

Armagh City, Banbridge &
Craigavon Borough Council

Local Development Plan 2035

Draft Plan Strategy

TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT 5

Tourism

September 2026



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Armagh City
Banbridge
& Craigavon
Borough Council

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of this document

This Technical Supplement brings together the evidence base that has informed the preparation of the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035 draft Plan Strategy (dPS). It is one of a suite of topic based Technical Supplements that should be read alongside the dPS to understand the rationale and justification for the planning policies proposed within it.

This Technical Supplement includes key updates relating to tourism in the Borough, that have emerged since the publication of the Councils original evidence base Preparatory Papers, Preparatory Paper No. 7 Tourism, which was one of 14 topic based Papers that were prepared and presented to the Councils Planning Committee during the period July 2014 to April 2017. These papers provided baseline information and helped inform the options presented in our Preferred Options Paper (POP).

This Technical Supplement also seeks to provide an update on the Councils progress in its approach towards tourism and the development of associated planning policies, since the publication of the POP.

In order to reflect the broad range of matters that were taken into account in the development of the Councils approach towards Tourism and the formulation of associated dPS planning policies this Technical Supplement has been organised into the following sections:

- **Sections 2 & 3** provide a summary of the Legislative, Regional and Local Policy Context that is relevant to the LDP, with particular emphasis on this topic area;
- **Section 4** provides an overview of tourism within the Borough;
- **Section 5** outlines the relevant Key Issue and Preferred Approach as detailed in the POP, alongside a summary of POP Commitments and a summary of some of the POP responses that were received, with a focus on those offering suggestions in respect of policy development.
- **Section 6** provides an overview of the policy review, and the ongoing consultation and engagement that has been carried out in preparation of the dPS policies. Furthermore, it also details the approach of neighbouring councils to tourism, briefly outlining their position, followed by a brief consideration of any potential conflict.
- **Section 7** summarises how the dPS policies for tourism have been developed. It provides a rationale where amendments have been made to the existing planning policies to take account of regional direction, POP feedback, consultation and engagement, where it has been considered necessary and appropriate to do so.
- **Section 8** sets out how the dPS policies for tourism have been prepared in accordance with the tests for soundness set out in the Department for Infrastructure's (DfI) Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017).

The information and data presented in this Technical Supplement have been derived from a number of different sources however, where possible, the most recent datasets available have been utilised.

It is important to note that this Technical Supplement has been collated at a specific point in time and therefore it may be necessary for the Council to review and update its evidence base / approach as new or updated information / guidance is published, so to ensure that the LDP is founded on the principles of soundness. The Council will continue to work with neighbouring councils, relevant key stakeholders and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to ensure that

tourism development is delivered in an appropriate and sustainable manner throughout and beyond the plan period of 2035.

Tourism

Tourism is identified as a significant economic driver for Northern Ireland, it generates wealth, jobs, exports, a sense of civic pride and innovation. In 2024, the estimated expenditure associated with overnight trips within Northern Ireland was £1.1billion¹. The Council recognises the importance of the tourism sector and the opportunity it provides for economic growth. As well as direct spending on holiday accommodation and use of tourist amenities, tourism plays an important role in helping to support the viability of many local suppliers, services and facilities. It can improve assets and provides infrastructure for local people and tourists, supporting the vibrancy of Northern Ireland's culture and heritage, and sustaining communities².

The Local Development Plan must help to ensure that tourism growth within the Borough is sustainable. Sustainable tourism development involves balancing the needs of tourists and the tourism industry alongside safeguarding key tourist assets. The planning system has a key role in managing tourism related development through planning policies that support the protection of important assets, the creation of attractive accessible places, and supporting good design in tourism schemes. This approach will ensure that development is sustainable, without damaging those assets which are of acknowledged public value upon which tourism depends.

Our Borough is uniquely positioned as a destination of choice, offering a rich tapestry of heritage, culture, and natural beauty. Armagh, renowned as the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, boasts outstanding and heritage sites, including its iconic cathedrals, Navan Fort Complex and the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium. Banbridge reflects a proud linen legacy and is home to attractions such as the globally acclaimed Game of Thrones Studio Tour. Craigavon complements this with outstanding outdoor recreation, including water sports at Craigavon Lakes and the scenic beauty of Oxford Island on the shores of Lough Neagh.

This paper provides an overview of the regional planning policy context, consultation with statutory consultees and how this has informed the draft plan strategy approach tourism.

¹ [Northern Ireland Tourism 2024 | nisra.gov.uk](https://www.nisra.gov.uk)

² SPPS 6.258 wording

2.0 Legislative Context

The key pieces of legislation relating to this subject area include the following:

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (hereafter referred to as the 2011 Act) is the principal planning legislation in Northern Ireland, which underpins the reformed two-tier planning system that commenced on 1 April 2015. It introduced the plan-led system, where the LDP is the primary consideration for decision making on all new development schemes and proposals will be required to accord with its provisions unless, exceptionally other material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations set out the sequence in which the Council's new LDP is to be prepared and provides detail on the content and procedure of each stage in the plan preparation process and independent examination.

The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992

The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 provides the legislative basis for a range of tourism development within Northern Ireland, for example, the act stipulates that all tourist accommodation providers must receive certification from Tourism NI before they are allowed to begin operating.

3.0 Policy Context

Regional Policy Context

Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' (2025, Northern Ireland Executive)

The PfG 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' outlines the NI Executives priorities for making a real difference to the lives of everyone living and working in Northern Ireland. It sets out the following three long term Missions, underpinned by a cross-cutting commitment to Peace, through which improved wellbeing, long term sustainability, and a thriving economy will be delivered.

People: Working to support everyone at all stages of their life to ensure they have the chance to succeed by improving life opportunities.

Planet: Harnessing the potential of a green growth economy while ensuring we provide an equitable transition to a sustainable and affordable society as we take responsibility for decarbonising our economy and society.

Prosperity: Improving our economic productivity while making sure that we have an economy that works for all.

These Missions are supported by nine cross-cutting priorities, including growing a competitive and sustainable economy, delivering high-quality childcare, reducing health waiting times, ending violence against women and girls, supporting children with special educational needs, providing affordable housing, promoting safer communities, protecting the environment (including Lough Neagh), and reforming public services.

Within the PfG there are a wide range of actions aimed at addressing the above priorities and delivering the missions, including multi sector investment and reform, the delivery of a Sub-Regional Economic Action Plan, the development of Northern Ireland's Climate Action Plan, publication of the Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme and the delivery of actions identified within the Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan.

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

The Regional Development Strategy 2035 was published in March 2012. It provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors and aims to protect and enhance the environment for current and future generations. The RDS recognises tourism as a key element underpinning sustainable economic growth in NI.

Strategic Guidance contained within the RDS is used to provide long term policy direction to guide the public, private and community sectors. Regional Guidance RG4 'Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure' seeks to:

- promote a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
- improve facilities for tourists in support of Tourist Signature Destinations; and
- encourage environmentally sustainable tourism development.

Other regional guidance of particular relevance to this subject area include:

- RG7- 'Support urban and rural renaissance'- recognises that regeneration is necessary to create more accessible, vibrant city and town centres which offer people more local choice for shopping, social activity and recreation.
- RG11- 'Conserve, protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment'- recognises that the environment, both in terms of natural and built heritage, is one of Northern Ireland's most important assets.

The Spatial Framework Guidance contained within the RDS also considers tourism, specifically SFG13: Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside. SFG13 seeks to encourage sustainable and sensitive development, acknowledging that the expansion of rural tourism and development which is both sustainable and sensitive to the environment should be encouraged.

The RDS identifies Lough Neagh as a strategic natural resource and promotes improving facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destinations. The concept of Signature Projects was introduced to align tourism investment to those developments that would act as the catalyst to create international stand out for Northern Ireland. One Signature Project (St Patrick's Trail) is located within the Council Area.

The RDS identifies the tourism potential within the Borough, particularly in relation to Armagh City, identifying that Armagh is a "rich heritage and tourism destination with an abundance of cultural product", whilst also highlighting that "Armagh's potential in tourism terms relies largely upon strategic improvements to the transport corridor around the city". The RDS also identifies that Craigavon Urban Area "benefits from a lakeland setting with leisure and tourism functions".

Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland - Planning for Sustainable Development Edition 2 2025 (SPPS)

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Edition 2 (SPPS) was published in December 2025 following the conclusion of a focused review of the former SPPS (2015) on the subject of renewable and low carbon energy. Whilst the revised SPPS sets out new policy provisions for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy all other policy provisions, including those relating to tourism, within the former SPPS, are unchanged.

The SPPS sets out regional planning policies for securing orderly and consistent development of land in Northern Ireland. The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in the preparation of LDPs and are a material consideration in planning applications and appeals.

The aim of the SPPS in relation to tourism is to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment. The Regional Strategic Objectives for tourism are to:

- facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
- safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development;
- utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
- sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas; and

ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.

The SPSS states that policies to safeguard tourist assets will be contained in the LDP, together with policies for tourism development such as tourism accommodation, amenity facilities, and holiday parks, and the criteria for consideration of such proposals. There should be a general presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements.

In the countryside there is a need, in the interests of rural amenity, and wider sustainability objectives, to manage the level of new build for tourism purposes. The guiding principle should be to facilitate tourism development where it supports rural communities and promotes a healthy rural economy and tourism sector.

The Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland ‘Everyone’s Involved’

The Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland (2010) recognises tourism as an important contributor to economic growth and community development. However, it emphasises that tourism should be developed in a sustainable manner that protects and enhances the natural environment, landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage upon which the long-term success of the tourism sector depends.

UK Marine Policy Statement (2011)

The UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS) was published in September 2011 under the Marine Coastal Access Act 2009 and provides the policy framework for the marine planning system and taking decisions affecting the marine environment. The MPS provides the high-level policy context within which marine plans will be developed and 3 monitored and will ensure consistency in marine planning across the UK marine area. The MPS will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom marine area. Although the Borough does not directly connect to a coastline, waterways will have connectivity to marine areas, therefore the draft Plan Strategy has had regard to the MPS.

Draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland

The draft Marine Plan for Northern Ireland (2018) will inform and guide the regulation, management, use and protection of the Northern Ireland marine area. It comprises two plans, covering the inshore and offshore regions. The Plan identifies tourism and recreation as important marine activities and states that proposals for tourism and recreation will be supported where they do not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on other marine activities, users or the marine environment, and where legitimate public access to marine and coastal areas is maintained.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)

Planning Policy Statement 16: Tourism (PPS 16)

Planning Policy Statement 16 sets out the planning policy for tourism development, including the main forms of tourist accommodation and tourist amenities within settlements and within the countryside. It aims to manage the provision of sustainable and high quality tourism developments in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment, whilst its objectives are to:

- facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
- safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development;

- utilise and develop the tourism potential of settlements by facilitating tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale;
- sustain a vibrant rural community by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas; and
- ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.

Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Environment (PPS 6)

Planning Policy Statement 6 seeks to protect and conserve our local built heritage in a sustainable and viable way through the implementation of appropriate policies. PPS 6 recognises that the cultural and environmental value of features of the archaeological and built heritage can help promote an area as a visitor destination which can generate widespread economic benefits through tourism and leisure; however, it is also recognised that tourism and recreation development can damage and destroy the assets it seeks to exploit through excessive visitor numbers, inappropriate development and other forms of adverse impact. Again, the role of planning in this instance is to seek a balanced approach, ensuring that the growth and development of tourism based on heritage assets is compatible with proper long-term conservation.

Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (PPS 8)

PPS 8 recognises the importance of the countryside for recreation and the contribution it can make to both the rural economy and promotion of tourism. It also acknowledges that open space can help to attract business and tourism and thereby contribute to the process of urban regeneration.

Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside (PPS 21)

One of the aims of PPS 21 is to manage development in the countryside in a manner which strikes the balance between the need to protect the countryside from unnecessary or inappropriate development, while supporting rural communities.

The main objectives of PPS 21 are to:

- to manage growth in the countryside to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development that meet the essential needs of a vibrant rural community;
- to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution;
- to facilitate development necessary to achieve a sustainable rural economy; including appropriate farm diversification and other economic activity; and
- to promote high standards in the design, siting and landscaping of development in the countryside.

Policy CTY 4 – The Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings para 5.21 acknowledges ‘There is also scope for the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings in the countryside for a variety of non-residential uses, including appropriate economic, tourism and recreational uses or as local community facilities’.

Policy CTY 11 – Farm Diversification provides scope for Tourism activity as per para 5.47, “This policy aims to promote forms of diversification that are sustainable in the countryside, including suitable tourism or agri-tourism schemes. It is important that the countryside is not

spoilt by the unfettered development of urban uses. Diversification proposals, therefore, should be of a scale and nature appropriate for the location and be capable of satisfactory integration into the rural landscape. Applications for large-scale proposals more suitable to the urban area or existing urban-based enterprises seeking relocation will not be acceptable”.

Other Strategies, Plans and Documents

Economy 2030 - draft industrial strategy³

This document was published by the Department for Economy (DfE) in 2017. The document aims to promote Northern Ireland's ability to compete globally as a destination, developing international focus on key areas of economic potential. As part of this the document commits to launching and implementing a new strategy to unlock the full tourism potential of Northern Ireland.

Draft Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy 10 Year Plan

The Department is leading on the development of a Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030 to provide a co-ordinated and focussed approach across the industry, for Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland and for all government departments and public authorities in shaping the future direction of the growth sector, growth that will be sustainable, inclusive and innovative.

The vision of the Tourism Strategy is a tourism sector which contributes to the delivery of the Department's 10X Economic Vision of positioning Northern Ireland amongst the most competitive small, advanced economies in the world.

It will provide a framework for tourism to help ensure the region can maximise its contribution to growing the Northern Ireland economy and secure its role as an important export sector and provider of employment⁴.

Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism Strategy⁵

This document identifies that the domestic market is a critical part of Northern Ireland's tourism economy and generates an important contribution to total tourism revenue. The domestic market has a significant positive impact to the regional and seasonal distribution of tourism. The reporting document published in 2020 outlines an analysis of the current domestic markets, sets out ambition for the future and outlines strategies and key actions required to support future development and growth opportunities.

Tourism Recovery Action Plan⁶

The Tourism Recovery Action Plan identifies the agreed actions to be taken to assist the recovery and regrowth of the NI tourism and hospitality sector following the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This document commits to producing a longer-term sustainable tourism strategy, which will set the vision for the next decade.

*A Prospectus for Change - A strategic framework to unlock the potential of heritage-led tourism in Northern Ireland*⁷

³ [Industrial Strategy | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/industrial-strategy)

⁴ [Tourism | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/tourism)

⁵ [ni-domestic-tourism-strategy.pdf \(tourismni.com\)](https://www.tourismni.com/ni-domestic-tourism-strategy.pdf)

⁶ [Tourism Recovery Action Plan | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/tourism-recovery-action-plan)

⁷ [NI full report v7 \(tourismni.com\)](https://www.tourismni.com/ni-full-report-v7)

The objectives of this report were:

1. To highlight the current issues which are preventing key heritage tourism assets from performing to their full potential.
2. To identify new approaches to animating and interpreting heritage for example through collaboration with the arts/cultural sectors and through new technologies, which will examine the linking of sites to their local place, stories and people and illustrate how these can be applied to Northern Ireland attractions.
3. To identify and prioritise Northern Irish heritage assets, that through investment, have the potential to increase visitor numbers and spend, highlighting those in tourism areas which are underperforming and have the potential to do more.
4. To identify best practice heritage management structures and practice – i.e. best in class – and how these can be adopted by small and large-scale Northern Ireland heritage providers.

This framework includes a number of recommendations as to how to promote and improve heritage-led tourism within Northern Ireland. Relevant to the Borough, the document cited potential areas of improvement, "...in Greater Belfast and Armagh we might conclude that there is a need to increase the distinctiveness of museums & galleries and/or the stories they tell and similarly for heritage sites in Strangford Lough and Fermanagh Lakelands. Opportunities to develop stronger connections between outdoor activities/parks & gardens and heritage in The Mourne, Causeway Coast & Glens & Lough Neagh should also be considered to engage more visitors in heritage activities in these areas and further encourage them to extend their stays, return & recommend to others."

Local Policy Context

Area Plans

The existing 4 statutory Area Plans covering the Borough provide the policy framework against which development proposals are considered.

- Armagh Area Plan (AAP) 2004
- Armagh Area Plan Alteration No 1: Countryside Proposals
- Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan (BNMAP) 2015
- Craigavon Area Plan (CAP) 2010
- Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan (DSTAP) 2010

Due to the varying ages of the extant Development Plans there are inconsistencies in approach with regards to a number of planning issues as well as the degree of emphasis in respect of the principles of sustainable development. However, the existing Plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, and as such have been taken into account in the development of the draft Plan Strategy. Policies within the respective Development Plans that are related to tourism, are laid out below.

The Armagh Area Plan 2004

The Armagh Area Plan 2004 provides a planning framework for the growth and development of the Armagh area. One of the Plan's principal objectives was to encourage the development

of the district's tourism potential however no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development were included.

At District level the Department endorsed the tourism strategy set out in the Armagh District Council's Tourism Development Plan (1989). The Plan stated that the Department would co-operate with all interested parties and public agencies to highlight and develop tourism throughout the Plan Area balanced with the needs of environmental protection and conservation.

The physical regeneration of the centre of Armagh was identified as being an essential element in Armagh developing its tourism potential, the Plan endorsed 2 main physical development proposals for Armagh (The St Patrick's Trian and the development of the Shambles Market) which had been identified in the Council's Tourism Development Plan 1989. In addition the Plan stated that it would encourage other proposals within the central area that would add to the overall level of and quality of tourism facilities whilst paying regard to conservation whether these were to be initiated by the Council or any other body.

Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015

The Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 acknowledges that tourism is an important industry within the Plan area. It recognises the contribution that tourism can make both in terms of the economy and in relation to the quality of life for both visitors and residents. The plan's overall Tourism Strategy includes the promotion of the development of sustainable tourism. This means facilitating tourist development in suitable locations without adversely impacting on environmental and man-made assets which attract tourists. The Plan has not generally sought to designate local policy areas for tourism as proposals for tourism development will be considered in accordance with the prevailing regional policies.

The plan offers no specific plan policies with regards to tourism development in the area but also acknowledges that towns such as Banbridge and Dromore have a role to play as the best locations for new accommodation and facilities to serve signature Tourism projects such as the Mournes and St Patrick's Trail. Development Opportunity Sites have also been identified within towns where tourism and leisure development may be accommodated.

