Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy, 2015 – 2020

Final Draft: 05 June 2015

This strategy has been based on research and consultation undertaken by Blu Zebra Ltd in association with Philip Mc Donagh, Eileen McGloin and Heather Maitland, as appointed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Foreword

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1 Introduction

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is located in the south east of Northern Ireland, covering parts of Counties Down and Armagh. As the third largest Council within Northern Ireland, it comprises approximately 11% of the total land area of Northern Ireland, more than 100 miles of coastline, and provides services to over 178,000 residents, *(10% of the NI population).* In addition to Newry City, the principal towns within the District are Downpatrick, Ballynahinch, Kilkeel, Newcastle, Warrenpoint and Crossmaglen.

We are home to strong concentration of companies, with 7 of the top NI performing businesses located within our District. The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council region accounts for 12% of the stock of schools in NI, and with 76% of school leaver's continuing into higher or further education, the region is performing above the NI average in terms of educational achievements.

Newry, Mourne and Down has rich heritage and tourism assets, stemming from the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which are located within the region.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has the assets, the heritage, the qualifications, skills and business base to deliver on the following vision and 5 year strategic targets.

Our Mission

"Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will be recognised as a vibrant, dynamic and connected region of enterprise and economic growth; a place of sustainable natural beauty and a premier tourist destination, encompassing excellence in culture and arts and enabling and creating opportunities for all"

Our Vision

"Newry, Mourne and Down a vibrant, dynamic and connected region for investment, tourism and culture"

Strategy Targets

The Strategy targets will incorporate the following areas:

- Job Creation and Job retention
- Resident Employment Rate
- Business birth and survival rates
- Economic inactivity levels
- Number of overnight visitors from outside the Destination
- Average spend per trip by visitors to the Destination
- Development and delivery an Integrated Urban/Rural Regeneration Framework

- Growing the culture and arts sector have a pivotal role in economic development, maximising the economic and social return on investment in cultural assets

Scope

This is the first Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy. The Strategy has been written in the context of the Vision for Newry, Mourne and Down District and covers a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues.

The creation of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council from 1st April 2015 with powers of economic development and regeneration presents an ideal opportunity to develop a strategy which will bring together all sectors of the economy and the community in a united effort to shape the area and to begin to create a new economic future for the next generation.

The Council has already led the way in its Corporate Plan with a mission statement that supports this strategy:

- "to lead and serve a District that is prosperous, healthy and sustainable"

The Corporate Plan places a strong emphasis on tourism, economic development and regeneration and five of the eight objectives in the Corporate Plan relate directly to this strategy.

By 2019 we will have:

- Become one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland;
- Attracted investment and supported the creation of new jobs;
- Led the regeneration of our urban and rural areas;
- Protected our natural and built environment
- Advocated on your behalf specifically in relation to those issues which really matter to you

Achievement of these ambitious objectives depends on a wide range of businesses, organisations and individuals within the local area, and on statutory agencies that operate in the area. The role of the Council is to provide clear leadership and direction for the strategy, to ensure that everyone understands their role and to provide accountability by reporting on the achievements on a regular basis.

This strategy has been based on research and consultation undertaken by Blu Zebra Ltd in association with Philip Mc Donagh, Eileen McGloin and Heather Maitland, as appointed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. It has been developed through a partnership approach and has involved an extensive engagement process with stakeholder forums, workshops, seminars and interviews, to establish where the Region is now, the challenges and opportunities that face the Region, and where we want the Region to be in 5 years' time.

The stakeholder engagement was undertaken across the five themes of the strategy:

1. Economic development,
2. Tourism development,
3. Urban regeneration,
4. Rural regeneration
5. Culture & the Arts

The engagement process involved Government Departments and statutory bodies who have responsibilities in each of the above areas, representative groups within the Newry, Mourne and Down area including Chambers of Commerce, the Tourism Destination Forum, urban and rural development groups and arts groups, and finally, it engaged businesses and other representatives who contribute to wealth creation and economic activity in the area. A survey of businesses located within the Region was also completed.

Timescale

The Strategy will have a life of 5 years, 2015 -2020, as local economic development and regeneration must have long term, clear objectives.

Implementation and Review

To enable effective delivery of the Strategy an Action Plan will be an integral part, and it is recognised that delivery of the Action Plan will require effective partnering. To enable this, an Economic Forum, representative of the economic drivers across the District will be established as a matter of priority.

Performance indicators and targets will be set through the strategy, on the basis that future success can be measured against performance of the economy. Appendix 1 provides a high level overview of baseline performance and identifies the projected strategic targets to be achieved by 2020. The Economic Forum when established will set further goals for the area to complement the delivery of this strategy, and which will recognise the work of partner agencies

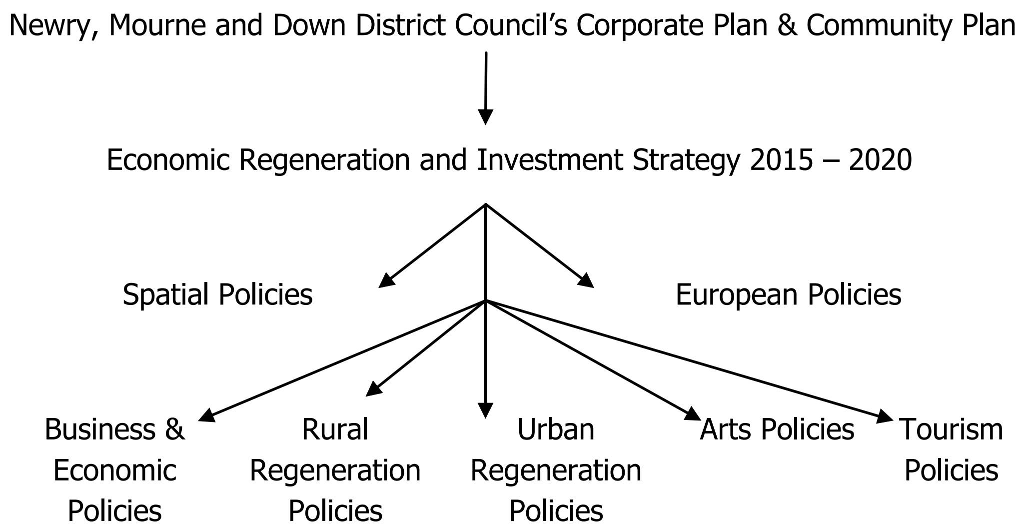
The Strategy Action Plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Committee of Council. The review will measure how effective the actions are in addressing the aims of the Strategy.

Each year progress against the strategy will be reviewed, and the actions intended to be taken in the following 12 months and beyond will be specified.

2 Policy Context Summary

The Economic Regeneration and Investment strategy is set in the context of EU, UK and Northern Ireland policies and strategies. It has been shaped by a range of strategy documents, and with consideration of the policy and strategies of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. All strategy documents that have been referenced are listed in Appendix 2. Below provides detail on the high level documents which were considered and their key messages which were relevant to the formation of this Strategy.

Figure 2.1: Strategic context for Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy



The Strategy was prepared with consideration of the proposals for EU funding in Northern Ireland for the period 2014 – 2020 and considered mainstream EU programmes, namely ERDF, ESF, RDP and Interreg V and trans-nation programmes. The above policies and strategies influence the actions of the Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy.

Key Messages

The NI Executive are proposing to cut the rate of Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland from April 2017, this will present a significant opportunity for Newry, Mourne and Down to compete with the south of Ireland. Corporation Tax at present is set at 21% in NI compared with 12.5% in the South. The Secretary of State for NI, Teresa Viliers has said that 34,000 businesses could benefit from a reduction in Corporation Tax. The transfer of responsibility will give the NI Executive the opportunity to rebalance the economy. Newry, Mourne and Downs position on the economic corridor between Dublin and Belfast provides the real opportunity to compete but the infrastructure needs to be in place (people/skills, place and environment).

Tourism development has significant potential for growth in NI but requires a more navigable route in terms of the experience for tourists; their understanding of the products on offer and how to access and interpret them but also the importance of iconic and supporting experiences- those that stand out against competitors.
The NI Tourism Brand should be utilised as a way of driving competitiveness .

Newry, Mourne and Down **MUST** take advantage of its location with Newry as a "Gateway" between NI and the South of Ireland; Downpatrick on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Catchment Area; its position along the Belfast- Dublin Economic Corridor; the unique tourism asset of the area with its three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty alongside its other natural assets; its rail and road network; the strategic importance of the Port; and the growth potential of the area through its four Hubs and Clusters

Central to the strategy is the requirement for investment in key infrastructure projects around networks (roads, public transport, gateways, telecoms and energy), skills (schools, further and higher education, youth services, libraries), health (primary care, public safety and technology, hospitals modernisation), social (regeneration, social housing, culture, arts, sports and inland waterways), productive (enterprise and innovation, tourism, rural development and primary industries, public sector reform)

The Newry, Mourne and Down region must maximise the opportunities for the provision of specialised services within different urban centres and must reinforce the importance of not competing but rather promoting collaboration and complementarity between the main City, the towns, villages and rural areas

Tackling the areas of highest deprivation in a cross-departmental and integrated manner is still a priority - ensuring that these areas do not slip back into new cycles of deprivation and poverty

There is a strong Arts and Culture base within the region and this has the opportunity to add significant value to the economic vitality of the area; to the regeneration of local neighbourhoods, towns cities and villages; and the importance of participation in arts and culture as a way of building cohesive communities.
Creative industries offer significant opportunities

The development of a new Rural Development Programme must embed the aim to empower rural communities to help themselves; improve the competitiveness of the rural business; improve the natural environment and develop and improve rural areas including the tourism opportunities via a bottom up approach engaging business, community and the public sector.

The reform process has presented 11 new Councils the opportunity to collaborate and strengthen the position of our areas and this must be developed through partnerships and collaboration across council boundaries and on a cross border basis and across themes.

3 Economic Review and Outlook

The Strategy takes account of the external environment within which it operates. The global economy is growing again although the rate of recovery in the UK and the Eurozone has been slower than elsewhere. The Irish economy has bounced back from the crisis of a few years ago but, as with some other countries, it is still burdened with crippling levels of public debt which constrains the capacity of government to respond.

The Northern Ireland economy has been much slower to recover than other UK regions and forecasts for the local economy suggest that growth will continue to struggle to reach 2% per annum. Continuing rounds of public spending cuts and welfare reforms mean that the local economy does not receive the same boost from the public sector that it has during previous recoveries.

Over the next 5 year period of this strategy the Newry, Mourne and Down economy will therefore be dependent on the private sector for economic growth and on export-led growth, including the tourism sector.

The latest outlook report from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects global growth of 3.5% in 2015 and 3.8% in 2016. Growth is expected to be stronger in 2015 compared to 2014 in advanced economies, but weaker in emerging economies. Growth projections for the Euro area have been uplifted by the IMF; a result of lower oil prices, lower interest rates and euro depreciation, as well as a shift to a broadly neutral fiscal stance. Growth of 1.5% and 1.6% in 2015 and 2016 respectively is now expected.

The Republic of Ireland is expected to be the fastest growing economy in the area this year, with estimated growth of 3.9%. The IMF estimates that the UK economy will grow steadily by 2.7% in 2015 and 2.3% in 2016, supported by lower oil prices and improved financial conditions. Elsewhere, inflation (CPI) has remained unchanged at 0.0% in March, with falls in clothing and gas prices producing the largest downward contributions to the rate.

The Northern Ireland labour market has continued to improve with the number of people claiming benefits decreasing for a 27thsuccessive month, by a further 1,000 in the month to March. The unemployment rate, at 6%, is slightly above the UK rate (5.6%) but is down by 1.7 percentage points over the year. However despite strong labour market performance, the economy has been much slower to recover than the rest of the UK. Forecasts for the local economy range around 2% this year and next year 2016 which does not represent a strong level of growth and highlights the importance of export markets as the main source of growth for the economy over the next few years.

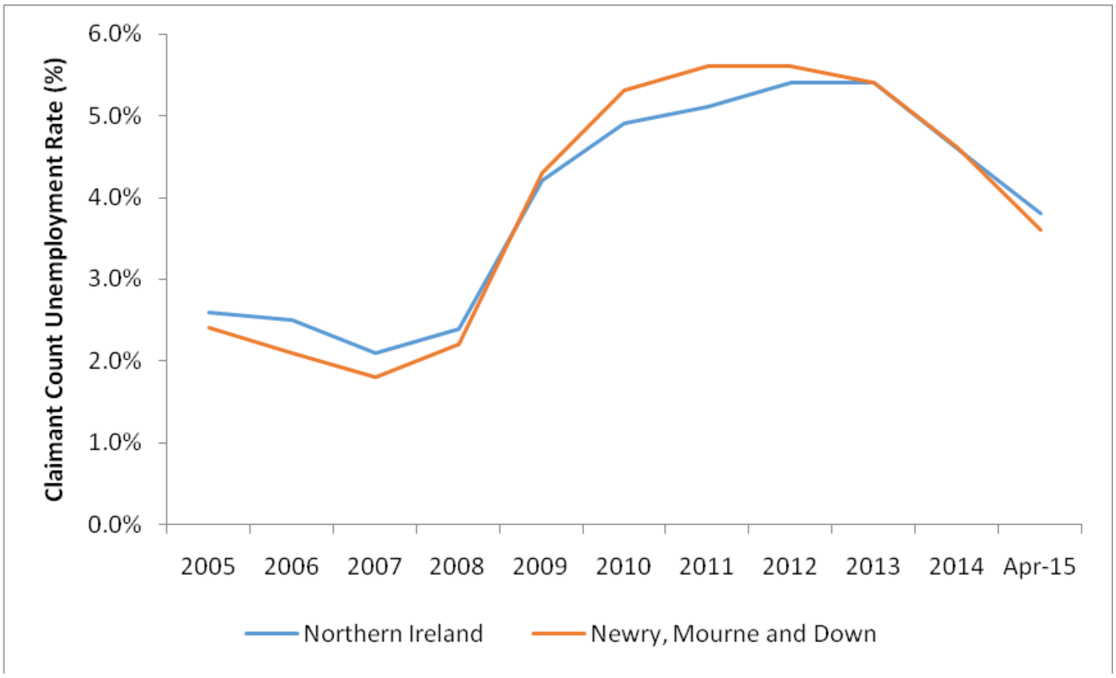
Recent economic performance & prospects in Newry, Mourne and Down

As with the wider NI economy, the Newry, Mourne and Down area is showing signs of economic recovery after a particularly turbulent period during what was the worst recession on record in Northern Ireland. The area was particularly badly hit because of its reliance on the Construction sector and corresponding links with Manufacturing, along with the area's proximity to the Republic of Ireland and fall out from the recession there.

Signs of recovery are probably most evident from recent changes in unemployment. As at April 2015 the claimant count rate[1] for Newry, Mourne and Down was 3.6%, just slightly below the Northern Ireland average of 3.8%. This represents a fall of 2.6% over the previous month (NI – 3.7%) and a decline of 24.8% over the year (NI -21.2%).

Reflecting its greater exposure to Construction, the area had experienced a larger rise in claimant count unemployment compared to the Northern Ireland average during the recession. The rate has been falling steadily since 2013 and in the first 4 months of 2015 Newry, Mourne & Down experienced the second largest rate of decline in claimant count numbers across the 11 Councils.

Figure 3.1: Claimant Count Unemployment Rate



Source: NISRA

[1] The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits

While both youth (4.7%) and long-term (1.6%) unemployment rates remain higher than their pre-recession averages, the youth unemployment rate has been falling steadily in the area (it peaked at 9% in August 2011 after being as low as 2.7% in November 2007). By comparison, the long-term unemployment rate has fallen very slowly over the last year, down from 1.8% in February 2014. It reached a low of 0.3% in November 2008.

There have also been greater signs of start-up and investment intentions. There has been a particular uplift in the number of new starts participating in the Regional Start Initiative (RSI) for the most recent year available, 2013. The numbers participating in RSI increased two and a half fold over the year to reach 357 start-ups, 10% of the Northern Ireland total. The lowest numbers recorded in the Newry, Mourne & Down area were in 2012. 2013 was also a record year in terms of the number of investments in Newry, Mourne & Down assisted by Invest NI reaching 457 and up 20% on 2012 (NI +10%). The value of investment increased by almost 50% over the year to reach £21m (NI +84%).

GVA, which measures the contribution of the area to the output of the Northern Ireland economy, was £1.24bn in 2012 representing 7% of the Northern Ireland total. GVA grew by 7.8% during 2011 and 2012 in Newry, Mourne & Down compared to 2.5% for Northern Ireland as a whole. In fact the region experienced the 4th highest increase in GVA over that period across the 11 Councils. For 3 Council areas GVA declined during 2012.

This general sense that the economy in the area is recovering is borne out by the findings of the Business Survey undertaken as part of the development of this Strategy. It specifically asked about business prospects and performance going forward. Businesses responding to the survey[2] were generally positive about prospects over the next 3 years. Almost 72% felt that there were growth opportunities and for 1 in 4 businesses those opportunities were significant. Only 5% anticipated a contraction in their business. Feedback from the businesses highlighted a general sense of business confidence returning to the area after the recession.

In terms of how this would translate into increased turnover, jobs and investment the businesses were also largely positive. Around half believed that turnover and investment in their business would increase in the next 3 years. However, fewer believed this would translate into increased jobs (32%) and around 40% believed that employment in their businesses would be unchanged.

Businesses did raise a number of challenges to recovery. They include economic uncertainty driven by a host of issues including Stormont budget concerns, public sector cuts, potential interest rate rises, higher rates and water charges. Other concerns include lack of clarity about Council plans, under-performance of tourism in the area, dependence upon limited local business market for growth, difficulty in

[2] Over 100 businesses in total

competing against lower VAT and property rates across the border along with difficulty in accessing bank funding.

The following projections have been prepared for employment in the Newry, Mourne & Down area for the year 2020.

Table 3.1: Projections for population and employment in Newry, Mourne & Down 2015 - 2020[3]

	Current	2020	Change	% Change
Population	177,700	185,000	+7,300	+4.1%
Working Age Population	111,800	113,600	+1,800	+1.6%
Economically Active	86,000	89,500	+3,500	+4.1%
Employment	53,000	55,200	+2,200	+4.1%
- Construction	3,230	3,370	+140	
- Manufacturing	6,300	6,570	+270	
- Services	42,300	44,060	+1,760	
- Other	1,170	1,200	+30	

The projections are based on official population projections together with average projected rates of growth for employment in sectors for the Northern Ireland economy. They provide a baseline projection for the economic strategy which if successful should generate a higher rate of growth in employment than estimated in these projections.

