expectancy at age 65 is higher at 21.0 years in the borough and 20.6 years in Northern Ireland. The standardised avoidable death rate per 100,000 population in 2018-22 was 240 in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. The borough and Northern Ireland overall had both shown decreases between 2010-14 and 2015-19 but since then rates have been increasing again in both areas.
- Gap in life expectancy between the most deprived areas and the borough overall: Female 1.3 years & Male 3.2 years

Economy

- Looking at women's participation in local government, almost a third (29%) of elected members (12 out of 41) of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council are female.

Pay parity between males and females was raised at the engagement sessions and barriers into employment was discussed, in particular the low paid jobs that women sometimes find themselves taking in the caring sector.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough had the third highest unemployment rate of the eleven LGD's and was 0.5 percentage points above the Northern Ireland average. ABC remains below the NI average for the economic inactivity rate with 18.4% male and 26.9% female being economically inactive in the borough. Although ABC is performing at a favourable rate with regards to economic inactivity vs the NI average, the LMP in ABC feel that this still requires continued intervention to maintain the positive levels and further reduce those economically inactive within the Borough, focusing on women as a priority group.

During the consultation a targeted workshop was held for women and there was a sense that the safety of women and girls should be paramount, and this should include domestic abuse and feeling unsafe/safety in public spaces. Mental health was also discussed in terms of both men and women

We will take this feedback on board and through the revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow we believe that the community plan will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of their gender.

Disability

The council is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, the revised community plan takes full account of the needs of people with disabilities. This includes ensuring compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone whether they have a disability or not.

Under the strategic themes the data analysis highlights some of the key inequalities that the revised community plan may help to address. Council and our partners will need to be aware of these potential barriers.

Community

- In NI the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20 found that those aged 16 and over who have a disability were less likely to have taken part in sport at least once within the last year (38%) compared with those who do not have a disability (64%). A similar disparity was found when participation rates over the last four weeks were considered, where over a quarter of those with a disability (28%) were found to have taken part in sport compared to over half of adults who do not have a disability (52%). Fifteen per cent of adults with a disability were members of a sports club, a lower proportion than the 30% of those who do not have a disability. Rates of participation in sport for adults who have a disability have remained fairly consistent at around a third of adults since 2011/12 (32%), aside from a slight decrease to 26% in 2012/13.
- In 2016 the YLT (Young life and Times) and KLT (Kids Life and Times Survey) both asked how many times during a normal week would respondents spend at least 60 minutes during a day playing sports or doing some physical activity. The target set by the Public Health Agency and Department of Health for young people under 18 years of age is 60 minutes every day. Results from the KLT show that almost a third (32%) of primary 7 children in the borough meet this target, just below the overall results for Northern Ireland (36%). The proportion of 16 year olds meeting the target is considerably lower, just 6% in the borough and 8% in Northern Ireland overall. The reasons given for not taking part in sport or physical activity more often by respondents in the borough were at similar levels to Northern Ireland respondents overall. In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon poor health and disability was identified by 7% of 16 year olds and 8% of primary 7 pupils.
- In a recent workshop help by in the southern region young people felt that they missed out on learning due to their physical and mental health. The Mental health of Children and Parents in Northern Ireland Prevalence Study 2020 revealed that 1 in 8 children and young people in Northern Ireland experience emotional difficulties, 1 in 10 conduct problems and 1 in 7 problems with hyperactivity .
- At the recent CVS engagement workshop held to inform the review of the community plan the issue was raised with transition from child disability living allowance to PIP at 16 years. Children with disability need support to access PIP at 16 and this is not always readily available.