Craigavon Area Plan 2010

The Craigavon Area Plan 2010 recognises that Tourism in the area is based on its easily accessible location in the heart of Northern Ireland, its natural land and water-based assets, its heritage features and the contribution of purpose built attractions. Lough Neagh and the River Bann were identified as the Borough's main natural features, with Craigavon Lakes providing 69 hectares of natural environment close to the urban centre.

The Plan recognises that the tourism potential of the Borough is further enhanced by an extensive network of cycleways including the National Cycle network and the Ulster Way and that although tourism can provide a number of economic and social benefits this should not be at the expense of its environmental assets.

The Craigavon Area Plan contains a designation and one specific policy related to Tourism Development:

Plan Policy TOU1 – The South Lake Zone- The South Lake Zone was zoned to provide an attractive location for tourism, cultural, community, civic and recreational schemes to enhance

the role and image of the central area and provide facilities for Borough residents and visitors. Within the Zone, two separate areas are designated, A and B. Within Area A favourable consideration will be given to proposals for tourism, recreational and cultural development and within Zone B favourable consideration will be given to proposals for tourism, cultural, community, civic and recreational development.

The plan also recognises that Maghera Country Park is an important local amenity and tourist attraction within the plan area.

Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan 2010

The Dungannon and South Tyrone Area Plan does designate two tourism opportunity zones, however neither fall within the area within the Councils boundary.

Policy TM 2 - Design of Tourism Development is a criterion based policy which all proposals for tourism development are expected to comply with.

Other Council Strategies and Documents

‘Our People, Our Place, Our Future’ – The Councils Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027

The Corporate Plan 2023-27 sets out the vision, values and priorities of the Council and represents its aspirations and dedication to continuous improvement. It is the roadmap for delivering Council's Community Plan 2017 – 2030 and sets out the Councils commitment to uphold the highest standards of service delivery, facilities, projects, and programmes for the benefit of our people, our place and our future.

The Vision of the Corporate Plan is to create “a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning” aligning with the aspirations of the Community Plan.

The priority of the Corporate Plan is to improve economic, social and environmental well-being through place shaping in order to attract visitors, investors, and to encourage people to be active, with a focus on promoting health and wellbeing. The Council aims to improve participation in arts and culture and strengthen the Borough as a visitor destination as well as supporting the growth of our local economy, by securing investment in infrastructure and connectivity, and providing opportunities in skills development.

Connected: A Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough 2017-2030

Councils across Northern Ireland have a statutory responsibility to participate and lead in Community Planning. The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 and the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 create a statutory link between the Community Plan and the LDP. It outlines that the LDP will provide ‘the spatial expression of the Community Plan.’

The Council's Community Plan is an overarching strategy for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough. ‘Connected’ was launched on 4th May 2017 and updated in 2025. It provides a strategic framework for collaborative working, helping to integrate other local and regional strategies and the delivery of positive change for communities.

The Community Plan will be taken into account throughout the preparation of the LDP, which will provide the spatial reflection of the Community Plan.

The Community Plan 2030 Vision is 'We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.'

The Community Plan aims to achieve the vision through three strategic themes of *Community*, *Economy* and *Place* and nine shared outcomes, as follows:

1. *Community*: Connected | Healthy | Welcoming
2. *Economy*: Enterprising | Inclusive | Skilled
3. *Place*: Creative | Revitalised | Sustainable

The three cross-cutting themes at the centre of the Community Plan are: *Connectivity*, *Equality* and *Sustainability*. These form the foundation of and underpin the Plan. The Community Plan identifies strong strategic alignment, including with the Programme for Government.

Due to the close relationship between the two plans, the LDP Vision will be based on the Community Plan Vision; citizen focused and aspiring to improve the quality of life for everyone. However, within the LDP, emphasis will be placed on land use and the creation of quality places.

The Long-Term outcome for tourism is that 'Our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life.'. The indicators used to measure this is the number of overnight trips made by visitors from outside Northern Ireland.

Transform: A Tourism Strategy for Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough

The Council published 'Transform, a Tourism Strategy 2017-2022' for the Borough in July 2017.

The Tourism Strategy aims to address the underperforming tourism industry in the Borough and identifies tourism as one of the key sectors which can drive economic growth within the Borough.

The Strategy also outlines a vision for the Borough with the target of increasing the Borough's tourism economy by 10% annually. The Strategy contains a series of principles to guide the tourism development of the Borough as it moves towards a growing tourism economy by 2022. A tiered approach to the strategic priorities has been used.

Below is the list of Tier 1 initiatives.

- Establish Armagh City as the centrepiece of the destination;
- Develop the apple orchards/cider into an international visitor experience, through investment in the orchards and the creation of food trails and tours;
- Actively pursue appropriate accommodation development opportunities with the private sector;
- Invest in gateway projects of scale at the FE McWilliams Gallery & Studio;
- Package visitor experiences based on the destination's unique stories;
- Focus on the destination's events programme and develop frameworks for Signature events; and
- Ensure a professional approach to marketing, sales and communications

The Tier 2 and Tier 3 initiatives are longer term projects aimed at supporting the Tier 1 priorities and broaden the overall appeal of the Borough including Genealogy and Ancestry, Screen Tourism, Discretionary Business Tourism, Activity Tourism and Gosford Forest Park. The Tier 3 priorities will focus on the research and development of initiatives that may be supported in the longer term.

Regeneration and Development Strategy 2015 – 2020

The Regeneration and Development Strategy (R&DS) for the Council area was published in 2015. The Council identifies the regeneration and development of the area as the number one priority. One of the headline messages of the R&DS is that there is significant opportunity to develop tourism within the Council areas.

The performance of the Council, comparative to other Councils was assessed to inform the strategy, and the performance was largely attributed this to poor accommodation infrastructure. It identified the need to tackle the deficit of hotel provision. 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. 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 R&DS puts forward examples of initiative that would focus on the tourist experience and internationalising the profile of key attractors and events. This includes:

- 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 as 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 eg 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

Recovery and Growth Framework (2021)

The ABC Recovery and Growth Framework was launched in February 2021 and focuses on how the Council can create the right social and economic conditions to help the borough recover from the covid pandemic and drive sustainable long-term growth for the region.

It sets out a series of aims which will meet the needs of companies within the borough, such as boosting tourism and footfall in towns, and delivering support to business of all sizes, as well as longer-term interventions which will boost efficiency and competitiveness.

The Framework emphasises the regional focus on driving economic investment for Northern Ireland around key sectors such as; agrifood, health and life sciences and advanced manufacturing, where the borough already excels and which, with support to improve skills, connectivity, and productivity, can become global exemplars.

It addresses the need for a specific focus on the case for investment in sustainable roads and rail infrastructure, for urban regeneration and rural development; for education and training to upskill the talent pool; for support of technological developments including Industry and investment in manufacturing research & development; and a commitment to driving regional competitiveness through the development of a start-up and innovative business ecosystem.

These targeted actions are aimed at accelerating the borough's recovery and set it on a path of renewed inclusive growth and prosperity.

City / Town Centre Masterplans

Whilst the Area Plans provide the statutory planning framework for land use proposals, City / Town Centre Masterplans are non-statutory documents which focus on regeneration initiatives and public realm improvements in our town centres.

City / Town Centre Masterplans set out a vision for a particular City / Town Centre and identify key proposals for realising that vision over a set period. Prior to the publication of the Council's Place Plans, Armagh had a City Centre Masterplan in place, Banbridge Town Centre Masterplan 2016 set out the regeneration objectives for Banbridge and Dromore Town Centre Master Plan defined a vision of how Dromore town centre could be transformed 2015-30. The Masterplans informed the direction of the Place Plans and had been considered during the POP and early policy development but have since been superseded by Place Plans for each respective settlement.

The Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown Place Plans are still in the development stage, with a draft document for public consultation anticipated in early 2027. Regeneration strategies for Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan are contained within the Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF) until the publication of the respective Place Plans.

Craigavon Integrated Development Framework (CIDF) 2010

The aim of the CIDF is to guide how the three town centres of Central Craigavon, Portadown and Lurgan will develop and thrive over the next 20 years and sets out a strategy for regeneration.

Armagh Place Plan 2022

The Armagh Place Plan identifies Armagh's rich heritage, culture, spirituality, learning and tourism assets as central to the city's future growth and identity. The Plan highlights the importance of building upon key attractions including Navan Fort, Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, the Cathedrals, the Gaol and the historic city centre to enhance Armagh's attractiveness as a destination for residents and visitors alike. It promotes cultural regeneration, improved connectivity, enhanced public spaces and the creation of a vibrant city centre environment that encourages visitors to stay longer and supports the local economy.

Banbridge Place Plan 2024

The Banbridge Place Plan promotes a vision of “Celebrating our Innovators and Independents” and seeks to strengthen Banbridge as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. The Plan recognises the importance of enhancing the town's cultural, heritage and leisure offer, improving the evening economy, and developing high-quality public spaces and recreational opportunities to increase visitor appeal. It supports initiatives that celebrate local heritage, improve connectivity through walking and cycling networks, and encourage greater use of the town centre and riverside environment, thereby contributing to the growth of the visitor economy.

