



our community engagement strategy

Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Community Planning Partnership

JUNE 2019

table
of contents

FOREWORD	
A message from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Community Planning Strategic Partnership	03
01 ENGAGE	
Why engaging with our communities is important	04 - 05
02 DEVELOP	
Improve community engagement	06 - 07
03 ABOUT	
About our Community Planning Partnership	08 - 11
04 FRAMEWORK	
Our Community Engagement Framework	12 - 15
05 ACHIEVE	
Achieving Quality Community Engagement	16 - 17
06 CHALLENGES	
Improve community involvement	18 - 19
07 NEXT	
Next Steps and Action Plan	20 -25



foreword

Community planning is about improving the quality of life of people who live and work in our Borough. Communities having a greater say in how their services are delivered and how their area is planned is at the heart of this work. This Community Engagement Strategy sets our community planning partnership's aspirations, along with the steps we will take together to make sure that people can be more involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

We developed and agreed our vision for the Borough and our community planning priorities by actively seeking the involvement of and listening to local people, businesses and community and voluntary organisations. As we take actions to deliver on our nine shared outcomes arranged around the three strategic pillars of **Community, Economy and Place** we are committed to having an **open, inclusive and ongoing dialogue** with our communities.

Roger Wilson

Chair of the Community Planning
Strategic Partnership

Ruth Bell

Vice-Chair of the Community Planning
Strategic Partnership



01

engage with **communities**



Why engaging with our communities is important

We want to make a **positive difference** for people and communities and **support people** to have more of a direct say in the decisions that affect their neighbourhoods and lives.

We recognise that there are many benefits of good community engagement:

- Local plans and services are more responsive to local needs and build on local strengths and assets;
- Skills and knowledge in communities and across public and private sector partners are brought together broadening understanding of the issues and fostering joint action which has greater impact;
- Positive relationships, mutual trust and respect are forged and strengthened;
- The views and experiences of those who may experience barriers to having a voice (for example, because of poverty and social exclusion, discrimination, disability or age) shape the priorities and solutions of the partnership;
- People have increased knowledge of how decisions are made and are supported to influence and shape decisions leading to a sense of effective participation and improved quality of life;
- People are energised and more confident.

We welcome the statutory duty on Community Planning Partners to seek community participation in the community planning process.

COMMUNITY IS DEFINED IN ITS BROADEST SENSE & INCLUDES:

- ✓ our residents;
- ✓ our service users;
- ✓ voluntary body representatives whose activities benefit our district;
- ✓ our businesses; and
- ✓ other persons interested in the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of the area.

We acknowledge that good community engagement is at the heart of addressing inequality. Therefore, we will strive to enable and empower the full participation of all our community. We will make extra efforts to actively engage with those who are traditionally underrepresented or face barriers to inclusion including women, children and young people, people with disabilities and rural dwellers.

02

develop
a strategy



Why develop a Community Engagement Strategy?

THIS STRATEGY WILL

- 1 Enhance our community engagement through agreed standards, defined roles and clear actions; and
- 2 Maximise opportunities for people to be more involved and have a meaningful say in decisions which affect their lives.

As a partnership we are **committed to working together** and have agreed to use this strategy as an opportunity to

- ✓ learn from each other and share good practice;
- ✓ develop our partnership's processes to make the most of our collective reach into the community;
- ✓ enable more people to influence and develop ownership of the Community Plan;
- ✓ respond to growing demands for transparency and accountability; and
- ✓ reflect on the quality of our engagement.

“

“Delivering public health effectively means working at the heart of communities – not only empowering people to live healthier lives, but also listening and learning to ensure that we deliver services and support effectively. Working collaboratively with our partners and engaging with residents of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough are helping us to improve people’s health and wellbeing across the area.”

PHA

“

“Keeping people safe is the core ethos of policing. Partner engagement, collaborative working and listening to the concerns of the community helps us to focus and deliver an effective response to local issues.”

PSNI

03

about our community planning partnership

While there are 13 statutory community planning partners who have specific duties to participate, we recognise that to achieve the long-term aspirations set out in our community plan, businesses, the voluntary sector and statutory agencies need to **work together to make a difference**.

Membership of our partnership reflects this. There are over 300 people from around 90 organisations who sit on the wider partnership structures. This inclusive approach to developing our partnership, with an emphasis on building strong working relationships, has created shared ownership of the plan across sectors and across the Borough.