SWOT Analysis of the Newry, Mourne and Down Economy

This is a summary SWOT of the economic position of the Newry, Mourne and Down region from an economic, tourism, urban development, rural development and arts and culture perspective.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Strategic importance of location on North / South economic corridor and Eastern Seaboard	Poor connectivity to support economic and tourism development	Warrenpoint Harbour	Slow economic growth in the domestic and international markets
Strong entrepreneurial tradition and vibrant indigenous business community	Business networks fragmented and under-supported	A range of business support	Competition from Belfast and Dublin for new investment in key growth sectors
Outstanding natural beauty of the area	Aging population leading to succession issues for businesses	Collaboration across agencies	Reduced public spending to support development
Availability of wide range of outdoor activities	Excellent natural resources which are currently not harnessed	Access to a successful diaspora	Currency fluctuation creating uncertainty
Vibrant rural infrastructure of hamlets and villages and strong agricultural and fishing tradition	Lack of a strong, identifiable brand	Strong educational sector	Development pressures including negative perceptions of the planning process & attaining a balance between conservation & development
Strong diverse cultural offering	Over reliance on domestic and Irish visitor markets	Location, location, location	Continuing need for rural regeneration
Good cross border linkages across all sectors	Lack of cohesion and coordination between cultural and tourism sectors	Strong and growing agric-food sector	
	Contribution of culture and arts to the economy is not recognised	Strong cross border linkages and partnerships	

4 Newry, Mourne and Down Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy

Making it happen

To make delivery a reality the Economic Regeneration and Investment Strategy has three primary roles:

1. Enabler – brings together existing partners and organisations within the area and supports and guides activity to deliver the regions priorities

2. Agitator – to use influence to bring in greater support from Central Government and greater investment from the private sector and internationally

3. Commissioner – to use resources directly and indirectly to strategically guide investment into priorities which support the strategy.

This strategy ultimately guides the 'what' and the 'how' we deliver our Vision of:

"Newry, Mourne and Down a vibrant, dynamic and connected region for investment, tourism and culture"

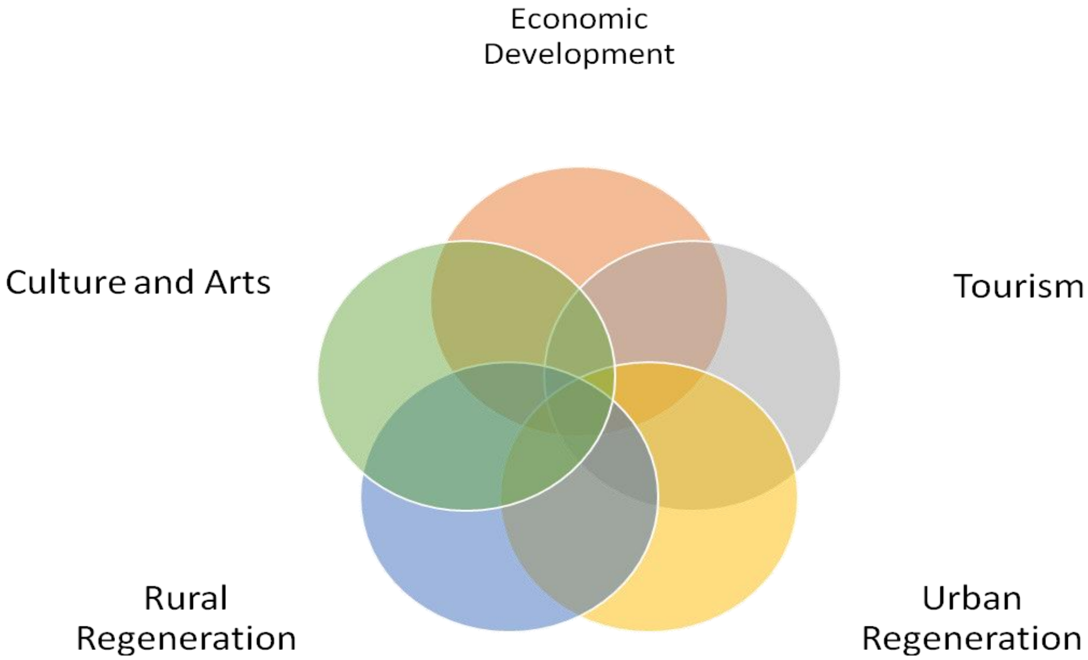
It provides the framework under which our objectives sit and how we prioritise the activity which is required to deliver.

Strategy Themes

Through the consultation and research five strategic themes have been identified and these are listed below:

Theme 1: Economic Development
Theme 2: Tourism Development, Marketing, Promotion and Events
Theme 3: Urban Development and Regeneration
Theme 4: Rural Development and Regeneration
Theme 5: Culture and the Arts

The Strategy recognises that there is synergy between the five themes that needs to be developed over the course of the implementation of this strategy. The relationship between the different elements of the Strategy are outlined in the diagram below, which illustrates the need for collaboration with others and the connectivity required across all five themes in terms of future planning and delivery.


Economic Development
Culture and Arts
Tourism
Rural Regeneration
Urban Regeneration

4.1 Theme 1: Economic Development

The Strategic Priorities and Actions required to meet the developmental needs of the business sector in Newry, Mourne & Down are centred on 8 strategic priorities listed below:

1. Support job creation through growth of the indigenous business base
2. Provision of a suite of business support programmes
3. Establishment of effective business networks
4. Increasing Foreign Direct Investment into the region
5. Establishment of effective and business-friendly approaches to the planning process
6. Building links between business and education sectors
7. Enhancing Cross Border and Trans-national Business Development Links
8. Advancing employability and skills within the region

Strategic Priorities	Actions	Partners	Performance Measures
Support job creation through growth of the indigenous business base	Establish, implement and deliver a Regional Start Programme for the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area	Invest NI DETI	Regional Start Programme implemented by December 2015
Provision of a suite of local business support programmes	Development of a suite of business support programmes which focus on cross sectors where the area already has key strengths as identified in the Socio-economic Profile, i.e. service industry (ICT), construction, tourism, agri food industry, creative industries, as well as in other growing sectors.	Invest NI DETI / DARD / DEL Education Sector Tourism NI	Suite of Business Support Programmes developed and implemented over 2015 – 2020

		Enterprise NI & Local Enterprise Agencies Chambers of Commerce and Trade Cross Border Council's and Enterprise Boards Tourism Ireland Sectoral Representative bodies	
Establishment of effective business networks	Establish an Economic Forum representative of the local business, regeneration and tourism sector Develop a web based business portal	Chambers of Commerce Business Community Enterprise Agencies External Support Agencies	Establishment of forum by September 2015 Development of a district wide database by 2016
Increasing Inward Investment into the region (including Foreign Direct Investment)	Work with Invest NI to promote the region across the UK, Ireland, Europe and further a field with the aim of attracting new investors.	Invest NI Chambers of Commerce	Development of targets through the Forum and in partnership with Invest NI Regular liaison meetings

		Business Community External Support Agencies	with Invest NI
Establishment of effective and business-friendly approaches to the planning process	Review land use and infrastructure provision for business development and to inform the Local Development Plan To work in partnership with business and planners to help facilitate a speedy and effective planning processes	Other Council Departments	To be developed in partnership with Regulatory and Technical Services
Building links between business and education sectors	Establish business and educational links through the Economic Forum	Council Education Sector Chambers of commerce Business Community	Establishment of forum by September 2015 with representatives from the Education Sector
Enhancing Cross Border and Trans-national Business Development Links	Continue to develop and expand the MOU to enable the delivery of effective cross border initiatives Explore other trans-national linkages	Inter Trade Ireland Cross border authorities East Border Region	Development of programmes transnational programmes

		SEUPB	
Advancing employability and skills within the region	Develop programmes that enhance employability and skills that are relevant to local business and investors needs	Council Education Sector Chambers of Commerce Business Community	Targets relevant to the local business and investors needs to be developed via the Economic Forum

4.2 Theme 2: Tourism Development, Marketing, Promotion and Events

The Strategic Priorities and Actions required to meet the developmental needs of the tourism sector in Newry, Mourne and Down are centred on:

1. To become the destination of choice in NI
2. To become Irelands premier outdoor/adventure destination
3. To become a destination recognised as an events stage

Strategic Priorities	Actions	Partners	Performance Measures
To become the destination of choice in NI	Develop and implement a Tourism Strategy to link the Destinations Develop destination brands to increase competitive standout Develop and deliver a Flagship Project to enhance the destination offering (e.g. Gondola) Development of new routes ie Greenway from Omeath to Carlingford, establish link from Carlingford to Portadown, Food trails, Craft Trails, Foster strong linkages between the three AONB's Develop stories, linkages and networks to enhance the experience	Tourism NI Tourism Ireland Chambers of Commerce Failte Ireland Louth County Council Tourism and service sectors DETI Tourism businesses	To be identified as part of the Tourism Strategy for the destination

	Develop the cultural products e.g. St Patrick Develop and promote the Mourne Coastal Route Develop industry capability and connectivity through training, mentoring and collaboration on the Economic Forum Develop & implement a technology led Visitor Servicing Strategy Develop and deliver a marketing and communication strategy utilising technology to promote the destination worldwide Review and improve how the visitor is serviced from the Destinations Complete the accommodation study that enables targeted development to meet the consumer need Enhancement of non-serviced accommodation sector where demand is identified i.e. camping/glamping sector Explore opportunities for Newry City to benefit from Tourism e.g. retail	City Centre Management MHT Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership Ring of Gullion Partnership Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council National Trust	

	development Continued development of the Geotourism product Explore opportunities for continued collaboration with Louth Council and the Ireland's Ancient East Creation of strong linkages across key products – encouraging the sector to work together to offer unique visitor experiences Enhancement of the skills base to deliver an effective tourism product Development and implementation of the Diaspora Project to support tourism Development of the evening economy		
To become Irelands premier outdoor/adventure destination	Enhance the adventure tourism product within the area and make it accessible throughout the year. Explore introduction of adventure mark or similar for all activity businesses promoted through the Destination Develop a strong product and service provider network that delivers a high quality product that specifically meets user	Tourism NI Tourism Ireland Chambers of Commerce Cross border Councils and Agencies	To be identified as part of the Tourism Strategy for the destination

	needs Develop and Deliver a marketing and communication strategy utilising technology to promote the destination worldwide Ensure use of the Forestry estate is maximised through leases and SLA's. Support innovation in the industry to ensure the continuous creation of additional challenges for adventure tourists. Organise a series of annual adventure related competition festivals and international events. Work with actual/potential entrepreneurs and accommodation providers to ensure a more individual service is provided for adventure tourists in terms of accommodation, facilities and equipment outlets.	Relevant Statutory Departments and Agencies Tourism and Service Sectors Activity Providers DETI MHT, Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership, Ring of Gullion Partnership Sport NI Forest Service National Trust	
To become a destination recognised as an events stage	Develop an Events Framework	Tourism NI Tourism Ireland	To be identified as part of the Tourism Strategy for the destinations

		Chambers of Commerce Cross border Councils and Agencies Relevant Statutory departments and agencies	

4.3 Theme 3: Urban Development and Regeneration

The Strategic Priorities and Actions required to meet the developmental needs for Urban Regeneration in Newry, Mourne and Down are centred on 7 strategic priorities which are listed below:

1. To develop a Sustainable Integrated Regeneration Framework
2. To address deprivation levels across the region
3. Delivery of a suite of urban Regeneration initiatives
4. Integration of local communities in regeneration plans
5. Identifying the role of Culture and the Arts in regeneration
6. Influence Central Government priorities for key infrastructural projects which can be the catalyst for regeneration
7. Develop an investment plan to realise regeneration in the area

Strategic Priorities	Actions	Partners	Performance Measures
To develop a Sustainable Integrated Regeneration Framework	Development of an integrated rural & urban regeneration framework which will: • Take direction and deliver on regeneration within the context of the community plan • Define disadvantage • Inform the Local Development Plan • Integrate the actions from existing Master plans and Village Plans and establish clusters where common themes and need exist • Explore ways to maximise the benefits of gateways to the region,	DSD/ DARD Chambers of Commerce Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations (LAG) Rural Networks	Integrated Regeneration Framework Developed by December 2015

	i.e. public art • Explore ways to maximise the benefit of the region's location on the Dublin to Belfast Economic Corridor with proximity to the Port of Warrenpoint, Downpatrick on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Catchment Area • Seek to maximise use of natural spaces and assets, i.e. canal, waterways, forestry, walkways, cycling routes Establish an urban & Rural Regeneration Partnership to oversee and advise Council on the delivery of the Integrated Regeneration framework		
To address deprivation levels across the region	To establish an area based partnership to address disadvantage To develop a definition of disadvantage which will tackle deprivation within the region, based on a range of indicators To maximise transferred functions and powers to address disadvantage and promote regeneration across the region	Community Networks DSD OFMDFM Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations	To be established via the area based partnership

	To develop a programme of activity which will seek to address economic, educational, health and social disadvantage Develop and agree a clear integrated investment programme for disadvantaged neighbourhoods for the next 5 -10 years	Education and Health Sectors	
Delivery of a suite of urban Regeneration initiatives	Deliver Urban regeneration initiatives that will create an environment that encourages people to want to live, work and visit and invest in, i.e. development of brown field and derelict sites Identify priorities for the retail sector, and deliver initiatives that will seek to grow and support it within our town centres, i.e. BIDs and LOTs Invest in high-quality infrastructure and public realm initiatives Enable the delivery of practical actions to give more vulnerable groups access to new opportunities and services Review the role of town centres towards a more diverse mix of functions, experience, service and specialisms and market accordingly.	Community Networks DSD OFMDFM Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations Education and Health Sectors	Integrated Regeneration Framework Developed by December 2015

Integration of local communities in regeneration plans	Supporting the development of networks, partnerships and participation within and between communities, to empower local people to contribute to improving their community, town and village centres Develop a programme of capacity building for regeneration including elements around, place planning and shaping, project consultation and engagement, programme management and stewardship	DSD Chambers of Commerce Local Area Community Groups Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations Rural Networks	Establishment of partnerships by December 2015 Establishment of a capacity building programme by December 2016
Identifying the role of Culture and the Arts in regeneration	Design and deliver a range of Arts and Culture Projects that aim to deliver on regeneration outputs To strengthen the Evening Economy through regeneration initiatives, and culture and arts programmes that encourage greater use of urban areas Create locations & spaces for meet to meet and interact through Arts and cultural activities	Dept Culture, Arts and Leisure NI Screen Craft NI Education Sector Voluntary Culture and Arts Sector	To have in place a Structure, working group, cultural strategy and action plan that reflects regeneration outputs agreed by March 2016

	To create a new arts and cultural entertainment venue (500+ capacity)		
Influence Central Government priorities for key infrastructural projects which can be the catalyst for regeneration	Lobby Government depts and agencies as required for provision of key infrastructure and services that will regenerate the region, i.e. roads, ports, broadband connectivity,	Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Education Sector Chambers of Commerce Business Partners Harbour Authorities	Priorities to be identified through the ERT, AHC and SPPR Committees annually
Develop an investment plan to realise regeneration in the area	Maximise the level of public spend Lever additional investment from private investment funds, EU, and other financial instruments	Central Government Private Sector Relevant Financial Instruments	Investment Plan developed and approved by Council

4.4 Theme 4: Rural Development and Regeneration

The Strategic Priorities and Actions required to meet the developmental needs for rural development and regeneration in Newry, Mourne & Down are centred on 6 strategic priorities which are listed below:

1. To develop a Sustained Integrated Regeneration Framework
2. Maximise investment opportunities from the Rural Development Programme, European Fisheries Programme, and other funding streams
3. To implement and deliver a Rural Development and a Fisheries Programme for the region
4. Improve infrastructure across the rural areas in order to meet the needs of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses.
5. Provision of a suite programmes which will seek to regenerate rural areas
6. Establishment of effective planning process which is considerate of rural development priorities

Strategic Priorities	**Actions**	**Partners**	**Performance Measures**
To develop a Sustained Integrated Regeneration Framework	Development an integrated rural & urban regeneration framework which will: • Take direction and deliver on regeneration within the context of the community plan • Define disadvantage • Inform the Local Development Plan • Integrate the actions from existing Master plans and Village Plans and establish clusters where common themes and need exist • Explore ways to maximise the benefits of gateways to the region, i.e. public art	DSD DARD Chambers of Commerce Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations (LAG) Rural Networks	Integrated Regeneration Framework Developed by December 2015

	• Explore ways to maximise the benefit of the region's location on the Dublin to Belfast Economic Corridor with proximity to the Port of Warrenpoint • Seek to maximise use of natural spaces and assets, i.e. canal, waterways, forestry, walkways, cycling routes Establish an urban & Rural Regeneration Partnership to oversee and advise Council on the delivery of the Integrated Regeneration framework		
Maximise investment opportunities from the Rural Development Programme, European Fisheries Programme, and other funding streams, i.e. Trans national programmes	Implement and deliver initiatives identified within Council's Regeneration Framework, Village Plans and Master Plans To maximise funding distribution to the region from key Rural Development programmes, i.e. RDP Agri-food schemes, Rural Business, Rural Tourism and Village Renewal schemes and other initiatives within the Rural Development Programme To support rural business and community groups to identify investment opportunities which will enable delivery of initiatives against the village plans and master plans, and contribute to the	DARD/DCAL Chambers of Commerce Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations Rural Networks/Local Area Community Groups	Delivery of Rural Development Programme and FLAG by 2020

	growth of the local rural business economy To support villages to identify possible opportunities for collaboration and delivery of rural initiatives on a cluster basis		
To implement and deliver a Rural Development and a Fisheries Programme for the region	To develop strategies for each programme that is considerate and complementarily of initiatives detailed within other Council and regional Strategies and Framework documents To implement EU funding programmes using delivery initiatives that will ensure maximum impact to the region	DARD/DCAL Chambers of Commerce Harbour Authorities Fish Production Organisations Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations Rural Networks/Local Area Community Groups	Delivery of Rural Development Programme and FLAG by 2020

Improve infrastructure across the rural areas in order to meet the needs of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses.	Review existing broadband research and data to identify current provision Support broadband research & data with consultation with relevant bodies to identify all infrastructural needs and requirements within the rural areas Work with Statutory Departments and agencies to encourage and support the delivery of initiatives across the region which will seek to improve rural infrastructure in order to meet the requirements of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses Council to deliver on initiatives which will seek to improve rural infrastructure provision, and usage of same, in order to meet the requirements of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses	DARD/DETI Harbour Authorities Relevant Statutory departments and agencies Funding Organisations Rural Networks/Local Area Community Groups Chambers of Commerce	
Provision of a suite programmes which will seek to regenerate rural areas	Development of a suite programmes which focus on addressing rural issues in order to revitalise rural areas, i.e. rural business development, farm diversification, addressing dereliction & maximising use of development sites, town & village environmental improvements & shop front schemes	Invest NI DETI / DARD / DEL Education Sector	Delivery of programmes from 2015-2020

	Establish were required collaborative networks involving external agencies who can help inform and assist in the development of regeneration programmes within and across the rural areas	Tourism NI Enterprise NI & Local Enterprise Agencies Chambers of Commerce Cross border Council's Tourism Ireland Sectoral Representative bodies	
Establishment of an effective planning process which is considerate of rural development priorities	Ensure that the Local Development Plan is informed of rural development priorities, i.e. the sustainable use of natural and built heritage Support were appropriate, planning opportunities which are economically sustainable, and show consideration for the protection and improvement of the environment, wildlife and natural and built heritage Support were appropriate, initiatives that progress renewable energy opportunities, and efforts towards achievement of the	Other Council Departments	To be developed in partnership with Regulatory and Technical Services