Dromore Place Plan 2025

The Dromore Place Plan identifies opportunities to strengthen the town's visitor appeal through the enhancement of its heritage, cultural and environmental assets. Key objectives include promoting Dromore's historic character, improving accessibility and connectivity, encouraging outdoor recreation, and enhancing the town centre as a focal point for community and visitor activity. The Plan supports initiatives that contribute to sustainable economic growth while preserving the distinctive qualities that make Dromore an attractive destination.

Other Departments, Agencies and Organisations with a role regards to Tourism

The Department for Communities (DfC) is the Government Department with responsibility for regeneration, arts and culture, museums and libraries and historic environment policies, all of which have direct links to supporting the tourism economy overall. Arts Council NI is a body of DfC and have published a five-year strategic framework for developing the arts 2019 - 2024, ‘Inspire Connect Lead’.

The Department for Economy (DfE) are responsible for setting out Government policies and strategies relating to the economy, including economy policy and tourism. Tourism Northern Ireland (Tourism NI) is part of the Department for Economy, and it has responsibility for the development of tourism product and experience across Northern Ireland and is responsible for the marketing of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination. Tourism NI's principal functions are to encourage tourism, to encourage the provision and improvement of tourist facilities and amenities and to certify tourism accommodation. Operating Plan sets out the organisation's strategic and tactical goals and objectives for a one-year period.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), is the overarching body responsible for the Forestry Service of NI which also hold a role in the promotion of tourism in Northern Ireland through their management of important natural assets.

DAERA also holds responsibility for Departmental Agencies including the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and have a role to play in regards tourism development given their role in the protection of our monuments and built heritage which are important tourism assets.

4.0 Borough Profile

Identifying tourism potential, sustaining public interest and attracting investment in the tourism industry has been historically based on a combination of both private and public interests and investment.

In line with strategic thinking on the matter, Natural and Built Heritage resources are often deemed to be key components in generating and attracting tourism and associated revenue. Whilst this is viewed, in the Borough and wider afield, as a sustainable foundation for tourism and tourism growth, it is not the only basis on which tourism attraction is founded.

The Borough has significant potential in terms of its tourism offering. As identified within the Council's Community Plan, it is the aspiration of the Council to capitalise on the Borough's unique assets and events to become internationally renowned as destination within Northern Ireland and island of Ireland. In particular the Boroughs culture and built heritage, links to St Patrick, quality food offering and events are strengths which should be capitalised on to attract visitors to the Borough.

Tourism Performance and Statistics

Although tourism data is derived from a variety of sources, it is important to acknowledge the significant impact that Covid-19 pandemic has had on the availability of information / data. As a result, there were no new estimates published for the following data between 2019 and 2023⁸.

Overnight Stays

According to the 2024 Local Government Tourism Statistics, the Borough recorded the joint third-lowest number of overnight trips, accounting for 3.51% of the Northern Ireland total (Figure 1). This represents a decline in its share of overnight trips over time, falling from 5% in 2013.

The Borough also recorded the fourth-lowest expenditure on overnight trips in 2024, accounting for just 2% of total overnight trip expenditure in Northern Ireland. Only Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Mid Ulster District Council reported lower levels of expenditure.⁹ *Figure 1: Estimate Overnight Trips by Local Government District (2024)*.¹⁰

⁸ Due to changes in methodology, users should err caution in comparing 2023 data to previous years.

⁹ Northern Ireland Tourism 2024 | <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/tourism/tourism24.html#>

¹⁰ Northern Ireland Tourism 2024 | <https://datavis.nisra.gov.uk/tourism/tourism24.html#>

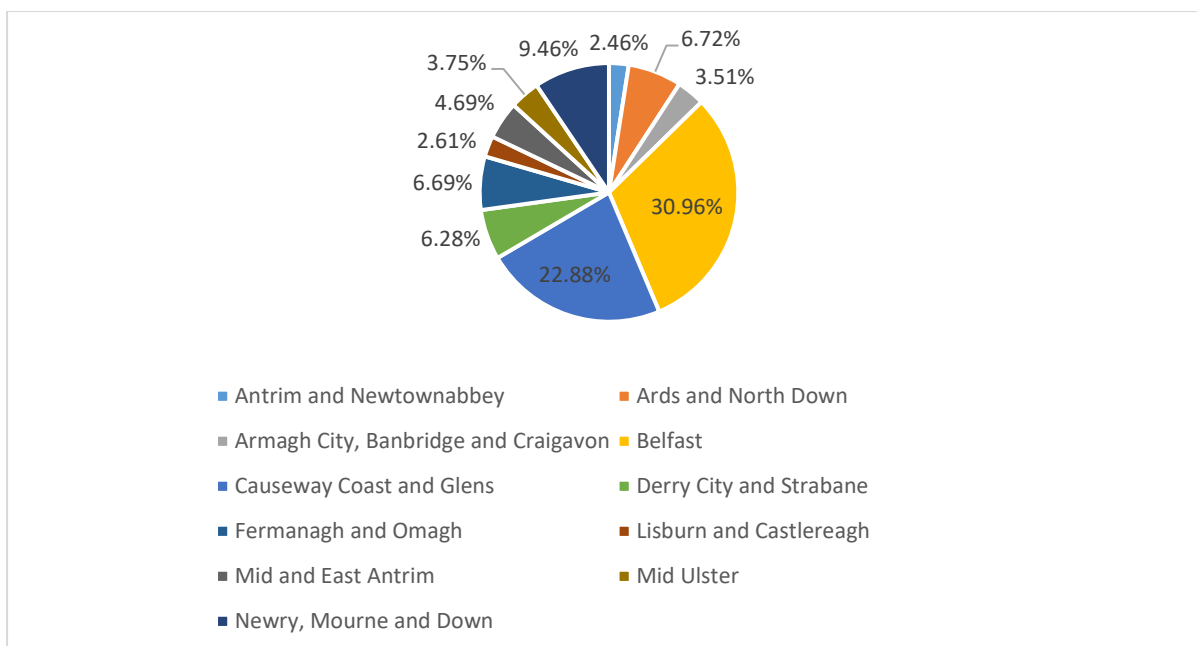


Table 1, below, indicates that the number of estimated overnight trips to the Borough were at their highest in 2017, reaching 228,595. Subsequent years have seen an overall downward trend, with the total decreasing to 164,724 trips in 2024.

Year	No. Overnight Trips to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	No. Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland
2013	201,161	4,191,491
2014	231,852	4,643,943
2015	149,782	4,657,109
2016	144,952	4,723,402
2017	228,595	5,008,962
2018	188,551	5,112,993
2019	181,477	5,475,376
2023	189,248	5,464,000
2024	164,724	4,692,000

Table 1: Number of Overnight Trips to the Borough

A similar trend is evident in the Borough's share of Northern Ireland overnight trips. As shown in Table 2, below, the Borough accounted for 5% of all overnight trips in Northern Ireland in both 2013 and 2017, before falling to 3% in subsequent years and recovering slightly to 4% in 2024.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023	2024
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	5%	5%	3%	3%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%

Table 2: Change in Estimated overnight trips (ABC% Share of NI Overnight Trips)

Expenditure on Overnight trips

As shown in Table 3, the Borough represented 2% of total overnight trip expenditure in Northern Ireland in 2024, the joint fourth-lowest proportion among council areas. This is broadly in line with the Borough's modest share of overnight trips relative to other local authority areas.

Council Area	Expenditure % of Northern Ireland Total
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2%
Ards and North Down	4%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	2%
Belfast	43%
Causeway Coast and Glens	19%
Derry City and Strabane	8%
Fermanagh and Omagh	6%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2%
Mid and East Antrim	5%
Mid Ulster	2%
Newry, Mourne and Down	7%

Table 3: % Expenditure of NI Total in 2024

Reasons for Visiting the Borough and Associated Expenditure

The Borough's overnight visitor profile differs notably from the Northern Ireland average, as set out in Table 4, below. In 2024, over half (51%) of overnight trips were made to visit friends and relatives, compared with 37% across Northern Ireland. This was the highest proportion recorded among all local government districts. By contrast, holiday, pleasure and leisure trips accounted for 37% of overnight visits to the Borough, significantly below the Northern Ireland average of 51%.

	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%
Holiday	60,637	37%	2,378	51%
Visiting Friends / Relatives	84,676	51%	1,722	37%
Business / Other	19,411	12%	592	13%
All	164,724	100%	4,692	100%

Table 4: Estimated no. of overnight trips in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland by reason for visit, 2024. Source: Tourism Statistics, NISRA.

An estimated £23.3 million was spent on overnight trips within the Borough in 2024, which equates to 2% of the Northern Ireland total. Table 5, below, breaks down this expenditure by purpose of visit. Across Northern Ireland as a whole, holiday-related trips accounted for 51% of all overnight trips and generated 53% of total overnight trip expenditure.

In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, expenditure associated with visits to friends and relatives (VFR) was the largest spending category, totalling approximately £10.0 million in 2024. Although VFR visitors accounted for 51% of overnight trips, they generated 43% of total

overnight trip expenditure, indicating lower average spending compared with some other visitor types.

Business and other visitors accounted for 12% of overnight trips to the Borough but generated an estimated £4.2 million in expenditure, representing 18% of total overnight trip spending.

This suggests that business visitors tend to spend proportionately more during their stay. Visitors travelling for holiday purposes spent an estimated £9.1 million in the Borough in 2024, accounting for 39% of total overnight trip expenditure. While holiday visitors represented 37% of overnight trips, their share of expenditure was slightly higher, reflecting relatively greater spending per trip.