Economy

- Findings from the Labour Force Survey from January-December 2022 in Northern Ireland shows people without a disability were more than twice as likely to be in employment (81.5%) than those with a disability (39.1%).
- According to the 2021 Census, more than one in five people in the borough (22% or 48,726 individuals) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability. Benefit statistics from the Department for Communities showed that as of November 2022 there were: 2,510 or 5.2% of under 16 population and 5,030 or 15.2% of pension age eligible population claiming Disability Living Allowance. There were also 5,930 or 17.9% of 66+ population claiming Attendance Allowance. 18,540 Personal Independent Payment claims in payment (experimental statistics).
- In ABC there is a 47.8% gap in economic inactivity rate for disability.

Place

- Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2019/20 show that in Northern Ireland adults who have a disability were less likely to have engaged with the arts (77%) than those who do not have a disability (90%).
- Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2021. In 2021, just under one fifth (19%) of persons aged 16 and over, who were surveyed, reported having a mobility difficulty. On average, those with a mobility difficulty made 519 journeys in 2021, 44% less than those without a mobility difficulty (929 journeys per year).
- Continuous Household Survey 2021-22. In 2021-22, 67% of all respondents said that they were satisfied with walking conditions in their area. The figure for those with a disability was 64%, which was significantly lower than those without a disability (69%). In 2021/22, less than half (46%) of respondents said they were satisfied with cycling in their area. There was no significant difference between the results for those with or without a disability (44% and 47% respectively).
- Almost 8 in 10 (79%) respondents said they were 'satisfied' with public transport facilities in their area. There was no significant difference between responses for those with a disability (78%) and those without a disability (80%).

During a consultation focus group targeted at those with a disability the importance of access to sport and other activities was raised, especially for those who are neurodiverse people. The new indicator- Employment gap for those with a disability was welcomed and it was discussed that those with a late life diagnoses for neurodiversity and hidden disabilities need to be taken into consideration. Access to a computer was also highlighted for those

with a disability and the value of libraries for digital access and community information was highlighted. Transport was highlighted with people finding it hard to get to appointments due to accessibility and lack of transport.

We have taken these views into consideration in our revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow and through this we feel that the revised community plan will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of having a disability or not.

Dependants

The council is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, the revised community plan takes full account of the needs of people with or without dependants. The council believes that the effective development and implementation of the revised community plan will deliver outcomes to all members of the local community including people living in, visiting, working or studying in the borough and will also affect future generations. It will have a positive impact on everyone whether they have a dependant or not.

Community

- People with dependants are likely to face additional barriers to a range of life experiences, including employment, sport and art activities and access to health.

Economy

- The Equality Commission published a Statement on Key Inequalities in Employment in Northern Ireland in 2018 found that women experience a lower employment rate and a higher economic inactivity rate when they have dependants. Women are more likely to be in part-time employment than men. Lone parents with dependent children are more likely to be in employment on a part-time basis. In addition, carers who provide less than 49 hours of unpaid care are more likely to work part-time. While part-time working is one of a number of means by which women, lone parents, and carers balance employment with caring responsibilities, it can negatively influence progression in employment, with women, lone parents and carers sometimes perceived negatively for asking for flexible working.

At the engagement sessions childcare and the lack of affordable and suitable childcare was highlighted as a barrier, in particular for women, when it came to them accessing employment in the borough and this is something that will be targeted through the LMP and taken into consideration in any programmes over across our action plans.

We have taken these issues into consideration in our revised community plan and revised action plans that will follow and through this we feel that the revised community plan will benefit all residents in ABC, irrespective of whether they have a dependant or not.

Multiple Identity

The council recognises that none of the section 75 groups operates as a silo and that people have multiple identities. It is aware that organisations representing any one or more of the section 75 categories will benefit from a policy which has as one of its overarching principles the need to be inclusive and fair. Therefore this is one of our cross cutting themes in the community plan and inclusivity has also been built into several of our outcomes in the revised plan.

