Economic Wellbeing Pillar: Tourism, Arts and Culture

Thematic Working Group (TWG): Workshop 3, 16ᵗʰ September 2016

Attendees: Ann Donnelly, Brigid McGibbon, **Armagh Rhymers**, Evelyn Hanna, **Libraries NI**, Fionnuala Walsh, **Arts Council of Northern Ireland**, Jackie Barker, **Millennium Court Arts Centre**, Joanne Wallace, **Wallace Consulting**, Katie Brown, **Amma Centre**, Lisa Finnegan, **Millennium Court Arts Centre**,
ABC Council- Charles McCafferty, Elaine Gillespie, Emma Drury, Jill McEneaney, Louise Rice, Riann Coulter, Rosemary Mulholland, Sara McGeary, Sarah Millsopp.

Apologies: Aubrey Irwin, **Tourism Ireland**, Averil Morrow, **AMMA Centre**, Charles Neville, **Ulster Scots Society**, Elaine McAteer, Eleanor Ferris, **Portadown Festival Association**, Michelle Shirlow, **Food NI,** Sheila McCreesh, **Lislea Community Association,** Stephen Bill, **Tourism NI,** Primrose Wilson, **Ulster Architectural Society,** Paul McAvinchey, **John Hewitt International Summer School**.
ABC Council- Brian Johnston, Olga Murtagh, Niall Drew, Gill Robb, Leah Duncan, Michelle Markey, Karen McKinstry, Jennifer Doak, Vincent McCann.

1.   Welcome & Introduction

Sara McGeary, Tourism Development Officer welcomed members as Chair of the Communities TWG.

2.   Baseline Statistics

There were no updates to the baseline statistics.

Outcome: TWG members agreed that the draft baseline report reflected the current situation.

3.   Workshop 2 Report

The Vision, based upon member proposals is:

"The Borough is an internationally renowned destination, a place of discovery that capitalizes on its unique, authentic, cultural and natural assets - where arts & culture inspire, create, grow and flourish."

Joanne Wallace, Wallace Consulting provided a recap of the draft outcomes & actions discussed at the previous session, as per the two inter-linked priorities of:

- *Improve accessibility, attendance, participation & building creative capital;*
- *Strengthen the International tourism product & message*

3. Short- Medium- & Long-Term Outcomes & Actions

Joanne presented draft short and medium-term outcomes & actions for discussion by members. The following Tables were updated on the basis of the discussions (see Table 3.1 & 3.2).

Outcome: Information updated to reflect TWG members comments.

Table 3.1: *Improve accessibility, attendance and participation & build creative capital*			
Proposed Actions		**Detail**	**Outcomes**
1	Understand the baseline	• Resource and develop a strategy for the collection of consistent, comprehensive qualitative and quantitative baseline data related to engagement, participation and resourcing (including partnerships) of the Borough's Arts, Culture & Heritage sector;	*Short-term (0-5yrs)* • We are working in partnership to enable more people to benefit from artistic & cultural engagement to deliver high quality, accessible experiences for residents and visitors. • We are working in partnership to develop creative skills, foster innovation to raise our profile as a region for creativity. *Medium-term (6-10yrs)* • Arts and Culture is fully embedded in community life, it enhances our sense of place and well-being for visitors and residents. • Our robust and vibrant arts and cultural collaborations nurture creativity in people
2	Increase access & participation	• Understand non-participation & potential barriers & work in partnership to remove; • Develop dynamic audience development strategies & initiatives which will communicate the benefits and why people should become involved (e.g. tell a friend, arts, culture & heritage free pass, rural pilots with transport operators) • Work in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector to develop a prioritized arts provision that is responsive to the needs of citizens and visitors and that is delivered through outstanding facilities and engaging outreach programmes; • Development a focused digital communications strategy for the promotion of arts & cultural events within the borough, nationally and internationally; • Develop the creative skills and capacity of our citizens across all ages through a programme of community & voluntary activity that impacts on health & well-being, inclusion, regeneration, capacity building, employability and education	