	PfG Renewable Energy targets Support the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly businesses in rural areas		

4.5 Theme 5: Culture and the Arts

The Strategic Priorities and Actions required to meet the developmental needs of the Culture and Arts Sector in Newry, Mourne & Down are centred on 6 strategic priorities which are listed below:

1. To ensure that culture and arts are pivotal to economic development and to maximise the economic and social return on investment in cultural assets
2. To ensure that cultural activity in Newry, Mourne and Down is co-ordinated
3. To ensure that the local and professional arts sectors can utilise council owned buildings to maximise economic and social impact
4. To support the voluntary arts sector
5. To maximise the opportunities generated by the Creative industry sector

Strategic Priorities	Actions	Partners	Performance Measures
To ensure that culture and arts are pivotal to economic development and to maximise the economic and social return on investment in cultural assets	Develop the organisational structures for delivery of the new Cultural Strategy Agree a cross departmental working group to coordinate the development of a new cultural strategy for NM&DDC Develop cultural objectives and an associated action plan Ensure the inclusion of arts and culture in strategies for rural development, neighbourhood renewal, tourism and economic development and in community plan	Arts Council DCAL Other Council Directorates Private Sector Craft NI Education Sector	Structure, working group, cultural strategy and action plan agreed by March 2016

	Lobby for the retention of budgets to the arts and culture as their contribution is underestimated currently Develop effective, measurable economic and social return on investment targets alongside cultural objectives and targets integrated into the wider policy which should be effectively monitored	Culture and Arts Sector	
To ensure that cultural activity in Newry, Mourne and Down is co-ordinated	Undertake an audit of cultural activity in Newry, Mourne and Down and the organisations undertaking this work alongside those also operating across the border attended by local audiences. Set up an effective structure for communication and consultation with the District's voluntary, community and professional arts organisations Facilitate connectivity between sectors e.g. linking cultural industries, education and tourism – on for example the Destination Forum and the Economic Forum and with those engaged in the evening economy	Chambers of commerce Arts Council NI Craft NI Education Sector Culture and Arts Sector	Structure to be agreed, forum set up and membership agreed by December 2015 Baseline agreed for number of projects/initiatives undertaken and developed: monitor and increase incrementally year-on-year

To ensure that the local and professional arts sectors can utilise council owned buildings to maximise economic and social impact	Develop marketing infrastructure and systems to support organisations by promoting events and opportunities effectively across the district and beyond. Develop high quality digital marketing channels Install a Box office ticketing system hosted online that covers all the cultural centres and activities in the district. In the longer term develop an entertainment/ cultural venue for Newry that is fit for purpose with a 500+ seat auditorium	Chambers of commerce Arts Council NI Craft NI Education Sector Culture and Arts Sector	Marketing system aligned to online box office/customer management system identified, resourced and implemented within financial year 16/17 Data collection beginning June 15 reporting monthly To have completed feasibility study for development of an entertainment/cultural venue within the first term of Council
To support the voluntary arts sector	Undertake an audit of how voluntary arts groups have been supported in the last two years in the town halls in the District, benchmark this against other parts of NI and the UK and make recommendations in regard of the new voluntary arts policy Develop new voluntary arts policy including discussions on how programmes can further animate Council-owned or managed buildings.	Arts Council DCAL Private Sector Craft NI Education Sector Culture and Arts Sector	Structure, working group, cultural strategy and action plan agreed by March 2016 (including Voluntary Arts, not separate policy)

To maximise the opportunities generated by the Creative industry sector	Develop a new needs analysis of and action plan for the creative industries Carry out a Consultation with creative and cultural industries sector and with existing business and social enterprise hubs within NM&DDC Develop Incubators and innovation hubs for creative and cultural industries; incentives and support for the craft sector to collaborate to develop their own sales channels e.g. pop-up shops, open studio schemes Inspire and motivate people to develop cultural micro-businesses, particularly young people, by sponsoring annual awards ceremonies Incentivise and reward partnerships and innovation Lobby for improved broadband to support the creative industry sector	Chambers of Commerce City Centre Management Education Sector Craft NI ACNI Voluntary arts sector Down Community Arts Invest NI NI Screen Executive Depts The Hub Newry BID Newry	Compilation of data begin June 2015 – present by November 2015 Structure, working group, cultural strategy and action plan agreed by March 2016 (including Voluntary Arts, not separate policy) Structure of working group to be agreed through Enterprise and Regeneration Section of ERT in collaboration with Tourism, Culture and Events Section

5 Making the Networks Work

While this is an Economic and Investment Strategy with five themes, it is very important that the plan is delivered using a collaborative, cooperative and partnership led approach by the NM&DDC team and others as appropriate. This will be achieved through collaboration and cooperation with a range of players engaged in economic development, tourism, rural and urban regeneration and arts and culture development activities. It is important that there is a cross fertilisation of ideas and contacts leading ultimately to increased citizen engagement in the planning of local areas and improved service delivery at a local level.

Maximising the effectiveness of business/education links, tourism collaboration, cultural networks, cross border and Local Government (LGD) co-operation with neighbouring local authorities and exploiting the value of the Newry, Mourne & Down Diaspora will be imperative in moving forward.

Actions:

- Engage the good will of the Diaspora to promote tourism and investment
- Cement relationships with neighbouring LGDs
- Develop new relationships with Belfast City Council
- Connecting to Eastern Seaboard and other cross border networks

Linking the five themes to achieve a cohesive set of goals:

- Undertake master classes across the five themes for elected members and staff increasing their awareness of the cross over between themes and how to maximise synergy and collaboration
- Engage culture and the arts, regeneration and Rural Development players in tourism networks in order to increase cooperation and the development of integrated projects
- Engage regeneration and culture in the evening economy as tools in regeneration
- Develop business opportunity workshops for example in the creative industries, tourism and Rural development to increase greater awareness of opportunities and build creativity and innovation into project development activities

6 Growth Process

This Strategy has identified that sustainable economic growth does not happen in isolation but is a result of sustained investment in public and private sector collaboration, community engagement, business development, marketing and product development. Realisation of this Strategy is dependent on the implementation of an innovative support programme by the Council, but success will only happen if there is good governance, strong and decisive leadership by Council and appropriate administrative support. The challenge is to map out a path that will determine priorities for NM&DDC across the five connected themes (Economic development, Tourism development, Urban Regeneration, Rural Regeneration and Culture & the Arts) which have been identified as central to economic growth in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

A starting point is to establish how economic growth opportunities can be best met and to establish a balanced across the 5 themes. The answer lies in the adoption and implementation of a phased development approach. The following development phases have been established. In the next section, table 6.1 outlines the development phases for each of the actions across the 5 themes.

<u>Pre start Phase 2015</u>

Aim:	Focus on communication, co-ordination, planning and investment
Activity:	Establish a working model, engender support, encourage networking and establish a funding committee
Outcome:	Solid foundations, networks established, governance agreed and funding model considered

<u>Development Phases – Individual Themes</u>

2015-2016:	Short Term Goals
2017-2018:	Medium Term Goals
2018-2020:	Long Term

Table 6.1: Individual Themes, Actions & Development Phases

Theme 1: Economic Development		Development Phase					
Priority	**Action**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
Support job creation through growth of the indigenous business base	Establish NM&DDC Regional Start Programme –	✓					
Provision of a suite of business support programmes	Development of a suite of business support programmes which focus on cross sectors where the area already has key strengths as identified in the Socio-economic Profile, i.e. food processing, construction, tourism, creative industries, as well as in other growing sectors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of effective business networks	Establish an Economic Forum representative of the local business, regeneration and tourism sector	✓					
	Develop a web based business portal		✓				
Increasing Foreign Direct Investment into the region	Work with Invest NI to promote the region across the UK, Ireland, Europe and further a field with the aim of attracting new investors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of effective and business-friendly approaches to the planning process	Review land use and infrastructure provision for business development and to inform the Local Development Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	To work in partnership with business and planners to help facilitate a speedy and effective planning processes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Building links between business and education sectors	Establish business and educational links through the Economic Forum	✓					
Enhancing Cross Border and Trans-national Business Development Links	Continue to develop and expand the MOU to enable the delivery of effective cross border initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Explore other trans-national linkages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advancing employability and skills within the region	Develop programmes that enhance employability and skills that are relevant to local business needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Theme 2: Tourism Development, Marketing, Promotion and Events		Development Phase					
Priority	**Action**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2018**	**2019**
To become the destination of choice in NI	Develop a Tourism Strategy to link the Destinations	✓					
	Develop a destination brand to increase competitive standout	✓					
	Develop a Flagship Project to enhance the destination offering (e.g. Gondola)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Development of new routes ie Greenway from Omeath to Carlingford, establish link from Carlingford to Portadown, Food trails, Craft Trails,	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Foster strong linkages between the three AONB's	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop stories, linkages and networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop the cultural products e.g. St Patrick	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop and promote the Mourne Coastal Route	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop industry capability and connectivity through training, mentoring and collaboration on the Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Forum						
	Develop & implement a technology led Visitor Servicing Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop and deliver a marketing and communication strategy utilising technology to promote the destination worldwide	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Review and improve how the visitor is serviced from the Destinations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Complete an accommodation study that enables targeted development to meet the consumer need	✓					
	Enhancement of non-serviced accommodation sector where demand is identified i.e. camping/glamping sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Explore opportunities for Newry City to benefit from Tourism e.g. retail development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Continued development of the Geo-tourism product	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Explore opportunities for continued collaboration with Louth Council and the Ireland's Ancient East	✓	✓	✓			
	Creation of strong linkages across key products – encouraging the sector to work together to offer unique visitor experiences	✓	✓	✓			
	Enhancement of the skills base to deliver an effective	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	tourism product						
	Development and implementation of the Diaspora Project to support tourism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Development of the evening economy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To become NI's premier outdoor/adventure destination	Enhance the adventure tourism product within the area and make it accessible throughout the year.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Explore introduction of adventure mark or similar for all activity businesses promoted through the Destination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop a strong product and service provider network that delivers a high quality product that specifically meets user needs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop and deliver a marketing and communication strategy utilising technology to promote the destination worldwide	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure use of the Forestry estate is maximised through leases and SLA's.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Support innovation in the industry to ensure the continuous creation of additional challenges for adventure tourists.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Organise a series of annual adventure related competition festivals and international events.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Work with actual/potential entrepreneurs and accommodation providers to ensure a more individual service is provided for adventure tourists in terms of accommodation, facilities and equipment outlets.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To become one of NI's finest events destinations	Develop an Events Strategy	✓	✓				

Theme 3: Urban Development and Regeneration		Development Phase					
Priority	**Action**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
To develop a Sustainable Integrated Regeneration Framework	Development an integrated rural & urban regeneration framework which will: • Take direction and deliver on regeneration within the context of the community plan • Define disadvantage • Inform the Local Development Plan • Integrate the actions from existing Master plans and Village Plans and establish clusters where common themes and need exist • Explore ways to maximise the benefits of gateways to the region, i.e. public art • Explore ways to maximise the benefit of the region's location on the Dublin to Belfast Economic Corridor with proximity to the Port of Warrenpoint • Seek to maximise use of natural spaces and assets, i.e. canal, waterways, forestry, walkways, cycling routes	✓					
	Establish an urban & Rural Regeneration Partnership to oversee and advise Council on the delivery of the Integrated Regeneration framework	✓	✓				
To address deprivation levels	To establish an area based partnership to address	✓	✓				

across the region	disadvantage						
	To develop a definition of disadvantage which will tackle deprivation within the region, based on a range of indicators	✓					
	To maximise transferred functions and powers to address disadvantage and promote regeneration across the region	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	To develop a programme of activity which will seek to address economic, educational, health and social disadvantage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop and agree a clear integrated investment programme for disadvantaged neighbourhoods for the next 5 -10 years	✓	✓				
Delivery of a suite of urban Regeneration initiatives	Deliver Urban regeneration initiatives that will create an environment that encourages people to want to live, work and visit and invest in, i.e. development of brown field and derelict sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Identify priorities for the retail sector, and deliver initiatives that will seek to grow and support it within our town centres, i.e. BIDs and LOTs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Invest in high-quality infrastructure and public realm initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Enable the delivery of practical actions to give more vulnerable groups access to new opportunities and	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	services						
	Review the role of town centres towards a more diverse mix of functions, experience, service and specialisms and market accordingly.	✓	✓				
Integration of local communities in regeneration plans	Supporting the development of networks, partnerships and participation within and between communities, to empower local people to contribute to improving their community, town and village centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop a programme of capacity building for regeneration including elements around, place planning and shaping, project consultation and engagement, programme management and stewardship	✓	✓				
Identifying the role of Culture and the Arts in regeneration	Design and deliver a range of Arts and Culture Projects that aim to deliver on regeneration outputs	✓	✓				
	To strengthen the Evening Economy through regeneration initiatives, and culture and arts programmes that encourage greater use of urban areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Create locations & spaces for meet to meet and interact through Arts and cultural activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	To create a new arts and cultural entertainment venue (500+ capacity)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Influence Central Government priorities for key infrastructural projects which can be the catalyst	Lobby Government depts and agencies as required for provision of key infrastructure and services that will	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

for regeneration	regenerate the region, i.e. roads, ports, broadband connectivity,						
Develop an investment plan to realise regeneration in the area	Maximise the level of public spend Lever additional investment from private investment funds, EU, and other financial instruments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Theme 4: Rural Development and Regeneration		Development Phase					
Priority	**Action**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
To develop a Sustained Integrated Regeneration Framework	Development an integrated rural & urban regeneration framework which will: • Take direction and deliver on regeneration within the context of the community plan • Define disadvantage • Inform the Local Development Plan • Integrate the actions from existing Master plans and Village Plans and establish clusters where common themes and need exist • Explore ways to maximise the benefits of gateways to the region, i.e. public art • Explore ways to maximise the benefit of the region's location on the Dublin to Belfast Economic Corridor with proximity to the Port of Warrenpoint • Seek to maximise use of natural spaces and assets, i.e. canal, waterways, forestry, walkways, cycling routes	✓					
	Establish an urban & Rural Regeneration Partnership to oversee and advise Council on the delivery of the Integrated Regeneration framework	✓	✓				
Maximise investment opportunities	Implement and deliver initiatives identified within Council's	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

from the Rural Development Programme, European Fisheries Programme, and other funding streams, i.e. Trans national programmes	Regeneration Framework, Village Plans and Master Plans						
	To maximise funding distribution to the region from key Rural Development programmes, i.e. RDP Agri-food schemes, Rural Business, Rural Tourism and Village Renewal schemes and other initiatives within the Rural Development Programme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	To support rural business and community groups to identify investment opportunities which will enable delivery of initiatives against the village plans and master plans, and contribute to the growth of the local rural business economy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	To support villages to identify possible opportunities for collaboration and delivery of rural initiatives on a cluster basis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To implement and deliver a Rural Development and a Fisheries Programme for the region	To develop strategies for each programme that is considerate and complementarily of initiatives detailed within other Council and regional Strategies and Framework documents	✓	✓				
	To implement EU funding programmes using delivery initiatives that will ensure maximum impact to the region	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve infrastructure across the rural areas in order to meet the	Review existing broadband research and data to identify current provision	✓	✓				

needs of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses.	Support broadband research & data with consultation with relevant bodies to identify all infrastructural needs and requirements within the rural areas		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Work with Statutory Departments and agencies to encourage and support the delivery of initiatives across the region which will seek to improve rural infrastructure in order to meet the requirements of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Council to deliver on initiatives which will seek to improve rural infrastructure provision, and usage of same, in order to meet the requirements of rural communities, rural services, and rural businesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provision of a suite programmes which will seek to regenerate rural areas	Development of a suite programmes which focus on addressing rural issues in order to revitalise rural areas, i.e. rural business development, farm diversification, addressing dereliction & maximising use of development sites, town & village environmental improvements & shop front schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Establish were required collaborative networks involving external agencies who can help inform and assist in the development of regeneration programmes within and across the rural areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of an effective planning process which is	Ensure that the Local Development Plan is informed of rural development priorities, i.e. the sustainable use of	✓	✓				

considerate of rural development priorities	natural and built heritage						
	Support were appropriate, planning opportunities which are economically sustainable, and show consideration for the protection and improvement of the environment, wildlife and natural and built heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Support were appropriate, initiatives that progress renewable energy opportunities, and efforts towards achievement of the PfG Renewable Energy targets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Support the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly businesses in rural areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure that the Local Development Plan is informed of rural development priorities, i.e. the sustainable use of natural and built heritage	✓	✓				

Theme 5: Culture and the Arts		Development Phase					
Priority	**Action**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
To ensure that culture and arts are pivotal to economic development and to maximise the economic and social return on investment in cultural assets	Develop the organisational structures for delivery of the new Cultural Strategy	✓	✓				
	Agree a cross departmental working group to coordinate the development of a new cultural strategy for NM&DDC	✓	✓				
	Develop cultural objectives and an associated action plan	✓	✓				
	Ensure the inclusion of arts and culture in strategies for rural development, neighbourhood renewal, tourism and economic development and in community plan	✓	✓				
	Lobby for the retention of budgets to the arts and culture as their contribution is underestimated currently	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Develop effective, measurable economic and social return on investment targets alongside cultural objectives and targets integrated into the wider policy which should be effectively monitored	✓	✓				
To ensure that cultural activity in Newry, Mourne and Down is co-ordinated	Undertake an audit of cultural activity in Newry, Mourne and Down and the organisations undertaking this work alongside those also operating across the border attended by local audiences.	✓	✓				

	Set up an effective structure for communication and consultation with the District's voluntary, community and professional arts organisations	✓					
	Facilitate connectivity between sectors e.g. linking cultural industries, education and tourism – on for example the Destination Forum and the Economic Forum and with those engaged in the evening economy	✓	✓				
To ensure that the local and professional arts sectors can utilise council owned buildings to maximise economic and social impact	Develop marketing infrastructure and systems to support organisations by promoting events and opportunities effectively across the district and beyond.	✓	✓	✓			
	Develop high quality digital marketing channels	✓	✓	✓			
	Install a Box office ticketing system hosted online that covers all the cultural centres and activities in the district.	✓	✓				
	In the longer term develop an entertainment/ cultural venue for Newry that is fit for purpose with a 500+ seat auditorium	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To support the voluntary arts sector	Undertake an audit of how voluntary arts groups have been supported in the last two years in the town halls in the District, benchmark this against other parts of NI and the UK and make recommendations in regard of the new voluntary arts policy	✓	✓				
	Develop new voluntary arts policy including discussions on how programmes can further animate Council-owned or managed buildings.	✓	✓				

To maximise the opportunities generated by the Creative industry sector	Develop a new needs analysis of and action plan for the creative industries	✓	✓				
	Carry out a Consultation with creative and cultural industries sector and with existing business and social enterprise hubs within NM&DDC	✓	✓				
	Develop Incubators and innovation hubs for creative and cultural industries; incentives and support for the craft sector to collaborate to develop their own sales channels e.g. pop-up shops, open studio schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Inspire and motivate people to develop cultural micro-businesses, particularly young people, by sponsoring annual awards ceremonies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Incentivise and reward partnerships and innovation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Lobby for improved broadband to support the creative industry sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

7 How will we measure success?

The success of the strategy will be measured against eight strategic targets which have been agreed and to which all the stakeholders will be invited to commit. None of these targets can be achieved directly by the Council or any other stakeholder working on their own and they require the commitment of all those involved. The proposed strategic targets are set out below and further detail of the underlying assumptions is provided in the Appendices.

