

Regeneration & Development Strategy

for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon
Borough Council

2015-2020
Summary Report



Lord Mayor's Foreword

Councillor Darryn Causby



As the inaugural Lord Mayor of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon I am delighted to endorse this ambitious Strategy for the Regeneration and Development of our new Borough.

The Regeneration & Development Strategy (R&DS) aligns itself to the Corporate Plan and builds upon the three strategic priorities to Prosper the Place, Serve the People and Strengthen our Position.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council has placed the utmost importance on the need for economic development and regeneration. The R&DS sets out a clear vision for the Council's future, a framework for a more joined up approach to economic development and regeneration and a process for effective implementation of a strategic action plan. This is a new era for Council with huge opportunities for local people and local government to take control of our own destiny.

We are the 2nd largest local authority in Northern Ireland, with more than 204,000 residents and almost 8,000 businesses.

The new Borough brings together the strengths of Armagh's unique tourism and heritage function, Banbridge's key strategic location on the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor and Craigavon's strong sub-regional function and reputation for manufacturing and excellence and creativity.

We are ambitious. We want to be the foremost authority with respect to economic regeneration, business creation and development.

The Regeneration & Development Strategy sets out our framework for achieving very specific goals including:

- **becoming the most business orientated council area in Northern Ireland;**
- **becoming the highest achieving local authority area in terms of skills and qualifications;**
- **increasing average tourism spend to equal the highest in Northern Ireland.**

With our range of new powers and functions we will embrace this opportunity to develop quality services and put structures and systems in place that will result in a stronger, more dynamic area that all of us can be part of.



The Palace Stables, Armagh

Chairman's Foreword

Councillor Sharon Haughey-Grimley



Chair of Economic Development & Regeneration Committee

Council has identified 'Growing our local economy' as our number one priority and as Chair of Economic Development and Regeneration it will be my responsibility to oversee delivery of this strategy. The economic landscape has changed. Local Government now has the responsibility for new powers which will ensure that we can achieve the vision and meet our commitments on:

- **Attracting investment, supporting business, protecting jobs and increasing employment;**
- **balancing economic, environmental and social progress; and**
- **enabling sustainable economic development.**

The strong foundations are already in place. We now need to build on them and achieve our ambitions now and for future generations.

This Strategy is just the beginning, outlining our route map for us all to work together to increase prosperity, improve quality of life and ensure our ability to influence key decision makers.

I look forward to working with everyone to expand and increase our business base, improve our skills levels and make the new Borough a prosperous place for all.

Headline Messages

1

The new Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ACBCBC or 'the Council') is the largest local authority outside of Belfast with a resident population of 204,000 people as of 2013. The council is projected to experience the greatest population growth of all the new 11 local authorities during the decade 2012-2022 estimated at 19,900 people, accounting for just over one-fifth of the total growth across Northern Ireland (NI).

2

In 2013, the Council area in terms of economic output was second only to Belfast, accounting for 9.4% of the NI total.

3

The local economy has considerable strengths in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agri-food production, life sciences and wholesale and retail.

4

There is a significant opportunity to develop tourism within the council area.

5

Of the 4,700 jobs forecast to be created by 2030 (Oxford Economics), around 3,700 will be in the construction, agricultural and admin and support service sectors.

6

Deprivation varies both spatially and in severity throughout the council area; with Craigavon urban area experiencing the effects most acutely.

7

Long term unemployment will continue to be a policy issue because of poor job growth in the dominant employment sectors (manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade) and relatively some of low concentrations of the faster growing high value added sectors (information and communication, financial and insurance activities and professional, scientific and technical activities). Youth unemployment continues to present a real challenge within the local economy, with a risk of creating a cycle of inactivity and social exclusion.

8

The new Council, under the transfer of planning powers, has the power to prepare a single Local Development Plan to set out the Council's strategy, objectives and policies on the development and use of land.

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Old Town Hall, Banbridge



The Navan Centre, Armagh

1. Introduction

A team led by Locus Management and including Colin Stutt Consulting, Morrow Gilchrist Associates, Oxford Economics and Fleming Mountstephen Planning was appointed to produce a Regeneration & Development Strategy (R&DS) for the new Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (the Council) in June 2014. The Council has placed the regeneration and development of the area as its number one priority and recognises the importance of establishing a clear, strategic direction for the Council region supporting and developing the local economy. The Regeneration & Development Strategy takes its lead from the 2015-2017 Council Corporate Plan which introduces the new council as:

- **A Bigger Council**
- **A More Powerful Council**
- **An Ambitious Council**
- **A Unified Council**
- **A Committed Council**

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its Mission as being to

“Prosper the Place, Serve the People and Strengthen our Position”.

The Corporate Plan includes the following three priorities:

1. Place

The commitment in the Council's Corporate Plan to Place is as follows: 'We will work to ensure that each city, town, village or rural area in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon realises its full potential as a 'Place of Choice' for living, working, visiting and investing and that this is achieved in a sustainable and equitable manner'.

2. People

The Council's commitment in its Corporate Plan in relation to People is as follows: 'We will place local people at the heart of the regeneration and

development strategy, supporting programmes and initiatives which improve the quality of life of residents, particularly those living in poverty, disengaged youth and the long term unemployed'.

3. Position

The Council's commitment in its Corporate Plan in relation to Positioning is as follows: 'We will proactively work to ensure that the Council region is appropriately positioned locally, regionally, nationally and internationally - focusing its relationships/networks, advocacy and reputation development on areas of greatest social and economic priority to the Borough'.

The R&DS aligns itself to the Corporate Plan and builds upon the three strategic priorities.

The R&DS has been developed through desk based research, consultations and engagement across the Council area. A stage 1 report was produced, led by Oxford Economics which provided a profile of the Council economy, projections and trends over the next 10-15 year period and a strategic review of key policies which impact upon the regeneration and development of the council area. The report was submitted, presented and approved by the ACBCBC Shadow Council.

Stage 2 was provided by the following methodology:

- 3 Council Officers workshops - over 100 in attendance
- 3 Community Workshops - over 150 attended from across the Borough
- 3 Business Workshops - over 50 local businesses attended from across the Borough
- 20 plus interviews with key stakeholders
- Updates and presentations to the Shadow Council and Services Committee
- Production of draft and final reports

The final report is supplemented by a Stage 1 Report and 4 Working Papers.

2. The Context

The R&DS is driven by the ambition of the new Council to be the foremost local authority with respect to economic regeneration, business creation and development. This ambition is underpinned by the fact that the Council is the largest local authority outside of Belfast, with a proud and rich history of manufacturing excellence. The Regeneration & Development Strategy seeks to build upon the ambitions described above through three interconnected themes which will facilitate the development of the city, towns and villages within the local area, developing and promoting start-ups and business growth seeking to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and enhancing the skills of local residents to compete for, and benefit from higher skilled, waged jobs being provided in the council area in an inclusive, equitable and sustainable social context.

The role of the new council is critical in respect to the delivery, management and promotion of the Regeneration & Development Strategy.

Three important new developments contribute to the positioning of local authorities as key players within their sub-regions, namely:

- New, larger local authorities
- Enhanced powers and resources, and
- Introduction of community planning

The R&DS contributes and helps to inform the emerging community planning process. The strategy cannot be delivered by the council alone. It requires others, including government departments, other public bodies, community and voluntary sector partners and the private sector to engage and coordinate resources which contribute to wealth and job creation within the Council area. The prize is much greater than the individual component parts, establishing the Council area as the foremost region for enterprise, entrepreneurship, FDI and business creation across Northern Ireland with a balanced quality of life in varied but inclusive communities.

Like most of Northern Ireland, the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ACBCBC 'the Council') economy enjoyed strong growth pre-recession. The financial crisis had a significant impact on the economy, but it has started to show positive signs of recovery. Unfortunately the pace of recovery is expected to be subdued meaning the new Council will have a number of challenges to tackle identified in the summary profile below.

A more detailed and in-depth analysis of the local economy and spatial framework was carried out by Oxford Economics and Fleming Mountstephen Planning respectively as stage 1 of the R&DS and is available as an accompanying document to this report.

2.1 The Area
Covering an area of 554 square miles and with a population in excess of 204,000 outside of Belfast, ACBCBC is the largest council in Northern Ireland. It is strategically positioned on the axis of the main East West and North South economic corridors and is supported by high quality road and rail links within Northern Ireland and to the Republic of Ireland.

2.2 Demography
The Council area is projected to experience the greatest growth in terms of population growth (i.e. 19,900 people), accounting for just over one fifth (20.9%) of the total growth across Northern Ireland during the decade 2012-2022. The Council requires an ambition which matches its position relative to the other ten local authorities and to ensure that it fully punches its



Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council Area



Brontë Homeland, Rathfriland



Newforge House, Magheralin

weight in debates and decisions about Northern Ireland wide priorities such as infrastructural development and investment.

2.3 Economy and the Labour Market

Challenge: Growth in entrepreneurial activity is required in order to become the most business orientated Council area in Northern Ireland.

Scale: One additional business start-up for every 25 persons within the working population. ACBCBCs business community would increase from 7,720 to 12,770 businesses.

Source: Oxford Economics Stage 1 Report, 2015

Our analysis of the local economy leads us to recommend that the Council focuses on building on existing strengths - for example, Banbridge as a strong retail destination within the Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor, Craigavon as a centre of manufacturing excellence and innovation and Armagh as a strong heritage and cultural tourism destination. The important role which Armagh, Banbridge, Lurgan, Portadown and Craigavon town centres play in respect to regeneration is critical to the future success of the Council economy. The council needs to prioritise the continued regeneration of each centre through the use of new regeneration powers, for example working with the Chamber of Commerce on public realm work, shop front schemes and other town centres initiatives.

There is a need for more business starts in the Council region and for these to be realised through the development of a start-up programme which fits specific specialisms within the region including life and health sciences, advanced engineering, rural diversification, agri-foods, creative industries and tourism and hospitality. Generally, more needs to be done to promote and nurture entrepreneurship across the Council area starting with programmes which engage with primary schools, post primary and the Further and Higher Education Sector (FHE). The Council

area is home to a strong SME base, with considerable tradition and strengths with respect to manufacturing, life sciences, food production and engineering indeed, Moy Park, NI's largest private sector employer, is located in the Borough. The new council is committed to expanding and developing its suite of business focused services and programmes which support indigenous business growth.