5. Consideration of Measures

The EQIA process requires that, if it is decided that the policy has an adverse impact on one or more of the nine equality categories, then a series of alternatives should be put forward for consideration and an assessment of the possible impact of these alternatives undertaken. The Council must consider measures which may mitigate the adverse impact and alternative ways of delivering policy aims which have a less adverse impact on the relevant equality category or which better promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

At the time of preparing the draft EQIA, and prior to the feedback obtained from the public consultation, it was considered that the draft, reviewed Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 is likely to have an overall positive impact on the communities that it serves. While acknowledging this overarching positive effect, the pre-consultation phase helped confirm key equality of opportunity and good relations issues that the community plan must recognise and address if all those who fall within its remit can expect to reap its benefits. These issues have been made explicit by a number of consultees, in the various stages of the community plan.

Potential adverse impacts on 'at risk' groups have been identified in Section 5: Consideration of impacts above, but the duty to consider these will reside with community planning partners, sub-committee's and action leads, through appropriate engagement with key stakeholders.

Other examples of how this can be done include:

- an explicit commitment to meet Section 75 duties for the duration of the project by all partners, sub-committee's and action leads (including the community and voluntary sector), including appropriate monitoring arrangements;
- a recognition of the need for diverse means of communication and engagement to access marginalised and hard to reach groups and communities;
- an acknowledgement of varying levels of educational attainment, including literacy, numeracy and digital among the population and taking these into consideration during the design and implementation of action plans, projects and in the revised Connected community plan.
- a need to have concern for people with a wide range of disabilities, including hidden, and in particular accessibility and mobility considerations in all projects;
- a need to identify and address barriers to employability and work among underrepresented sections of the population as identified above;
- a recognition that longstanding structural inequalities may serve to make particular initiatives or enterprises more or less accessible to particular Section 75 groups and communities;
- the need to adopt a flexible and responsive approach to managing good relations within the borough.

This list is not exhaustive and may change as the review of Connected and its associated action plans build momentum but through this, we will endeavour to mainstream Section 75 principles into the delivery of Connected.

In addition to these considerations, the reviewed Connected must incorporate mechanisms for considering the impact on equality of opportunity and good relations through robust monitoring. This will take the form of the monitoring captured by action leads and recorded by the community planning team which will then feed into the Statement of Progress which is published every 2 years.

A commitment can be made that each programme or project under the reviewed Connected will be subject to equality screening in line with the Council's and CPP partners' Equality

Schemes and in accordance with the criteria as set out in the guidance produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

