January 17th, 2022

<u>Notice Of Meeting</u>

You are requested to attend the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee meeting to be held on **Monday, 17th January 2022** at **6:00 pm** in **Mourne Room Downshire Civic Centre and via Microsoft Teams.**

Committee Membership:

Councillor R Howell **Chairperson**

Councillor T Andrews **Deputy Chairperson**

Councillor R Burgess

Councillor W Clarke

Councillor D Curran

Councillor M Gibbons

Councillor G Hanna

Councillor V Harte

Councillor M Larkin

Councillor R Mulgrew

Councillor A McMurray

Councillor H Reilly

Councillor M Ruane

Councillor M Savage

Councillor G Stokes

Agenda

1.0 Apologies and Chairperson's remarks.

Councillor R Howell

2.0 Declarations of Interest.

Presentations

3.0 Presentation: Janice Gault, Hotels Federation.

All Councillors invited to be in attendance for this item.

For Agreement

4.0 Action Sheet: Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting - Monday 13 December 2021. (Attached)

Action Sheet - ERT December 2021.pdf ***Page 1***

Notices of Motion

5.0 Notice of Motion - free car parking for Electric Vehicles. (Report attached).

To consider the following Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor P Brown:-

"In the interest of encouraging people to reduce their carbon footprint and incentivise the ownership of Electric vehicles in the District, Council will introduce free car parking for electric vehicles in all council-owned car parks."

(Referred from Council Meeting held on 8 December 2021)

ERT Report - Notice of Motion - Free parking for Electric Vehicles.pdf ***Page 7***

Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration Items

6.0 All Ireland Smart Cities Forum. (Attached).

ERT Report - All Ireland Smart Cities Forum.pdf ***Page 11***

7.0 BRCD Renewed Ambition Programme. (Attached).

ERT Report - BRCD Renewed Ambition Programme.pdf ***Page 16***

8.0 Small Settlement Regeneration Plan. (Attached).

ERT Report - Small Settlement Scheme.pdf ***Page 20***

Exempt Information Items

9.0 Castlewellan Forest Park Operating Model Procurement. (Attached).

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, (including the Council holding that information) and the public may by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

- ***ERT Report - Castlewellan Forest Park Operating Model Procurement.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx 1 Castlewellan Forest Park Trading Pitches 2022-23 Business Case.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx 2 Castlewellan Forest Park - Grass Hedge & Hedge Cutting 2022 - 2025 Business Case.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx 3 Castlewellan Forest Park Reactive Maintenance Services 2022-2025 Business Case.pdf*** — ***Not included***

10.0 Labour Market Partnership. (Attached).

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, (including the Council holding that information) and the public may by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

- ***ERT Report - Labour Market Partnership Jan 2022.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx - Labour Market Partnership.pdf*** — ***Not included***

11.0 Newcastle Harbour - Sailing Academy Pilot Proposal. (Attached).

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, (including the Council holding that information) and the public may by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

- ***ERT Report - Newcastle Harbour - Sailing Academy Pilot Proposal.pdf*** — ***Not included***

12.0 Planning IT System. (Attached).

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, (including the Council holding that information) and the public may by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

- ***ERT Report - Planning IT System 2022-23.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx - Draft Planning IT System SLA.pdf*** — ***Not included***

13.0 Shared Environmental Services LDP SLA. (Attached).

This item is deemed to be restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, (including the Council holding that information) and the public may by resolution, be excluded during this item of business.

- ***ERT Report - Shared Environmental Services LDP SLA.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx 1 - Shared Environmental Services SLA for SASEA Support.pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx 2 - Shared Environmental Services Explanatory Note (HOP SES SA 25-10-2021).pdf*** — ***Not included***
- ***Appx 3 - Shared Environmental Services Review of Options.pdf*** — ***Not included***

14.0 Tourism NI Product Development Fund - SLA agreements. (Attached).

- ***ERT Report - Tourism NI Product Development Fund SLA.pdf*** — ***Not included***

For Noting

15.0 Dog Euthanasia Update. (Attached).

- ***ERT Report - Dogs Euthanasia Update.pdf*** — ***Page 25***

16.0 Enterprise Week 2021 Update. (Attached)

- ***ERT Report - NMD Enterprise Week 2021 Update.pdf*** — ***Page 29***

17.0 Historic Action Tracker Sheet. (Attached).

- ***ERT Historic Action Tracker Sheet - for Jan Mtg 2022.pdf*** — ***Page 33***

18.0 Invest NI Economic Recovery Action Plan. (Attached).

- ***ERT Report - Invest NI Economic Recovery Action Plan.pdf*** — ***Page 42***

19.0 Louth/NMD Strategic Alliance Report 15.09.2021. (Attached).

- ***Report L.NMD Strategic Alliance 15 Sept 2021.pdf*** — ***Page 46***

20.0 Planning Performance Figures for December 2021. (Attached).

- ***Planning Performance Report - December 2021.pdf*** — ***Page 51***

21.0 Ulster University Economic Policy Centre Report. (Attached).

Invitees

Cllr Terry Andrews

Ms Kate Bingham

Cllr Patrick Brown

Cllr Robert Burgess

Cllr Pete Byrne

Mr Gerard Byrne

Mrs Dorinnia Carville

Cllr Charlie Casey

Cllr William Clarke

Cllr Dermot Curran

Cllr Laura Devlin

Ms Louise Dillon

Cllr Cadogan Enright

Cllr Aoife Finnegan

Cllr Hugh Gallagher

Cllr Mark Gibbons

Cllr Oonagh Hanlon

Cllr Glyn Hanna

Cllr Valerie Harte

Cllr Roisin Howell

Mr Colum Jackson

Mrs Sheila Kieran

Cllr Mickey Larkin

Cllr Alan Lewis

Mr Michael Lipsett

Cllr Oonagh Magennis

Mr Conor Mallon

Cllr Gavin Malone

Cllr Cathy Mason

Mr Johnny Mc Bride

Colette McAteer

Cllr Declan McAteer

Cllr Leeanne McEvoy

Jonathan McGilly

Cllr Harold McKee

Patricia McKeever

Cllr Karen McKevitt

Cllr Andrew McMurray

Cllr Roisin Mulgrew

Cllr Declan Murphy

Cllr Barra Ó Muirí

Linda O'Hare

Cllr Gerry O'Hare

Cllr Kathryn Owen

Mr Andy Patterson

Cllr Henry Reilly

Cllr Michael Ruane

Cllr Michael Savage

Cllr Gareth Sharvin

Donna Starkey

Cllr Gary Stokes

Sarah Taggart

Cllr David Taylor

Cllr Jarlath Tinnelly

Cllr John Trainor

Central Support Unit

Cllr William Walker

Mrs Marie Ward

ACTION SHEET

ENTERPRISE REGENERATION & TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY 13 DECEMBER 2021

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
ERT/228/2021	DfC NEWRY ENABLING PLAN	A copy of Department for Communities "Newry City Centre Development Enabling Plan 2035" and "Newry Enabling Action Plan", to be forwarded to Councillors for information.	C Mallon	Both docs sent to Members - 15/12/2021 /LD	Y
ERT/230/2021	MID YEAR ASSESSMENT - BUSINESS PLANS 2021-2022	To approve the Mid-Year Assessment of the ERT Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022.	C Mallon	Noted	Y
ERT/231/2021	NEWRY CHAMBER CROSS BODY CONFERENCE	The Council issue an SLA to Newry Chamber of Commerce and Trade for Sponsorship of £5,000 towards a Cross Border conference to be held in March 2022.	J McGilly	In progress	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
ERT/232/2021	RING OF GULLION AONB WATER IMPROVEMENT GRANT	a) To note that Council have successfully received £25,500 at up to 85% of eligible costs from Northern Ireland Environment Agency through their Water Improvement Fund. b) To approve a Service Level Agreement of £2,500 value with the Dundalk Institute of Technology for delivery of their H20 Hero's Education Programme with schools in the Ring of Gullion area, including engagement with local secondary schools in GIS mapping of the rivers. c) Officers examine the possibility of extending this programme to provide water improvements to other areas in view of the poor statistics issued by the Water Framework Directive with regard to water standards in lakes and rivers etc in other parts of the District.	J McGilly	In progress	Y
ERT/233/2021	SALES ACCELERATION PROGRAMME TRADE VISIT	To approve the attendance of the Chairperson (or their nominee) and one Officer at the two Sales Accelerator Programme Trade Visits: the first to be	J Mc Gilly	In progress	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		held in Edinburgh for 2 nights (1 – 3 February 2022 - proposed dates), with the second to be held in South of Ireland (dates / venue to be agreed).			
ERT/234/2021	SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE BIG APPRENTICESHIP EVENT 2022	To issue of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to Southern Regional College (SRC) for sponsorship towards the delivery of their Big Apprenticeship Event scheduled to take place during Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week 2022 in February 2022, at a cost of £5,000.	J McGilly	In progress	Y
ERT/235/2021	UUJ RESEARCH CROSS BORDER CONNECTIVITY & COOPERATION PLAN	To approve an amendment to the Council's Memorandum of Understanding with Ulster University to include the completion of a further research on cross-border connectivity and cooperation at a cost of £12,000.	J McGilly	Actioned	Y
ERT/236/2021	ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING EXTENDED OPENING HOURS	To take into consideration the extended opening hours that can be applied for under the amendments to the Act and to process applications for extended Entertainment to process requests in line with current practices. ie to approve extended hours applications under delegated authority and to refer refusals to	C Jackson	Actioned	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		committee for consideration.			
ERT/237/2021	EXEMPT: BANN ROAD CASTLEWELLAN - PARK & RIDE	a) Committee members approve the attached business case for a Capital spend to develop a 72 bay Park 'n' Share facility at Bann Road, Castlewellan. b) Members approve the revised Capital budget as set out in Section 4.1 of Report dated 13 December 2021 from Mr C Jackson Assistant Director Building Control & Regulations.	C Jackson	In Progress	N
ERT/238/2021	EXEMPT: CLEANING SERVICES CONTRACT - TOURISM FACILITIES	To procure and appoint a cleaning services provider to Council's four Forest Parks and Tyrella Beach between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025.	A Patterson	In progress	Y
ERT/239/2021	EXEMPT: CAR PARK DOWNPATRICK ST, SAINTFIELD	To approve the business case for the Capital spend required to carry out the refurbishment project for Downpatrick Street car park, Saintfield.	C Jackson	Planned for the Summer of 2022	N
ERT/240/2021	EXEMPT:	a) Subject to DFI Business Case sign off, Council to accept DFI Letters of Offer once	J McGilly	In progress	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
	GREENWAY & ACTIVE TRAVEL - DfI FUNDING	received for the Newry City Greenway, Newry to Warrenpoint Greenway and Downpatrick Green/Blue Way Feasibility/Design Studies. b) To approve attached Business Case, to appoint consultants to deliver the feasibility & costed options for all 3 outlined schemes. c) To approve a contribution from the Capital programme to match fund DFI grant aid as set out in section 4.1 of Report dated 13 December 2021 from Mr J McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment & Regeneration.			
ERT/241/2021	EXEMPT: MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP NETWORK (MLN) EVENT	To approve that Council sponsors Podium / MLN for the development, management and implementation of a high-profile leadership event in 2022.	J McGilly	In progress	Y
ERT/242/2021	EXEMPT: PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY SERVICES	To appoint a supplier via tender for a two-year contract using an existing Council Framework for videography and photography to assist the tourism and arts	A Patterson	In progress	Y

Minute Ref	Subject	Decision	Lead Officer	Actions taken/ Progress to date	Remove from Action Sheet Y/N
		sectors by creating videography and photography content.			
ERT/243/2021	EXEMPT: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE - LEVELLING UP FUND	To approve the procurement and appointment of a suitably qualified consultant to assist council officials with the preparation and submission of bids to the Levelling up fund.	J McGilly	In progress	Y
ERT/244/2021	EXEMPT: SMALL SETTLEMENT REGENERATION PROGRAMME	1) To accept the letter of offer. 2) To approve 10% match funding required by DfI, DAERA and DfC. 3) To submit outline proposals by 31 December 2021 with detail finalised early in 2022 via engagement with DEAs and report back to the ERT Committee.	JMcGilly	Draft plan submitted – to be reviewed for Feb ERT	N
ERT/245/2021	WARRENPOINT PONTOON	To approve the appointment of a supplier via the existing Council framework to repair the pontoon at Warrenpoint Breakwater and to undertake the dredging of the pontoon pocket area by Warrenpoint Harbour Authority.	A Patterson	In progress	Y
END		*************			

Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	Notice of Motion C/245/2021 – Free parking for Electric Vehicles in Council Off-Street
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Mr Colum Jackson – Assistant Director Enterprise, Regeneration & Tourism Department
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Gary McCurry, Duty Manager, Off Street Parking Function.

