



A Gateway region positioned for growth

How are we delivering on the potential for the region?

Joan Martin
Chief Executive
Louth County Council

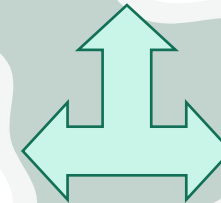
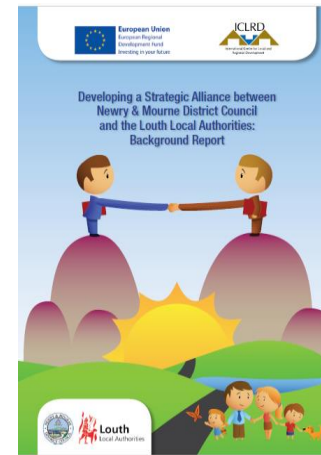
Marie Ward
Chief Executive
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Joint Council Strategic Alliance

- Established between LCC and NMD DC in the recognition that both local authorities have common challenges & opportunities
- Enables the 2 local authorities to work across an administrative and political border, & jointly progress the economic development & competitiveness of the area
- Operating as a Strategic Alliance opens up opportunities for cross border cooperation, jointly representing the views of both councils in a lobbying role



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Strategic Alliance Action Plan

- The Joint Council's Action Plan 2021 is based on 4 core themes
 1. Economic Development
 2. Tourism
 3. Lobbing
 4. Climate Change and the Environment
- Key Objectives are
 1. To promote, strengthen and stimulate the social, cultural and economic links within and between the people of the region.
 2. To provide an enabling framework to promote the region more effectively for inward investment and open up further opportunities for the sharing of services
 3. To consolidate the long established working relationship of the councils, position them on a strategic long term footing with a an outward looking focus
 4. To enhance the leadership position within the cross border region and bolster our influencing and coordinating role
 5. To develop links with other local authorities and regional stakeholders.

Joint Council Strategic Alliance - Achievements

Over the past decade the Strategic Alliance has been a successful vehicle for delivery against common visions and goals

More recent achievements are in the areas of infrastructure, active travel, economic development and tourism

Achievements: Infrastructure

- **Active Travel - Carlingford Lough Greenway**

- 20 km Greenway will be available (2023) for active travel from Newry City to Carlingford, providing a much needed cross border recreational facility
- It will link with the existing Newry/ Portadown Cycleway/Towpath resulting in a total length of 52km of Greenway along the East coast of Ireland enabling walkers and cyclists to travel off-road between Belfast and Dublin using Sustrans Route 9 (The Great Eastern Greenway)

- **Faster: Electric Vehicle initiative**

- €6.4m/£5.8m Interreg project which will help reduce reliance on fossil fuels by encouraging increased use of more environmentally-friendly forms of transport
- The project recognises that one of the main barriers to greater public uptake of electric vehicles is the perceived lack of rapid charging stations.
- 73 rapid charge points to be installed across the eligible area (NI, Ireland and Scotland)
- LCC is the Southern Lead partner / NI: EBR Lead partner, NMDDC associate partner



Achievements: Economic Development

- Both Council's working with their Local Enterprise Agencies have delivered annually an Innovate Accelerate programme
- The ethos of the programme is to increase the innovativeness and thus the competitiveness of companies operating across the border
- Currently 21 food & drink based companies are being supported to become International Trade ready through support in securing new markets and acquiring knowledge of better ways of trading



Achievements: Tourism

Carlingford Lough Ferry

- A privately operated cross border ferry crossing from Greencastle to Greenore facilitating cross border day trips and over night visits was supported in a lobbying role through the Strategic Alliance



Joint Cross border tourism video

- The Strategic Alliance recognises joint tourism initiatives as a key area of growth for the region. A joint promotional video has been developed showcasing the tourism assets of the cross border region

Cross-border experiences

- The Strategic Alliance is facilitating cross border tourism experiences for day trips and over night visits, promoting opportunities for walking, golf, family days out, food and drink experiences, cultural and heritage experiences

Festivals around the Lough

- Carlingford Lough Classic is an annual golf event that brings together visitors from the across the border in a 3 day golf event over 3 golf courses in Greenore, Kilkeel and Warrenpoint



Strategic Alliance as a Gateway Region



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- Both NMD DC and Louth DC hold strategic locations on either side of the Border
- Joint regions are an attractor for local & international trade
 - Louth – Gateway to NI / UK,
 - NMD DC – Gateway to Ireland, and now Europe
- Location is a key opportunity particularly arising out of Brexit
- Joint regions offer a mid-way location between 2 Capital Cities of Belfast & Dublin

