

# Tourism Strategy

2017 – 2022



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# 1. Executive Summary

## Background

Antrim and Newtownabbey possesses a rich cultural and natural heritage, good access and sufficient business infrastructure to establish and sustain a substantial and successful tourism sector. The Borough's principal resources with potential for development for tourism are cultural heritage supported by gardens and parks, waterways and festival and events programme.

## Development Potential

The Borough has a number of major attractions of regional significance in terms of visitor numbers and/or of historic and cultural importance such as Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House and Shane's Castle. These sites attract significant and growing numbers, whereas the Borough's forests, activity sites, museums and theatres provide a regular and sustainable flow of tourists into the Borough, albeit with potential for growth.

There is extensive open space sport and outdoor recreation provision across the Borough including a number of formal parks in the main urban areas. There are opportunities for recreational walking and cycling in the Borough including the Newtownabbey Way and other shorter waymarked routes. The tourism offer of neighbouring Belfast City Council and the ease of access to substantial natural assets that include Lough Neagh, Belfast Lough Shore, the Lower Bann Valley, and parts of both the Belfast Hills and Antrim Hills, creates a diverse range of potential tourism assets in the Borough.

Tourism assets in the Borough are concentrated in several hubs. Antrim Town provides a range of historic, cultural and activity tourism interests. Randalstown and Newtownabbey provide minor hubs, with the latter providing a more commercial leisure focus of tourism interests. Other assets are distributed evenly throughout the Sixmilewater Valley or are close to the A6 corridor. There is a noticeable gap in tourism assets in rural areas to the south of Antrim, Templepatrick and Mallusk despite the area having an abundance of accommodation available.

Antrim and Newtownabbey is located between two of Northern Ireland's most significant key tourism destination areas, namely Belfast and the Causeway Coast and Glens. There is good access into the Borough, public transport is good and transport networks within the Borough are good. Antrim and Newtownabbey has a strong hotel and conference facility provision, but a shortage of tourism products and experiences – 'things to see and do'.

Antrim and Newtownabbey visitor attractions are not sufficiently developed or presented to the market. Through the boost provided by the Tourism NI Draft Tourism Strategy 2025, and by collaborating with neighbouring Local Authorities, private sector developers and operators, and local communities, Antrim and Newtownabbey can develop a distinctive range of tourism products that will complement tourism developments in Northern Ireland and generate substantial socio-economic benefits for the Borough. Opportunities exist for Antrim and Newtownabbey to deliver a visitor destination, achievable within an environment of fiscal constraints, by looking at creative ways to leverage investment.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

The Strategy for Antrim and Newtownabbey 2017 -2022 will drive awareness and encourage tourism and recreational use of the Borough's resources. Developments to facilitate such usage will focus on:

- **Enhancing** the Visitor Experience and Product Development including developments under: Culture and Heritage; Natural Heritage; Outdoors; Festivals and Events; Business tourism;

Accommodation; Food and the Evening Economy, each supported by the development of clusters and corridors; and engaging with visitor markets activities.

- **Improving** Access and Infrastructure including developments under: Visitor Information Centres; Transport Facilities; and Services Directional and interpretative signage; and
- **Effective** People and Skills Development.

In developing its range of tourism products, it is proposed that Antrim and Newtownabbey should focus on following developments to ensure that all areas and communities receive socio-economic benefit for the development of the sector. These will be:

1. Cultural heritage development through the following innovations: Ancient Celtic and Medieval History; Plantation of Ulster and Ulster Scots; Industrial heritage; World War I and World War II; Combat and Clashes: Battle of Antrim, Nine Years War; and Vikings.
2. Clusters of attractions and activities centred on parks and gardens; waterway developments; outdoor activity, festival and events developments and the provision an eco-tourism experience.
3. Business tourism and a strengthening of marketing support for business tourism through emphasis on the infrastructure and facilities available in the Borough;

These primary product developments will be supplemented and complemented through development and marketing support for activities in:

- The food and evening entertainment provision;
- A broadened range of visitor accommodation oriented towards the interest and preferences of target market segments;
- Improvements to access around the Borough;
- Interpretation and directional signage and visitor information provision;
- Marketing and branding of the Borough;
- People and skills development through establishing tourism skills and training programmes and tourism awareness programmes.

## **Markets**

Antrim and Newtownabbey has two diverse but equally important markets – leisure/recreation and business. The developments proposed and current offering detailed in this strategy must be marketed using appropriate tools, with a focus on matching the offering with primary market segments, as follows:

### **Domestic**

- Mature Cosmopolitans
- Family Fun
- Time Together

### **ROI, GB and Overseas**

- Culturally Curious
- Great Escapers
- Social Energisers (secondary)
- Young and Lively (ROI only)

Considering the maturity of the visitor offering presently in the Borough, it is felt that the initial primary focus should be on the domestic market, concentrating efforts on reviewing and developing the product for the local and NI market initially. Awareness of the tourism offering in Antrim and Newtownabbey is currently not strong. Focusing on the domestic market in the first instance will

ensure the offering is of sufficient standard, clustered effectively and that marketing activity has been increased and enhanced. This is likely to take years 1 and 2 to progress. Thereafter (and potentially with some overlap in Year 2) activity should focus on consolidating the domestic market but also developing the out of state market, once the product has embedded and the sector's confidence and skills have developed to support self-assured promotion and continued development of the offering.

### **Action Plan**

To put the strategy into practice over a five-year period, an Action Plan is presented in the following five themes:

- Organisation and Management;
- Visitor Experience and Product Development;
- Access and Infrastructure;
- Engaging with the Visitor Markets and Marketing; and People Skills Development.

Realisation of the Action Plan Antrim and Newtownabbey will ensure a well-established range of tourism attractions and activities targeted at its primary market segments and supported by a strong private sector.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Background**

In January 2017, EMG Solutions and Type AB consultants were appointed by the Council to develop a Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2022 for the new Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area. The Strategy was to include a comprehensive analysis of visitor servicing provision and activities throughout the Borough, identifying potential opportunities for investment and growth.

### **2.2 Strategy Outputs**

The Strategy aims to ensure that all opportunities are identified to develop and enhance the tourism offering, and to drive an increase in visitor numbers and spend.

This Strategy has the following outputs:

- A detailed analysis of the tourism industry potential in terms of physical growth, clusters and corridors, and business and skills development;
- A prioritised and costed five-year Action Plan indicating how Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council can meet, develop, support and grow the local tourism sector in a practical and innovative way, that is customer led, demand-driven and focused on promoting new opportunities for investment;
- A marketing action plan for the tourism sector in the Borough, identifying the key market segments, marketing activity and appropriate media channels, including digital platforms;
- Recommendations on delivery, including potential collaboration with other relevant partners and tourism partnerships;
- Tourism key performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation, in terms of increasing visitor trips, visitor spend and bed nights etc.;
- External funding opportunities to support tourism development in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

### **2.3 Methodology**

The Strategy has been developed through careful consideration incorporating the following activities:

- Establishing the context for the development of tourism, including consideration of key stakeholder policy objectives and strategies at a local, regional, and national level. Some 23 strategies have been reviewed.
- An up-to-date profile of the tourism and visitor servicing sector in the Borough Council, including baselines and key performance indicators for visitor numbers, revenue/spend, bed nights and employment.
- A tourism product audit for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council which identified the current tourism product portfolio and the current tourism product/service mix. The research has outlined important sectors, for example culture, natural and built heritage, parks and gardens, outdoor and recreational activities, and support services. The audit identified where clusters of related tourism service sectors exist and what sets Antrim and Newtownabbey apart from other Local Government Districts (LGDs).
- Consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Elected Members and Officers, Tourism Northern Ireland, the Antrim and Newtownabbey Tourism Team and Tourism Forum, Partnership representatives: Visit Belfast, Lough Neagh, Belfast Hills, Departmental Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Department for Communities (DfC), local hotels, local potential visitors etc.
- A detailed assessment of the need and demand considering:
  - The tourism infrastructure and resource in Antrim and Newtownabbey;

- Clustering and development of natural corridors, recognising the need for accessibility in geographical terms;
- The activities engaged in by visitors, and the attractions that both overseas visitors and domestic trip takers find most popular; and
- Expected market demand for the destination with consideration given to sustainability and development.
- Analysis of the Borough's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a tourism context;
- A review of comparable Republic of Ireland (RoI) and United Kingdom (UK) and international best practice examples with regard to product development;
- Consideration of future opportunities to grow tourism markets e.g. domestic markets - Connected Families and Footloose Socialisers; and overseas markets - Culturally Curious and Social Energisers;
- Identification of the benefits to be accrued from tourism (domestic and international), and community development in the local and wider area;
- Describing potential high level options for development; and
- Establishing a set of clear recommendations and a prioritised future Action Plan for the development of tourism in Antrim and Newtownabbey; and
- Presenting an outline management, delivery and funding review to support the actions identified.

## 2.4 Report Structure

In response to the objectives, our Strategy Report has the following structure:

Chapter 1:	Executive summary
Chapter 2:	Introduction
Chapter 3:	Current situational analysis
Chapter 4:	Market drivers
Chapter 5:	Consultation research and SWOT
Chapter 6:	Strategy and recommendations
Chapter 7:	Organisation, management and delivery structure, marketing, funding review, key performance indicators and monitoring and evaluation
Chapter 8:	Action Plan

### 3. Current Situation Analysis

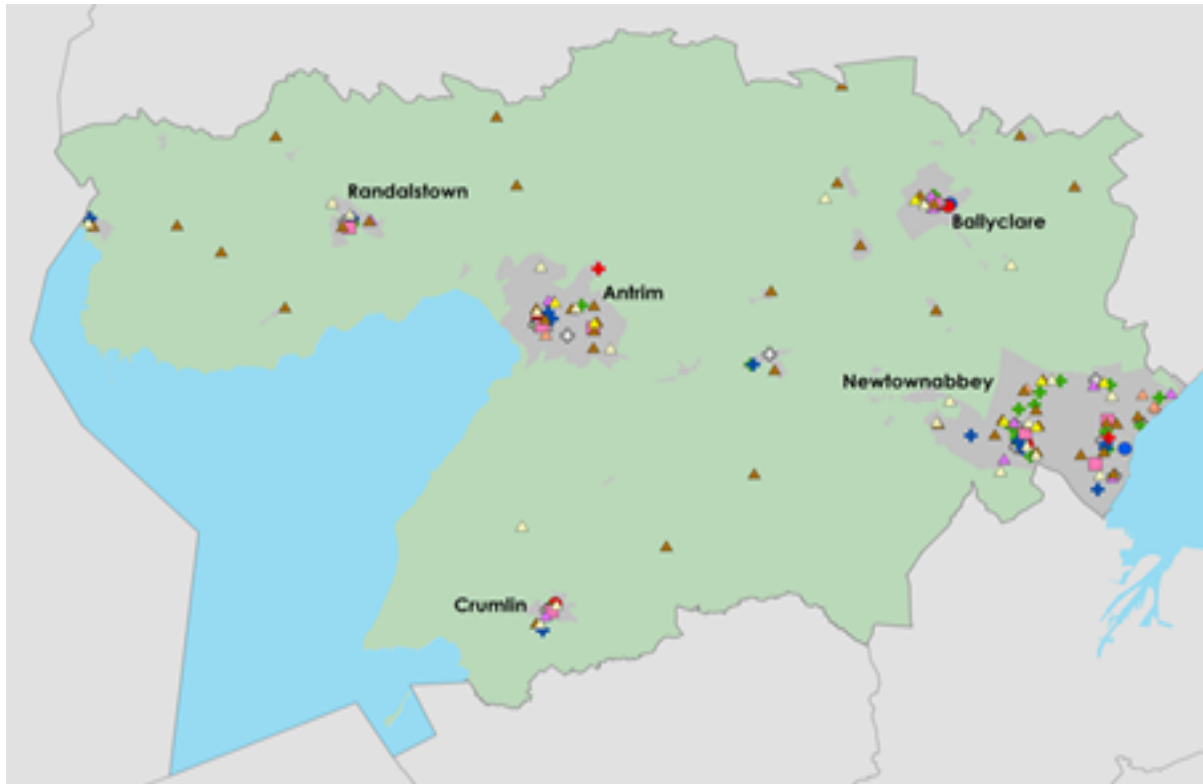
#### 3.1 Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council: Regional and Local Context

Antrim and Newtownabbey stretches 274 square miles (710 km<sup>2</sup>) from the lower River Bann and Lough Neagh to the shores of Belfast Lough at Jordanstown. It is strategically positioned in a geographical context to take full advantage of key transport hubs as visitor gateways into Northern Ireland. Antrim and Newtownabbey locates one of Northern Ireland's five visitor gateways at Belfast International Airport. A second gateway at the Port of Belfast is just two miles from the Borough's boundary on Belfast Lough. In 2016, Belfast International Airport handled approximately 5.1 million passengers, whilst the Port of Belfast handled 1.38 million passengers. The Port of Larne, located approximately 19 kilometres to the north-east of the Borough, handles over 0.6million passengers per year.

Antrim and Newtownabbey is located between two of Northern Ireland's most significant key tourism destination areas, namely Belfast and the Causeway Coast and Glens. These areas, together with the accessibility provided by public transport hubs and corridors, means that existing tourism assets can contribute to a more sustainable form of tourism for Antrim and Newtownabbey, through route development.



Figure 1: Location of Antrim and Newtownabbey



**Figure 2: Antrim and Newtownabbey Map**

### **3.2 Policy Context for Tourism**

To consider the strategic context against which tourism in Antrim and Newtownabbey is set, it was necessary to complement the objectives of national, regional and local strategies, to ensure that tourism actions within this Strategy contribute to the tourism, economic and social development agenda for Northern Ireland. The 23 policies and strategies that were considered were grouped under the following headings:

- Community Planning and Regeneration;
- Activities and Recreation;
- Culture, Arts and Events;
- Marketing and Market Development; and
- Parks and Natural Heritage.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Tourism Strategy 2017-2022 complements the recommendations and actions outlined in each of the policies and strategies considered. Whilst the economic crisis has made a number of the ideas and approaches outlined in policies and strategies somewhat redundant, it is necessary for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to keep in mind the strategic approaches outlined in these documents.

The paragraphs below consider and summarise a number of key strategies, outlining the strategic 'fit' of these with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Tourism Strategy 2017-2022.

#### **Regional Policy Context - New Programme for Government (PfG) 2016 -2021**

The draft Programme for Government Framework is an approach which focuses on the major societal outcomes that the Executive wants to achieve, and provides a basis for all sectors to contribute to the development of plans and actions. It is an approach that reflects international advice and well-established practice. There are 14 strategic outcomes which, taken together, the Executive believes

best describes the society we wish to have. The outcomes are expressed in a way that provide a clear direction of travel, enables continuous improvement over time, and directs efforts towards developing our wellbeing. The Draft Programme outcomes are illustrated in Figure 3.3 below:

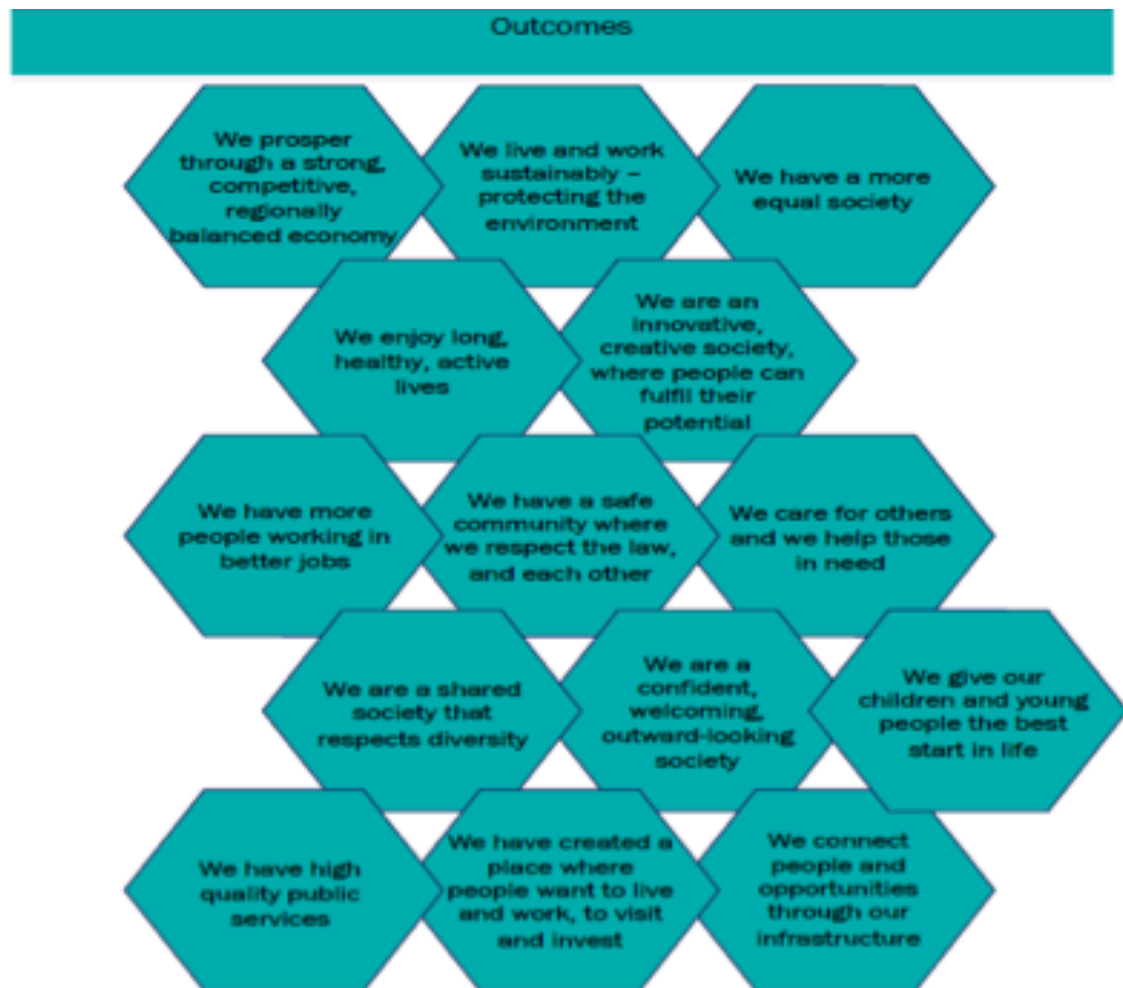


Figure 3: Programme for Government Outcomes Framework

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Tourism Strategy 2017-2022 provides opportunities for tourism that allow stakeholders from a broad spectrum of sectors to offer a coordinated tourism service. This will maximise benefits of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council for residents, local communities and regional and international visitors, and as such, will assist the achievement of the following PfG outcomes:

- Improve our attractiveness as a destination
- Improve our international reputation
- Increase the competitiveness of the economy
- Reduce economic inactivity
- Improve the skills profile of the population
- Increase the proportion of people in work
- Increase the proportion of people working in good Jobs
- Increase the size of the economy
- Increase innovation in our economy
- Improve cultural participation
- Improve shared space

### **Regional Tourism Policy Context**

The 2014 independent **Review of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Wider Structures** (*The Hunter Review*) sought to ensure, *current [tourism] organisational structures are the optimum necessary to deliver the targets set out in the Economic Strategy and the Programme for Government and are effectively aligned with the work of Invest NI.*

The report made 33 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Department for the Economy (DfE) including: the development of a Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland; that Tourism Northern Ireland's client facing destination managers should be based at local level, where they could help develop and implement the tourism element of Council's Community Plans; closer working between Tourism Northern Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland, Tourism Ireland and local councils; and a review of the skills needs of the tourism industry.

### **Tourism NI Draft Tourism Strategy 2025**

The DfE has embarked on the development of a new tourism strategy. It is unclear as to when the Strategy will be implemented. The overarching theme of the strategy is 'internationalising' the Northern Ireland tourism product through expansion of out-of-state markets to drive up interest and awareness of Northern Ireland as a visitor destination by maximising natural assets, culture and heritage and promoting iconic attractions. Key policy areas to be addressed by the strategy include:

- Growing the events and business tourism marketing;
- Creating visitor experiences;
- Developing Northern Ireland's tourism skills;
- Defining and developing the role of government and industry; and
- Developing Northern Ireland's digital tourism experience.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Tourism Strategy 2017-2022 focuses on developing the 'experience' for visitors, ensuring that the experience matches the expectations and standards of all visitors, and provides an authentic experience. This relies on a high level of customer service being delivered through recommendations for improved digital technology and skills training and product familiarisation for all the key players in the visitor information network, in the Borough.

Similarly, the importance of business tourism and events in driving up visitor numbers and generating increased spend has been recognised. In line with the growing influence of natural capital, this strategy supports the development of natural assets, and supports the industry to demonstrate a commitment to sustainable tourism. In addition, an emphasis on collaboration between government, tourism agencies, councils and the private sector has been outlined to support the delivery of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Tourism Strategy 2017-2022.

### **Local Area Plans**

#### **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Corporate Plan 2015-2030**

The Corporate Plan has defined Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's vision for the area as: *"A prosperous place, inspired by our people, driven by ambition."* The Corporate Plan presents the corporate values of Council to be Excellence, Integrity, Commitment and Responsibility, and has commitments and targets under the themes of Place, People, Prosperity and Performance.

This Strategy will complement and help to deliver against Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Corporate Plan, in terms of supporting actions to develop:

- A PLACE where people take pride in their surroundings; where they feel safe and where they can protect and enhance, where possible, natural habitats and built heritage;
- PEOPLE through providing community access to high quality council services and facilities, and supporting an inclusive community supporting and encouraging a culture of tolerance diversity and respect;
- PROSPERITY through maximising tourism opportunities and have a strong arts and cultural economy; and
- PERFORMANCE through an innovative and results focused Strategy aiming to make the best use of resources available.

The development and enhancement of tourism in the Borough will bring about positive changes to public spaces, actions such as product and support services developments in Culture and Heritage, Natural Heritage, Events and Festivals, Business Tourism and Accommodation. It will encourage prosperity in Antrim and Newtownabbey through the attracting new local visitors, and domestic and international tourists. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council will be a welcoming and attractive destination for all visitors.

### **Antrim and Newtownabbey Local Development Plan 2030**

The Local Development Plan is a spatial land use plan that guides the future development and use of land in Antrim and Newtownabbey's towns, villages and rural areas by addressing the spatial implications of social, economic and environmental change. Responsibility for preparation of new local development plans passed to local authorities in 2015.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has commenced work on the preparation of its new Local Development Plan (LDP). The purpose of the new LDP will be to inform stakeholders of how the Borough should develop in the years ahead. It will contain policies and proposals that will be used in determining planning applications. The LDP will be prepared in the context of the Council's overall Corporate Plan and wider government policy including the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS). It will also take account of the Council's Community Plan.

Proposals for tourism are currently assessed under the provisions of the current local development plans for the area (Antrim Area Plan 1984 – 2001 and Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015), the SPPS and several planning policy documents including Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism.

The Council's new LDP will contain new planning policy for tourism proposals within the Borough and will protect land required for any tourist related proposals that may come forward. It will also contain policies to safeguard tourism assets.

The strategy recommendations as outlined in our action plan (Chapter 8) have been considered in line with current planning policy. The Economic Development Section, through the out workings of the Tourism Strategy, will be engaging further with the Local Development Plan Team to ensure the needs of the Borough in terms of tourism are reflected in the forthcoming new LDP.

### **Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan**

This strategy has taken account of the emerging themes of the Community Plan being prepared for the Borough, and intends that it will be fully integrated with the final Community Plan when this is available. The three strands of the Community Plan are: Economic Wellbeing; Environmental

Wellbeing; and Social Wellbeing. They all integrate with, and drive each other. The emerging themes from the plan include:

- Supporting economic development of the Borough – creating opportunities for entrepreneurship and supporting existing businesses that are providing vital employment and services;
- Maintaining and making better use of the Borough’s assets, including open spaces, parks and recreation facilities;
- Regenerating town and village centres and making use of vacant units and redundant spaces;
- Providing better links between public, community and voluntary sectors;
- Providing opportunities and activities for young people;
- Supporting and caring for older members of the community to prevent isolation; and
- Improving transport links within and throughout the Borough.

This Strategy and associated Action Plan will support the delivery of some of the emerging themes of the Community Plan. This includes supporting economic development, product and service development, supporting regeneration in village/towns, and making better use of the Borough’s assets.

### **Strategic Conclusion**

This Strategy also complements many of the policies that provide for the creation of prosperity through an integrated approach to tourism development, regional development, and economic sustainability at a Local, Regional, and National level.

## **3.3 Current Tourism Performance and Impact in the Borough**

To quantify the socio-economic impact of tourism in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area, it is necessary to understand: the levels of tourism (i.e. visits/recreational activity, participants and spending), ideally separated between overseas tourists, domestic visitors and the local population, analysed by three broad motivations i.e. holiday, business and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)); and the contribution made by tourism in the form of business creation and jobs generated. The most up-to-date data available is presented in a comprehensive socio-economic profile of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. The summary below presents key tourism facts and figures for Antrim and Newtownabbey:

### **3.3.1 Antrim and Newtownabbey Tourism Facts and Figures**

- Visitors to the Council area of Antrim and Newtownabbey accounted for 5% of visitors to Northern Ireland in 2015, representing 5% of total tourism revenue. This decreased slightly from 2013 when the Borough received 6% of the total visitors to Northern Ireland and the revenue generated was 6% of total.
- The average tourism spend has decreased from £43m in 2013, to £38m in 2016.
- The average spend per tourism trip in Antrim and Newtownabbey LGD was £185 in 2013, decreasing to £167 in 2015.
- The average number of nights spent also decreased from 4 in 2013, to 3 in 2015.
- In 2016 the origin of visitors to Antrim and Newtownabbey came from Northern Ireland (38%), followed by Great Britain (GB) (37%), RoI (11%), Europe (8%) and North America (6%)<sup>1</sup>.
- In 2016 49% of visitors to Antrim and Newtownabbey came to the area to visit friends and relatives (ranking sixth highest of all LGD); 32% visited for holiday, leisure or pleasure purposes (ranking 8<sup>th</sup> of all LGD)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Average figures recorded for 2014 – 2016

<sup>2</sup> Average figures recorded for 2014 – 2016

- In 2016 Antrim and Newtownabbey and Belfast have the highest proportion of business trips (16%), of all the LDGs in Northern Ireland.
- In 2016 Antrim and Newtownabbey had 8% of all available bed-spaces in Northern Ireland, 10 hotels, 6 Guest Houses, 24 B&Bs and 2 Guest Accommodation (GA) and 14 Self-Catering establishments (64 units). The number of hotels has remained the same since 2012, but the numbers of guesthouses, B&Bs and self-catering establishments have all decreased.
- Room occupancy for Hotels in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council in 2016<sup>3</sup> was 64%, and bed-space occupancy was 45%. This was below the Northern Ireland average of 71% and 55%. Figures for hotel room occupancy were similar to, Causeway Coast and Glens; Derry City and Strabane; and Fermanagh and Omagh LGDs.
- In 2016 occupancy figures for Guest Houses, B&Bs and GA for room occupancy were slightly above the Northern Ireland average, with room occupancy of 37% and bed-space occupancy of 30%, the Northern Ireland average was 36% and 28%. Figures recorded for Guest Houses, B&Bs and GA were similar to Causeway Coast & Glens and Mid and East Antrim LGDs,
- Antrim and Newtownabbey has two 5\* Caravan and Camping Sites. Most visitors come from the UK including Northern Ireland.
- Antrim and Newtownabbey had 4,197 tourism jobs in 2015 – 7% of the Northern Ireland total, the figure has remained the same as those recorded in 2013.<sup>4</sup>
- The top visitor attractions in terms of visitor numbers are Antrim Castle Gardens & Clotworthy House Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council recorded the annual footfall at the end of March 2017 at 464,453<sup>5</sup>.
- The Northern Ireland visitor attraction survey recorded visitor numbers for sites in Antrim and Newtownabbey it identified that Shane's Castle attracted 40,000 visitors (2014-2016); and Clementsmount Fun Farm attracted 15,000 visitors in 2016. The Museum at The Mill visitor numbers are decreasing attracting 15,447 in 2012 and 6,703 visitors in 2016. Sentry Hill Historic House & Visitor Centre has had a steady flow of visitors in the time series approximately 6,000. World of Owls recorded visitor increasing visitor numbers of 5,814 in 2014 to 11,689 in 2016. Ballyrobert Cottage Garden & Nursery had visitor numbers of 4,980 in 2014 increasing to 5,800 in 2016.
- Antrim and Newtownabbey has four Visitor/Local Information Centres. The Borough's Visitor Information Centre (VIC) is located at Antrim's Old Courthouse, and Local Information Centres are located at Mossley Mill, The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, and Randalstown Post Office. Each information centre is co-located with other visitor/cultural/retail services. Antrim's Old Court House VIC record approximately 40,000 counter enquires per annum. The Council also has a partnership agreement with Visit Belfast who operate a Visitor Information Pod at Belfast International Airport (BIA).
- The Borough has three main theatre venues offering a year-round programme: Theatre at the Mill, The Courtyard Theatre (at Ballyearl Arts and Leisure Centre), and the Old Courthouse. The combined capacity for these venues is 768 per event.
- Theatre at the Mill is the largest and the theatre venue for the Borough. In 2016 its average occupancy was 50%; similar recorded figures for the Courtyard was 69% and the Old Courthouse 41%<sup>6</sup>.
- There are six gallery spaces across the Borough in a number of venues which offer opportunities for exhibitions along with arts and culture-related workshops.
- Annually the major events in the Borough have continued to attract growing visitor numbers. The Enchanted Winter Garden is the highlight in the events calendar with 44,000 visitors in December 2016, a significant increase from 17,000 in 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Figures are recorded from January until December for hotels and January to November for Guest Houses, B&Bs and GA

<sup>4</sup> 2015 represents is the most up-to-date employment figures available

<sup>5</sup> Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-2017 Update Report 2017

<sup>6</sup> In comparison with other venues across the UK, the three venues are performing well with regards to impact of artistic experience with a rating of 4.49 out of 5 and a satisfaction rate of 72%.