Over the period 2015-2020 we will contribute to:

- Job Creation, by promoting at least 500 new jobs over the period 2015-2020
- Increasing the regions working age Employment Rate, by raising the level of working age population who are employed/self-employed from 68% (2013) to 70% by 2020
- Increasing the growth of businesses located in the region by supporting the establishment or growth of 100 businesses over the period 2015-20
- Increasing the number of businesses employing more than 10 people in the region, by supporting 30 businesses to grow above 10 employees over 2015-2020
- Increasing the working age economic activity rate from 73% (2013) to 75% by 2020
- Increasing the number of bed nights in the region by external visitors from 1,464,000 (2013) to a 10% increase by 2020
- Increasing the average expenditure per trip by external visitors to the area to from £110 (2013), to £150 per trip by 2020
- To develop and deliver an Integrated Regeneration Framework by 2020
- To ensure that culture and arts are pivotal to economic development and to maximise the economic and social return on investment in cultural assets through development of a cultural strategy and action plan

The targets will be monitored on an annual basis by the Council's Economic Regeneration and Tourism Department and will be reported to the Economic Forum.

Appendix Documents

Appendix 1: Socio Economic Profile of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area

Curent Population Trends in the District

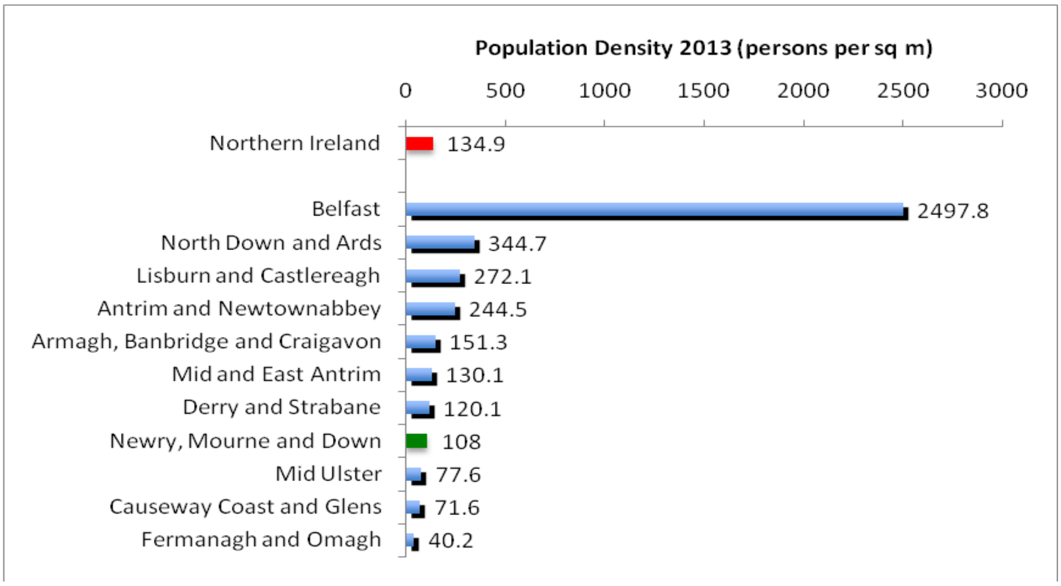
The 2011 Census recorded just over 172,000 people living in the Newry, Mourne and Down (N,M&D) District Council area, almost 10% of Northern Ireland's total population. This makes N,M&D the 3rd largest Council in Northern Ireland after Belfast and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon. Within the area, Newry (26,893) and Downpatrick (10,874) are the two largest towns accounting for 16% and 6% of the area's population respectively. Newry is defined as a large town and Downpatrick as a medium town according to NISRA[4]. The area also has a number of 'small' towns including Warrenpoint/Burren (8,819), Newcastle (7,743), Kilkeel (6,521), and Ballynahinch (5,715).

Key characteristics of the population in the N,M&D area are as follows:

- The population is split almost equally between men and women, similar to Northern Ireland
- The age profile is broadly similar to the NI average although N,M&D has a slightly higher share of young people (aged 0 -15) compared to the NI average (23% vs. NI 21%)
- The birth rate per 1,000 female population aged 15-44 is higher than the NI average (N,M&D 74 vs. NI 67)
- N,M&D has one of highest shares of births by 'High Social Class' across the 11 Councils (N,M&D 56% vs. NI 51%)
- There are currently almost 65,000 households living in the N, M & D area, 9% of the NI total.
- N,M&D is one of the least densely populated Councils in Northern Ireland

[4] Source: Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements, NISRA, March 2015

Figure 1: Population Density (2013)



Source: NISRA

The majority of the people living in the N,M&D area are originally from Northern Ireland (88% vs. NI 89%). The area does have a higher slightly proportion of people originally from the Republic of Ireland living there (3.2% vs. NI 2.1%). Some 1.1% of the population were from an ethnic minority group (NI 1.8%). Other points around non-nationals living in the area include:

- N,M& Down has the 3rd highest proportion of people born in the EU accession countries (2.5%) after Mid Ulster (4.2 per cent), Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (3.2 per cent),

- N,M&D accounted for just over 5% of the A8 population in Northern Ireland as at 2009[5]

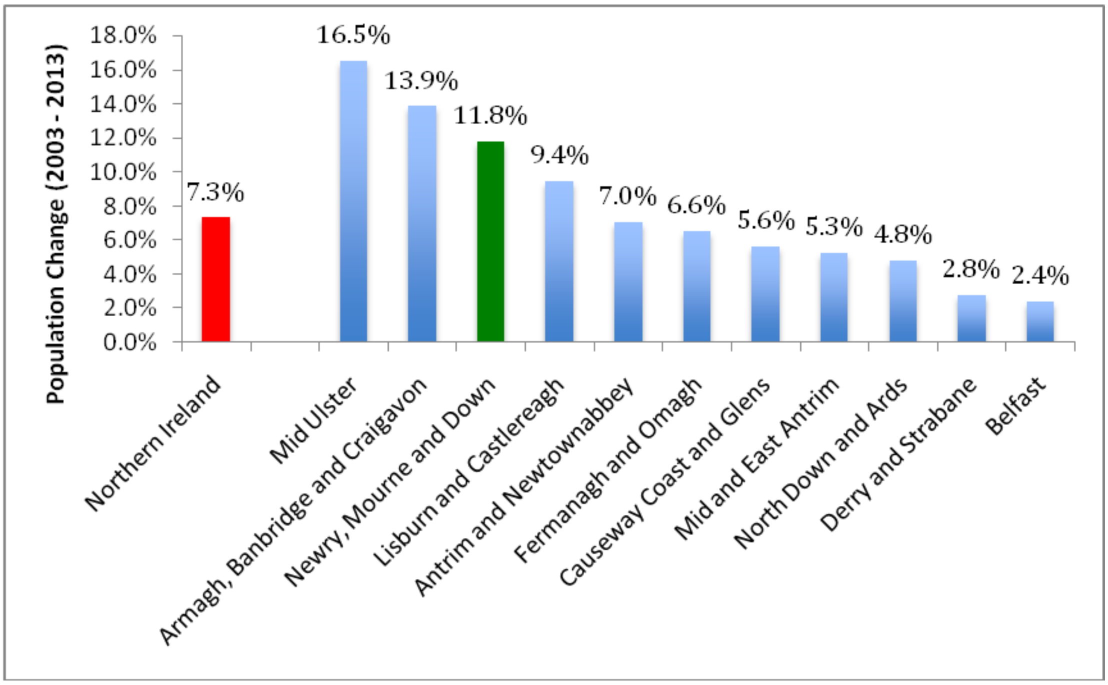
The top 3 countries in terms of Health Card registrations for the N,M&D area are Ireland first followed by Poland and then Lithuania. For Northern Ireland as a whole the top 3 in rank order are Poland, Lithuania and then Ireland. The main reason why people move to the N,M&D area are to work (48.3% vs. NI 46.4%) and for family reasons (39.4% vs. NI 29.4%).

[5] Source: NISRA 2009

Population Growth Trends – Past & Forecast

Over the last decade the population in N,M&D has grown by almost 12%, 3rd fastest across the 11 Councils.

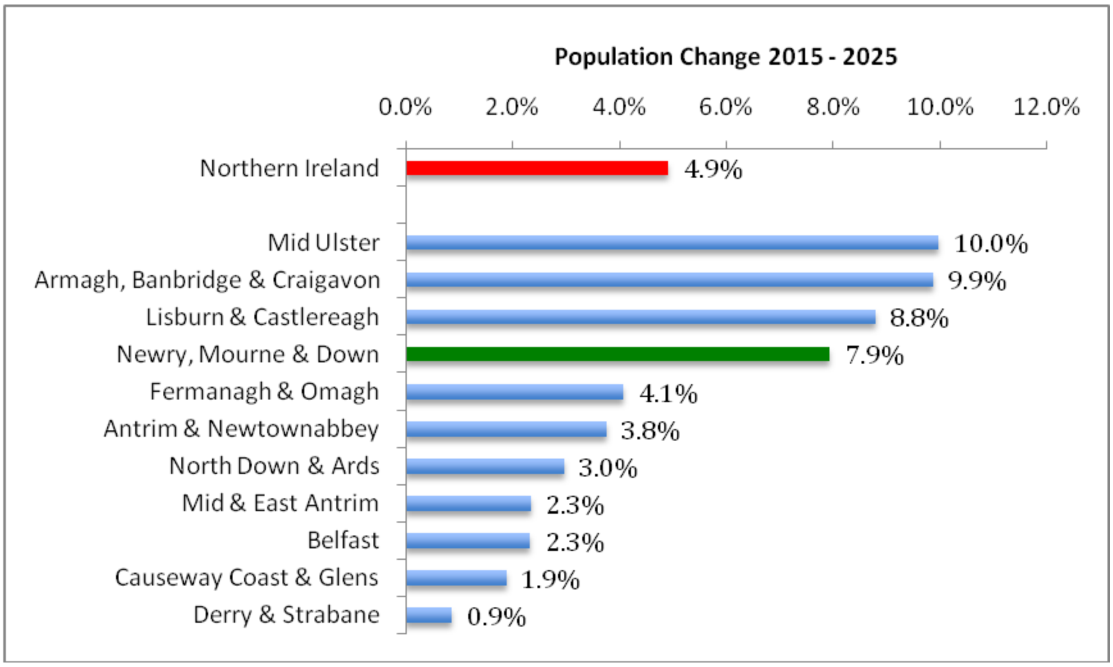
Figure 2: Population Change (2003 – 2013)



Source: NISRA

Over the next decade, the population in the District is expected to grow by just over 14,000 people to reach 191,800 in 2015. In general, population growth is expected to slow across Northern Ireland during the next 10 years and N,M&D is no exception. However, the District is expected to grow at a faster rate to the Northern Ireland average (+8% vs. NI +5%). This is 4th highest across the 11 Councils.

Figure 3: Projected Population Growth by District Council, 2015 to 2025



Source: NISRA

Table 1: Population Projections for N,M&D District Council, 2015 – 2025

	2015	2025	% Change 2015 – 2025
Population	177,681	191,833	+8%
Number of Households	64,594	70,923	+10%
Household Size	2.73	2.68	
% children	22%	22%	No change
% working age	63%	60%	-3%pts
% older people	15%	18%	+3%pts

Source: NISRA

In general people are living longer. While this isn't unique to N,M&D there is an expectation that older people will drive population growth in the District over the next decade. In fact, the older population (aged 65+) in the Council is expected to grow by 33 per cent over the next decade, significantly higher than the NI average of 25%. The youth and working age populations are expected to show limited growth in the next 10 years by comparison (+5% and +3% respectively). However, N,M&D is one of only 4 Councils where the working age population growth over the next decade is expected to be positive (Figure 4).

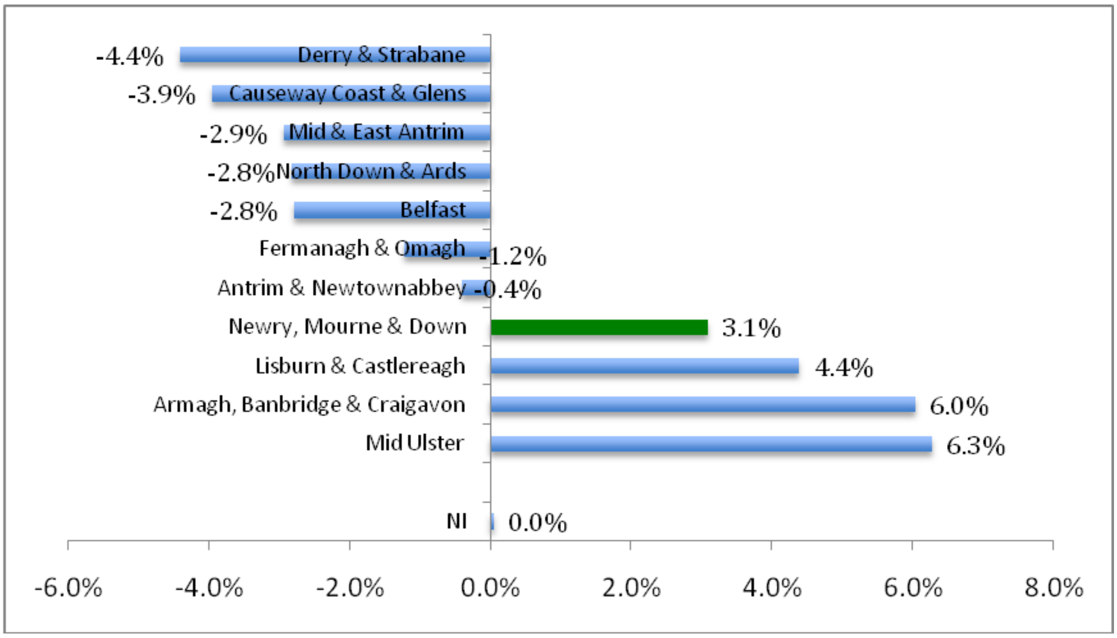
Table 2: Projected Population Change, 2015 – 2025

Population Change 2012-2022 (%)	**Newry, Mourne & Down**	**Northern Ireland**
	% Change	% Change
Youth (0-15 yrs)	+5%	+3%
Working Age (16-64 yrs)	+3%	No change
Older Person (65+ yrs)	+33%	+25%
All Population Change	+8%	+5%

Source: NISRA

An extra 6,300 households are expected to be living in the N,M&D areas over the next decade representing an increase of 10% over that period. The average household size by 2025 is anticipated to be 2.7 people.

Figure 4: Change in Working Age Population (2015-2025)



Source: NISRA

THE EDUCATION/SKILLS BASE IN NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN

NVQ Qualifications

NVQ achievements for the area are broadly similar to NI. Some 28% of the population achieved NVQ4+ in 2013, 54% below NVQ level 4 while 17% achieved no qualifications.

Table 3: NVQ Achievements 2013

	Newry, Mourne & Down	NI
Achieved NVQ 4+	28.4%	28.5%
Achieved below NVQ 4	54.3%	54.1%
No Qualifications	17.3%	17.4%

Source: NISRA

Qualifications and Destination of School Leavers

There were 2,410 school leavers in N,M&D in 2012, 10 per cent of the Northern Ireland total. Higher and Further Education are the most significant destinations for school leavers. More than 2 in every 5 (46%) go on to Higher Education, a greater share than the Northern Ireland average (40%). A further 30% of students go on to Further Education, slightly lower than the Northern Ireland average (34%). Students in area are more likely to go into training after school and less likely to go into unemployment.

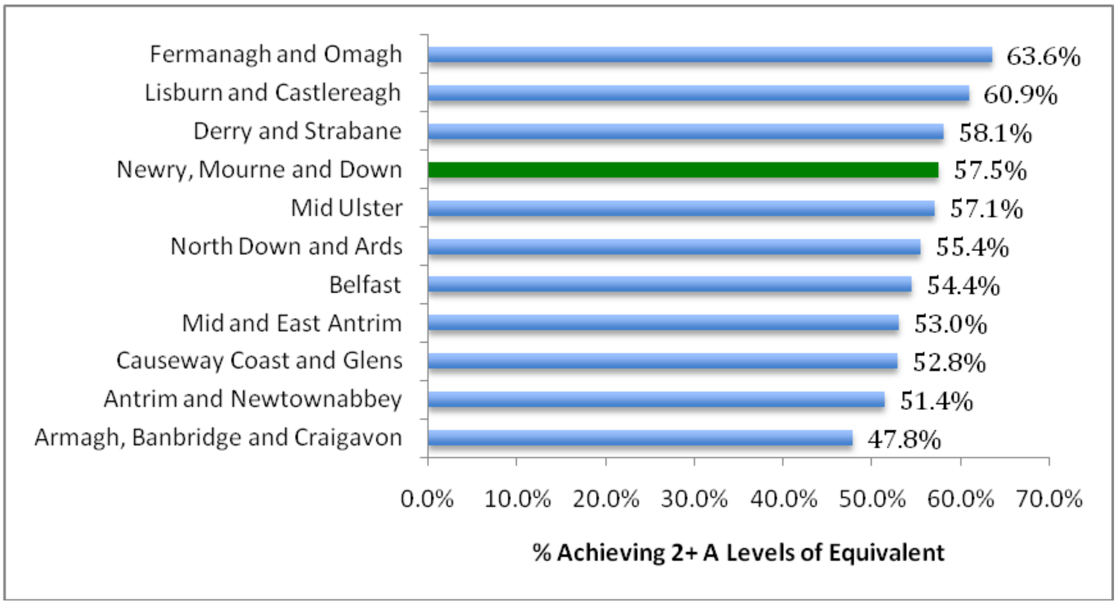
Table 4: Qualification Achievements and Destination of School Leavers – 2012

	Newry, Mourne &Down	**Northern Ireland**
	%	%
2+ A levels	57.5%	55%
At least 5 GCSEs grade A*-C	79.5%	78%
% students going on to:		
- Higher Education	46%	40%
- Further Education	30%	34%
- Employment	7%	6%
- Training	13%	11%
- Unemployment/Unknown	2%	5%

Source: School Leaver's Survey 2011/12

N,M&D's performance at GCSE level was similar to the NI average in 2012 in terms of 5+ GCSEs and performed slightly better in terms of those with 2 or more A level grades. The area's achievements in terms of the share of students with 2 or more A level grades was 4th highest of the 11 Councils

Figure 5: % Achieving 2+ A Levels of Equivalent (2012)



The area accounts for 12% of the stock of schools in Northern Ireland.