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision		**For noting only**	**x**

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose: To provide some context and background to the notice of motion as detailed below as proposed by Councillor Brown. **"In the interest of encouraging people to reduce their carbon footprint and incentivise the ownership of Electric vehicles in the District, Council will introduce free car parking for electric vehicles in all council-owned car parks."** We all shoulder responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint, which can be achieved by various actions, however, more specifically, there is a need for the transport sector to decarbonise and reduce emissions. This sector is the largest contributor to UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions, estimated at 27 per cent in 2019. It is the commonly held view, that Electric Vehicles (EV's), are the principle mechanism by which to decarbonise the transport sector, therefore all opportunities to encourage or assist the uptake of EV ownership should be supported, if realistic and quantifiable.
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	PRIMARY PURPOSE OF TARIFFS Car parking tariffs are a two-pronged instrument, utilised in eleven (of fifty-two) Off-Street car parks which service Newry, Downpatrick and Ballynahinch. The primary function of the tariff is concerned with traffic/parking management, by encouraging parking bay turnover which positively impacts upon City/town centre footfall, therefore trade, as they prevent car parks from becoming stagnant with long stay parking actions. Additionally, tariffs provide a revenue stream to cover operational expenditure, e.g. maintenance, lighting, enforcement and cleansing etc. Newry,

Mourne & Down District Council (NMDDC), presently operate a standardised 40p/hr tariff across all 11 charged car parks, which achieves the required bay turnover, whilst remaining extremely competitive and affordable for users. Furthermore, of the current provision of eight EV charge points located in Council controlled car parks, only one, is sited within a Pay & Display car park, with the remaining seven charge points situated within free car parks.

Therefore, to afford EV owners the availability of free parking in all 11-centralised charged Pay & Display Off-Street car parks, could prove detrimental to the parking management strategy, as potentially, EV's could park in centralised parking bays all day for free and block up car parks, denying shoppers access, hence negatively impacting upon trade/footfall. This issue would magnify over time as more EV's enter the market. Equally, free parking provision would also have a downward impact on parking revenue.

<u>LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT</u>

Council operated Off-Street car parks are legislated for under the Off-Street Parking (Northern Ireland) Order 2000, which enables enforcement of Parking Contraventions. Any amendment to the Order to facilitate exemption from payment for a specific group (in this instance EV's), would involve a cost implication to Council and more significantly, would be very difficult to obtain and implement, as the Order was produced by The Department for Infrastructure (DFI) and any such amendment, even if possible, would affect all Councils as the Order encompasses all Off-Street car parks in Northern Ireland at this present time. Specific alterations to the Order could not be accommodated for a specific Council.

In addition to this aspect, Traffic Attendant's (TA's) would encounter difficulty in identifying vehicles exempt from payment, as checking an individual vehicle's drive train status would be time consuming, thus extending the time a TA spends in a car park. Consequently, this would increase enforcement costs as Council are invoiced on patrol hours spent in our Off-Street car parks, under the present Agency Agreement for Enforcement provision.

<u>INCENTIVISING UPTAKE</u>

Any apparatus aimed at incentivising uptake in EV ownership, should be championed by Central Government and vehicle manufacturers, E.g. Scrappage scheme incentives to remove Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) vehicles from the public fleet, reduced purchase costs of EV's, interest free loans to assist purchase and available grants to install home charge points. These types of incentives will formulate a consistent centralised approach, not fragmented into Council District's and Borough's. Occasionally saving 40p/hr in a Council Off-Street car park, in my view, will not influence customer behaviour and clinch the deal on an EV purchase.

A resident survey revealed that the perception of a lack of reliable public charging options was the biggest barrier to encouraging motorists to transition to EV's, followed with the high upfront cost of purchase. Limited vehicle range and choice of

	model also factored in the responses. The development of a country – wide EV charging infrastructure strategy is required to identify the future needs and approach to achieving those needs, to meet the demand for a suitable EV charging network. Again, in my view, this should be driven by a Central Government entity. In addition, when considering implementing a positive action proposal of preferential treatment for electric vehicle owners, it would be expected that this would be underpinned by evidence that electric vehicle owners have suffered a detriment at the expense of other vehicle owners due to the implementation of car parking charges and that Council has definitively established a clear correlation that free car parking will have a substantial influence upon the decision of individuals to purchase electric vehicles. There is no available data to display that detriment or establish the correlation. Whilst any move to provide free parking for EV's would not be deemed discriminatory under Section 75 legislation, the potential exists to create the perception to drivers of non EV's of a disadvantage or prejudice. In my view, this would not be a viable operational policy to attempt to introduce. NMDDC COMMITMENT Newry, Mourne & Down District Council are presently working with other Councils and partners collaboratively on funding for the installation of public EV charge points in a number of Council controlled car parks and facilities, concerned with the Faster Charger Project (INTERREG funded project) and the On-Street Residential Charging Scheme - ORCS funding. Numerous sites have been identified and submitted for consideration.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	To note the content of this report in the discussions on the notice of motion, and recommend that • Officers continue the collaborative work in relation to both the Faster and On-Street Residential Charging Schemes in order to secure funding for increasing EV charging provision within the District.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	None at this stage.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes***

	It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations	☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:	
	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened	☐
	The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation	☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation***	
	Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves	☐
	Consultation period will be 12 weeks	☐
	Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided)	☐
	Rationale:	
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**	
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:	
	Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☐
7.0	**Appendices**	
	N/A	
8.0	**Background Documents**	
	N/A	

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	All Ireland Smart Cities Forum Update
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director of Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Patricia McPolin Business Intelligence Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	**X**	**For noting only**	

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
	<u>Purpose</u> To approve the annual membership cost and provide an update on All Ireland Smart Cities Forum (AISCF) <u>Background</u> Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is a member of the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum (www.smartcitiesireland.org). The All Ireland Smart Cities Forum is focused on the advancement of cities in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland through the deployment of, and value creation generated by, smart city programmes and best practise. The Forum is made up of city officials who have a wealth of knowledge and experience of the evolving smart city agenda, and the opportunities this provides for future growth and investment. The primary objective is that this will be a cooperative Forum for the advancement of smart city agendas across all partner cities. Current members of the Forum include: Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway, Belfast, Derry and Newry. Representatives from each City meet every 2 months and the key aim is to discuss the advancement of Cities through the deployment of technology, to share knowledge, cultivate best practice, foster innovation and to identify potential sources of funding for Smart City schemes. The AISCF is a valuable tool for Newry, Mourne and Down particularly in relation to the Belfast Regional City Deal (BRCD) through collaboration with partner cities in topics such as Health, Travel, Energy, Safety, Smart buildings, ethics, procurement, etc.

2.0	**Key Issues**
2.1	A preliminary strategy and proposition paper has been prepared to position local authorities to take full advantage of a new policy environment on both jurisdictions, to bring Smart policies to the core of public service in reconfiguring and digitalising regions, cities, towns and rural communities. The strategy document will enable collaboration to access funding platforms to deliver relevant transformational projects at local and national levels by positioning local government as a resourced and equipped sector to influence a Smart island. Details of the processes to be followed will be presented to County and City Management Association (CCMS) and the Society for Local Authority Chief Executives (SoLACE) for approval. Following which a business case will be produced to examine the various options to take advantage of the developing policy and funding arena, driving the leadership role of local government. The overall objectives will be to position the local government system to become a key policy influencer, allow access to the funds becoming available and to provide a local government led platform for Smart and digital/transformation at national level, allowing the CCMA to further position itself as a key policy influencer in public service change and transition. Other tasks/objectives the proposed business case might consider include: • Becoming a Centre of Excellence on certain topics e.g. Security and Ethnics for Local Government; • Development of Best Practice/Guidance for local government e.g. 5G, Use of Drones, Smart Districts, Procurement, Smart developments in economic, rural and environmental development, etc.; • Potential for developing clusters of expertise that in part already exist within local government; • Develop a local government digital charter (like the Local Government Charter on Climate Change) in synch with a national digital strategy; • Develop methodologies for demonstrating impact of projects in areas such as climate transition; • Develop a comprehensive and up-to-date portfolio with consistent messaging of all smart city activities/case studies in Ireland; and • Deliver other national level activities could scale innovation at a local authority/local government level, etc. Advancing this proposition will therefore: • Allow local government to avail of new funding opportunities while also underpinning their statutory role in planning and sustainable development along with alignment to the developing role it is playing on climate change; • Underpin the local government role in local economic development, creating a local environment conducive to job creation and innovation;

	• Allow a shared local government approach to policy development at national level while also supporting economies of scale in accessing new technologies through joint procurement; • Underpin the relationship between the CCMA and SoLACE NI, and the Department of An Taoiseach in regard to All of Ireland developments; • Support the availability of critical expertise and related resources to the local government system as a whole as well as to the individual local authorities; **Funding this initiative** Funding for a future service configuration will need to be fully appraised as part of the proposed business case. It is not unreasonable at this point to envisage a combination of project/technical assistance funding from both National and EU funding platforms alongside, the already in place, local funding of the local government systems. The critical context is to use the local funding to begin to lever considerably greater resources on a sustainable basis. NMDDC as current members of the AISCF pay a membership fee of €4,809 per annum. Any additional cost implications are not stipulated at this stage, however when developed, Committee will be advised of associated costs. **Next Steps** The preliminary strategy prepared by the forum envisages these arrangements be put in place, if approved, over the next 12-18 months so that access to the new funds and other initiatives can be advanced quickly. To advance this proposition a briefing of the Chief Executives as a group may be necessary to provide the opportunity to raise awareness of the new funding opportunities and to agree a broad roadmap to advance the more detailed thinking required. Also, to reflect on the need to put in place interim arrangements as business planning is advanced, to position the system to take immediate advantage of the current policy environment.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	• To recommend the cost of renewal of membership of €4,809 per annum. This cost includes facilitation support of Maynooth University Business School, the bi-monthly meetings and the Annual All-Ireland Smart Cities Conference. • To note that Newry, Mourne and Down District Council continue to avail of the expertise from the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum. An ERT officer and representative from East Border Region will continue to attend the meetings and disseminate the information to relevant stakeholders.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	• Membership costs of €4,809 per annum for facilitation, bi-monthly meetings and Annual All-Ireland Smart Cities Conference. • Officer time and resources to attend bi-monthly meetings and feed into forum activities/objectives (along with a representative from EBR)

5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:

	Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed If no, please complete the following: The policy / strategy / plan / public service is not influenced by rural needs	☐ ☒
7.0	**Appendices**	
	N/A	
8.0	**Background Documents**	
	Strategy document available upon request	

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	BRCD – Renewed ambition programme
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly – Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly – Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	x	**For noting only**	

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	The Renewed Ambition Programme (RAP) is a joint public and private sector led initiative and aims to work collaboratively to showcase investment and development opportunities across Belfast City Region as we seek to deliver on our shared ambitions for the city region as an exciting place to work, live, visit and invest. It is a 5 pillared programme focused on activities to ensure Belfast and the wider city region is positioned to continue to attract investment and deliver on inclusive growth. The 5 pillars include: • Programme of Content aimed at the local and international real estate audience which aims to showcase the Belfast City Region for future real estate investment though participation at virtual and in-person conferences and showcase events. • Programme of Engagement and Advocacy to facilitate two-way conversations with policy makers and showcase real estate opportunities to the investor community. This aims to position the Belfast City Region positively and seeks to identify and try to address barriers that investors, developers, and occupiers may face when they consider Belfast as a destination. • Media and Stakeholder Engagement reinforcing positive messaging around Belfast's investment proposition through international marketing and communication campaigns targeting the national and international real estate investment and development community. • A shared access Repository on the investinbelfast.com website which facilitates sharing of data, marketing collateral and intel to help ensure consistent messaging and shared narrative is used by all partners when promoting the city region. • Research aligned to the impact of real estate investment to inform the city proposition and narrative.

