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# TRANSFORM

## A TOURISM STRATEGY

for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough

2017-2022







Tourism is identified as one of the key sectors which can drive economic growth in Northern Ireland. The goal is that tourism will generate £1bn spend from out-of-state visitors by 2025.

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council share this growth ambition. With leadership, a focus on the customer, investment and a professional approach to destination development, the target is a 10% annual growth in the Borough's tourism economy.

## Our vision is

“ to be a market leading cultural tourism destination in Ireland by 2022 ”



# Guiding Principles

**A series of principles will guide the development of the destination as it moves from a relatively embryonic stage to a developing tourism economy to include:**

Adoption of a value versus volume proposition. The tourism offer in its widest sense will be developed on the basis of appealing to the higher spend Free Independent Traveller as opposed to pursuing a strategy of purely higher volume, lower yield business. In line with this the primary focus will be on generating overnight stays.

Reflecting Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland strategies, Mature Cosmopolitans and Culturally Curious segments in primary out-of-state markets will be the principal focus of activity for the destination team.

There will be an emphasis on authenticity, differentiation and innovation in product development. In particular, taking a design-led approach to Council-led investment and influencing partners to follow a similar approach to create iconic developments will be important.

Adopting a sustainable development philosophy to ensure the creation of a more commercially sustainable sector in partnership with the private sector.

Adopting a Responsible tourism approach and pursuing associated accreditations to gain national and international recognition.

Taking a local authority-driven approach to development of the destination with clarity of purpose and leadership uppermost together with a recognition that success will not happen overnight and there requires to be a commitment by all to growing the tourism economy. Effective communication and co-operation with delivery partners such as the private sector, government agencies and national tourism agencies will be central to ensure success.

Utilising the new Council powers to effect positive change and adopt a flexible, rapid and innovative approach to planning with the emerging Local Development Plan an enunciation to opportunity.

Pursuing a hub approach to the development of the destination in recognition of the fact that investment requires to be prioritised where there is most potential for international growth whilst ensuring that the economic impacts are delivered Borough wide.

Building capacity and capability across all stakeholders including Council understanding of the business of tourism.







# Strategic Priorities

A tiered approach with regard to the development of the destination will be employed as outlined below:

**TIER 1** These initiatives are capable of assisting the destination to stand out in a crowded market and will respond to the requirements of international travellers and will reinforce the brand proposition for the destination.

**TIER 2** These initiatives will support the Tier 1 products and initiatives by broadening the overall appeal of the destination through exposure to new market opportunities.

**TIER 3** These are research and development initiatives which with further investigation may be suitable as tourism products beyond 2022.

- TIER 1**  
Establish Armagh City as the centrepiece of the destination
- *Redevelopment of former Armagh Gaol*
  - *Reposition Navan Centre & Fort*
  - *Pursue a Heritage-led Regeneration approach*
  - *Reinforce the City's association with Saint Patrick*
  - *Consider the future potential of our Museums*
  - *Support proposals at the Observatory/Planetarium*

Develop the Apple Orchards/Cider into an International Visitor Experience through investment in the orchards and the curation of food trails and tours.

Actively pursue appropriate accommodation development opportunities with the private sector including boutique accommodation in buildings of historic significance and in the orchard areas, budget accommodation on the A1 and a conference hotel in Craigavon.

Invest in gateway projects of scale at the FE McWilliam Gallery & Studio to allow for additional Gallery space and more retail space to showcase crafts and products from the Borough.

Package visitor experiences based on the destination's unique stories including the Orange Cultural Product, Linen and Artisan Food & Drink.

Focus the destination's events programme and develop associated event development frameworks for Signature events.

Ensure a Professional Approach to Marketing, Sales & Communications with out-of-state markets the key targets.

- TIER 2**  
Genealogy & Ancestry  
Screen Tourism  
Discretionary Business Tourism  
Activity Tourism  
Gosford Forest Park

**TIER 3**  
This includes Lough Neagh with issues such as a ownership, management, navigation and water quality requiring to be considered.