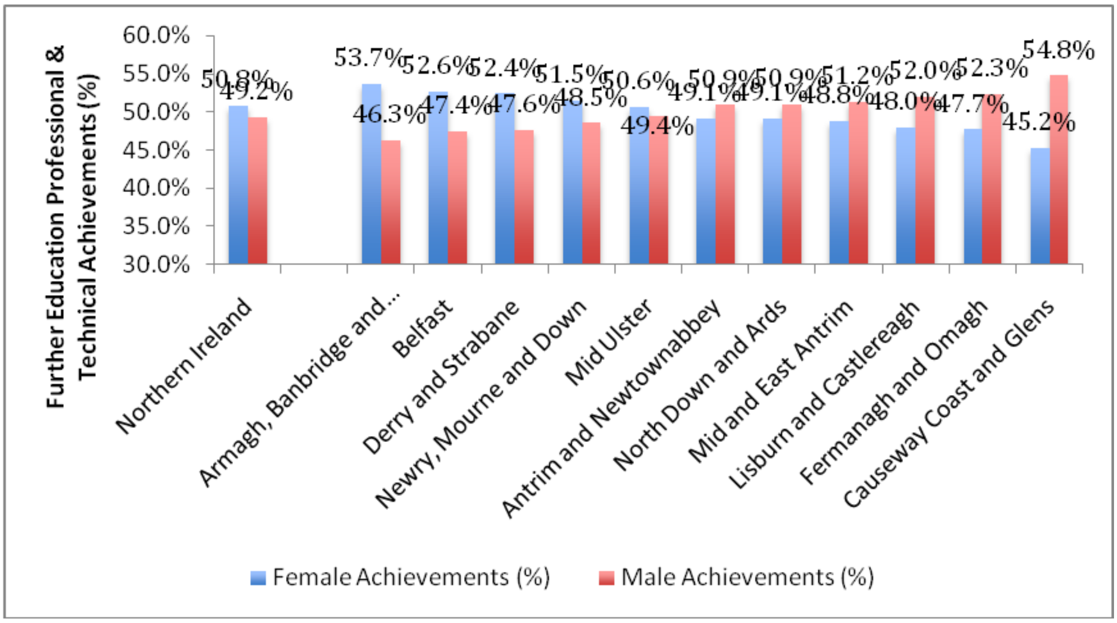
Higher and Further Education Enrolments

In 2013 2,775 students from N,M&D were enrolled at HE colleges across the UK. This is 10% of the total for Northern Ireland. Around 40% were first year students. Some summary indicators include:

- Three in every 4 of those students were enrolled in full-time courses (75% vs. NI 71%).
- Slightly fewer students were enrolled on postgraduate courses compared to the Northern Ireland average (13% vs. NI 15%).
- HE students from the area were slightly more likely to stay in NI to study (69% vs. NI 67%)

In 2012, 1,860 students from N,M&D received a HE qualification, again 10% of the NI total. Around 77% gained an undergraduate qualification with the remaining 23% achieving a postgraduate HE qualification, similar to the Northern Ireland average. One in 5 graduated in medicine/dentistry (19%). A further 18 per cent graduated in social studies and law. This is largely similar to the NI average.

Figure 6: FE Professional & Technical Achievements



In the 201316,197 students from N,M&D were enrolled at Northern Ireland Further Education colleges, 11% of the NI total. The area had a higher share of young people (under 20 years) enrolled compared to the NI average (63% v). Some 18% of enrolments were full-time and the rest part-time, similar to the NI average.

There were 3,260 essential skills enrolments in 2013 in N,M&D, 7% of the NI total. This represents a decline in numbers of 23% on 2012 compared to a fall for 11% for NI as a whole.

Essential Skills

Essential skills are offered to people who want to improve their reading, writing, maths and IT skills. The courses are located in the regional colleges across NI. There were 3,326 essential skills enrolments in the area during 2013. This is 7.3% of the Northern Ireland total. The number of enrolments is down 23% on 2012, the 2nd highest fall after Lisburn & Castlereagh. The numbers have been falling across Northern Ireland since 2012.

WORKING PATTERNS IN NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN

Introduction

This section examines the working patterns of people living in Newry, Mourne & Down. This includes the share of people who are either in jobs or “actively seeking work”. It looks at the extent of employment in the area as measured by jobs density. It also looks at travel to work patterns, an issue which is of particular importance to the District.

Economic Activity and Employment Rates

The economically active are the number of people in a job or unemployed (therefore actively seeking work). Economic activity (aged 16+) is slightly higher in N,M&D compared to the NI average (62.3% vs. NI 60.8%). Employment rates in the District are largely in line with the NI average (57.2% vs. NI 56.3%). Full-time employment plays a more important role in the area compared to the Northern Ireland average (46% vs. NI 42%).

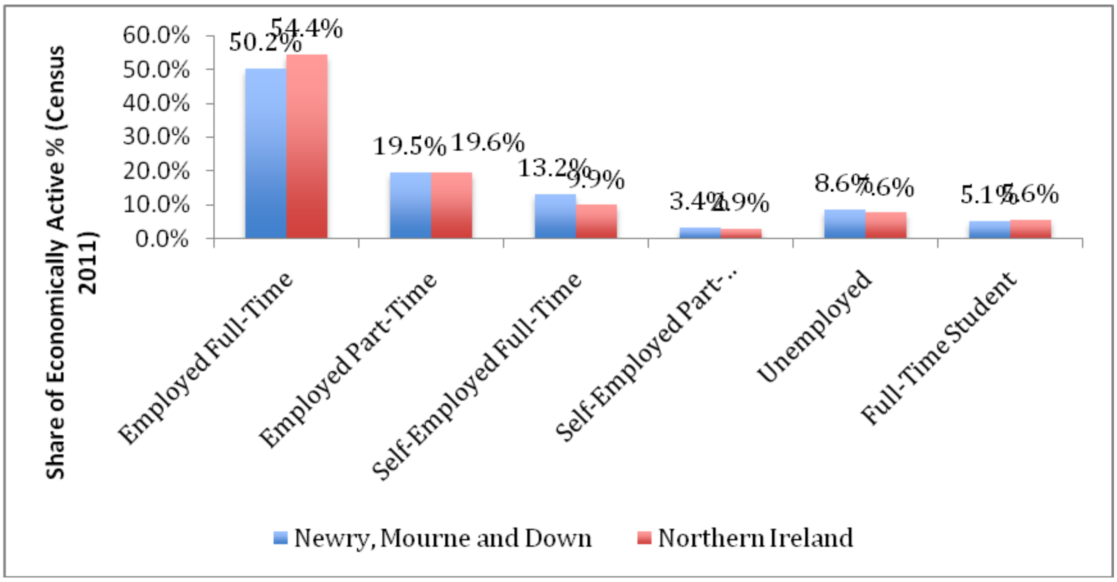
Table 5: Economic Activity and Employment Rates

	N,M&D	Northern Ireland
Economically Active (16+)	62.3%	60.8%
Economically Inactive	37.7%	39.1%
Employment Rate (16+)	57.2%	56.3%
Full-Time Employment	45.7%	41.8%
Part-Time Employment	11.6%	14.4%

Source: DETINI

A greater share of the economically active in the area are full-time self-employed compared to NI overall (13% vs. NI 10%) and as a result there is a lower share of the workforce in the area employed on a full-time basis (50% vs NI 54%).

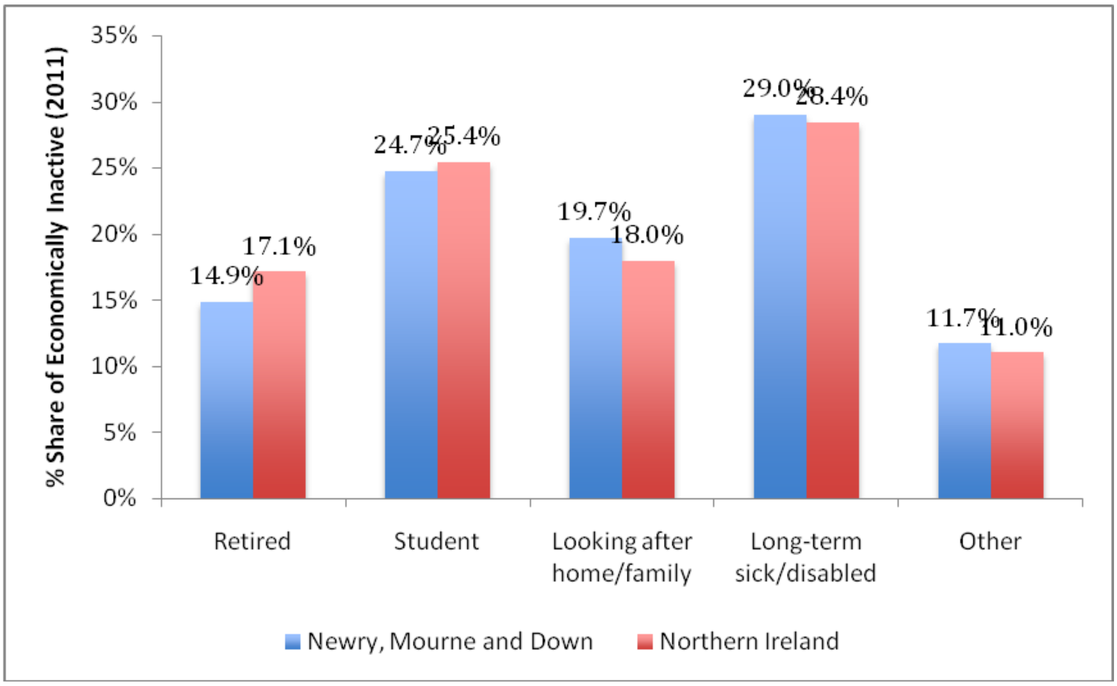
Figure 7: Share of Economically Active (2011)



Source: Census of Population 2011

A slightly greater share of those who are 'economically inactive' are looking after the home (20% vs. NI 18%) and a smaller share are retired (15% vs. NI 17%).

Figure 8: Share of Economically Inactive (2011)

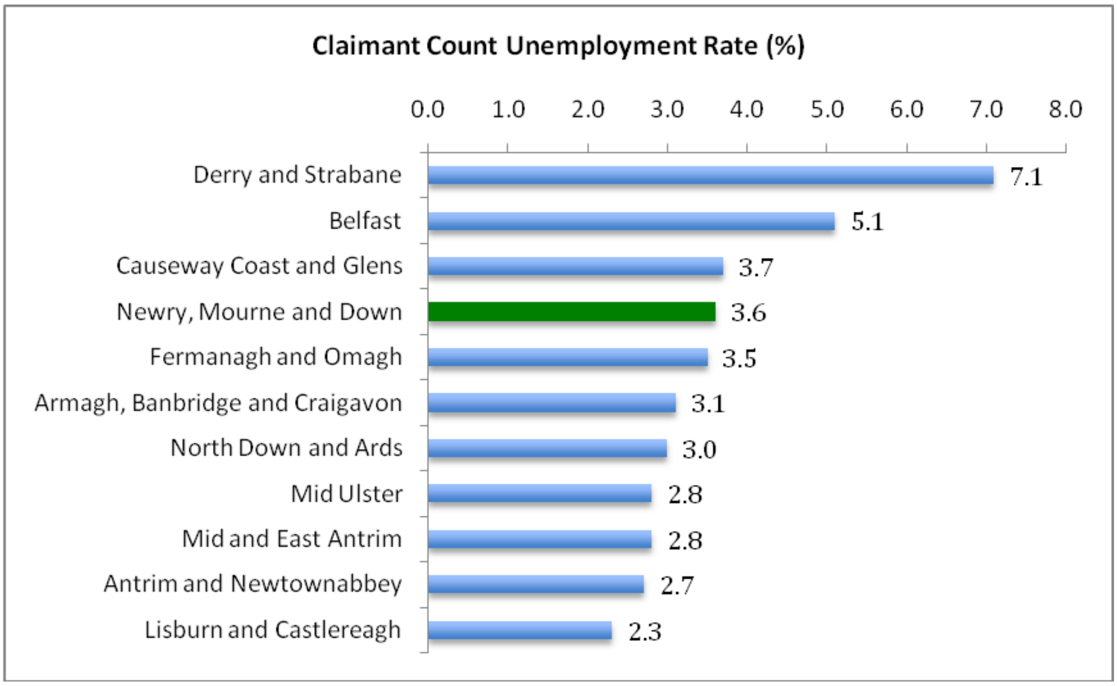


Source: Census of Population 2011

Working Age Benefit Claimants

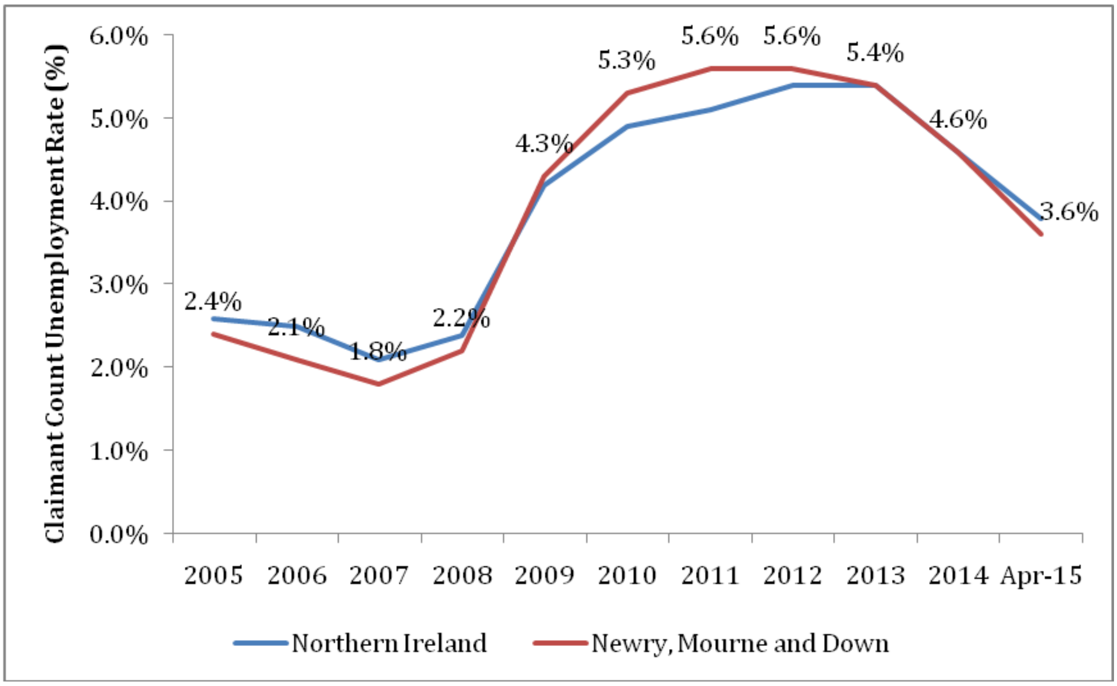
There are currently 4,049 benefit claimants in N,M&D as at April 2015, 3.6% of the working age population in the area which is slightly lower than the Northern Ireland average (3.8%). This ranks the area 4th highest in terms of claimant count unemployment across the 11 councils.

Figure 9: Working Age Claimant Unemployment Rate, April 2015



Source: NISRA

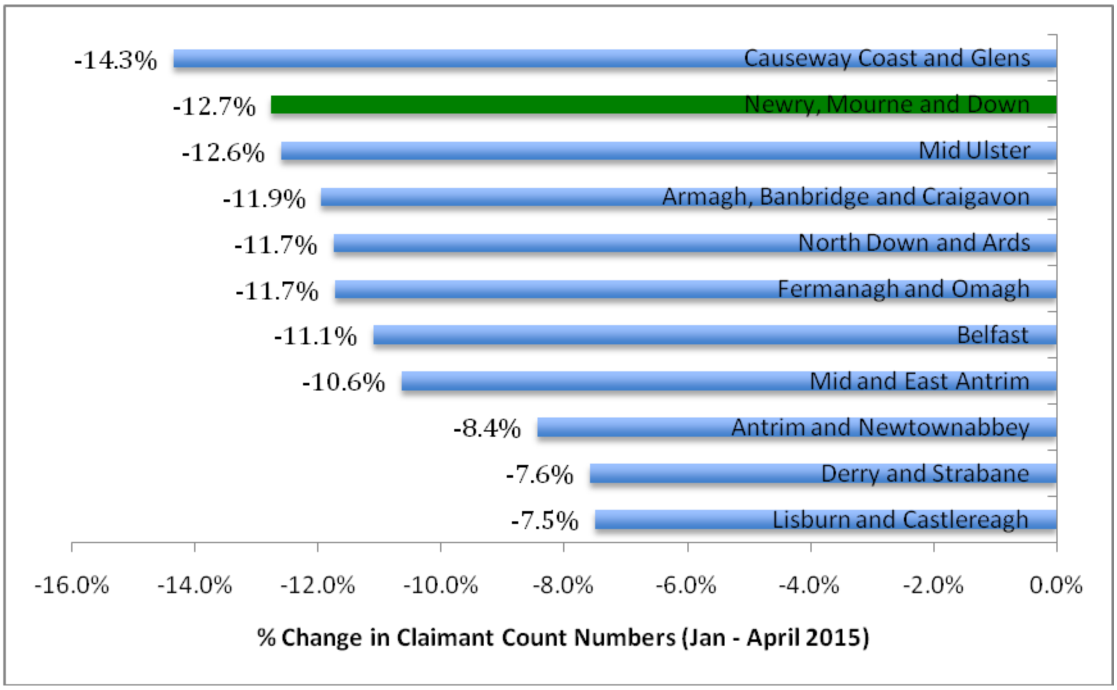
Figure 10: Claimant Count Rate 2005 - 2015



Source: NISRA

The claimant count unemployed in the area doubled in numbers during the period 2007 to 2012, one of the highest rates of increase across the 11 Councils. The numbers have been falling at a faster rate than the NI average over the last year and has fallen at the second fastest rate across the 11 Councils in the first four months of 2015.