2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	For 2022, an exciting collaborative programme of activity is being developed across the key pillars of Research, Events, Engagement and Advocacy, Communications and Repository. The programme will also include a return to international real estate conferences such as MIPIM and UKREiiF and Investor showcase events in London and Dublin, to showcase real estate opportunities across the city region to a global audience. The proposed programme of activity at MIPIM 2022 includes Belfast region delegation participation on the Department for International Trade stand, and investment showcase and networking opportunities. The proposed programme of activity at UKREiiF includes a dedicated stand in the exhibition area to act as a meeting point for partners, and investment showcase and networking opportunities. In addition, as part of RAP events programme discussions are taking place with Real Estate Live to join their webinar programme of events, and Built Environment Network to participate in their Ireland Conference in April (https://www.built-environment-networking.com/region/republic-ireland-construction-property-conferences/). In 2022 the objectives are to: • Continue to build collaboration and partnership in the city and wider region • Continue to promote and market the Belfast region outside Northern Ireland • Increased engagement and advocacy with all key stakeholders, in particular target investors and government. Belfast City Council allocates substantial budget to support investment activities and to lead on the Renewed Ambition Programme has requested partner contributions of £15,000 per Council partner to support the programme of activities as outlined above. It should be noted that the private sector also supports and sponsors the Renewed Ambition Programme. Attracting investment into the District is an integral part of Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and collaborating with the Renewed Ambition Programme will help Council's reach into wider markets and to achieve higher impact and leverage spend against any activity that we could undertake alone.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	It is recommended that Council approves participation in the Renewed Ambition Programme at a cost of £15,000 for 2022-23, subject to budget estimates Rate setting.
4.0	**Resource implications**

4.1	£15,000 – 2022/23 budgets
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service

	Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	**Appendices**
	N/A
8.0	**Background Documents**
	N/A

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Kevin McGarry, Rural Development Programme Manager

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision	x	**For noting only**	

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose The purpose of the paper is to seek approval to procure a suitably qualified resource to work towards RIBA Stages 1 to 3 (Stage 1; Preparation and Brief, Stage 2; Concept design, Stage 3; Spatial Coordination) and to work towards project completion (Stages 4; Technical Design, Stage 5; Manufacturing and Construction, Stage 6; Handover) subject to an issue of a letter of offer from the Department of Communities for the capital element of the project. Background The COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme aims to build upon the successful collaborative approach of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme. This saw DfC, DAERA, and DfI contribute to the establishment of objectives, jointly fund and oversee the delivery of the programme. Councils worked with stakeholders to identify priority projects for delivery on the ground. NMDDC will be required to submit a draft Small Settlement Regeneration Investment Plan which sets out its proposed projects. Councils will be required to contribute 10% to their total cost of the Investment Plans.
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	The Programme aims to deliver on the following objectives through realising a range of benefits including: - Physical regeneration of small settlements in order to improve place making and aid recovery from COVID-19 - Improvements that encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area by 2022/23 - Improvements that enhance walking, cycling and other facilities within the scheme area by 2022/23.

	Responsibility for identifying project proposals within the rural settlement context will lie with NMDDC and should reflect priorities and opportunities identified at a local level. Key considerations in the development of projects for support would include the establishment of need that should be served, and the value for money case for the proposed actions. NMDDC are responsible for identifying projects and establishing priority across the district. This process will be informed by suitable stakeholder engagement and will show clear connections to the outcomes and objectives of the overall programme. DfC and DAERA funding must be used to deliver regeneration benefits for small settlements covered by the programme. Objectives could include support for village investments such as: - revitalisation; - public realm; - derelict and vacant site enhancement; - environmental improvements; - conservation and upgrading of rural culture and heritage (natural and built); and - gateway projects. DfI funding must be used to deliver projects, or elements of projects, that contribute to DfI's policy interests: supporting active travel, promoting connectivity and access to services, and/or create and enhance green / blue spaces, for example could be drawn from the following exemplar project ideas: - cycle tracks or lanes - including pop-up cycle lanes and creating space on pathways for cyclists; - pavement or footway widening to allow for physical distancing; - cycle parking and charging facilities; - connection pathways to access town centres the centre of settlements and key services – adapting existing routes and/or creating desirable new ingress and egress routes; - tree planting incidental to creating/improving walking or cycling paths; and - parklets, rain gardens, living roofs and living vertical gardens. It is intended that the programme would commence in 2021/22 and run over 2 years. In order to access the funding, a programme of works has been submitted to DfC for their consideration; 1. **<u>Shop front, streetscape, open space and active travel enhancement scheme</u>** The scheme will work towards the design and capital development (through environmental improvement works) of 7 locations across the district with a view to enhancing the public realm areas through cleaning and washing of pavements,

upgrade of street furniture in keeping with the local heritage and general improvements to the settlements. Further to this there is the opportunity to develop pathways and safe walking routes throughout the settlements. Environmental improvement works which also implements wider pavements will also be included.

With regards the shop front aspect of the project, the opportunity of financial assistance will be publicised to the businesses and owners of the property with an Expression of Interest exercise undertaken in order to scope the scale of works from resource and capital perspective.

The settlements are across all 7No district Electorate Areas to include;

- Dundrum
- Newtownhamilton
- Annalong
- Meigh
- Strangford
- Hilltown
- Killyleagh

In keeping with the requirements of the funding local consultation will be undertaken using the District Electorate Area fora and this will be fed back into the proposal with DfC.

2. <u>Delivering Regeneration through Environmental Improvement</u>

The proposed schedule of Environmental improvement works includes a number of projects keeping in mind the state of readiness the sites are in with regards to public realm consultation undertaken to date. To include the following settlements;

- Slieve Gullion (Bessbrook)
- Slieve Croob (Castlewellan)
- Crotlieve (Rostrevor)
- Rowallane (Saintfield)

There is a requirement to divide the project into 2 separate phases;

Phase 1 (Design);_It is anticipated this project will be exclusively resource led in order to realise the RIBA aspect of the project (stage 1-3) across district.

Phase 2 (Capital works);_This will include the capital element of the project to include RIBA stages 4 to 6.

Please note there is an element of flexibility permitted with regards to the identification of the sites which can be further investigated at consultation stage.

3. Post Project Evaluation / attitudinal surveys / resource costs

	Further to this there is a requirement to undertake post project evaluation through attitudinal surveys as well incorporating the salary costs associated with the completion of the programme from an administrative perspective.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	It is recommended to approve the relevant business cases and commence the required procurement processes / framework appointments for scheme design consultants and contractors and proceed to tender / quotation / assessment and award if within budget. In advance of this all proposals will be presented to the relevant DEA Fora by way of consultation.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	The resource implications associated with the programme are incorporated within the programme of works and the budget allocated by DfC.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐

	Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided)	☐
	Rationale: *N/A*	
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**	
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☐
7.0	**Appendices**	
	N/A	
8.0	**Background Documents**	
	N/A	

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	Euthanasia of Dogs
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Colum Jackson, Assistant Director, Building Control
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Fintan Quinn, Head of Licensing and Enforcement

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision		**For noting only**	**X**

To note the content of this report

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose To report back to the ERT committee in relation to progress following the Notice of Motion on Dog Euthanasia agreed at Council Meeting held on 7th September 2020. Item C/ 114/ 2020. The notice was as follows: "Council welcomes reports from DAERA that incidences of dog euthanasia are down across Northern Ireland in 19/20, but is extremely concerned that in the same period our District has had substantially more dogs put down than any other council area. To address this Council will take the following actions: · Undertake an investigation into why these figures are so high in the District and bring a report back for consideration on this to the AHC committee. · Write to the 10 other council areas asking what measures they took to successfully reduce the number of animals killed, particularly Derry & Strabane which has seen an 80% reduction and Ards & North Down which killed zero dogs this year · Consider ways in which the Council can bring together strategic partners such as the Dog Warden, local kennels, Animal Welfare Officer, PSNI and animal rescue charities, to address the issue, including through tackling illegal and unethical breeding and sale of dogs, particularly online" Background A previous report was made to the ERT Committee meeting of 12th October 2020. The Licensing and Control of Dogs is regulated by Councils under the Dogs(Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

	Newry Mourne and Down District currently have contracted one centre as a Dog Holding facility and one Dog Kennelling facility for dogs impounded or unwanted by owners. All dogs impounded are kept within the Kennelling facility for 6 days to allow owners to reclaim their dog. After the expiry of 6 days, it is for the Kennelling facility owner to determine suitable disposal of unclaimed dogs. Dogs may be resold or passed to Shelters or Animal Charities by the Kennelling facility owner if the dog is deemed suitable to do so.
2.0	**Key issues** Officers were tasked with reviewing the existing disposal arrangements for dogs and in particular, the incidences of dog euthanasia within the Newry and Mourne District Council area. In consideration, the Licensing section; a. Have reviewed the figures given on the DAERA reports and have compared these against our council returns. It is noted that the number of stray dogs impounded within the NM&DD has fallen year on year over the period and that figure continues to reduce. In relation to the number of dogs euthanised, the number of dogs euthanised for the year April 2020 to March 2021 is **5**. This compares to <u>37</u> for year April 2018/March 2019 and <u>35</u> for the year April 2019/March 2020. The number of dogs euthanises to date for the year April 2021/September 2021 is **5**, showing a levelling off of dogs euthanised. b. We continue to have discussions with other councils through the NIDAG group meetings and maintain contacts with charitable and dog rehoming organisations. c. In conjunction with Animal Welfare and the PSNI, the issue of puppy farming and illegal breeding establishments within the Newry Mourne and Down District Council area is investigated and we have carried out joint inspections with our Animal Welfare colleagues and have successfully uncovered and dealt with two instances of unlicenced breeding of dogs in the past 6 months. The Licensing section will continue to engage with partners and kennelling providers to monitor arrangements with the intention of reducing the number of dogs euthanised within our district.
2.1	
3.0	**Recommendations** Note content of this report, welcome the reduction in dogs euthanised and continue to work with all the relevant agencies to limit the number of dogs euthanised within our district.
3.1	

4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	Administration and time taken to consult with other councils and partners within the Dog Control sector.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☐
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☒ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☒
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**

6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	**Appendices**
	N/A
8.0	**Background Documents**
	N/A

Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	Review of NMD Enterprise Week 2021
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director of Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Elaine McAlinden Regeneration and Business Support Officer

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision		**For noting only**	**X**

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	Purpose • To note the impact of NMD Enterprise Week 2021, led by Council in partnership with key business support providers within and outside the District with the aim of enhancing the entrepreneurial activity and partnership working across the District. Background NMD Enterprise Week 2021 took place from Monday 8 November – Friday 12 November. The week comprised of a range of activities aimed at championing the Council's role as a key economic driver across the District and with the objective of: • Showcasing the entrepreneurial activity across the District and further afield. • Reaching new audiences across the District, potentially identifying talented entrepreneurs and the great people that work within it • Enhancing Council's leadership profile within the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the District. • Strengthening connections with existing organisations and business support providers, by providing more visibility for them. NMD Enterprise Week linked in with Global Enterprise Week which organisations around the world had adopted as a platform to disseminate a positive post-pandemic economic recovery message.
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	NMD Enterprise Week 2021 had a focus on key themes, with the week being branded as 'Make it Your Business' to get involved, to connect, to engage, to inspire and to develop.

In total, 27 virtual or in person events were delivered plus individual video broadcasts by 32 Go-For-It new business start clients and social enterprises (on average six per day) over the course of the five days.

In total across the week 74,619 people participated in NMD Enterprise Week 2021 in some way, either by attending or participating in an event, viewing posts on social media or taking part in the video and/or viewed some of the marketing content. To accommodate numbers on this scale in physical venues using traditional advertising channels would have entailed a complex and expensive logistical exercise. Given the reach of virtual and some smaller in person events adhering to Covid 19 restrictions, it is defensible to conclude that a hybrid programme of delivery can engage many more people.

Much of the activity that took place within NMD Enterprise Week is available across the year from a range of partners as part of their core activity. NMD Enterprise Week 2021 engaged the support and collaboration of the following partners:

- Schools across the NMD district
- Southern Regional College (SRC)
- South Eastern Regional College (SERC)
- InterTradeIreland
- Invest Northern Ireland
- Newry Chamber of Commerce
- Enterprise Northern Ireland
- Newry BID
- Women in Business / Lean in Newry
- Social Enterprise Northern Ireland
- Council-appointed delivery agents for the NMD Business Growth, Tender for Growth and Digital Growth programmes.
- Social Enterprise Partners

Clustering all their activity within an 'Enterprise Week' has had many added benefits for the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the District, namely:

- Easy access for entrepreneurs to a wide range of support, in one place at the same time;
- Linking appropriate support providers together under themes, strengthening the appeal and relevance to entrepreneurs;
- Showcasing the breadth of support available;
- Creating a stronger story for marketing activity – generating a 'buzz'!
- Engaging new clients and partners through an alternative and outputs focused approach to enterprise development.

Feedback from our partner organisations and from the attendees to the events has been very positive.