### 3.4 Ongoing Antrim and Newtownabbey Capital Investment Initiatives

Table 3.1 presents a summary of the status of a series of established and ongoing initiatives involving Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council either alone or in collaboration with other organisations.

INITIATIVE Investments	Status			
	Current/ In Planning/ Future	Date of implementation/ estimated future launch	Funding/To be funded	Costs
Antrim Castle Grounds Pump Chamber	Complete		Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£127.8k
Valley Leisure Centre Hall of Fame	Complete		Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£31k
Allen Park Recreational Development	Complete	Opened Autumn 2016	Enkalon Foundation	£5.3 Million
Steeple Site Development, Antrim	Consultation and planning required		Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£7 Million
Lough Neagh Gateway Centre	Business Case with DERA	2018	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£2.3 million
Antrim Lough Shore Play Area	Nautical themed	Commencing September 2017	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£225k
Antrim Lough Shore Park Bandstand	Deliver after Gateway	2019	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£100k
Antrim Lough Shore Park street furniture and sculpture/artwork	Deliver after Gateway	2019	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£80k
Crumlin Glen	Development Study for Crumlin Glen Complete		To be funded PEACE IV SPORTNI	Amount TBC and match funding required
Sixmilewater River Park, Ballyclare Entrance Upgrade	Planning	December 2017	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£250k
New play park sites and extension of existing parks	Locations to be confirmed		Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Budget TBC
Threemilewater Park upgrade paths, signage and features	Feasibility		Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Budget TBC
Skateboard Park – Valley Leisure Centre	Planning		PEACE IV	£450k
Valley Leisure Hall of Fame	Complete		Enkalon Foundation and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£31K

INITIATIVE Investments	Status			
	Current/ In Planning/ Future	Date of implementation/ estimated future launch	Funding/To be funded	Costs
Allen Park Recreational Development	Complete	Opened Autumn 2016	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	£5.3m

**Table 3.1 Status of Current, Planned and Potential Capital Investment Initiatives**

### 3.4.1 Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership - Heritage Lottery Funding

In addition, Table 3.2 below presents projects being developed by the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership as a result of £2.5 million Heritage Lottery Funding recently secured. The projects involve investment around all of Lough Neagh. However, it is worth noting that a considerable number include sites or activities in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.

Theme	ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY: location	Project overview
<b>Natural Heritage</b>	Lower Bann at Toome	Research into eel life cycle River habitat creation and training on the removal of invasive species River and Lough flotsam and jetsam removal
	Lough Neagh shoreline within Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough	Barn owl preservation project Biodiversity recording Cryptic Wood White butterfly distribution research
	Sixmilewater	Creation of a sound map for Sixmilewater
<b>Built Heritage</b>	Lough Neagh shoreline within Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough	Heritage signage and development of a heritage trail Lough Neagh World War II (WWII) research including aviation story
	Toome	Restoration of the Lock-keeper's Cottage and development of interpretation, and restoration of the pier
	Cranfield Church and Holy Well	Conservation of Cranfield Graveyard and Holy Well
	Ram's Island	Ram's Island theatre project
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Lower Bann Lough Neagh Antrim and Newtownabbey shoreline	Liban film and book (legend of the Lough Neagh Mermaid)
	Toome	Development of an exhibition, visitor centre and shop at Lough Neagh Fisherman's Co-operative
	Antrim Castle Gardens	Antrim Castle Gardens archaeology exhibition
	Antrim Lough Shore Park	Sculpture, beach, interpretation, audio trail
<b>Other combined</b>	Lough Neagh Antrim and Newtownabbey shoreline	Small grants programme for groups
	Lough Neagh Antrim and Newtownabbey shoreline	Development of three heritage tours: food, natural heritage and Nine Years War

Theme	ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY: location	Project overview
	TBC if includes full Lough Neagh shore area	Volunteer and apprenticeship training programme

**Table 3.2 Heritage Lottery Funding Supporting Activities in Antrim and Newtownabbey**

### 3.5 Product Audit

The resources and features for consideration in the Antrim and Newtownabbey tourism development strategy fall into nine broad categories.

- Natural Heritage;
- Built and Cultural Heritage;
- Historical events and figures;
- Modern Culture;
- Outdoor Activities;
- Family Fun;
- Sustainable Eco-Tourism;
- Commercial Leisure; and
- Restaurants, Cafes, Hot Food Bar and Licensed Premises

The tourism product audit for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough has identified the product and service mix. The research has indicated important sectors, for example culture, natural and built heritage, parks and gardens, outdoor and recreational activities, and support services. The current position in respect of each of these elements has been summarised in the paragraphs below.

#### Natural Heritage

- 10 Parks and Gardens<sup>7</sup>
- Crumlin Glen
- Lough Neagh
- Belfast Lough
- Lower Bann runs into Lough Neagh at Toome

#### Built and Cultural Heritage

- Rams Island
- Antrim Round Tower
- Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House
- Sentry Hill Historic House and Visitor Centre
- The White House
- Pogue's Entry Historical Cottage
- Patterson's Spade Mill
- Randalstown Viaduct
- Donegore Motte
- The Holystone
- Cranfield Church and Holy Well

<sup>7</sup> Antrim Castle Gardens; Antrim Lough Shore Park; Ballyrobert Gardens; Hazelbank Park; Jordanstown Loughshore Park; Sixmilewater River Park; Lilian Bland Community Park; Mossley Park; V36; and Walled Garden at Greenmount

- 10 heritage trails<sup>8</sup>
- 5 galleries/exhibition spaces and 3 theatres<sup>9</sup>

### Historical events and figures

- Lilian Bland
- William of Orange and links with the White House in Whiteabbey and Holland
- Ulster Scots
- The Plantation of Ulster
- The 1798 Rebellion
- The Battle of Antrim
- Alexander Irvine
- Huguenots<sup>10</sup>

### Modern Culture

Game of Thrones: potential at Toome Canal Lock and Moneyglass

### Outdoor Activities

- 5 canoe trails<sup>11</sup>
- Blueway along the Lower Bann
- 4 outdoor adventure centres<sup>12</sup>
- 5 cycling routes<sup>13</sup>
- 5 fisheries<sup>14</sup> and the Lower Bann at Toome
- 7 golf courses
- Jim Baker Bowling Stadium
- 10 walks<sup>15</sup>

### Family fun

- 2 fun farms
- 2 indoor bowling alleys
- 2 horse-riding centres
- JCB young driver experience
- World of Owls

### Sustainable Eco-Tourism Sites

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<sup>8</sup> South Antrim Heritage Trail; Antrim Heritage Trail; Ballynure Heritage Trail; Doagh Heritage Trail; Whitehouse Heritage Trail; Ballyclare Heritage Trail; Lough Neagh Heritage Trail; Randalstown Heritage Trail; Crumlin Heritage Trail; and Taste of Local Heritage

<sup>9</sup> Galleries and exhibition spaces: Garden Heritage Exhibition Space, Eyre Studio, Oriel Gallery (Antrim Castle Gardens), it is worth noting that Oriel Gallery is a state of the art gallery that has been created in the former Long Barn and features a dedicated year-round programme of exhibitions. Clotworthy House, Flax Gallery (Museum at the Mill). Theatres: Theatre at The Mill (Mossley Mill), The Courtyard Theatre, Ballyearl and The Old Courthouse (Antrim).

<sup>10</sup> While the number of Huguenots in Northern Ireland was never large, they are recognised as having made a significant contribution to the culture and heritage of the region, including being hailed as the founders of the modern linen industry. Further research is required to identify specific links with Antrim and Newtownabbey.

<sup>11</sup> Toomebridge Canoe Trail; Lough Neagh Canoe Trail - Traad Point Randalstown; Lough Neagh Canoe Trail - Randalstown - Ardmore Gawley's Gate; and Lough Neagh Canoe Trail - Ardmore - Gawley's Gate.

<sup>12</sup> Breckenhill, Borderline Combat Airsoft, Scaramouch Activities and NERF Works

<sup>13</sup> Route 94 – Lough Shore Trail (incorporating Antrim Town Loop); Route 93 - Lough Cycle Way; Newtownabbey Way; Randalstown Viaduct Walk Way & Cycle Path; and Lower Bann Cycle Trail

<sup>14</sup> Craigmore Fishery, Creeve Trout Fishery, Mossley Mill Dam Fishery, Straid Fishery, Tildarg Fishery

<sup>15</sup> Crumlin Glen; Randalstown Forest; Rea's Wood; Tardree Forest Walk; Toome Canal; Carnmoney Hill; Newtownabbey Way – including New Mossley Woodland Walk, Monkstown Wood and Threemilewater Park; Mill Race Trail; Black Mountain – Lough Trail; Ulster Way - Glenarm to Ballynure – Quality section; and Ulster Way - Ballynure to Belfast - Link section.

- 15<sup>16</sup> or the 51 priority habitats in Northern Ireland<sup>17</sup>;
- 133 of the 481-priority species in Northern Ireland;
- 1 RAMSAR site<sup>18</sup>
- 1 designated SPA<sup>19</sup>
- 2 Special Areas of Conservation (SPCs)<sup>20</sup>
- 2 Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)<sup>21</sup>
- 4 National Nature Reserves<sup>22</sup>
- 2 Local Nature Reserves<sup>23</sup>
- Birdlife<sup>24</sup>

### **Commercial Leisure**

- 6 Leisure Centres<sup>25</sup>
- 2 Cinemas<sup>26</sup>
- Retail<sup>27</sup>
- 2 Spas<sup>28</sup>

### **Restaurants, Cafes, Hot Food Bar and Licensed Premises**

- 100 Restaurants, Cafes, Hot Food Bar and Licensed Premises

Key considerations emerging from the product audit and review have been presented in the paragraphs below.

#### **3.5.1 Product Audit Implications for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Tourism Strategy**

The Borough has several major attractions of regional significance in terms of visitor numbers and/or of historic and cultural importance such as Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House and Shane's Castle (see Section 3.3. for visitor numbers). These sites attract significant and growing numbers, whereas the Borough's forests, activity sites, museums and theatres provide a regular and sustainable flow of tourists into the Borough.

There is extensive open space sport and outdoor recreation provision across the Borough including a number of formal parks in the main urban areas. There are increasing opportunities for recreational walking and cycling in the Borough including the Newtownabbey Way and other shorter waymarked routes. The tourism offer of neighbouring Belfast City Council and the ease of access to substantial natural assets that include Lough Neagh, Belfast Lough Shore, the Lower Bann Valley, and parts of both the Belfast Hills and Antrim Hills, creates a diverse range of potential tourism assets in the Borough.

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<sup>16</sup> Lowland Meadows; Arable Field Margins; Eutrophic Standing Water; Hedgerow; Lowland Fens; Ponds; Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture; Reedbeds; Rivers; Traditional Orchards; Upland Heathland; Wet Woodland; Parkland; Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land; Mixed Ashwoods

<sup>17</sup> Marine priority habitats number not confirmed for Belfast Lough

<sup>18</sup> Lough Neagh

<sup>19</sup> Lough Neagh

<sup>20</sup> Rea's Wood and Farr's Bay

<sup>21</sup> Lough Neagh and 'Ballypalady

<sup>22</sup> Randalstown Forest; Farris Bay and Lough Neagh Islands

<sup>23</sup> Carnmoney Hill and Newtownabbey Way

<sup>24</sup> Jordanstown Loughshore Park and Lough Neagh

<sup>25</sup> Valley Leisure Centre, Sixmile Leisure Centre, Ballyearl Arts and Leisure, Antrim Forum, Crumlin Leisure Centre, and Allen Park

<sup>26</sup> Antrim and Glengormley

<sup>27</sup> Abbeycentre in Newtownabbey, Castle Mall, and The Junction in Antrim. In Glengormley, Ballyclare and Randalstown the Council is investing in improvements in public realm and in shop fronts. In November 2016, a £30m revamp and extension was announced for The Junction shopping centre, it will create 500 new jobs in the area. The new development announced for The Junction (November 2016) will develop 20 new shops cafes and restaurants, bring the total number of cafes shops and restaurants at the retail park to 100.

<sup>28</sup> Antrim Forum and Dunamoy Cottages and Spa

Tourism assets in the Borough are concentrated in several hubs. Antrim town provides a range of historic, cultural and activity tourism interests<sup>29</sup>. Randalstown and Newtownabbey provide minor hubs, with the latter providing a more commercial leisure focus of tourism interests. Other assets are distributed evenly throughout the Sixmilewater Valley or are close to the A6 corridor. There is a noticeable gap in tourism assets in rural areas to the south of Antrim, Templepatrick and Mallusk despite the area having significant accommodation capacity<sup>30</sup>.

Interpretation within the Borough does not follow consistent branding and in some cases, is in a state of disrepair. In addition, wayfinding signage is often lacking:

- **Antrim Round Tower** is difficult to spot from the road as it is surrounded by tall trees with the very top of the tower just visible from certain angles. It also cannot be seen from the park entrance while the leaves are on the trees. Access is free but lack of awareness is an issue and, as a standalone attraction, is more suited to a niche market;
- **Cranfield Church and Holy Well** provides some visitor interpretation around the site, but as the area around the well is overgrown, it is not possible to walk around it. Plans have been put forward to develop a raised platform walkway around the well; and
- **Sandy Bay Marina** (where the Island Warrior boat departs to Rams Island) is difficult to find, this should be addressed as part of the heritage signage project<sup>31</sup>.

There is a real need to develop an interpretation plan to fully engage the visitor with their surroundings, encourage them to further explore the Borough and promote heritage and cultural trails. The plan needs to include recommendations for accessibility for example Braille, tactile and literacy friendly options.

Limited opening hours are acting as a barrier to tourism development. The product audit has identified limited opening hours at several heritage and family sites:

- **Sentry Hill Historic House and Visitor Centre** is a paid-for attraction and open from April to September.
- **The White House** seasonal opening from June to September on Saturday and Sunday afternoons only. Parking facilities are also limited here which restricts access to, for example, coach parties.
- **Pogue's Entry Historical Cottage** opens June to September at limited times, although other times are available by appointment.
- **Patterson's Spade Mill** opening hours are weekends only from April to mid-September and Saturday to Wednesday during June, July and August.
- **Family Open Farms** close over the winter months.

This strategy has identified opportunities for the Borough to promote heritage and cultural trails. As such, there is a need to consider opening hours at such attractions to allow for greater visitor access.

With regard to walking and canoeing, the following has been noted. **Walking:** a number of paths need to be upgraded and anti-social behaviour has created a negative perception at some of the sites. **Canoeing:** there is dangerous piling in water at Toome Sluice Gates which creates a hazard for users. It is not clear who is responsible for these piles and, as a consequence, there has been a delay in their

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<sup>29</sup> The Council has in 2017 commissioned an ariel virtual tour to connect Antrim Town, Antrim Castle Gardens and Antrim Lough Shore Park, with every scene linked allowing the user to jump from sky to ground based attractions and take a virtual walkthrough town centre attractions – Antrim Courthouse, Pogue's Entry and Barbican Gate

<sup>30</sup> Evidence Paper Facilitating Economic Development Page 84 January 2017

<sup>31</sup> Being implemented as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund Scheme managed the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership.

removal. There is potential to create a niche market for specialist water activities and competition at the Sluice Gates<sup>32</sup>.

Information on visitor attractions and services has been difficult to access, with several websites difficult to navigate, and with pages not working, information difficult to find, sometimes inaccurate and dated. On the **Maid of Antrim's** web site for example, it was difficult to find up-to-date information on sailing times. It shows information on public cruises correct as of July 2013, which may lead to a lack of confidence that other information may be correct as it states elsewhere on the site that the Maid of Antrim departs from Antrim Lough Shore Park every Sunday on the hour from 12 noon to 5:00pm between Easter and Halloween. Similarly, with the Island Warrior, which serves Rams Island, it is difficult to find out exactly when boat trips take place. Poor access to information was also apparent in several private sector activity web pages; this highlights a requirement for training in digital platforms and marketing for local industry (see Chapter 6: Strategy and Recommendations).

### **3.6 Conclusions**

Antrim and Newtownabbey has a range of heritage, cultural, natural and built resources of outstanding merit, but many are not yet sufficiently developed or presented to the market. There is good access into the Borough, public transport is good (except in some rural and more remote areas) and transport networks within the Borough are good. Antrim and Newtownabbey has a strong hotel and conference facility provision, but a shortage of tourism products and experiences – 'things to see and do'.

Through the boost provided by the Tourism NI Draft Tourism Strategy 2025, and by collaborating with neighbouring Local Councils, private sector developers and operators, and local communities, Antrim and Newtownabbey can develop a distinctive range of tourism products that will complement tourism developments in Northern Ireland and generate substantial socio-economic benefits for the Borough.

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<sup>32</sup> These activities need to be timed around water level management plans, so there could be restriction on timings of usage.

## 4. Tourism Market Drivers

### 4.1 Introduction

In determining the Tourism Strategy 2017-2022 for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, it is necessary to consider the trends and tastes of visitors to Northern Ireland, and the purpose of their visit, such as holiday/leisure/recreation, business meetings/events/ conferences or other events.

### 4.2 Tourism Trends

There are several tourism trends that are relevant to the development and expansion of the tourism sector in Antrim and Newtownabbey:

- **Demography:** The number of people in older age categories is rapidly increasing. Seniors are often healthier and have higher disposable incomes than in the past; this may result in holidaymaking where arts, culture and history play a more important role, including more educational and spiritual holidaymaking. Destinations are also increasingly modernising their offer to attract younger age-group markets. As a result, there is a growing number of more 'culturally curious' and 'active' tourists.
- **Travel experience:** More sophisticated consumers are progressively more self-assured regarding their needs. For tourism, this results in an increasingly critical attitude to quality, and to the price-quality ratio.
- **Consumer and visitor loyalty to destinations has dissipated:** Visitors are both more discerning and demanding about what is on offer from a destination.
- **Information technology and use of digital platforms:** The internet and its role as an information source, as well as for actual purchasing of tourism products and services, will continue to increase. Social media and review sites will continue to increase as a key engagement tool for potential visitors. These **Trends**<sup>33</sup> are patterns of behaviour in visitors and potential visitors and how they act in relation to tourism. Significant research has been done in recent years to establish what the key trends of visitors to Northern Ireland are; these are summarised in Table 4.1.

Trend	Behaviours
<b>Trend 1</b>	Consumers continue to book more components of their itinerary online. With their travel options now virtually unlimited most consumers no longer want an off-the-shelf package and are happy to build separate and independent tourism products into a bespoke and personal holiday (although travel agents and tour operators are still seen as a risk mitigator, particularly in long haul markets).
<b>Trend 2</b>	Consumers are increasingly booking components of their itinerary using their mobile devices on-the-go and often while already in the destination; this means that lead times are shorter, flexibility is greater and consumers can be open to more influence whilst in-destination.
<b>Trend 3</b>	Consumers have access to unlimited amounts of information and have become more perceptive about the world. They are arriving at destinations with a wealth of previously sourced information about what to see and what to do; this means that they are increasingly looking more from their trip and want to be surprised by hidden gems and authentic places only the locals know about.

<sup>33</sup>These trends were identified by Northern Ireland Tourist Board (now Tourism NI) and included in their toolkit *Knowing Your Customer and Growing Your Business* published in 2014

Trend	Behaviours
<b>Trend 4</b>	Consumers are increasingly influenced by what their peers are doing and saying on social media. Driven by 'FOMO' (Fear of Missing Out) or bragging rights, visitors increasingly want once-in-a-lifetime experiences that they can share on social media.
<b>Trend 5</b>	Based on their experience with technological innovations such as mobile phones and tablets, consumers have become used to the idea of fast, efficient service with minimal effort on their part. It must be easy for them to choose their destination, to make their travel and accommodation arrangements, to decide what to see and do, and to find their way around

**Table 4.1 Digital Platforms and Northern Ireland**

- **Visitor servicing providers:** Providers are being more creative about what activities are being offered with new niche products being developed and presented, particularly around 'cultural and heritage and adrenalin experiences'.
- **Transportation:** The increasing availability of low-cost air carriers will influence travel flows; this is particularly relevant as Ryanair, Easyjet and Norwegian Air are all operating routes from Belfast International Airport.
- **Northern Ireland:** The region must compete hard to attract traditional and existing markets, since these also have a wider choice and access to destinations. The tourism and hospitality offer and experience to visitors must be unambiguous. Visitors need to know what they are going to get in the destination, suggesting that the product needs to be well defined and accessible.
- **Sustainability:** Environmental consciousness will continue to increase. For tourism, this will result in more demand for sustainable destinations, in which nature and population will play an increasingly prominent role.
- **Fragmentation of consumer interests:** Increasing diversity of tourist interests suggests that a range of opportunities for visitors are required, with mutually reinforcing products and services, but each well matched to their specific market e.g. sports or cultural activities; family or moderate walks and physical opportunities; sightseeing; food and drink; and heritage. The choices about which activities that can be experienced are so immense that the ease of gathering information and booking, access, the quality of support services and the quality of the destination itself are now dominant motivators. Each product needs to be part of the destination "offering", but in addition, differentiated for its own market. Destinations succeed or fail on the basis of their ability to package and present themselves competitively with other destinations.
- **City breaks:** City breaks remain popular. Low cost travel reinforces this interest amongst visitors, using public transport, being entertained by the quality of the food and drink, and entertainment product.
- **Alternative forms of accommodation:** The emergence of alternative and creative camping offerings has seen the image of traditional camping evolve; this has resulted in a significant rise in visitors choosing this type of accommodation and a broadening of the demographic who enjoy this.

### 4.3 Conclusion

Whatever their primary motive for destination choice, the common needs of all visitors are: transportation to, and around the destination, and signage to key sites in the destination; choice of places stay; and good quality local and international-style bars and restaurants; this Tourism Strategy

presents recommendations for Antrim and Newtownabbey to respond to these market needs in terms of attractions and activities that can be developed and expanded, and the resources required to support this (Chapter 6: Strategy and Recommendations).

## **5. Consultation Research and SWOT Analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Some 25 consultations were held with government departments, agency officials, tourism officials, partnership representatives and private sector operators. Three workshops were also held with Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Tourism Team, Elected Representatives, and Tourism Forum. In parallel, an online survey was conducted with visitors, the residents in the Borough, tourism providers/attractions, and SMEs. A summary of the survey analysis is presented in Section 5.3.

### **5.2 Consultation Research Findings**

The findings of the stakeholder consultations and workshops identified a number of key considerations for tourism in Antrim and Newtownabbey; these are set out in the paragraphs below:

#### **5.2.1 Strengths of offering within Antrim and Newtownabbey**

- Access into Antrim and Newtownabbey through the international airport, seaports, motorway network, rail, and bus services is a key strength of the region that should be further harnessed.
- Transport links across and outside the Borough are some of the best in Northern Ireland, with express connections to Belfast along with slower scenic routes; rural areas are less well served by public transport. Antrim is a key transport hub with good connections to the airport and ports, and to other visitor destinations such as the Causeway Coast and Glens and Belfast.
- There is a wide range of natural and cultural heritage across the Borough. There is significant potential to develop tourism experiences with further product development and building, and communicating the narrative to locals and visitors alike.

#### **5.2.2 Challenges for tourism in Antrim and Newtownabbey**

Antrim and Newtownabbey receives a relatively small share of total inbound tourism to Northern Ireland. The stakeholder consultations have identified several perceived barriers to visitors coming to Antrim and Newtownabbey; these were also listed as 'inhibitors' to locals exploring, enjoying and getting to know their own area as summarised below.

##### **5.2.2.1 Visitor offer and experience**

- Lack of things to do and see, combined with limited opening hours for several the key visitor attractions.
- Outdoor activities are not of sufficient standard to attract visitors from outside Northern Ireland and compete with other LGD provision.
- There is a danger of duplication of offering and visitor experience for example, between Antrim Gateway Centre and Toome Lock-keeper's Cottage interpretation. There needs to be a joined-up approach and complementary visitor offerings as the latter will also explore the wider Lough Neagh story, albeit in less detail than the story of the immediate vicinity.

##### **5.2.2.2 Awareness and promotion**

- Weak market awareness (both consumer and travel trade) of Antrim and Newtownabbey's visitor resources and attractions.
- Antrim and Newtownabbey has not yet developed a 'destination narrative'.
- There is limited awareness of the range of theatre programmes outside the immediate area, the quality of offering is good, although programming reflects a more regional audience.
- Up-to-date information on things to do and see in the Borough is often not available and is difficult to find.

- Marketing or branding of the Borough in Belfast International Airport (BIA) is limited, with just two branded walls in the international arrivals corridor: one for the Boroughs attractions and a second myths and legends comic-strip wall.

#### **5.2.2.3 Infrastructure**

- There is no rail link to BIA and the main approach road to the Airport (A57) needs upgraded.
- Directional and interpretative signage across the Borough needs to be reviewed to ensure it is up-to-date and consistent for language and brand<sup>34</sup>.
- Materials are required to support visitor navigation such as maps and clear online information including directions, opening hours etc.
- There is a good bus network across the Borough except for some rural and more remote areas. An audit conducted by Translink confirms that all major visitor attractions are serviced by a bus route, however, these services need to be promoted.
- Lough Neagh presents difficulties for recreational boating activity as it is unpredictable and volatile. There is currently no one navigation authority for the Lough or navigation routes around or across the Lough<sup>35</sup>.

#### **5.2.2.4 Partnership working**

- Currently there are a significant number of projects at different stages of delivery for example, development of a Lough Neagh Heritage Trail, construction of the Antrim Lough Shore Park Gateway Centre and collation of myths and legends about the region.
- Many capital build projects require long term planning<sup>36</sup> and it is crucial that short-term partnership strategies support this.

### **5.2.3 Opportunities for tourism development and promotion**

#### **5.2.3.1 Visitor offer and experience**

- There are opportunities to develop more themed flagship events and festivals, and to promote these more widely.
- There is consistency in themes developing around Lough Neagh and the Lower Bann, with those identified more widely in the Borough including The Plantation, World War I and II, Vikings, Celts and Mesolithic heritage.
- The Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership Scheme (administered by the Lough Neagh Partnership working in conjunction with the Councils) has secured £2.49 million in funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the Lough Neagh Heritage Signage project which includes the design, production and installation of directional and interpretative signage at a number of key heritage sites around the Lough<sup>37</sup>.
- A food tour is being piloted along the north shore of Lough Neagh which will include Toome<sup>38</sup>.
- Belfast Hills Partnership has implemented a Google Trekker route on Carnmoney Hill.
- A feasibility study has been completed to develop a mountain biking trail at Tardree Forest.
- There are opportunities to develop unique experiences in the Borough such as developing a sunrise cycle ride, or a sunset boat trip on Lough Neagh and campfire dinner on Ram's Island.
- There is potential to develop Antrim as a hub for outdoor water activities; however, this requires significant investment and must be supported by other tourism activities.

<sup>34</sup> A signage plan for the Council is currently underway, tourism signage must be considered in this context. This strategy refers to tourism signage in its recommendations.

<sup>35</sup> These are currently being mapped

<sup>36</sup> 10 years is not an unreasonable timeframe to allow for feasibility studies, security funding, procurement, delivery, establishment and evaluation

<sup>37</sup> Consultants have been commissioned to develop this as of mid-March 2017

<sup>38</sup> Lough Neagh Partnership

- The river and lock at Toome and surrounding facilities such as the marina planned by TIDAL, provides a good opportunity for recreational canoeing and outdoor water play and competitions such as playboating.
- There are several good quality parks in the Borough, a range of eco-tourism products, angling opportunities, golf courses and ecclesiastical trails<sup>39</sup>.
- Themes for cultural experience are evident with a very strong base of myths and legends, and significant historical events and characters: Lilian Bland; William of Orange and the White House; links with Holland; the development of a Williamite tour; Ulster Scots; The Plantation of Ulster; the 1798 Rebellion; the Battle of Antrim; development of a Scotch Quarter in Antrim; Sentry Hill; Alexander Irvine and Pogue's Entry; Armed Forces Day; Liban legend; National Museum/National Gallery.
- There are opportunities to develop Antrim as a Christmas destination. Visitors to the Enchanted Winter Garden have increased from 8,000 in year one (2014) to 44,000 in 2016.

#### **5.2.3.2 Awareness and promotion**

- Local people are a key market, both as visitors and event attendees, and also as ambassadors for promoting the Borough.
- While an overarching 'It's in Our Nature' brand has been developed, this is not being used sufficiently or across all tourism offerings.
- Budgeting and other marketing resources should be combined with smarter working together and aligned objectives such as the recent tourism and recreational strategy produced by Waterways Ireland and the Councils along the Lower Bann river.
- There is ambition to commission public art as part of the development of roundabouts; this could be developed as a way of linking locations and improving the experience for visitors travelling throughout the Borough.
- Focus should be on identifying the 'gem' of the region and using this as a focus, but linking to other sites and developing clusters and trails. Antrim Castle Gardens was identified by many consultees as being this gem.
- There is a significant opportunity to promote large scale events in the area at the BIA.

#### **5.2.3.3 Infrastructure**

- Translink operate an iLink card which could be promoted as a 'Ticket to the Borough'; this is a smartcard pass that can be topped up and saves passengers money but can also encourage visitors to explore the region. While it is available across all of Northern Ireland, there is an opportunity to promote it as part of a Borough-only marketing campaign.
- Translink will support innovation such as animation on buses themed around events or attractions.
- The larger Visitor Information Centre desk at BIA offers an opportunity to develop the airport as the Gateway to Antrim and Newtownabbey, encouraging visitors to explore the area they are arriving at.
- Creative wolfhound directional signage<sup>40</sup> from the town centre to Antrim Castle Gardens is currently being considered.