Our Borough has vibrant and diverse community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors. In June 2018, we established a Community and Voluntary Sector Panel to make sure that these sectors were partners in the process. There are currently 38 people on the panel and these representatives play an important role in keeping the wider sector and local communities informed and involved.

“The Community and Voluntary Sector Panel provides an opportunity to shape not only our own future but the futures of our children and grandchildren. It allows us direct input into decisions that have a direct and long-term effect on both our social and working lives.

The Community Engagement Strategy is an important tool for the residents of the Borough and it is essential that all of the various groupings within the community network take advantage of it and become engaged.”

PANEL MEMBER

“ABC Community Network welcomed the opportunity of being actively involved in the community planning governance structure, including chairing the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel and representing the panel at the Community Planning Strategic Partnership. The process to date has been very inclusive and ensured formal, ongoing participation of the community and voluntary sector in the development of the Community Plan and its implementation.”

CHAIR OF PANEL

COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR PANEL

We are committed to working with local business to ensure that they can also play an active role. Local businesses contribute through creating local wealth, but also have a role to play in the community as good corporate citizens. Community planning offers opportunities for local businesses to be involved in how the area is planned, and also to give back to their communities.

Our Elected Members sit on all of the partnership structures. They have a key leadership role to play, including reaching out to communities to ensure that the community plan is meeting local needs and aspirations. We will work with colleagues across Council to ensure that our Elected Members are supported in this work.