The Council is keen to attract FDI especially in sectors where it has key strengths and land available for industrial use. The Council will work closely with Invest NI and its partners to facilitate this process.

Youth unemployment is a particular problem and consultations highlighted the problem of disengaged, disadvantaged young people living in the Council area. This can lead to other problems including anti-social behaviour, loss of ambition and higher than average levels of suicide and self-harm. This could result in a lost generation of young people, the ultimate legacy of the recent economic recession.

The role of the social economy was highlighted by a number of individuals and local organisations in particular when looking at service provision in areas of severe disadvantage. Within the Council area it was recognised that the social economy was generally under developed. It was suggested that the new Council should prioritise the social economy for development as part of its future regeneration plan.

2.4 Skills

Challenge: Increasing working population attainment levels at NVQ level 4 and above to that of the highest achieving local authority area in NI.

Scale: Up-skilling an additional 7,900 people (6.1%) within ACBCBC equates to 46% of Queens Universities current undergraduate base.

Source: Oxford Economics Stage 1 Report, 2015

There is a need to facilitate a better alignment between the enhanced skills that the economy will require in future (particularly that in relation to high-growth value-added sectors) and the skills of the resident population in the Council region. A strong partnership between the new Council, the Department for Employment and Learning and the Southern Regional College (SRC) is important to achieve this, but there is also a need to consider whether and how to attract university provision in the area. Both universities are working closely with Council on innovation, research and development programmes and this unique partnership could be developed further.

Tackling youth unemployment and positive actions to support the retention of young people in the Council region is a priority and the new council has a role to play. The type of actions required include enhanced training, apprenticeships and the council facilitating closer links with large employers in the area to encourage job placements. The Council may wish to include employment social clauses in its larger contracts and to encourage other public bodies (such as SRC) also to do so. Social clauses can also help to address supply chain opportunities.

Upskilling the working population is equally important given the large percentage of those in employment with little or no skills. The introduction of a skill voucher scheme either on a sectoral basis or within large employers in the Council area might provide some assistance.

Finally, skills will not be addressed without better cooperation between education, training and employers. Large numbers of young people are leaving school with very poor or zero qualifications, indeed some evidence was provided that many don't have basic numeracy and literacy. The push for upskilling the local population is too important to leave to any one body or sector.

2.5 Quality of Life

It is important that the new Council tackles deprivation and social exclusion wherever it exists in the Council area through a new Social Inclusion Strategy for the Council area.

These issues need to be redressed as part of a longer term commitment to regeneration which requires inter-agency support provided through working directly with target communities.

A large percentage of the Council population resides in the rural hinterland, villages and hamlets. It is important that the rural communities are not overlooked with respect to the R&DS and that actions are supported which strengthen rural communities and related infrastructure, particularly enhancing rural broadband which is currently a significant constraint for rural businesses. The new Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 provides a means of securing resources to support and sustain rural communities in the Council area. The Council will seek to draw in other resources to ensure the sustainable development of rural communities and will commit its own funding to those communities.

All of this serves to illustrate the importance within the R&DS of actions to reinforce community cohesion as necessary underpinning mechanisms to reinforce economic growth and prosperity.

Poor community capacity remains a problem in parts of the Council area. Banbridge is characterised as having small number of community organisations mainly dependent on voluntary input. Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown include areas of both strong and weak community infrastructure. Community infrastructure in Armagh tends to focus on arts, culture and sporting activities. The new council provides the opportunity to share learning and best practice across the sector, with the potential to develop new models of collaboration and consider merger where appropriate.

2.6 Tourism

Challenge: Increasing the ACBCBC tourism sector's average spend per visit to equal the highest currently in Northern Ireland.

Scale: Increasing average spend per visit by over 90% or £112 per visit. The ACBCBC tourism sector ranking by expenditure would improve from last place currently to the 6th highest grossing out of the 11 local authority areas. Holding visitor numbers constant, this would equate to an extra £18.3 million entering the ACBCBC economy.

Source: Oxford Economics Stage 1 Report, 2015

The Oxford Economics report highlights that the new Council area is a poor performing tourism area, primarily as a result of the poor accommodation infrastructure across the region. This generally surprised many of the stakeholders consulted with as they perceived Armagh City to have a strong visitor product, and noted other strengths including Lough Neagh and the successful events programme. The Council area needs more hotels which could support tourism growth, and it is important that future hotels are developed in city and town centres. In addition there is a requirement to facilitate the development and expansion of supporting tourism services including an events programme, arts and cultural product development and evening economy businesses, for example restaurants, bars, cafés etc. The Council area does not need a new tourism attraction but instead needs to invest in its existing attractions to attract visitors to the area and to develop the business of tourism across the Borough.



3. Spatial Considerations

There are a range of spatial considerations for the Regeneration and Development Strategy, for example, the provision of housing, economic growth and development, infrastructure, community facilities and the protection of environmental assets. An agreed spatial agenda for the area will provide expression to the Council's economic, social, cultural and environmental policies and will inform Council decision-making. The spatial agenda will, for example, contribute significantly to the 'Creating Places of Choice' strategic action area.

3.1 Existing spatial planning context

- The statutory regional spatial context is provided by the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and related transportation strategy documents. The R&DS identifies Craigavon, Banbridge and Armagh City as a 'Cluster' of 'Main Hub' towns which 'have the potential to capitalise on their strategic position on the Belfast/Dublin and Belfast/Enniskillen/Sligo economic corridors' and states, significantly, that Craigavon 'performs a strong sub-regional function';
- The statutory local spatial context is provided by the three existing DoE Area Plans (the Armagh Area Plan 2004 (AAP), the Banbridge/Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 (BNMAP) and the Craigavon Area Plan 2010 (CAP) which includes the 'Craigavon Town centre Boundaries & Retail Designations Plan'); and
- The non-statutory regeneration context is provided by masterplan/development strategy documents for Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon and other towns and villages

3.2 Key spatial tools

The key spatial tools that will be available to the Council for shaping the future spatial context will be:

- The Community Plan;
- The Local Development Plan (LDP) comprising of a Plan Strategy and Local Plan Policies. There is a

statutory link between the Community Plan and the LDP and the Council is responsible for preparing and keeping under review a timetable for the preparation and adoption of the Council's LDP;

- The regeneration functions that are scheduled to be transferred to the Council in 2016; and
- Decisions on individual planning applications through the regular development management process.
- These spatial tools will benefit from new potential sources of financing, for example Tax Increment Finance and Local Asset Backed Vehicles, resulting from the Council's new general powers of competence.
- The Council has the power and responsibility to prepare a Local Development Plan for the area with a Plan Strategy (to set out the Council's objectives on the development and use of land and the policies to achieve the objectives) and a Local Policies Plan (to set out the Council's policies in relation to the development and use of land). This enables the Council to have one Development Plan for the Council area (in place of the 3 which currently exist, one of which, the Armagh Area Plan is seriously out of date) and planning policies which are 'tailored' to the development and use of land in the Borough within the planning policy context set by the Department's proposed Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland.
- The LDP will be the Council's most important strategic planning tool and will be subject to annual monitoring and five-yearly review. It will be evidence-based and preliminary papers have already been prepared on Population and Growth and Housing with papers on the Economy and Town centres and Retailing to be prepared. These papers will inform the preparation of the timetable for the preparation and adoption of the LDP.

3.3 Main Spatial considerations for R&DS

Settlement Hierarchy

This currently includes 3 Main Hubs, 6 towns, 28 villages and 74 small settlements/hamlets and is an essential planning mechanism in allocating growth. It needs to be reviewed and revised to recognise the significance of the sub-regional role of the Craigavon Urban Area, the distinct roles of Armagh and Banbridge, the local towns and villages, the importance of the rural area and the urban/rural balance within the Council area. It is recommended that the settlement hierarchy would be the Craigavon Urban Area (a 'Main Hub' with its important sub-regional role as the 3rd largest urban centre in Northern Ireland), Armagh and Banbridge as 'Main Hubs', local towns, villages, hamlets and dispersed rural communities. Within this hierarchy would be the 'cluster' of the Craigavon, Banbridge and Armagh 'Main Hubs'.

Settlement Functions

The following functions are noted:

- Craigavon Urban Area with its strong sub-regional function based on population size, retail centres, acute hospital, manufacturing/industry base, administration, leisure and tourism and strategic location (road and rail). The sub-regional function of the Craigavon Urban Area is a strategically significant spatial consideration. Within this, the Craigavon Integrated Development Framework establishes the important concept of the '3 centres - distinct yet linked and complementary, the complete package', responds to the sub-regional role of the Craigavon Urban Area, provides the evidence for public sector intervention (including public sector land disposal), recognises that implementation depends on a large number of individual actions and highlights the importance of cross-cutting actions especially in relation to transport. The South Lakes development opportunity, including the new Southern Regional College campus and Leisure Complex, adjacent to the Rushmere retail

destination, is a major regeneration initiative in Central Craigavon, whilst important opportunities exist in Portadown and Lurgan also, for example, along the River Bann and adjoining lands and at Brownlow House / Lurgan Park respectively. The proximity to Lough Neagh and its associated tourism potential and the presence of, inter alia, Craigavon Hospital and a wide range of major industrial employer's present opportunities for further strengthening the sub-regional status of Craigavon.

- Armagh with its unique heritage/tourism role (but with infrastructure constraints, the need to develop tourism accommodation and the need to enhance multi-functional town centre role). The Armagh City Centre master plan, whilst it is non-statutory, is a critical spatial planning tool to guide and stimulate development and regeneration initiatives including those relating to the significant tourism, ecclesiastical and heritage potential of the city. There are a wide range of ongoing regeneration initiatives and opportunities in Armagh, for example, Armagh Gaol, Shambles Market, Mall West Shopping Centre expansion and the 'Armagh - A Learning City' proposal. The delivery of road infrastructure improvements also represents an opportunity for Armagh.
- Banbridge with its retail, sports and leisure facilities and strategic location on Belfast-Dublin corridor (but with land constraints for housing and employment and need to enhance multi-functional town centre role). The Banbridge Development Strategy, whilst non-statutory, is an important spatial planning tool to guide and stimulate development and regeneration initiatives particularly in relation to economic development, town centre development (including back land sites and office accommodation) and public realm enhancements and to strengthen the town relative to its recent population growth. The potential for Banbridge to be a retail destination and the opportunity for economic development arising from Council ownership of land on the A1 Belfast-Corridor is also noted.