3	Develop skills & infrastructure	• Devise an Arts & Cultural strategy to secure additional investment in people, organisations and partnerships, ensure our current facilities are invested in to create a renowned creative destination; • Lever internal and external funding to resource Strategy; • Source non-traditional partnerships & funding opportunities; • Arts, Culture & Heritage Forum – based on need identified in arts strategy consider establishing a forum with a lobbying role to raise the profile of the sector & improve partnership working; • Work with key partners to support the development of the professional arts/creative sector - support job and company development, professionalise suitable amateur/voluntary organisations, artist studios, research facilities, equipment etc, cross-sector mentoring programme;	organisations and partnerships, forging our reputation as a creative place. *Long-term (11-15yrs)* • The Borough has a vibrant, authentic, dynamic and inclusive arts and cultural offering that is responsive to the needs of its residents and has a compelling appeal to visitors. • The Borough is recognised as an inspirational creative environment with a well-resourced, flourishing and innovative arts and cultural sector, facilities and industries.
4	Profile Raising	• Lobby Stormont for ABC investment – Champions through Arts & Culture Forum; • Bid for City of Culture (Armagh) & build local, national & international profile for arts & culture; • Develop an instantly recognisable brand for the Arts and Culture in the Borough and embed this in branding at arts, culture & heritage led events	

Target Beneficiaries	Potential Partners
• Residents & Visitors (regional and international) • Artists and creatives, Education sector – all ages, Current providers • Wider community - Children & young people, older people, BME (including Travellers), people with physical & learning disabilities, rural communities, areas of deprivation, men, families, volunteers, the unemployed, people on a low income; • Business sector – retail, entertainment & hospitality; • Language sector	• Government Departments • Audiences NI/Arts and Business • ACNI and other arts sectoral bodies • Education & libraries, Health & Social Care Trusts • Community voluntary sector • Other statutory agencies • Funders, Media, Third Level Education • Vocational training, employability sector, Cross border, Other Local Authorities, attractions, venues etc.

Table 3.2: International Tourism Product & Message			
Proposed Actions		**Detail**	**Outcomes**
1	Tourism Development Strategy	- Gain a detailed understanding of existing and emerging visitor markets and assess current performance baseline together with capability and capacity audit; - Identify the Borough's unique selling points supported by high quality products throughout the Borough – Cluster approach; - Develop an ambitious and deliverable vision based on collaboration and partnership between all stakeholders;	*Short-term* - Our collaborative approach to tourism planning and development, provides the best visitor experience possible by prioritising investment in new and existing products & events, accessible infrastructure and offering professional training to the industry; - We understand our markets and segments & have established a strong unique identity and associated proposition, which we are communicating to International markets *Medium-term* - Tourism is a key contributor to the local economy - maximising opportunities, events & assets, creating increased opportunities to stay & spend & encouraging repeat visits. - We have a well-defined tourism product that we all value and are proud to share with others. *Long-term* - The Borough has a thriving tourism economy, successfully attracting the NI International visitor spend based on the delivery of unique, authentic and customised experiences. - The Borough has a recognisable and defined brand in key International markets, identifying the area as one of the top destinations in Northern Ireland.
	Infrastructure Investment	- Audit of existing facilities to gauge investment needs (e.g. TNI visitor attraction grading); - Protect and Enhance existing attractions & create new reasons to visit; - Build supporting infrastructure with service industry training (e.g. restaurants, accommodation, taxi drivers), - Exploring & supporting ways to increase bed spaces & quality of current bed stock; - Prioritise product development that matches future market opportunities underpinned by commercial investment; - Combined Events Framework - Invest in events that reinforce the new proposition; - Cross sector community partnerships to develop & reinforce local tourism product & improve visitor experience (whole community approach)	
2	Coherent Messaging	- Develop a compelling tourism proposition and associated branding strategy supported by market testing – unified message & one website for tourism information; - Explore potential of shared information gathering protocols and databases;	

• Engage with national and international Tourism agencies to support the proposition; • Explore the efficacy of a themed, rather than geographical approach using "Storytelling", sense of place, characters messages; • Make use of other groups representing the area & support them to market us to their audiences in other countries (e.g. Pipe Bands, Sports Clubs) • Make links with destinations across the world to learn about approaches and open up funding opportunity (e.g. Faith destinations – Santiago de Compostella)	

Target Beneficiaries	Potential Partners
• Visitors – international • The diaspora • Residents • Communities of interest e.g. fishermen, boat builders, blacksmiths • Current providers • Wider community • Business sector – retail, entertainment & hospitality	• Tourism Ireland • Tourism NI • Tour Operators • Arts and culture providers • Community voluntary sector • Other statutory agencies • Funders • Media • Chambers of Commerce and the business community • Third Level Education • Vocational training, employability sector • Cross border • Government Departments, Other Local Authorities, attractions, venues etc.