3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	• To note the impact of NMD Enterprise Week 2021, led by Council in partnership with key business support providers within and outside the District with the aim of enhancing the entrepreneurial activity and partnership working across the District.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	NMD Enterprise Week 2021 was implemented within existing and approved budgets.
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:

6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	**Appendices**
	N/A
8.0	**Background Documents**
	N/A

HISTORIC

ACTION TRACKER SHEET

ENTERPRISE REGENERATION AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

(For Noting at ERT January 2022)

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		October 2019			
ERT/138/2019	CARLINGFORD LOUGH GREENWAY	(a) The Council proceed to commence the PQQ contractor procurement stage for the Northern section of the Carlingford Lough Greenway. (b) Council Officers to update Councillor McMurray regarding plans for Greenways at Comber/Downpatrick.	J McGilly	Negotiations ongoing with landowners and funder. Revised submission submitted to funders May 2020. Planning submitted and awaiting decision. SEUPB considering additional funding bid. Economic appraisal completed and with SEUPB and DfI	N

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		(AUGUST 2020)			
ERT/095/2020	CAR PARK BANN ROAD CASTLEWELLAN	To progress the proposed redevelopment of the Bann Road parking area in collaboration with DFI and approve the submission of a planning application for a change of use for the area concerned.	C Jackson	Work in progress.	N
		SEPTEMBER 2020			
ERT/129/2020	(Historic Action) NEWCASTLE HARBOUR	A paper be brought to a meeting of the Enterprise Regeneration & Tourism Committee Meeting outlining proposals to move forward with the regeneration of Newcastle Harbour.	J McGilly	Work in progress, Following September ERT Working group to be established to progress in line with Master plan review for Newcastle	N
		(JANUARY 2021)			
ERT/010/2021	WARRENPOINT FRONTSHORE PR SCHEME	1. Members area asked to accept the broad Concept Design proposals as presented by AECOM, with suggested adjustments and proceed to a Consultation Process in early 2021.	J McGilly	Scheme consultation launched April 2021	N

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		2. Officers report on feedback from the consultation process to the Task and Finish Group, before proceeding to finalise the design for submission to planning. 3. Officers complete and submit the Economic Appraisal to Council and the Department For Communities for consideration of the funding package for the scheme. 4. Members approve the Business Case to carry out a Site Investigation Survey and other smaller surveys costs as required to prepare for the planning submission. 5. Once completed officers will present the DFI One Way system proposal for Warrenpoint at a future meeting of Crotlieve Cllrs in early 2021.		Scheme approved following consultation now moving to submit planning and complete Economic Appraisal	
		(MARCH 2021)			
ERT/051/2021	WARRENPOINT BATHS	1. Council continue to ensure that ongoing measures are taken to monitor and address Health and Safety concerns as they arise at the existing Baths Structure. 2. Council officials to continue discussions with potential funders given the development of new funding programmes - Peace Plus; Shared Prosperity Fund; NLHF, Tourism NI, etc, based on the	J McGilly	Cavanagh Kelly currently working on SOC for project as approved for planning Draft report due mid September	N

Back to Agenda

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		development of the facility as per the planning approval that is currently in place on the site. 3. Council officials proceed with appointment of a consultancy team to prepare a business case / economic appraisal on the existing Council approved scheme based on the Planning approval in place for the Warrenpoint Baths site.			
ERT/093/2021	LEVELLING UP FUND	1. The Council do not submit an application in the current call for 18 June 2021 Levelling Up Fund, but explore and develop initiatives that best fit the criteria utilising the Development fund that will become available early summer. 2. In respect of CRF, the Council explore potential joint funding bids with FE sector aligned to economic development and regeneration strategy.	J McGilly	Work in progress	N
		(AUGUST 2021)			
ERT/137/2021	NOTICE OF MOTION RE: REVIVAL OF DOWNPATRICK TOWN CENTRE	To note Report dated 09 August 2021 from Mr J McGilly, Assistant Director Enterprise, Employment & Regeneration, and proceed as follows:	J McGilly	Work in progress. Follow p meeting held with Downpatrick Councillors.	N

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		• Officers carry out a detailed options appraisal in partnership with local elected Members and business representatives, looking at the most suitable option going forward, that best represents the need of the Town Centre. • Report back to the ERT Committee with findings of the options appraisal exercise.		Survey of key stakeholders to be undertaken	
		(SEPTEMBER 2021)			
ERT/178/2021	SUBMISSIONS TO DFI RE: GREENWAY AND ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS	Given their importance to the District's tourism industry, Task and Finish Working Groups be set up for: - Development of Greenways - Newcastle Harbour An update be provided to Councillor Stokes regarding the application in respect of Newry Greenway.	J McGilly	Work in progress	N

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		(OCTOBER 2021)			
ERT/183/2021	LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP	a) To note that Council have prepared and submitted to the Department for Communities, a Strategic Assessment and Action Plan for implementation of a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) across the District. b) To approve the Business Case for the Labour Market Partnership Action Plan. c) To approve that Council now procure and appoint external delivery agents to implement the range of initiatives outlined in the business case, and approved for funding by Department for Communities. d) To approve the acceptance of Department for Communities Letters of Offer for Labour Market Partnership / Skills and Employability activity, including administration and operational costs. e) To approve the development and submission of a Labour Market Partnership Strategic Assessment & Action Plan for the 2022/2023 financial period, with details on same to be tabled at a further meeting of Council.	J McGilly	Work in progress – update at Jan 2022 ERT	N

Back to Agenda

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
ERT/185/2021	REPORT OF WARRENPOINT FRONT SHORE PUBLIC REALM SCHEME TASK & FINISH – 05/10/2021	To accept the following recommendations arising from the Warrenpoint Front Shore Public Realm Scheme Task and Finish Steering Group Meeting held on Tuesday 05 October 2021: • To extend the Public Consultation process for the proposed Breakwater Scheme. • To note the Task & Finish Steering Group are in agreement to proceed based on a phased approach, to the overall delivery of a Warrenpoint Front Shore / Breakwater Public Realm Scheme. • A separate report on the project and it's cost options, to be take to the next Meeting of the Council's Strategic Finance Working Group. • The project proceeds to RIBA Stage 4 with it's Consultants, to ensure that the contractor for Phase 1 is appointed and in place to meet the required funding commitment.	J McGilly	Work in progress	N

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
		(NOVEMBER 2021)			
ERT/212/2021	(EXEMPT) COVID 19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP MTG 21 OCTOBER 2021	a) To support the implementation of a Jobs and Careers fair, focusing on the Hospitality and Tourism Sector. b) That works are carried out to improve beach access and provide facilities at coastal areas across the District including Warrenpoint, Rostrevor and Lecale. c) Development of a Masterplan to develop walking linkages at Quoile Downpatrick.	C Mallon	In progress In progress In progress	N
ERT/214/2021	EXEMPT REVIEW OF TOURISM EVENTS	a) Carry out a full review of the existing flagship events historically delivered by Council during the Summer season. b) Make recommendations to Council on a programme of Summer event for 2022.	A Patterson	In progress	N
ERT/216/2021	(EXEMPT) WARRENPOINT TOWN HALL Re:VENTILATION WORKS	To approve the allocation in the Capital Programme as outlined in Section 4.1 in Report dated 08 November 2021 from Mr A Patterson Assistant Director Tourism Culture & Events, to enable the completion of works to Warrenpoint Town Hall within the current financial year.	A Patterson	In progress	N

ITEM	SUBJECT	DECISION	REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN	REMOVE FROM ACTION SHEET Y/N
END		(DECEMBER 2021 TO FOLLOW) ******			

Report to:	Enterprise Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	Invest NI Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP) Sub Regional Funding
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director of Enterprise, Employment and Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Amanda Smyth Head of Regeneration and Business Development

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision		**For noting only**	**X**

1.0 Purpose and Background

1.1 Purpose

- To note the funding secured through Invest NI Economic Recovery Action Plan for the completion of a number of research projects into the wider economic outlook

Background

- Invest NI invited applications for funding from NI Council's for funding towards research into the wider economic outlook, either at a sub-regional or individual Council area.
- A number of bids were submitted and awarded grant aid in December 2021.
- All research projects are to be completed in full by 31st March 2022.

2.0 Key issues

NMD DC Letter of Offer: £20,000

This research will identify a detailed framework for business support for SMEs post Dec 2022 when the current business support structure is due to conclude. The ethos of the research will be to define future support for SMEs within the District, who, with the right support, advice and assistance, will be capable of growth. Sub-regional entrepreneurship and enterprise initiatives within NMDDC, funded through ERDF , have played a key role in helping SMEs to take those first steps towards competing nationally and globally. As we come to the end of the current business support provision, NMDDC is keen to scope out what are the priorities for delivery of future interventions , and which can be aligned to future funding opportunities

This research will seek to determine what are:

- Key growth sectors & required initiatives to stimulate growth in these areas

	• traditional sectors that need support to maintain their position as important contributors to the local economy • Sectors within which are opportunities for new start-ups • Niche sectors with potential to scale • Sectors where NMD have unique offering, and are an attractor for further investment The research will seek to define: • appropriate support requirements, i.e. mentoring, programmes, finance, property, people, skill , R&D , sales, digital etc ▪ support structure required to stimulate & support growth of innovative new start-ups • external influences required to attract and support growth of businesses where opportunities lie for collaborative delivery i.e. with Council's, colleges etc ▪ Funding opportunities & how these align with proposed interventions <u>NMDDC, Ards and North Down and ABC Council joint project: Letter of Offer £25,000</u> This research will identify appropriate support mechanisms for companies pivoting to a greener, more sustainable and low carbon business model. The research project will provide guidance on potential actions needed to be implemented by businesses to protect the environment, support the social fabric of our area and create job opportunities and growth through the use of green technologies, management practices and clever repurposing of existing equipment or services. <u>NI Council bid, led by Belfast City Council: Letter of Offer £30,000</u> The facilitation of a business case for future business start-up support. This business case will progress the recommendations of recent research completed to date to ensure that any future measures and delivery models are aligned to the delivery of 10x and councils' community planning and growth deal ambitions. <u>NI Council bid, led by Derry City and Strabane District Council: Letter of Offer £25,000</u> NI Councils' direct statutory remit in the field of economic growth and regeneration is relatively limited at present. However, they have a critical convening role to play, through their community planning remit. This presents an opportunity to drive forward coherent place-based approaches that recognise the uniqueness of locations while developing flexible interventions to ensure alignment with regional and national policy interventions. The research will review existing structures, consideration of delivery against targets and the Programme for Government outcomes. The research will look into models from other locations and the lessons learned for NI. The feasibility study will identify the statutory/legislative changes required and highlight considerations for Councils in the case of any revision to the current economic development delivery approach.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	• To note the funding secured through Invest NI Economic Recovery Action Plan for the completion of a number of research projects into the wider economic outlook

4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	All budgets outlined in this report are 100% funded through DFC
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒
5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following:

	Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed	☐
7.0	**Appendices**	
	N/A	
8.0	**Background Documents**	
	N/A	

Approved 2.12.2021

Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne and Down
District Council

M/151

Louth/ Newry Mourne and Down Strategic Alliance
of Elected Members between
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, and Louth County Council

Report of Meeting held Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 10.00 a.m.
Via ZOOM Platform

In the Chair:	**Councillor J Tinnelly,**	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC (Joint Chair)**
Present:	**Councillor J Sheridan,**	**Louth County Council (Joint Chair)**
	Councillor A Watters,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor P McGeough,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor T Cunningham,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor D Power,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor E Corrigan,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor E Coffey,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor A McKevitt,	**Louth County Council**
	Councillor D McAteer,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Councillor J Tinnelly,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Councillor M Larkin,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Councillor D Curran,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Councillor R Mulgrew,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Councillor D Murphy,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Councillor H McKee,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
	Ms J Martin,	**Chief Executive LCC**
	Ms M Ward,	**Chief Executive NMDDC**
	Mr F Pentony,	**Director LCC**
	Ms B Woods	**Director LCC**
	Mr J McGuinness	**Director LCC**
	Mr C Mallon,	**Director NMDDC**
	Mr P Donnelly	**Director LCC**
	Mr M Lipsett,	**Director NMDDC**
	Mr J McGilly,	**Assistant Director NMDDC**
	Ms P Arthurs,	**East Border Region**
	Ms A Powell,	**NMDDC (Notes)**

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Apologies received from:

Councillor J Byrne,	**Louth County Council**
Councillor W Clarke,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
Councillor W Walker,	**Newry, Mourne and Down DC**
Ms D Carville,	**Director NMDDC**
Mr J McBride,	**Director NMDDC**
Ms C Duff	**Director LCC**

Election of Joint Chairs

Councillor Declan McAteer took this first item in order to hand over to the new Chair following election.