	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon		Northern Ireland	
	Estimated Spend (£)	%	Estimated Spend (£)	%
<i>Holiday</i>	9,120,387	39%	578,239,711	53%
<i>Visiting Friends / Relatives</i>	10,015,250	43%	308,953,064	28%
<i>Business / Other</i>	4,167,903	18%	206,302,147	19%
All	23,303,540	100%	1,093,494,923	100%

Table 5: Estimated spend during overnight trips in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland by reason for visit, 2024. Source: Tourism Statistics, NISRA.

Overnight Trips by Place of Origin

The origin of visitors taking overnight trips to the Borough in 2024 is shown in Table 6, below. Visitors from Great Britain accounted for the largest proportion of overnight trips, representing 35% of the total. A further 34% of visitors originated from countries outside the UK and Ireland, while 31% were residents of Northern Ireland.

The proportion of overnight trips made by visitors from Northern Ireland has declined since 2023, when this group accounted for 40% of all overnight trips and represented the largest visitor market.

In contrast, the visitor profile for Northern Ireland as a whole differed from that of the Borough. Visitors from other countries accounted for the largest share of overnight trips (38%), followed by visitors from Northern Ireland (33%) and Great Britain (29%).

Overall, the Borough attracted a higher proportion of visitors from Great Britain than the Northern Ireland average, while attracting a slightly lower proportion of visitors from other countries and Northern Ireland.

	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon		Northern Ireland	
	Number	%	Number	%
Northern Ireland	51,050	31%	1,563,507	33%
Great Britain	57,916	35%	1,365,207	29%
Other	55,758	34%	1,763,478	38%

All	164,724	100%	4,692,191	100%
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Table 6: Estimated number of overnight trips in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland by origin of visitor, 2024. Source: Tourism Statistics, NISRA. Please note percentages may not sum due to rounding.

Tourism Accommodation in the Borough

At the end of 2024, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough had a total of 166 registered accommodation establishments, providing 732 rooms and 1,697 bed spaces. The Borough's accommodation stock is diverse, with provision across hotels, guest houses, guest accommodation, bed and breakfast establishments, self-catering accommodation and hostels.

Self-catering accommodation represented the largest accommodation sector in the Borough, with 104 establishments, 310 rooms and 640 bed spaces, accounting for almost 38% of all available bed spaces. Hotels formed the second largest category, with 7 hotels providing 207 rooms and 556 bed spaces, equivalent to approximately 33% of total bed spaces. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon has the lowest number of hotel rooms and the third lowest number of self-catering rooms of all the local council areas.

Bed and breakfast accommodation also made a notable contribution to the Borough's tourism offer, with 28 establishments providing 213 bed spaces. Guest accommodation comprised 21 establishments and 166 bed spaces, while 5 guest houses provided a further 60 bed spaces. The Borough also contained one hostel, offering 13 rooms and 62 bed spaces. No registered bunkhouse accommodation was recorded in 2024

Accommodation Type	Number	Units	Rooms	Bed Spaces
Hotels	7	-	207	556
Guest Houses	5	-	28	60
Guest Accommodation	21	-	76	166
Bed & Breakfast	28	-	98	213
Self-Catering	104	126	310	640
Bunkhouse	0	0	0	0
Hostel	1	-	13	62
Total	166	126	732	1,697

Table 7: Registered Tourism Accommodation Bed Spaces in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Area, 2024.¹¹

Hotel Occupancy

Hotel occupancy statistics continue to be collected by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) through its monthly occupancy survey. However, Local Government District occupancy rates are not always published due to sample size limitations, particularly in areas with a relatively small hotel accommodation stock. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough had the lowest number of hotel rooms of any local

¹¹ Tourism NI Accommodation Stock, Year-End 2024

government district in Northern Ireland in 2024¹², which can affect the availability of robust local occupancy estimates.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, hotel room occupancy within the Borough increased from 52% in 2016 to 65% in 2018, before remaining high at 64% in 2019. Occupancy fell sharply to 36% in 2020¹³ as a result of pandemic-related restrictions on travel and accommodation providers.

More recent accommodation statistics indicate that the Northern Ireland hotel sector has largely recovered from the pandemic period, with hotel room occupancy levels in 2024¹⁴ remaining broadly in line with 2023 and hotel room sales increasing by 5% year-on-year.

Tourism and Employment

In March 2024, there were 535 tourism businesses operating within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, representing 9.1% of all tourism businesses in Northern Ireland (5,865). As illustrated in Figure 2, below, the number of tourism businesses in the Borough generally increased between 2015 and 2022, reaching a peak during this period before declining slightly in both 2023 and 2024.

Despite these fluctuations in business numbers, the Borough's share of Northern Ireland's tourism businesses has remained relatively stable over the period, consistently accounting for approximately 9% of the regional total each year.

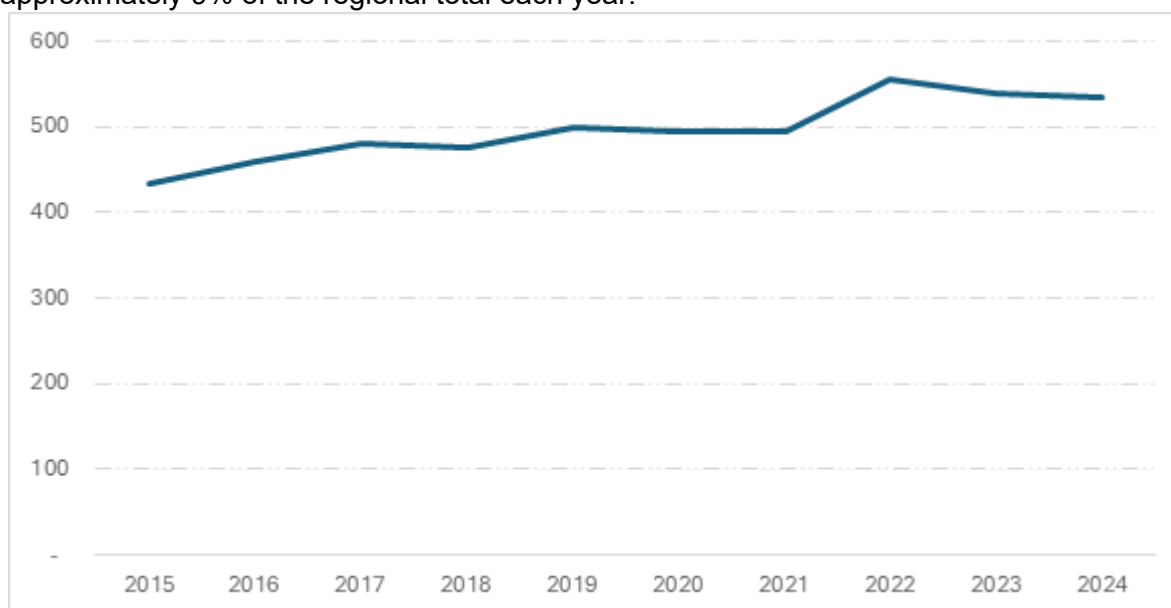


Figure 2: Number of tourism businesses operating in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 2015-2024.¹⁵

With regard to tourism employment, an estimated 5,364 tourism-related jobs were located in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough in 2022, representing an increase of 11.3%

¹² www.tourismni.com/research-insights/local-government-district-tourism-statistics/

¹³ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2022-northern-ireland-annual-hotel-occupancy-survey-publication>

¹⁴ [NISRA Accommodation Performance Report](#)

¹⁵ Interdepartmental Business Register (NI Tourism Annual Publication)

from 2021. This was the second-highest percentage increase among all local government districts in Northern Ireland, exceeded only by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (13.3%).

The Borough accounted for 7.6% of all tourism jobs in Northern Ireland in 2022, maintaining its position as a significant contributor to the regional tourism economy. In total, tourism employment in Northern Ireland increased from 65,425 jobs in 2021 to 70,384 jobs in 2022, an increase of 7.6%.

Despite this strong growth, tourism employment remains concentrated in Belfast, which accounted for 21,394 jobs, or 30.4% of all tourism employment in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon recorded one of the strongest rates of growth in tourism employment across the region, indicating continued expansion of the local tourism sector.

District Council Area	2021	2022	% Change
Antrim and Newtownabbey	4,115	4,538	10.3%
Ards and North Down	5,358	5,775	7.8%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	4,821	5,364	11.3%
Belfast	19,500	21,394	9.7%
Causeway Coast and Glens	5,094	5,602	10.0%
Derry City and Strabane	5,150	5,230	1.6%
Fermanagh and Omagh	3,680	3,679	0.0%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	4,190	4,748	13.3%
Mid and East Antrim	4,234	4,224	-0.2%
Mid Ulster	3,554	3,879	9.1%
Newry, Mourne and Down	5,729	5,949	3.8%
Northern Ireland	65,425	70,384	7.6%

Table 8: Number of tourism businesses Jobs in Northern Ireland 2021 & 2022¹⁶

Table 9, below, shows the distribution of tourism-related employment across industry sectors within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough in 2022. Of the 5,364 tourism jobs in the Borough, the majority (3,485 jobs or 65%) were in food and beverage serving activities, highlighting the importance of the hospitality sector to the local tourism economy.

Sporting and recreational activities represented the second-largest tourism employment sector, supporting 797 jobs (15%), despite a slight decline of 1.1% compared with 2021. Employment in visitor accommodation increased by 4.2% to 523 jobs, accounting for approximately 10% of all tourism-related employment in the Borough.