- Local towns should continue to respond to the local needs of each community and their rural catchments, with an emphasis on a network of towns and villages/hamlets to sustain and service rural community.

Town Centre designations

There is a need to review town centre designations for Craigavon Urban Area, Armagh and Banbridge to ensure compact retail centres, Town Centre boundary extension in Central Craigavon and consolidation of town centres in Armagh, Banbridge, Lurgan and Portadown should be considered to reflect changing role of town-centres from retail-led to multi-functional.

Land for housing use

There is a need for land to be identified and allocated under settlement hierarchy for 31,000 new households between 2008-2030 (a population increase of 52,000 persons). Housing is the major land user in the area.

Land for economic use

There is a need for land to be identified and allocated under settlement hierarchy, including for office and warehousing, with close regard paid to high quality and accessible land. Detailed consideration must be given not only to the quantum of floorspace that is required but to its deliverability and, in particular, the deliverability or otherwise of floorspace on existing zoned sites which have not been developed to date. Craigavon Urban Area is ideal for growth and enhance its important sub-regional role.

Strategic infrastructure

The priorities are connections within the Craigavon Urban Area (to enhance its sub-regional role), the Portadown-Armagh road improvement, the Armagh NW and E links and public transport connections, potentially including Quality Bus Corridors, between settlements in the settlement hierarchy and between the population and employment and learning opportunities.

3.4 Other Considerations

It is important to note other considerations, which are related to the spatial considerations, as development and regeneration cannot and indeed, must not, be put on hold while the Community Plan and Local Development Plan are under preparation. Without underestimating the important role of the LDP in particular (particularly in relation to the provision of housing), it is considered that the majority of constraints facing development and regeneration projects relate to matters such as site ownership/ assembly, funding and development viability rather than absence of a site or difficulties in securing planning approval. It is relevant to note that Belfast City Council’s Investment Programme for the city is based on a sustained investment programme over a period of considerable turmoil in relation to planning (the new Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan took some 10 years between publication and adoption). This integrated and sustained investment approach was agreed by elected representatives and has avoided many of the difficulties encountered when individual projects and areas have to wastefully compete each time funding becomes available. The approach also paid particular regard to maximising the returns from Council-owned surplus land whether by sale for specific uses or by release to the market with a development brief.

It is also apparent that a regeneration and development strategy for any Council area will identify a range of social, economic, physical, funding and organisational challenges and opportunities. In addition, statutory and non-statutory plan documents include a range of zonings, infrastructure requirements and development opportunity sites under a range of policy aims and objectives. In light of the above and in the context of the Council’s new powers (local planning, community planning and production of a local development plan), a key challenge is how to prioritise public sector intervention and investment and ensure implementation over a sustained period. There is a range of existing information, particularly the work done in the master plan documents, which sets out the roles

of the Main Hubs (and within Craigavon the concept of the 3 distinct, linked, complementary centres) and provides an overall framework which should inform the task of prioritising projects and initiatives. These documents and the reviews currently underway will play an important role in enabling development and regeneration and informing the preparation of the LDP.

Within the context of development, regeneration and the preparation of a Community Plan and Local Development Plan, is the overall cross-cutting theme of ‘place-making’ i.e. creating places with a distinct identity which are successful in physical, economic and social terms. The ‘Urban Stewardship and Design

Guide for Northern Ireland’ published by the DoE and titled ‘Living Places’ highlights the critical importance, value and benefits of ‘place-making’ in cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods. The sister document, ‘A sustainable design guide for the Northern Ireland Countryside’, published by the DoE, and provides similar advice on delivering quality, sustainable development in the countryside.

The spatial tools of the Council, informed by the spatial considerations and a commitment to ‘place- making’, are a means to an end, namely to facilitate the social, physical and economic development of the Council area.



Apple Orchards, Armagh



Rushmere Shopping Centre, Craigavon

4. Vision and Strategic Themes

4.1 Strategic Vision

Our strategic vision is taken from the Council's draft corporate plan.

- The Council will proactively build the economic prosperity of the area by developing the infrastructure that connects businesses and citizens to markets and employment opportunities anywhere in the world. Council services will be modern, reliable and efficient.
- The Council will facilitate the thriving business community in key areas including Life and Health Sciences, advanced engineering, rural diversification, agri-foods, creative industries and tourism as well as supporting small enterprise development and entrepreneurship. Strategically located on the Belfast-Dublin cross border commuter and transport corridor, the Council will work together with other partners to attract new investment and resources in particular FDI.
- The area offers a good quality of life for all its residents, and will be safe and affordable for families and older people to live in. Local communities will be actively engaged on key issues in an inclusive manner. Young people will be able to realize their potential and develop their dreams through first class education and training provision, employment opportunities, as well as participating in sport, arts and community life. The Council will support communities to tackle social issues to improve cohesion and tolerance across the area.
- The rural character of the Orchard County, the upper Bann, Lagan Valley, The Mourne and Lough Neagh southern shoreline will be preserved with care and developed for residents and visitors to enjoy. The people who live in rural areas are to be afforded good services, transport and digital accessibility to ensure they fully participate in all aspects of civic life and the economic development of the area. Effective systems for waste management and environmental protection safeguard nature for future generations.

- The Council will support the diverse and colourful cultural heritage of the area: the buildings and architecture; its customs, stories, songs, poetry, music and sport; the traditions of the countryside and towns; the food and entertainment. Armagh's ecclesiastical prominence underlines the significance of the area regionally, nationally and internationally.
- The Council will invest in state of the art leisure facilities as well as out-door and adventure activities using the beautiful natural environment. Town and village centres will be attractive, clean and accessible offering quality shopping and restaurants as well as cultural and entertainment experiences, which are inviting to everyone. There will be a step change improvement in areas of deprivation and dereliction.

4.2 Strategic Aims

By implementing this Regeneration & Development Strategy the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council aims to play an ambitious and dynamic role in reversing the effects of recent economic decline and, in particular, equipping its area for the future by

- Supporting new and existing businesses to grow, invest and offer employment
- Developing to the full the distinctive character of the Borough by investing in its city, towns, villages and rural areas to make them 'places of choice'
- Investing in the people of the Borough and the communities they live in to make them inclusive and sustainable, and
- Positioning the area as a dynamic place in which to live, work, invest or visit in the eyes of Northern Ireland, national and international markets.

4.3 Strategic Themes

The Regeneration & Development Plan aligns itself to the Council’s three Corporate Priorities which will focus our efforts and resources:

- 1. **Place** - increasing prosperity through developing the economy, employment, connectivity and environment.
- 2. **People** - improving everyone’s quality of life, opportunity, safety and wellbeing.
- 3. **Position** - giving the leadership to tackle the issues that matter and influencing decision makers at all levels.

4.4 Linkages to Wider Policies

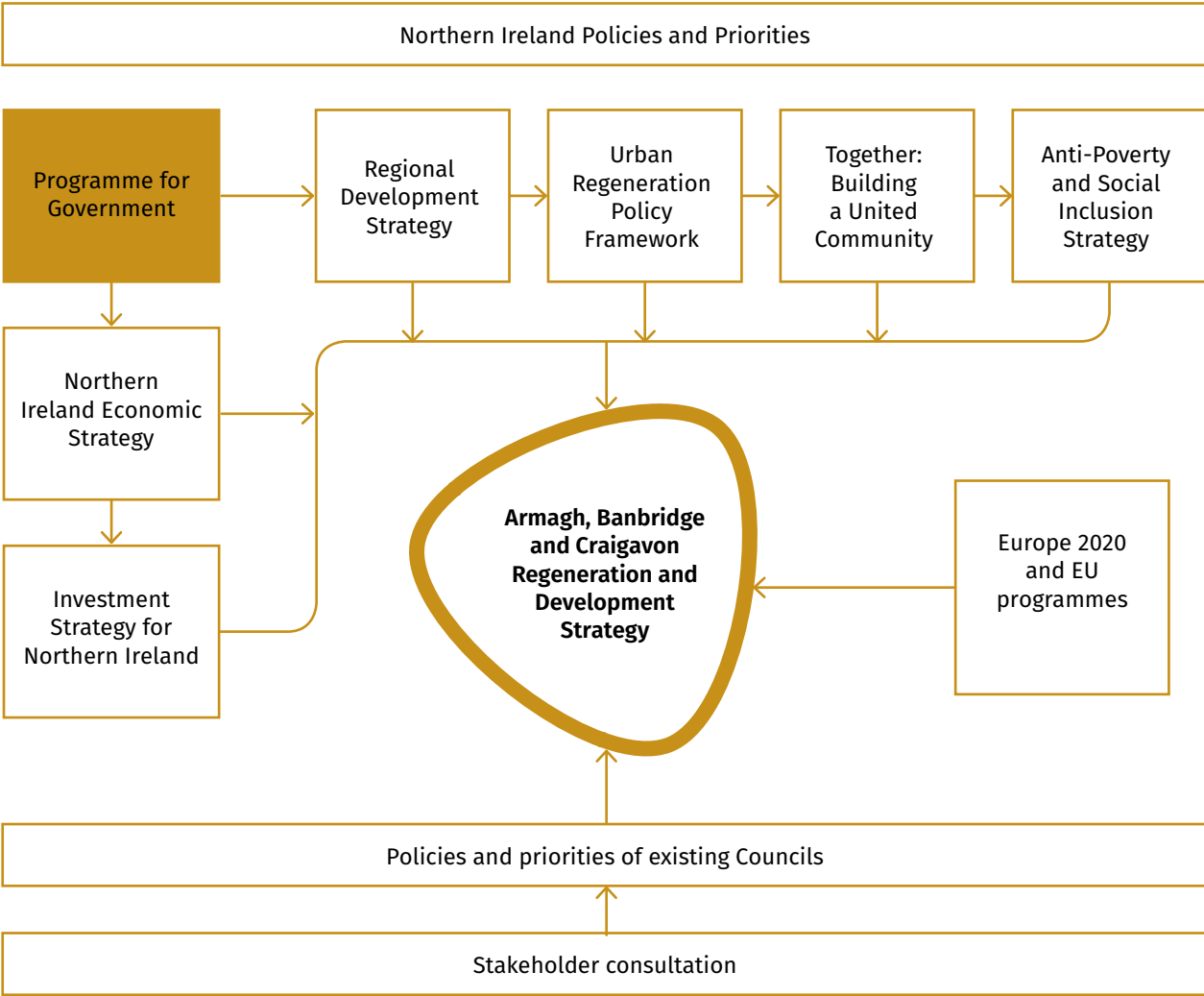
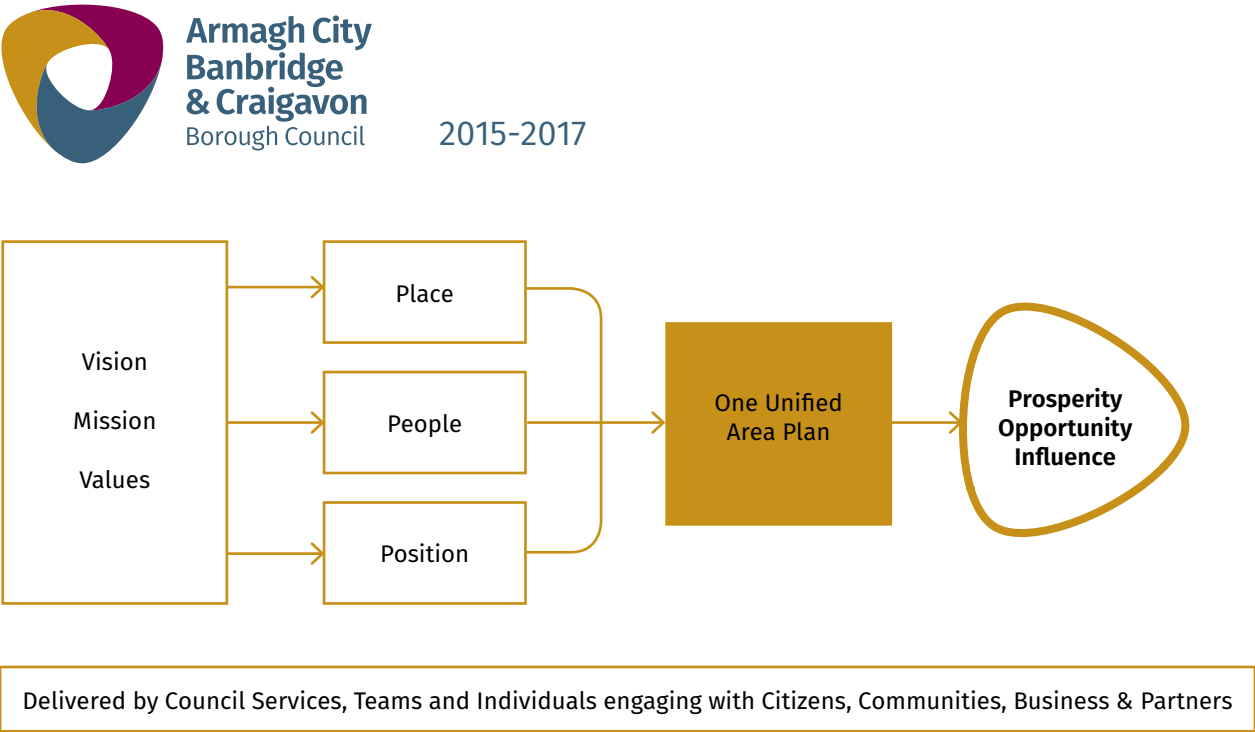
The Regeneration & Development Strategy is the result of balancing top-down and bottom-up considerations. The bottom-up considerations include the priorities emerging from the stakeholder consultations, together with the existing policies, priorities and practices of the predecessor Councils, which reflect their adaptation to the needs and opportunities of their areas.