Figure 11: Change in Claimant Count Numbers (Jan – April 2015)

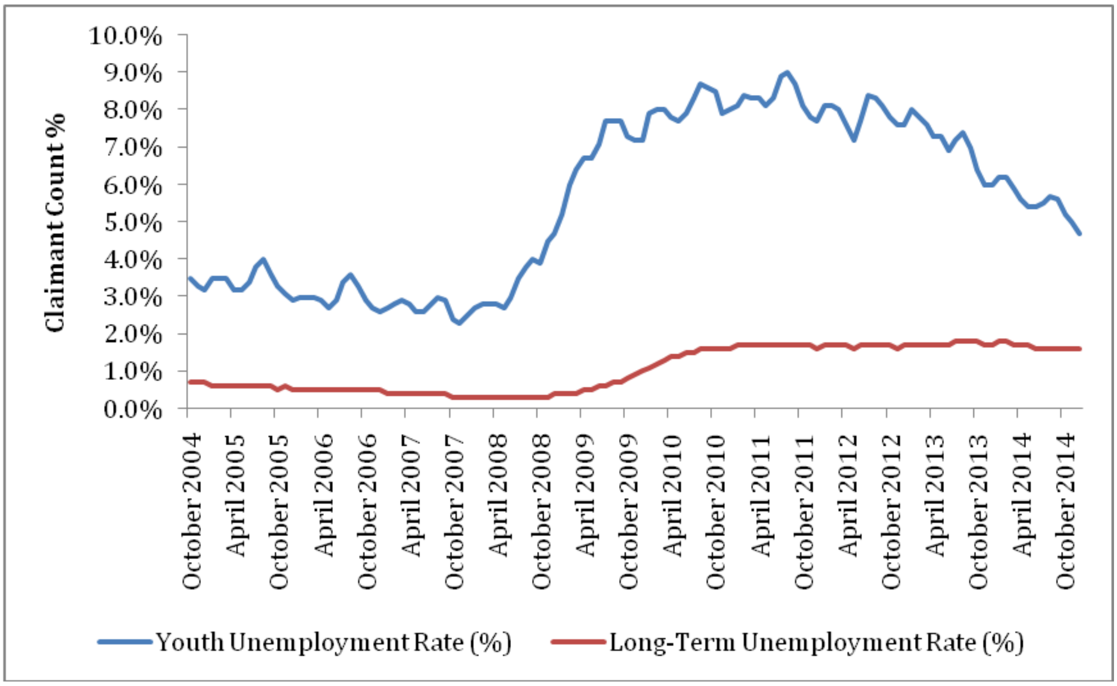


Source: NISRA

The long-term unemployment rate (1.6%) is 3rd highest after Derry & Strabane (3.1%) and Belfast (2.2%) The youth unemployment rate[6] in the area is 4.7%, 6th highest of the 11 Councils. Both rates remain higher than their pre-recession averages.

[6] Youth unemployed as a share of resident population aged 16-24 years

Figure 12: Youth and Long-Term Unemployment Rates in Newry, Mourne & Down



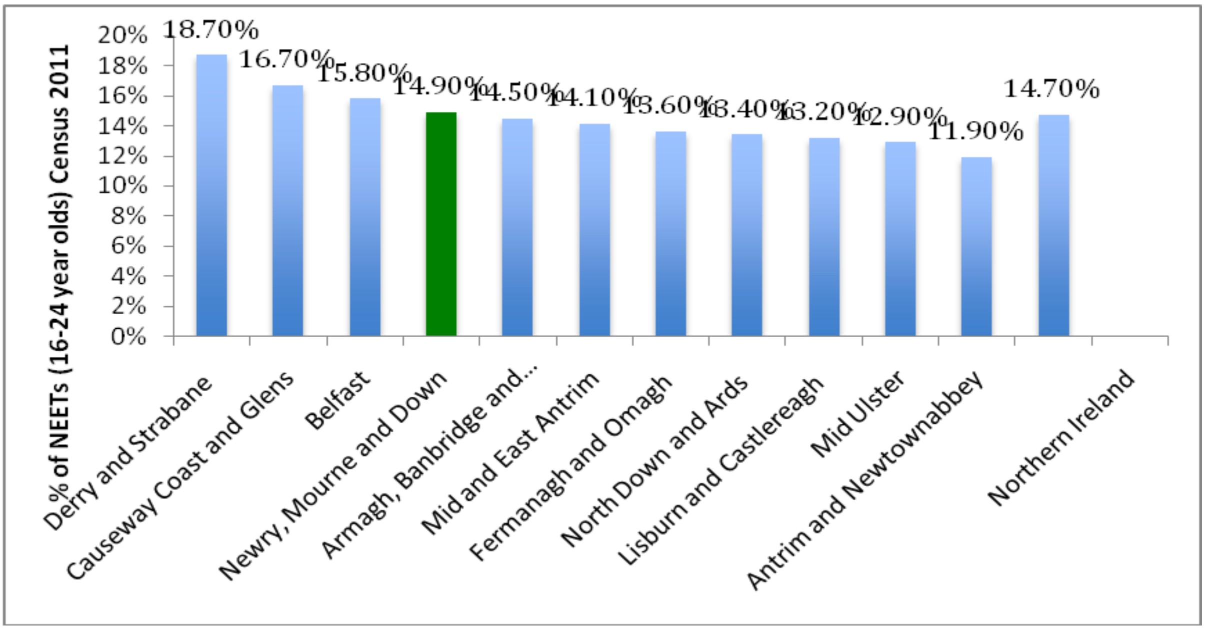
Source: NISRA

Ballymote (8.1%) has the highest claimant count rate in the District followed by Ballybot (7.8%) and Murlough (7.0%). Kilmore (1.3%) and Dunmore (1.4%) have the lowest.

NEETS – Not in Employment, Education or Training

The Census 2011 identified 3,100 young people 16-24 years) in the N,M&D population who were not in employment, education or training. This represents almost 15% of this age group, 4th highest of the 11 Councils and on a par with the Northern Ireland average.

Figure 13: Share of NEETs in the 16-24 year old Population

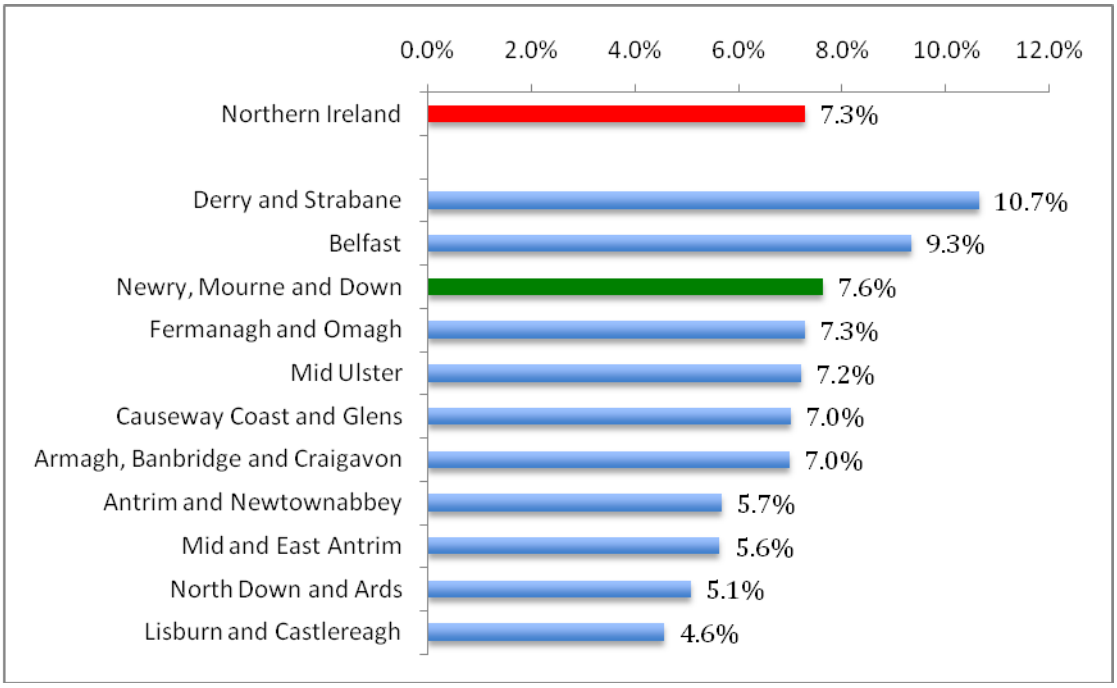


Source: Census of Population 2011

Long-Terms Sick/Disabled Inactivity Rate

The area has the 3rd largest share of people who are classified as 'long-term sick/disabled' after Derry/Strabane and Belfast. The rate is 7.6% which is just above the Northern Ireland average of 7.3%.

Figure 14: Long-Term Sick/Disabled Inactivity Rate % (2011)



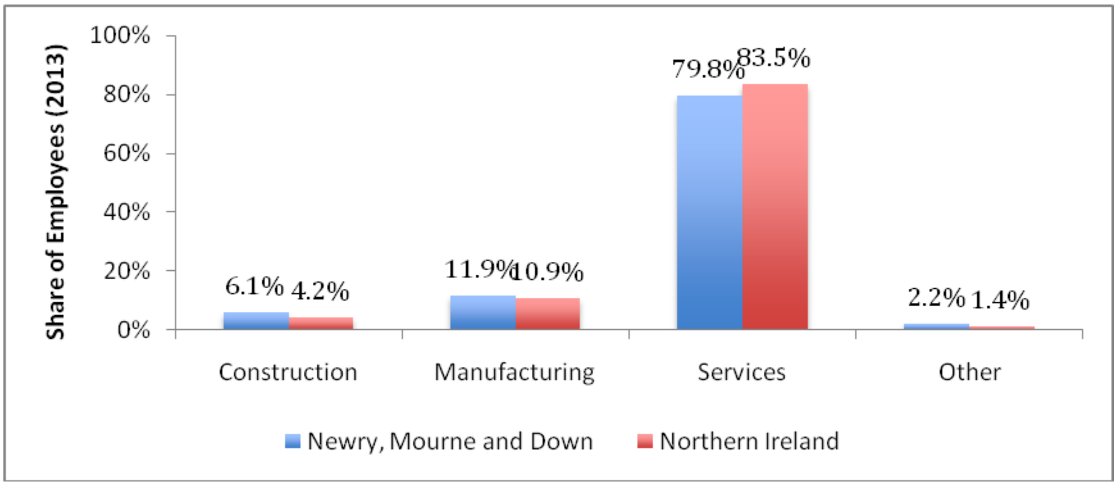
Source: NISRA

Employment

There were 51,178 employee jobs in the N,M&D area in 2013, 7% of the NI total. This is made up of 55% female employees and 45% male employees (NI 52% female vs. 48% male). There is a higher share of employees working part-time in the area compared to the NI average (38% s. 35%). This is largely because there are more women working part-time in the N,M&D area.

The area has a higher share of employees in both the Construction and Manufacturing sectors compared to the NI average. It has the 3rd highest share of Construction employees across the 11 Councils.

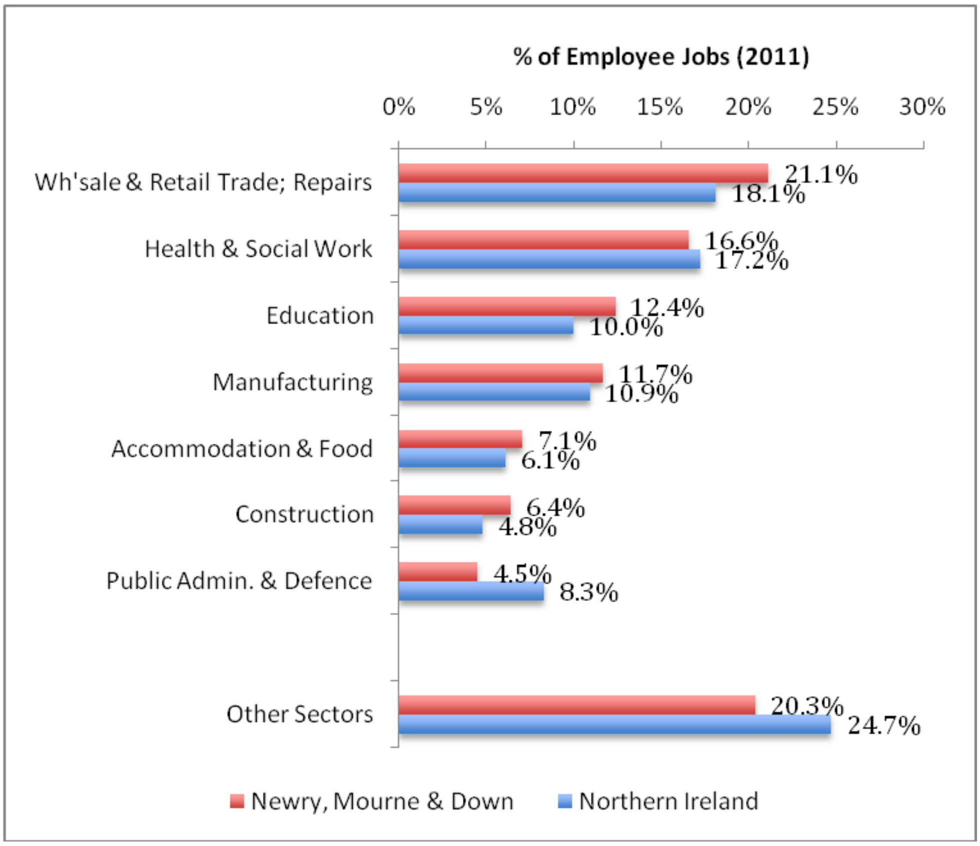
Figure 15: Sectoral Share of Employees (2013)



Source: Census of Employment 2013

The 2011 Census of Population confirms the findings of the 2013 Census of Employment and provides some greater detail on the sectoral composition of jobs in the area. It also highlights a higher share of employees in Wholesale/Retail, Education and to a less extent Accommodation/Food compared to the NI average.

Figure 16: Employee Jobs in Newry, Mourne & Down (2011)



Source: Census of Population 2011

Public Sector Employment

There are just over 14,500 people employed by the Public Sector in N,M&D, 7% of the NI total. This represent just over 28% of the employees in the area, lower than the NI average of 31%.

Table 6: Public Sector Employment (2013)

District Council	Public Sector	% of Employment
Belfast	72,159	34.3%
Derry and Strabane	16,855	33.5%
Fermanagh and Omagh	12,852	33.4%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	17,097	33.2%
Causeway Coast and Glens	11,969	30.4%
Antrim and Newtownabbey	16,426	29.8%
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	20,035	29.5%
Newry, Mourne and Down	14,547	28.4%
North Down and Ards	9,946	26.8%
Mid and East Antrim	10,617	25.0%
Mid Ulster	10,462	21.9%
Northern Ireland	212,965	30.8%

Source: Census of Employment 2013

Occupations

A greater share of people in N,M&D are employed in skilled trades (18.2% vs. NI 14%).

Table 7: Key Occupations (16-74 years)

	Newry, Mourne and Down	Northern Ireland
Managers, directors and senior officials	8.3%	8.0%
Professional occupations	16.9%	17.2%
Associate professional and technical occupations	7.5%	8.6%

Administrative and secretarial occupations	12.5%	14.1%
Skilled trades occupations	18.2%	14.0%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	9.9%	9.3%
Sales and customer service occupations	9.0%	10.1%
Process, plant and machine operatives:	7.9%	8.0%
Elementary occupations	9.9%	10.8%
	100%	100%

Source: Census 2011

Average Wages

Newry, Mourne and Down is a middle ranking region in terms of wages. The average annual gross salary for those living in the area is just over £21,500, similar to the NI average. The average wage of people who live in the area is higher than those who work in the area. The average wage of those working in the area is £19,440, just over £2,000 lower.

Table 8: Gross Annual Wage (mean) 2014

	Average annual pay for those working in area	Average annual pay or those living in area	Difference
Belfast	£25,384	£22,400	£2,984
Antrim and Newtownabbey	£22,626	£22,117	£509
Mid and East Antrim	£22,127	£22,011	£116
Derry and Strabane	£20,297	£19,254	£1,043
Mid Ulster	£20,099	£18,868	£1,231
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	£19,945	£20,292	-£347
Newry, Mourne and Down	£19,440	£21,538	-£2,098
Lisburn and Castlereagh	£19,415	£24,669	-£5,254
North Down and Ards	£19,103	£22,255	-£3,152
Causeway Coast and Glens	£17,829	£20,519	-£2,690

Fermanagh and Omagh	£17,662	£19,934	-£2,272

Source: ASHE 2014

The average wage for those living in the area is £25,500for men compared to £16,023 for women.

Travel to Work Patterns

The 2011 Census highlighted that 87% of people who work in Newry, Mourne and Down live in the area. Some 76% of people who live in the area work in the area while a further 11% commute to Belfast[7].

Table 9: Means of Travel to Work

	All Usual Residents (16-74 yrs)	Work from home (%)	Car (%)	On Foot (%)	Bus (%)	Train (%)	Bicycle (%)	Other (%)
N,M&D	738,659	11.9%	75.8%	6.7%	2.7%	0.5%	0.5%	1.9%
NI	68,277	10.3%	72.5%	7.7%	4.8%	1.3%	0.9%	2.6%

Source: Census of Population 2011

The area has a higher proportion of individuals who use their car to travel to work compared to the Northern Ireland average (76% vs. NI 73%) and a slightly higher proportion who work from home (12% vs. NI 10%). Fewer use public transport to get to work (3% vs. NI 6%).

THE BUSINESS BASE IN NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN

Introduction

Northern Ireland is very much a micro-enterprise economy and this is also the case for Newry, Mourne and Down Council. The majority of businesses in the area employ less than 10 people. The self-employment rate is higher than the NI average.

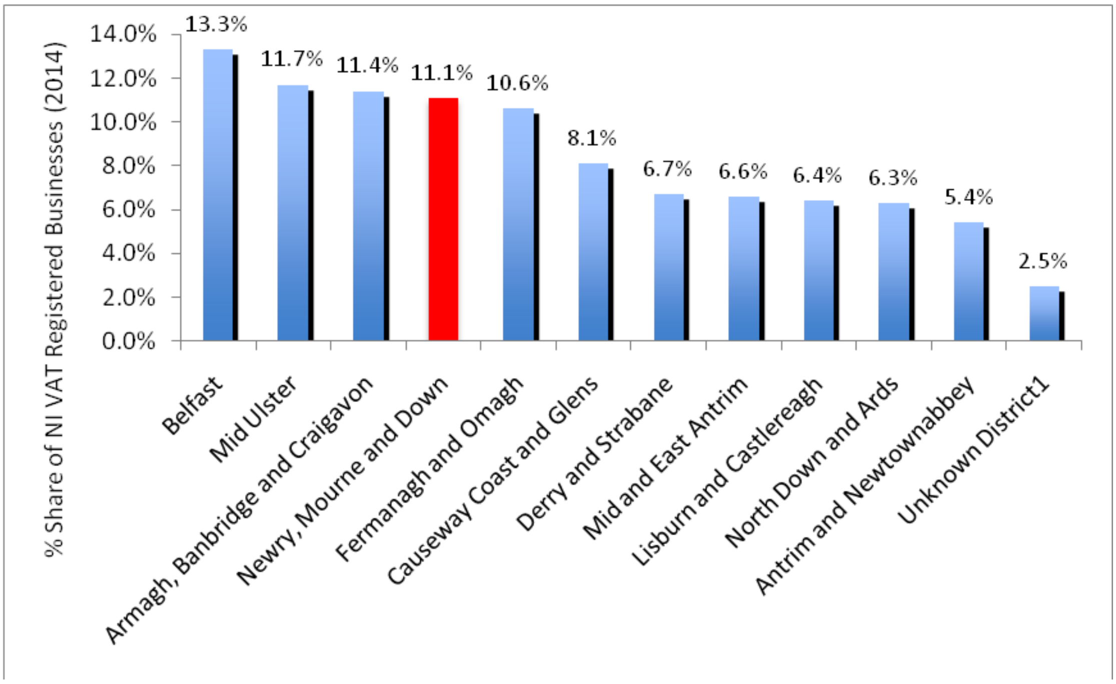
However, the area does have some large businesses and accounts for 7 of the Top 100 Companies in Northern Ireland[8].