THEMATIC ACTION PLANNING TEAMS

HEALTHY

COMMUNITY

CONFIDENT & WELCOMING

COMMUNITY

SKILLED & ENTERPRISING

ECONOMY

TOURISM

ECONOMY

CREATIVE

PLACE

ENHANCED & REVITALISED

PLACE

ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

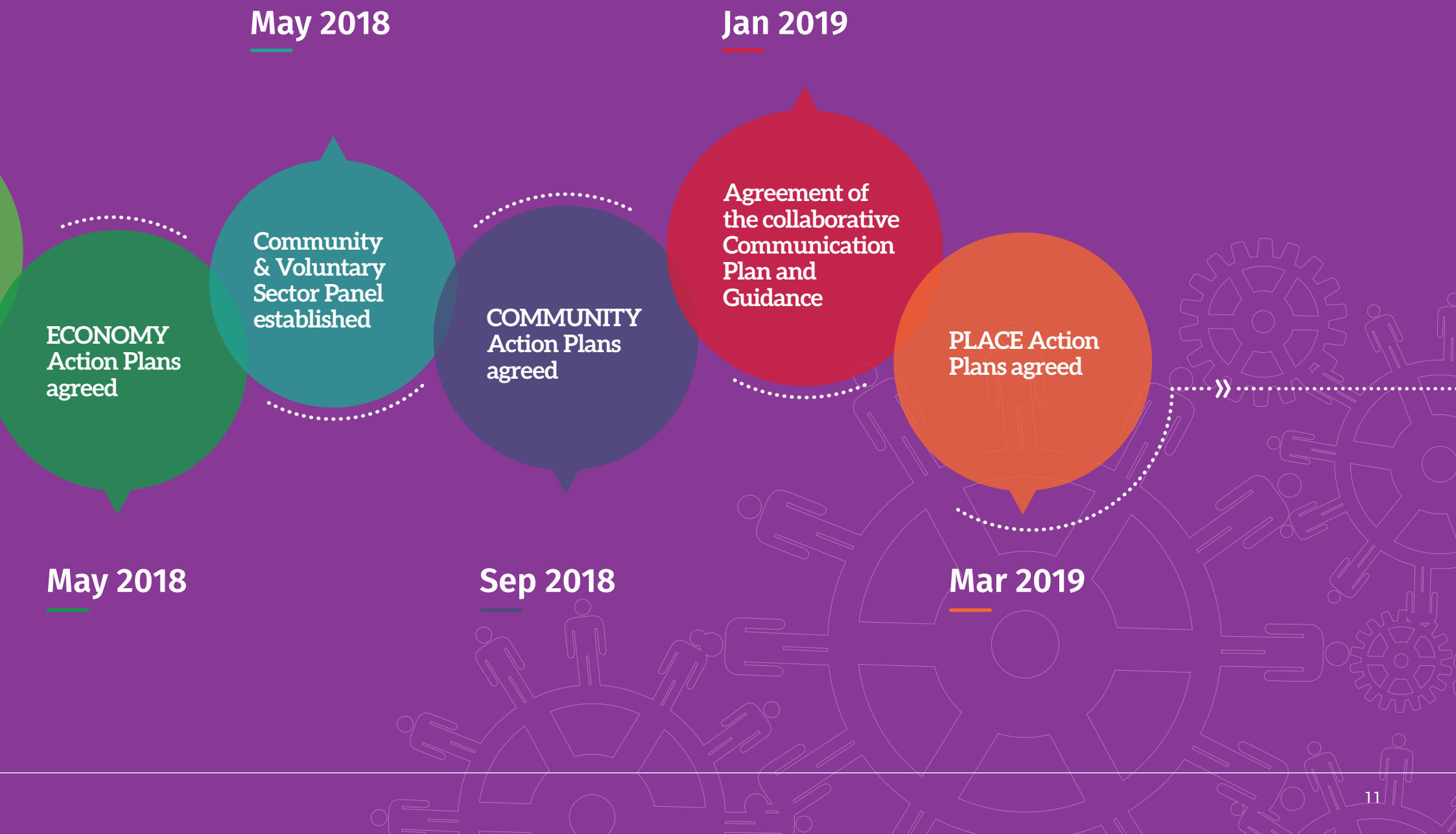
“

Community planning is about giving local people their opportunity to have their say on issues that matter to them and their communities. It is an exciting time for us and by working together we can explore new, innovative and creative ways to deliver public services that will make a positive impact and bring about real change”

COUNCILLOR



how we
got here



04

our community engagement framework

As partners we are committed to increasing levels of community involvement in our engagement processes and achieving our Confident Community long-term outcome that ***“Everyone has opportunities to engage in community life and shape decisions - we have a strong sense of community belonging and take pride in our area.”***

There are varying levels of engagement and communities can participate in a range of ways and to differing levels of influence. ***Each level of involvement is important and has a role in the engagement process.***

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a 5-step framework which sets out the varying depths and scope of community engagement and establishes five potential roles for the community in any engagement process. ***The framework supports partners to determine the level and style of engagement required to achieve their engagement goal.***

Moving along the spectrum from left to right expectations of levels of community input, impact on decision-making processes and distribution of power increases. ***Informing*** and ***Consulting*** with communities have lower levels of community input and involve sharing information through websites, social media or newsletters, or obtaining feedback on a policy, issue or programme.

At the other end of the spectrum ***Collaborating*** with and ***Empowering*** communities to, for example, develop solutions and deliver services, demands high levels of community input, requires ongoing,

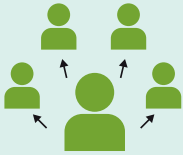
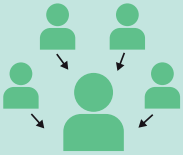
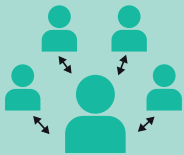
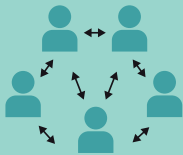
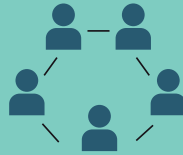
face to face communication and offers greater distribution of power and influence on final decision-making processes. Partnership approaches such as Co-production which bring people together to find shared solutions work best when people are empowered.

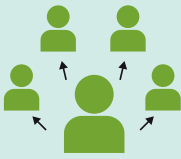
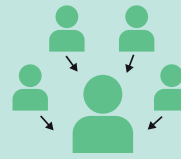
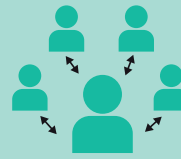
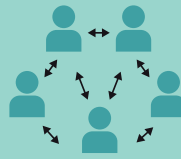
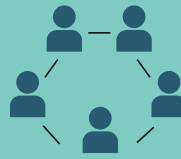
“Co-production is at the heart of ‘Delivering Together 2026’ the transformation programme for health and social care in Northern Ireland. We see partnership working as a key enabler. Co-production seeks to combine people’s strength, knowledge, expertise and resources to improve personal, family and community health and well-being – a genuine partnership approach which brings people together. Delivering Together commits us to building and strengthening partnerships working with other providers of care, including those in the voluntary and community sector and in other sectors in support of the Programme for Government (PfG) priorities – Community Planning is an important mechanism for achieving this.