In contrast, employment in the transport sector fell by 5.9%, declining from 220 jobs in 2021 to 207 jobs in 2022, making it the smallest tourism employment category. The other tourism-related industries category experienced the strongest growth, increasing by 71.4% to 353 jobs, although it continued to account for a relatively small proportion of overall tourism employment.

Overall, the tourism sector in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough grew by 11.3% between 2021 and 2022, significantly exceeding the Northern Ireland average growth rate of 7.6%. This represented the second-highest rate of growth among all local government districts, indicating a strong recovery and expansion of tourism-related employment within the Borough.

¹⁶ *Business Register and Employment Survey (NI Tourism Annual Publication)*

	2021	2022	% Change	ABC as % of NI
Accommodation for Visitors	502	523	4.2%	4.7%
Food and Beverage Serving Activities	3,087	3,485	12.9%	8.4%
Transport	220	207	-5.9%	4.4%
Sporting and Recreational Activities	806	797	-1.1%	9.9%
Other	206	353	71.4%	7.2%
Total Tourism Jobs	4,821	5,364	11.3%	7.6%

Table 9: Number of employee jobs in tourism related industries in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough & Northern Ireland 2021 & 2022.

Visitor Attractions in the Borough

Visitor attraction statistics are collected through NISRA's Visitor Attraction Survey. The most recent attraction level data available for the Borough relates to 2021. These figures indicate that the Borough is home to a number of well-established attractions, including public parks, gardens, heritage sites, museums and visitor centres.

In 2019, Portadown People's Park was the most visited attraction in the Borough, recording 608,169 visitors, followed by Lurgan Park (559,947 visitors) and Tannaghmore Gardens and Rare Breeds Animal Farm (130,656 visitors). Both Lurgan Park and Portadown People's Park ranked among the most visited free attractions in Northern Ireland¹⁷. The data highlights the importance of the Borough's parks and outdoor attractions within its tourism and leisure offer.

Visitor Attraction	Visitor Numbers
Armagh County Museum	10,273
Armagh Robinson Library	8,060
Dan Winter's House	1,452
Edenvilla Park & Garden	84,243
Lurgan Park	559,947
Milford House Collection	2,079
Millenium Court Arts Centre	20,001
Mount Ida Pottery	890
No 5 Vicars' Hill	4,426
Portadown People's Park	608,169
Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum	12,463
Sloan's House Museum of Orange Heritage	5,200
St Patricks Cathedral	78,686
Tannaghmore Gardens and Rare Breeds Animal Farm	130,656
The Navan Centre & Fort	55,795
William McCrum Park - Home of the Penalty Kick	900

Table 10: Visitor Attractions by number of visitors in 2019¹⁸

¹⁷ [2021 Northern Ireland visitor attraction survey publications | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁸ [Northern Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey 2019 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

	2018		2019	
	No. Establishments	No. Visitors	No. Establishments	No. Visitors
ACBC	28	3,242,697	16	1,583,240
Northern Ireland	259	21,121,421	165	16,513,368

Table 11: Summary of visitor attractions and visitors. Comparison between 2018 & 2019 Figures.¹⁹

Tourism Sectors

Activity Tourism

Activity Tourism covers a range of spheres from “active” holidays involving canoeing, climbing, horse-riding and mountaineering, to the less physical, yet still activity-focused areas of nature watching, food trails, or local culture and heritage trails. The Borough has potential to further grow activity tourism growth within the Borough.

The Ulster Canal Green Way development is one way in which there is likely to be future growth with links to tourism growth within the Borough. The Greenway is intended to encourage active travel in preference to vehicular transport and to promote the area as a walking/cycling tourist destination, however this is also likely to have benefits in relation to tourism, as a result of increased visitor numbers passing through the Borough.

Amongst the visitors the Borough, participation in cycling, adventure and outdoor pursuits was higher relative to many other areas in NI, and Oxford Island National Nature Reserve / Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Kinnego Marina and Lurgan Park were the top three attractions visited in the area.²⁰

Cultural Tourism

Heritage/cultural tourism is recognised as one of the largest and fastest growing segments within the global tourism marketplace. According to the World Tourism Organisation (www.worldtourism.org) this includes ‘all aspects of tourism that can teach visitors about their past and inheritance, as well as their contemporary lifestyles’.²¹

There already is a wealth of Cultural tourism offered across the entire Council Area. The Council hold a number of festivals throughout the year, helping to support the tourism economy of the Borough. This includes the Armagh Georgian Weekend, Fusion Festival Weekend and St Patrick Festival.

The historic environment assets across the Borough already make a contribution to the tourism offering, which may grow, including historic houses, parks gardens and demesnes, listed buildings, conservation areas and other tourism assets.

¹⁹ [Northern Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey 2018 | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁰ Tourism NI Visitor Attitude Survey [PowerPoint Presentation \(tourismni.com\)](#)

²¹ [NI full report v7 \(tourismni.com\)](#)

In July 2022, Navan Fort has been placed on the tentative list for World Heritage Status. In line with UNESCO guidelines, a site must first be on its State's Tentative List, before it can be considered eligible to move forward with a bid for World Heritage status.

The Borough is home also to a number of theatres and galleries, including the Marketplace Theatre, Armagh and the FE McWilliams Gallery, Banbridge. Such facilities help to support and grow tourism growth and potential in the Borough.

Orchard County / Food & Drink Tourism

Armagh has long been renowned as the orchard county, famous for apple growing and production and more recently has seen the growth of a number of cider businesses. This helped the Borough to be recognised as the Food Heartland of Northern Ireland, with award winning local food, ciders and juices.

The Armagh Food and Cider Weekend is now an annual event that runs each year, which involves a range of different events and activities. This is indicative of the growth in the overall growth of the agri-food industry within the Borough, supported also by the Food Heartland Action Plan which was published in March 2021. 'The Armagh Apple Orchards Collection' was launched in 2022 and refers to unique experiences that allow people to discover the best local food, award winning ciders and juices, heritage, nature and stories'.²²

Food experience and offering is important to visitors to an area. Places to eat within the Borough was measured in the Tourism NI Visitor Attitude Survey (2018). Of those surveyed, the range of Engagement with staff was a highlight of the eating out experience. The range of eating out establishments and quality of food and drink scored however below the NI average. Improvements in these areas, as well as providing menus which suit dietary requirements and feature local ingredients could enhance the visitor experience.

Night-Time Economy

A healthy night-time economy in the Borough would help to support the tourism industry, helping to provide attractions for people to visit the Borough. The Council are currently working towards developing a 5 year Evening Economy strategy.

Music Tourism

An example of music events within the Borough is BuskFest an international busking festival which takes place in Banbridge each year. The event comprises an outdoor daytime busking competition followed by a prize giving ceremony in Solitude Park. This flagship event is now entering its 19th year and attracts 6000+ people to Banbridge town centre. Armagh City also hosts the "7 Hills Blues Fest" which is a weekend music event.

Screen Tourism

The Borough is served by three cinemas located in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon, contributing to the area's leisure and entertainment offering. In addition, the Borough has gained international recognition through its association with the filming of Game of Thrones. This connection was further strengthened by the opening of the Game of Thrones Studio Tour

²² <https://visitarmagh.com/armagh-apple-orchards/>

at Linen Mill Studios, Banbridge, in February 2022, as the world's first and only official Game of Thrones Studio Tour and attracts both domestic and international visitors.

5.0 Preferred Options Paper

The Council published its Preferred Options Paper (POP) in March 2018. The main purpose of the POP was to promote focused debate on key issues of strategic significance likely to influence the direction of future development within the Borough, so to inform the next stage in the LDP process, the Plan Strategy.

The POP outlined the vision and strategic objectives of the Plan, along with 38 Key Issues and the possible options available to address them, including the Council's Preferred Option. The Key Issues emerged from our evidence base; from engagement with Elected Members and Section 75 Groups; and from formal and informal consultation with Statutory Consultation Bodies. In order to inform the POP, a preliminary review of operational planning policy was also carried out, with a commitment to complete a more detailed policy review in advance of the Plan Strategy.

The POP did not cover every issue, policy and proposal that will be included in the LDP. Instead the POP focused upon the main planning issues that had been identified through the work undertaken in developing the evidence base for the LDP, including consultation with statutory consultees and council officials, workshops with Elected Members and through the Community Plan.

A total of 201 responses, from members of the public and statutory consultees, were received during the 9 week public consultation period, these included a wide range of comments in relation to the POP, supporting documents and the POP consultation process.

Key Issue ECN 10

Key Issue ECN 10 in the preferred options paper was 'supporting sustainable tourism development'. The paper noted that the tourism sector within the Borough appeared to be underperforming relative to many other areas of Northern Ireland.

Preferred Option

The preferred option on how best to approach this key issue within the local development plan was option ECN 10A, to "Carry forward an approach in line with existing policy and further regional direction to support and facilitate appropriate sustainable tourism development in both settlements and the countryside, with additions that are tailored to meet specific local tourism needs and protect tourism assets within the Borough".

Summary of POP Commitments

The POP identified that the preferred approach to tourism development would allow for some adjustments to existing policy and regional direction, as appropriate, to reflect the Council's wider approach to the rural area and to best reflect local circumstances. As such, the POP committed to consideration being given to the need to tailor tourism policy to local circumstances, an example being the apple orchards / cider tourism experience within the Borough.