Councillor Edel Corrigan sought clarification that each grouping is not referred to in the Standing Order and that may need to be reviewed for D'Hondt election system.

Joan Martin confirmed that the Standing Order does not refer to groupings, however she proposed that this does not need to be reviewed as it has always worked well that it is left to Political Parties to decide amongst themselves.

Councillor McAteer asked for Nominations from Louth County Council.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Emma Coffey, seconded by Councillor Andrea McKevitt, Councillor John Sheridan was elected as Joint Chair for Louth County Council.**

Councillor McAteer asked for Nominations from NMDD Council.

AGREED: **On the proposal of Councillor Declan McAteer, seconded by Councillor Dermot Curran, Councillor Jarlath Tinnelly was elected as Joint Chair for NMDD Council.**

2. Report of Louth/Newry Mourne and Down Joint Committee Meeting held on 19 May 2021 (attached)

On the proposal of Councillor McAteer, seconded by Councillor Corrigan, report of meeting held on the 19 May 2021 was approved.

Approved 2.12.2021

3. Matters Arising

Conor Mallon informed members that a decision was taken with Joint Chairs to reschedule the planned action plan review workshop on 16 June to a date when members could meet physically and that a date will be sought for this workshop in October 2021.

AGREED: **Action Plan Review Workshop to be organised on a date in October 2021 at a location in NMDD Council area.**

4. Presentation – Peace Plus

Pamela Arthurs provided a presentation on Peace Plus.

AGREED: **The presentation on Peace Plus will be circulated to all members following the meeting**

5. Update – Strategic Alliance Action Plan (attached)

Conor Mallon advised the Joint Tourism Promotional Video has now been launched and that recently a joint Tree Planting event took place. Conor confirmed that a full review of the current action plan will take place during the upcoming workshop.

6. Schedule of meetings 2021:

The next meeting will be held at 10am on 24th November 2021 via ZOOM Platform

Future meetings for 2021 are scheduled as follows:

- Action Plan Review Workshop – provisional date 19 November 21
- Wednesday 24th November 2021

Signed: C Mallon
Director of Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Approved 2.12.2021

ACTIONS

	ACTION	Referred to
1.	On the proposal of Councillor Emma Coffey, seconded by Councillor Andrea McKevitt, Councillor John Sheridan was elected as Joint Chair for Louth County Council.	NOTED
2.	On the proposal of Councillor Declan McAteer, seconded by Councillor Dermot Curran, Councillor Jarlath Tinnelly was elected as Joint Chair for NMDD Council.	NOTED
3.	Action Plan Review Workshop to be organised on a date in October 2021 at a location in NMDD Council area.	C Mallon / F Pentony
4.	The presentation on Peace Plus will be circulated to all members following the meeting	C Mallon

Approved 2.12.2021

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council – December 2021

1. Live Applications

MONTH 2021/22	NEW APPLICATIONS	LIVE APPLICATIONS	LIVE APPLICATIONS OVER 12 MONTHS
April 2021	206	1,195	232
May 2021	204	1,238	228
June 2021	172	1,219	236
July 2021	176	1,190	224
August 2021	152	1,174	226
September 2021	182	1,175	226
October 2021	188	1,188	232
November 2021	184	1,158	234
December 2021	112	1,097	232

2. Live Applications by length of time in system

Month 2020/21	Under 6 months	Between 6 and 12 months	Between 12 and 18 months	Between 18 and 24 months	Over 24 months	Total
April 2021	770	193	81	54	97	**1,195**
May 2021	818	192	76	53	99	**1,238**
June 2021	777	206	82	43	111	**1,219**
July 2021	787	179	79	44	101	**1,190**
August 2021	754	194	84	49	93	**1,174**
September 2021	737	212	87	44	95	**1,175**
October 2021	724	232	85	46	101	**1,188**
November 2021	687	237	81	50	103	**1,158**
December 2021	623	242	78	48	106	**1,097**

3. **Live applications per Case Officer**

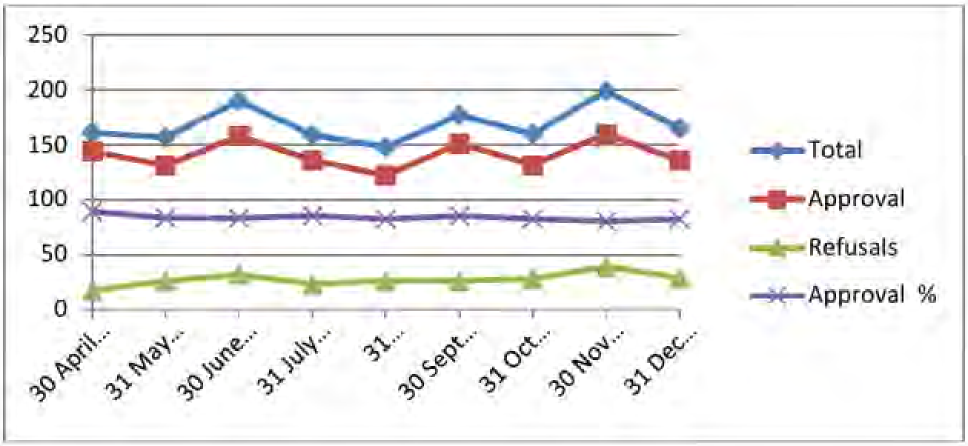
Month 2021/22	Average number of Applications per Case Officer
April	83
May	85
June	89
July	83
August	75
September	67
October	64
November 2021	66
December 2021	66

4. **Decisions issued per month**

Month 2021/22	Number of Decisions Issued	Number of Decisions Issued under delegated authority
April	161	155
May	157	146
June	190	184
July	159	150
August	148	145
September	177	166
October	160	155
November 2021	199	183
December 2021	165	147

5. Decisions Issued YTD

Month 2021/22	Number of Decisions Issued	Breakdown of Decisions	
April	161	Approvals (144)	89%
		Refusals (17)	11%
May	318	Approvals (275)	86%
		Refusals (43)	14%
June	508	Approvals (433)	85%
		Refusals (75)	15%
July	667	Approvals (569)	85%
		Refusals (98)	15%
August	815	Approvals (691)	85%
		Refusals (124)	15%
September	992	Approvals (842)	85%
		Refusals (150)	15%
October	1,152	Approvals (974)	85%
		Refusals (178)	15%
November	1,351	Approvals (1,134)	84%
		Refusals (217)	16%
December	1,516	Approvals (1,270)	84%
		Refusals (246)	16%



6. Enforcement Live cases

Month 2021/2022	<=1yr	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-4 yrs	4-5 yrs	5+yrs	Total
April	285	133	127	122	62	101	**830**
May	291	134	122	128	64	104	**843**
June	267	132	121	136	60	102	**818**
July	269	134	114	137	68	102	**824**
August	266	132	107	133	71	103	**812**
September	279	136	103	129	71	102	**820**
October	269	121	99	126	65	101	**781**
November	248	129	93	123	60	98	**751**
December	244	126	85	126	59	92	**732**

7. Planning Committee

Month	Number of Applications presented to Committee	Number of Applications Determined by Committee	Number of Applications Withdrawn/ Deferred for future meeting	Number of Officer recommendation overturned
8 April 2021	14	11	3	3
5 May 2021	16	8	8	3
2 & 30 June 2021 (Meetings cancelled)	-	-	-	-
28 July 2021	15	7	8	2
25 August 2021	15	9	6	6
22 September 2021	13	10	3	5
20 October 2021	25	22	3	6
17 November 2021	19	10	9	4
15 December 2021	20	13	7	9
Totals	**137**	**90**	**47**	**38**

8. Appeals

Planning Appeal Commission Decisions issued during period 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2021

Area	Number of current appeals	Number of decisions issued	Number of decisions Allowed	Number of decisions Dismissed	Withdrawn
Newry & Mourne	20	0	0	0	0
Down	35	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	**55**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council – December 2021

Statutory targets monthly update - November 2021 (unvalidated management information)
Newry, Mourne and Down

	Major applications (target of 30 weeks)				Local applications (target of 15 weeks)				Cases concluded (target of 39 weeks)			
	Number received	Number decided/ withdrawn[1]	Average processing time[2]	% of cases processed within 30 weeks	Number received	Number decided/ withdrawn[1]	Average processing time[2]	% of cases processed within 15 weeks	Number opened	Number brought to conclusion[3]	"70%" conclusion time[3]	% of cases concluded within 39 weeks
April	2	-	0.0	0.0%	172	143	16.6	43.4%	44	19	69.8	52.6%
May	2	1	35.4	0.0%	159	137	17.2	41.6%	31	30	57.0	66.7%
June	1	1	49.8	0.0%	179	173	16.8	42.8%	38	41	85.8	46.3%
July	0	-	0.0	0.0%	124	136	17.0	41.2%	38	27	85.2	51.9%
August	0	-	0.0	0.0%	138	140	17.1	38.6%	35	67	89.2	53.7%
September	2	-	0.0	0.0%	148	166	19.8	28.3%	48	37	158.4	37.8%
October	0	-	0.0	0.0%	158	147	17.8	34.0%	27	75	122.0	40.0%
November	0	2	75.3	0.0%	127	173	20.2	32.9%	22	69	129.2	44.9%
December	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%
January	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%
February	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%
March	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%	0	-	0.0	0.0%
Year to date	**7**	**4**	**60.2**	**0.0%**	**1,205**	**1,215**	**17.8**	**37.6%**	**283**	**365**	**99.2**	**47.7%**

Source: NI Planning Portal

Notes:

1. DCs, CLUDS, TPOS, NMCS and PADS/PANs have been excluded from all applications figures

2. The time taken to process a decision/withdrawal is calculated from the date on which an application is deemed valid to the date on which the decision is issued or the application is withdrawn. The median is used for the average processing time as any extreme values have the potential to inflate the mean, leading to a result that may not be considered as "typical".

***3.** The time taken to conclude an enforcement case is calculated from the date on which the complaint is received to the earliest date of the following: a notice is issued; proceedings commence; a planning application is received; or a case is closed. The value at 70% is determined by sorting data from its lowest to highest values and then taking the data point at the 70th percentile of the sequence.*

Report to:	Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday 17th January 2022
Subject:	Ulster University Economic Policy Centre Report – What Next for Commuting and Remote Working.
Reporting Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration
Contact Officer (Including Job Title):	Jonathan McGilly Assistant Director Enterprise Employment and Regeneration

Confirm how this Report should be treated by placing an x in either:-

For decision		**For noting only**	x

1.0	**Purpose and Background**
1.1	This research was commissioned following discussions between the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) and four Councils, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (ABC), Ards & North Down Borough Council (AND), Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) and Newry, Mourne & Down District Council (NMD) in Q1 2021 about the ways in which work and travel to work patterns might develop in light of COVID-19 and what this might mean for local economies.
2.0	**Key issues**
2.1	The report looks at each area and details the key findings and recommendations that will assist local Councils in partnership with key stakeholders plan for augmented work patterns and travel post pandemic based on the lessons learnt from the last two years and research across sectors both from an employer and employee perspective.
3.0	**Recommendations**
3.1	To note the content of the report and utilise the findings going forward to inform future programme development etc.
4.0	**Resource implications**
4.1	None
5.0	**Due regard to equality of opportunity and regard to good relations (complete the relevant sections)**
5.1	***General proposal with no clearly defined impact upon, or connection to, specific equality and good relations outcomes*** It is not anticipated the proposal will have an adverse impact upon equality of opportunity or good relations ☒

5.2	***Proposal relates to the introduction of a strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or sensitive or contentious decision*** Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please complete the following: The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) has been equality screened ☐ The policy (strategy, policy initiative or practice and / or decision) will be subject to equality screening prior to implementation ☐
5.3	***Proposal initiating consultation*** Consultation will seek the views of those directly affected by the proposal, address barriers for particular Section 75 equality categories to participate and allow adequate time for groups to consult amongst themselves ☐ Consultation period will be 12 weeks ☐ Consultation period will be less than 12 weeks (rationale to be provided) ☐
	Rationale:
6.0	**Due regard to Rural Needs (please tick all that apply)**
6.1	Proposal relates to developing, adopting, implementing or revising a policy / strategy / plan / designing and/or delivering a public service Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please complete the following: Rural Needs Impact Assessment completed ☐
7.0	**Appendices**
	Research report – What next for commuting and remote working - UUEPC
8.0	**Background Documents**
	N/A

ulster.ac.uk

What next for commuting and remote working?

Report for
Ards & North Down BC
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon BC
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
Newry, Mourne & Down DC

Dr Eoin Magennis
Anastasia Desmond

November 2021

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements:

The project arose from a discussion between staff from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) and four Directors from Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (ABC), Ards & North Down Borough Council (AND), Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) and Newry, Mourne & Down District Council (NMD) in Q1 2021 about the ways in which work and travel to work patterns might develop in light of COVID-19 and what this might mean for local economies.