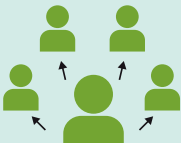
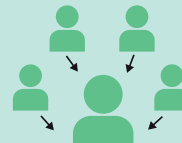
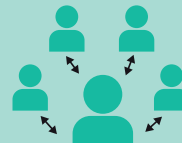
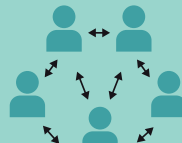
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BOARD

In delivering our nine community planning outcomes we will use the spectrum to determine which level of engagement is most appropriate. Yet, we will always strive to empower communities by creating and supporting meaningful opportunities for people to influence decisions on how local services, programmes and projects are delivered. We recognise and value the positive change that this can contribute to the wellbeing and quality of life experienced across the Borough. It will be important to continue to create an enabling environment to support and increase levels of community engagement and effective influence, bringing decision making closer to local communities.

Each level of engagement is set out below with an explanation of the overall engagement goal, the promise being made to the community, appropriate methods and existing good practice from across members of the Community Planning Partnership.

	 INFORM	 CONSULT	 INVOLVE	 COLLABORATE	 EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
METHODS CAN INCLUDE	• Social Media • Conferences and Events • Newsletters • Leaflets • Websites	• On-line Consultation Hubs • Surveys • Focus groups Mystery Shopping	• Workshops • World Café • Site Visits / Tours	• Citizen advisory committees • Consensus Building • Participatory decision-making • Co-production processes	• Citizen juries • Delegated decision • Community Panels • Participatory Budgeting • Co-production processes

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP	 INFORM	 CONSULT	 INVOLVE	 COLLABORATE	 EMPOWER
	• PSNI: Social Media – humorous Facebook Posts from ‘M’ • Partners’ Magazines and Communications e.g. Borough Link • Health and Social Care Board in partnership with HSCT, the Regional Adoption and Fostering Service and Adoption UK- Adoption Changes Lives Campaign: myth busting on who can adopt.	• Statutory Partners On-line Consultation Tool – Citizen Space • NI Housing Executive: Continuous Tenants Omnibus Survey • Police and Community Safety Partnership Public Meetings to identify public concerns	• PSNI: Next Door Social Media Platform two-way engagement with direct action and response from PSNI www.nextdoor.co.uk	• Health Partners: Consultation Panels – Daisy Hill Hospital Pathfinder Project included early and ongoing engagement • Health Partners and ACBCBC: Good Neighbourhood for Ageing Well Action Plans • Health Partners and ACBCBC: Citizens Hub Gambling and impacts on young people • NI Housing Executive: Housing Community Network identifying policy issues • ABC Community Network: Training Needs Assessment for CVS groups	• Healthy Living Centres in Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon Area Southern Health and Social Care Trust, PHA, Verve Network with Armagh Consortium and Clanrye • NI Housing Executive – Communities Leading Change Participatory Budgeting Project delivered by Newry Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS OUR COMMUNITY PLANNING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP	 INFORM	 CONSULT	 INVOLVE	 COLLABORATE	 EMPOWER
	• PHA: Smoking Cessation Make March your Month to Quit Campaign • HE: Website and My Housing Executive App www.nihe.gov.uk	• Thematic Action Planning Teams wider consultation for action plan preparation	• Process to develop and shape Peace IV Action Plan and Projects	• Education Authority: Community extended hours of school in Keady • Education Authority: Youth Councils Facebook @banbridgeyouthcouncil @craigavonyouthcouncil • Education Authority: Community Conversations giving communities a voice in relation to future school provision in their area Planning for Sustainable Education Provision • Community Plan Community and Voluntary Sector Panel: panel members represented on thematic action planning teams and two panel members represented on the Community Planning Strategic Partnership ensuring a community voice	• ACBCBC: Gosford Forest Park Adventure Play Trail School Workshops and the community made decisions on the design of the play park • ACBCBC: Balloon and Lantern Consultation and decision-making process, public made the final decision

05

achieving
**quality
community
engagement**



We strive to support effective community engagement practice.

To help us do this, as a partnership, we have adopted a set of seven standards, developed in Scotland, to inform our engagement processes. Applying these standards will support consistent engagement practice across our partnership structures, help us to assess and improve our impact and benchmark for good practice.