#### **5.2.3.4 Partnership working (internally and externally)**

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<sup>39</sup> Around Lough Neagh which include Cranfield Church and Holy Well

<sup>40</sup> Part of an innovative approach to signage being explored by Ursula Fay, Director of Arts and Culture .

- Partnerships and good working relationships exist between sector organisations such as Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Lough Neagh Partnership, Visit Belfast and Belfast Hills Partnership.
- An agreement with Outdoor Recreation NI could provide the Borough with support for outdoor activity product development<sup>41</sup>.
- There are opportunities for the tourism and culture and arts function to work more closely together to address challenges around duplication of activity, communication and cross promotion between tourism, and culture and arts. The Council's Corporate Improvement Plan has helped to focus activity, and positions culture and arts as a key tourism driver.
- Links with the private sector through sponsorship opportunities of events e.g. Garden Show Ireland and Enchanted Winter Garden.
- BIA is committed to working with the local community and Council to help encourage people to explore locally and become ambassadors for the region.
- The Lough Neagh Development Trust has been established, but no funding has yet been made available from central government.

#### **5.2.4 Clusters or tourism corridors**

- Create and promote clusters of nature-based and cultural heritage attractions, trail and activities across the Borough.
- Antrim Gateway Centre and Toome Lock-keeper's Cottage (and the surrounding environs and offering) offer opportunities for clustering.
- Antrim Castle Gardens, Antrim Lough Shore, Antrim Town Centre and Shane's Castle<sup>42</sup> can be clustered as an experience.

The consultations provided a number of ideas and recommendations which have been considered and developed further in Chapter 6: Strategy and Recommendations.

### **5.3 Survey analysis**

To help establish the tourism needs of potential visitors, the local community and businesses in the area, an online survey was developed, distributed and analysed; this has informed the findings of this Tourism Strategy 2017-2022.

The purpose of the survey was to identify visitor, local community and business views on:

- The USPs of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough as a tourism destination;
- Its tourism attributes;
- Tourism development opportunities for Antrim and Newtownabbey;
- Issues and concerns around development of Antrim and Newtownabbey's tourism potential;
- The current strength of visitor, community and business engagement with tourism; and
- Improvements to the Borough that would enhance the visitor experience and would ensure that local potential visitors and businesses felt a sense of commitment to the development of tourism in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

#### **5.3.1 Visitor Survey Analysis**

<sup>41</sup> Sourcing of funding and awareness raising with the target market.

<sup>42</sup> Privately owned and not opened to the public

The visitor survey was conducted between Wednesday 8 February 2017 and Thursday 8 March 2017. The survey was carried out online, with the survey link distributed through the following media channels: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Tourism Databases; Social Media<sup>43</sup>; Press Release; Participants on the Council's business support programmes (ASK, Bricks & Clicks, and STAR 2 Programmes); Chambers of Commerce in the major towns; the LAG Board and wider LAG members; the Council's Community Database; village groups in the Borough; Invest NI and Enterprise Agencies; Michelin Development Limited; Councillors of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; and the GROW South Antrim website. Additionally, the consultants distributed the survey through the following channels: Visit Belfast; Lough Neagh Partnership; Belfast Hills Partnership; Outdoors NI; and Ulster University contacts.

The survey generated a good response rate of 149 completed surveys. Table 5.1 presents the key findings in relation to the analysis of the local potential visitor survey.

**Table 5.1: Visitor Survey Analysis**

Summary of Key Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Respondents were almost split evenly by gender with just over half female (75) and half (74) male.</li> <li>❑ The majority of respondents, 75%, were aged between 35 and 64.</li> <li>❑ 32% of respondents had children aged 16 years or younger. Of those: 7% had children under 3; 7% had children aged between 3 -7 years; 8% had children aged between 7-10 years; and 8% had children aged between 11–16 years.</li> <li>❑ 51% of respondents lived in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.</li> <li>❑ 80% of respondents either lived or worked in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.</li> <li>❑ 39% of respondents reported that visiting friends and relatives was the most popular reason to visit Antrim and Newtownabbey, followed by visiting cultural or heritage attractions or exhibitions (21%).</li> <li>❑ 30% of respondents reported that having a relaxing break was their least popular reason to visit Antrim and Newtownabbey.</li> <li>❑ With regard to satisfaction levels for heritage sites in Antrim and Newtownabbey, the majority of respondents, 74%, indicated that they had no view or opinion on any of the heritage based visitor attractions in Antrim and Newtownabbey.</li> <li>❑ The highest level of satisfaction recorded was for a number of parks and gardens, particularly Antrim Castle Gardens (67%).</li> <li>❑ A significant number of respondents had no view or opinion of culture attractions. Of those who did express a view, the majority were satisfied with the Theatre at the Mill (44%).</li> <li>❑ Family fun activities were poorly recognised as a visitor attraction. Some the highest satisfaction levels of those surveyed were for World of Owls (18%) and Donegore Farm (17%).</li> <li>❑ Elements of the visitor experience for a day trip or longer in Antrim and Newtownabbey that were considered to be of high quality by respondents included: attractive parks, gardens and other public spaces (72%); unspoiled nature (66%); diversity of culture and historical attractions (57%); and availability of sport facilities or recreational activities (56%).</li> <li>❑ Elements of the tourism services offered for a day trip or longer experience in Antrim and Newtownabbey that were considered of high quality by participants included: the friendliness of local people (69%); appearance and cleanliness of an area (55%); personal safety and security (55%); adequate parking at visitor attractions (53%); directional signage to attractions available and easy to follow (53%), and accessibility (52%).</li> <li>❑ The quality of accommodation in Antrim and Newtownabbey was considered high, and staff were considered friendly.</li> <li>❑ Respondents considered that there was a wide variety of places to eat in Antrim and Newtownabbey, customer service was excellent, with a wide variety of menus and prices.</li> <li>❑ The retail experience was rated as high with friendly staff. The availability of visitor-orientated products was low, with limited ability to buy locally produced goods.</li> </ul>

<sup>43</sup> Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, partner organisations and the Consultants

### Summary of Key Findings

- ❑ 57% of respondents indicated that they would recommend Antrim and Newtownabbey to visiting friends and relatives.
- ❑ Most respondents were made aware of activities in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council by friends or relatives (36%), followed by the media (29%).
- ❑ The majority of respondents had not used Visitor Information or Local Information Centres in Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- ❑ A lack of visitor activities/amenities, and competition from better known attractions and other Local Authority areas in Northern Ireland, was suggested to be the main barriers to tourism in the area.
- ❑ Accessibility and proximity to Belfast was viewed as a key asset.
- ❑ Suggested improvements to add value to the visitor experience included investing in other visitor attraction facilities and visitor services.

### 5.3.2 Survey Analysis Implications for the Antrim and Newtownabbey Tourism Strategy

Participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the visitor attractions in Antrim and Newtownabbey. There were high satisfaction levels for a number of parks and gardens, particularly Antrim Castle Gardens, Antrim Lough Shore Park and Jordanstown Loughshore Park.

Most respondents indicated that they had no view or opinion on the heritage based visitor attractions in Antrim and Newtownabbey. As such, it may be assumed that the high number of 'no views' indicate that respondents are not aware of or/and have not been to the listed heritage attractions. Similar assumptions may be made in relation to cultural attractions, family fun activities, adventure activities or boat trips. In each of these cases, significant numbers of respondents also had no view or opinion; this suggests that to stimulate demand, there is a significant body of work to be completed by the Council on awareness raising and marketing of visitor attractions. The findings are supported by responses to the 'visitor experience' question, and the 'barriers to tourism' question, with respondents suggesting better advertising and promotion of activities was important, and that the *"current fragmented marketing approach and lack of advertising"*, was problematic.

Most respondents were made aware of activities in the Borough by friends or relatives and the media. Only 20% reported that visitor or local information offices prompted awareness.

The major barriers to tourism reported by respondents are the lack of visitor activities/amenities and competition from better known attractions and other Local Authority areas in Northern Ireland.

The Borough's people were identified as a key asset. The friendliness of local people, staff and customer service was rated as the highest quality in relation to support services offered, in accommodation, restaurants and retail. Respondents felt a sense of pride with the area, and many perceived themselves as unofficial ambassadors for the future development of Antrim and Newtownabbey. Respondents reported that they would be likely to recommend Antrim and Newtownabbey to potential visitors, and that the area was a safe and secure place to visit.

A large proportion of respondents indicated that an enhanced evening economy with nightlife, café culture and street entertainment would most enhance visitor experience. The majority also considered cultural and heritage events and festivals, themed family events at various times of the year, and themed visitor trails and experiences as important elements to enhance visitor experience. Suggested improvements to add value to the visitor experience included *"Better advertising and promotion of activities, Investment in toilets at Loughshore, Development of events programme, Investment in the War Memorial Park and Sixmilewater River Park in Ballyclare, Removal of all flags and the development of the retail experience, including having a flagship store."*

The visitor survey analysis has supported the development of Antrim and Newtownabbey, and has highlighted several actions related to infrastructural developments, visitor trails, festivals and events and family fun experiences.

#### 5.4 SWOT Analysis

The research and consultation led to a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis which served to identify gaps and needs in respect of tourism product developments, infrastructure and support services, target markets and segments, financing/investment and organisation. The SWOT analysis reflects the challenges for Antrim and Newtownabbey, an area with several distinctive assets and a modest tourism base.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich cultural and rural heritage history, - monastic sites, ancient monuments, medieval past, Christian and industrial heritage.</li> <li>Landscape, mountains and the waterways provide a unique natural environment.</li> <li>Strong and growing business tourism market.</li> <li>Activity tourism can support other attractors such as cultural and heritage tourism.</li> <li>Proximity to Belfast and the Causeway Coastal Route – gateway location.</li> <li>Linkage with neighbouring Local Authority Areas – Greater Belfast Area.</li> <li>Strong festivals and events programme.</li> <li>Easy access through the international and city airports, ports, motorway network, rail, and bus services.</li> <li>People friendly and inviting.</li> <li>Educated, skilled and enterprising people.</li> <li>Public transport to attractions in key towns.</li> <li>Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No 'signature' project, offering or narrative for the Borough.</li> <li>Limited availability of high quality outdoor activities - activity tourism, cycling and walking.</li> <li>Lough Neagh has no core attractor or demand generator that is integrated into the destination.</li> <li>Lack of tourism 'product message'; the area has diverse products and limited brand awareness.</li> <li>Very low numbers of overseas visitors.</li> <li>Revenue from the tourism sector is low.</li> <li>Limited private sector engagement in tourism development.</li> <li>Poor evening economy.</li> <li>Large number of key stakeholders operating with a tourism agenda with differing levels of influence and limited connectivity/ collaboration.</li> <li>No annual large international signature festival(s) or event(s).</li> <li>Poor access and transport links to rural attractions.</li> <li>Many tourism products in area are still underdeveloped with limited product enhancement and marketing.</li> <li>Challenges with infrastructure to support attractions in terms of car parking, coach parking, signage etc.</li> <li>Many attraction, partner and service web sites provide poor and dated information.</li> <li>Heritage and culture currently viewed as core market but not developed as such.</li> <li>Limited opening at key heritage and culture sites.</li> <li>Poor response to changing tourist needs for service and bundling/ packaging of support services.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen strategic and operational linkages with: Tourism Northern Ireland; Tourism Ireland; and Visit Belfast.</li> <li>• Focused marketing campaigns in collaboration with Tourism Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland, Visit Belfast and Belfast International Airport.</li> <li>• Build on current business tourism strengths</li> <li>• Evolving and innovative accommodation offering to meet changing visitor needs.</li> <li>• Become the premier location on the island for Heritage and Cultural tourism.</li> <li>• Increase connectivity between tourism assets and providers: heritage and cultural tours, cycle ways, walking routes and accommodation packages.</li> <li>• Strengthening cross LGD collaboration and implementation models.</li> <li>• Extend and Internationalise the festival and event season and broaden the tourists experience.</li> <li>• Focused campaigns linked with diaspora.</li> <li>• Further niche market development of sustainable/ecotourism.</li> <li>• Develop links with coach and tour operators.</li> <li>• Develop and nurture relationships with press and travel media.</li> <li>• Develop ICT and new media to communicate with visitors in market and in destination.</li> <li>• Develop integrated regional delivery models involving the private sector.</li> <li>• Expansion of skills base in tourism-related business activities.</li> <li>• Train operators to design new packages to get to target markets and to implement e-marketing technology.</li> <li>• Enhance linkages between food and tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ireland has a much stronger image than Northern Ireland, particularly in terms of being welcoming, familiar, fun and relaxing.</li> <li>• Limited recognition of Northern Irelands cultural and heritage product</li> <li>• Security and safety perceptions</li> <li>• Low cost airlines and accessibility to European short stay markets</li> <li>• Ongoing budgetary pressure across Government Departments and Local Authorities.</li> <li>• Global recession.</li> <li>• Uncertain weather.</li> <li>• Lack of weather independent facilities (or knowledge of)</li> <li>• Uncertainty around future trading conditions following Brexit; currency fluctuations.</li> <li>• Short season May – September.</li> <li>• Limits to public sector intervention in terms of funding support.</li> <li>• Decline of the GB/ European and North American Markets.</li> <li>• Destruction of the land and heritage/loss of habitats.</li> <li>• Broadband access, capacity and speed.</li> </ul>
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## 5.5 Overall Positioning

The analysis reflects the challenges that Antrim and Newtownabbey needs to address to meet visitor needs. Antrim and Newtownabbey has a range of natural, cultural and built resources of outstanding merit, but they are not sufficiently developed or presented to the market. Through collaborating effectively with neighbouring Local Authorities, private sector developers and operators, and local communities, Antrim and Newtownabbey can develop a distinctive range of tourism products that will complement those available in Belfast or the Causeway Coast, and generate substantial socio-economic benefits for the Borough. Opportunities exist for Antrim and Newtownabbey to deliver a visitor destination, achievable within an environment of fiscal constraints, by looking at creative ways to leverage investment. The sections that follow present the Tourism Strategy for Antrim and Newtownabbey that demonstrates effective planning, service delivery, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of outcomes.

For Antrim and Newtownabbey to realise its potential and gain maximum benefit from collaboration with neighbouring Local Authorities and partnerships, future tourism development in the Borough should be focused on:

- Cultural heritage, building on the Borough's cultural, natural and built heritage;
- Business tourism, capitalising on present strong visitor base; and
- Outdoor activities, exploiting the Borough's key natural assets of Lough Neagh, the many walkways, cycleways and parks can support other attractors such as cultural and heritage and business tourism.

## 6. Tourism Vision and Strategy Recommendations

### 6.1 Proposed Strategy

Taking full consideration of the research conducted in the preceding sections of this report, the Strategy for tourism development in Antrim and Newtownabbey over the next five years will create awareness and encourage tourism and recreational use of the Borough's resources. Developments to facilitate such usage will focus on the maintenance of the authenticity of its living cultural heritage, conserve built historical heritage, and preserve its natural heritage, nature, waterways and outdoor environment.

### 6.2 Recommendations

Recommendations to support the development of the tourism sector in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area are presented below. Several development opportunities and associated themes have emerged; these include:

- Visitor Experience and Product Development including developments under: Culture and Heritage; Natural Heritage; Outdoors; Festivals and Events; Business tourism; Accommodation; Food and the Evening Economy, each supported by the development of clusters and corridors; and engaging with visitor markets activities.
- Access and Infrastructure including developments under: Visitor Information Centres; Transport Facilities; and Services Directional and interpretative signage; and
- People and Skills Development.

### 6.3 Visitor Experience and Product Development

#### 6.3.1 Culture and Heritage

There is a rich culture and heritage across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough that lends itself to providing a narrative for tourism products and events. There is a considerable amount of positive activity already under way. The recommendations below build on this activity, and propose further enhancement and development where appropriate.

#### THEME: ANCIENT CELTIC AND MEDIEVAL

**ATTRACTIONS:** Antrim Round Tower; Cranfield Church and Holy Well; Donegore Motte; and Rams Island.

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious.

#### CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:

**Cranfield Church and Holy Well:** plans are underway to develop a walkway around the site.

**Ram's Island:** project plans aligned to HLF funding include an archaeology project.

**Pilgrimage trails:** GROW South Antrim has identified several cooperation tourism projects; these include: Pilgrimage trails - Develop religious based walking and cycling trails leading to the economic development of corridors along the routes.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:

**Antrim Round Tower:** This is recognised as a good example of an early round tower by experts as one of the finest in Ireland. There is a market (albeit niche and small) to develop links to other round towers



in Ireland; for example, the Round Tower Heritage Group in Clondalkin, Dublin, are keen to develop Round Tower links and trails across the island: there are 65 round towers in Ireland. In addition, this site should be included on all heritage trails. The Round Tower on Ram's Island should also be included as part of a trail experience.

This also links to Christian Heritage: there is a Christian Heritage trail on the south shore of Lough Neagh which should be reviewed for ideas on developing a product for Antrim and Newtownabbey.

**Ram's Island:** there is potential to develop archaeology trails; while quite niche, this would have positive education benefits that could be promoted to local schools.

**Donegore Motte and the Holeystone:** while these are currently part of the South Antrim Heritage Trail, there is limited local awareness. Although both are sites of historical significance, they would benefit more from enhanced promotion as part of a wider offering.

### Case Study: Clondalkin Round Tower



**Figure 4: Round Tower at Clondalkin, Dublin**

Clondalkin is the proud location for a round tower, which is considered one of the finest in Ireland. A Visitor Centre will be completed by June 2017, which will form a trail head for longer walks and dedicated trails and cycle links. Heritage walks of Clondalkin and environs with local guides will also commence from the busy Visitor Centre. Currently Clondalkin Village Heritage Walks are led by the Clondalkin Round Tower Heritage Group and have approximately 50 people per walk and the Slí Chrónáin Mochua Walk has approximately 160 people joining in.

Regular themed well-attended cultural evenings are held to celebrate the medieval heritage. Clondalkin Historical Society also runs monthly lectures throughout the year. There was a Clondalkin Heritage Day in November 2015, which approximately 120 people attended. The recent Red Line Book Festival also included a talk on Irish Round Towers by Professor Tadhg O'Keeffe from University College Dublin.

The visitor centre will include gallery and exhibition spaces offering insight into Clondalkin's early Christian heritage including the history of round towers in Ireland. A calendar of activities and events will be promoted and organised by South Dublin's active Libraries and Arts Office. A central theme of the exhibition space will be telling the story of Round Towers across Ireland, in an accessible way that appeals to both domestic and international tourists. Additional themes will focus on the strong industrial heritage of the area.

Clondalkin Round Tower Heritage Group currently runs free tours and is developing an app. They have printed a map in several languages that they distribute to tourists. They are also training potential tour guides; this is a significant opportunity that would require the support of robust interpretation plan but could include live animation in the form of period guides and storytellers.

## THEME: PLANTATION OF ULSTER AND ULSTER SCOTS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Pogue's Entry; Ulster Scots Quarter; Newtownabbey Ulster Scots Trail; and Sentry Hill

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; and Mature Cosmopolitan

### **CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

The Culture and Arts team is looking at the development of the Ulster Scots story in the Borough including potentially extending the existing trail, developing an Alexander Irvine Festival and creating a Scots Quarter in Antrim Town.



**Figure 5: Pogue's Entry, Antrim**

An audit of existing trails has recently been carried out. A feasibility study was carried out in 2012 led by the Ulster Scots Society; this is an important, detailed piece of work which details the offer in the Newtownabbey area, with recommendations for trails as well as subsidiary activities including events, publications, celebrations of Ulster Scots writers, exhibitions, signage and interpretation and living history.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Much of the Ulster Scots built heritage has gone so it is vital the story is developed and innovative and engaging ways for visitors to connect with those stories are developed.

It is essential that a review is carried out of progress against the recommendations in the Ulster Scots Feasibility Study and an action plan drawn up to identify actions, with priorities and clear outcomes and measurements.

The existing Ulster Scots trail should be extended to include sites in Antrim, with consideration given to visitor interpretation including printed materials and the existing app.

With the continually developing opportunities through social media, a series of short films should be made to promote the story and offer locally and out of state.

Links should be developed with Ulster Scots organisations outside of Northern Ireland, such as the Ulster-Scots Society of America, to promote the local experience and develop packages; this would include engagement with tour operators.

As part of the Tourism Forum activity, a subgroup could be formed to develop the product, including working with local accommodation providers and restaurants to develop themed stay experiences and menus.

A calendar should be developed of key Ulster Scots dates and a programme of activity considered around these dates.

Further research should be carried out to identify Ulster Scots and Plantation of Ulster stories that resonate with all elements of the community, to overcome perceptions of inclusion.

Discussion should be held with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's events team who are also developing Ulster Scots-themed events, also including the theme of emigration.

An annual Alexander Irvine Festival should be progressed, recognising that such events can take several years to embed and become successful subject to a robust marketing plan. It is recommended that budget and resource is allocated to this to deliver the marketing activity required.

The Ulster Scots report references a tourism strategy; this should be acquired and considered when developing an overall Ulster Scots action plan.

It is advisable to establish a Borough working group of experts to help develop the narrative and visitor offer.

Links should be developed with the Discover Ulster Scots Centre, Hill of O'Neill and the Museum of Orange Heritage.

## **THEME: INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE**

**ATTRACTIONS:** Patterson's Spade Mill; Randalstown Viaduct; The Old Mill at Crumlin; and Museum at the Mill.



**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious

### **CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

#### **Industries Past:**

Linen, coal, diatomite, willow basket making and reed harvesting.

#### **Industries Present:**

**Figure 6: Randalstown Viaduct** Angling, agriculture, peat extraction, sand extraction, water extraction, tourism and recreation. 1.7 million tonnes of sand is extracted from Lough Neagh annually and supplies one quarter of all local construction industry in Northern Ireland. Sand from Lough Neagh was used to build the surface of Croke Park and the mortar in Stormont.

Lough Neagh was historically a major economic hub transporting linen, timber, coal, and livestock via the canals; Lagan, Ulster, Newry and Coalisland. Proposals to restore the Ulster Canal are now in the pipeline to connect Lough Neagh to Lough Erne and the rest of the Inland waterways in Ireland. Lough Neagh is home to the largest commercial wild eel fishery in Europe, exporting some 400 tonnes of produce a year to outlets in Billingsgate, Holland and Germany.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Research should be carried out into the industrial heritage of the region and visitor experiences such as trails developed.

Connection should be explored with modern day industry including investigating the potential to attract industry conferences or incentive groups to the area.

Explore links with the Ulster Scots offer as there are Ulster Scots entrepreneurs whose story could add value to the industrial revolution narrative and entice visitors to find out more about Ulster Scots as a 'spinoff' experience.

## THEME: WWI AND WWII

**ATTRACTIONS:** Ram's Island; Lough Neagh, RAF Langford Lodge.

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious

**CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

HLF funded projects through the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership Scheme include: research on the WW1 story at Lough Neagh; audit of all sites and creation of exhibition and restoration of one small project; new exhibition proposed at the Ulster Aviation Society Aircraft Museum (note that this is in Lisburn); capturing of reminiscence stories.



Figure 7: Ram's Island

Armed Forces Day: In 2016 an Armed Forces Day Family Fun Day event was held with a parade of Regulars, Reserves, Cadets and Veterans through Antrim town and Antrim Castle Gardens to Antrim Stadium, followed by a Drumhead Service.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Exploration of the WWI and WWII stories in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough should be further explored.

Investigate the potential to develop visitor opportunities at the former RAF station at Langford Lodge, currently in private ownership by Martin-Baker, the world's leading manufacturer of ejector seats.

Consideration should be given to other themed events as part of the wider programme, including how to engage with the whole community.

## THEME: COMBAT AND CLASHES

**ATTRACTIONS:** Battle of Antrim; Nine Years War

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

One of themes proposed for HLF project funding was a heritage tour focused on the Nine Years War.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Further research should be carried out to develop the stories of battles within the Borough; this could be another themed project undertaken by the Tourism Forum.

Consideration should be given to staging re-enactments, which do attract visiting Historical Re-enactment Societies.

## THEME: VIKINGS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Antrim Lough Shore Park, Ram's Island, Shane's Castle; other sites to be investigated.



**Figure 8: Up Helly Aa, Shetland**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; and Social Energisers

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

Little research or development has taken place to explore the Viking history of the Borough and consider its visitor potential. However, research indicates that around 930 AD, Vikings were on Lough Neagh, with an encampment at Rubha Menna; this place has been identified as the spot where the River Maine enters the Lough, near Shane's Castle.

A Viking themed event was held in summer 2017; however this could be expanded upon significantly and serve as a tester for a future event involving as much of the Borough as possible and where appropriate, working with other Council areas.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Investigate and develop the Viking story perhaps creating a local schools project, at different levels involving significant investigation.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is also considering their Viking heritage. Together a very innovative event could be developed potentially as a combined Council initiative that could be very successful. Many areas hold Viking 'Dragon' boat races so it would need to be different and unusual to really stand out and have impact. See the footnote for event ideas <sup>44</sup>.

**Case Study: Up Helly Aa, Shetland**

Up Helly Aa is an annual fire festival held on Shetland on the last Tuesday of January to mark the end of the Yule season. It celebrates the island's Viking links and involves a procession of up to a thousand people in the capital town of Lerwick with several smaller more rural festivals held across the main and neighbouring islands. A Viking boat is constructed by the community in the weeks running up the festival then the main event involved a torchlight procession involving 45 teams of 'guizers', upwards of 950 people, dressed as Vikings to accompany the boat to the harbour. The boat is then ceremonially burned followed by celebrations in more than a dozen community halls, each visited by the guizer squads.

The festival is so well attended by locals that visitors do struggle to gain entrance to the community hall celebrations; however, the event attracts a significant number of tourists (numbers have not been recorded in recent times) and perhaps more significantly, the event is projected around the world using social media, including live broadcasts on the night. The event is fully self-sufficient financially, receiving donations from local businesses and involving considerable personal expenditure.

While Up Helly Aa remains an event that is challenging for visitors to join in, it provides a huge opportunity for promotion for Shetland. Should Antrim and Newtownabbey deliver an event of this

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<sup>44</sup> A Viking themed event. Taking steer from Up Helly Aa in Shetland but ensuring a distinct narrative, this could involve building a Viking boat in Larne then parading it across to Antrim, accompanied by people dressed as Vikings, handing over the ship from village to village. It could then be burned on Lough Neagh (as per in Up Helly Aa) but if that had bio-diversity issues, it could be burned on land at an appropriate spot. This kind of event attracts significant spectators; consider The Temple burning in Derry-Londonderry which attracted over 15,000 people.

nature, the opportunities for tourism are much greater, and could involve visiting guests from Shetland and other regions with Viking links to provide significant return on investment.



**...to be brave!**

*Develop a Viking-themed festival, potentially working with another local authority – build a boat, burn a boat, parade it through the towns and villages of the Borough. Be bold like the Vikings!*

### 6.3.2 Natural Heritage

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has some rich resources for nature and natural heritage based tourism. The waters at Lough Neagh and Belfast Lough along with the Sixmilewater and Threemilewater rivers and the Borough's waterside locations at Toome Canal, Sixmilewater, Threemilewater Park, and Jordanstown Loughshore Park all provide accessible nature opportunities for visitors. Randalstown Forest, Rea's Wood in Antrim, and Lough Neagh's Islands especially Ram's Island provide the most valuable assets as nature attractions in the Borough.

#### THEME: PARKS AND GARDENS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Antrim Castle Gardens; Crumlin Glen; Jordanstown Loughshore Park; Hazelbank Park; Rea's Wood; V36; various other parks across the Borough.

**Gardens:** Ballyrobert Gardens; Walled Garden at Greenmount

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; and Mature Cosmopolitans

#### CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS: Antrim Castle Gardens:



**Figure 9: Antrim Castle Gardens**

The overarching aim of the project is to “increase public access and enjoyment of the unique resource of the historic gardens, by restoring, conserving and protecting the heritage fabric and encouraging increased community and visitor usage and appreciation of the Gardens”.

#### *Marketing/emphasis for centre for garden heritage objectives*

To implement a permanent garden heritage exhibition (with rotating temporary exhibition) to be marketed as an informative and interactive visitor experience, linking the outdoor with the indoor, through tours, workshops, informal talks and lectures.

To continue to market the outdoor spaces of the gardens (including the Clotworthy courtyard, Parterre Garden and Castle site) as a venue for cultural and music events in the Borough.

To undertake to implement a joint marketing initiative with identified parties such as Antrim Castle Gardens, Lisburn Castle Gardens, and Greenmount.

To franchise the Lough Shore Gateway Centre restaurant to a private sector operator to encourage social visitors to the facility pulling from The Junction, the town centre, the marina, the cycle path and the Antrim Forum.

To continue to market facilities as a local resource for meetings of community groups and private groups.

It is worth noting that the Lough Shore Gateway Centre Economic Appraisal refers to the “String of Pearls”<sup>45</sup> of sites and attractions around and including Antrim Castle Gardens and Antrim Lough Shore Park.

A strong programme of events is offered at Antrim Castle Gardens. A promotional video for Operation Wolfhound (as part of the Antrim Live event) was produced and set in the gardens.

**Garden trail:** GROW South Antrim has identified several cooperation tourism projects; these include: development and marketing of a garden trail to support small businesses. A unique aspect of this project could be to encourage youth entrepreneurship by linking up with the CAFRE College to support student’s development as well as local businesses in the sector.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

**Antrim Castle Gardens** should be developed as the gem of the Borough; this should be done with pride and confidence, recognising that other areas and attractions in the Borough may feel somewhat put out. Messages should be developed in advance to communicate the benefit to the overall Borough of having a focal point. Cluster experiences, engagement with the private sector and provision of visitor information services can be explored.