POP Representations

Of the total 201 responses received in respect of the preferred options paper document, 25 made reference to key issue 10. There was a large majority of support for preferred option ECN 10A, with 72% of representations categorised as being generally supportive, 4% categorised as unsupportive whilst the remaining 24% were considered to be non-committal or unclear.

Many of those responses which were supportive did not substantiate their support, however some comments provided included “The promotion of the historic environment and heritage assets as key tourism destinations is welcomed, exploiting the regions historic environment plays a decisive role in attracting outside investment. It is important that the approach towards the use and maintenance of heritage assets is sensitive, so to maintain the Boroughs distinctive historic environment character”.

Department for Infrastructure commented, “without details of how the policy will be tailored, it is difficult to provide comment on the preferred approach”. DfI also stated that they “would like to see further evidence and analysis into the many tourist opportunities and tourism assets in the borough, e.g. the apple orchard / cider experience, Lough Neagh and Armagh City, aligning with the R&DS and the Tourism Strategy”.

Consideration of Preferred Option

As part of the background work of the draft plan strategy policies, further analysis was undertaken to establish how tourism policies may be tailored, if at all, to help support the overall ambitions of the Council’s tourism agenda, specifically helping to accommodate and support apple orchard / cider tourism facilities.

There are a number of existing apple orchard / cider businesses in operation within the Borough at present. Many of which, in recent years have undergone some diversification by way of introducing tea rooms, meeting rooms etc. in business confines to help accommodate and facilitate increased visitor numbers, many of whom attend facilities to take part in guided tours submitted planning applications as part of overall redevelopment or diversification.

Following an analysis of such planning applications it was established that the majority were approved through the provisions of Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside, specifically CTY 11 Farm Diversification. There were also approvals permitted under PPS 4 policies, where the application site was within a settlement. A breakdown of these applications is provided at Appendix 1.

The review of planning applications demonstrate a number of points. Firstly, that the existing suite of planning policies facilitated any proposed development. Firstly, that there is ample provision within the existing suite of planning policies to facilitate such development. Secondly, there has been a change in the nature of development proposals that are being submitted. Whilst the earlier dated applications related more so to apple processing and production, more recent applications, however, have focused upon the provision of ancillary spaces such as ancillary accommodation, cafés, meeting rooms.

Whilst this transition towards more tourism-based development proposals highlights the growing potential of apple orchards and the cider tourism experience, as identified by the Council in the Preferred Options Paper, the analysis of development proposals also clarifies that there is no current policy gap to support such proposals. As such, it is contended that there is no requirement bring forward a tailored tourism policy in the emerging draft plan strategy to meet local circumstances.

The Council considers that the suite of draft tourism policies brought forward for tourism amenities and tourism accommodation in the countryside align with regional direction and are considered flexible enough to accommodate any proposals which may come forward for appropriate development at existing orchards within the Borough. Any new business

enterprises in the countryside will be assessed against the economic development (rural) policies and sustainable development in the countryside policies, where appropriate.

Additionally, in acknowledgement of the crucial role that tourism plays in driving economic prosperity and supporting community well-being, the Council will bring forward a Strategy for Tourism in the draft Plan Strategy. The aim of the Tourism Strategy will be to promote sustainable tourism development by balancing the need for appropriate tourism growth across the Borough with the protection of the Borough's unique natural, built and historic environment. Whilst it will offer a general presumption in favour of tourism development within settlements, it will also help to facilitate appropriate sustainable tourism development in the countryside, such as cider tourism proposals, that will sustain vibrant rural communities and promote a healthy rural economy and tourism sector. The Tourism Strategy will be supported by a suite of operational policies for tourism, in addition to a suite of General Policies and Design and Place- Making Policies so to ensure high-quality design, environmental protection, and alignment with place-making principles.

For further detail on the POP responses, and the Council's consideration, refer to the POP Public Consultation Report available on the Council's website.

6.0 Stakeholder Engagement

Internal Stakeholders

Planning Officers in Development Management and Enforcement Sections

Consultation was carried out with planning officers in the Planning Department's Development Management Section. Officers showed a high level of support for proposed tourism policies, whilst any queries raised were considered in finalising draft policies prior to being presented at Council Members workshops.

Other Council Departments

Representatives from relevant Council departments have been engaged to ensure that due account has been taken of Council's Community Plan, as well as other Council strategies and initiatives.

This engagement was undertaken by way of individual meetings with council departments, in particular the Community Plan Team to ensure account was taken of the Council's Community Plan.

A meeting also took place with a 'Project Management Team.' The Project Management Team was comprised of Officers from a range of council departments, including Community Plan, Tourism, Economic Development, Environmental Health and Environmental Services

Elected Members Workshops

Section 8 (7a) of Part 2 (Local Development Plans) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Plan Strategy to be adopted by resolution of the Council. As such, Elected Members have been engaged throughout the LDP process, including the preparation of the draft dPS policies. Engagement with the Elected Members has been facilitated through a series of workshops. That engagement included the following draft policies set out below:

- TOU 1 Tourism Development in Settlements
- TOU 2 Tourism Amenities in the Countryside
- TOU3 Hotels, Guest Houses and Tourist Hostels in the Countryside
- TOU 4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside - Exceptional Circumstances
- TOU 5 Self-Catering Accommodation in the Countryside
- TOU 6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside
- TOU 7 Safeguarding Tourism Assets

Whilst there was general agreement with the draft policy wording, Elected Members highlighted the following:

- The importance of working with the Tourism team in Council;
- Shortfalls in tourism accommodation provision in the Borough;
- Clarification sought on certain wording and interpretation of policies TOU 4, TOU 5, TOU 6 and TOU 7;
- The importance of planning permissions and DAERA tourist accommodation (farm diversification) grants; and

- Tourism policies should prevent general housing proposals using tourism policies to seek planning permission.

In terms of the impact on the wording of the policies brought to the working groups, it was ~~not~~ considered that the comments made by the Elected Members did not necessitate any amendments to the suite of draft tourism policies. Consideration of the comments indicated that the draft policies were closely worded to existing operational policy and that of regional strategic policy that further amendments would not bring any substantial benefit to the outcome of the policy, or the comments did not directly impact on the objectives of the draft Tourism policies.

External Stakeholders

Government Departments and Agencies

Section 8 (5) of Part 2 (Local Development Plans) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires the Plan Strategy to take account of the RDS, any policy and guidance issued by the Department and other relevant government strategies and plans. As such the Council has engaged key consultees representing relevant central government departments and agencies in the preparation of the draft Plan Strategy policies.

The following bodies returned with comments on the Tourism operational policies:

- Natural Environment Division (NED) Development Plan Team
- DAERA Drinking Water Inspectorate
- Historic Environment Division
- NI Water
- DfI Regional Planning Policy and Casework Directorate

The majority of comments suggest minor wording amendments which have been considered and adopted where appropriate. It was highlighted that criterion (c) of TOU 5 differs to the current requirements of TSM 5 of PPS 16. This criterion was removed as there are no existing clachan's or close's within the Borough.

Consideration of Neighbouring Council Approaches

In considering draft planning policies for tourism, the approaches of the adjoining Council areas, were taken into account. The draft Plan Strategies and Preferred Options Papers have been considered to identify cross-boundary issues exist.

Adjoining Council	Position
Newry Mourne & Down District Council	Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) published its Local Development Plan 2035 draft Plan Strategy in June 2025. The consultation period was carried out over a twelve-week period, from Friday 27 June 2025 to Monday 22 September 2025. The Strategic Policy for Sustainable Tourism (TS1) has three key points: promote a sustainable approach to tourism development, including tourist accommodation and tourist

	amenities to meet future demand; protect and safeguard existing tourism assets; and contribute to sustainable economic development, urban regeneration and conservation. Operational Policies: Policy TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements Policy TOU2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside Policy TOU3 Hotels, Guest Houses, B&Bs, Tourist Hostels and Bunkhouses in the Countryside Policy TOU4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside – Exceptional Circumstances Policy TOU5 Self-Catering Accommodation in the Countryside Policy TOU6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside Policy TOU7 New and Extended Glamping Accommodation in the Countryside
Mid Ulster District Council	Mid Ulster District Council published its Local Development Plan 2030 – Draft Plan Strategy on 22nd February 2019, the Council re-consulted on its Draft Plan Strategy, which closed at 5pm on 24th September 2020. The draft Plan Strategy has now been submitted to the Department for Infrastructure on 28th May 2021. Draft policies which address tourism are Policy TOU 1 - Protection of Tourism Assets and Tourist Accommodation, Policy TOU 2 - Resort Destination Development, Policy TOU 3 Tourism Accommodation & Policy TOU 4 Other Tourism Facilities / Amenities and Attractions. MUDC dPS proposes to introduce tourism opportunity zones and tourism conservation zones.
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	The draft Plan Strategy was published for formal consultation on Friday 8th November 2019, and it was submitted to the Department for Infrastructure on 22nd March 2021. Independent examination of the dPS began on 28th March 2022. The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) issued a Direction on 28th June 2023 under Section 12 (1) (b) of the Act directing Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to adopt the draft Plan Strategy with the modifications specified in the Direction. Strategic Policy 16 Tourism sets out where the plan will support development proposals in relation to tourism. Draft policies relating to tourism includes TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements, TOU2 Proposals for Tourism Amenity in the Countryside, TOU3 Proposals for Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside, TOU4 Self-Catering Accommodation in the Countryside, TOU5 Holiday Parks in the Countryside, TOU6 Proposals for Major Tourism Development in the Countryside, TOU7 General Criteria for Tourism Development and TOU8 Safeguarding of Tourism Assets.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.	Draft Plan Strategy was published in 2019. Planning Appeals Commission began independent examination of the dPS in June 2022. Strategic Policy SP 2.15 Sustainable Tourism identifies that the Council will promote the growth of sustainable tourism economy within the Borough, outlining 4 ways in which this would be achieved. Policy DM 9 outlines policy criteria for tourism development, tourist accommodation, major tourism development and general criteria.
Monaghan County Council	Monaghan County Council adopted its County Development Plan 2025 - 2031 on 26 May 2025. The objectives for Tourism are set out in Chapter 4 of the Plan. The Plan sets out 25 objectives that seek to promote and support the tourism economic within the council area. The Ulster Canal is identified as an important cross border tourism asset within the Plan.