[7] Commuting is much more prevalent in Down than in Newry & Mourne
[8] Source: Belfast Telegraph and Ulster Business

The Business Base

There were 7,500 VAT/PAYE registered businesses in N,M&D in 2014, 11% of the NI total. This means the area has one of the largest business bases after Belfast across the Super Council areas.

Figure 17: Share of NI VAT/PAYE Registered Businesses (2014)



Source: IDBR 2014

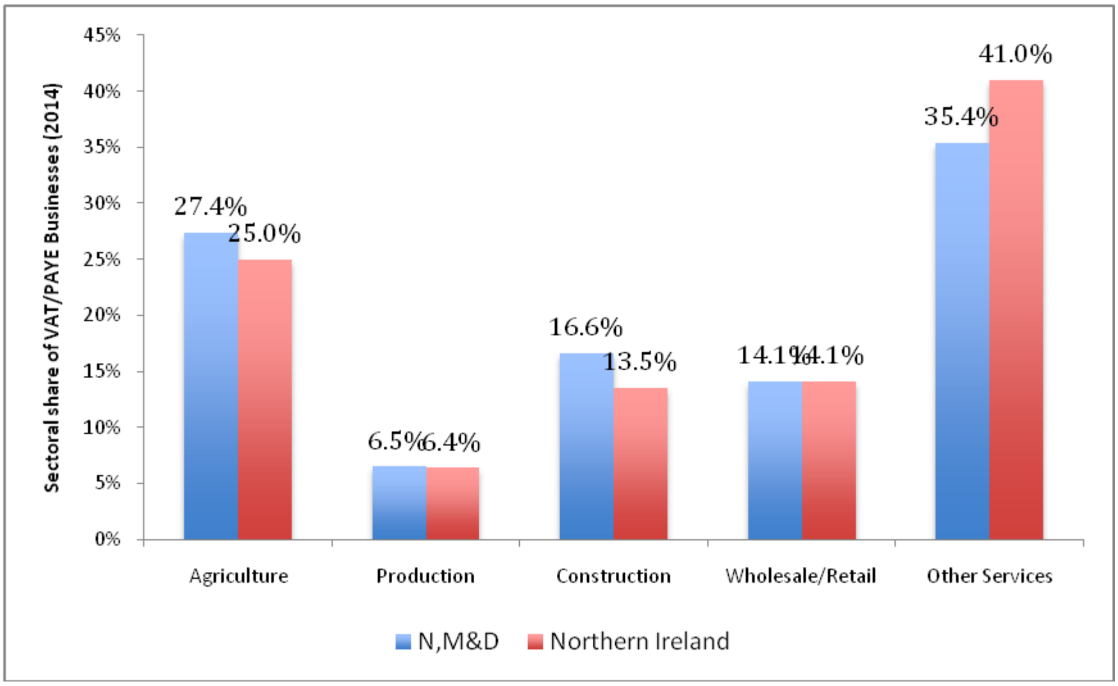
Micro-businesses[9] make up slightly more the business population in N,M&D compared to Northern Ireland. Around 4 in 5 of businesses employ less than 5 people (79% vs. NI 76%), Nine in 10 businesses in the area employ less than 10 (91% vs. NI 88%), 3rd highest across the Councils. Just 1.2% of businesses employ between 50 and 249 employees (NI 1.7%) and the number of businesses with 250+ employees is minimal as is the case for NI more widely. This highlights just how small the overall business base is in Northern Ireland.

Almost 31% of businesses in N,M&D have a turnover of less than £50k placing them well under the current VAT threshold of £82k. This compares 28% for NI so businesses in the area are on average smaller in terms of turnover size also compared to the NI average. A further 43% of businesses have a turnover ranging between £50k and £249k (NI 43%). Fewer businesses have sales of £250k or more (26% vs. NI 29%).

The area has a larger share of businesses in both the Construction and Agriculture sectors compared to the NI average. It has a smaller share of businesses in Other Services, particularly the Professional Services sector.

[9]Less than 10 employees.

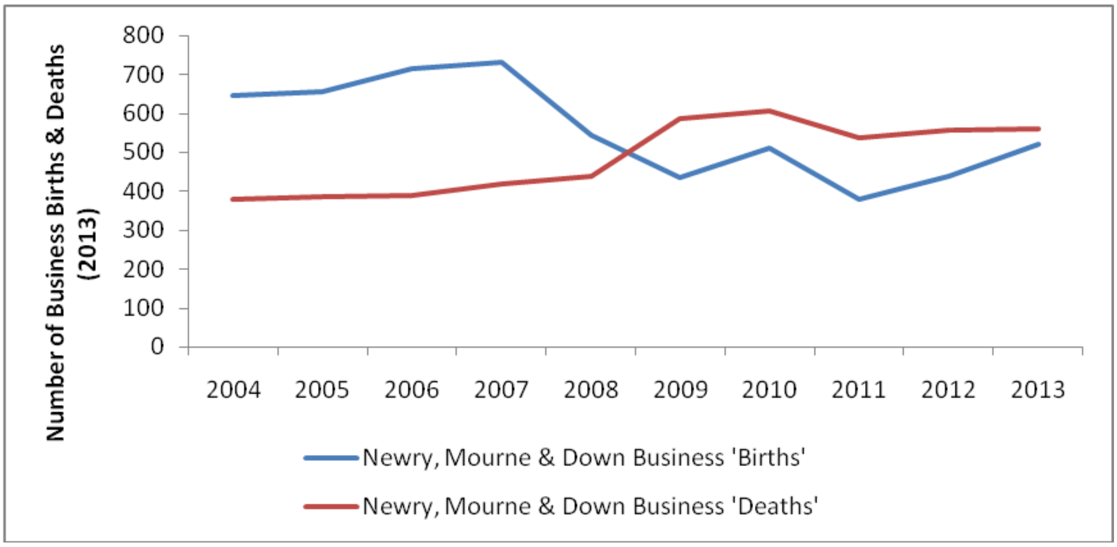
Figure 18: Sectoral Share of VAT/PAYE Businesses (2014)



Source: IDBR 2014

In 2013 there were more business 'births' than deaths in the N,M&D area which was also the case for Northern Ireland as a whole. Some 520 businesses newly registered for VAT/PAYE in 2013 while 560 businesses de-registered. The fall-out from the recession was significant in the area although some signs of recovery are beginning to emerge.

Figure 19: Business 'Births' and 'Deaths' in N,M&D

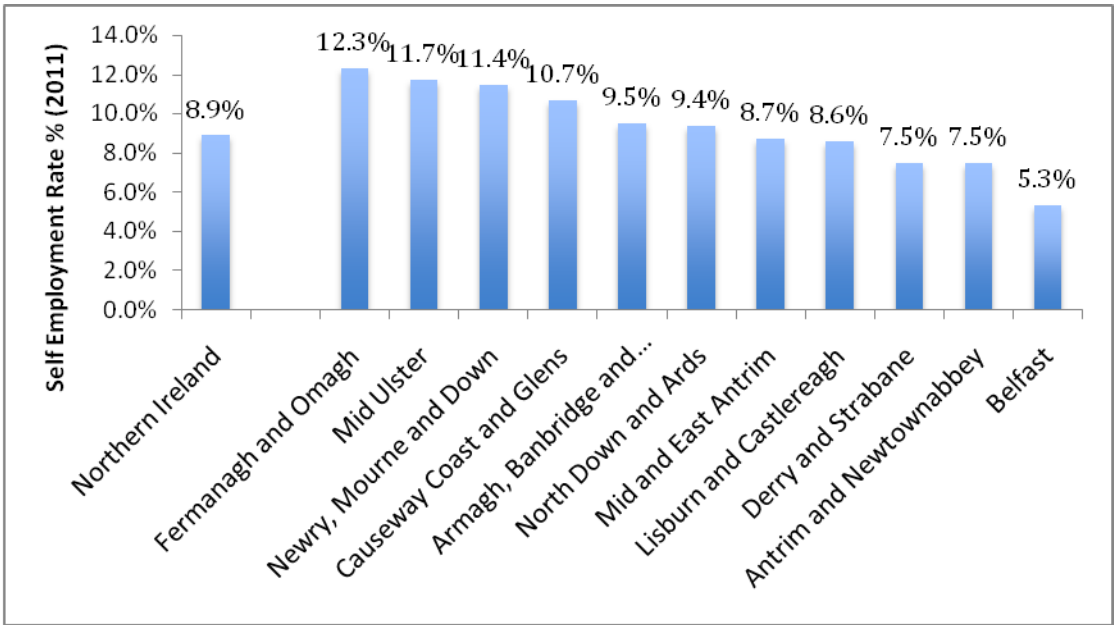


Source: Business Demography

Self-Employment

The 2011 Census highlights that there is a higher share of self-employed in the economically active population (17.3% vs. NI 13.4%). In fact the area has the 3rd highest share of self-employed in the economically active population across the 11 Councils.

Figure 20: Self Employment Rate



Source: NISRA

The Agricultural Sector

In 2014 there were 3,765 farms in N,M&D, 15 per cent of the total in Northern Ireland. This ranks N,M&D the 3rd largest farming community after Fermanagh &

Omagh and Mid Ulster. Farms in the area are more likely to be very small farms compared to NI average. The average size of farm is smallest across the 11 Councils alongside Fermanagh & Omagh. Some 83% of farms are defined as 'very small' compared to 76% for NI overall.

Table 10: Farming Community (2014)

	Number of Farms	Average SO/farm (€ '000)	Agricultural labour
Northern Ireland	24,228	74.0	47,864
Antrim and Newtownabbey	862	95.3	1,833
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	3,166	91.1	7,079
Belfast	21	122.7	115
Causeway Coast and Glens	2,453	89.4	5,119
Derry and Strabane	1,687	74.1	3,339
Fermanagh and Omagh	4,958	50.6	8,797
Lisburn and Castlereagh	833	88.4	1,904
Mid and East Antrim	1,750	81.3	3,483
Mid Ulster	4,080	82.4	7,621
Newry, Mourne and Down	3,735	51.6	6,845
North Down and Ards	683	118.3	1,729

Source: Farm Census 2014

The farm labour force in the District is 6,845 making up 14 per cent of the overall Northern Ireland Agricultural labour force. The majority of the labour force is made up of farmers and their families (77% v. NI 74%). Around half of farmers are self-employed (50% vs. NI 56%).

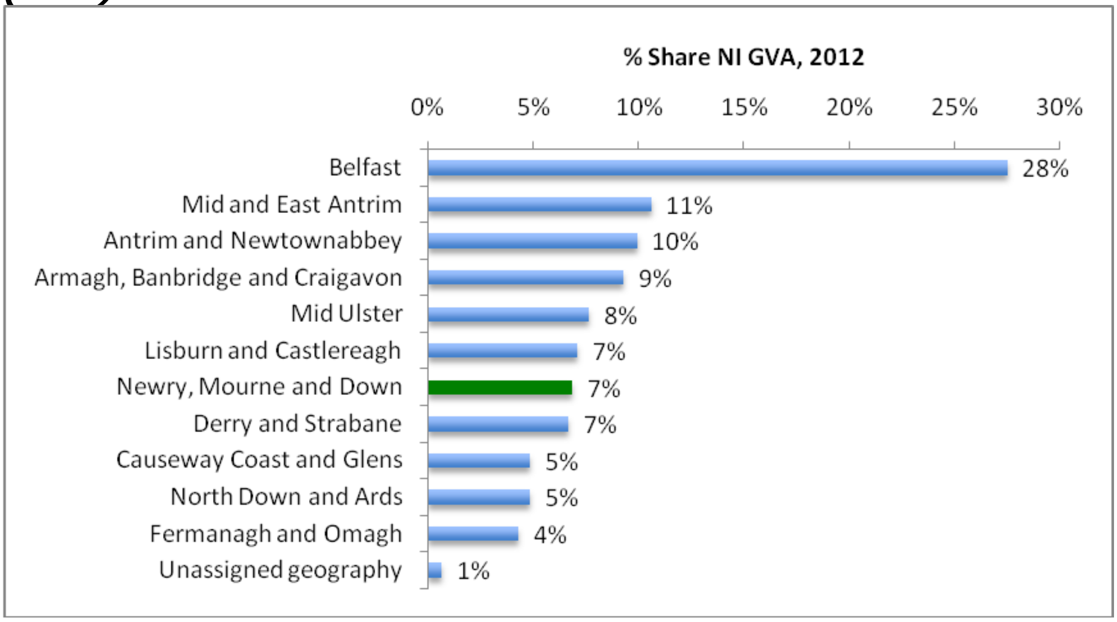
Although the farms in the area are largely focused on poultry (66% vs. NI 84%), there is a larger concentration of both cattle (13% vs. NI 6%) and sheep (18% vs. NI 8%) compared to the NI average.

Share of Industry GVA

GVA (Gross Value Added) measures the contribution of the area to the Northern Ireland economy. In simple terms it measures the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs which are used up in production.

N,M&D accounts for 7% of industry GVA according to the 2012 Annual Business Inquiry. This is just 3% of the NI total and ranks the area 5th from the bottom of the Council rankings.

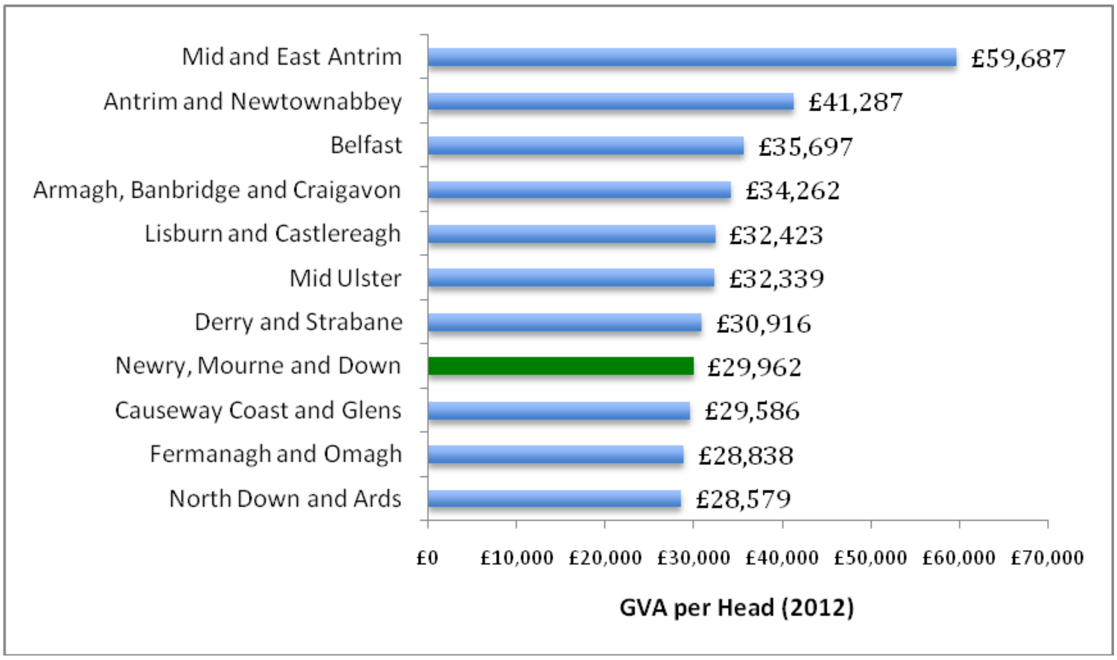
Figure 21: Share of Industry GVA (2012)



Source: Annual Business Inquiry

When GVA is standardised by employment, the area ranks 4th from the bottom of the Councils' rankings.

Figure 22: GVA Per Employee (2012)



Source: Annual Business Inquiry

Quality of Life Indicators

Introduction

This section considers a number of indicators which reflect on the 'quality of life' of people living in the N,M&D area. This focuses on the information currently available at LGD2014 level around deprivation, poverty, health, crime and property.

Table 11: Summary Indicators on 'Quality of Life'

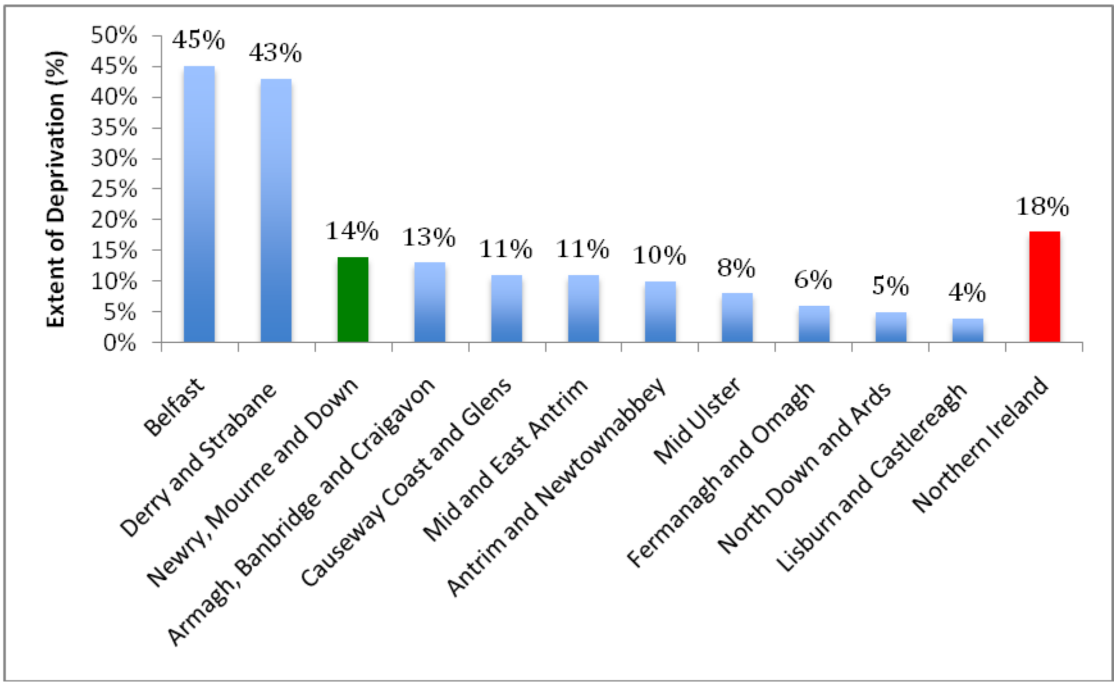
Indicator	Value	Share of NI Total (NI Average)	Rank out of 11 Councils	Reference Date
HEALTH				
Long-term health concerns – day to day activity restricted a lot (16-64 years)	10,617	9.7%	3rd	2011
Average Life Expectancy (years)	Male 78 Female	Male 78.5 Female 82	4th 8th	2009-11

	82			
DEPRIVATION				
Extent of deprivation (% of population)	14%	18% (NI average)	3rd	2010
CRIME				
Recorded crimes	8,836	8.6%	4th	2013
Incidents of Anti-social Behaviour	4,282	7.1%	5th	2013
BENEFITS				
Income Support Claimants 16+ yrs	4,530	9.6%	3rd	2014
Pension Credit Claimants 60+ yrs	8,860	9.9%	4th	2014
Incapacity Benefit Recipients 16-64 yrs	310	8.7%	4th	2014
Housing Benefit Claimant 16+ years	13,220	8.1%	4th	2014
HOUSING				
% Social Housing	10.0%	14.9%	9th	2011
Non decent homes	11,090	9.9%	4th	2009
% homes in fuel poverty	49.1%	43.7%	1st	2009
Property Repossessions	130	8.5%	4th	2013
Lone parent households	8.8%	9.1%	4th	2011
PROPERTY				
Domestic Rate	.3528	.3408 (NI average)	5th	2015
Non-Domestic Rate	21.9679	23.8657 (NI average)	8th	2015

Deprivation

Newry, Mourne & Down ranks 3rd highest of the 11 Councils in terms of the extent of deprivation after Belfast and Derry/Strabane. This measure represents 14% of the population compared to an average of 18% of NI.