A strategic location, combined with access to skills, educational linkages, a growing and innovative local economy, supported by appropriate infrastructure is what ensures the region and the Strategic Alliance is in a **Position of Strength**

Our Position of Strength

Infrastructure

- Rail, road, air and Port infrastructure:
 - Rail & road linkages, opens up access to Belfast & Dublin
 - 2 Ports, Drogheda & Warrenpoint, (Warrenpoint Port, 3rd largest in Ireland),
 - Air travel within 60 minutes: Access to EU and International travel
 - Combination of transport infrastructure connecting people and businesses to internal and international markets – critical to growth

Active Travel:

- Newry – Carlingford Greenway, 20km, enabling health and well-being benefits on either side of the border

Digital:

- Developments underway to make available superfast & ultrafast connectivity which will facilitate and enable future deployment of smart city applications
- Through better and more widespread digital infrastructure this provision will enable more businesses to locate and grow, increasing sustainable employment opportunities, and attracting high value jobs for individuals who in turn make financial contributions into the local economy.



Our Position of Strength

People

- 16% of population along the EEC reside in NMD / LCC
- High presence of a young and well education population, **above** the NI/ROI average
- 1/3 of those employed on the Island of Ireland are employed along the EEC
- Aware that availability of suitable skills is directly tied to attractiveness to investment
- Skills profile indicates more jobs requiring graduates than there are residents with HE qualifications.
- Working collaborative with Councils, and colleges on either side of the border
 - ensure that we can continue to meet current and future demand for skills
 - upskill, reskill, create pathways to employment for those unemployed / inactive,
 - facilitate commuting to the places of highest demand

Our Position of Strength

Economy

- New business births contribute to levels of competition & innovation in an economy, which will lead to both productivity improvements and employment growth
 - LCC has the 3rd highest level of business births in the ROI, with NMD the highest of the NI Council's
- 96% of firms - employ less than 20 people, potentially pool of firms with ambition to build greater scale.
- Job-rich sectors: manufacturing, construction, education & agriculture
- Priority sectors for growth
 - Digital sector: Attracting ICT / digital businesses, also supporting digitisation of non-digital business
 - knowledge Intensive Business Services - professional Services, Financial Services
 - Continued growth in manufacturing

Our Position of Strength

Tourism

- Visitor economy is a key growth sector
 - AONB's, Cultural & heritage linkages, festivals / events, food & drink, active tourism (golf, walking, hiking, sailing)
- Just under 10% of the tourism trips along the EEC are to NMD or LCC
- Represents €188M revenue / tourism spend (2018 NMD / LCC)
- This is strong position upon which to build day trips, over night visits – dispersing the visitor from capital cities of Belfast / Dublin



Looking Ahead: Collaborating at a Cross Border level

Joint Council Strategic Alliance

- Working to progress the economic development and international competitiveness of the Newry & Louth Cross border region

The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

- Recognises the benefits of the Economic Corridor model - demonstrated effectiveness in improving competitiveness and supporting growth
- As we emerge from the COVID-19 crisis, the partners strongly believe that increased cross-border cooperation is vital if we wish the region to return to sustained and inclusive economic prosperity

Co-operation Ireland working group for Town Centres

- A engagement forum of Cross Border Government Departments, public and private bodies looking at the sustainable recovery and growth of our town centres
- **Cross Border Emergency Planning and lobbying**



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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

**Urban Regeneration and
Development Fund (URDF)**

Enablers for Growth

City Deal

- £1 Million investment between UK Government, NI Executive, 6 City Deal Council partners, Universities, Colleges and private sector.
- Investment is focused on delivering inclusive economic growth, creating more and better quality jobs, and increasing GVA by £470m p/a

Urban Regeneration Fund: Ireland 2040

- Enabler for sustainable development opportunities, through the regeneration of Irelands Cities and main towns
- Opportunities will be progressed for residential and commercial development, working towards the achievement of the 'compact growth' that was set out in Project Ireland 2040

Enablers for Growth

Peace Plus

- Cross Border collaboration with NI and border region Council's, through the East Border Region partnership
- Seeking to develop & implement projects that will boost economic growth and stimulate social and economic regeneration on a cross border bases

Shared Island Fund (€500m up to 2025)

- The Shared Island Fund will foster new investment and development opportunities on a North/South basis and support the delivery of key cross-border infrastructure initiatives set out in the Programme for Government
- Shared Island Fund will be an important enabler for progressing key strategic opportunities for growth
- Looking at opportunities such as Narrow Water bridge, education & skills, connectivity, environment, health developments



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Mourne
Mountains
& Ring of Gullion

<https://vimeo.com/507441967/5a8cd236e1>

Louth & Newry Mourne and Down,
Joint Tourism Video