In order to implement the above standards for community engagement, we will deliver training to each of our Thematic Action Planning Teams. Each team will use the engagement handbook, based on the standards, to enable us to plan effectively and to reflect on and measure the effectiveness of our community engagement.

We are also mindful of and guided by Community Development National Occupational Standards and Values which seek to empower, enable and encourage participation which has a positive impact on poverty, discrimination and social exclusion.

Source: Scottish Community Development Centre and Scottish Government National Standards for Community Engagement
Revised in 2016: www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards



06

challenges community engagement

As we move towards engagement that is more empowering, and requires greater levels of community involvement there are three main challenges. Research by What Works Scotland emphasises the importance of planning and designing engagement which is **Inclusive**; **Deliberative** and ultimately has **Impact**.



Source: Escobar, O 2014, Towards Participatory Democracy in Scotland. in POST (ed.), Scotland 44: Ideas for a new nation.

INCLUSIVE & DIVERSE

Views and perspectives should be representative of wider society and not be dominated by the 'usual suspects' or those who can shout loudest. Inclusive engagement is central to addressing inequality. The challenge is to design engagement processes which reduce barriers to those commonly referred to as 'hard to reach' or perhaps more accurately 'easy to ignore'. As a partnership we are committed to identifying gaps in involvement and will undertake targeted projects to address these. It is also important to design processes that include a diversity of perspectives and knowledge to tap into the wisdom of the crowd. Using a range of engagement channels will appeal to a wider cross-section of people.

DELIBERATIVE

Safe spaces should be created which support evidence based, facilitated discussion and exchange which can lead to more informed citizens and decision-making. As a partnership we will strive to create and support such spaces and opportunities.

IMPACT

It is important that participants feel their contributions are valued and that they can tangibly see how their input has made a difference to policy and decision-making.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING AND MINI-PUBLIC PROCESSES are two innovative techniques which seek to include a diverse range of citizens, create spaces for meaningful and informed exchange and empower citizens to make a real difference through engagement which is influential and has clear links to policy and decision-making or to resource allocation.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING (PB) directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending and priorities of a defined public budget to meet local needs. There are two principal PB models: Small grants allocation with individual pots of money and mainstream investment where a percentage of a resource is allocated via PB. In both processes a menu of ideas or projects are identified through a process of deliberation; participants vote for their priorities with the resources going to the projects or ideas which receive the most support. PB is much more than just deciding how resources are allocated. It provides opportunities to engage in innovative ways that reach out to and increases participation from people who may not have a voice. It improves trust and builds relationships and connections and it empowers participants to make decisions. The partnership will pilot a PB project and develop a local PB network for the Borough to support the development of further PB processes.

“

“The Housing Executive was delighted to participate in the pilot PB project in Newry Mourne and Down. As an organisation that works closely with community groups, we are always keen to explore new and innovative ways with engaging the communities we serve. The PB pilot empowered communities to lead and make real changes in respect of issues that matter most to them. It is our intention to investigate ways which we can use this approach in supporting our work with communities across Northern Ireland”

NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING EXECUTIVE

MINI-PUBLICS bring together randomly selected citizens who are representative of the wider public. They include two key stages: learning and information exchange on a particular issue or theme and secondly, facilitated discussion and scrutiny of that evidence to develop collective recommendations or to inform policy and decision-making and wider public opinion. The partnership will research the range of mini-public techniques and identify opportunities to pilot this approach with the aim of delivering more informed, more inclusive, deliberative and influential engagement processes.

07

next steps & action plan





It will be important for us to establish clear roles and responsibilities for partners in delivering this Community Engagement Strategy.

Community Planning Strategic Partnership

The Community Planning Strategic Partnership has overall responsibility for the implementation of this Community Engagement Strategy. They have a role in troubleshooting and ensuring communities can see how their engagement has made a difference.

Engagement and Communications Working Group

This group has already overseen the establishment of the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel and has developed a joined-up Communications Plan and Guidance for the partnership.

This strategy has been developed with the Engagement and Communications Working Group, and while some of the actions sit with the Thematic Action Planning Teams, they will have a key role in driving and overseeing the actions within the strategy and reporting to the Community Planning Strategic Partnership on its implementation.

Thematic Action Planning Teams

Thematic Action Planning Teams are responsible for ongoing community engagement. Each team will apply the Community Engagement Standards. This will involve attending training on the standards and using the engagement manual associated with the standards.