The authors are grateful to these Council staff and to all those who took the time to be consulted or to respond to our online survey.

Key findings and considerations

1. Most adults commute as part of their daily work routine. In the most recent NI Travel Survey (for 2017-2019) 20% of the total number of journeys taken by people and 31% of their total distance travelled was due to commuting. The commuting journey remains the longest average journey made by people, averaging at 10.5 miles (an increase of 2 miles over the past decade).

2. Given this average commuting distance it follows that most of those in employment will live and work in same Council area, ranging from more than three quarters in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (ABC) and Newry, Mourne & Down District Council (NMD), to 59% in Ards & North Down Borough Council (AND), and the only Council to have less than half (49%) in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC).

3. However, there are still significant numbers of the working age population who commute to a work location outside their Council area, often on a daily basis. Table 1 summarises the numbers and shows that, at the time of the last census, 146,200 people in the four council areas commuted outside their district, just over a third of the working age population. Belfast city is naturally the key location for 60% of these commuters.

Table 1: Commuting flows in the study area and proportion travelling to/from Belfast, 2011

	Total outflow	% of outflow to BCC	Total inflow	% of inflow from BCC
AND	39,300	71%	11,600	42%
ABC	34,900	12%	17,400	35%
LCCC	46,000	74%	37,200	37%
NMD	26,000	47%	12,000	12%
Totals	146,200	60%	78,200	28%

Source: Census 2011 & UUEPC Analysis

4. The commuting patterns across the study area vary by occupation and the sector worked in. Those working in sales, operative, elementary or caring occupation commute the shortest distances, while those in professional jobs have the longest journeys. In terms of sectors the shortest commutes are by those working in Retail and Other Services, while those working in Construction and Manufacturing commute furthest.

5. The car is key to commuting, which is unsurprising given that 71% of all journeys in NI in 2017-19 were taken by car, rising to 75% in the study area. The same survey found that 55% of all cars possessed by households are used for commuting journeys, though only a quarter of these are used for work purposes.

6. Before the COVID-19 pandemic began less than 10% of the NI labour force either mainly or regularly worked from home. In April 2020 this rose to 41% due to work from home orders and the levels have stayed close to 30% since. This is supported by the October 2021 Google mobility figures, which suggest that travel to work levels still remain well below the norm at the start of 2020.

7. As work from home mandates are lifted and a return to workplace takes place for many the question remains about the extent to which jobs can be done remotely. This paper uses two different research methods which look at the tasks which make up jobs and then relate these to the sectors people are employed in. We have used these to offer two estimates of jobs that could be completed remotely: an 'effective' (lower) and a 'theoretical potential' (upper) estimate.

8. The research suggests that the tasks associated with jobs in the professional and secretarial occupations will allow a much higher concentration of remote working than in those occupations associated with caring, operative and also sales roles. Relating the occupations across the sectors and employment in these we have shown that sectors such as Manufacturing, Health, Retail and Construction have a lower proportion of jobs than can be done remotely. Therefore a council area such as ABC – which has a higher concentration in those sectors – will have a lower share of jobs with remote working potential than other Council areas or the NI average.

Table 2: Estimates of the number and proportion of jobs that could be done remotely, study area, 2020

	'Effective' estimate	% of employee jobs	'Theoretical potential' estimate	% of employee jobs
AND	15,500	40%	25,000	64%
ABC	29,200	37%	44,600	57%
LCCC	22,400	38%	36,900	63%
NMD	22,400	38%	34,500	58%
Study area	89,400	38%	141,000	60%
NI	312,000	40%	471,000	61%

Source: Dingel & Newman (2020); Crowley & Doran (2020) & UUEPC Analysis

9. In summary, Table 2 shows that between 38% and 60% of employee jobs in the study area might be done remotely in the future. These can be regarded as lower and upper bounds for the scale of change that may come in time. In the short to medium term the role of remote working will be determined first by public health guidelines and, as restriction further ease, then by decisions in workplaces across NI.

Will remote working become a permanent feature of the future of work?

10. The intention of a majority of businesses is to have their staff return to the workplace as the pandemic emergency ends. Business opinions have changed to some extent over time, but the ONS survey of UK business attitudes running since the pandemic began suggests that a solid core, often a majority, do not intend to use an increased level of homeworking as a permanent part of their future business model. At the same time, surveys regularly suggest that, among business managers, there is a majority who believe that some form of hybrid working (where staff split their working week between the workplace and a remote location) will indeed become a permanent feature. The criteria will be whether remote working is suitable for their business.

11. As part of this research senior staff in public and private sector organisations – across a range of sectors including Manufacturing and Construction – agreed to be consulted on this topic. The general sense was that, where suitable, remote working was expected to come more to the fore after the work from home guidance changes and staff return to the workplace. The suitability issue relates to the tasks and jobs in hand as well as the ability of management to ensure output by staff.

12. Openness to future requests for remote working is based upon a belief that it had worked better than expected during the pandemic and that productivity had not suffered (though how this is measured was not always clear). Consultees also referred to the opportunities remote working might mean for future recruitment of staff as well as retention of those with longer commutes into central locations. There was less optimism that a hybrid model would significantly reduce overheads with most referring to the need to maintain the space they had for staff to rotate in and out of.

13. There were also concerns expressed around costs to business and public bodies from a loss of collaboration between staff and potentially creativity. Other concerns centre on how to manage any shift towards greater levels of remote working or a hybrid model while ensuring fairness in the workplace and the impacts of long-term homeworking on morale and well-being of staff.

14. In terms of considerations the views of business would suggests that a planned approach to hybrid working, if it is suitable, will be essential. This will need ***a focus on a number of factors: fairness to and well-being of staff; planning on how to use existing workspace in a different way; and how any change in the model can ensure measurable future gains in productivity among employees (including recruitment and retention of skills)***. On a practical level, it may dictate more 'one size fits all' than flexibility.

What might 'Zoomshock' mean for local towns and cities?

15. The estimates from the research suggest that Belfast city has the highest proportion of employee jobs (46% and 66%) that could be completed remotely. This has the potential for a knock-on impact on commuting and weekday consumption patterns in Belfast city centre. This impact – sometimes referred to as 'Zoomshock' (Dr Fraja, Matheson and Rockey, 2021) – is based on the idea that city centres are a magnet for commuters and fewer resident sources of expenditure. And that, if a proportion of these commuters work from home for a number of days per week then spending from the overall group will fall.

16. The assumption that those days not spent in a centrally-located workplace mean a displacement of consumption to another place is not straightforward. The almost 150,000 people who commute outside their district in the study will not all work from home more regularly. But if 2 in 5 jobs are able to do so and these might transfer to one or two days a week working remotely, then mathematically there could be 8-16% of consumption by that group moving from one place to another. On the other side this too would apply to the 78,000 who flow into the districts each day – again 8-16% of their consumption might move.

17. The suggestion of 'Zoomshock' is that suburbs of cities and commuter towns relatively close to these centres might stand to benefit most from any displacement. However, ***it remains to be seen whether employees retain their expenditure for when in town and city centre locations or spread this more widely to retailers and hospitality closer to home***. The implications of any change to increased levels of remote working on an more permanent basis will only be seen over time in footfall and consumption patterns in high streets and out-of-town centres across NI.

18. Another consideration is the sustainability implications of a greater shift to remote working. Two factors come into consideration here:
    - Whether a reduction in commuting volumes mean not only a reduction of car journeys but also usage of public transport modes (bus and train) which cause pressure on those services; and
    - Whether increased levels of working from home mean a reduction in the distances travelled but this is offset by more shorter journeys into nearby towns or higher usage of walking and cycling to use nearby services and shops.

Can enterprise hubs become a local regeneration force?

19. The idea if a dispersed model of co-working spaces, satellites or hubs to serve greater numbers of remote workers has been raised long before COVID-19 arrived. In NI there has been a lengthy discussion about the potential for greater numbers of civil service jobs, for example, being dispersed to satellite hubs. The new Connect2 programme – with 10 possible sites for hubs to be opened by 2023 – will be the first step in this direction.

20. Across the EU and in the Republic of Ireland there is also a programme of provision of 'third party' co-working hubs and spaces which could act as an alternative to working from home or in public spaces. These spaces have long been available for hire by freelancers and the self-employed and the open question is the extent to which a new cohort of remote workers will pay to use these services (or will have them paid for by an employer).

21. In terms of consideration of the role of developing hubs to assist in local regeneration, the usual questions arise about: ***existing provision by the CVSE or private sector; who will pay for such a service; and whether it can form an element of new use of existing property assets in local towns. As with 'Zoomshock' this will need careful monitoring of local demand for such hubs and likely supply by various actors before any concrete actions could be taken***.

1. Introduction

1. Prior to 2020 less than 4% of workers in Northern Ireland (NI) worked mainly from home with all others getting into or onto some form of transport that took them to their workplace. Homeworking, teleworking or remote working (as it has increasingly become known) has not increased much in recent decades although technologies have adapted to make it more possible. The COVID-19 pandemic has produced a sharp jump in this trend rather than a smoother acceleration as seen elsewhere (such as online shopping and video communication). During the first set of 'stay or work at home' mandates in April 2020 the 4% had turned into 41% for NI. Since then, as we shall see below, more than 30% of UK businesses have regularly reported that some or all of their employees are working remotely.

2. Given this 'great leap forwards', with much larger parts of the labour force working remotely, a discussion with four Councils in the South-Eastern region of NI – Ards & North Down Borough Council (AND); Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (ABC); Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC); Newry, Mourne & Down District Council (NMD) – raised a number of questions including:
   - What are the 'normal' travel to work and commuting patterns (in terms of sectors, occupations, etc) and how important is Belfast in terms of outflows?
   - What are the current and potential levels of remote working?
   - What can be said about the future intentions of employers and workers?
   - What are the likely policy and other responses to the remote working issue?
   - What might the responses of local government be to any changes to (travel to) work patterns?

3. To complete the project the UUEPC researchers have used a combination of data analysis, survey and consultation. The data analysis focussed on two elements:
   - Commuting data – which tells us about the typical 'spine' of travel to work for most people (approximately 20% of annual journeys in NI in 2019 were for work accounting for 31% of distance travelled).
   - Remote working data – before and during 2020 and an analysis of the potential for remote working based on sectors and occupations.

4. An important part of the project has been consultations with both employees and employers. An online employee survey ran in June/July 2021 for anyone living in NI. More than 1,600 people responded to this (39% of these from the four Council areas under discussion) and this provides insights into the experience of remote working and what workers want in the future. In the same period senior staff from 15 larger private sector businesses and public sector organisations – as well as three private sector focus groups of smaller firms – were consulted to better understand their views on current and future remote working and how this fits into their business perspectives. This paper provides a summary of what the research found and what this might mean for future travel to work patterns and local economic opportunities in the South Eastern region of NI.

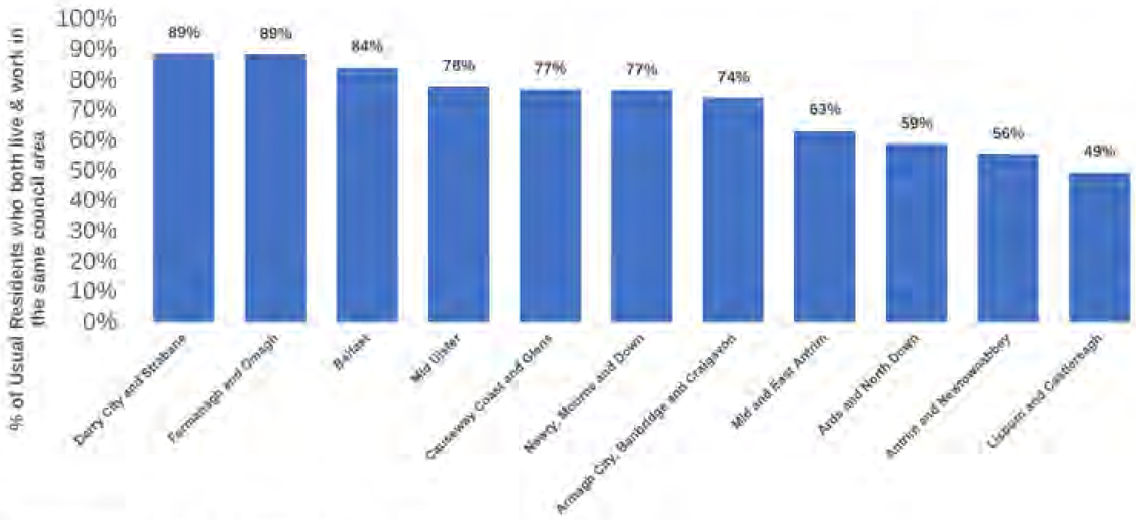
2. Commuting and existing travel to work patterns

22. The 'commute' or the journey to and from work remains the spline around which most of those in employment organise the large majority of their working days. In the most recent NI Travel Survey (for 2017-2019) 20% of journeys and 31% of distance travelled by people were for commuting. For those commuting to employment the average journey was 10.3 miles (an increase of 2 miles on average over a decade). The commuting journey remains the longest average journey made by people and the time spent doing it has also increased over time.