While these bottom-up considerations have primacy, it is necessary to balance them by placing those priorities in the context of government and EU policies and priorities for NI. If projects and proposals arising under the R&DS are to receive support and funding from

Northern Ireland Departments or EU Programmes they will have to be aligned with the policies of the Northern Ireland Executive and/or the European Union.

The relationship of the Regeneration and Development Strategy to some key policies is shown in the following diagram.

In support of the Regeneration and Development Strategy it will be necessary for the Council to develop its evidence base relating to the economy and the labour market in the Council Borough and its performance relative to other areas in Northern Ireland and beyond in order to establish and justify priorities and argue the case for investment by Government Departments and other funding bodies in the Borough.



5. Thematic Actions 2015-2020

5.1 Prosperous Places

The Corporate Plan commitments under the Place priority are:

1. **Growing our local economy is top of our agenda.**
2. **We will do all we can to attract investment, support businesses, protect jobs and increase employment.**
3. **We will plan for the whole area taking a balanced approach to economic, environment and social progress.**
4. **We will create the conditions to enable sustainable economic development: physical regeneration, transport and technological connectivity.**
5. **We will lead the way in the environmental management of the borough.**

The Regeneration and Development Strategy implements the Corporate Plan Place commitments through 4 Thematic Action Areas.

1. **Supporting Business Enterprise, Business Growth and Innovation;**
2. **Creating Places of Choice;**
3. **Developing strong Business Networks across the Council Borough and using them to drive supply chain initiatives and business growth; and**
4. **Employability and Skills.**

Supporting Business Enterprise, Business Growth and Innovation

The first and most fundamental commitment to Prosperous Places is to encourage existing businesses to grow and new businesses to be formed and then to grow to ensure that the Council economy has a rich and diverse stock of businesses which can offer the best possible range of employment opportunities. The Council will use its enterprise support policies, including key sectoral policies and its work to improve the employability and skills of local people, to develop

a supportive environment for business start-up, business growth, innovation in existing businesses and attracting FDI.

While it may be that elements of the support for business start-up are organised across Northern Ireland, the Council Borough needs to make flexible arrangements for those who do not fall easily within the standardised arrangements, for example those who are coming from unemployment and need additional support to start a sustainable business and those with high potential for growth who may not reach their full potential for employment and income generation if they are not given appropriate additional support.

As well as supporting business start-up it is also necessary to support growth and innovation in existing businesses. Programmes of development appropriate to the stage of development of particular businesses can be offered in association with the Southern Regional College (SRC), the Northern Ireland Science Park, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and the Universities. Strong business networks will enable Council officers and the enterprise agencies to signpost businesses to appropriate support to overcome barriers to business growth and to develop innovation strategies.

In addition to these cross-cutting policies, the Council will develop focused development strategies for key sectors in the Council economy including advanced manufacturing, agri-food, the life and health sciences sector and the knowledge-based and creative sectors (including the digital sector) and the visitor economy. The predecessor Councils to the ACBCBC Council have all developed strong links with companies in these sectors, in their respective areas, and have implemented development strategies for these sectors. The Council will build on this strong foundation and take its development role further by making use of its new powers, including its planning and regeneration powers in support of these key sectors and working closely with Invest NI to attract FDI.

Creating Places of Choice

The aim of the Creating Places of Choice Strategic Action Area of the Council Regeneration and Development Strategy is to ensure that each city, town, village or rural area in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon realises its full potential as a 'Place of Choice' for living, working, visiting and investing and that this is achieved in a sustainable and equitable manner.

Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon contains many distinctive places each with their own history and with different development dynamics. The full potential of the Borough will be realised only if each of those distinctive places is supported by policies and priorities appropriate to the opportunities and challenges which they face. A 'one size fits all' approach will not realise the full potential of the Borough to provide income, employment and an outstanding quality of life for its residents. A place-based, bottom up approach to the development of Prosperous Places across the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough will result in strength in diversity and will be underpinned by place-sensitive cross-cutting strategic approaches to issues such as entrepreneurship, innovation, culture and the arts and creativity together with the development of business networks across the Borough and actions to link local businesses through Borough-wide supply chain development initiatives.

The Council will use its new planning powers and its new regeneration and economic development functions together to realise its ambitions for Prosperous Places.

The Council Corporate Plan already includes a commitment to develop an integrated Masterplan for the Council area. The Masterplan will contain actions to realise the full potential of each city, town, village or rural area in the Borough in a complementary, sustainable and equitable manner, based on recognition of the distinctive roles of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon and development of an agreed strategy for the realisation of the full potential of each together with distinct strategies for other settlements and for rural areas. The Masterplan will recognise the nuances and

implications of the different communities and traditions within each settlement and provide an agreed basis for development and investment in each settlement. The Masterplan will also provide the framework for the Council's longer term Area Plan and act as an interim framework while the Area Plan is developed.

In the tourism sector there is particular potential for growth of employment and investment by developing new hotel capacity in the Borough and by developing new tourism based businesses. Analysis carried out for Banbridge District Council show that the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council area has a significant deficit in hotel provision. In 2010 the Council accounted for 11.2% of Northern Ireland's population but only 3.3% of its hotel bed spaces. This meant that the Council had 1 hotel bed space for every 352 people whereas the Northern Ireland average was 1 hotel bed space for every 105 people and areas such as Coleraine, Down and Fermanagh had, respectively, 1 hotel bed space for every 49, 98 and 64 of their populations. The deficit in provision of hotel bed spaces in the Council means that the ability of the Borough to earn income from visitors is limited. Action to tackle this deficit of hotel provision is urgent.

The Council will use its planning, economic development and lobbying and positioning capacity to realise this potential. Using these powers the Council will first carry out an accommodation and visitor services audit and then put in place a campaign for hotel investment in the Borough.

While the provision of new accommodation is essential, it is only one component of a wider opportunity to grow businesses, income and employment in tourism. The Council will also support the creation of new tourism based businesses outside the accommodation sector through a wide range of interventions, such as the use of development briefs to assist the private sector in assessing opportunities for development. Tourism is a rapidly growing sector nationally and internationally but visitors are increasingly discerning about which tourism experiences they choose.

The Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council tourism product has to offer visitors memorable experiences and outcomes based on an innovative and holistic approach. This goes well beyond the provision of accommodation and includes the quality of the welcome to visitors in local businesses and visitor attractions, the importance of supporting industries, the existence of a vibrant evening economy, the provision of services, the cultural and arts offering. Opportunities to position and develop new tourism businesses include conferences and incentives tourism, teaching English as a foreign language, activity holidays, learning traditional arts and crafts, cookery schools and structured study visits related, for example, to ecclesiastical history or industrial archaeology.

In each case a strong visitor experience can be combined with the strong and distinctive destination branding of Armagh and its St. Patrick associations, the Mourne and Lough Neagh, as distinct destinations appealing to distinct market groups within the overall the Council tourism offering which will also include opportunities for leisure and recreation, a distinctive arts and culture offering, attractive town centres and retail destinations at the Rushmere Centre and the Outlet at Banbridge.