Community and Voluntary Sector Panel

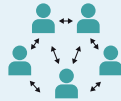
The Community and Voluntary Sector Panel has a key role as a partner, including promoting engagement with residents and the wider community and voluntary sector. The panel can also advise the partnership on community engagement.

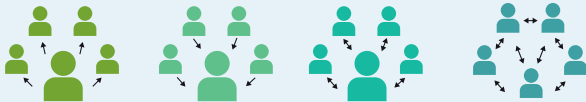
Community Planning Team

The Community Planning Team will have a key role in supporting partners as they embed the use of Community Engagement Standards. They will support and encourage partners to get involved in training and help promote its use across the whole partnership. The Community Planning Team will embed the Community Engagement Standards in all areas of their work and ensure these are used during the review of the Community Plan.

The partnership is committed to ongoing community engagement and specific actions through the thematic action plans. Existing actions are outlined below, along with additional actions to achieve the ambitions as set out in this strategy.

To enhance our community engagement through agreed standards, defined roles and clear actions

ACTION	WHO?	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT
Continue to implement collaborative communications plan and communications guidance.	Communications Working Group and all partners	Ongoing	Staff and use of existing communications tools	 INFORM
Communicate our first progress statement in a clear and accessible way.	Communications Working Group	Nov/Dec 2019		 INFORM
Implement the Scottish Community Engagement Standards through training and the use of a Community Engagement Handbook.	Community Planning Partnership TAP Teams Engagement Working Group	Ongoing 2019-2020	Carnegie UK Trust to resource through Embedding Wellbeing in NI Project	 INFORM  CONSULT  INVOLVE  COLLABORATE  EMPOWER
Work across the partnership to research and to share good practice, to develop an engagement tool box and joining up existing engagement mechanisms.	Engagement Working Group	June 2019 – March 2020	Carnegie UK Trust to resource through Embedding Wellbeing in NI Project	 INFORM  CONSULT  INVOLVE  COLLABORATE  EMPOWER

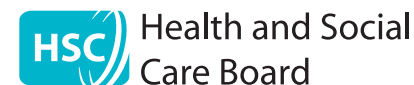
ACTION	WHO?	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT
Work together to ensure that the partnership plan and deliver a Borough-wide engagement exercise to review the community plan, in line with the Scottish Community Engagement Standards.	Community Planning Partnership Engagement and Communications Working Group CVSP TAP Teams	2021		 INFORM CONSULT INVOLVE COLLABORATE
Provide development support to Elected Members on community planning.	Learning and Development, Council Member Services, Council			
Report regularly to the Community Planning Strategic Partnership on progress towards implementing this strategy and impact achieved.	Engagement and Communications Working Group	Reports presented annually to the partnership	Staff time	

To maximise opportunities for people to be more involved and have a meaningful say in decisions which affect their lives

ACTION	WHO?	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT
Identify any gaps in Section 75 involvement and those facing barriers to inclusion and deliver targeted projects with communities to ensure everyone can shape the community plan and its actions.	Engagement Working Group	March to September 2020	Carnegie UK Trust to resource through Embedding Wellbeing in NI Project	 INFORM CONSULT INVOLVE COLLABORATE EMPOWER
Work with children and young people to develop innovative models to engage them in the partnership.	Confident and Welcoming Community Action Planning Team	March to September 2020	Carnegie UK Trust to resource through Embedding Wellbeing in NI Project	 INFORM CONSULT INVOLVE COLLABORATE EMPOWER
Continue to support the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel to contribute to the partnership and further explore the role of these sectors in public decision making.	CVSP Engagement Working Group	Ongoing	Carnegie UK Trust to resource through Embedding Wellbeing in NI Project	 INFORM CONSULT INVOLVE COLLABORATE EMPOWER