As an events space, Antrim Castle Gardens has a strong offering and a varied portfolio. This should be developed and promoted extensively as a unique visitor and local experience.

Explore the potential for developing ‘packaging’ Antrim Castle Gardens and surrounding parks; these could include:

- Antrim Castle Gardens & Clotworthy House
- Allen Park
- Antrim Forum Complex
- Six Mile Water Caravan Park
- Rea’s Wood
- Massereene Golf Course

**Garden Trail:** currently there is a limited garden offering, with three in the Borough. However, The Walled Garden at Greenmount is open by appointment only, which restricts visitor access. There is a keen market for gardens tours, including within the European Market (Germany) so it would be beneficial to review the current Antrim Garden Trail to assess the experience and consider how this can be further developed and promoted, including in discussion with plans being discussed under the GROW Antrim initiative.

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<sup>45</sup> This was originally referenced in the Antrim Development Strategy 205-2010 which drew reference to the cluster of tourist attractions in the Antrim Lough Shore Park area, namely: Antrim Castle Gardens & Clotworthy House; Allen Park; Antrim Forum Complex; Six Mile Water Caravan Park; Rea’s Wood; and Massereene Golf Course. The attractions were referenced as the “String of Pearls” to take forward the objective to develop a Gateway Centre at Lough Neagh to package the surrounding attractions to promote the concept of a “National Park” of regional significance.

### Case Study: Marlay Park, Dublin

Opened in 1975, Marlay Park is considered a benchmark park by many local authorities in the Republic of Ireland. It is administered by Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. The extensive parklands include playgrounds, lakes, sport fields and recreational spaces under the stunning vistas of the Dublin Mountains. Marlay Park has become one of the most important outdoor music venues in Ireland with a capacity of 32,000, and is also the official start of the 132 km Wicklow Way.

In addition to music concerts a number of annual events take place including Park Run and an Outdoor Cinema. Outdoor Movies in the Park in the Marlay Park is part of the summer DLR Events programme. The event presents free screenings with no admission charge or ticket required of some of cinema's classics, recent hits and kids favorites on a High Definition 646 square foot LED screen. The backdrop for the giant movie screen is the magnificent Marlay House. A market is also held at the venue during this event. During the summer, a miniature railway provides a fun attraction for families.

A 1.82 hectare (4.5 acre) walled garden was built near Marlay House around 1794, and consists of restored regency ornamental and kitchen gardens. The ornamental garden boasts an extensive display of period plants, ranging from herbaceous borders to shrub beds. The Head Gardener's house, orangery, arbour and water features combine to create a distinctive atmosphere. Located just over the wall, the kitchen garden houses a fine collection of regency fruit trees, vegetables and associated bothys (basic shelters). Daily tours of the gardens are available in the summer months and by appointment at other times. Tea, coffee and other refreshments are available, year-round, in the former gardener's house.

Marlay Craft Centre: Several small craft workshops are in the courtyard adjacent to Marlay House including, weaving, glass cutting, bookbinding, furniture restoration, copper craft, pottery, jewellery and embroidery; these workshops further engage with local community plus provide shopping opportunities for visitors.

### THEME: PARKS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Crumlin Glen

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; and Great Escapers

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

The recent feasibility study identifies the following developments to be delivered:

**Phase 1:** Themed trail; accessibility particularly work to open the entrance; Permanent orienteering course (geocaching); improved path network (disability and pram friendly).

**Phase 2:** Waterfall viewing platform at Cockle House; create a path loop (technical solution); natural play area/classroom.

**Phase 3:** Zip line across the waterfall; use existing topography or creation of a man-made rock climbing wall; high ropes course.

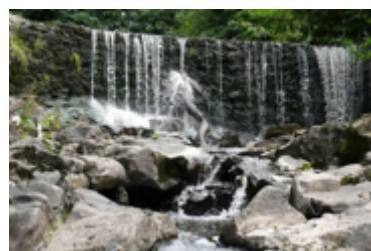


Figure 10: Crumlin Glen

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:

Link the park to a theme of the region such as castles, battles, myths and legends through a themed children's trail. Potential themes could be princesses, or mermaids and mythical water creatures, linked to the Lough Neagh legend of the Liban.

Consider how to link and cluster to other experiences and market segmentation – possibly a later phase. The Crumlin Glen feasibility study identifies the need for a comprehensive and targeted marketing strategy. Making use of all communication methods and media, both traditional and modern, will ensure maximum outreach.

The zipline, and high ropes course has huge potential as a visitor experience and should be developed as soon as is practical. As a charged-for experience, this can generate sound return on investment.

Developments like this to improve outdoor spaces will significantly benefit the levels of physical and mental well-being and help to deliver on the objectives of the community plan.

### THEME: WATERWAYS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Lough Neagh; Sixmilewater; Threemilewater River; Lower Bann; Jordanstown Loughshore Park; and Antrim Lough Shore Park

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; and Social Energisers

### CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:



**Figure 11: Jordanstown Loughshore Park**

HLF projects: As part of the Landscape Heritage Partnership programme of activity, a call has been made (March 2017) for storytellers. The programme aims to recruit 16 people who will explore the rich built, natural and cultural heritage and how it can be promoted to tourists. A range of heritage experiences and tours based on wildlife, old buildings and monuments, local songs, poetry and music. Other HLF projects focusing on waterways include: Lower Bann at Toome – research into eel life cycle; river habitat creation and a clean-up on the river and Lough Neagh; creation of a sound map for Sixmilewater; restoration of the Lock-keeper's Cottage at Toome; Liban (Mermaid) book and film.

The Landscape Partnership Scheme working in conjunction with Councils has secured £2.94 million funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the Lough Neagh Heritage Signage project which includes the design, production and installation of directional and interpretative signage at several key heritage sites around the Lough. A consultant has been appointed and a working group established with the aim of being completed by November 2017.

The Lough Neagh Partnership has launched three pilot tours of the Lough (linked to the clusters) (1) Food (north shore of Lough Neagh) most relevant to Antrim and Newtownabbey. Eels will include Antrim and Toome experience and hospitality sites (2) Eco (for example, birdwatching, Oxford Island.) (3) Heritage (western shore).

A consultant has been commissioned by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to research stories, myths and legends about Lough Neagh.

GROW South Antrim has identified several cooperation tourism projects. These include: (1) Develop canals as a centrepiece for tourism through innovation and ensuring that they play an integral part in the rural community and economy. (2) Develop Lough Neagh as a destination by learning from others how to develop waterways to play an integral part in the rural community and economy.

Waterways Ireland – Lower Bann Corridor Tourism and Recreation strategy: the strategy, supported by the Councils, aims to unlock the full value of the Lower Bann as a leisure and tourism resource. The report will consider the development of several hubs or clusters. A project already well underway is the development of the Lock-keeper’s Cottage at Toome and the construction of a new marina nearby. The development of a Blueway along the length of the Lower Bann is included in the strategy.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Work with the LHP to develop key themes and agree how the outputs can be used by all areas around the Lough.

There needs to be joined up approach to developing infrastructure and experiences around Lough Neagh. There is a considerable amount of work underway, which should continue, but there is duplication of work and effort and the risk of conflicting projects. More effective use of budget will be achieved through closer partnership working.

Work with the private sector to develop experiences and events focused on and introducing people to Lough Neagh such as a sunset boat trip on Lough Neagh or a campfire dinner on Ram’s island.

### **6.3.3 Outdoor Activities**

There is a plethora of outdoor activity options across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough that lend themselves to providing an addition to the tourism offering, rather than as a key tourism driver for the Borough. Numerous studies have been carried out and these, along with our consultations, have identified the opportunities for developing the offering. The recommendations below propose further enhancement and development where appropriate.

#### **THEME: NATURAL HERITAGE – OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

##### **ATTRACTIONS: Trails and Walks**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; Great Escapers; Mature Cosmopolitans

##### **CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

Existing Walks: Crumlin Glen, Randalstown Forest, Rea’s Wood, Sixmilewater and Mill Trail, Tardee Forest Walk (informal path), Toome Canal Walk, Carnmoney Hill and Monkstown Wood.



**Figure 12: View from Carnmoney Hill**

An audit of visitor trails was carried out in the Borough to help address the issues around connectivity and identify gaps and opportunities for future development.

Council owned Heritage Trails, include: South Antrim Heritage Trail; Antrim Heritage Trail; Ballynure Heritage Trail; Doagh Heritage Trail; White House Heritage Trail; Ballyclare Heritage Trail; Lough Neagh Heritage Trail; Randalstown Heritage Trail; Crumlin Heritage Trail; and Taste of Local Heritage.

Walking trails - ten walking based trails each approximately 1hr in length, have been developed across the Borough including:

- Crumlin Glen and the Cockle House, is one of several attractions promoted through the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Heritage Trails publications
- Randalstown Forest
- Rea's Wood
- Tardree Forest Walk
- Toome Canal
- Carnmoney Hill
- Newtownabbey Way – including New Mossley Woodland Walk, Monkstown Wood and Threemilewater Park
- Mill Race Trail
- Black Mountain – Lough Trail, Ridge Trail, Summit Trail & Heath Trail. These trails are mainly located in Belfast City Council area, however there are only small sections within Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Ulster Way - Glenarm to Ballynure – quality section
- Ulster Way - Ballynure to Belfast - link section
- Ecclesiastical trails around Lough Neagh are already developed which include Cranfield Church and Holy Well.
- The Chest, Heart and Stroke Association provided funding for several way markers which have been incorporated into existing council maintained trails 'Highways to health', these have not however been marketed since the original funding was provided.
- Belfast Hills Partnership has invested in Google Trekker Maps around the Carnmoney Hill area. This gives the user opportunities to see the views from various locations on walks and trails.
- Belfast Hills Partnership has a new ten-mile circular walking trail has been mapped out by Belfast Hills Partnership from Ligoniel including: Cavehill, Carnmoney Hill, Threemilewater, Hazelbank Park, and Belfast Lough Shore.
- The Lough Neagh Partnership is developing tours of the Lough.

Council are currently considering funding to develop an Industrial Heritage Poetry trail that would be unique to the Borough and will incorporate the themes of manufacturing/textiles).

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Trails can be developed under the following themes: Walking, Heritage, Canoeing, and Cycling.

Potential to modernise and expand trails has been identified and possibly introducing driving trails to the Borough.

Link the gardens across the Borough to create a garden trail.

Walking trails development potential: Crumlin Glen which could embrace a theme that is carried throughout the trail; this could be a family related theme that also links into the heritage or culture of the Borough.

Investment to upgrade some of the trails to Quality Walk grading could yield positive results and good PR opportunities. Such improvements to the product will attract families and specialist walkers.

Investment in facilities such as wet rooms, parking, lockers/equipment storage will all help enhance the walking experience.

There is potential to link Carnmoney Hill Trig Point orienteering route at Rathfern Activity Centre.

Collaborate with RSPB to introduce more bird watching facilities at Hazelbank and key sites.

Partnering with Belfast Hills Partnership to market the Google Trail Maps facility offers an opportunity to promote a unique facility and promote the walking trails.

Marketing of all the trails should be reviewed with a specific strategy developed that identifies priorities, budgets and timeframes aligned to stakeholder's activity.

Signage on the walks needs to be clearer and if possible vandal proof.

Partner with Lough Shore Partnership to develop the trails they are exploring around: Food (north shore of Lough Neagh). Eels will include Antrim (2) Eco (south, bird watching, Oxford Island etc.) (3) Heritage (western shore). Consideration should be given to working with the four other councils who are located around the Lough to explore how the vast waters can be co promoted to encourage visitors.

There is potential to develop the Harley Davidson Motorbike Trail to include the Lough and an alternative to the Coastal route when travelling from Belfast to the Causeway.

## **THEME: NATURAL HERITAGE – OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

### **ATTRACTIONS: ANGLING**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Great Escapers; Mature Cosmopolitans

#### **CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**



**Figure 13: Six Mile Water River**

Angling is available at: Craigmore Fishery; Creeve Trout Fishery; Mossley Mill Dam Fishery; Straid Fishery; and Tildarg Fishery.

- The Tourism Team is currently assessing the angling offer.
- There are local angling clubs at Doagh and Mossley Mill.
- A guide to angling in the Borough is in the final stages of production: *'Get Hooked – It's in our nature'*.
- Salmon fishing in the region has increased significantly in the last year from 6,000 – 16,000.
- Crumlin Glen has angling platforms which facilitate disabled access, and a fish pass exists beside the waterfall. A project is underway to develop the wider experience at this attraction.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

- Potential to further develop an angling trail in the Borough.
- Install the required 130 angling stands to secure The European Coarse Angling Competition at Lower Bann in 2019.

## THEME: NATURAL HERITAGE – OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

**ATTRACTIONS:** Cycling

**TARGET MARKETS:** Great Escapers; Family Fun

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

Existing cycle paths: Newtownabbey Way; Randalstown Viaduct Walkway and Cycle Path; Lagan and Lough Cycle Way; Lough shore trail Route 94 incorporating Antrim town loop; Lower Bann Cycle Way; Route 93 - Lough Cycle Way.



**Figure 14: Lagan and Lough Route at Newtownabbey**

The development of cycle paths requires partnership working across several stakeholders including Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the Department for Communities, Sustrans, Lough Neagh Partnership and Outdoor Activities NI.

A study was commissioned to review the National Cycle Trail and identified an opportunity to loop off from the cycle path around the Lough.

Breckenhill outdoor centre currently offers mountain biking.

The Council has produced a Cycling Guide.

Potential to develop a greenway in Borough is being considered.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Mountain biking – significant investment is required to develop a trail on the scale required to become a major attraction. Potential for a Mountain Biking trail at Tardree Forest has already been identified; however, even with investment a mountain bike trail of quality that would attract visitors is unlikely.

Consideration and a feasibility study should be carried out at Randalstown Forest to ascertain if the green space offering could add and supplement other offerings in the Borough, potentially focusing on bikers and soft adventure activities targeted at the family market.

Enhance the limited offering with, for example, the creation of unique cycling experiences such as sunrise cycles.

The Street Velodrome was held in Antrim town in 2017 – this should be built upon by marketing the cycling trails and offering temporary ‘refreshment carts’ or bespoke refreshment pit stops in locations which are currently not serviced by such amenities along the way.

Promoting mountain biking and cycling as an add on family experience to a visitor to the Borough is a more realistic approach when considering the tourism offer.

Investment in the development of attractions at the start and end points of the cycling paths within the Borough – perhaps ensuring there are events, or attractions, which will encourage people to make the journey.

## THEME: NATURAL HERITAGE – OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

**ATTRACTIONS:** Canoeing/Jet Skiing



**Figure 15: Canoeing in the Borough**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Great Escapers; Family Fun

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

Existing trails: Lough Neagh Canoe Trail - Traad Point – Randalstown; Lough Neagh Canoe Trail Randalstown - Ardmore Gawley's Gate; Lough Neagh Canoe Trail - Ardmore - Gawley's Gate; Lough Bann Canoe Trail – Toome – Coleraine (partly included in the Borough); TIDAL Community Group is implementing plans to

create a boat park; Antrim Lough Shore Park provides jetty access to the water, one jetty for jet skis and the other for boats and is attractive for canoeists; canoeing in Lower Bann has quadrupled in recent years.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Lower Bann/Toome – with the restored visitor centre at the Lock-keepers Cottage, a planned marina and potential Game of Thrones attractions in the Toome area could be further enhanced by canoeing and collectively these could be promoted to develop this as a significant visitor attraction.

There is an opportunity to develop recreational canoeing and outdoor water play and competitions such as playboating – a full study into how this could be achieved should be carried out and Outdoor NI could be considered as a partner in such a project.

It should be recognised that canoeing is not a significant visitor number generator; this is a specialist sport and participants are typically not 'spenders'.

Canoeing around the Lough is limited due to the suitability of the water with shallow waters, unpredictable and strong currents.

Specialist white water activities and canoeing competitions could be developed, however this will require significant investment, marketing and partnership working.

Investment in the development and promotion of local canoe clubs could help in widening the general appeal of the sport.

Enhance the attractiveness of the Antrim Lough Shore Park by placing canoe stands near the Antrim Boat Club.



*...to be extraordinary!*

*Become the Borough known for making the ordinary, extraordinary. Support dawn chorus bike rides, romantic campfire dinners on Ram's Island or canoe ride outs led by ancient Celtic settlers.*

### 6.3.4 Sustainable Development and Eco Tourism

Sustainability in travel and tourism has progressed from a niche consideration to an industrywide priority. Holidaymakers now expect the companies they book with to be as responsible, ethical and sustainable as possible. The objective of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is to raise eco standards, not only among the tourism sector, but among the wider community in the area through increased awareness and commitment to 'eco-tourism issues'.

#### THEME: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ECO-TOURISM

**ATTRACTIONS:** Hazelbank Park; Newtownabbey Way; Burnside River Walk; Threemilewater Conservation Park; Sixmilewater River Park; Valley Park; Monkstown Wood Local Nature Reserve; Carnmoney Hill Local Nature Reserve; Cranfield Bay; Lough Neagh; Tardree Forest; Rea's Wood; Randalstown Forest and Farr's Bay; Rams's Island; Mill Race Trail, Antrim Lough Shore Park; Antrim; Linear Park; Canal walk, Toomebridge; Crumlin Glen; Antrim Castle Gardens; CAFRE Trail, Greenmount Campus; and Belfast Hills.

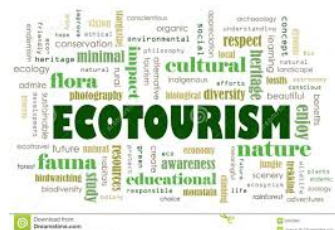


Figure 16: Eco-tourism word cloud

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; Social Energisers

**CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

Antrim and Newtownabbey has a significant number of sustainable sites of interest identified via a product audit.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Biodiversity Events for 2017 include: Bird Walk, Newtownabbey Way; Bat Walk, Newtownabbey Way; and Sentry Hill biodiversity days.

Jordanstown Loughshore Park offers an experience over 100 species of bird life on Belfast Lough; in addition the wildlife-rich wetlands of Lough Neagh are internationally renowned, and nationally important for birdlife.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should engage with relevant non-local government partners/agencies at either operational or strategic level to embed eco-tourism. There needs to be joined up approach to developing sustainability and an eco-tourism experience. The Council should consider establishing appropriate partnerships in implementing the eco-tourism agenda for example, Oxford island/Portmore Lough Nature Reserve.

**Birdwatching:** The quality of the bird life on view in the region presents an ideal opportunity for clustering and product development for a targeted niche market. There are also additional opportunities to partner with other sites such as Larne Lough, Rathlin Island, Magilligan, and Oxford Island to offer an extended stay using the Borough as a base.

The Council should consider supporting the creation of a sustainable cluster of ecotourism products and services in the area.

The Council should work towards defining the landscape and interpretations regarding ecotourism trails.

Improved accreditation and standards in ecotourism - implement an ecotourism Programme to aid tourism and service related enterprises to enhance their sustainability by adopting eco-tourism practices and technologies; creating market differentiation; and building capacity of businesses to be more competitive; increase the appeal of their business to out-of-state markets and visitors, particularly those interested in an eco-tourism destination.

A focused marketing campaign could be implemented to increase awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey as an eco-friendly destination.

Utilise technology as a source of eco-educational learning and discovery for visitors.

### **6.3.5 Theme: Events and Festivals**

Culture, arts, festivals and events are well developed across the region, with a year-round programme enhanced by seasonal activity. The proximity of the Borough to Belfast should be regarded as a bonus and offers great opportunities to build upon the already growing market. Investment is required to ensure the growth of the culture, arts, festival and events programme, and to ensure awareness of the programme is wide reaching beyond the Borough. Partnership working with other councils and within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area will help ensure the ambitions of this strategy in terms of culture, arts, festivals and events can be realised. The recommendations below build on existing activity and propose further enhancement and development where appropriate.

## **THEME: CULTURE, ARTS, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS**

**ATTRACTIONS:** Theatres

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun

### **CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

**Theatre at The Mill (400 seats):** A year-round programme including youth theatre and a Christmas show as well as in-house productions. The venue is held in high regard among the culture and arts community, however existing occupancy levels for 2016 are sitting in and around 50%, which leaves room for development. 48% of audiences for the Christmas show come from outside the Borough.



**Figure 17: Theatre at The Mill, Newtownabbey**

**The Courtyard Theatre (180 seats):** located at Ballyearl Arts Centre is a receiving house and in the main does not produce its own shows except for the annual pantomime. Currently, the programme is an eclectic mix of local show bands through to performance art and theatre. Occupancy levels were 69% for 2016.

**The Old Courthouse (188 seats):** with an average occupancy of 41%, there is much room to further develop the potential of The Old Courthouse location as an arts, events and conference venue. The year-round programme at the restored venue is also that of a receiving house and comprises music acts, pantomime and independent theatre company performances; this is also enhanced with workshops and conferences.

The Council has developed an Arts Advisory Panel; its role is to provide advice, support, and advocacy for the Borough's Arts and Cultural Service to enable it to deliver on the Council's Corporate Plan, *Our Vision, Our Borough 2015 – 2030*. The specific role of the panel is to:

- Advise Council on programming of arts and cultural activities, specifically the performing arts programme of the three theatres.
- Provide advocacy for the Borough's arts and cultural sector
- Provide the Council with an informed insight into current issues affecting the arts and culture throughout Northern Ireland
- Represent the arts and cultural community both locally and regionally
- Contribute expertise, skills and knowledge from specific genre for the benefit of the ongoing development of arts and culture in the Borough.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

The continued development of the programmes in each of the venues with the input of an Arts Advisory panel is vital.

Ongoing input from the Arts Advisory Panel to the Council's Corporate Plan.

The inclusion of programmed activity that aligns to appropriate themes identified in the Tourism Strategy is vital for continuity on the approach, for example continuing from the success of the recent Alexander Irvine production as part of the Antrim Live festival.

A clear understanding of each venue and what its potential is in terms of programming is recommended; this requires a full review of box office performance which will help identify what types of shows perform best; this informs the creation of a series of programmes which are unique to each venue.

Exploration of the development of genre/performance specific venues or at least venues which have a majority of a pre-identified theme in their programming (for example, The Courtyard Theatre as a family venue, the Theatre at The Mill as a live music and theatre venue and The Old Courthouse as a venue for one off speciality events) would ensure that the Borough is serviced and that visitors are also able to avail of a variety of types of culture and arts events.

Becoming specialist venues also affords the Council's marketing team with an opportunity to promote the venues clearly and in a targeted fashion.

Programming creatively across the Borough increases the potential for visitors coming for specific events.

The current marketing of the venues is from a central marketing team in the Council. It is suggested that a culture and arts venues and events marketing team could be established; this could provide an opportunity to develop a more targeted and effective marketing approach and, in turn, this should result in better yields on box office sale.

It should be noted that venues in receipt of funding from ACNI are determined by their conditions of grant for example, if community engagement at Theatre at The Mill is a condition of their grant award this could be serviced by ensuring relevant events are accompanied by ancillary activity such as school projects.

## THEME: CULTURE, ARTS, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Museums and Galleries: Museum at The Mill; Flax Gallery; Oriel Gallery.  
Potential other events spaces at Sentry Hill Historic House; The White House.



**Figure 18: Sentry Hill Historic House and Visitor Centre**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Mature Cosmopolitan; Time Together

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:** The Culture and Arts team is looking at the development of the Ulster Scots story in the Borough including potentially extending the existing trail, developing an Alexander Irvine Festival and creating a Scotch Quarter in Antrim Town.

Several venues currently provide a series of culture and arts related workshops such as painting, photography, ceramics, and weaving.

At Antrim Castle Gardens there is a plan to implement a permanent garden heritage exhibition<sup>46</sup> which will be promoted as an informative and interactive visitor experience, linking the outdoors with the indoors, through tours, workshops, informal talks and lectures.

There is an ambition to commission public art as part of the development of roundabouts.

There are number of visitor locations which double as exhibition space for example, Theatre at The Mill and Clotworthy House.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:

The feasibility study carried out in 2012 led by the Ulster Scots Society made a series of recommendations for subsidiary activities including events, publications, celebrations of Ulster Scots writers, exhibitions, signage and interpretation and living history; these should be incorporated into the museums' programmes.

In addition, there is an opportunity to programme exhibitions in galleries and museums which reflect and are aligned to other identified cultural and arts themes/events across the Borough including Ulster Scots, WWI & WWII, Linen, and the Vikings.

Living exhibitions are a good attraction for visitors as they offer a unique experience, for example a linen exhibition at The Mill with period characters and the opportunity to work a loom and take away a product at the end which could help to develop the Museum at The Mill into a key and unique attraction.

Developed trails (such as the Ulster Scots trails and the additional trails recommended in the Tourism Strategy) should be extended to include visits to the museums, which should have related exhibitions programmes, especially during peak visitor season.

Where a specific historic or cultural theme is being programmed, links should be developed with organisations outside of Northern Ireland to promote the local experience and develop packages; this would include engagement with tour operators.

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<sup>46</sup> With rotating temporary exhibition

A calendar should be developed of cultural and arts activity and dates.

Marketing for such exhibitions should be included as a package and promoted with any related themes and theatre performances workshops.

Building on the success of Antrim Live, an annual Alexander Irvine Festival celebrating the Antrim writer should be progressed with the aim to grow upon its success year on year.

Public Art – taking note of the themes identified as key visitor drivers in this strategy, public art could be commissioned with a long-term objective to fill the Borough with engaging and quality public art for example, wolfhounds in bronze in Antrim, and planes at Carnmoney Hill.

Public art could be an engaging way of linking locations and improving the experience for visitors travelling throughout the Borough; this could be another way of telling the stories of the region, combined to support the overall Borough narrative. A piece of public art is planned at Antrim Lough Shore Park interpreting folklore and myth, funded by the Lough Neagh Landscape Scheme.

Each of the recommendations for festivals and events will require significant PR and effective marketing will be required. It is also recommended that appropriate budgets and resources are allocated to ensure successful project delivery.

### **Case Study: Yorkshire Sculpture Park**

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) opened in 1977 and is a pioneering place that aims to challenge, inspire, inform and delight, welcoming over 500,000 visitors, including 48,000 learning visits each year.

The organisation has grown over the last 37 years: from humble beginnings with £1,000 to fund a small exhibition of 31 sculptures, to now contributing £5 million to the local economy and is responsible for five indoor galleries set in 500 acres of the 18th century-designed Bretton Estate, reunited in recent years under YSP's stewardship.

Within a national and European context YSP is unique, offering artists and visitors experiences and opportunities unlike anywhere else. 'Great art for everyone' has been YSP's goal since opening to the public in 1977, enabling access, understanding and enjoyment of art and landscape for everyone, whilst dismantling many of the barriers that often exist between the public and contemporary art; this vision remains as strong as ever. The revelatory nature of the Park's setting opens many possibilities and encourages exploration of the relationship between art and nature, stimulating engagement and adventure in the surroundings. The rural location, just some thirty miles from the city of Leeds is home to some of the most celebrated sculptors of this and the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 19: Yorkshire Sculpture Park**



***...to be big!***

*Begin the journey of transforming the Borough into an international sculpture park. Small investments made over the next 5-10 years and cleverly planned locations could result in a significant visitor attraction.*

## THEME: CULTURE, ARTS, FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

**ATTRACTIONS:** Festivals and Events: Antrim Live; The Enchanted Winter Garden; Christmas Market; Halloween Spooktacular; Jordanstown Loughshore Festival; Circuit of Ireland; Festival of Food and Festival of Cycling.



**Figure 20: The Enchanted Winter Garden, Antrim Castle Gardens**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Culturally Curious; Family Fun; Social Energisers; Young & Lively

### **CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

**Antrim Live Festival:** this took place for the first time in February 2017. It was funded by the Council through the DEA (District Electoral Area) programme where the Council provides £100,000 towards agreed projects in each DEA. The objectives of the festival were to: cater for as broad a spectrum of people as possible; keep ticket prices low and include several free events; utilise Council assets such as The Old Courthouse and Pogue's Entry; and engage with local business and local traders.

The festival was a combined series of tickets and non-ticketed events, many of which sold out. All ticketed events exceeded availability. Visitor numbers were very good with 16,500 visitors to Antrim town over the two days.

**Antrim Castle Gardens:** With an overarching aim to "increase public access and enjoyment of the unique resource of the historic gardens, by restoring, conserving and protecting the heritage fabric and encouraging increased community and visitor usage and appreciation of the Gardens", Antrim Castle Gardens lends itself perfectly as a location for events and festivals. The aim is to implement an exhibition and to market the outdoor spaces as locations for music and cultural events which opens the opportunity to include it as a significant culture and arts venue in the Borough.

**Garden Show Ireland:** delivered at Antrim Castle Gardens in partnership with the event organisers (25,000 visitors); it is a flagship event for the Council which continues to grow in popularity as evidenced with an around 30,000 visitors in 2017 and a commitment from the organisers to locate it in Antrim Castle Gardens until at least 2018).

**The Enchanted Winter Garden** runs for a week in December. Visitors to the Christmas attraction have increased from 8,000 in 2014 to 44,000 in 2016 which attracts visitors from all over Ireland.

**Halloween Spooktacular:** the location of the event at The Junction is agreeable to most visitors. Rather than becoming a key tourism driver, this event seems to be big attractor to local residents and has the potential to become a regional Halloween destination.

The Halloween event Spooked Out at V36 in 2016 attracted 10,500 visitors; this was the second year for the showcase event from the Council that played host to members of the public and entertained them with 'spooky' themed entertainment and a fireworks display.