The Council will put in place a range of interventions focused on innovation in the visitors' tourism experience, internationalising the profile of key attractors and events, the development of niche markets, clear branding and an innovative marketing strategy. Examples of such initiatives include:-

- Investment in innovation and creative talent to develop unique visitor experiences;
- Establishing a programme of innovative visitor experiences that will transform the existing offerings into experiential products that will help develop new niche markets, (such a TEFL, Science and Astronomy, Pilgrimages and choral groups);
- Actively pursuing appropriate designations to raise the profile of our key attractors in national and international markets e.g. World Heritage Site status for Navan Centre & Fort;
- Creating a 'rapid response' and proactive team within the Council able to fast track tourism and other investments and planning applications by becoming THE local authority in NI that demonstrably wants and welcomes appropriate and sympathetic tourism development more than any

- other – especially in terms of supporting new hotel and tourist accommodation development;
- Developing supporting tourism industries sector – evening economy, arts and crafts, languages, artisan food and supporting initiatives such as 2016, Year of Food.
 - Continuing to invest in Signature Events which have a proven track record of success and generating profile and significant economic benefits to position region and bid for international events.

The Council has a track record in successful delivery of significant, tourism based events. Such Signature Events¹ raise the profile of the area and themselves generate income and employment. Combining the resources of the 3 previous Councils will enable the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council to be more ambitious in the events which it bids for or manages itself and to ensure that more of the benefit of such events is retained in the Borough.

¹ Signature Tourism events are distinct from community events which encourage the civic and community engagement and participation and are considered under the People Priority.

Developing Strong Business Networks

Strong business networks are key to realising the full potential of businesses across the Borough. While strong business networks exist in some parts of the Council, in other places they are under developed and under utilized.

The Council is committed to developing and supporting strong business networks across the Borough. It will do so by building on the existing expertise and experience in Chambers of Commerce, enterprise agencies, community business agencies etc. to develop a Council wide business network.

The Council will also seek to develop an ACBCBC-wide business to business supply chain initiative to encourage local businesses to trade with each other, both in the priority sectors identified in Section 4.2 and

between businesses generally as well as between the Council and other public bodies and local businesses. The Council wide Supply Chain Initiative will use the ACBCBC wide business network as its main vector for delivery.

Employability and Skills

The actions under Employability and Skills tackle existing weaknesses in the skills profile of the working age population of the Council Borough, complements other social and economic inclusion activities under the People Priority and reinforces the sectoral development strategies.

These Actions address the need to improve the skills of those in employment, unemployed, under employed or economically inactive. In particular there needs to be a focus on the youth of the Council to ensure that generational unemployment doesn't become the norm in parts of the Council area.

The Council's role under the Employability and Skills Thematic Action Area is somewhat different from that under the other Thematic Action Areas as in this case the Council has little direct influence on the provision of skills or the development of employability. Instead, in this case the Council has largely to work in partnership and through other organisations, although the Council can have a direct impact by ensuring that its own employment practices open up the maximum opportunity for local people to gain experience in the workforce, to take up employment opportunities and to develop their skills.

The Department for Employment & Learning (DEL) is the main government body with responsibility for the delivery of youth and adult employability and training services. Other departments have a role to play including DETI, Education & Library Board, DSD, DENI and OFMDFM. The main DEL programmes include Training for Success, Apprenticeship NI, Steps to Work, Community Family Support Programme and LEMIS. Peace IV, the European Social Fund and Erasmus+ provide additional opportunities to secure funding for



Dromore Park Viaduct



Almac Pharmaceutical, Craigavon

local projects which help to move the Council residents into employment, education or training. Council will seek to play a proactive role by helping local providers engage with target groups and disadvantaged communities, in particular those furthest from the labour market.

One potential action for Council is to work with others to establish a ‘Council Employability & Skills Forum’ which brings together local providers, the Council and key statutory organisations to facilitate the sharing of best practice, coordination of existing services and planning for future needs. The Council will ensure that the work of the forum is fed into other planning processes e.g. community planning.

Council could develop its relationship with key local providers through the establishment of a memorandum of understanding. This would provide the Council with an overview of year on year targets and enable it to identify gaps (if any) in local provision which the Council could potentially provide resources to address. Ultimately, it should contribute towards better partnership building between the new council and key local stakeholders.

Consultations and interviews carried out during the production of the Council’s R&DS highlighted the need for sound careers advice to help inform decisions by young people (and their parents) about their choice of future learning of employment pathway, including entrepreneurship. The new council should continue to provide support to local projects such as Area Learning Communities (ALCs), Jobfairs and Business Education Partnerships.

Finally, it is important that the new Council is recognised as an exemplar local authority in respect to providing employment opportunities for the long term unemployed and disengaged through a new programme of work placements, training and apprenticeships within council. It is proposed that the Council develops a programme which will include commitments to apprenticeships, traineeships and work placement opportunities for local residents. These targets should be agreed between regeneration staff and HR personnel and the trade unions.



Armagh Observatory



Moneypenny's Lock, Craigavon

Prosperous Places Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
1 Development of a model of business start-up support appropriate to the needs of ACBCBC, including differentiated support for those who experience particular challenges in business start-up and those with high growth potential.	Implementation from October 2015 on transfer from InvestNI – specific adaptations to ACBCBC needs introduced progressively from October 2015.	ACBCBC Council Place Directorate with InvestNI, enterprise support organisations and contractors appointed for programme delivery.	Design and procure new RSI programme to commence Autumn 2015. Targets informed by SLA with ACBCBC Council 172 business plans. Indicative budget £323,432. Resources required to manage programme and to provide audit and monitoring support – estimate resourcing with existing EDO team.
2 Business innovation and growth initiative targeted on the existing businesses in ACBCBC.	Consultation with local businesses and partner organisations commencing from April 2015. Particular initiatives introduced from 2016 onwards.	ACBCBC Council Place Directorate with InvestNI, Southern Regional College, Northern Ireland Science Park, Universities.	Bolt on programmes to focus on sectoral priorities in strategy to approx. budget of £2m (youth, agri-food, digital). Resources required – estimate resourcing with existing EDO team.
3 Developing strategies to strengthen and develop key sectors in the ACBCBC economy.	Consultation on development of sectoral strategies from April 2015. Strategies for key sectors introduced over the period 2016 to 2020.	ACBCBC Council Place Directorate with InvestNI, Southern Regional College and sector partners including • The Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association • Food Northern Ireland • Biosciences Ireland Ltd • Momentum Northern Ireland, the trade association for the Northern Ireland digital sector • The Northern Ireland Science Park • The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland Ltd • The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBBI)	Establish key partnership forums: • advanced manufacturing • agri-food forum • life and health sciences group/cluster • Digital and knowledge-based • Creative sectors • Visitor economy No additional resources required.

Prosperous Places Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
4 Creation of an integrated master plan to maximise the potential of city, town and village centres, regeneration, tourism, land and property development.	Master plan commissioned by December 2015 and completed by December 2016.	The Council Place Directorate and the Council Planning team, in association with Department of the Environment, the Department of Regional Development, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and local voluntary, community and business interests.	Plan will be externally commissioned. Likely cost of the order of £100,000 (dependent upon tor).
5 Progressing existing regeneration plans and completing environmental improvement public realm schemes as agreed within council's new capital programme.	Implementation of regeneration plans are agreed. Public realm work completed by 2018.	The Council Place Directorate with local communities and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.	Cost will depend on number and scale of regeneration plans agreed. In the case of smaller towns and villages the Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 may meet, or contribute, to the cost of the regeneration process. Public realm work costed at £9.7 million between 2015-2018.
6 Developing the tourism sector across the Council Borough.	Accommodation and tourism audit and action plan completed by April 2016. Innovative marketing strategy adopted in 2016 targeting specific tourism market segments.	The Council Place Directorate, Tourism Northern Ireland (formerly NITB), Tourism Ireland Ltd., Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.	Accommodation and tourism audit – consultancy project £30K. Innovative tourism strategy - £50k per annum for delivery. No additional resources required.
7 Developing transport linkages to enhance travel, access and connectivity.	Continuing task.	The Council Place Directorate.	Function is essentially one of lobbying and watching out for opportunities for funding and development. No capital cost to Council.
8 Sustaining public and private services in the city, towns and villages.	Continuing task.	The Council Place Directorate	Function is essentially one of lobbying and watching out for opportunities for funding and development. No capital cost to Council.
9 Tackling problems of poor physical and broadband connectivity in rural areas.	Continuing task.	The Council Place Directorate	Function is essentially one of lobbying and watching out for opportunities for funding and development. No capital cost to Council.

Prosperous Places Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
10 Development of an ACBCBC wide business network supported by business relevant events across the Borough.	ACBCBC wide Business Network established by January 2016, following consulation and conference in 2015.	The Council Place Directorate with InvestNI, Southern Regional College, Universities and Colleges elsewhere in Northern Ireland and externally and local business networks.	Cost is mainly related to animating and organising network and from time to time hosting higher profile events and speakers, approximately £50,000 per annum.
11 Deployment of the business network to drive an ACBCBC wide supply chain initiative linking purchasers and suppliers in the public and private sectors.	In course of 2016.	The Council Place Directorate with InvestNI, Southern Regional College and contractors appointed to deliver the Supply Chain Initiative.	Cost of programme delivery of £60-£80,000 per annum possibly offset by InvestNI or ERDF contributions.
12 Putting in place a network of local advisors able to signpost businesses to appropriate support to overcome barriers to business growth and to develop innovation strategies.	In course of 2017.	The Council Place Directorate with InvestNI, Southern Regional College, Universities and Colleges elsewhere in Northern Ireland and externally and local business networks.	Costs incorporated in item 10, the Council wide Business Network.
13 Development of a council led 'Employability & Skills Forum' bringing together key local stakeholders.	By 2016	ACBCBC Council Place Directorate with DEL, SRC, Education & Library Board, Universities, private sector representatives and other local providers.	Costs minimal (set up, convening meetings, administration).
14 Sustaining and developing existing programmes which support enhanced career guidance services.	Continuing task	ACBCBC Council Place Directorate with DEL, SRC, Education & Library Board, Universities, private sector representatives and other local providers.	Costs approximately £10,000 per annum.
15 The new council to be considered as an exemplar local authority through the development and delivery of new council employment programme.	By 2016/2017	ACBCBC Council Place Directorate with DEL, SRC, Education & Library Board, private sector representatives and other local providers.	Costs approximately £20,000 per annum.