23. The most detailed data on commuting patterns in NI can be found in the 2011 Census. The data is based on census responses which identify place of residence and place of work with these assigned a geography – in this case a Council area.

24. Figure 1 shows the percentage of employed residents who actually live and work in the same LGD. There is a large difference between Council areas with the highest share (Derry City & Strabane where 89% of employed residents work in their own Council area) and the LGD with the lowest (Lisburn & Castlereagh with an equivalent share of 49%). All four of the LGDs under consideration are in the half with the lowest shares of residents living and working within the Council area with Belfast providing the obvious draw as a destination for commuters.

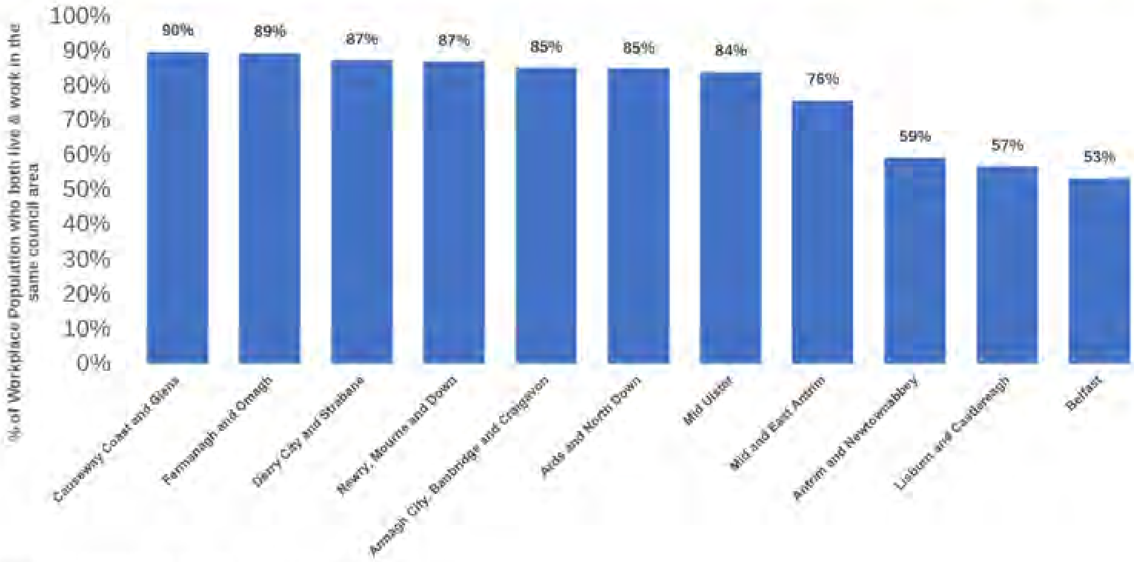
Figure 1: % of Residents who both live & work in the same Council Area, NI LGDs, 2011



Source: Census 2011 & UUEPC Analysis

25. Figure 2 shows a different metric: the percentages of local workplace jobs filled by those who live in the same Council area. Here Belfast has the lowest share, signalling the fact that almost half of all jobs in Belfast are filled by those with a residence outside the city. In most of the Council areas under consideration more than 4 in 5 jobs are filled by residents of the Council area, meaning that any commuting is local to the district itself.

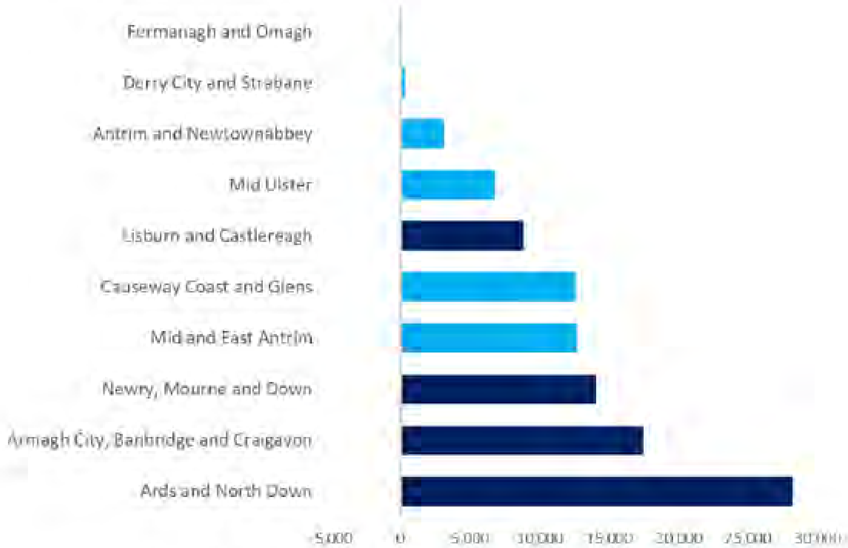
Figure 2: % of Workplace Jobs filled by Residents of the Council Area, NI LGDs, 2011



Source: Census 2011 & UUEPC Analysis

26. Using 2011 Census data and applying 2020 Population estimates we can propose an estimated figure for the number of people commuting between council areas. Figure 3 outlines the net commuting flow indicating that the majority of councils have a positive outflow of residents commuting to other council areas.

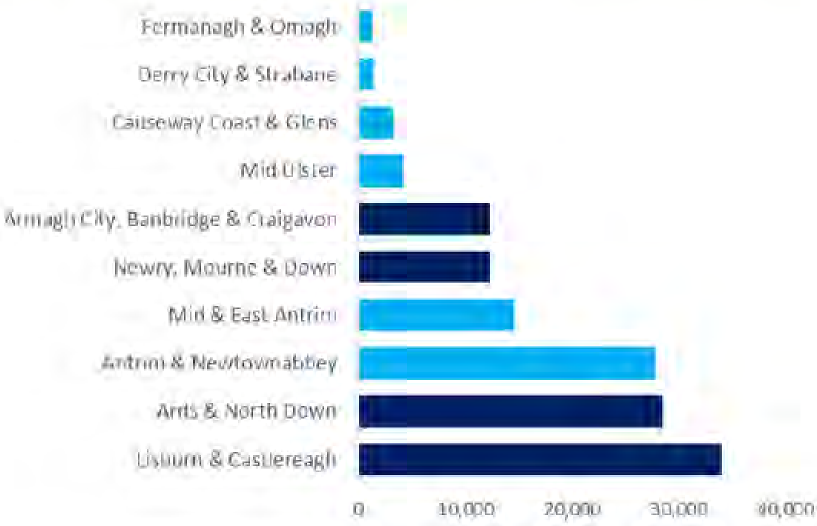
Figure 3: Estimated net commuting flow, NI LGDs excluding Belfast, 2020



Source: Census 2011 & UUEPC Analysis

27. Figure 4 explores the number of people regularly commuting into Belfast. Unsurprisingly geographic nature takes precedence with neighbouring councils seeing the greatest number of residents travelling to Belfast for work. However, it is important to consider that a significant number of people residing in Belfast will travel out of the city to similar neighbouring council areas, hence Lisburn & Castlereagh and Ards & North Down have higher volumes of commuters moving both into and out of Belfast.

Figure 4: Estimated number of commuters into Belfast, NI LGDs, 2020



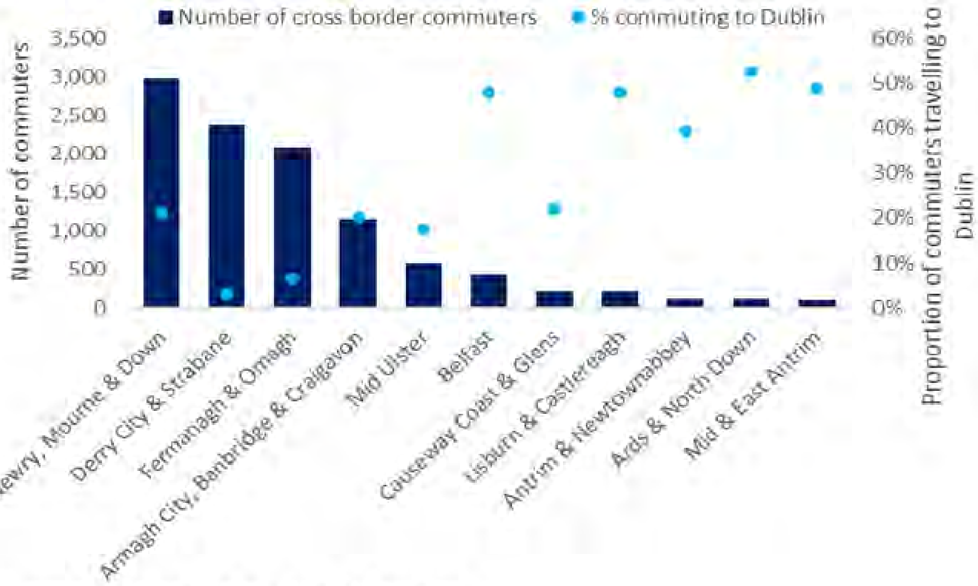
Source: Census 2011 & UUEPC Analysis

28. Lisburn & Castlereagh have approximately 34,000 commuting into Belfast on a daily alongside Ards & North Down who have 28,500 accounting for 74% and 71% of outward commuters respectively. Newry, Mourne & Down and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon have a lesser but still significant proportion of outward commuters travelling to Belfast at 46% and 35% respectively however it shows that their commuters are spread more evenly through other council areas.

29. When studying the movements of outward commuters from Belfast around 13,600 commuters travel from Belfast to Lisburn & Castlereagh for employment, compared to 4,800 in Ards & North Down, 2,000 in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and 1,400 in Newry, Mourne & Down.

30. Turning to cross-border commuting, the two councils with the highest levels are Newry, Mourne & Down and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (see Figure 5). The majority of this tends to be localised cross-border labour market travel with 43% of commuters leaving Newry, Mourne & Down to travel to County Louth and a third travelling from Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon into County Monaghan.

Figure 5: Cross-border commuting estimates, NI LGDs, 2020

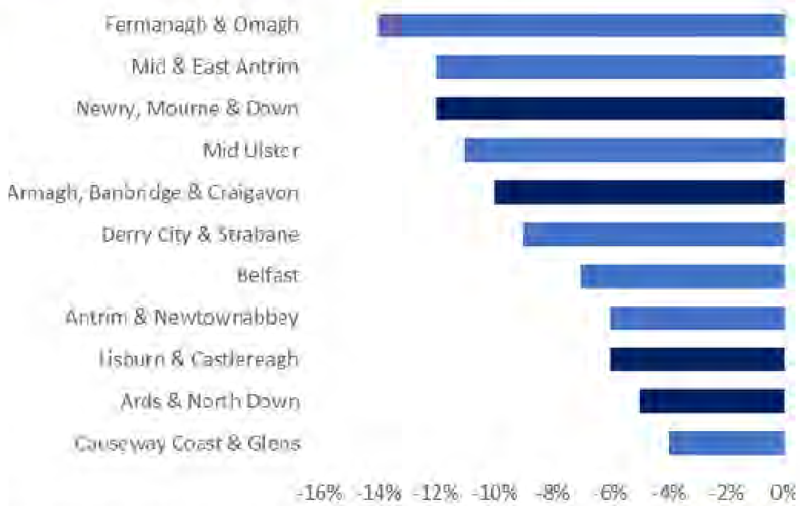


Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

31. In Ards & North Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh smaller numbers of cross-border commuters are recorded, yet a much higher proportion are attracted to the wider Dublin area, likely to influenced by the higher wages premium on offer.