Figure 23: Extent of Deprivation



The area also ranks highly in terms of income deprivation among the working age and wider population.

Table 12: Multiple Deprivation Measures (2010)

	N,M&D Value	N,M&D Rank	NI Value
Extent of deprivation	14%	3	18%
% of population income deprived	26%	3	25%
% of working age population income deprived	13%	4	13%

Source: NISRA

The Super Output Areas (SOAs)[10] which rank in the Top 100 most deprived in terms of multiple deprivation include Ballymote (59th), Drumgullion (71st), Ballybot (91st), Daisy Hill 1 (95th). The least deprived ward is Saintfield with 552.

[10] There are 890 Super Output Areas (SOA)

The table below outlines the wards within Newry, Mourne and Down Local Government District that fall into the top 10% and the top 20% most deprived wards in Northern Ireland in relation to the deprivation across seven domains.

Table 13: Top 10% and Top 20% Most Deprived Wards in N,M&D

Domain	Wards at Top 10%	Wards at Top 20%
MDM	• Ballymote • Ballybot • Daisy Hill • Crossmaglen	• Bessbrook • Derrymore • Drumgullion • Creggan • St Marys
Income Domain	• Crossmaglen • Ballybot • Ballymote • Daisy Hill • Derrymore	• Creggan • Bessbrook • Drumgullion • Forkhill • Murlough
Employment Domain	• Ballymote • Ballybot • Crossmaglen	• Daisy Hill • Drumgullion • Creggan • Ardglass
Health Domain	• Ballymote • Daisy Hill • Ballybot • Crossmaglen • St Mary's	• Bessbrook • Drumgullion • Derrymore
Education Domain	• Ballymote • Daisy Hill	• Bessbrook • Ballbot • St Mary's • Derrymore • Kilkeel South
Proximity to Services	• Ballyward • Derryboy • Spelga	• Killough • Seaford • Silver Bridge • Donaghmore • Dunmore • Strangford • Mayobridge • Lisnacrss • Creggan

Domain	Wards at Top 10%	Wards at Top 20%
		• Ardglass • Tullyhappy • Newtownhamilton
Living Environment	• Ballybot	• Bessbrook • Ballymote • Daisy Hill • St Mary's • St Patrick's
Crime and Disorder	• Ballymote • Shimna • Daisy Hill • Cathedral • Clonallan	• Murlough • Ballybot • Drumalane • St Patrick's • Windsor Hill • Seaview • Derrymore • Quoile • Ballynahinch East • St Mary's • Kilkeel Central

Long-Term Health Problems

The area ranks 3rd highest across the 11 Districts in terms of the share of the population (aged 16-64 years) with long term health concerns which mean that their day to day activities are restricted a lot.

Crime Rates

There were 8,836 recorded crimes in the N,M&D area in 2013, 8.6% of the NI total. The main forms of crime were violence (31%) followed by burglary/theft (27%) and criminal damage (18%).

The area has experienced a particularly large increase in drugs related crime over the last decade. The number of offences relating to the possession of drugs has more than doubled in the last 10 years (+232% vs. NI 72%). In 2013 there were 104 crimes relating to the trafficking of drugs and 538 to possession, both highest after Belfast.

Housing

N,M&D accounted for almost 10% of non-decent homes in NI during 2009 ranking the area 4th highest of the 11 councils. More recently the area also ranked 4th highest in terms of property repossessions accounting for 8.5% of the NI total.

Newry, Mourne & Down has the highest share of household in fuel poverty across the 11 council areas. Almost half of households (49.1%) were classified as being in fuel poverty in 2009. The lowest recorded was in Lisburn and Castlereagh at just 38%.

Benefit Supports

N,M&D accounted for almost 10% of those on income support in Northern Ireland in 2014. Those on income support are more likely to be women (69%) and single and of working age. Two in 5 are lone parents.

There were 13,220 housing benefit claimants in the area during 2014. Some 30% were aged between 35 and 49 years (NI 28%) and 28% were aged between 16 and 34 years.

Property

The domestic rate is above the Northern Ireland average ranking the area 5th highest across the 11 councils. The non-domestic rate is below the Northern Ireland average ranking the area 8th highest.

Appendix 2: Policy Context: Strategies reviewed and consulted

Newry, Mourne and Down Council

- Corporate Plan 2015-2019
- Community Plan

European Policy

- Europe 2020
- EU Funding opportunities 2014- 2020

Spatial Policies

- The Regional Development Strategy 2035
- Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 (RSTN TP)
- A Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) planning for Sustainable development – Feb 2014
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS) (ROI)
- New Local Development Plan for Newry, Mourne and Down and old Area Plans

Business and Economic Policies

- Programme for Government 2011-2015
- Northern Ireland Executive: Economic Strategy, March 2012
- Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020 (DETI)
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021
- Innovation Strategy 2014-2025

Urban Regeneration Policies

- The Department for Social Development's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy (URCD) Framework (July 2013)
- People and Place – A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal
- Enabling Success - A Strategy to Tackle Economic Inactivity in Northern Ireland 2015

Arts Policy

- Arts Council NI: Ambition for the Arts 2013 - 2018
- NESTA, A Manifesto for the Creative Economy (2013)
- Craft NI, Craft in an Age of Change (2012)

Rural Development Policies

- DARD Strategic Plan 2012- 2020

- DARD Rural Development Programme 2014- 2020
- DARD Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011- 2015
- Common Agricultural Policy
- Going for Growth - Agri-food Strategy Board – 2013
- Rural White Paper Action Plan

Appendix 3: Business Survey Analysis

Introduction

In March 2015 a survey of businesses in the Newry, Mourne Down Council area was undertaken by Blu Zebra and distributed by Council using internal databases of local businesses.

The purpose of the survey was to ensure that any local businesses who wished to engage in the consultation process for the Newry, Mourne Down Economic and Investment strategy had an opportunity to do so. The survey was designed to gather feedback on the current outlook for the business community, issues affecting future growth prospects, challenges facing the business community and potential areas of support that business owners felt could contribute to future economic stability and growth in the Newry, Mourne Down area.

A total of 2,900 local businesses were sent a link to the online survey by email. Of these, circa 560 links to the survey were opened. Some 124 businesses completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 22%.

Business Outlook

The survey began by asking respondents about the outlook for their business over the next 3 years. Feedback was very encouraging, in that almost 70% of respondents felt that their business had either significant or modest growth opportunities, while fewer than 5% of the survey respondents anticipated that their business would contract.

What is the outlook for your business over the next 3 years?	
Significant growth opportunities	23.6% 29
Modest growth opportunities	46.3% 57
No change anticipated	15.4% 19
Contraction anticipated	4.1% 5
Not sure	10.6% 13
Total	123

Respondent Comments

Where business outlook is positive, underlying reasons given included:

- sector growth (digital media, construction), growth in export markets, expansion into new markets / new sectors and a general sense of business confidence returning after recession.

Where business outlook is not as positive/ not positive at all, underlying reasons given included:

- economic uncertainty (Stormont budget concerns, concerns about public sector cuts, potential interest rate rises, higher rates, water charges), lack of clarity about Council plans, under-performance of tourism in the area, dependence upon limited local business market for growth, difficulty in competing against lower VAT and property rates across the border, difficulty in accessing bank funding

Business Performance Indicators

Respondents were asked whether they anticipated that turnover, job levels, investment and export sales were likely to increase, decrease or remain stable over the next 3 years. Once again, responses indicate that the majority of businesses are reasonably confident about future prospects. Some 51% of businesses anticipate that turnover will increase, 31% are likely to increase employee numbers, 43% will make further investment in their business and 31% believe that export sales will increase.

Export sales also remain an area of uncertainty for many businesses, with 41% of respondents replying "don't know" to this question.

What do you anticipate happening to the following over the next 3 years?					
	Increase	**Stable**	**Decrease**	**Don't know**	**Total**
Turnover	51.2% 63	32.5% 40	6.5% 8	9.8% 12	123
Jobs	30.9% 38	50.4% 62	6.5% 8	12.2% 15	123
Investment in the business	43.1% 53	41.5% 51	7.3% 9	8.1% 10	123
Export Sales	31% 38	22% 27	5.7% 7	41.3% 51	123

Market Challenges

The key market challenge that businesses in the Newry Mourne Down area face is the rising cost of doing business, highlighted by 70% of respondents. This was followed by too much competition for business (53%), currency fluctuations (45%), access to good communications e.g. Broadband (42%) and lack of demand for goods and services (37%). Perhaps most surprising is the number of respondents who feel that lack of access to good communications is a challenge for the business.

Is your business currently facing any of the following market challenges?				
	Yes	**No**	**Not Applicable**	**Total**
Lack of demand for goods/services	36.5% 38	56.7% 59	6.8% 7	104
Too much competition	52.9% 55	42.3% 44	4.8% 5	104
Rising cost of doing business	70.2% 73	22.1% 23	7.7% 8	104
Accessibility e.g. transport links	34.6% 36	48.1% 50	17.3% 18	104
Currency fluctuations	45.2% 47	35.6% 37	19.2% 20	104
Difficulty in recruiting staff	31.7% 33	47.1% 49	21.2% 22	104
Poor location	13.5% 14	70.2% 73	16.3% 17	104
Access to good communications e.g. Broadband	42.3% 44	51% 53	6.7% 7	104
Other	13.5% 14	26.9% 28	59.6% 62	104

Respondent Comments

A number of comments reiterated concerns raised in 2 above regarding public sector finances in Northern Ireland and the roll-on impact on small business. Other comments included:

- Broadband issues, difficulty in accessing good business training locally, difficulty in getting signposts for tourism / leisure businesses, strength of sterling against Euro, trend towards Internet shopping, transport links.

Internal Challenges

The most significant internal challenge faced by businesses (65%) is the need for investment, possibly more acute at this stage because of the likelihood of limited investment during the recession. Closely linked, the need to manage cash flow (59%) and accessing finance (53%) are the next key challenges faced by businesses in the area.

Business management issues that are a challenge include identification of new business opportunities (47%), staff training and development (42%) and the need for additional management skills and expertise (40%).

What, if any, are the internal challenges facing the business?				
	Yes	**No**	**Not Applicable**	**Total**
Managing cash flow	59% 61	37% 38	4% 5	104 104
Accessing finance for growth	53.19% 54	35.11% 38	11.70% 12	104
Identification of new business opportunities	47% 49	47% 49	6% 6	104
Need for additional management skills / expertise	40.4% 42	54.8% 57	4.8% 5	104
Staff training and development	42.3% 44	46.2% 48	11.5% 12	104
Attracting / retaining staff	35% 36	51.5% 54	13.5% 14	104
Unsuitable premises	17.3% 18	65.4% 68	17.3% 18	104
Need for investment e.g. equipment	65.4% 68	29.8% 31	4.8% 5	104

Respondent Comments

Comments were generally wide-ranging, although 4 of the 21 comments received specifically related to rates. Other comments included:

- Lack of in-house marketing skills, lack of finance for investment, pressure on senior management time, which limits time spent on business development, lack of promotion of the tourism package to bring tourists into the area, uncompetitive VAT rate in tourism sector, difficulty in accessing public sector work due to business size, general lack of support for small business to grow.

Potential Areas of Business Support from Council

Local businesses demonstrate an interest in participating in business support initiatives, particularly networking activities (74%). Business training and mentoring also was of interest to 62% of respondents.

Are there specific areas of support that the Council could provide as part of its economic development role that would be particularly helpful to your business?				
	Yes	**No**	**Not Applicable**	**Total**
Business training/mentoring	62% 61	34% 33	4% 4	98
Business networking	74% 74	22% 22	4% 4	100
Supporting business education links	59% 57	30% 29	11% 11	97
Lobbying government	68% 68	19% 19	13% 13	100
Speed of planning process	55% 55	19% 19	26% 26	100

Respondent Comments

Training on a range of business management skills (sales, marketing, digital skills) appears to be welcomed and several comments related to very positive experiences through the "Rebuilding the Construction Sector" programme and networking. One comment related to poor experience of mentoring in the past and emphasised the need to use experienced business mentors who can add value. Other areas that respondents were keen to see Council taking a more active support role include:

- Supporting tourism by putting in place a strong tourism delivery team, with skills to effectively promote the region, become more proactive in facilitating networking for business e.g. Meet the Buyer events, improve profile of Newry City as a tourism destination, faster and more flexible planning system, lobby role to reduce VAT, promotion of strong tourism infrastructure projects and events to attract visitors, support from craft / creative businesses.

Awareness and Effectiveness of Support Programmes

Businesses were asked if they were aware of support programmes delivered by council. A substantial proportion (46%) was unaware of such programmes. A total of 40 respondents (38%) had received council support in the past and they were asked to rate the effectiveness of this support. Only 15% rated this support as "very good", although a further 47% rated it as "good".

If you have received support from Council, how would you rate this?	
	Responses
Very Good	15% 6
Good	47.5% 19
Average	25% 10
Poor	10% 4
Very Poor	2.5% 1
Total	40

Respondent Comments

Most of those respondents who had availed of programme support had found it beneficial. Several positive comments related to the Rebuild the Construction Sector programme and the wider Beyond Programme received a number of positive comments. Where experience had been less positive, reasons given were the level of form filling and bureaucracy involved.

Newry Mourne Down as a Good Location for Business

Respondents were asked if Newry, Mourne and Down is a good place in which to locate a business. Just over 80% were positive but almost 1 in 5 respondents disagreed.

Is Newry, Mourne Down region a good location to set up/ operate a business?			
	Yes	**No**	**Total**
Newry, Mourne & Down is a good place to set up / operate a business	80% 73	20% 18	91

Respondent Comments

This question generated the largest number of comments from respondents (55). Many comments were positive and these included:

- Excellent location with easy access to Belfast and cross border markets, education standards, natural resources, links to motorway and easy access to international airports, entrepreneurial spirit and work ethic,

Negative comments about Newry, Mourne Down as a good location to set up and operate a business included:

- Poor communications (both Broadband and mobile), too much focus on out-of-town retail developments at the expense of town centres, hike in rates, road infrastructure, lack of investment in town centres and the unsightliness of unoccupied premises, remote from Belfast, more tourism infrastructure needed in Mournes, more manufacturing courses at FE level needed, political bickering, lack of modern business premises (Downpatrick.

The factors which scored least well in terms of combined "very strong/ strong" ratings were availability of skilled staff (38%), college courses suited to the needs of business (30.8%),business support available (29%).

Quality of life was the highest scoring attribute in relation to attractiveness of the Newry, Mourne Down region (70%).

The following are some factors which make a region an attractive location in which to do business. Please rate each factor in relation to the Newry, Mourne and Down region.							
	Very Strong	**Strong**	**Average**	**Weak**	**Very Weak**	**Don't Know**	**Total**
Availability of good business premises	12.4% 12	39.2% 38	36% 35	3.1% 3	2% 2	7.3% 7	97

The following are some factors which make a region an attractive location in which to do business. Please rate each factor in relation to the Newry, Mourne and Down region.							
	Very Strong	**Strong**	**Average**	**Weak**	**Very Weak**	**Don't Know**	**Total**
Transport links	17.5% 17	32.9% 32	28.9% 28	15.5% 15	4.2% 4	1% 1	97
Road infrastructure	15.5% 15	30% 29	34% 33	15.5% 15	4.2% 4	1% 1	97
Broadband access	15.5% 15	34% 33	24.7% 24	9.3% 9	14.4% 14	2% 2	97
Proximity to customers	11.1% 11	40.2% 39	30.1% 29	11.3% 11	4.2% 4	3.1% 3	97
Availability of skilled staff	10.3% 10	31% 30	35% 34	8.2% 8	4.2% 4	11.1% 11	97
College courses suited to requirements of employers	9.2% 9	21.6% 21	36.1% 35	12.4% 12	4.2% 4	16.5% 16	97
Business support available	7.1% 7	26% 25	38.1% 37	13.4% 13	9.3% 9	6.1% 6	97
Quality of Life	24% 23	47.3% 46	26.7% 26	1% 1	0% 0	1% 1	97

Priorities for the Newry, Mourne & Down Council Vision, Economic Development and Investment Strategy

- Respondents were invited to comment on what they felt should be the key priorities for the Newry, Mourne & Down Council in developing its Vision, Economic Development and Investment Strategy. Priorities included:
- Protection of town centres and town centre businesses, particularly against companies which repatriate profits to other countries
- Would like to see more variety in the delivery agents awarded small business development programmes
- Provision of quality support for new and small businesses, with an emphasis on encouraging innovation. Flexible delivery to suit those still in employment
- Council procurement should seek to facilitate doing business with local business

- Ensure that there is ongoing dialogue with the local business community. Council should ensure that there is engagement with local community. A vibrant community will contribute to the vision for the area.
- Support town centres with empty premises
- Improved planning system
- Better use of natural resources
- Traffic management in Newry – southern relief road
- Redress VAT rate for tourism in line with competing markets
- Support first cable car tourism project which would be a core attraction with spin off potential
- More high quality business premises are required
- Faster decision-making, with less red tape
- Efficient planning service which will support growth of construction opportunity in the area

Business Profile of Respondents

Survey responses were received from a well balanced sample of established and younger businesses. Over 58% of responses were from businesses established 10 years or more, while 23% of responses were from businesses established up to 4 years ago.

Sole trader respondents represented just over 37% of businesses surveyed, 13% were partnerships, 46% were limited companies and the remaining 3.3% were social enterprises.Some 70% of responses were from VAT registered businesses. Just over 30% of respondents to the survey have a turnover of less than £50k and a further 25% have turnover between £50k and £250k.

The average number of employees per respondent business was 10 full-time, 8 part-time and 1 temporary employee. These businesses represent a full-time employee base of 685, part-time 284 and temporary base of 22 employees.

The majority of the 55 respondents to this question were from the retail/ wholesale sector (45%), 20% from construction, 16% from tourism, 12% from manufacturing and 5% from agriculture.