5.2 People

The Corporate Plan commitments under the People priority are:

- 1. Our people are the most important resource in our area.
- 2. We will provide people centred services that will improve quality of life and health and well-being.
- 3. We will offer varied leisure and recreational facilities.
- 4. We will celebrate our culture and arts.
- 5. We will support communities to develop a sense of belonging, safety and cohesion across our area

The Regeneration & Development Strategy contributes to all of the 5 Corporate Plan People commitments through three thematic action areas:

- 1. Reducing social inequalities - through regenerating communities which exhibit deprivation, protecting the vulnerable and ensuring access for all across the Council Borough to services and opportunities
- 2. Fostering a progressive, dynamic and sustainable third sector that contributes to building good relations, cohesion and equality in the Council Borough; and
- 3. Developing a strong cultural and arts offering building on and celebrating the rich heritage of the Council Borough.

Reducing Social Inequalities

The first commitment to People is to reduce social inequalities in the Council Borough through revitalising communities exhibiting deprivation, protecting the vulnerable and ensuring access for all across the Borough to services and opportunities. Tackling disadvantage (and the underlying causes of social inequalities) is embedded as a cross cutting element of the work of the new Council and is integral to building good relations and cohesion within the Borough.

Deprivation can be a particularly difficult variable to quantify as it can be spatially acute and can apply to a number of aspects which effect any given persons quality of life. As detailed in the analysis in the Stage 1 R&DS report and as reinforced by consultation input, deprivation can be personal as well as spatial. The rural perspective of deprivation, particularly in respect of access to services is also a key issue that has been highlighted during the course of the consultation.

With the impending transfer of DSD powers and resources to the Council (in April 2016) there is an opportunity to use these to tackle deprivation and social inequality in a manner consistent with need as defined by the new Council. It was highlighted during the course of consultation for this R&DS that there are areas and pockets of need outside the current Neighbourhood Renewal areas. As such in tackling deprivation and social inequality under the new Councils extended powers, we will adopt a wider focus that will also include the personal and rural perspectives highlighted above. Given that many of the factors that influence poverty and social exclusion directly and immediately are outside our control, it is even more important that we optimise what we can do and that we can measure the outcomes of those actions. The effectiveness of our actions will depend on our capacity to do things differently and to maximise the impact of what we do by being more focused and joined up with our statutory and third sector partners.

Related to the actions under the Prosperous Places theme to develop infrastructure and services in rural areas of the Council Borough the People theme of the R&DS has a key emphasis on tackling rural poverty and social isolation. There are many factors that contribute to feelings of social exclusion and isolation that are exclusive to rural communities. Lack of access to public transport, public services, employment and educational opportunities are very real issues that affect the day to day lives of many rural dwellers.

Linked to the above we will work in partnership with DARD, other departments and organisations to develop

an integrated approach to dealing with specific rural challenges. In doing so we will build on lessons learned from DARD’s tackling rural poverty and social isolation framework (TRPSI) (in place from 2011-2015) which focuses specifically on access poverty, financial poverty and social isolation, and which has particular target groups including the elderly, lone parents and carers. Through any successor initiative to TRPSI and the sixth of the stated EU priorities for rural development (which is centred on social inclusion, poverty reduction and rural economic development and which is enshrined in forward proposals for the RDP 2014-20), we will work to address social inequalities facing rural dwellers across the Council Borough.

Finally a key aspect of our ambition under this theme is to build on emerging models of prevention and early intervention, to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families. Supporting the whole family unit has a significant beneficial effect on children and young people across a range of social outcomes (e.g. reduced school absences; potential for becoming NEET; early signs of offending behaviour; early signs drug/alcohol misuse; low level emotional/mental health issues etc.) and will make a key contribution

to reducing future social inequalities in the Council Borough. This is not an area directly within the remit of the new Council, but an area where we will support the work of strategic partners – in this case Locality Planning and Outcomes Group for the Southern Trust Area, under the auspices of the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership.

Fostering Third Sector Development

The second commitment to People is to foster a progressive, dynamic and sustainable third sector that contributes to building good relations, cohesion and equality in the Council Borough.

The third sector, comprising voluntary and community (VCS) groups and social economy enterprises (SEE’s) is a strong contributor to the economy of the Council region. Whilst there is no definitive headline number for the Council region as a whole in terms of the scale of employment and economic output from the third sector in the Council region, the work recently conducted by Williamson Consulting in developing a new Financial Assistance policy for the Council does provide some insights into this. Of the organisations surveyed nearly 50% had paid staff and there was good representation



Armagh Skyline



Scarva Visitor Centre



Public Art, Lurgan

in higher turnover bands (e.g. circa 25% had a turnover of £50-£200,000; 5% between £200,000 and £1m and 2% over £1m).

The community and voluntary sector and social enterprises play a key role in stabilising disadvantaged communities, providing linkages to training and employment opportunities and in building good relations and community cohesion at local levels. Fostering third sector development is critical not just for social development imperatives, but also to creating an enabling environment conducive to the achievement of the economic objectives of the R&DS (set out under the Prosperous Places priority). Allied to this third sector development is also critical in terms of the capacity to inform the Community Planning process for the Council, with specific reference to the planned Community Forum for this purpose detailed under the Positioning Priority.

The key NI policy framework driving change in this area is DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework (July 2013), and the actions set out within this thematic action area for the Council Borough are designed to be consistent with the policy imperatives expressed in this framework. The main source of funding for community development under current arrangements is provided via the Community Support Programme, involving DSD and the 26 Councils, working in partnership with local VCS groups and local advice organisations. Under these current arrangements each of the legacy Councils in ACBCBC has been required to produce a Community Support Plan in consultation with the local community in order to be eligible for the support from DSD, which is then matched by each of the Councils from their rate income. Funding is utilised to help support the provision of community centres, advice services, resource centres, grants to VCS groups and the employment of Community Services staff in Councils. With the transfer of the DSD budget for urban regeneration and community development to Councils in April 2016 all of this activity will fall wholly under the remit of the new Council, with appropriate linkages

back to DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework. As part of this the new Council will take greater responsibility for local delivery of generalist advice provision, having regard to guidance issued by DSD, including the new strategy for advice services² which is currently out for consultation.

This thematic action area considers community development in a broad sense and as such also encompasses Good Relations, Community Safety and Policing and Community Safety Partnership activities. Whilst funding for these activities is sourced from OFMDFM, and the Department of Justice (DOJ) it has a very strong community development approach and officers responsible for these areas typically work very closely with Council Community Support / Community development staff. This reflects our ambition to have a fully integrated focus to tackling poverty, enhancing community safety and building good relations within the Council Borough, consistent with the organisational structure for the new Council, whereby all of the resources for all of these areas sit collectively under Community Development in the People Directorate. Allied to this the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2014 – 2020 (PEACE IV) will continue and strengthen the local authority partnership model for a significant proportion of its delivery, with the partnerships reconfigured for the new Council areas. Thus the new Council (as with the other local authority Peace IV partnerships) will support peace and reconciliation projects in the Council Borough in three out of the four thematic areas in Peace IV – i.e. children and young people; shared spaces and services and civil society, seeking to deliver synergies with all of the other funded activity involving the third sector within this thematic action area.

Similarly in adopting a broad focus this thematic action area also recognises the importance of a community development approach in delivering health and well-being benefits through participation in sport and physical activity – as part of the integrated focus on poverty and building community cohesion in the Council Borough. To this end sports development grants are reflected as one of the six programme streams in the new Council Financial Assistance Policy for the third sector. This will build on many of the successful community sport initiatives, currently delivered in the Council Borough that have helped to build participation generally and target under-represented groups (e.g. Active Communities, Midnight Soccer, Disability Summer Schemes and the DV8 Youth Sports Projects).

Finally this thematic action area considers the development of social enterprise recognising the increasingly significant role that it will play in the Council Borough, consistent with policy priorities expressed by the NI Executive to enable the continued

growth of a sustainable social economy sector across NI. This will build on the recent establishment of the Southern Region Social Enterprise Incubation (SEI) Hub in Lurgan, which along with eight other SEI Hub contracts in NI is one of the Signature Programmes being taken forward under the Northern Ireland Executive's Delivering Social Change (DSC) framework - which seeks to tackle poverty and social exclusion, through the establishment of SEI Hubs in each of the nine designated Social Investment Fund (SIF) Zones. With funding support from the Executive's DSC fund, the Signature Programme is being led by DSD in conjunction with DETI/Invest NI. The SEI Hub in Lurgan, as per the other hubs across NI, is supported under a two-year pilot phase to support new or existing social enterprises with an idea for a new product or service. The early experiences in terms of the profile and nature of demand emanating for the Southern Region SEI hub provide a basis from which to plan forward support for the development of the social economy within the Council Borough.

In terms of measurement we will have a greater focus on outcomes as the means of measuring impact rather than on activities funded or associated outputs. This will be driven by a desire to achieve results on the ground; to deliver services in more innovative and cost effective ways; and to obtain a clearer understanding of the difference and contribution being made. This will be inbuilt into funding mechanisms and contractual arrangements. In doing this we will draw on good practice emanating from the Inspiring Impact initiative in NI supported by the Building Change Trust and DSD which is supporting the third sector (and their funders) to better understand and embrace impact practice. In terms of outcome measurement we will also draw on good practice emanating from the work being led by the Carnegie Trust UK³ - Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland - A new conversation for new times, which is exploring how the concept of wellbeing can be used to promote social change. This work is being done in the context that some of the most enduring post-conflict challenges⁴ in NI are, at their heart, questions of wellbeing.

A strong cultural and arts offering will contribute not only to the self-identity of the Council Borough but also to a positive external perception. Similarly a strong, confident and distinctive cultural and arts offering can make a contribution to the development of tourism revenue across the Council Borough. Part of this is a continued focus on a localised programme of culture and arts based events (to complement the Signature / large events programme detailed under the Prosperous Places priority). Finally a strong cultural and arts offering will also help to support and nurture the artists and crafts people living and working in the Council Borough.

Developing a strong cultural and arts offering

The third commitment to People is to develop a strong cultural and arts offering building on and celebrating the rich heritage of the Council Borough.