Table 12: Adjoining Councils Position - Tourism

The Council has responded to neighbouring Councils Preferred Option Papers and draft Plan Strategies, as they have been published.

Although there are some differences in the draft policy wording of neighbouring Councils dPSs, it is not considered that there are any significant conflicts with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Councils Draft Plan Strategy insofar as it relates to tourism. The Council will continue to liaise and engage with adjoining Councils, particularly in regard to landscapes that straddle council boundaries, such as the Lough Neagh environs.

7.0 Draft Plan Strategy Policy Approach

As analysed above, the Council's draft Tourism policies and relevant draft policy provisions within the suite of General Policies and Design and Placemaking Policies have evolved from a review of extant regional planning policies, other key policy and guidance documents, the POP, responses to the POP and a series of engagements with key stakeholders, including the following:

- Key statutory consultees.
- Elected Members of the Council.
- Officers from the Development Management section of the planning department; and
- Officers from other relevant departments of the Council.
-

In preparing the draft policies, the Council has taken account of a range of relevant matters, including the following:

- The RDS (in particular RG4) and SPPS (in particular paragraphs 6.264 to 6.269).
- PPS 16 (Tourism), PPS 8 (Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation) and policies CTY 1 Development in the Countryside, CTY 4 the Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings, CTY 11 Farm Diversification and CTY 14 Rural Character of PPS 21 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside) along with extant development plans within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough.
- The Council's Community Plan (especially in terms of the Plan's long term outcome: 'our distinctive, inclusive and vibrant urban and rural areas are at the heart of community and economic life' - see page 24 & 25), ongoing council initiatives and the neighbouring council context.
- The adopted /draft Plan Strategies of neighbouring councils – the draft policies are not considered to conflict with any of those.

In preparing the draft Plan Strategy (dPS), a range of general planning considerations, including design, integration and amenity, are now incorporated into the General Policies or Design and Place-making Policies of the draft Plan Strategy²³. This approach consolidates and streamlines requirements that were previously repeated across multiple Planning Policy Statements and subject policy areas within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement. It improves the structure, clarity and usability of the Plan while maintaining the existing policy objectives and regional policy direction.

Part 1 of the draft Plan Strategy sets out a number of strategic policies and Spatial Growth Strategies. These, in turn, link to the operational policies contained within Part 2.

The Tourism Strategy within Part 1 promotes sustainable tourism development in hubs, small towns, and settlements where it enhances economic growth, conservation and regeneration. In line with this Strategy, appropriate tourism development will be facilitated to sustain rural communities and strengthen the local economy. Tourism assets will be protected from inappropriate development to preserve their long-term value.

Part 2 of the draft Plan Strategy sets out the operational planning policies relating to Tourism. A total of 7 operational policies have been brought forward (TOU 1-7). These policies are largely updated from PPS 16 and with some clarification and changes to reflect the wording of the SPPS. The preferred option from the POP has generally been brought forward.

²³ Exceptions to the General Policies and Design and Place-making Policies are set out in the dPS.

The draft policies have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the findings of which are set out in the accompanying SA Environmental Report.

In conclusion, the draft policies are founded on a robust evidence base which includes baseline information contained in this Technical Supplement, the POP, responses to the POP and subsequent engagement with consultees.

8.0 Soundness

The LDP has been prepared in accordance with the tests of soundness set out in the DfI's Development Plan Practice Note 6: Soundness (Version 2, May 2017). The draft Plan Strategy, insofar as it relates to Tourism policies, is considered to be sound, as it satisfies the relevant tests of soundness, as summarised in Table 13 below:

Table 13: Consideration of Soundness

Procedural Tests	
P2	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have evolved from the POP and have taken account of responses to the POP and the POP Consultation Report.
P3	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Consistency Tests	
C1	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have taken account of the RDS and in particular RG 4.
C2	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have taken account of the Council's Community Plan, particularly in terms of the Plan's commitment to deliver a sustainable place.
C3	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have taken account of existing planning policies as contained within the SPPS, in particular paragraphs 6.264 to 6.269, along with PPS 16 (Tourism), PPS 8 (Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation) and policies CTY 1 Development in the Countryside, CTY 4 the Conversion and Reuse of Existing Buildings, CTY 11 Farm Diversification and CTY 14 Rural Character of PPS 21 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside)
C4	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have taken account of the existing development plans within Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, ongoing Council initiatives and the neighbouring council context, including the Republic of Ireland.
Coherence and Effectiveness Tests	
CE1	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 have taken account of the emerging LDPs of our neighbouring Councils in Northern Ireland and neighbouring council in the Republic of Ireland (Monaghan County Council) and are not considered to be in conflict with those.
CE2	GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 are founded on a robust evidence base which includes the baseline information contained in this technical supplement, the POP and responses to it and subsequent consultation with consultees, including DfI.
CE3	As part of the Council's ongoing monitoring framework, the number of approvals granted for tourism development will be annually monitored and assessed against relevant indicators to determine whether the strategy and policies are being implemented effectively, remain appropriate and continue to support the Plan's objectives. Monitoring findings will inform the future review of the Plan and any necessary policy intervention.

CE4

GP1, GP2, GP 3 & GP 4, DES 1 & DES 2 and TOU 1-7 will be reviewed at Plan Review stage. Where appropriate, the need for flexibility has been built into the strategic approach and draft policies to allow for changing circumstances. Local Policies Plan stage will provide further opportunity to review existing and introduce new local policies, provided this is underpinned by robust evidence base and is consistent with the adopted Plan Strategy.

Appendix 1- Planning Applications related to apple orchard/cider production.

A review of planning applications relating to apple orchard business/ cider production was carried out. The results have been filtered to show applications from 2010 onwards, as this was the year when current planning policy statements PPS 4 & PPS 21 were introduced. This review of applications demonstrates that existing planning policies are meeting the needs of business who want to extend their production or grow their tourism offering as well.

Application Reference	Address	Proposal	Approved under:
LA08/2022/0725/F	Lands approximately 152 north west of 87 Loughgall Road Portadown BT62 4EG	Retention of tourist pavilion structure for display, tasting & training of cider products to include food demonstrations and classes	PPS 16 – TSM 2 & TSM 7
LA08/2016/0565/F	Long Meadow Cider Company (McKeevers) 87 Loughgall Rd, Portadown, BT62 4EG	Tea-room & ancillary space for sale of farm produce	PPS 21 - CTY 11
LA08/2019/1330/F	120m south west of 87 Loughgall Road Portadown Armagh BT62 4EG	Erection of agricultural storage building for year round bulk apple storage.	PPS 21 - CTY 12.
LA08/2016/1679/F	90 College Lands Road Charlemont Dungannon	Erection of apple processing facility.	PPS 4- PED 9 (within settlement)
LA08/2017/0252/F	Farm buildings at 57A Battehill Road	Extension to existing apple stores and replacement agricultural shed	PPS 4- PED 3
LA08/2016/0765/F	160 metres north of 83 Salters Grange Road Aughnacloy	Erection of general purpose agricultural shed for the storage of apple boxes and 2 no Polytunnels for soft fruit growing	PPS 21 – CTY 12.
LA08/2016/0567/F	Armagh Cider Company and TG Troughtan Farm Ballinataggart 73 Drumnasoo Road Portadown	Retention and refurbishment of office and ancillary staff accommodation including first floor extension and replacement roof.	PPS 21- CTY 11

		Change of use of existing barn to workshop, café and farm shop with extension to provide tasting area, meeting room, reception areas, stores and kitchen on ground floor and stores on the first floor. To include ancillary works with car and coach parking.	
LA08/2015/0839/F	43 Summerisland Road	Proposed agricultural building on active and established orchard farm building.	PPS 21 – CTY 12 PPS 3 – PED 3
O/2013/0051/F	Adjoining and south of 74 Ballymacully Road Killylea Armagh BT60 4NX	Cider making plant as farm diversification to produce cider from cider apples grown on applicants farm	PPS 21 – CTY 11.
O/2010/0263/F	Chapman Foods, 57 Battlehill Road, Portadown	Extension to existing apple processing factory and associated stores	PPS 4 – PED 3
O/2010/0141/F	Chapman Foods, 57 Battlehill Road, Portadown	Extension to existing apple processing factory and associated stores	PPS 4 – PED 3

INTERESTED IN DEVELOPMENT

in the Armagh City,
Banbridge and
Craigavon Borough

Please contact

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