The Irish Game Fair and Fine Food Festival annually in June. Although not run by the Council the commercial fair is supported through sponsorship. The Irish Game Fair & Fine Food Festival in Northern Ireland partners with the Irish Game and Country Fair in the Irish republic and both are marketed as the 'Great Game Fairs of Ireland'. Ticket prices are family £25; adult £10; and children £5. In addition to the traditional Game Fair attractions, the fairs have a huge range of entertaining and

educational activities, displays and attractions to interest anyone who lives works or plays in the Irish countryside. The fair is held in Shane's Castle in June and at Birr Castle in Offaly in August; it is now in its 39<sup>th</sup> year with a solid following and reputation.

Jordanstown Loughshore Shoreline Festival (August bank holiday) including free family fun, entertainment, concerts and fireworks in the park over two days (Saturday and Sunday), with Saturday by far proving to be the most popular day.

The River to Lough Festival, organised by the Lough Neagh Partnership, is a family festival in the Borough which has increased in popularity over the past couple of years and is rotated at venues around Lough Neagh.

Secrets of the Landscape brochure: this is not a festival but rather the grouping in one brochure of a series Tales, Myths and Legends of the Borough under the banner Secrets of the Landscapes. Locations include:

*Spooky Secrets Of Shane's Castle* - The O'Neill Banshee; The Black Face Of Stone;  
*From The Depths* - the Legend Of The Overflowing Well; The Legend Of The Under Water City;  
*Men Of Myth And Mystery*- The Legend Of Finn Mccool; Fergus, The First King Of Scotland; *Deadly Landmarks*; Donegore Motte; Body Snatchers Of Newtownabbey;  
*Holy Relics And Religion*- The Legend of The Holey Stone; The Legend of The Holy Well;  
*Legends Set In Stone*- The Round Tower and Witch's Stone; The Legend of Templepatrick; *Fantasy Becomes Reality*; Game Of Thrones Film.

Successful partnership working has taken place with Mid and East Antrim Council before and during the Heritage Lottery Funded project, '*Wild about Food*' which was the two Councils' contribution to Northern Ireland's 2016 Year of Food and Drink.

A target of a 5% increase in visitors to events has been set in the Corporate Improvement Framework.

Other events taking place include Circuit of Ireland, Festival of Food and Festival of Cycling, Armed Forces Day.<sup>47</sup>

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Antrim Live: Feedback on the Antrim Live event suggested extending the time frame to run into the Sunday.

Consideration should be given to the time of year as weather conditions do limit the use of outdoor space and street animation.

Continued development of relationships with theatre companies is recommended, as is the commissioning of new work such as the Alexander Irvine Ulster Scots piece which has been very well received.

By emphasising the distinct history and heritage of Antrim as part of the festival the Council can increase interest from outside the Borough from those keen to experience something unique.

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<sup>47</sup> Footfall figures: Circuit of Ireland – 15,000; Festival of Food and Festival of Cycling - 2,000; Armed Forces Day - 15,000.

Create an annual Alexander Irvine and Pogue's Entry Festival.

Viking festival: Viking settlements have been identified in and around Lough Neagh and an encampment at Rubha Menna the spot where the River Maine enters the Lough, near Shane's Castle.

Partnership working: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is also considering its Viking heritage. If the Councils can collaborate there is a significant opportunity to fully develop an exciting and attractive Viking experience – this could be expanded to include camping experiences, banquets, boat building and battles.

Discussions should be held with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's events team who are also developing Ulster Scots-themed events, including events themed on emigration.

Develop a Myths and Legends weekend using the locations included in the Secrets of the Landscape 'collective'; these locations can of course remain open and active throughout the year, but a focused weekend and the associated marketing activity would help raise awareness of the distinct offering.

Battle re-enactments and festivals: over set dates promote and encourage visitors to journey throughout the Borough where different location could be identified to represent different periods in history such as King William of Orange, Vikings, Finn McCool, and the 1798 Irish Rebellion.

An extension of the Irish Game and Fine Food Fair so that it incorporates a broader offering: rather than dilute the offering across too many locations in a short space of time, the event could be a longer festival with a different location headed by an event of significance such as a jousting championship, banquet or battle re-enactment.

Partnership working with other councils will enhance the offering: the notion of time periods being 'celebrated' in different locations (a Giant Trail) could be extended along the coast to include the Spanish Armada.

The Christmas Markets in Antrim, Ballyclare and Glengormley could be developed to include a traditional Dickensian Christmas Market with characters, storytellers, street animation and live cookery demonstrations. Given the large visitor numbers to the Enchanted Garden in Antrim Castle Gardens there is an opportunity to co-promote Christmas events in the Antrim Town and develop the area as a key Festive destination.

The NI Science Festival is now in its third year (running since 2015). Given the famous female aviator Lilian Bland flew her plane off Carnmoney Hill, this offers an opportunity for the Borough to become known as a place of female scientific innovation; if the Council promotes the Borough with a history of female innovation this could help attract conferences and global attention; this will also help the Council achieve this ambition as laid out in the *Corporate Improvement Plan 2017-18 (Objective Five)* to 'encourage entrepreneurship across the Borough.'

Given that the NI Science team offers a regional road show throughout the year there is an added opportunity to further enhance the reputation of the Borough international location; in turn this would also help the Borough tie into the Department of Economy advancement of STEM projects agenda.

The NI Science Festival is in early stage talks with the Ulster Scots Agency about the development of a production. Given the Ulster Scots heritage in the Borough, staging this production in Antrim and Newtownabbey is highly appropriate.

A series of events around the production such as a performance of the Dumbworld *Anything But Bland* musical production and a record breaking paper airplane throw off the hill could easily be programmed and would bring with it a great opportunity to attract visitors to the Borough and retain them. Belfast International Airport could be approached as key sponsorship partners. The legacy of such a mini festival or grouping of themed events could be built upon to further develop the Borough's reputation as advocates of female science and innovation – something that would be unique to the Borough.

Further marketing activity outside the Borough for all events and festivals is recommended with perhaps the inclusion of a travel offers with Irish Rail or Translink and/or accommodation providers might be beneficial; this is a good opportunity to further develop the partnership with Visit Belfast.

Marketing for all culture arts and events has a specialist skills and resource requirement and should be moved from a central service to a specialist service; this may require additional investment and staffing but is vital to ensure the potential is reached.

### **Case Study: Belfast Christmas Market**

The award-winning Belfast Christmas Market is now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year. What started as a small event hosting 20 temporary stalls in the grounds of Belfast City Hall has now developed into a market with just over 100 wooden chalets in a beautiful designed festive village.



**Figure 21: Belfast Christmas Market**

Estimated visitor numbers for 2016 were 1.3million, generating a gross economic impact of £78 million. The increase in visitor numbers has been gradual year on year since the pilot project, with investment being made in the development of the Christmas Market brand, infrastructure (chalets, electricity supply points, event dressing) operations (traders and operational staff) and community engagement.

The market currently attracts 43% of its visitors from Greater Belfast, 32% from the rest of Northern Ireland, 9% from the Republic of Ireland, 7% from GB and 9% from other locations outside of the UK and Ireland. The operation of the market by an established large-scale specialist market provider has ensured operational and product quality.



#### ***...to be high!***

*Simultaneously celebrate female innovation and aviation in the Borough - join forces with the community to create a record breaking number of people collectively making and throwing paper planes off Carnmoney Hill.*

### 6.3.6 Theme: Business Tourism

Antrim and Newtownabbey is a popular destination for business travellers, who spend on average three times more than their leisure counterparts while crossing over significantly into leisure travel themselves, through tours before or after their business activities (including if they bring their families and extend their stay) and through return trips in subsequent years.

#### THEME: BUSINESS TOURISM

**SERVICES:** Hotels; Conference Centres; and Theatres



**Figure 22: Hilton Templepatrick**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Business Tourists

#### **CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

In 2016 Antrim and Newtownabbey and Belfast have the highest proportion of business trips (16%), of all the LDGs in Northern Ireland. One of Antrim and Newtownabbey's strengths is the extensive hotel and related conference provision; these cater for business visitors who visit the Borough's industrial and commercial operations, or to

attend a business event. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should continue to capitalise on the strong business visitor base as business tourism visitor expenditure is amongst the highest of all visitors and the business visitor is more prone to visit an area in the 'shoulder' and off-seasons.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

The business base for visitor inflow is well-established and will continue to expand with appropriate support from, and co-ordination with, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. Business tourism can be boosted through:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council emphasising in each of its marketing campaigns its infrastructure and facilities, making Antrim and Newtownabbey an attractive area for investing and doing business.

Clustering venues, attractions and services to offer a 'package' to conference and event organisers. Commissioning a short video to promote the business tourism facilities to be uploaded on to the websites of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

Commissioning a scoping study to review the benefit of a direct transfer service between Belfast International Airport and all the hotels in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Marketing the destination for business tourism in collaboration with Belfast International Airport management.

Supporting the industry to assess and develop the most effective B2B sales channels and links.

Supporting accommodation providers in providing tourist information via in room literature, online or direct staff engagement.

Collaborating in the pursuit of potential leads. The Council and hotel/conference facility operators should work together to follow up leads for the Borough with Visit Belfast, Tourism NI's Business to Business (B2B) unit, Business Representative Organisations and Conference Organisers.

Continuing to provide logistical support for familiarisation visits and support in bidding/tendering for conferences, meetings and trade shows.

#### **Case Study: Business Tourism Development, Wexford Town, Ireland**

Wexford had been underutilised in terms of its potential as an out-of-Dublin conference venue. It is accessible as a business tourism destination and has put several efforts in place to attract conference business away from Dublin. Wexford town is increasing its business tourism share through: links with the association conference business; developing an integrated marketing strategy for the town; building an integrated conference ambassador/champion programme; and building on the reputation that Wexford already has as a leisure tourism destination. Several improvements are underway to help build the brand of Wexford town as a business tourism destination of note; these include building a cohesive brand, the development of Wexford's own identity as a business tourism destination, a strong marketing strategy, an early evening entertainment schedule, and the development and implementation of a strategic plan and a focused business tourism message. An exploitation of new technologies and new channels of distribution are also planned for the sector.

Research has highlighted that the more successful conference destinations have their own conference bureau. Best practice cases in terms of marketing business tourism destinations have been reviewed, including Edinburgh, Dublin, Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Vienna; they are key national and international destinations of note. Tourism and conference bureau/actor's actions all have the support of their national tourist authorities, and are often funded by them. Additional funding comes through partnership agreements with several organisations that are recipients of business through the marketing initiatives and actions of the tourism and conference bureau. They all provide a wide-range of support and marketing services to attract business tourism to their destination, and all are managed through an extensive website infrastructure.

#### **6.3.5 Theme: Accommodation**

In recent years, there have been a number of tourism efforts on behalf of private operators to broaden the range and scale of non-hotel accommodation that caters for visitors looking for a different form of accommodation experience. There is an increasing number of Northern Ireland resorts offering 'glamping' alternatives to traditional camping; these include, for example, Benone Tourist Complex, Limavady, Causeway Coast Wigwams, County Antrim, East Coast Adventure, County Down, and Teepee Valley, County Armagh. Camping and glamping has been generating significant interest in recent years, with beginner campers venturing outdoors for alternative forms of camping; this trend has been increasingly supported by celebrities showing their interest.

## THEME: ACCOMMODATION

**SERVICES:** Hotels; Guest Houses; Bed and Breakfast Establishments; Self-Catering

**TARGET MARKETS:** Family Fun; Young and Lively; Social Energisers; and Great Escapers

### CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:

While Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough offers a large stock of hotel rooms relative to the size of its non-business tourism sector, the range and capacity of other innovative forms of commercial accommodation are small.



Figure 23: Dunamoy Cottages and Spa

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:

To diversify the range of commercial lodging facilities and identify sites for development the Council should identify zones/locations for alternative accommodation in the Borough.

Engagement with the private sector through, for example, workshops, dissemination of information on exemplars, and an advisory service. The Council could encourage prospective developers/operators to consider/create diverse forms of accommodation in line with market requirements for example, camping pods, tepees, yurts, sheds, huts and converted barns.

The Council could support the development and marketing of characterful forms of lodging that reflect the nature and cultural heritage of Antrim and Newtownabbey; this could be achieved through supporting the development of: locations in natural settings; accommodation infrastructure that uses traditional building materials; the conversion of old buildings; and providing eco-tourism accommodation offerings in the Borough.

The Council should consider commissioning a bespoke study to identify the current level and profile of overnight tourist accommodation within the Borough highlighting how the profile of supply and the profile of users has changed; future anticipated growth; identify where gaps in the supply side are likely to emerge; and make recommendations regarding the type and scale of accommodation required to bridge those gaps and where additional room stock should ideally be developed. Following on from the scoping study, the Council should encourage the private sector to invest in suitable developments.

### Case Study: East Coast Glamping, Rostrevor, Northern Ireland

East Coast Glamping is a privately owned and managed site located 3 miles into the Knockbarragh Valley, behind Rostrevor. The site acts as a base for hiking, walking and mountain biking in the Mourne. It is linked to East Coast Adventure Centre and Hostel which offers mountain biking, hiking, zip line, archery, angling, canoeing, watersports and power-boat trips. There is a total of six glamping pods, one larger communal pod, an outside catering hut, shower/toilet pod with free onsite parking. The wooden pods have: electricity and a heater; a table that folds into a bed; and a BBQ area with picnic table outside. Each pod sleeps up to four people. They are low maintenance, with no cooking, washing or toilet facilities contained; they are waterproof and are



Figure 24: East Coast Glamping, Rostrevor

available all year round. The cost is £60 per night per glamping pod. East Coast Glamping has 100% occupancy in July and August, and 75% throughout the year. The Booking.com portal is used as the main sales tool.

### 6.3.7 Theme: Food and Evening Economy

Food and drink are elements that all visitors experience. Foods, recipes, drinks, music and dance, and theatre performances all represent an expression of an area's cultural heritage. Dining is increasingly not just about food, but ambience, entertainment and service, and an opportunity to engage with local people. The evening economy needs further emphasis and development to ensure a safe, well-regulated environment. Restaurants, pubs, food outlets, music and entertainment venues will enhance visitor experiences, reinvent town centres, and re-use existing buildings.

#### THEME: FOOD AND THE EVENING ECONOMY

**SERVICES:** Hotels; Restaurants; Cafes; Pubs



**Figure 25: Sleepy Hollow, Newtownabbey**

**TARGET MARKETS:** Family Fun; Young and Lively; Social Energisers; Business Tourists; and Great Escapers

**CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

This is an area where Antrim and Newtownabbey is currently lacking. The present offering is adequate, but not outstanding. The goal is to raise the combined offering of evening entertainment and food and drink to a level where it represents an enhanced part of the visitor experience to the Borough; this could create a reason for

the visitor staying longer in the Borough, generating additional bed nights and spending.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

The evening economy must be developed in collaboration with the tourism sector, cultural and arts sector, and festival and event organisers to provide an experience for visitors and locals to enjoy. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and the Tourism Team should look at innovative ways to support the evening economy and explore night-time economy initiatives that encourage the development of the café/art and cultural ethos.

The Council should publish a weekly digital 'What's On' Guide to evening entertainment (linked to digital content development by VIC staff (see Section 6.5.1).

As the tourism product develops in Antrim and Newtownabbey, the Council and the Tourism Team could work with individual restaurants and pub restaurants to develop themed nights based on for example, culture heritage using local ingredients.

### 6.4 Access and Infrastructure

### 6.4.1 Theme: Visitor and Local Information Centres

Visitor Information and the ability to source information has changed significantly. Many Visitor Information Centres (VICs) are still well used but are much less important to the visitor. Visitors are increasingly using social media. TripAdvisor and review sites are very influential in decision making, and the concept of 'Ambassadors' (or 'meeters and greeters') with tablets and smartphones are emerging in many tourist destinations. Northern Ireland VIC trends are changing: counter enquires are down by 9% and Non-counter enquiries<sup>48</sup> are down by 25% (2008-2015), and the demand for print is lower.

#### THEME: ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**SERVICES:** One VIC; three Local Information Offices

**TARGET MARKETS:** All

#### CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council provides on-the-ground visitor information services at four locations across the Borough. The Borough's VIC is located at Antrim Old Courthouse and Local Information Centres are located at Mossley Mill, The Junction Retail and Leisure Park, and at a convenience store in Randalstown. Antrim Old Courthouse VIC has around 40,000 visitor numbers per annum, serviced by one full-time staff member and casual staff as required.



**Figure 26: Visitor Information Pod at Belfast International Airport**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:

The goal is to provide ready access to visitor information, both online and at key points in the Borough. The Council should consider a review of VIC locations against opportunities for alternative forms of information provision to achieve the best return on investment.

If on-the-ground visitor information points are considered appropriate, the location should be based on visitor footfall. For example: Antrim Castle Gardens and Clotworthy House has the highest recorded number of tourists visiting the Borough at 440,000 in 2016; this may be one location the Council should consider for the relocation of Antrim's Visitor Information Centre and Local Information Centres. Shane's Castle near Randalstown attracted 40,000 visitors in 2015; the Castle is not open to the public on a regular basis but hosts several annual large events. The figures recorded warrant some consideration regarding visitor information provision. The Council could consider the provision of 'pop up' information office or mobile ambassadors at major events in Shane's Castle and other major events or busy visitor periods in the Borough. A mobile tourism unit could also be considered for use at major events and consultations, branded with the Council's tourism brand 'It's in our Nature'.

VIC staff with local knowledge should develop social media and digital skills (see Section 6.6 People and Skills Development). Their roles and responsibilities could be extended to developing content for Antrim and Newtownabbey, online information provision, through social media/review sites and other web channels, such as creating and feeding it to Trip Advisor, Facebook and Twitter, Visit Belfast and the Lough Neagh Partnership.

<sup>48</sup> Email and telephone enquiries and self service

All activities and attractions catering for visitors should hold material on the Borough's tourism attractions and activities, and provide website information. Additionally, a computerised kiosk or 'pop up' information office might be operated in the Borough.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should further develop opportunities with Visit Belfast at the VIC at Belfast International Airport. Given the location of the Airport in the Borough, promotional opportunities exist through staffing/mobile ambassadors from Antrim and Newtownabbey to offer visitors extensive local knowledge enhancing the promotion of the local area; this could be used for promotion at agreed times for example, to sell an event.

Antrim's VIC undertakes a wide range of community services. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should review this activity.

Develop VICs in line with Tourism NI's forthcoming Visitor Information Plan, regarding a flexible approach to VIC operations and VIC network operations; flexible innovations in terms of presence in areas of high footfall; the use of volunteers/ambassadors in providing visitor information; and the viability and sustainability of VICs in line with new trends in information sourcing used by visitors.

#### **Case Examples:**

**Visit England** is revolutionising visitor information via Twitter #Realtimetravelguide, a campaign that delivers real-time visitor information via Twitter. Participants including tourist information centres (TICs) are encouraged to engage with and support local businesses to share their announcements, offers, updates and reasons to visit specific locations. The evolution of visitor information is crucial because of the: increasing volume of people using social networks to find information on the go; vast amount of local knowledge that can be used to better effect; and the ongoing increase of Twitter as an online customer service.

**'This is Durham'** Visitor Contact Centre: staff answer enquiries via phone, e-mail, text, Skype and Twitter seven days a week. It is **not** open to the public for face to face enquiries<sup>49</sup>. 'This is Durham' also has 18 Visitor Information Points (VIPs) across the County in attractions, hotels and local authority buildings, providing the latest information via face-to-face or electronic tourist information kiosks and telephone points, plus access to a wide selection of leaflets and guides.

**'The Welcome People' London** is a visitor welcome and street management service that has nine team members in the West End and over 650,000 contacts. The ambassadors aid visitors, commuters and residents alike, ranging from calculating the fastest and easiest route for a business meeting to the entrance fee and opening times of popular local attractions. They use a special app – Strata, which records detail of visitors. In the West End, it is a seven-day a week operation, with three people and costs £80,000 per annum; they have recently expanded to Belfast. Other good practice examples of **Mobile Ambassadors**, include: **Visit London Infobikes**<sup>50</sup> – operated every summer in South Bank, Bankside and London Bridge; **Cape Town Tourism** – Info Centre on wheels (van)<sup>51</sup>; and **Cape Town Tourism** – Info Centre on wheels (bikes and scooter)<sup>52</sup>.

### **6.4.2 Theme: Transport Facilities and Services**

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.thisisdurham.com/visitor-information/durham-visitor-contact-centre-p91441>

<sup>50</sup> : <http://www.southbanklondon.com/infobikes>

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.capetown.travel/industry\\_blog/entry/ctt-launches-the-first-mobile-visitor-information-vehicle-in-africa-thando](http://www.capetown.travel/industry_blog/entry/ctt-launches-the-first-mobile-visitor-information-vehicle-in-africa-thando)

<sup>52</sup> : [http://www.capetown.travel/industry\\_blog/entry/new-ctt-visitor-mobile-vehicles-launched](http://www.capetown.travel/industry_blog/entry/new-ctt-visitor-mobile-vehicles-launched)

## THEME: TRANSPORT FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**SITES/LOCATIONS:** Antrim Bus Centre and Train Station; Belfast International Airport; Jordanstown Railway Station, local bus and train links; easy distance to two ferry ports.



**Figure 27: Antrim Train Station**

**TARGET MARKETS:** All Visitors

**CURRENT or PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

Consultation has identified the opportunity to promote Antrim as a transport hub, for rail, bus and air. Antrim is regarded as one of the best-connected towns in Northern Ireland.

It is suggested that Antrim could be promoted as an easy link to travel southwards to Dublin, by travelling from Antrim to Lisburn then on to Dublin, avoiding the need to have to go to Belfast.

The Antrim and Newtownabbey Community Plan is aiming to improve transport links within and throughout the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATIONS for FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

Create and promote public transport corridors across the region.

Need to maximize on the opportunity offered by other visitor destinations to promote the Borough as a gateway onward to such as the Giant's Causeway and Heaney Country.

Through marketing and communications, address the misconception that journeying to Dublin will involve travel from Belfast - promote Antrim as a transport hub going south.

The good transport links offer the chance to promote Antrim as an accommodation base for large events such as the Irish Open and Ulster Grand Prix.


Promote Translink's iLink card, for example, 'Your Ticket to the Borough'.

Translink is prepared to consider ideas to promote local events such as animation and period characters on buses and trains; this should be explored and built into marketing activity for events.

Develop a marketing campaign for Bus and Train Week in the first week of June.

Consider reinstating the shuttle bus to The Junction even just on certain days during peak season but in the context of 'town centre first' so as not to be encouraging footfall away from the town.

Work with BIA on the development and promotion of its new corporate event space in the former Air Traffic Control Tower.

	<p><b>...to get around!</b></p> <p>Use local transport as a mobile theatre to engage with the local market to promote events and festival: historical characters, poets, book readings – bring the promotion to the audience and inspire them to come to the event.</p>
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### 6.4.3 Theme: Directional and Interpretation Signage

#### THEME: DIRECTIONAL AND INTERPRETATION AND SIGNAGE

**ATTRACTIONS:** All

**TARGET MARKETS:** All Visitors

**CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:** The Landscape Partnership working in conjunction with Councils has secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the Lough Neagh Heritage Signage project which involves the design, production and installation of directional and interpretative signage at a number of key heritage sites around the Lough.

**Figure 28:**  
Fingerposts at  
Antrim Castle  
Gardens



A recent video produced to promote an event as part of Antrim Live, 'Operation Wolfhound' was filmed at Antrim Castle Gardens. The signage in the video is noticeably in poor condition and does not represent the venue very well and detracts from the overall brand of the Borough.

HLF projects led by Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership include the creation of a sound map for the Sixmilewater River.

The Council's Tourism Team is looking at the potential of a Lough-to-Lough Trail which may require signage. A trail audit has just been completed across the Borough so this is likely to inform any future developments of this trail. Currently only a list of attractions/sites that could form part of a trail from Belfast Lough to Lough Neagh has been compiled.

Plans for Antrim Lough Shore Park include interpretation, an audio trail and a piece of public art.


Parking is limited in Antrim Castle Gardens so the Culture and Arts team has identified the need to develop links to nearby town centre car parks; this requires signage to be installed and an idea has been proposed to direct visitors and locals using wolfhound paw prints on the ground.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

It is recommended that the review and replacement of current signage across the Borough is completed by the Council.

Consideration should be given to developing a common look and feel using the 'It's In Our Nature' brand as well as ensuring that signage in poor condition is either repaired or replaced.

It has also become apparent that there is a serious issue with incomplete visitor information available online for a considerable number of attractions and experiences across the region. It can be very difficult to find out basic information such as opening times. Given that several sites are open during the summer only, it is imperative that this is communicated clearly to visitors (see people skills development section 6.5).



***...to be seen!***

*Create a large-scale representation of the Borough e.g. It's In Our Nature that is visible from the air for people flying into Belfast International Airport. In other regions, e.g. Manchester, businesses close to the airport paint their name or logo on their roofs as a promotional tool. Who doesn't look out the window when their plane is landing?*

## 6.5 People and Skills Development

The standard of visitor welcome and of core customer and business skills within the local industry is of principal importance to a destination. For tourism to grow, it is essential that the people who work in the industry are appropriately skilled. Furthermore, to facilitate tourism development it is essential that residents of an area have a general awareness of tourism and of tourism products.

### THEME: PEOPLE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**SERVICES:** Tourism Education and Training Programmes; Tourism Awareness Programmes



**TARGET MARKETS:** All

**CURRENT OR PLANNED ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENTS:**

In 2016-17, the Council delivered three masterclasses in Website Design (six attendees); Photography (two attendees) and Social Media (seven attendees). The Council also facilitated a World Host Food Ambassador Programme in 2017 which was very well attended. Two further Worldhost Workshop were held in 2017 in Customers with Disabilities and Sales Powered by Service – both courses received positive feedback. In 2015 and 2016, the Council hosted three<sup>53</sup> familiarisation trips for the tourism industry in the Borough and these were very well attended from the local tourism industry and staff from VIC's across Northern Ireland. A best practice visit has been suggested by the Tourism Team to an area with a similar tourism offering as Antrim and Newtownabbey, linking directly to the new tourism strategy.

This research has highlighted several skills challenges facing the tourism sector in Antrim and Newtownabbey. The product audit (Section 3.5) identified a fragmented approach by the industry in relation to product and service information. The consultations identified that:

<sup>53</sup> **November 2015** – Walled Garden at Greenmount, Harley Davidson, Antrim, The World of Owls, The Spa at Dunamoy Cottages; **March 2016** – The White House, Spade Mill and Ram's Island and **October 2016** – Antrim Castle Gardens, Donegore Hill Open, Borderline Combat, Dunamoy Cottages and Spa

- Service personnel in tourism and related businesses often do not have a clear or detailed understanding of the economic contribution that tourism makes to a destination. Many are unaware of the range of assets and features within the Borough that visitors may be interested to experience. Consequently, they are unable to either pass on informed guidance, or to act as ambassadors for Antrim and Newtownabbey;
- Antrim and Newtownabbey does not have a long tradition of tourism. As a result, the Borough does not have an extensive supply of trained tourism local personnel to meet increases in its tourism product development; and
- Skill gaps have been identified in the areas of: Management and Leadership; Language; Digital Skills, and awareness; this is applicable to a broader audience, not just those working in and around the tourism sector, and includes the public and communities in the Borough. The online survey demonstrated local support and advocacy for the tourism sector in Antrim and Newtownabbey. The range of positive comments from locals in the online survey demonstrates the affection held for the area and the opportunity for locals to serve as ambassadors to help advocate for, and promote the Borough.

People and Skills Development has been identified as a priority area for action, requiring specific interventions by various stakeholders to increase the skills base in the Borough, the objectives being to: improve the visitor experience through a focus on customer care; identify and develop future “tourism leaders”; and provide pathways into employment in the tourism sector in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:**

### **1. Establish a Suite of Tourism Training and Mentoring Programmes**

This will focus on people and developing opportunities in respect of skills and employment. Delivery in this area will be undertaken through undertaking a training needs analysis within the industry, identifying gaps for mentoring and training, and the provision of training and mentoring to address the identified skills gap. As a preliminary piece to a needs analysis, this research has highlighted the requirements to develop a specific training programme for all tourism stakeholders on ***How to deliver an Engaging Tourist Experience in Antrim and Newtownabbey***. Priority areas for skill development include:

- Tourism Leadership;
- Customer Service;
- World Host Programme;
- Ambassador Programme;
- Know Your Region;
- Marketing Support;
- Customer Feedback - effective tools and techniques;
- Study/Familiarisation Trips;
- Business and Business Development Planning; Revenue Modelling, Cost Benefit Analysis and Sustainability;
- Digital Skills Development, including development of online presence – web presence and content management systems/blogs/websites; Domain name registration; and selling/online store; and social media (Council and VIC Staff could also participate in this training and development programme see Section 6.6.);
- Language skills training to accommodation providers, visitor attraction employees and guides in the Borough; and

- A scheme whereby training may be provided free of charge in tourism-related courses for the long-term unemployed. Additionally, a tourism apprenticeship programme aimed at school leavers could represent a further opportunity for the tourism industry in Antrim and Newtownabbey to develop a pool of talent equipped with key knowledge and skills to support the growth and development of the sector.