The Council Borough has a strong and diverse cultural heritage, including rich Architectural, Industrial, Literary & Musical Heritage – encompassing for instance St Patrick, Lough Neagh, The Brontës, Ecclesiastical centres, the Armagh Museum, the Navan Fort and the Iron Age. It has excellent arts centre provision (such as the Market Place Theatre, the Millennium Court Arts Centre and the FE McWilliam Gallery & Studio) and considerable arts events delivery expertise, including expertise in delivering community based projects that tackle exclusion, physical regeneration, community safety, health and well-being and good relations. Public Art has been and will continue to be a prominent manifestation of arts and cultural development in the Council Borough.

2 Advising, Supporting, Empowering' A strategy for the delivery of generalist advice services in Northern Ireland 2015-2020
3 <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/2013/measuring-wellbeing-in-northern-ireland>
4 Cited in the report as including equalities challenges, mental and physical health, community safety, resilience and good relations, pockets of inter-generational educational under attainment, fuel poverty, weaknesses in environmental governance, and building social capital, to name a few.



The Market Place Theatre & Arts Centre, Armagh



Slieve Croob

People Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
1 Development of a new Social Inclusion Strategy for the ACBCBC Borough.	September 2015	ACBCBC Council People Directorate - working with DSD and OFMDFM.	External commission - £30k (dependent upon tor)
2 Development of an integrated approach to tackling rural poverty and social isolation in the ACBCBC Borough.	Starting September 2015 (and onto 2020 in implementation terms).	DARD Supported by ACBCBC Council People Directorate.	This will be developed through any potential successor initiative to the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation framework and the sixth of the stated EU priorities for rural development (which is centred on social inclusion, poverty reduction and rural economic development) – and as such will involve DARD resources, with input/ influence from ACBCBC People Directorate.
3 Support for the development of the planned Early Intervention Service (EIS) in the ACBCBC Borough (also encompassing the Family Support Hubs and Parenting Programmes).	As per EIS contract period EIS contract in each Outcomes Group area - period of 33 months from July 2015 to April 2018.	The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (Locality Planning and Outcomes Group for the Southern Trust Area) and OFMDFM. Supported by ACBCBC Council People Directorate.	This is resourced as a pilot under ODFDFM Delivering Social Change Initiative, and will be implemented in Craigavon and Banbridge in the first instance within the Southern Trust region.
4 Implementation of the recently developed ACBCBC Financial Assistance Policy promoting a common approach in terms of financial support to the third sector across the ACBCBC Borough.	Starting March 2015 (and implemented onwards to 2020).	ACBCBC Council People Directorate.	The implementation will be resourced within existing staff resources within the People Directorate. This is largely centred on bring existing funds / grants into a consistent delivery framework in the new larger Council structure, replacing different approaches in the three legacy Councils.
5 Implementation of a review of the existing third sector network organisations within the Council Borough.	September 2015 – December 2015.	The Council People Directorate Local VCS organisations (and umbrella/ network bodies).	External commission - £10-12k.
6 Implementation of accredited training programmes for Community Development Workers and potential community leaders to support the development of skilled and knowledgeable practitioners in regeneration and community development within the Council Borough.	Starting March 2015 (and implemented onwards to 2020).	The Council People Directorate Local VCS organisations (and umbrella/ network bodies);	No additional resources, it will be resourced through funds traditionally within the remit of DSD Community Support Plan, which will come under the remit of the new Council.

People Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
7 Delivery of a third sector iteration of the previous SEED procurement programme, to maximise opportunities for third sector participation in procurement processes (and to address prevailing barriers relating to the same).	Starting January 2016 and implemented annually.	The Council People Directorate Local VCS organisations (and umbrella/ network bodies);	External commission – circa £60-£80k pa.
8 Implementation of a collaborative approach to the funding of advice services within the Council area, which meets local need and offers efficiencies in service delivery.	September 2015 onwards.	The Council People Directorate DSD VCU (Voluntary Advice Services).	External commission – circa £15k.
9 To re-engage and increase levels of volunteering and active citizenship in the ACBCBC Borough- with Council itself as an exemplar in encouraging volunteering and active citizenship in the delivery of its services across the Borough.	September 2015 onwards.	The Council Place Directorate DSD VCU (Volunteering Strategy Lead)	No additional resources.
10 Development of an ACBCBC Good Relations Plan with needs and action areas aligned to the four pillars of Together: Building a United Community.	First consolidated plan implemented by April 2016 (and annually thereafter to 2020).	OFMDFM Planned Equality and Good Relations Commission SEUPB	Resourced via THE Council Good Relations Programme under OFMDFM. Linkages to resources within EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation 2014-2020 (Peace IV), in respect of reconfigured local authority partnerships.
11 Aligned to (10) above the development of a new Policing and Community Safety Partnership Action Plan for the Borough.	September 2015.	The Council Place Directorate PCSP DOJ NIPB	No additional resources.
12 Exploration of opportunities for local asset ownership and management by the third sector of surplus public sector assets in the Borough (in the context of ACBCBC Asset Management Strategy).	April 2016 onwards.	The Council Place Directorate DSD (policy lead for Community Asset Transfer)	External commission- circa £25k.

People Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
13 Development of a social clauses programme for the Council Borough linked to the planned £100-£150 million public investment associated with the capital works programme of the three legacy councils. Potential to also consider contractual arrangements which oblige contractors to contribute funds towards local regeneration projects when they achieve profits over and above agreed figure.	April 2016 onwards.	The Council People Directorate SIB CPD	Potential cost for an Intermediary Labour Market (ILM) provider, from the third sector, who will work with young people to ensure that they are 'employment ready' for their apprenticeship role. External contract £100k pa.
14 The development of the social economy in the Council Borough, working alongside the Southern Region SEI Hub and focusing on particular sectoral areas of opportunity for the Borough (e.g. social care, community transport).	April 2016 onwards.	The Council People Directorate DSD DETI/ Invest NI OFMDFM Southern Region SEI Hub Stakeholder Group	The SEI Hubs are funded as a pilot to March 2016 via resources from DSD, DETI/ Invest NI and OFMDFM. The Council may wish to consider involvement in a succession plan/ resourcing post this date.
15 Development of an integrated arts and creativity strategy for the Council Borough (incorporating consideration of a new ACBCBC wide Museum's Policy).	September – December 2015.	The Council People Directorate Arts Council of Northern Ireland Department of Culture Arts & Leisure Tourist Board; Northern Ireland Museum's Council National Museums of Northern Ireland Community Cultural and Arts based groups across the Council Borough Various cross border partners (e.g. in respect of collaboration on arts and cultural exhibitions and arts/ cultural programming activity, as is currently the case with the three legacy councils).	External commission – circa £30k.

5.3 Positioning

The Corporate Plan sets out 5 areas of action under the Positioning Priority

1. **Leadership – championing key local issues, influencing regionally on behalf of the area, developing the Community Plan, promoting civic pride in the Council and the community, creating productive partnerships for collaborative advantage**
2. **Transformation - use evidence to inform policy development, enable online citizen engagement and transactions, develop new effective service models, promote a learning culture to drive innovation**
3. **Governance – put in place new organisational structures, provide public accountability and confidence, develop effective working relationships between elected members and officers**
4. **Communication – keep citizens, elected members, staff and external parties well informed, optimise information technology to support planning, joined up service delivery, decision making and performance reporting, and**
5. **Performance – maximise the assets of the region to increase its performance, deliver excellent service, create a productive working environment, and achieve performance efficiency through continuous improvement’.**

The Positioning Priority of the Council Regeneration and Development Strategy will contribute to meeting each of the Corporate Plan commitments in different ways and to different degrees. It will do so through 3 Thematic Action Areas;

1. **Ensuring full participation of the community and of the business and economic sectors in the development of the Council Community Plan,**
2. **Acting as the voice for the Council, by developing appropriate advocacy structures, creating an**

international engagement strategy for the Council and creating an ACBCBC Diaspora Network, and

3. **Developing Partnership Agreements with Key Public Sector Partner Organisations.**

Engaging in the Community Planning Process

The Department of the Environment has described Community Planning as

“a process led by councils in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared vision for their area, a long term vision which relates to all aspects of community life and which also involves working together to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people’s lives”.

The Council is required to establish a Community Planning Partnership for its Borough. Under the community planning arrangements, the Partnership will need to report on an outcomes basis and draw together the inputs and insights of wide range of businesses, voluntary organisations, communities and other groups.

The work of the Community Planning Partnership can be informed by strong business and community networks. The Council will work with the voluntary and community sector and the business community to ensure that they are meaningfully and effectively engaged in the Community Planning process. The Community Planning Partnership will be the summit partnership pulling together an overall Community Plan for the Council Borough, drawing on the inputs of the voluntary and community sector and the business community and those of the other statutory, social and community partners. Partnership working is, therefore, a necessary and underpinning component of the Council Regeneration and Development Strategy.

The Council will formally engage with the community and voluntary sector (in partnership with the ACBCBC Community Network) and will develop an economic grouping to complement its other work with the third

sector under the People Priority. Effective engagement with the business community is challenging for the Council – the Council will need to develop innovative approaches to ensure that the economic grouping is both representative and effective. This may involve working on particular issues of concern to the business community across the Council Borough and this is linked to the actions under the Prosperous Places theme to develop strong business networks across the Council Borough.

From time to time it may be appropriate for the Community Network and the business and economic grouping to work together on particular issues of common concern.

The members of the Community Network and the Economic Grouping could be drawn as appropriate from representatives of the Council, of Invest NI and of tourism interests, the Southern Regional College, enterprise support organisations and the business representative organisations such as Chambers of Commerce or Trade, together with city and town centre interests, rural development interests and voluntary and community sector and social enterprise partners. It is important that the voluntary, community and business sectors in the Borough are supported to engage in the community planning process in a meaningful and effective way.

Advocacy Role for Council

The new Council will be a much larger Council than its predecessors and a more ambitious Council. It will be home to 1 in 9 of Northern Ireland residents. As such, its voice will be important at the regional as well as the local level. In addition, the Council wishes to build on the international linkages already put in place. For these reasons it is important that the Council has effective means of expressing its views on key issues locally, regionally, nationally and, where appropriate, internationally.

There is a need to develop suitable advocacy structures to take forward actions and priorities once agreed

within the Regeneration and Development Strategy. This needs to encompass appropriate representation on a joined up/ partnership basis between private business, community and civic leaders on behalf of the Borough. Allied to this there is a need to develop specific thematic advocacy strategies (e.g. in relation to emerging issues such as rural connectivity i.e. community transport and broadband services and provision of key infrastructure services such as road or rail improvement). The rationale for this action is to ensure that there is an appropriate framework for taking forward those priorities and themes, which are identified within the Regeneration and Development Strategy but which lie outside the immediate powers of the Council itself.