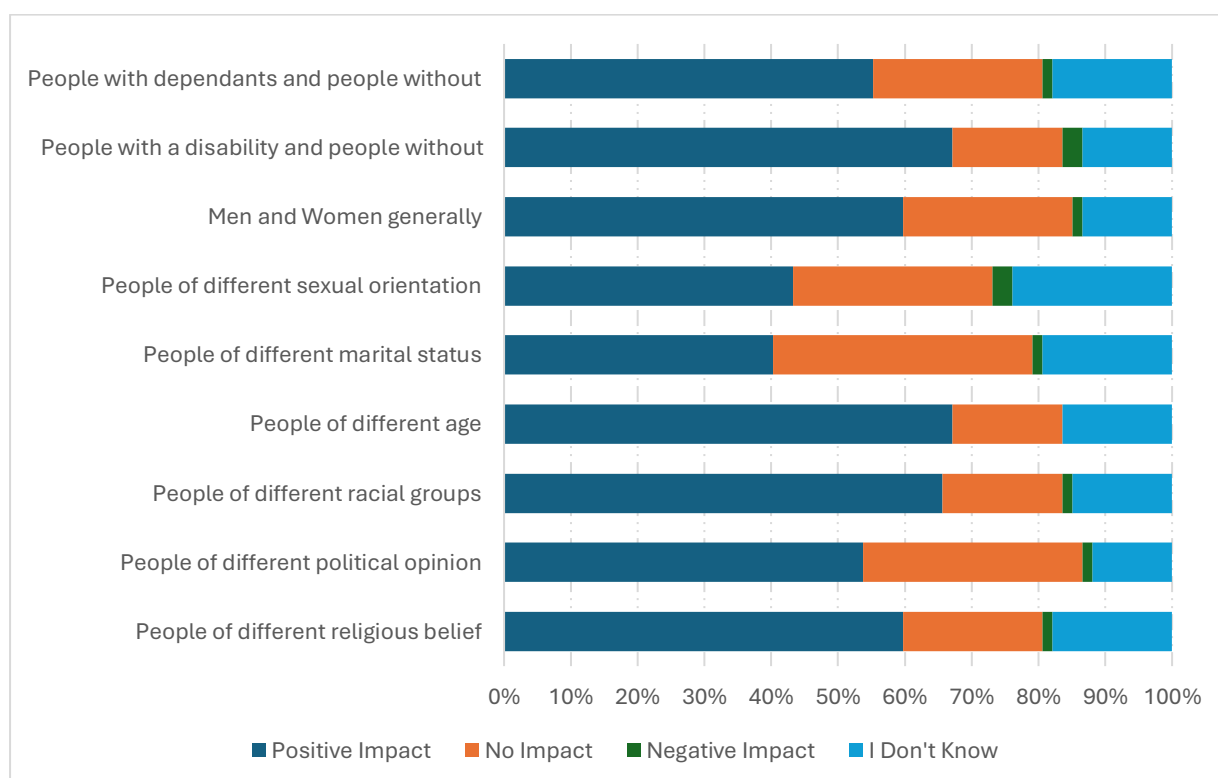
6. Summary of consultation responses

Between 7 October 2024 and 12th January 2025, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council carried out a 13-week public consultation, accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), on the draft, reviewed Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030. During the consultation period a Draft EQIA Consultation Report was made available on the Council's website together with a questionnaire on Citizen Space, alongside the Connected review document, designed to facilitate responses. Targeted workshops took place during the consultation period with section 75 groups.

A total of eight written responses were obtained from the online survey during the consultation process, though not all eight commented on all sections in their responses.

Responses were as follows-

Please describe the impact you think this draft Midpoint Review on Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 would have on Equality of Opportunity between the people in the groups below.



Please provide any further comments you may have in relation to your response (6 responses)

- *I don't know the proposed impact as I don't have enough evidence at the moment.*
- *The needs of men and women when it comes to safety are different, consideration of the risks women and girls face in their everyday lives needs to be part of any community planning approach.*
- *We are a diverse community but to succeed they all need to integrate and not just have their own areas.*
- *I just think there are too many of these plans nowadays. The time and money spent could be used to create real impact in our communities. This is highlighted by the low engagement in these exercises and the overly wordy nature of the plans means no one actually cares about them.*
- *Intentions are good. It is difficult to assess the potential impact. Changing the way some people think can be very challenging. Having a welcoming and inclusive community is vital. Sadly, not everyone wants change.,*
- *We should have a society where everybody is included*

Do you have any comments on how we can reduce potential negative impacts on Equality of Opportunity? (8 responses)

- *An equality and human rights policy is the foundation stone for any community and supporting the vulnerable could reduce inequality e.g. volunteering to assist them. You have to ensure that all interested individuals and parties have the same ability to access all facilities in the area. There maybe should be feedback boxes so all organisations can find out that access and equality has been obtained.*
- *spend money on things that make our communities better. Tidy open spaces, offer inhabitants things to do, encourage businesses (lower rates etc).*
- *In terms of protecting the environment and heritage, and promoting the enjoyment of our green spaces, we need to consider how it is possible to maximise the existing assets in order to best serve those with disabilities and transport challenges.*
- *Treat everyone equally*
- *Ensure proactivity of all groups and beliefs regardless of birthplace or sexuality.*
- *More awareness and education in community groups and schools via workshops*
- *get folk together to talk face to face and explain each other's views*