## **2. Deliver a Tourism Awareness Programme**

This will ensure increased awareness of the tourism sector through networking and tourism support activities. Priority areas for development include:

- A series of activities for front-line personnel in hotels and other tourism-related operations patronised by visitors: seminars on topics such as the socio-economic benefits of tourism, the Borough's visitor attractions, and how they can be effective and gain job satisfaction from their role as Tourism Ambassadors. In addition to this, there should be an increase in the number of study/familiarisation trips for front-line personnel in hotels and other tourism-related operations;
- With the expansion of Antrim and Newtownabbey's tourism sector, focussing on heritage and culture and outdoor activities, there will also be a requirement for a programme for Tourism Guides at central locations throughout the Borough; this may be based on the geography of the Borough or the themes/trails identified of Heritage and Culture, Natural Heritage, (angling/walking/cycling) based;
- Guidelines for the tourism trade relating to sustainability and eco-friendly tourism (attractions and accommodation) in the Borough.
- Networking and business development events for the tourism industry, learning from best practice through increased opportunities for peer-to-peer support, including visits, learning journeys, masterclasses and on line fora and networks;
- Workshops/briefing of good practice innovations within the tourism sector, for example a workshop on new and diverse forms of accommodation or fragmentation of consumer interests; and
- Ensure businesses can make effective use of customer feedback. The Council could: raise awareness of the importance of utilising user generated feedback; develop 'briefings' on key consumer trends; and develop a process to identify and offer support to tourism businesses that are receiving poor customer feedback.

## **6.7 Conclusions**

The recommendations set out above provide a guide to stimulate tourism development and investment. They aim to maximise national and international stays/visits to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council from market segments which offer an economic return. The recommendations have been developed to: overcome the weaknesses observed in the development, delivery, organisation and marketing of the Boroughs tourism offering; capitalise on the tourism assets and current tourism actions in the Borough and converting them into opportunities. The recommendations identify strategic opportunities in: organisation and management; visitor experience and product development; access and infrastructure; marketing and promotion; and people and skills development. They have led to the development a phased action plan (see Chapter 8: Action Plan).

## **7. Delivery, funding and monitoring**

### **7.1 Organisation Management and Delivery**

#### **7.1.1 Strategy Implementation Team**

Establishing the organisational and management structures and procedures to achieve the Strategy and Action Plan are central to the delivery of this Strategy. Tourism, Arts, Culture, Leisure and Marketing are spread across three Directorates in the Council. Collaborative relationships exist between directorates; however, these could be further embedded by establishing a cross-directorate operational team responsible for the Tourism Strategy 2017-2022 implementation phases. The cross-directorate team would serve to further connect the tourism, culture and events, leisure and recreation and marketing operations within Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. They could meet regularly (monthly) to ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan and monitor its progress against targets set. The Tourism, Town Centre and Regeneration Manager would lead the cross-directorate team and facilitate collaboration with, the private sector, Visit Belfast, Lough Neagh Partnership, Belfast Hills Partnership, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

The Tourism Team should also have an ongoing monitoring and evaluation role in the delivery of the strategy.

#### **7.1.2 Current partnerships**

##### **7.1.2.1 Visit Belfast**

Prior to the Council merger both Antrim and Newtownabbey legacy Councils had partnership agreements with Visit Belfast. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council established a partnership agreement with Visit Belfast two years ago, prior to the Council merger. This is a bespoke agreement as it reflects the opportunities presented by the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Belfast International Airport (BIA); the Belfast Welcome Centre and the wide range of marketing networks and media channels to promote the Borough.

The partnership agreement for 2016-17 expired at the end of March 2017, and Visit Belfast submitted a request to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council to not only renew, but increase the cost associated with this partnership. The additional funding requested centred on the expansion of the VIC at BIA, with an extended desk, additional digital touch screen and additional staffing.

The VIC at BIA currently offers the following services:

- Free tourist information and advice on Belfast and Northern Ireland;
- Accommodation booking service;
- Transport tickets for onward travel; and
- Tickets for tours.

##### **2016/17 annual partnership agreement (£15,000)**

- Marketing and promotion: includes 'gold' platform promotion in Visit Belfast Welcome Centre, an external advertising screen, internal literature display, dedicated web presence for 7 key attractions, digital marketing channel, defined advertising in Visit Belfast Guide and corporate member benefits. (£10,000).
- A presence at Visit Belfast's BIA Visitor Information Centre located in the arrivals lounge: images on digital screens, Borough branding on the desk, fielding enquiries about the Borough including accommodation bookings and literature. In addition there are 'destination images' of the Borough

at Applegreen Services on the M2 on the electronic kiosk located there, with 6 of the resting images featuring attractions within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough. (£5,000).

(Note that Theatre at the Mill has a separate Silver Partnership with Visit Belfast that is paid for and managed separately) at £1,000.

#### **Proposed Visit Belfast annual partnership agreement 2017/18 (£20,000)**

- Marketing and promotion: as per 2016/17 agreement above (£10,000).
- Promotion at Visit Belfast's newly expanded Visitor Information Centre: this includes an increase in Visit Belfast staffing from one to two (April to September every day; October to March Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday – the peak periods). The larger facility will provide opportunities to showcase the key attractions of the Borough including an additional touch screen service (£10,000).

#### **Opportunities arising from the new proposed Service Level Agreement**

There are a number of opportunities that the enhanced Service Level Agreement are expected to bring to support tourism in the Borough:

- Additional branding and destination images at the new VIC at BIA
- Opportunity to create a positive impression of the Borough destination from early in the visitor engagement relationship, with improved customer service at the enhanced VIC.
- Opportunity to work with Visit Belfast and BIA to develop animation around the VIC at key arrival times and/or to promote particular Borough-themed events or cultural heritage. For example, in the run up to local flagship events, characters in period costume could welcome guests to the VIC, deliver short character pieces and (BIA permitting) possibly offering free samples of local artisan foods.
- A new Visit Belfast website (currently in development) with strong use of digital data for targeted marketing: there is an opportunity for the Council to identify 'visitor drivers' with faster reaction times to the needs and online enquiries from customers.
- Guaranteed racking of the Council's Visitor Guides at the VIC at George Best Belfast City Airport (also operated by Visit Belfast).
- For visitors travelling and staying some distance away, recommendations can be made to make time on their return journey to the airport to explore the Borough and what it has to offer.

#### **Overall BIA VIC performance:<sup>54</sup>**

<b>BIA VIC</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Diff</b>
<b>Throughput (Counter)</b>	67,692	95,710	152,439	<b>315,841</b>	<b>▲ 125.2</b>
<b>Daytime Browsers</b>	18,826	25,367	34,178	<b>78,371</b>	<b>▲ 81.5</b>
<b># Other enquiries</b>	7,463	10,627	8,100	<b>26,190</b>	<b>▲ 8.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,981</b>	<b>131,704</b>	<b>194,717</b>	<b>420,402</b>	<b>▲ 107.2</b>

**\* projected**

**#Telephone/kiosks**

- Visitor profile 2015/16: 5 % NI, 51% GB, 19% European, 13% North America, 13% rest of the world
- The most frequently requested information from visitors using the VIC (aside from onward travel information):
  - Places to Eat 71%
  - Visitor Attractions 43%

<sup>54</sup> Figures available early March 2017

- Tours 41%
- Shopping 37%
- Events 27%

### **Projected Performance**

- Anticipated increase in passengers at BIA for 2017/18 projected as 5.4 million (from 5.2 million in 2016) with the introduction of new airlines
- Projected increase in total enquiries in 2017/18 to 232,000 from 197,800 in 2016/17
- Ticket sales are projected to increase by 128% to £361,919

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop clear mechanisms for regularly supplying Visit Belfast with updated information; this should include updates for the Visit Belfast website on events, changes to attraction opening hours, pushing when venues are open (particularly those with short seasonal opening like The White House). There needs to be a regular process put in place for updates to be collated and sent to the Visit Belfast digital team. Visit Belfast has indicated that the information received from venues, and on events, could be improved.
- A review should be held of the suite of images held by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council and if required, new images commissioned to ensure that they present the most striking pictures of the Borough from the moment visitors arrive at BIA, and in the Belfast Welcome Centre.
- Review the sites and attractions identified by the Council and presented to Visit Belfast for use on the digital platforms. The Council should consider if these are the most appropriate and impactful, particularly considering access and visitor experience. Consideration should be given to exchanging promotion of one visitor attraction for increased promotion of events, which are a strong visitor proposition in the area.
- Quarterly reports should be requested from Visit Belfast and update meetings held to review progress, identify opportunities that are not being maximised, and agree action for the coming quarter. The report should be structured around the key headings in the partnership agreement, adding Responsible Owner (named), Support, Dependencies, Progress Against Deliverables. We would also suggest considering a simple traffic light system to flag progress against outputs; this is to clearly identify where outputs are not achievable or less effective, and to allow for the identification and delivery of the most effective opportunities for the region and budget.

### **New Service Level Agreement**

A report was taken to April 2017 Committee and The Council approved the recommendation to renew the Service Level Agreement at a cost of £20,000 for 2017/18.

#### **7.1.2.2 Lough Neagh Partnership**

The Council currently has a partnership agreement with Lough Neagh Partnership (LNP), which is renewed annually.

#### **Current agreement**

The agreement for 2015/16 and 2016/17 was for £25,000 towards core operating and programming costs (£3,000 for the delivery of a digital marketing skills programme to tourism businesses in the area and £22,000 for core funding).

#### **Outputs 2016/17**

**Digital marketing skills programme:** this was poorly attended. LNP does not propose running this programme again, and the partnership contribution has therefore been reduced by £3,000 for 2017/18.

**Landscape partnership project:** Oversee delivery of the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership project.

**Destination Marketing Plan:**

- Review the Destination Management Plan (DMP) to clearly identify tourism product and devise a tourism marketing plan.
- Develop the tourism and cultural tourism skill base of local tourism providers and communities in accordance with Theme 3 of the DMP Action Plan by implementing a digital marketing skills programme

**Marketing Lough Neagh:**

- Event information forwarded by Antrim and Newtownabbey VICs to Tourism NI (TNI) to be also featured on Lough Neagh website.
- Coordination of marketing features for TNI productions/ advertorials.
- Review and update website regularly with events, newsletters and other promotional information [www.discoverloughneagh.com](http://www.discoverloughneagh.com).
- Issue of event updates and press releases.
- Consumer and Trade pages on Facebook and Twitter.
- Co-ordinate an electronic Christmas colouring competition within local primary schools.
- Increase SEO optimisation of [discoverloughneagh.com](http://discoverloughneagh.com) through a co-ordinated social media Blog Competition and link relevant blogs to the Council's website.
- Promote the destination and its events at relevant trade fairs and exhibitions in co-ordination with councils.

**River to Lough Festival:** held at Antrim Castle Gardens in 2016 but will rotate to other Councils in other years

**Lough Neagh Cycle Trail:** monitor the development of this aligned to the development of a Lough Neagh Heritage Trail.

**Lough Neagh Community Trust:** work with the Development Trust NI to ensure this become operational.

**Lough Neagh Cooperation Project:** Facilitate the securing of a Rural Development Project in conjunction with Antrim Newtownabbey Council and GROW to bring benefits to the Antrim Newtownabbey District in terms of Lough shore facilities owned by Council.

**Lough Neagh Food Programme:** Develop strategy for Lough Neagh food with emphasis on Lough Neagh fish with a view to securing EU or RDP funding for a food programme. Involve relevant partners such as Food NI and Tourism NI.

**Assisting Council with strategies:** Assist Council officers and consultants with cultural, leisure, tourism, recreational strategies as requested.

**Issues and challenges:**

- Discover Lough Neagh website has significant issues with its search and/or tagging functions, meaning that many subpages report 'no information available' when clicked on for example, for festivals. This means that there is little information to be found on venues, attractions or things to do in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough.
- Lough Neagh Development Trust was established in 2016 to take on the long-term management and development of the Lough under community ownership. There is an expectation that funding will be forthcoming from central government to support the work of the Development Trust going forward and that there would be reduced reliance on the Council's to cover core operating costs.

- It is not clear how LNP and the Lough Neagh Development Trust will work together, and where added value will be achieved by a separate continuing agreement with Lough Neagh Partnership. It is possible however that the Trust will be the vehicle for managing Lough Neagh going forward.
- It is not clear where Antrim and Newtownabbey has gained significant promotion through destination marketing activity by LNP.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Council should request an end of year report from LNP with examples of where events and attractions have gained appropriate promotion and secured return on the considerable investment.
- Detailed consideration needs to be given to the added value to be achieved by renewing the partnership agreement with Lough Neagh Partnership or detailed service level agreement with outputs agreed.

#### **New Service Level Agreement**

A report was taken to May 2017 Committee and The Council approved the recommendation provide £22,000 towards Lough Neagh Partnership's costs in 2017/18 and for Officers to engage with the Partnership regarding reduced funding over the next 2-3 years.

#### **7.1.3 Strategic Partnerships**

The Council has established a Tourism Team and Tourism Forum to develop the tourism agenda for the Borough. As this research has identified the importance of business tourism to the Borough it is suggested that the forum is extended to involve local Chambers of Commerce or Business Networks for business representation. In addition to the Tourism, Culture and Leisure teams within Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, the Tourism Team and Tourism Forum, strategic partnerships (outside those outlined in the paragraphs above) will be required to implement several key objectives outlined in the Strategy and Action Plan; the following are proposed:

- **Regional Networking and Local Authority Working Groups:** It is recommended that Antrim and Newtownabbey should meet quarterly with Belfast City Council, Mid and East Antrim and Lisburn and Castlereagh. Each of the Local Authorities has completed Tourism Strategies recently. They should meet to agree potential synergies and to drive agreed tourism development agendas. Consideration could also be given to jointly preparing, supporting and submitting funding bid proposals where the delivery would have strategic benefits across the area. Collaboration on practical measures such as signage and cost sharing on joint marketing initiatives could also be explored. The councils should seek a collective bi-annual meeting with Tourism Northern Ireland to discuss collaborative development agendas.
- **Lough Neagh:** Maximising opportunities around Lough Neagh will require close working with up to five Councils, as well as with other organisations such as Waterways Ireland, The Lough Neagh Development Trust, the Lough Neagh Landscape Trust and Community/ Volunteer Representative Organisations.
- **Collaboration between Directorates in project/funding bids:** Funding opportunities for tourism development can come from a wide variety of sources (see Section 7.2 below). To ensure the funding opportunities can be maximised, greater collaboration between Council directorates on project proposals to obtain funding could be more strategically beneficial if aligned with an economic and tourism focus, in addition to their current purposes.

## 7.2 Marketing Strategy

### 7.2.1 Key aims of the marketing strategy

This section identifies and recommends the core elements of the marketing activity necessary for the successful implementation of the Tourism Strategy 2017-2022. It is important to note that this should be supported by a full marketing strategy that should be developed by the Marketing Team assigned to this project.

This strategy contains marketing campaign recommendations to deliver the following:

- Recognition of other plans and priorities where available and appropriate such as the *Antrim and Newtownabbey Corporate Improvement Plan*.
- Recommendations for target market segmentation with project priorities, to retain and attract visitors.
- Detailed marketing recommendations with proposed responsible owners, timing and budget to deliver on the segmentation.

The marketing campaign will:

- **Raise awareness:** Build awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough and the tourism product and offer.
- **Generate increased income:** Generate sufficient footfall and income to achieve the sustainable development of tourism as a key economic driver for the region and ensure these resources are managed effectively and efficiently with the overall objective on increasing economic impact.
- **Be innovative:** By working with the Council team to ensure innovation is at the fore of everything they do, it will ensure the development of the appropriate plans, skills and infrastructure to achieve the agreed aims and objectives.
- **Promote enjoyment of Antrim and Newtownabbey region:** Demonstrate, promote and celebrate the experiences, products/retail, rich heritage and tourism potential of the Antrim and Newtownabbey region.
- **Build on the current visitor numbers:** Welcome visitors to the Antrim and Newtownabbey region to ensure they will want to come back and support the area as a 'must visit' tourism destination in Northern Ireland.
- **Increase dwell time:** Support other initiatives in the region to increase the number of visitors from outside the Borough, extend their dwell time, overnight stays and increase spend.
- **Convert residents into attraction visitors:** Convert the number of people from the Borough and area choosing to visit elsewhere into champions of the Borough and all it must offer.
- **Actively promote the uniqueness of the region:** Promote the variety of attractions, whilst also celebrating the collective 'experience' they offer the visitor. Celebrate and build on the existing offering whilst actively promoting attractions through clustering.
- **Encourage collaboration & partnership:** Promote sharing and support between the attractions, and industry service providers in the region.

### 7.2.2 Critical Success Factors

To deliver upon the ambitions identified in this document, our research has identified some key critical success factors that must be addressed through the marketing strategy. It needs to:

- Bring together a **shared vision and plan** of what the tourism offer currently is and its potential;
- Have **buy in** and support from **council staff** and **tourism attractions**, and **service providers**;
- A **long-term investment** in the development of the product offering – there is no quick fix;

- Incorporate additional **research of the existing visitors** and their preferences;
- **Combine excellence in quality with excellence in experience;**
- **Reflect the rich and distinctive cultural heritage of the area and not just import offerings;**
- **Be distinctly the Antrim and Newtownabbey brand;**
- **Engage people as owners and participants, not only as visitors;**
- Be outward looking and **linked to what is happening more widely in** tourism in Northern Ireland and beyond; and
- Provide **benefits** for the residents, local businesses and the Council.

### 7.2.3 The Unique Selling Points (USPs) of Antrim and Newtownabbey

Identifying the USPs for Antrim and Newtownabbey is key to unlocking the marketing potential for the project. It is essential that the USPs of the attractions throughout the Borough are captured, scripted, and communicated in marketing and promotional activity to all audience/visitor segments.

Antrim and Newtownabbey has many things to say and so messages must be confidently prioritised. When the offer is, rich and varied, there is the temptation to try and say everything, and end up losing focus or diluting the strength of the region's USPs. A clearer view is gleaned and collated from previous workshops, the visitor survey and consultation meetings by grouping all the strong positive attributes together.

**Figure 7.1 Antrim and Newtownabbey Unique Selling Points**



There is a need to have a clear standalone proposition that can be easily understood and that can also work hard with other marketing propositions. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough region has played a big part in the history of Northern Ireland, although unknown to many people, and it has the unrealised potential to play an influential and important role in the future development of the economy as a significant tourism destination. There are many old stories which remain untold, still to be uncovered, new people to be discovered, and unique stories to be shared.

Marketing and branding the Borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey is all about selling the stories of

the region. Visitors and locals are intrigued by stories, and Antrim and Newtownabbey has an abundance of them: personal stories, stories of history, tragedy, mythical folklore and intrigue. Some are grounded in fact and some perhaps embellished over the years, but all are stories that have stood the test of time.

A 'tool kit' detailing the USPs, and how they should be used in all marketing materials and activities would help to ensure that the stories of the region are retold in a way that raises awareness among locals and attracts visitors. This tool kit can be used not only by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council staff, but also by stakeholders, partners and the local community and media.

#### 7.2.4 Key Messages

It is crucial to have a suite of agreed key messages that are used consistently across all marketing activity (above and below the line) to continually reinforce brand messages and values.

**Table 7.1 Key Messages and Values**

<b>1. Locations</b>	<b>Antrim and Newtownabbey is easily accessible by bus, bike, boat or plane, is located on the border of Belfast and is an important gateway to the Causeway Coastal Route and the rest of Northern Ireland.</b>
<i>Aligning with the <u>marketing</u> objective:</i>	<p><b>Raise awareness:</b> Build awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough and the tourism product and offerings.</p> <p><b>Build on the current visitor numbers:</b> Welcome visitors to the Antrim and Newtownabbey region to ensure they will want to come back and support the area as a 'must visit' tourism destination in Northern Ireland.</p> <p><b>Promote enjoyment of Antrim and Newtownabbey region:</b> Demonstrate, promote and celebrate the experiences, products / retail, rich heritage and tourism potential of the Antrim and Newtownabbey region.</p> <p><b>Increase dwell time:</b> Support other initiatives in the region to increase the number of visitors from outside the Borough, extend their dwell time, overnight stays and increase spend.</p>
<i>Aligning with the <u>tourism</u> objective:</i>	Access and Infrastructure including developments under: Visitor Information Centres; Transport Facilities; and Services Directional and interpretative signage.
<b>2. The experience</b>	There is so much to experience - culture, arts, heritage, the great outdoors. Come and experience the uniqueness of the region.
<i>Aligning with the <u>marketing</u> objectives</i>	<p><b>Raise awareness:</b> Build awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough and the tourism product and offerings.</p> <p><b>Promote enjoyment of Antrim and Newtownabbey region:</b> Demonstrate, promote and celebrate the experiences, products / retail, rich heritage and tourism potential of the Antrim and Newtownabbey region.</p> <p><b>Build on the current visitor numbers:</b> Welcome visitors to the Antrim and Newtownabbey region to ensure they will want to come back and support the area as a 'must visit' tourism destination in Northern Ireland.</p> <p><b>Increase dwell time:</b> Support other initiatives in the region to increase the number of visitors from outside the Borough, extend their dwell time, overnight stays and increase spend.</p>

<i>Aligning with the <u>tourism</u> objective</i>	<p><b>Visitor Experience and Product Development</b> including developments under: Culture and Heritage; Natural Heritage; Outdoors; Festivals and Events; Business tourism; Accommodation; Food and the Evening Economy, each supported by the development of clusters and corridors; and engaging with visitor markets activities.</p> <p><b>Access and Infrastructure</b> including developments under: Visitor Information Centres; Transport Facilities; and Services Directional and interpretative signage; and</p> <p><b>People and Skills Development.</b></p>
<b>3. People behind the places</b>	Meet the people of the past and present, the people who made and make Antrim and Newtownabbey what it is today. Experience the personal touch.
<i>Linking with the <u>marketing</u> objective</i>	<p><b>Raise awareness:</b> Build awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough and the tourism product and offerings.</p> <p><b>Be innovative:</b> By working with the Council team to ensure innovation is at the fore of everything they do, it will ensure the development of the appropriate plans, skills and infrastructure to achieve the agreed aims and objectives.</p> <p><b>Promote enjoyment of Antrim and Newtownabbey region:</b> Demonstrate, promote and celebrate the experiences, products / retail, rich heritage and tourism potential of the Antrim and Newtownabbey region.</p> <p><b>Build on the current visitor numbers:</b> Welcome visitors to the Antrim and Newtownabbey region to ensure they will want to come back and support the area as a 'must visit' tourism destination in Northern Ireland.</p> <p><b>Increase dwell time:</b> Support other initiatives in the region to increase the number of visitors from outside the Borough, extend their dwell time, overnight stays and increase spend.</p>
<i>Linking with the <u>tourism</u> objective</i>	<p><b>Visitor Experience and Product Development</b> including developments under: Culture and Heritage; Natural Heritage; Outdoors; Festivals and Events; Business tourism; Accommodation; Food and the Evening Economy, each supported by the development of clusters and corridors; and engaging with visitor markets activities.</p> <p><b>People and Skills Development.</b></p>
<b>4. The environment</b>	<p>It's In Our Nature</p> <p>The Great Outdoors</p> <p>Rich eco-tourism– endangered species</p>
<i>Linking with the <u>marketing</u> objective</i>	<p><b>Raise awareness:</b> Build awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough and the tourism product and offerings.</p> <p><b>Be innovative:</b> By working with the Council team to ensure innovation is at the fore of everything they do, it will ensure the development of the appropriate plans, skills and infrastructure to achieve the agreed aims and objectives.</p> <p><b>Promote enjoyment of Antrim and Newtownabbey region:</b> Demonstrate, promote and celebrate the experiences, products / retail, rich heritage and tourism potential of the Antrim and Newtownabbey region.</p> <p><b>Build on the current visitor numbers:</b> Welcome visitors to the Antrim and Newtownabbey region to ensure they will want to come back and support the area as a 'must visit' tourism destination in Northern Ireland.</p>

	<b>Increase dwell time:</b> Support other initiatives in the region to increase the number of visitors from outside the Borough, extend their dwell time, overnight stays and increase spend
<i>Linking with the <u>tourism</u> objective</i>	<p><b>Visitor Experience and Product Development</b> including developments under: Culture and Heritage; Natural Heritage; Outdoors; Festivals and Events; Business tourism; Accommodation; Food and the Evening Economy, each supported by the development of clusters and corridors; and engaging with visitor markets activities.</p> <p><b>Access and Infrastructure</b> including developments under: Visitor Information Centres; Transport Facilities; and Services Directional and interpretative signage; and</p> <p><b>People and Skills Development.</b></p>

### 7.2.5 Branding

The development of the *It's In Our Nature* brand (including a graphic identity/logo) will ensure continuity of message and will support identified market messages to promote and market the Borough. A brand safeguards a distinct tone, a cohesive concept and singular voice that can be applied across all collateral and communications, and where appropriate by partners and stakeholders. Brand guidelines have not been developed and require some further work by the Council.

A framework is also required to align communication approaches across council, tourism services and providers from other partner organisations including: Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, The Ulster Scots Agency, Lough Neagh Partnership, tourism providers and visitor attractions.

### 7.2.6 Key Market Segments

The visitors identified in the product audit and in the strategic context chapters of this report are further explored below; these audiences and visitor segments align with those of the partner organisations who will be charged with supporting the promotion of Antrim and Newtownabbey as a tourism destination, including the Council, Visit Belfast, Tourism NI, and Tourism Ireland.

- **Leisure** – includes all independent leisure visitors both within and from outside NI. There are of course sub audience categories within this. However, it is more appropriate to target and be aware of the overall leisure numbers; this includes families, couples travelling without children, independent travellers and small groups travelling together as a larger family unit or a group of friends. The category is a primary target market and should be encouraged to make a conscious decision to include Antrim and Newtownabbey on their itinerary.
- **Coach groups** – includes all visitors who will travel to and from Antrim and Newtownabbey as part of a planned coach tour. This includes fully guided tours of attractions in the region booked by visitors before they depart for Northern Ireland. It also includes visitors who book a coach tour once they arrive either in Ireland or Northern Ireland. Most coach visitors that visit Antrim and Newtownabbey as part of a tour will have made a conscious decision to do so as part of their itinerary. A more limited number will have purchased a tour because they have specific interest in visiting a specific attraction in the Borough such as Antrim Castle Gardens and The Junction; this reiterates the importance of it working closely with the international coach operators in the longer term to ensure that they see the benefits of including such attractions as part of their itineraries.
- **Special Interest Groups** – includes both domestic and national/international visitors. It can be defined as a group of like-minded individuals who are travelling for a specific purpose. This purpose could be to research genealogy, explore archaeology, interest in myths and legends,

local history or to participate in an experience for example a battle re-enactment. Given the abundance of history in the Borough opportunities should be explored to link with archaeological and historical groups. Opportunities for engagement with such groups is an innovative way to raise awareness of the region. Local archaeological groups such as the Ulster Archaeological Society and Young Archaeologists Club should be contacted and connections made. History groups both local and national should be contacted and made aware of historical sites such as The White House and Pogue's Entry and encouraged to visit.

- **Ulster Scots** – a strong Ulster Scots history exists in the Borough and there is significant potential to promote this to those interested in exploring their Ulster Scots heritage. Contact should be made with the Ulster Scots Agency to ensure that opportunities are identified on an ongoing basis. In addition, the Discover Ulster Scots website offers a wonderful opportunity to promote the unique heritage of the Borough through stories, images and video on the site. Web links should be established from the Discover Ulster Scots website to the Council website or newly developed tourism micro site promoting the locations and stories. Potential genealogy links and opportunities should also be explored through the Ulster Historical Foundation and website Ancestry Ireland.
- **Heritage partnerships** - research should be carried out to identify heritage organisations with whom partnerships could be formed, or awareness-raising opportunities activated. This could include disseminating information to their members, mindful that a geographically-defined organisation will usually only promote sites in their own areas; this approach could include Historic Scotland, English Heritage and American historical societies. Social media can be a very productive way to connect with such organisations and their members and such an action should be built into the digital communications plan.
- **Outdoor Enthusiasts** - the Borough boasts some high-quality golf courses, some of the best angling sites in Ireland, access to the expansive waters of Lough Neagh and is a bike friendly region. By targeting outdoor actives and sports enthusiasts via sites and publications well known to them, the reputation of the region as a cost-effective place to visit for this reason could be enhanced significantly. It should be noted that there are varying degrees of economic benefit from sports enthusiasts, depending on the sport they enjoy for example, angling is a significant income generator while canoeists usually come prepared and with their own accommodation.
- **Holiday makers** – for those who wish to take a holiday but not stray too far from home there is an opportunity to design a campaign with a 'did you know approach'; this may encourage families, overnight stay and return visits if packaged bravely and correctly.

Having identified key markets that may be interested in visiting the Antrim and Newtownabbey region it is also important to identify the different types of visitors within those groups. Identified market segments for visitors to NI are included in Table 7.2 below:

**Table 7.2 Market Segments**

<b>Customer Segment</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>What they are looking for</b>	<b>Best suited communications channels</b>
<b>Time Together</b>	NI & ROI	Interested in romantic breaks and spending quality time as a couple.	Local terrestrial TV & Radio channels, Local National papers, web and deal sites such as Groupon.
<b>Family Fun</b>	NI & ROI	Interested in breaks that will keep their children amused whilst giving them an opportunity to relax.	Local terrestrial TV & Radio channels, Local National papers, web and deal sites such as Groupon.
<b>Mature Cosmopolitans</b>	NI & ROI	Aspire to travel more and have the time and money to do so, but are looking for good deals.	Local TV, Sports Channels, Local National papers and Radio. NB: Less digitally connected than other segments.
<b>Young and Lively</b>	ROI only	Interested in urban breaks often taken with friends.	TV, Music Radio stations, Web, digital and social.
<b>Social Engergisers</b>	GB, FR, GER, N. America	Action-packed days as well as fun- filled nights.	High social media users, video on demand, news online, cinema and outdoor.
<b>Culturally Curious</b>	GB, FR, GER N. America	Want to discover culture for themselves.	Medium to heavy viewers of TV which drives some online search. Newspapers and radio and cinema, important.
<b>Great Escapers</b>	GB, FR, GER N. America	Want to immerse themselves in nature and get away from it all.	TV, newspapers, radio, outdoor. internet and social media are all important.