As a new entity, there is also a need for the Council to establish its identity and find the optimum distinctive ‘niche’ within the post Local Government Reform structures. Implicit in this is the need to build a cohesive ‘ACBCBC Brand’ that presents the Council region in the best possible light as a location for both inward investment and indigenous business growth. This is a partnership activity in relation to which the Council can offer its residents civic leadership in influencing key strategies of the Northern Ireland Executive or of the UK Government. The arrangements for partnership working set out in Section 7 will underpin this work. There is also a thematic component to the advocacy role of the Council, enabling the Council to represent the views of particular groups of its citizens. Finally, there is a promotional component, creating a positive image of the Council’s area both among its own citizens and more widely. The promotional component includes establishing a strategy for developing and maximising value from the Council tourism offering and new approaches to regeneration to enhance the profile of the Council as a vibrant and forward thinking region. During the process of consultation leading to the development of this Regeneration and Development Strategy both businesses and community groups expressed their wish for the Council to take a leadership role in promoting a positive image of the Borough and in showcasing its business and other successes.

Developing an Effective International Engagement Strategy for the Council

As the largest Council outside of Belfast, ACBCBC needs to proactively project an outward and forward looking image. While this is an activity which can be advanced by many of the new Council’s functions, it seems likely that a central Unit will be needed to build up international contacts and expertise and to monitor and pursue opportunities for the Borough.

The 3 legacy Councils have built up strong international linkages on a cross-border, EU and international basis. Those existing relationships provide the platform on which the new Council can build. However, the size and diversity of the new Council area means that a more ambitious and business focused approach can be taken to building relationships and pursuing opportunities for the advantage of the Borough. In addition, the new Council’s area includes a greater range of businesses with international connections which the Council can draw upon both to complement its own linkages and to showcase the range, diversity and quality of businesses in the Borough.

For these reasons, the Council’s reach should be global and outward looking in approach and the remit of the relationships and networks in the Council should be international. This will reflect the fact that the Council Borough has important international links and partnerships outside Europe (e.g. in terms of trade relationships and current twinning arrangements). In this regard Council will work closely with Invest NI’s International Business Team and UK International Trade Teams to help promote the Council’s FDI proposition and with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) which maintains Northern Ireland Bureaus in the USA, in Brussels and in China.

In terms of cross-border relationships and networks, there are opportunities to take advantage of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation and trade, building on relationships through the work of East Border Region (EBR) and ICBAN. Specifically this should be geared to components of the Interreg Programme

2014 – 2020, namely the Interreg VA Programme for Ireland, Northern Ireland and Western Scotland; Interreg VB – inter-regional co-operation and Interreg VC – trans-national co-operation.

A key role of the International Engagement Strategy will be to identify opportunities to seek funding from international sources. There is also the opportunity to build relationships by participating in EU and international networks building approaches to key sectors (such as agri-food, life and health sciences and tourism development) and key issues such as urban renewal. The geographical and thematic priorities of the Council’s International Unit will need to be informed by consultation with business and community interests as well as by the Council’s own priorities.

Creation of the Council Diaspora Network

The creation of the larger Council entity, affords an opportunity to formalise a Council diaspora network, with the critical mass and cohesion to affect success. This work will bridge the responsibilities of the International Unit and the Council advocacy structures.

A Northern Ireland global diaspora initiative has been established by the Executive under the name Northern Irish Connections - www.niconnections.com.

A Council diaspora initiative should help to create a ‘community of interest’ by:

- Undertaking initiatives utilising virtual/ social media channels and ‘real world’ events that promote the Council business, talent, and innovation via live events, video conferences, online programs, webinars, and podcasts.
- Developing and promoting business relationships between the Council businesses and diaspora focussing on strategic or priority sectors for the Council.
- Seeking to match the Council businesses/ industries with diaspora owned counterparts.

Developing Strategic Partnership Agreements with Key Public Sector Partner Organisations

Key public sector bodies have a particular role in the development of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. These bodies include the Southern Regional College and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The Council can play a part in shaping the policies and priorities of these bodies in a number of ways:

- By direct representations to the staff and boards of the bodies, using the Council Advocacy Structures
- Through the Community Planning process, and
- By developing strong Strategic Partnerships with each body.

The Council should to develop Strategic Partnerships with the Southern Regional College and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

This approach could extend to other public bodies important to the development of the Council Borough such as the Education Authority, InvestNI and Transport Northern Ireland. The Council will also wish to maintain its strong and effective working relationships with a wider range of bodies, such as the two Universities and the Northern Ireland Science Park, the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute.



Solitude Park, Banbridge

Positioning Action Plan

Actions	Time Frame	Lead Responsibility (and key partners)	Resources/ Indicative Cost
1 Engaging the voluntary and community sector and the business community in the Community Planning Process.	In line with the development of the Council's Community Plan but preparation of the sectors will require intensive prior engagement.	ACBCBC Council's People and Position Directorates, working together. The voluntary and community and business sectors throughout the ACBCBC Borough.	No direct cost beyond cost of staff and provision of venues for meetings.
2 Acting as the voice of ACBCBC.	Continuing task.	CEO ACBCBC Borough Council.	No direct cost beyond cost of staff and occasional events or campaign expenses.
3 Developing an effective international engagement strategy for the Council.	Complete Scoping Study of International Engagement by June 2016 and establish new arrangements by January 2017.	CEO ACBCBC Borough Council Partners will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OFMDFM and its bureaus in the USA, EU and China• InvestNI• The Special EU Programmes Body• DETI• Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland Ltd• EBR or ICBAN• Other Councils in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Great Britain, to learn of their experiences• Partner organisations within the ACBCBC Borough, including – for example – the Southern Regional College.	It has been assumed that scoping study will be undertaken internally. Cost and resource implications are not yet known. Options will be identified in the Scoping Study and will be determined by Council decisions arising from the Scoping Study.
4 Creation of the ACBCBC Diaspora Network.	Develop proposals for the ACBCBC Diaspora Network in course of 2016 and make the Network operational in 2017.	CEO ACBCBC Borough Council Partners will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OFMDFM and the Northern Ireland Bureaus it manages• InvestNI• Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland Ltd.• Northern Irish Connections• ACBCBC business community,• Existing sectoral networks of which the Council is an active part (eg European Connected Health Alliance)	Cost and resource implications are not yet known. Options will be identified in the course of developing proposals for the Network and will be determined by Council decisions on the proposals.
5 Developing strategic partnership agreements with key public sector partner organisations.	Pilot with Southern Regional College in 2015 and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust in 2016, consider extension of approach to other public sector partner organisations in 2017.	ACBCBC Position Directorate and partner organisations such as SRC and SCHSCT.	No direct expenditure implications.



St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh

6. Delivering the Strategy

6.1 Partnership Approach

It is envisaged that the R&DS will form the regeneration and development component of the Council Community Plan, with which public authorities will – by statute – have to cooperate. The R&DS prescribes the establishment of a three separate fora relating to Business, Community and Skills to help inform and deliver the R&DS. These fora will comprise of the private, public, voluntary and community sectors from across the area, working together to advance an agreed agenda for the Council.

Too many strategies sit on shelves and do not influence the priorities and behaviour of key organisations across the council area. If the R&DS is to make a difference it must be owned and have the commitment and energy of not only the Borough Council but also of a wide range of other organisations from across the area. It must seek to form an effective coalition for the development of the Council.

In addition to having genuinely widely based, inclusive and participative fora for regeneration and development, there must be arrangements for

making the individual fora and the work of member organisations accountable to citizens and stakeholders. The effective communication of the strategic approach is an important starting point for development but it must also be coupled with honest, timely and accurate reporting of progress against the plan, acknowledgement of challenges and identification of new opportunities. Regular, public reporting will give confidence to citizens and investors that the fora are making progress on the development of the Council area and provide an incentive for them to participate in its development, at local, community and council-wide levels.

The new Council cannot achieve these outcomes on its own, it needs to develop a sense of partnership with a range of key organisations, put in place arrangements for them to participate in joint decision making for the sub region and contribute to resourcing the resulting actions and investments. The role of the Council in this development model is to convene each forum, to prompt the partnership by setting an informed agenda and – like the other organisations in the fora – to align its expenditure and investment priorities to support the agreed agenda. The fora established for the purposes of the Regeneration and Development Strategy can also be the means by which other Council functions communicate with the voluntary and community and the business sectors. They should form a single channel of communications between the whole Council and the business and community sectors. It is also important that the Council is in a position to monitor the progress of this Strategy, at the overall level. A dashboard of key indicators will form the basis of overall monitoring of the Strategy while the appropriate Directorates of the Council will monitor the implementation and progress of individual priorities and themes using detailed indicators developed in the course of the articulation of the Strategy.

The proposed overall or macro-indicators for monitoring the implementation and progress of the Strategy are set out below.



Corbet Lough, Banbridge

6.2 Indicative High Level Indicators

Prosperous Place

- 1. Number of new businesses supported by the Council enterprise policy.
- 2. Employment in target sectors including:
 - Manufacturing
 - Agri-food manufacturing
 - Life & health sciences
 - Knowledge-based & creative industries
- 3. Number of bed-nights in 3* and higher classified hotel accommodation.
- 4. Employment in accommodation & food services (tourism).
- 5. Number of placements/apprenticeships provided through the Council employment programme.

People

- 6. Number and value of projects supported through the Councils financial assistance programme.
- 7. Number of apprenticeships, trainee positions and work placements provided through the Council led social clauses programme.
- 8. Number of and employment in social enterprises in the Council Borough.
- 9. Total participation in arts centres and arts and cultural events in the Council Borough.

Positioning

- 10. Number of new regions tied into formal /informal relationships with the new Borough Council (post 2016).
- 11. Number of participants engaged in the Council led diaspora programme (post 2017).
- 12. Number of organisations which have a strategic partnership relationship with the Council.

These are mainly activity indicators dwelling within the control of the council and suitable for regular monitoring. It is important that council undertakes regular evaluation of the strategy to establish that the outcomes identified within the strategy are being achieved (such evaluations could be undertaken in years 2 and 5).



Oxford Island National Nature Reserve, Craigavon



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