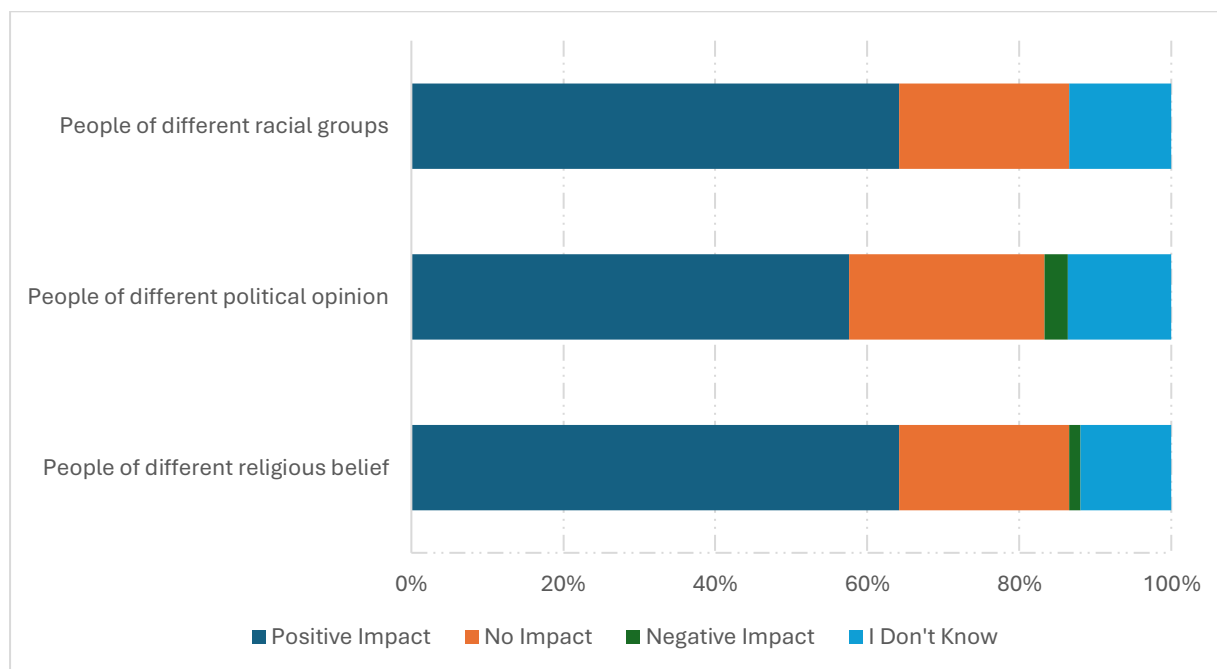
- *Treat all groups and religious organisations equally and with impartiality. There should be no difference in funding opportunities for the Orange Order than that of the GAA which I have no problem in the GAA getting funding when they qualify*

Do you have any comments on how we can best promote Equality of Opportunity? (7 responses)

- *The first very obvious thing is to identify any serious issues within the community. What is wrong and what needs to change? The best thing to find these issues is by following cases say on social media, speaking to members of the community or engaging with a human rights group.
You could organise an event like a photo exhibition, a public debate or a local meet-up to draw attention to inequality issues. Invite members of your local community to attend and engage in a dialogue.
Create a community newsletter offering a human rights perspective on issues that happen in the community.*
- *I have concluded that dividing people into groups and group identity is unhelpful. Bureaucracy loves dividing people into groups because it helps with a box-ticking mentality.
People are individuals and should be treated as equals under the law in a democratic society.*
- *While equality of opportunity is vitally important, I feel it is essential to ensure equity also. Different groups face different challenges and need different solutions to those challenges a community plan cannot effect change if it creates a one size fits all solution.*
- *Local champions acting as points of contact for tourists or visitors to our places would allow better communication. It is often hard for people to access information about places if they wish to visit. Allowing/enabling local points of contact would also help to connect the community with each other better. Information is often anonymous and centralised.*
- *Ensure it is apparent that it is aimed at giving everyone a fair chance.*
- *being fair equal amounts of 1 from each group*
- *Open and honest dialogue and fairness in the application process*

Good Relations

Please describe the impact you think this draft Midpoint Review on Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 2017-2030 would have on Good Relations between people in the groups below.