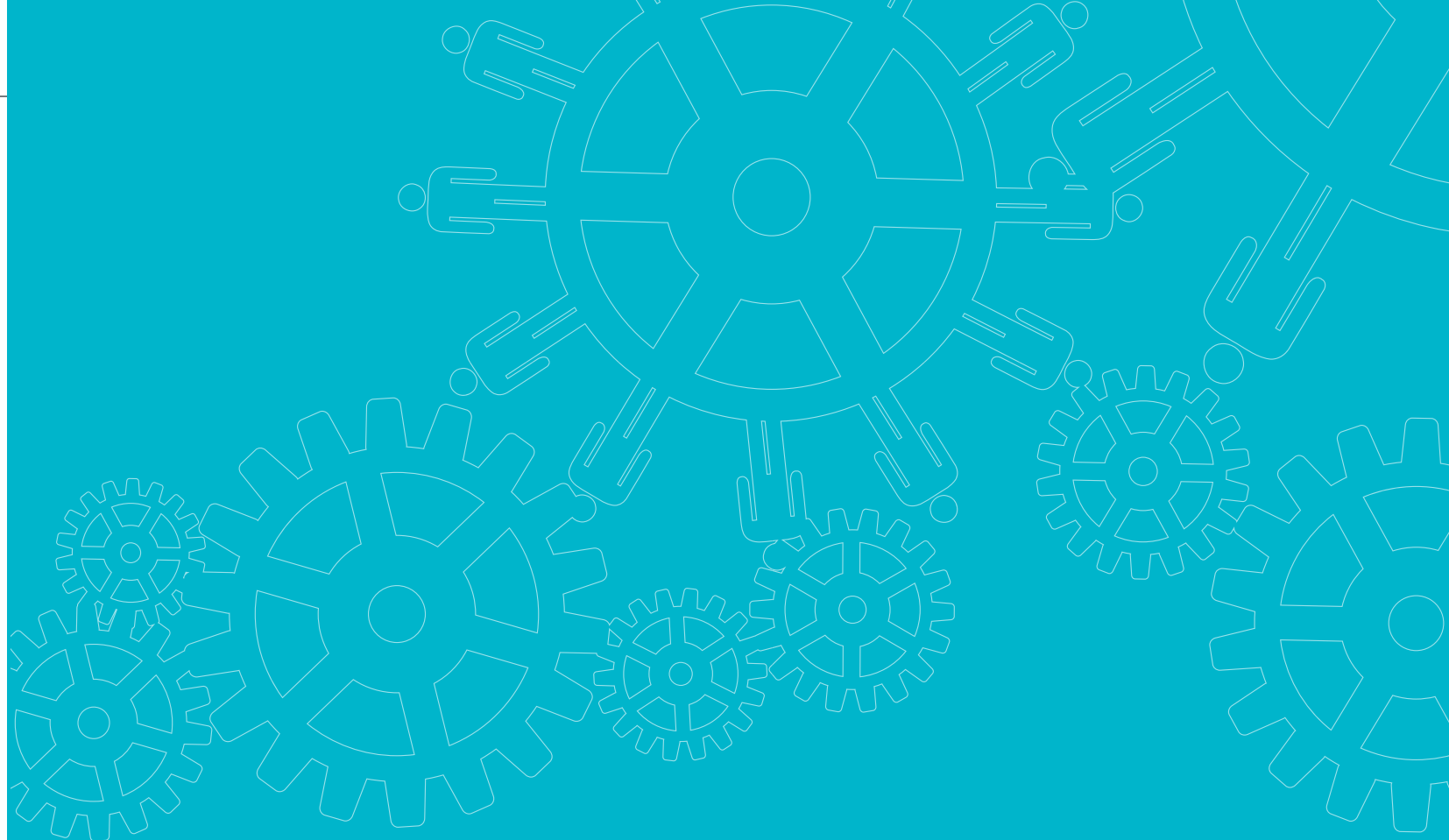
ACTION	WHO?	TIMEFRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT
Work with local business to agree a model for their involvement in the community planning partnership.	Community Planning Team, Council Economic Development, Invest NI	Ongoing		 INFORM CONSULT INVOLVE COLLABORATE EMPOWER
Implement a Participatory Budgeting pilot.	Creative Place Action Planning Team	Autumn 2019 and ongoing	Partners to contribute funding pool	 EMPOWER
Support a Participatory Budgeting Network for the Borough.	Engagement Working Group	From Autumn 2019	Carnegie UK Trust to resource through Embedding Wellbeing in NI Project	 EMPOWER

our community planning strategic partnership



thank
you

This strategy was developed in conjunction with **Community Places** through **Carnegie UK Trust's Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Project**. Our thanks also go to **Dr Claire Bynner** and **Dr Oliver Escobar** for their ideas and training which influenced the strategy and to all those from across the partnership who took part in the workshops during its development.



For further information please contact

Community Planning Team

✉ communityplanning@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

☎ 028 4066 0644

✉ Community Planning Team
Civic Building
Downshire Road
Banbridge
BT32 3JY