### 7.2.7 Tourism Marketing Plan

The marketing plan is focused on delivering across the main revenue generators detailed above. If Antrim and Newtownabbey is going to succeed as a key tourism destination, it is essential that a sufficient and robust marketing and communications strategy is developed and implemented from an early stage, with resources such as staffing and budget put in place.

The marketing plan in this strategy has been developed in line with the overall objective of creating a gear change in the awareness and marketing of Antrim and Newtownabbey as a tourist destination. Consideration is also given to not duplicating the marketing effort of strategic partners whether they are local organisations such as Lough Neagh Partnership or national/international organisations such as Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

The key considerations and drivers are to:

- Drive perception change, by raising the profile and positive awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey as a tourism destination;
- Drive increased visitor numbers to the region over the next 2 – 5 years;<sup>55</sup>
- Maximise awareness of tourism products on offer across the Borough;
- Create engagement both locally and internationally; and
- Develop community pride and engagement from residents and in turn create ambassadors of the Borough.

Indicative budget figures have been proposed in the marketing plan outlined below. In discussions on

<sup>55</sup> This recognises that it is likely to take at least a year to develop the narrative for the region and refine the product and service, and market it sufficiently.

staffing and resource requirements, it should be noted that these figures are conservative and take into consideration budgetary pressures currently faced by all councils. However, there is ample opportunity to utilise further marketing budget, should it become available. Many of the activities proposed could be up-weighted, particularly around digital and social media, and sales and advertising. However, the figures proposed will allow for some solid marketing activity to take place, with good return on investment.

#### 7.2.8 Communication Tools

The marketing plan for Antrim and Newtownabbey rooted in a firm knowledge of what the Borough must offer, and who the target markets are, will include a range of marketing activities, platforms and tools such as:

- **Trade Shows:** A calendar of key trade shows should be compiled and a budgetary commitment should be made by Council to ensure the region is represented at key trade events; this will assist with long term planning and in building relations within the industry at home and internationally.
- **E-Newsletters:** Plans and attractive visuals must be developed for newsletters targeting existing and potential clients who opt in. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council can work with partners to access databases (if permitted) or ask that partners and stakeholders include news pieces in their own e-newsletters. For evaluation purposes when it is important to review any data on engagement, these findings will help inform future activity.
- **Digital and Social Media:** Whilst Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has a stand-alone web presence to reflect their current services, facilities and attractions, the primary focus is on Council run sites. A dedicated tourism web site [visitantrimandnewtownabbey.com](http://visitantrimandnewtownabbey.com) has been agreed and will be live during 2017.

To support Digital and Social Media, Antrim and Newtownabbey should:

- Develop an annual web content plan for the Tourism website; this should be based on events promotions and attraction 'highlights' that the Council's marketing team know are coming up, and then built upon. Consideration should be given to the time investment required to keep sites up to date with relevant and engaging content is significant. The trade-off for this investment in resource is the power and reach of such tools in terms of raising awareness and promoting USPs to all audience markets.
- Social Media is one of the most cost-effective ways to reach the maximum number of people. Key to the success of tourism focused platforms is a Social Media Manager to be responsible for developing and delivering on a content plan, posting relevant content with the freedom/authority to post, and the wherewithal to respond to queries and comments, some of which through the nature of social media may be negative or disruptive. A social media policy should be followed and all staff who are involved in delivering social media content should be trained in this. Wider Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council staff should also be made familiar with and engage with the social media policy and platforms.
- A dedicated tourism Twitter account could also facilitate reach to a larger potential audience of organisations and individuals who know little or nothing about the unique offerings within the region. The content must always support and reflect, although not necessarily duplicate, what is being communicated through all other communication channels.

- A LinkedIn profile could also be established and linked with Twitter to drive traffic to a dedicated website. The connections made via this platform can also be used to build a database. This could be beneficial in promoting the regions offer to the corporate and incentive market as well as niche and specialist groups.
- Blogging provides another mechanism to create interest, awareness and drive engagement. There are multiple well-known bloggers in the tourism sector who can help to create great interest in the offering. Such bloggers should be considered as key media influencers. Inviting them to come to the area and to experience some of the products and attractions will have a cost, however this is more than outweighed by the value of the coverage that can be obtained.
- Pinterest and Instagram – again, a presence should be established for the region on these platforms. On these platforms images speak for themselves, which means that with little effort, impact and reach can be made. With such a plethora of highly visual locations Antrim and Newtownabbey lends itself to photo opportunities. Engagement with local photographers (amateur and professional) should also be encouraged with joint promotion via social media to drive up engagement.
- All social media will help create awareness and drive interest in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area as a tourism destination and should be viewed as part of an integrated digital and social media plan which details specific messages. Specific KPIs for activity should be established, and an evaluation process which monitors, reports on and influences content plans created.
- Encourage VIC and Local information Office staff to take the lead and become digitally active (see Section 6.4).
- **Press and Public Relations** A detailed media communications plan needs to be developed both for the domestic and international markets. Table 7.3 illustrates the key categories to deliver against the audiences:

**Table 7.3 Communication Categories**

Media Type	Audience	Communication purpose
Local consumer media	Leisure Coach groups Special Interest Groups Ulster Scots Heritage partnerships Specialist Sports Enthusiasts	Awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey borough Council area as a key 'on your doorstep' tourism destination.  Specific information should be tailored for each group type.
	Leisure Coach groups Special Interest Groups Ulster Scots Heritage partnerships Specialist Sports Enthusiasts	Awareness of the tourism offer, key events such as Antrim as a Christmas destination and key historic anniversaries. Specific sporting events.
Trade media (international)	Leisure Coach groups Special Interest Groups	Key events/bespoke events. Locations of historic relevance.
Trade media	Coach groups	Key events/bespoke events.

Media Type	Audience	Communication purpose
(national and international)	Special Interest Groups	Locations of historic relevance.

- **Advertising** across a range of above the line platforms will add weight to the campaign. The use of outdoor, radio and TV advertising will serve to add weight to any campaign, reiterating messages and increasing reach. Points of entry and exit, in destination and in market, should all be considered as areas in which activity should take place.
- **Sales** A proactive sales plan for each location and/or attraction is critical to the success of the overall marketing of the Borough as a tourist destination. Therefore, it is essential that where sales are required, responsibility be allocated to a sales or sales and marketing manager to drive bookings and ensure their messaging is aligned and supports the overall objectives of the overarching tourism strategy.

### 7.2.9 Marketing Resources and Implementation

Consideration must be given to the additional range of resources for knowledge and skills, resources and people across partner organisations that will be fundamental in the successful delivery in marketing.

- **Knowledge and skills** Partners bring different knowledge and skills to the marketing activity plan and an emphasis must be placed on maximising these skills; these include sector knowledge, trade engagement, campaign development and delivery and media management. There are also areas of marketing operation that will require enhanced skills particularly in language, strategic communications, digital campaigns and sales development.
- **People and partnerships** from planning to delivery resources, challenges with resources to assist with maintaining and delivering the marketing activity plan makes partnership working even more vital. For all activity and actions, it is important to agree a lead person, team or agencies who can oversee and lead the following range of planning, co-ordination and delivery of marketing activities. The table below identifies considerations that if made will bring Antrim and Newtownabbey a step closer to success.

In delivering the marketing activity plan through a collaboration of partners and new resources, there will be a collective growth in knowledge and skills, integration of effort and clarification on roles and responsibilities. While this plan will require further refinement, the principle of shared resources and integration is central to its success as outlined in Table 7.4.

**Table 7.4 Marketing Activity Plan**

Area of Activity	Activity required
<b>Strategic and Operational Co-ordination</b>	Clarity of linkages and leadership of the range of people and teams who assist with developing or delivering the marketing activity plan. Also, having resources for ongoing planning and review is essential.
<b>Strategic Communications and Co-ordination</b>	Focus on the 'It's In Our Nature' brand within the regional brand and stories. This necessitates working in partnership and is essential to the successful delivery of integrated marketing.
<b>Consumer Campaigns and Platforms</b>	Agreeing shared resources with other partners to maximise the opportunity of consumer campaigns and platforms.
<b>Business to Business Platforms</b>	Agreeing shared resources with other partners to maximize the opportunity of B2B platforms.

Area of Activity	Activity required
<b>Digital Communications</b>	Coordination of digital resources and agreeing the deficit or gap in delivery is essential for the successful implementation of any digital component of the strategy.
<b>Familiarisation Visits</b>	Coordination of familiarisation visits and their itineraries will assist with building the capacity within a range of partnership. Organisations must ensure the tourism stories of Antrim and Newtownabbey and new related experiences in the Borough come through on any itinerary plan.
<b>Media Visits</b>	Coordination of media visits and managing the legacy contacts of this audience will provide a stronger ongoing relationship with the international media.
<b>Monitoring and review</b>	Ensuring all aspects of the marketing activity plan are coordinated and delivered on time and to the impact level required will demand a co-ordinated resource for monitoring

### 7.3 Funding Strategy

This Tourism Strategy 2017-2022 sets out a programme of tourism product development interventions and marketing initiatives. The interventions proposed will require a combination of public sector and private sector funding, allied to community support. Any larger projects and improvements to the Borough's tourism infrastructure will invariably be dependent on support from the public purse. Table 7.5 presents the detail on the funding currently open (unless otherwise stated), that the Council may wish to investigate further to support projects related to the Action Plan.

**Table 7.5 Sustainable and Competitive Tourism – Funding opportunities: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

National Funds	
<b>Tourism Northern Ireland</b> Capital Development Funding Support The International Tourism Events Fund 2017/18 will offer funding to eligible events taking place between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 Funding requests greater than £30,000  The National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme 2017/18 will offer financial support to eligible events taking place between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018	<p>There are currently no Capital Funding Schemes open for applications.</p> <p>Events supported through the International Tourism Events Fund must: Generate substantial economic benefit for Northern Ireland through increased visitation including visitors and participants; Highlight Northern Ireland as an events and tourism destination through high profile, international media coverage; Enhance Northern Ireland's opportunities to host further major events; Be backed by a viable budget and realistic planning; Have the opportunity to build legacy and sustainability; Possess measurable outcomes; Total visitor numbers greater than 5,000; Events must have an overall budget of £150,000 or more (in kind support not considered); and Aimed return on investment of 5:1.</p> <p>Events must satisfy the parameters below to apply for the National Tourism Events Sponsorship Scheme: Total visitor numbers greater than 1,000; Events must have a minimum income of £50,000 through ticket sales, private sponsorship, other public sector, merchandise etc. (prior to receiving monies from Tourism NI); Events must have an overall minimum expenditure of £50,000 (not including monies from Tourism NI); Sponsorship available for events from £6,000 including VAT to £30,000 including VAT; Events must demonstrate how they will promote Tourism NI and discovernorthernireland.com to our key visitor segments; Tourism NI support cannot be included as part of the minimum income requirement and In-kind support is not included in the budget.</p>

National Funds	
<b>Arts Council</b> <sup>56</sup> Local Government Challenge Fund  The Public Art Programme	<p>The Local Government Challenge Fund has been devised to underpin and strengthen arts provision in a community setting and to stimulate long-term change. Historically, local authority funding for the arts has been variable across Northern Ireland. There is an opportunity to change this through the development of Community Plans and their emerging themes, such as economic regeneration, community relations and social cohesion, tourism and health. The Arts Council believes that the Challenge Fund has the greatest chance of success if arts policy and programmes are embedded in Community Plans. The Arts Council is making £1.5m available within this Fund which is open to the 10 council areas outside Belfast. The Arts Council will match each council's contribution, up to a maximum of £150,000.</p> <p>The Public Art Programme is designed to support the commissioning of new art for public places throughout Northern Ireland. The dates for next round have not yet been set.</p>
<b>Heritage Lottery Fund</b> <sup>57</sup> Heritage Grants  Heritage Enterprise programme  Townscape Heritage programme  The Landscape Partnerships programme	<p>Heritage Grants open programme is for any type of project related to the national, regional or local heritage in the UK. Grants of more than £100,000 are available.</p> <p>The Heritage Enterprise programme is for projects that seek to achieve economic growth by investing in heritage. It is primarily for enterprising community organisations to help them rescue neglected historic buildings and sites and return them to a viable productive use. Grants from £100,000 to £5million are available. Under this programme, HLF fund applications from: not-for-profit organisations; and partnerships led by not-for-profit organisations.</p> <p>The Townscape Heritage programme is for schemes which help communities improve the built historic environment of conservation areas in need of investment across the UK. We support partnerships of local, regional and national interests that aim to regenerate economically disadvantaged historic areas for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors. Grants from £100,000 to £2million are available.</p> <p>The Landscape Partnerships programme is for schemes led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK. Grants from £100,000 to £3million are available.</p>
<b>Sport NI</b> Every Body Active 2020- Outdoor Spaces	<p>This strand is funded by the National Lottery and is targeted at small scale capital projects that deliver new or enhanced sustainable trails or facilities in the natural environment. Funding is offered up to £120k and is distributed by Sport NI.</p>
<b>BFI Film Forever</b> Programming Development Fund	<p>Support for programming initiatives of cultural significance, high profile and wide reach bringing films to audiences across the UK in original ways. Offered under three strands including 1. R&amp;D (£5,000 - £20,000); 2. small scale project activity (£15,000 - £150,000) and 3. larger scale – limited awards (£150,000 to £500,000).</p>

<sup>56</sup> <http://artscouncil-ni.org/funding/funding-for-organisations>

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.hlf.org.uk/apply/application-deadlines-and-funding-decisions#Northern Ireland](https://www.hlf.org.uk/apply/application-deadlines-and-funding-decisions#Northern%20Ireland)

European Funds	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council must be mindful of the implications of Brexit
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – administered through DERA	<p>Opportunities investment through Village Renewal – village plans and community engagement, the Rural Business Investment Scheme linked to job creation.</p> <p><b>Capital investment-</b> The scheme will invest in natural and built heritage projects, that can act as a key driver for encouraging rural tourism and particularly out of state visitors, whilst preserving the built and natural assets of the rural community, support will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of rural tourism infrastructure using cultural and natural heritage</li> <li>• conservation of small scale rural built heritage for tourism use.</li> </ul> <p>Projects will be typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Infrastructure;</li> <li>• Provide increase in out of state visitors</li> <li>• Flagship unique type/notable/high impact rural tourism-focused actions.</li> <li>• Job creating (during capital build and after completion)</li> <li>• Where possible promote/encourage a Partnership approach with other statutory organisations sharing a common goal.</li> </ul> <p>A Technical Assistance Scheme has just been agreed providing £50K Councils to develop a project, feasibility study, preparation design and business case. Within one month of the current funding applications being cleared an EOI will be put out for technical assistance (possible later part of March or beginning of April 2017), with full applications due in October or November.</p> <p>The fund wants to support signature type projects, something innovative and new unique and different. The fund will not support Leisure projects walking cycling trails etc. The fund will support up to £0.5 million with match funds from a non-European source.</p> <p>Tourism-related investments are also specifically mentioned under Art. 20 (1) e ('basic services' measure) and Art.35 (2) c (cooperation measure).</p>
European Regional Development Fund	Sustainable tourism is specifically mentioned in Recital 11 of the Regulation and Art. 3(1) e. More generally, thematic objectives potentially related to tourism initiatives include: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility; Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures; and Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT. In line with Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation, tourism-related territorial investments are also eligible for support when promoting sustainable urban development.
European Social Fund	Tourism investments may be considered both in relation to the labour market and to foster social inclusion. For example, in <i>Promoting sustainable and quality employment &amp; supporting labour mobility</i> : potential tourism-related activities may include support to local employment initiatives targeting youth or seniors, promotion of self-employment, female tourism entrepreneurship, and business creation.
INTERREG Europe	Tourism-related investments by LGDs can be funded under the specific objective (SO) 4.1: <i>Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, ETC programmes, in the field of the protection and development of natural and cultural heritage</i> . Projects and actions related to sustainable

European Funds	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council must be mindful of the implications of Brexit
	management (preservation and exploitation) of the natural environment and of cultural heritage are eligible, especially when they add to regional attractiveness and support tourism development whilst valorizing local ecosystems and cultural artefacts.
URBACT III	Tourism-related actions by LRAs eligible for funding may include: building of the capacities of city stakeholders (e.g. policy and decision makers, municipal staff, etc.) involved in the design, funding, implementation and monitoring of sustainable urban policies and action plans, including urban tourism strategies; implementing participatory approaches in the production of integrated sustainable urban development strategies and action plans in tourism destinations (involving support from experts and peers); and transnational exchange of experience supporting the implementation of urban strategies and action plans targeting tourism areas.
Northern Periphery and Arctic	Tourism-related investments by LRAs that may be supported under Priority Axis 4: ' <i>Natural and Cultural Heritage</i> ' include: the transfer of innovative concept models for sustainable environmental management or the creation of new ones, involving the protection and promotion of natural and cultural heritage for tourism purposes; and the transfer of decision-making tools for local authorities in remote and sparsely populated areas, facilitating the capitalisation of tourism development opportunities based on local natural or cultural assets.
North West Europe	Tourism-related actions may include: Axis 3 To reduce GHG emissions in NWE through international cooperation on the uptake of low carbon technologies, products, processes and services <sup>58</sup> ; Axis 4 To reduce GHG emissions in NWE through international cooperation on transnational low carbon solutions in transport systems <sup>59</sup> ; and Axis 5 To optimise (re)use of material and natural resources in NWE through international cooperation <sup>60</sup> .
North Sea	Eligible tourism-related investments may include: Priority 1 'Thinking Growth: Supporting growth in North Sea Region economies'; Priority 2 'Eco-innovation: Stimulating the green economy'; Priority 3 'Sustainable North Sea Region: Protecting against climate change and preserving the environment'; Priority 4 'Promoting green transport and mobility'.
Cross-border co-operation Programmes	Specific examples of such challenges, some of which are related to tourism, i.e. 'poor accessibility' in relation to transport infrastructure, 'environmental pollution', and 'negative attitudes towards neighbouring country citizens'.
Youth Employment Initiative	Any tourism-related initiative addressed to this age group with a view to facilitating youth access to the labour market is potentially eligible for support. This may include work placement schemes, on-the-job-training, apprenticeships or back-to-school programmes.
Europe for citizens	The programme has two strands: 'Remembrance and European citizenship'; and 'Democratic engagement and civic participation'. Some of the activities foreseen by the programme may be related to tourism as they address history-related topics or town twinning. Most of the actions under

<sup>58</sup> co-operation with tourism enterprises in implementing and adopting zero/low carbon technologies

<sup>59</sup> design, application and evaluation of efficient traffic management solutions in historic city centres and other urban tourism destinations (e.g. smart mobility, IT systems, last mile concepts or services, journey planning tools), if GHG emissions reductions are achieved

<sup>60</sup> co-operation with tourism enterprises and specialised environmental experts in improving resource efficiency of tourism services through the implementation of life cycle analysis

European Funds	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council must be mindful of the implications of Brexit
	the programme will be managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
LIFE+	Promotes a shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate resilient economy, to the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment and to halting and reversing biodiversity loss'. Tourism-related eligible priority areas include: Environment and Resource Efficiency; Nature and Biodiversity; and Environmental Governance and Information.
Creative Europe	The programme provides support to the creative and cultural sectors. It encompasses two sub-programmes MEDIA and CULTURE and a cross sectoral strand. The culture sub-programme is the most interesting for tourism, special actions including prizes, the yearly awarding of 'European capitals of culture' to 2-3 cities, and the awarding of the 'European Heritage Label' to sites with a historical value for the European integration process. The cross-sectoral strand establishes a Guarantee Facility to facilitate access to loans by SMEs and organisations operating in the cultural and creative sectors. Recent examples of tourism-related funding include a light festival moving between three EU cities, and creative installations linking former fishing communities and highlighting their maritime heritage.
Horizon 2020	Due to the complexity and range of topics addressed by the various pillars, measures and programmes of Horizon 2020, funding opportunities for tourism, even if not explicitly mentioned, may be multiple. The 'Societal Challenges' strand may be of interest to LGDs, enabling research funding around health and well-being of the citizens (spa and health tourism), smart, green and integrated transport (tourism accessibility), intangible cultural heritage and its digitalisation or (re-)use of cultural artefacts. Likewise, 'Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation' may provide funding to 'teaming', 'twinning' and 'policy support facility' measures. Within the WP 2014-2015, tourism is explicitly mentioned regarding innovation in the public sector, business model innovation, protection and mapping of cultural heritage, and the delivery of Earth Observation information services; The cultural heritage of war in contemporary Europe; SME business model innovation, with a focus on 'user-oriented services, cultural heritage related services, social services and tourism';

Table 7.5 provides detail on National and European funding opportunities related to Antrim and Newtownabbey's development priorities: tourist information; small-scale tourism infrastructure; co-operation for services related to rural tourism; heritage and cultural tourism; festivals and events; skills; and sustainable tourism infrastructure development. Additionally, the table presents complementary opportunities to co-finance tourism-related initiatives via European programmes such as Territorial Cooperation (i.e. Interreg), Europe for Citizen, Creative Europe, Life+, and Horizon 2020.

BREXIT and the uncertainty surrounding future European Structural and Investment, has major implications for Local Authorities in terms of access to such funds. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council should be mindful of the timetable for calls for such funds acting quickly to submit funding applications. Several funds require transnational relationships/networks, which take time to develop, however, opportunities exist because of the twinning activities undertaken by the Council and the strong relationships already established with other European territories.

#### 7.4 Key Performance Indicators and Economic Impact

In setting future growth rates targets for Antrim and Newtownabbey we have considered the following:

- Predictions of future growth in tourism in Northern Ireland at the international, national and regional levels;
- The very low starting base level of tourism in Antrim and Newtownabbey whereby the application of tourism growth rates in line with those for Northern Ireland would produce a tourism sector of a modest scale even over a ten-year time frame; and
- Much of the recommended tourist product offering for Antrim and Newtownabbey is not market ready, so cannot be widely promoted.

The approach adopted in setting targets and assessing impacts has been to take an initial phase (i.e. years 1 to 3) while tourist product development is implemented, a rapid growth phase (years 4 to 7) when Antrim and Newtownabbey achieves a lift off with strong marketing support for the newly developed range of attractions and activities, and a consolidated phase (years 8 to 10) when Antrim and Newtownabbey becomes an established destination within Northern Ireland.

The growth rates set for the three phases are relatively modest but are realistic combined targets for overseas and domestic tourism. In the short term, it is unrealistic to anticipate growth of more than 5% a year. Once significant product developments are in place and active marketing undertaken, growth rates can be higher at 8% (in line with Northern Ireland growth rates), with the rates for nights and spend higher than for arrivals reflecting the fact that there will be more to do encouraging tourists to stay longer and spend more.

The resulting targets are detailed in Table 7.6 Visitor arrivals targets for the end of the ten-year period almost 1.3 million nights spent in Antrim and Newtownabbey, and visitor spending in the Borough estimated at £74 million.

Using the accepted Tourism NI formula based on 'revenue generated from visitors' that every £1m of visitor spend supports 18 jobs, then the target for employment in the tourism sector in Antrim and Newtownabbey by the end of the decade is estimated to be 5,529.

**Table 7.6 Antrim and Newtownabbey Visitor Targets and Economic Impact Over a 10 Year Period**

Period	Visits		Nights		Spend		Additional Jobs
Current 2016 Figures <sup>61</sup>	217,829		672,929		£38.4m		4,197 (2015 baseline)
	+ % PA	Value 000	+ % PA	Nights 000	+ % PA	£m	
Initial Phase (Years 1 to 3)	5	252,164	5	779	5	£44.4m	+799
Rapid Growth Phase (years 4 to 7)	8	343,067	8	1,059,820	8	£61m	+1,098
Consolidated Phase – Years (years 8 to 10)	7	420,272	7	1,298,325	7	£74m	+1,332

Key indicators to measure performance will include:

- Economic value of tourism – spending by visitors;
- Employment in the sector - accommodation, food and events;

<sup>61</sup> The most up-to-date figures available for visits, nights and spend. The trend has illustrated a decrease since 2013 across all 3 areas. The percentage of overnight visitors to the area has decreased from 6% in 2013, to 5% in 2016. The average number of nights spent decreased from 3.9 in 2013, to 3.3 in 2015. Visitor spend has decreased from £43m (6% of NI) in 2013, to £38.4m (5% of NI in 2016).

- Enterprise development – expansion and initiation of new businesses in the sector;
- Number of visitors – domestic and overseas, ideally by purpose of visit; and
- Market share performance - percentage share of tourism to Northern Ireland.

## **7.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation should take place throughout the life of the Strategy and Action Plan. The main areas evaluated will include:

- Achievement of milestones against priority targets;
- Achievement of projected annual outputs;
- Annual cost of action plan activities against budget;
- Timeframe to completion (phased approach); and
- Delivery of all Tourism Strategy elements within the specific actions as outlined.

The Council should establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks which will be integrated into the Strategy and Action Plan implementation processes at the outset. This will allow for the collation of data to inform progress reporting to Council at various implementation stages. An external evaluation of the impact of the Strategy and Action Plan is recommended in Year 3.