Please provide any further comments you may have in relation to your response (2 responses)

- All positive impact in the community is beneficial. We feel that inequality and inclusivity should not be political therefore the reason for the positive choice.*
- Needs to be more integration from these parties*

Do you have any comments on how we can reduce potential negative impacts on Good Relations? (1 response)

- Creating a positive ethos, a culture, of good relations and recognising the need to promote positive relations within and between communities.*

Do you have any comments on how we can best promote Good Relations? (5 responses)

- The main action that can be done is to Network as Much as Possible and communicate with the community to get feedback of what each organisation can do; keep your promises.
Hold a community "conference/question and answer" event which will give the*

community the chance to meet the council and talk about their concerns or have a certain agenda to discuss beforehand.

- *Have objectives on tackling sectarianism*
- *Education on all genders, races, religions etc*
- *School projects, a social fair to show how diverse a community we are.*
- *Again without repeating myself being open and honest, don't hide behind decisions that were made months ago and come out with it when there is no time to challenge it. The better people can trust our council and councillors the better good relations will follow*

7. Conclusion

Feedback obtained during this consultation phase of the EQIA was limited, with only eight responses to some of the questions on the online submission, although focus groups targeted at section 75 groups along with the survey responses combined were effective in confirming issues that were already raised during the pre-consultation period through workshops and 121 meetings, reinforcing the need to acknowledge and address the concerns of marginalised and disadvantaged groups during the rollout of the reviewed Connected – A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2035. These issues have already been highlighted earlier in the report and are incorporated within Connected's themes, long term outcomes and cross cutting themes.

This EQIA has not discovered additional adverse impacts but has established that the reviewed Connected community plan may have the potential to enhance the quality of life for all residents within the borough. However, this will not happen automatically and will need to include a recognition of the challenges faced in making sure that the reviewed Connected- A Community Plan for ABC 2017-2030 delivers irrespective of a person's identity or membership of a particular group or community, extending across all Section 75 categories.

8. Monitoring

Monitoring is presently gathered as part of the action lead progress updates twice a year which then feeds into the Statement of Progress every 2 years, though this is somewhat limited.

It is hoped that later in 2025 a performance management framework will be developed to fully capture equality data for all of the actions delivered under Connected. The aspiration is that this will collectively provide an insight into the extent to which our 2030 vision is being realised through our themes, long term outcomes, indicators and cross cutting themes of connectivity, equality and sustainability which underpin everything that we do.

“We have a happy, healthy & connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.” (2030 vision)

Through these measures, we aspire to enable everyone, but particularly the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society. Monitoring will be firmly in place through the performance management framework to capture relevant data at each stage of implementation, which will identify mechanisms for considering the impact on equality of opportunity and good relations across relevant Section 75 groups.

The monitoring aspect of the framework will be mindful of identifying and addressing existing gaps in data/information and should report on a regular basis. Responsibility for monitoring cannot rest solely with the Council but should involve all partners and action leads involved in Connected through its delivery.

At this early stage of implementation, a commitment to the progression of the performance management framework should ensure that the reviewed Connected community plan can continue to help promote equality of opportunity and good relations and can deliver on its themes and priorities. At later stages of implementation then, further screening of emerging initiatives, projects and programmes by the relevant action leads should help to ensure that

Section 75 principles continue to be mainstreamed into Connected, thereby hopefully removing the requirement to subject Connected to later scrutiny through a further EQIA.

In addition, as part of this EQIA, the results of ongoing monitoring will be reviewed on an annual basis and included in the Council's annual review on progress to ECNI.