4.   Cross-Cutting Themes

Presentations were given on the following Community Planning cross-cutting themes:

- Sustainability;
- Equality, Good Relations & Social Inclusion;
- Rural Development; and
- Communication.

Members discussed issues relating to their Theme in groups.

Sustainability		
Economic	Social	Environmental
• Flourishing Arts and Cultural sector fosters innovation and helps support Creative Industry • Attractive Tourism facilities and events deliver visitor spend and support growth within the industry • Arts can anchor the physical regeneration of public spaces (e.g. The Kelpies, Falkirk) helping tell the story of the place and driving economic regeneration	• Arts engagement can contribute to community wellbeing, promoting health & wellbeing, overcoming disadvantage, improving community safety; • The arts can tackle the skills deficit and can develop skills and foster creative entrepreneurship; • Cultural volunteers can be instrumental in adding value to the experience people have through projects, events and visits.	• Protecting and enhancing the natural and built heritage of the Borough contributes to biodiversity • The natural and built heritage can be harnessed to create a unique destination that is attractive to visitors (e.g. Eden Project)

Equality, Good Relations & Social Inclusion		
Equality	Good Relations	Social Inclusion
• Find relevant meaningful ways for representative groups to be consulted and involved in programme design • Tackle the barriers to engagement (e.g. transport, childcare, social isolation) • Ensure staff and partners are aware of S75 legislation relating to access to services	• Using the arts and culture to challenge perceptions, flags and emblems and to help create welcoming public spaces • Delivering events and activities that create shared spaces • Work in partnership with statutory and community partners to understands the current climate and design projects to address issues	• Engage with hard to reach groups using targeted programmes • Improve access to information about services

Rural Development	
Challenges	Opportunities
- Poor broadband & mobile connectivity; - Fewer facilities, resources, social hubs; - Weak transport connectivity with no public transport or inaccessible transport; - Young people leaving the area for schooling and employment; - Isolation for all ages but particularly older people; - Political divisions can be hidden; - Lack of information about extent of services available; - Reluctance to pool resources and work together resulting in need for localised services which cost more	- Link to Infrastructure TWG; - Improve information gathering and sharing by engaging with partners in rural areas - Experiment with using technology to engage with people who are isolated - Share examples of successful projects (e.g. Ballydougan Pottery or Wetlands Arts Initiative) - The stories of rural townlands and villages provide a great starting point for skills development projects, regeneration and cultural entrepreneurship; - Take a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary approach to development to get the best use of resources and deliver greater impact
Communications	
Challenges	Opportunities
- Reaching those in most need; - Information overload; - Talking to the 'right' people and danger of assuming people are represented by a certain group - Difficult to share complex messages without creating new barriers - Apathy - Different communication needs amongst specific groups (e.g. Interpreters, people with visual impairments, young people, older people)	- Share the benefits that arts and culture can deliver for communities - Harness a range of tools (traditional and new technologies) to share messages that are relevant and timely - Need central communication portal & consistent message (Communication Plan with tailored communication methods); - Shared databases (MOU) - Create effective partnerships to help identify the right person to communicate with and use 'plain English'

5.   Next Steps

As this is the final workshop for the TWG, Elaine Gillespie, Head of Community Planning thanked the group for their continued support and expertise.

Next Steps are:

- Consideration and prioritisation of outcomes from all six thematic working groups by Statutory Partners (Sept/Oct 2016);
- Consultation and engagement with local citizens and communities (Sept/Oct 2016);
- Draft Plan and formal consultation (Oct- Dec 2016);
- Conduct formal assessments (Oct-Jan 2017);
- Development of final plan (Dec- March 2017).