## 8. Tourism Action Plan

### 8.1 Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out details of a total of 65 actions, presented in the following five themes:

- Organisation and Management
- Visitor Experience and Product Development
- Access and Infrastructure
- Engaging with the Visitor Markets and Marketing
- People Skills Development

The action plan in the matrix is laid out as follows:

- The detail of the action
- The rationale for taking the action
- The agency(ies) sector(s) that will support the action or provide funding
- The action plan will be implemented through the following phased approach to development:
  - Phase 1 (Year One)
  - Phase 2 (Years 2-3)
  - Phase 3 (Years 4-5)
- Headline Costs associated with each action

### 8.2 Organisation and Management

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Develop an inter-departmental working group: Tourism; Culture and Arts; Marketing; Leisure and Recreation	Lead and coordinate tourism development and marketing.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Collaborative partners in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	1	Nil
Continue the work of the Tourism Team and Tourism Forum	Facilitate tourism industry representation and engagement.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Tourism Team Tourism Forum	1/2/3	<b>Phase 1: £1,000</b> <b>Phase 2: £1,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £1,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
1. Meetings to be rotated and hosted by Visitor Attractions in the Borough 2. Meetings combined with a familiarisation trip(s) 3. Carry out Best Practice Visits			Private Sector		<b>Total: £3,000</b>
<b>Visit Belfast Partnership</b> Continue and enhance the partnership with Visit Belfast	Ensure that Antrim and Newtownabbey gains as much recognition and stand out as possible as a primary gateway to NI particularly at Belfast International Airport.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Visit Belfast Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council: Arts and Culture Department, Marketing team.	1/2/3	£20,000 per year <b>Total: £100,000</b>  Phase 1 Cost agreed in current estimates. <b>'Nil additional cost'</b>  Phase 2 &3 Cost provided for separately through estimates process <b>'Nil additional cost'</b>
<b>Lough Neagh Partnership</b> Review the partnership agreement with Lough Neagh Partnership.	Review the current partnership to clarify outputs and agree deliverables including differentiation of roles and responsibilities with Lough Neagh Development Trust.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Lough Neagh Partnership Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council: Arts and Culture Department, Marketing team.	1	£22,000 for Phase 1 Cost agreed in current estimates. <b>'Nil additional cost'</b>
<b>Establish other strategic partnerships:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities working groups</li> <li>Inter-agency working groups</li> </ul>	Collaborative approach required to deliver strategic objectives.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism Northern Ireland</li> <li>Tourism Ireland</li> <li>Waterways Ireland</li> <li>Belfast City Council</li> <li>Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</li> <li>Lisburn and Castlereagh Borough Council</li> </ul>	1	NIL

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Lough Neagh Development Trust Lough Neagh Landscape Trust</li> <li>Community/ Volunteer Representative Organisations in the Borough</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b></p> <p>Monitor the outcomes of an Action Plan to assess whether it is relevant on an ongoing basis and to fine-tune its actions.</p> <p>Subsequent development of the action plan for the following year in conjunction with the Tourism Team. <i>Ideally this should be undertaken quarterly and reported to the tourism team/ forum.</i></p> <p><i>A mid-term and final project evaluation should be undertaken external resources.</i></p>	Assess progress against targets and objectives outputs and impact of the strategy.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council – Tourism Team/Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism NI</li> <li>Tourism Team</li> <li>Tourism Forum</li> </ul>	3	<p>Quarterly monitoring <b>Cost: NIL</b></p> <p>Mid-term and final evaluation of Strategy and Action Plan <b>Total: £12,000</b></p>

### 8.3 Visitor Experience and Product Development

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
<b>Ancient Celtic and Medieval:</b> develop links with other round towers on the island of Ireland`	Maximise on potential of niche market for visitors on round tower trails: can include Antrim Round Tower	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Ram's Island Heritage Trust Other Round Tower Heritage Groups	2	Fam trip to e.g. Clondalkin Round Tower <b>Total: £500</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
	and Ram's Island Round Tower.			1	Uncover the Ancient Celtic and Medieval story across the Borough <b>Total: £3,000</b>  <b>Total: £3,500</b>
<b>Plantation of Ulster and Ulster Scots:</b> 1. Develop an action plan against UHF <sup>62</sup> study 2. Extend current Ulster Scots Trail 3. Develop international links with other Ulster Scots groups 4. Tourism Team to lead project	Uncover the Ulster Scots story across the Borough and develop product and promote this to the market.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Ulster Scots Society Ulster Historical Foundation	1	Consultant/society further study <b>Total: £3,000</b>
<b>Industrial heritage:</b> 1. Research and options project	Explore potential and consider trails and developing markets.	Tourism Team	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Local societies	1	Research and options study <b>Total: £3,000</b>
<b>WWI and WWII:</b> 1. Research and options project	Explore potential and consider trails and developing markets.	Tourism Team	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Local societies	2	Research and options study <b>Total: £3,000</b>
<b>Combat and Clashes: Battle of Antrim, Nine Years War:</b> 1. Research and options project	Explore potential and consider trails and developing markets including events such as re-enactments.	Tourism Team	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Local societies	2	Research and options study <b>Total: £3,000</b>
<b>Vikings:</b> 1. Research and options project	Explore potential and consider trails and developing markets.	Tourism Team	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Local societies	1	Research and options study <b>Total: £3,000</b>

<sup>62</sup> Ulster Historical Foundation

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
<b>Parks and gardens:</b> 1. Cluster the natural offering around Antrim Castle Gardens	The natural offering around Antrim is very strong and needs to be packaged and promoted. Develop coach packages.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (led by Arts & Culture Section)	Tourism Team Appropriate attractions Garden and horticulture societies	1	Production of guide (print and online)  <b>Total: £1,500</b>
<b>Lough to Lough</b> 1. Trail review and development	Research Study and Options Analysis for Trail Developments and Infrastructure Required	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Team Consultant/trail developer Researcher Local interest group(s)	1	Development of research <b>Total: £5,000</b>
<b>Crumlin Glen:</b> 1. Develop a family-themed trail around Crumlin Glen based on local myths and legends e.g. water legends	Extensive investment is being made in Crumlin Glen so opportunities need to be harnessed to widen the offer and encourage locals and visitors to discover the area.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Consultant/trail developer Researcher Local interest group(s) Tourism Team	2	Development of physical trail and promotional material <b>Total: £35,000</b>
<b>Waterways:</b> 1. Develop a Waterways Working Group involving and working with other Councils.	Encourage more effective partnership working and less duplication of effort for efficiency and productivity.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Consultant/trail developer Researcher Local interest group(s) Tourism Team	1/2	Nil Phase One – cost to be confirmed for Phase 2
<b>Enhance Sustainable Tourism and provide an eco-tourism experience</b> 1. Raise eco standards among tourism sector and wider community 2. Cluster ecotourism products and services in the area 3. Ecotourism Accreditation Programme to aid tourism and service related enterprises to enhance their sustainability by	Capitalise on the products and the experience available.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Private Sector Tourism Northern Ireland Tourism Ireland Oxford Island Portmore Lough Nature Reserve.	1       2/3	Cluster opportunities and facilitation  <b>Cost: £2,000</b>  Pilot Accreditation Programme  <b>Phase 2: £5,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £5,000</b> <b>Total £10,000</b> <b>This budget is to be confirmed</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
adopting eco-tourism practices 4. Marketing campaign to increase awareness of Antrim and Newtownabbey as an eco-friendly destination					<b>Total Cost £12,000</b>
<b>Business Tourism – scope the facilitation of direct access into the Borough from the airport, and promote awareness of activities and attractions in the Borough:</b> 1. Scoping study on direct transfer service between Belfast International Airport and all the hotels 2. Support for fostering links with hoteliers and conference organisers 3. Providing information to hoteliers on tourism attractions and activities, events/festivals 4. Providing logistical support for familiarisation visits and support in bidding/tendering	Extend business visitor 'dwell time'.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Team/ Forum</li> <li>• Tourism Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Tourism Ireland</li> <li>• Visit Belfast</li> <li>• Private Sector</li> <li>• Belfast International Airport</li> </ul>	1	Scoping study <b>Cost: £4,000</b>  Financial and marketing support for linkages <b>Cost: £8,000</b>  Information to hoteliers – In house development & delivery  Logistical support <b>Cost: £8,000</b>  <b>Total: £20,000</b>
<b>Identify zones/locations for alternative accommodation</b> 1. Meeting with Planning 2. Engagement with the accommodation sector	To diversify the range of accommodation, offer in the Borough.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Private Sector	1	Meetings – In house Accommodation Sector Engagement <b>Cost: £3,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
3. Accommodation study <sup>63</sup> including an Option Appraisal and Business Case for development of Caravan and Camping at the two sites					Option Appraisal and Business Case <b>Cost: £12,000</b>  <b>Total: £15,000</b>
4. Extension of facilities in the Borough	To diversify the range of accommodation, offer in the Borough.	Private Sector		3	The costs here will be based on the output of the Option Appraisal and Business Case. The following costs have been provided as a guide:  Development of new caravan and/or camping pitches and facilities <sup>64</sup> <b>Cost: £Nil (Unless otherwise agreed by Council to extend existing facilities at Six Mile Water and Jordanstown Loughshore Caravan Park)</b>  Development of glamping pods <b>Cost: £Nil (Unless otherwise agreed by Council to extend existing facilities at Six</b>

<sup>63</sup> A bespoke study to identify future innovations and accommodation opportunities in the Borough. This would involve a comprehensive study on the environment, needs analysis and zoning particular areas in the Borough for advancements in glamping provision e.g. tepee's, treehouses, feather beds etc.

<sup>64</sup> Caravan pitches (tent pitches may be dispersed throughout), internal roads, toilets, showers, water, power, waste water provision and fencing.

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
					<i>Mile Water and Jordanstown Loughshore Caravan Parks)</i>
<b>Use the evening economy to enhance the visitor experience, reinvent town centres, and re-use existing buildings:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop evening economy in collaboration with the tourism sector, cultural and arts sector, and festival and event organisers</li> <li>2. Provide a Weekly Digital What's on Guide to evening entertainment</li> <li>3. Develop collaborative initiatives and packages involving hotels, the arts and retail sector Work with restaurants and pub restaurants on themed nights using local ingredients.</li> </ol>	Attract/cater for different market segments through the enhancement and encouragement of 'good food/culinary providers'.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Private Sector Retail Sector Arts Sector	1 & 2	Networking opportunity (see Organisation and Management) <b>Cost: NIL</b>  Digital content provided on the website and available through partner websites. Content and information developed by VIC staff (see VIC below).  Working with the arts, retail, hotels and food establishments to develop packages and themes network facilitation <b>Cost: £2,000</b>  <b>Total: £2,000</b>

#### 8.4 Access and Infrastructure

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
<b>Directional and interpretative signage</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Borough signage review/audit</li> </ol>	Ensure that visitor signage is fit for purpose and fully reflects the brand of the Borough in quality,	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Visitor attractions and providers Belfast International Airport Consultant	1  2	Signage review/audit <b>Cost: £3,000 – Phase 1</b>



## 8.5 Marketing

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Development and delivery of specific marketing campaigns including 'outdoors and nature' and 'heritage and culture' including destination marketing at shows in conjunction with partners such as Outdoors NI.	To promote and raise awareness of particular offerings in the Borough to deliver to specific market segments.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Outdoor NI	1/2/3	£2,200 budget per year. <b>Phase 1: £2,200</b> <b>Phase 2: £4,400</b> <b>Phase 3: £4,400</b>  <b>Total Cost: £11,000</b>
<b>Strengthen marketing support and business tourism through emphasis on the infrastructure and facilities available in the Borough:</b>  1. Develop a business tourism marketing campaign 2. Clustering of venues to offer 'packages' to organisers  An on-line video promoting business tourism facilities	Support the business tourism sector.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Team/Forum</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Business Representative Groups</li> <li>• Private Sector</li> </ul>	1	Business Marketing  Clustering – In house mapping  On-Line video £4,000  <b>Total: £4,000</b>
Create a digital toolkit and a range of collateral material for use by strategic partners and other organisations. To include a PowerPoint presentation, suite of ads (both print and digital), images, video, pop-ups, factsheets and stories, case studies and digital/email sign-off.	To raise awareness and provide information for promotion partners to use in marketing activity and across social media platforms.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Tourism NI	1 & 2	<b>Cost: £10,000</b>
Develop a range of written copy that demonstrates the new brand and message of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Raise awareness and provide information for partners to use in marketing activity.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Tourism NI	1	<b>Cost: £2,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
tourism offering.					
Production of suite of promotional merchandise under the “Its In Our Nature” brand (bags, t-shirts, cups, posters, postcards, fridge magnets, shopping bags, Points of Sale collateral. etc.) aligned with retail and to be sold.	Raise awareness of the brand and the tourism offering whilst helping to generate income. Encourage engagement from local retailers/ venues/ hotels with, and promotion of, the Borough through visible usage in premises. Sold at VICs	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Chamber of Commerce Local Business associations Venues hosting collateral Visit Belfast Tourism Forum Tourism NI	2	<b>Cost: £20,000</b>
Produce a template for bi-monthly e-newsletter to database.	To raise awareness to the industry and local businesses about the tourism developments and plans.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Tourism NI Visit Belfast	1/2/3	<b>Cost: In house only</b>
Develop a tourism social media strategy.	To promote the tourism offering of the Borough, clearly aligning messaging and reinforcing brand.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council VIC Staff	Tourism Forum Tourism NI Visit Belfast Possible social media consultant	1/2/3	<b>Cost: £2,000</b> Strategy developed in <b>Phase 1: £2,000</b> Strategy reviewed in house <b>Phases 2 and 3</b>
Develop a marketing campaign to promote the Borough as a Gateway to the rest of NI. Develop separate campaigns for specific markets.	Promote the very good transport and infrastructure across the region to locals and visitors; develop more proactive and innovative links with Transport NI.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council VIC Staff	Transport NI Belfast International Airport Tourism Forum	1	Promotional video & Digital media <b>Cost: £9,600</b>
Investigate the tourism perspective of Translink iLink card as ‘Your Ticket To The Borough’.	Promote the transport and infrastructure across the region to locals and visitors and encourage them to purchase an iLink card. Strengthen links with Transport NI.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Transport NI Tourism Forum	1	Nil (cost absorbed by Translink and in other marketing activity) <b>Cost: NIL</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Develop animation programmes on public transport to promote events, festivals and attractions.	Use local transport in more innovative ways for promotion of Borough events and activities. Explore the potential of bus route subsidies	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Transport NI Belfast International Airport Tourism Forum	2	Animation programmes <b>Cost: £3,000</b>
Develop a marketing campaign re Bus and Train Week.	Promote the very good transport and infrastructure across the region to locals and visitors; develop more proactive and innovative links with Transport NI	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Transport NI Belfast International Airport Tourism Forum	1/2/3	Bus and Train Week additional marketing <b>Cost: £5,000</b> <b>Phase 1: £1,000</b> <b>Phase 2: £2,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £2,000</b>
Work with BIA on the development and promotion of former Air Traffic Control centre as an events space.	Develop innovative links with BIA and help promote this unusual events space.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Belfast International Airport	1	Cost absorbed by BIA <b>Cost: NIL</b>
Development of key Ulster Scots dates document.	Promote in a cohesive manner the strong Ulster Scots heritage in the Borough.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Ulster Scots Society Tourism NI / Tourism Forum Surrounding Local Authorities	1	Part of heritage research study project <b>Cost: NIL</b>
Development of Ulster Scots marketing collateral.	Promote the Ulster Scots link.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Ulster Scots Society Tourism NI Tourism Forum Surrounding Local Authorities	1	Potential to generate income from Ulster Scots Society <b>Cost: £4,000</b>
Develop Ulster Scots events and Alexander Irvine Festival.	Promote in a cohesive manner the strong Ulster Scots heritage in the Borough.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Ulster Scots Society Tourism NI Tourism Forum Culture & Arts Advisory Forum Surrounding Local Authorities	2	<b>Cost: £25,000</b>
Create a marketing campaign online and above the line to promote WWI/WWII events.	Events to be developed which engage the whole community.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Special interest groups Ulster Aviation Society Tourism Forum	2	Potential to explore other funding sources <b>Cost: £4,000</b>
Create a campaign to promote the history of Lilian Bland and	Promote the female entrepreneurial spirit of the Borough.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	NI Science Festival Ulster Aviation Society Tourism Forum	2	<b>Cost: £1,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
aviation linked with the NI Science Festival.					
Viking festival – supporting marketing collateral and delivery of the event.	Promotion of Viking story in the Borough through an innovative event.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	2	<b>Cost: £30,000</b>
Re-visit marketing of theatres as venues and market each show on a large scale above the line outdoor format.	Raise awareness of the borough as a theatre venue and in turn increase occupancy levels.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Theatre at the Mill The Old Courthouse The Courtyards Theatre Antrim Castle Gardens	1	<b>Cost: £500</b>
Gem of the Borough: Develop the offering and marketing of Antrim Castle Gardens as the Gem of the Borough with appropriate communications and marketing plan and supporting collateral.	Promote gardens in the Borough and Antrim Castle Gardens as a key destination; create cluster opportunities and extend garden trail as an offering for coach parties in particular.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Visit Belfast Appropriate attractions and gardens Garden and horticulture societies Coach and tour operators	1 - ongoing	<b>Cost: £3,500</b>
Develop a Crumlin Glen marketing strategy and promotion collateral for themed children's trail including brand development.	Help promote Crumlin Glen as a family destination.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Community Organisations Local Environmental organisations	2/3	<b>Cost: £4,000</b> <b>Phase 2: £2,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £2,000</b>
Create a suite of videos promoting the tourism events and attractions for use with media or on social media and digital media platforms.	Support the development of the Borough as a tourism destination (leisure and business).	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (Marketing Dept will take the lead)	Tourism Forum Tourism NI Accommodation providers Travel providers Outdoor activity providers Business conference suppliers	1/2/3	<b>Cost: £10,000 split across the 3 phases</b> <b>Phase 1: £3,500</b> <b>Phase 2: £3,500</b> <b>Phase 3: £3,000</b>
Development of a sub brand for inspirational and unique experiences that promote the Uniqueness of the Borough e.g. campfire dinners at RAMs Island, or Game of Thrones banquet at Shane's Castle, or other screen tourism opportunities.	Support the promotion of the Borough in a unique way.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourist Attractions Lough Neagh Partnership Special Events companies	2	<b>Cost: £3,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Based on the results of the audit of interpretative signage, work with the Councils marketing department or appoint a design house to create uniform use of the <i>It's In Our Nature brand</i> across interpretive signage.	Ensure clear and consistent use of the <i>Its in Our Nature</i> branding across the Borough.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Road Service DoE Tourism NI	Ongoing	Costs covered in the infrastructure budget <b>Cost: NIL</b>
Promote the Borough as a tourism destination to the media.	Enhanced media coverage.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism NI Visit Belfast Tourism Forum	1/2/3	<b>Cost: Nil (in house)</b>
Develop, design and deliver an engaging and celebratory attractive old-fashioned market style wheel barrow which travels to different parts of the Borough promoting artisan products. Ensure that is it possible to update and add to the barrow in a cost-effective way so that it could be used for a long period to communicate and update on market activity (a blackboard incorporated into the design may be an option). This can also be used at council and civic events and media launches.	Increase awareness and ownership of the Borough offering.  Increase civic pride.  Attract visitors.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	External supplier	2	TBC Cost of Wheelbarrow Design approx. 8hrs @ £55 <b>Total cost: £10,000 (estimated)</b>
Recreate historical scenes from the cultural heritage stories of the Borough, and produce performances at council owned property as an innovative and unique way to promote stories.		Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council		2	£5,000  Production cost dependent on the window dimensions.  <b>Total cost: £5,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Create an innovative event with street food stalls/arts and craft	Draw people to the Borough experience. Linking with Heritage, Nature, Lough and Screen Tourism in Council's Strategy	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Visit Belfast	2	<b>Total Cost: £8,000 (approx.)</b>
Design a taxi wrap, which clearly promotes the Borough as a tourism destination. This can also be used for airport pickups (benefitting business economy), competitions such as 'spot the taxi to win vouchers'.	Develop brand awareness with locals and visitors. Encourage interest in exploring the retail, culture, leisure and heritage opportunities across the Borough.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Belfast International Airport	1	Design time 8hrs @ £55 £440 Media buy £3,500 (for Phase 1) <b>Cost: £3,940</b>
Commission, produce and install lamppost banners (including brackets and cherry picker) for use across in town centres and towns in the Borough *Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council may already have the fixings for lamppost banners in place.	Warm welcome that's consistent. Raising awareness throughout the town and add to the overall look of the town. Good for seasonal and event specific messaging Especially around the market area.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council		2	Cost depends on quantity, cost of fixing banners and design required if not delivered in house. <b>Cost: £10,000</b>
Improve the visual appeal and marketing opportunities for the approach road to the airport.	Improve the welcome for visitors arriving at the airport.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council		2/3	<b>Cost: £8,000</b> <b>Phase 2: £4,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £4,000</b>
Cruise Ship One Pager: The one page recommendations prepared by Visit Belfast for visiting cruise ships is prepared every day and available in Visit Belfast for all visitors. This can also be made available on all bus tours and as a pdf shared across social media channels.	Provide a one-page overview of activities happening every day in the Borough which can guide visitors to cultural/arts events.	Visit Belfast	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council Tourism Forum  Organisations providing content	1	<b>Cost: Nil – included in partnership</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Digital Cultural notice boards: The installation of outdoor digital cultural/ heritage notice boards across council owned or council funded venues: ticker tape style or large screens either presenting just facts (time date venue) or running short ads.	Raise awareness of culture and heritage offering to non-traditional audience in a variety of Borough locations with high footfall such as Antrim Castle Gardens, the Old Courthouse, Mossley Mill, the Junction and Abbeycentre.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Organisations to provide content	2	<b>Total Cost: £20,000</b>  Plus ongoing resource dedication by Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council  £5,000 by 4 boards
Event Tagging: Use of online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to allow users to 'tag' themselves as attending events or visiting locations and allow them to upload pictures etc.	Encourage loyalty and to deepen the experience of attending an event by presenting attendees with an online legacy.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council - this would work in tandem with the new online resource Tourism Website. VIC Staff	Attendees – requires some marketing to ensure buy-in.	1	Online promotion to raise awareness of the function and encourage participation. <b>Cost £500:</b>  Ongoing updates to the new tourism website. <b>Cost £250:</b>  <b>Total cost: £750</b>
The Three Minute Low Down: Creation of a bi monthly three - minute video round up which showcases events taking place in the Borough as well as including any promotions that organisations are running.	Provide people with a short, fun and informative roundup of activities within the city. This can be linked to the new tourism website as well as provided to Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, new digital screens (as mentioned above).	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council (in conjunction with Marketing Dept)	Tourism Forum Visit Belfast Tourism Northern Ireland Organisations to provide content	1/2/3	Per video <b>Cost: £1,000</b> 6 per year <b>Cost: £6,000 per year</b> <b>Phase 1: £6,000</b> <b>Phase 2: £12,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £12,000</b> <b>Total cost: £30,000</b>
Retail Revenue: The delivery of a <i>Lazy Sunday and Non-Lazy</i> events in key locations in the Borough between 11am – 3pm: easy listening/jazz at Antrim Castle Gardens, galleries opening at	Use culture as the driver for increased footfall into the Borough on Sunday mornings to increase economic impact for retailers and promoting the Borough as a lively Sunday visitor option.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	Local galleries Local cafes Tourism Forum Tourism NI Visit Belfast	2	Marketing materials <b>Cost: £2,000</b>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
11am and cafés offering <i>Lazy Sunday</i> incentives.					
Cross Venue Loyalty card: The creation of a cross-venue loyalty card aimed at 1 – 3 times a year users. Points are gained through attendance at different venues over the year.	To encourage 1 – 3 times a year users to attend more frequently and to attend multiple venues.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Requires multiple venue buy-in	3	Initial research, development and advertising <b>Cost: £15,000</b>
Research the potential for a culture and heritage bus: The creation of a scheme which combines a transport scheme attraction and/or event which removes transport based barriers. Trial on a monthly basis, around a new venue/theatre experience. Buy a ticket for the overall experience. Bus picks up at various places around the Borough and brings attendees to the venue (price also includes a drink on entry) and then returns them to these pick-up points following the performance or visit is over.	Remove transport based barriers to engagement with culture and heritage. Develop innovative and user-friendly experiences for locals and visitors.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	Cultural and heritage organisations across the Borough Translink Transport NI	2	Promotion with costs of operation covered by inclusive ticket costs. <b>Cost: £500</b>
Wet weather offering: Develop and cluster existing indoor product and promote this as things to do in inclement weather.	Ensure the visitor experience is good regardless of weather – turning a negative into a positive.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism NI Visit Belfast Cultural/heritage organisations	1	Marketing and promotion <b>Cost: £3,000</b>
Pop up boxes: Drop branded ‘boxes’ put into various locations under cover of night and fulfil with cultural experiences	Uniquely animate the streets Raise awareness of talent and culture in the Borough.	Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism Forum Visit Belfast Cultural/heritage organisations	2/3	Sponsors of boxes Fit-out of physical spaces x 10 £3,000 x 10

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
entertainment (live recorded local talent, exhibitions, readings etc.)					<b>Phase 2: £15,000</b> <b>Phase 3: £15,000</b>  <b>Total cost: £30,000</b>

## 8.6 People and Skills Development

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
<b>Establish Tourism Education and Training Programmes in:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Leadership;</li> <li>• World Host;</li> <li>• Customer Service;</li> <li>• Know Your Region;</li> <li>• Marketing Support;</li> <li>• Customer Feedback - effective tools and techniques;</li> <li>• Business Development Planning and Sustainability;</li> <li>• Digital Skills; and</li> <li>• Language skills;</li> </ul> <p>Tourism-related training for the long-term unemployed; and an apprenticeship programme aimed at school leavers.</p>	Address current shortage of skilled personnel/plan for future needs.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Tourism NI Private Sector Ulster University Invest Northern Ireland Belfast Met World Host NI <i>Diageo Northern Ireland</i>	1/2/3	<p>Skills training will occur in each phase a suite of six training programmes.</p> <p>Costs have been calculated at:</p> <p> <b>Phase 1 £5,000</b>  <b>Phase 2 £5,000</b>  <b>Phase 3 £6,000</b> </p> <p><b>Total cost: £16,000</b></p>
<b>Undertake Tourism Awareness Programme</b>	Promote understanding of tourism and economic development opportunities.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Private sector Visit Belfast Belfast International Airport	1/2/3	<p>Tourism awareness programme</p> <p> <b>Phase 1: £2,000</b>  <b>Phase 2: £2,000</b>  <b>Phase 3: £2,000</b> </p>

Action	Rationale	Lead	Supporting Partners	Phase	Cost
Study/Familiarisation Trips <sup>67</sup> ; and Seminar and workshop series.					<b>Total: £6,000</b>  Seminar and workshop series <b>Phase 1: £1,500</b> <b>Phase 2: £1,500</b> <b>Phase 3: £1,500</b> <b>Total: £4,500</b>  <b>Total Cost: £10,500</b>
Recruit and train mobile ambassadors for festivals, events and other opportunities.	Engage and involve local people in the promotion of the Borough, accessing their local knowledge and passion, and helping to reduce other staff costs.	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Local community and special interest groups.	2	Costs covered above. <b>No additional costs.</b>

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<sup>67</sup> 5 Study or Familiarisation Trips undertaken in Phases 1,2, and 3.

## 8.7 Summary Costs

The Tables below present a summary of all the developments proposed within each theme, with costings presented per phase for ease of reference.

Theme	Action	Cost Phase 1 (Year 1)	Cost Phase 2 (Years 2-3)	Cost Phase 3 (Years 4-5)	Total cost (Years 1-5)
<b>Organisation and Management</b>	<b>Tourism Team meetings and fam trips</b>	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£3,000.00
	<b>Monitoring and evaluation of the tourism strategy and performance</b>		£6,000.00	£6,000.00	£12,000.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£7,000.00</b>	<b>£7,000.00</b>	<b>£15,000.00</b>

Theme	Action	Cost Phase 1 (Year 1)	Cost Phase 2 (Years 2-3)	Cost Phase 3 (Years 4-5)	Total cost (Years 1-5)
<b>Visitor experience and product development</b>	Fam trips re Round Towers/medieval heritage & Ancient Celtic and Medieval product development study and action plan	£3,000	£500		£3,500
	Ulster Scots product development study and action plan	£3,000			£3,000
	Industrial heritage research project	£3,000			£3,000
	WWI and WWII research project		£3,000		£3,000
	Combat and Clashes: Battle of Antrim, Nine Years War research		£3,000		£3,000
	Vikings research project	£3,000			£3,000

	Lough to Lough research and options study	£5,000			£5,000
	Development of Crumlin Glen family trail		£35,000		£35,000
	Parks and Gardens	£1,500			£1,500
	Develop eco-tourism cluster opportunities			£2,000	£2,000
	Deliver pilot eco-tourism accreditation programme		£5,000	£5,000	£10,000
	Business tourism scoping study	£4,000			£4,000
	Financial and marketing support for business tourism linkages	£8,000			£8,000
	Support for business tourism fam trips	£8,000			£8,000
	Engagement with the accommodation sector		£3,000		£3,000
	Accommodation options appraisal and business case		£12,000		£12,000
	Facilitate the development of the evening economy with providers.	£2,000		£0	£2,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£40,500</b>	<b>£61,500</b>	<b>£7,000</b>	<b>£109,000</b>

Theme	Action	Cost phase 1 (Year 1)	Cost Phase 2 (Years 2-3)	Cost Phase 3 (Years 4-5)	Total cost (Years 1-5)
<b>Access and infrastructure</b>	Signage audit/review	£3,000			£3,000

	Update of interpretative signage		£30,000		£30,000
	Update of directional signage		£16,000		£16,000
	Installation of large-scale artwork		£6,000		£6,000
	VIC options and cost benefit analysis		£8,000		£8,000
	VIC staff digital skills development		£2,000		£2,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£3,000</b>	<b>£62,000</b>		<b>£65,000</b>

Theme	Action	Cost phase 1 (Year 1)	Cost Phase 2 (Years 2-3)	Cost Phase 3 (Years 4-5)	Total cost (Years 1-5)
<b>Marketing</b>	Develop and deliver specific marketing campaigns: 'outdoors and nature' and 'heritage and culture'.	£2,200	£4,400	£4,400	£11,000
	Production of a digital toolkit for partners and tourism providers.	£5,000	£5,000		£10,000
	Business tourism promotional video	£2,000	£2,000		£4,000
	Development of copy and key messages.	£2,000			£2,000
	Production of promotional merchandise		£10,000	£10,000	£20,000

	Development of a social media strategy	£2,000			£2,000
	Develop a marketing campaign to promote the Borough as a Gateway to the rest of NI. Develop separate campaigns for specific markets.	£9,600			
	Development of promotional animation programme on public transport.		£3,000		£3,000
	Bus and Train Week Marketing Campaign design and delivery	£1,000	£2,000	£2,000	£5,000
	Development of Ulster Scots marketing material	£4,000			£4,000
	Development of Ulster Scots event and Alexander Irvine Festival		£25,000		£25,000
	WWI/II event and product marketing campaign		£4,000		£4,000
	Lilian Bland story and NI Science Festival link marketing campaign		£1,000		£1,000
	Development and delivery of a Viking Festival		£30,000		£30,000
	Refresh of theatres marketing		£500		£500

	Antrim Castle Gardens marketing as Gem of the Borough including gardens guide and tour/coach operator marketing.	£3,500			£3,500
	Crumlin Glen marketing strategy and trail promotion		£2,000	£2,000	£4,000
	Development of a suite of tourism attractions and product videos	£3,500	£3,500	£3,000	£10,000
	Develop a sub-brand for inspirational and unique experiences e.g. campfire dinners	£3,000			£3,000
	Development and production of market wheelbarrow		£10,000		£10,000
	Create an innovative event with street food stalls/arts and craft		£8,000		£8,000
	Taxi wrap (one year)	£3,940			£3,940
	Lamppost banners		£10,000		£10,000
	Airport Marketing Opportunities		£4,000	£4,000	£8,000
	Recreate Historical Scenes		£5,000		£2,000
	Digital Cultural notice boards		£20,000		£20,000
	Social media event tagging: promotion of functionality	£750			£750

	Three Minute Low Down showcase video	£6,000	£12,000	£12,000	£30,000
	Lazy Sunday events		£2,000		£2,000
	Cross-venue Loyalty Card			£15,000	£15,000
	The Culture and Heritage Bus: combined transport and access ticketing		£500		£500
	Promotion of wet weather offering.	£3,000			£3,000
	Pop Up Music Boxes.		£15,000	£15,000	£30,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£49,290</b>	<b>£174,500</b>	<b>£63,000</b>	<b>£277,190</b>

Theme	Action	Cost phase 1 (Year 1)	Cost Phase 2 (Years 2-3)	Cost Phase 3 (Years 4-5)	Total cost (Years 1-5)
<b>People and skills development</b>	Delivery of training programmes for industry, staff and apprenticeship programme	£5,000	£5,000	£6,000	£16,000
	Delivery of tourism awareness programme: fam trips and study visits	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£6,000
	Tourism seminars and workshops	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£4,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£8,500</b>	<b>£8,500</b>	<b>£9,500</b>	<b>£26,500</b>

## Summary of Total Costs

The Table below present a summary of all the developments proposed within each theme and per phase for ease of reference.

Theme	Cost phase 1 (Year 1)	Cost Phase 2 (Years 2-3)	Cost Phase 3 (Years 4-5)	Total cost (Years 1-5)
Organisation and management	£1,000	£7,000	£7,000	£15,000
Visitor experience and product development	£40,500	£61,500	£7,000	£109,000
Access and infrastructure	£3,000	£62,000		£65,000
Marketing	£49,290	£174,500	£63,000	£277,190
People and skills development	£8,500	£8,500	£9,500	£26,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£102,290</b>	<b>£313,500</b>	<b>£86,500</b>	<b>£492,690</b>



## **Economic Development and Strategic Investment**

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