32. To give a better picture of current levels of commuting we have used data collected by Google's mobility study to compare travel to the workplace in week of the 21st October 2021 to a baseline median figure constructed over a 5-week period at the beginning of 2020. The overall picture shown in Figure 6 is one of travel to the workplace or commuting remaining below pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 6: Workplace mobility, NI LGDs, October 2021



Source: Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Report & UUEPC Analysis

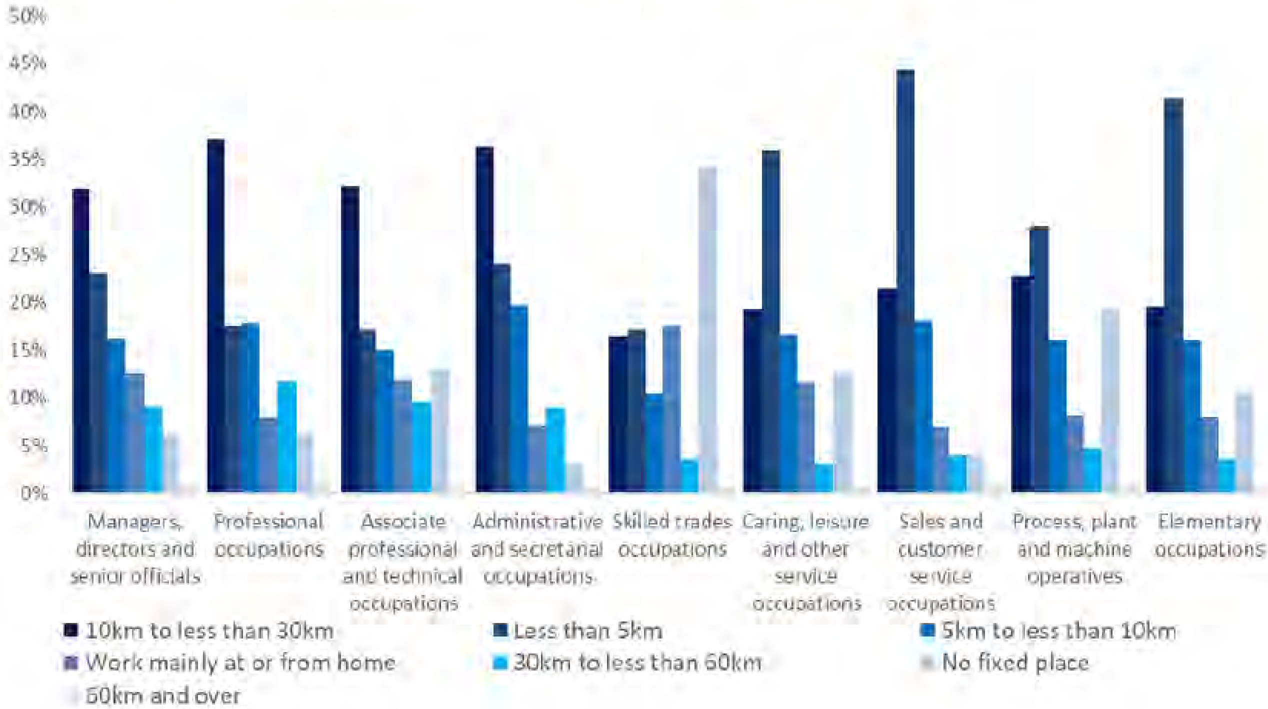
33. There are clear differences between council areas and in the four under consideration. Both Newry, Mourne & Down and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon are currently

experiencing a heightened decline in mobility to the workplace with levels 12% and 10% respectively lower. In comparison, Ards & North Down and Lisburn & Castlereagh have mobility rates much closer to the 2020 baseline comparison with declines of 5% and 6% respectively.

34. Using Census 2011 data we can explore the commuting patterns of employees by occupation and broad industry. Figure 7 shows the occupational data and for this, on average across the study area and various occupations, the largest share of employees, 28%, commute less than 5km.

35. There are a variety of responses here across occupation, pointing to a relationship between commuting patterns and roles within workplaces. For example, Managerial, Professional and Technical occupations have higher shares of people travelling distances further than 30km to work – a sign of willingness to commute larger distances for fewer roles of these sort. By contrast, 34% skilled trades people have no fixed working location (travelling different distances depending on the job or project in hand), compared to 3% in administrative and secretarial roles.

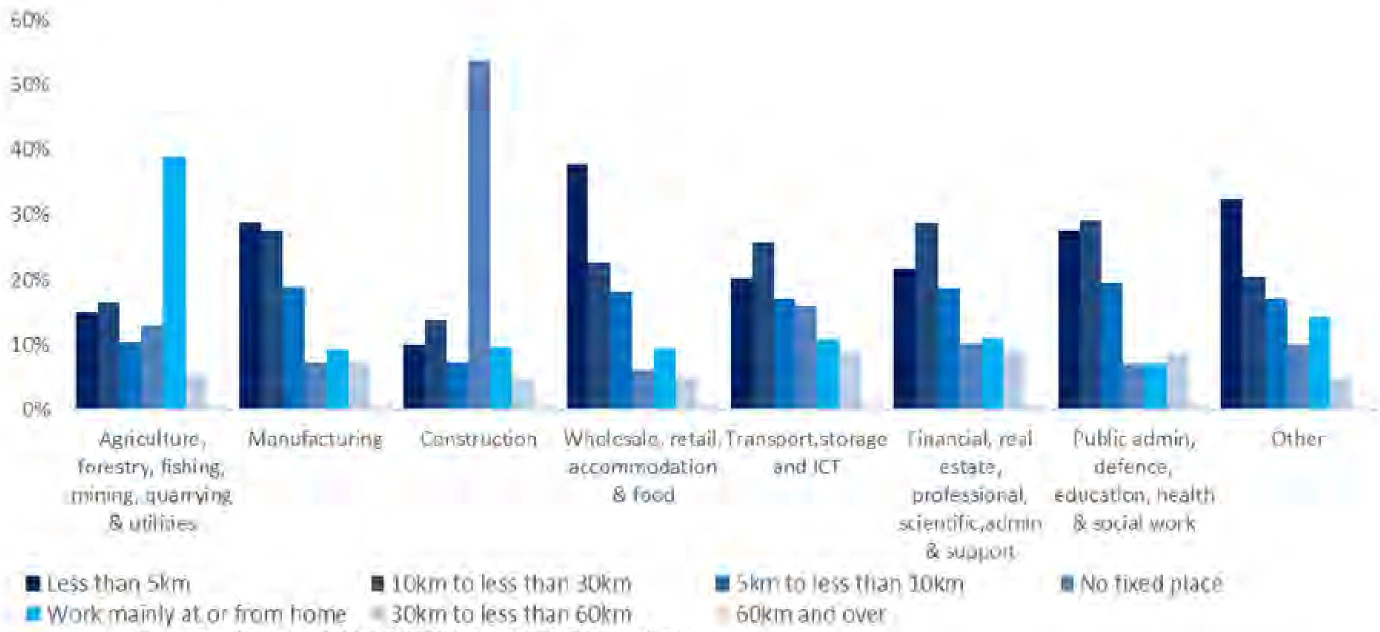
Figure 7: Commuting distances by occupation, Study area, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

36. Interestingly, for the purposes of this research, the proportion of people working mainly 'at' or 'from' home averaged at 10% of employees in 2011. Occupations with higher proportion of workers completing their role from home included skilled trades people (18%), managers, directors & senior officials (13%), associate professional & technical occupations and caring, leisure & other service occupations (both 12%).

Figure 8: Commuting distances by sector, Study area, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

37. Similarly to the occupation data, the sectoral data in Figure 9 shows that, on average, the largest share of employees (24%) commute less than 5km to their place of work. Sectors with the highest commuting distances include Transport, Storage & ICT, Finance & Real Estate, and in the Public Sector group. In these sectors 10% of employees face a commute of more than 30km.

38. On average across all industries 14% of employees worked mainly 'at' or 'from' home. This figure is skewed upwards by the high proportions (39%) in Agriculture, etc who work from home. The second highest proportion fell to Other Industries at 14%. This includes the likes of Other Services. Excluding the Agriculture sector, the average proportion of employees working 'at' or 'from' home across the remaining sectors would fall to 10%.

39. In summary, we can see that perhaps 10% of people work 'at' of 'from' home with around another 30% commuting very locally to less than 5km away. A majority of people work within the Council area that they live in – a slight exception to this rule being Lisburn & Castlereagh given proximity to Belfast city, but even here 49% work locally. Among professional occupations and in sectors with concentrated larger workplaces (eg: public sector organisations) people commute larger distances but even here most journeys are less than 30km or 18 miles. Travel survey data suggests that both distances and time spent commuting has increased since 2011 but NI probably remains the UK region with the smallest commuting distances.

40. In more recent times, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Google mobility data suggests that fewer of us are travelling to work. So that, while numbers taking journeys might be close to their normal level according to traffic counter data from DfI, these are not (yet) taking us to the workplace. The next chapter will look further at this.

3. Remote working: Current and potential patterns

1. Remote working, also known as teleworking[1] and sometimes related to homeworking[2], entered the headlines in 2020[3] as a result of COVID-19 but it is a practice that has been increasing, very slowly, over the past two decades. What we mean here by remote working is where employees or owner/managers are working away from their normal workplace or office but are connected digitally with their usual working location. This remote working is mostly done from home though sometimes from another location such as an enterprise hub or workspace.

2. There are some issues around definitions in the data covering remote working. Much of this has to do with the regularity of the practice. In NI around 3% of employees report in the LFS that they work from home, similar to the 2019 Annual Population Survey (APS) results, where 3.8% ***'mainly'*** work from home. The figures for NI are among the lowest percentages of any UK region, though not dissimilar to some survey data from Ireland. They also show an increase in scale over time, perhaps a doubling since the early 2000s. In terms of numbers in 2019 the 3-4% of employees would mean less than 30,000 people across NI ***'mainly'*** working from home.

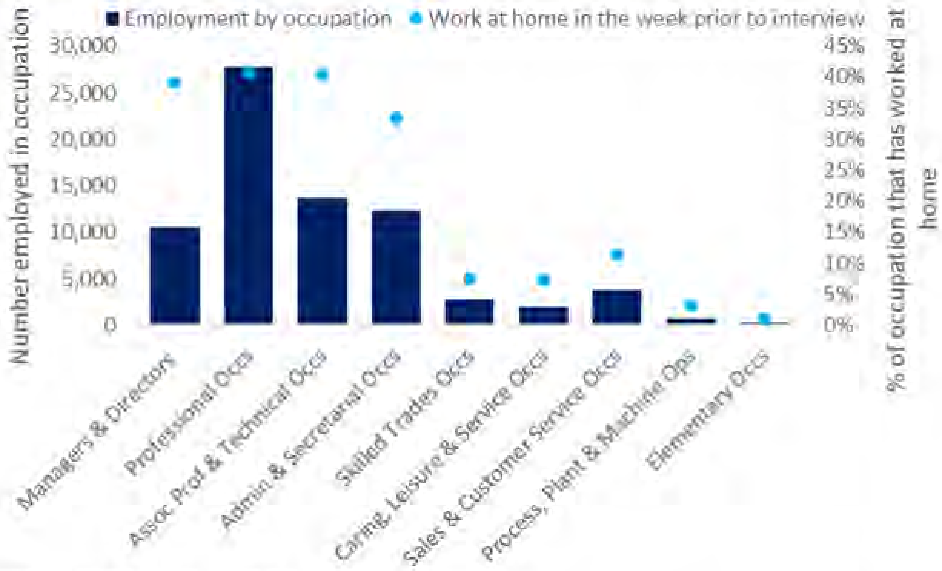
3. In addition to these mostly remote workers there were a further 7.7% in the APS who ***'regularly'*** worked from home or had done so in the week before. Again, NI is the UK region with the lowest proportion in this category, compared to 16.4% in London or 12.4% for the UK as a whole. This equates to a further 60,000 employees in NI who ***'regularly'*** worked from home in 2019.

4. Using occupation data at council level coupled with the APS data on homeworking by occupation we can estimate the proportion of employees ***'regularly'*** working from home at the council level in NI (shown in Figure 9 below). The occupational data shows a concentration of remote working in the professional occupations. It is important to note that those occupations with high homeworking proportions (and presumably future potential) are similar to those identified in the homeworking trends from 2011 commuting patterns previously in Figure 7. This more recent data also support the suggestion that the extent to which employees are working from home within their role has increased over the last number of years.

---

[1] Defined as 'work done at locations which are separate from the location of the employer or client for whom the work is being done, and which involves electronic interchange between the two locations' (Gillespie & Richardson, 2000).
[2] This covers those in population surveys who 'mainly, sometimes or ever from home' and can include farmers, childminders in some surveys (eg: those by the CSO in Ireland).
[3] A search of US and European newspaper articles on the topic for the 12 months either side of March 2020 saw a 350% increase in the number of stories on the topic.

Figure 9: Employment by occupation in the study area and the % of the occupation group working from home, UK, 2019



Source: NISRA, ONS, UUEPC analysis

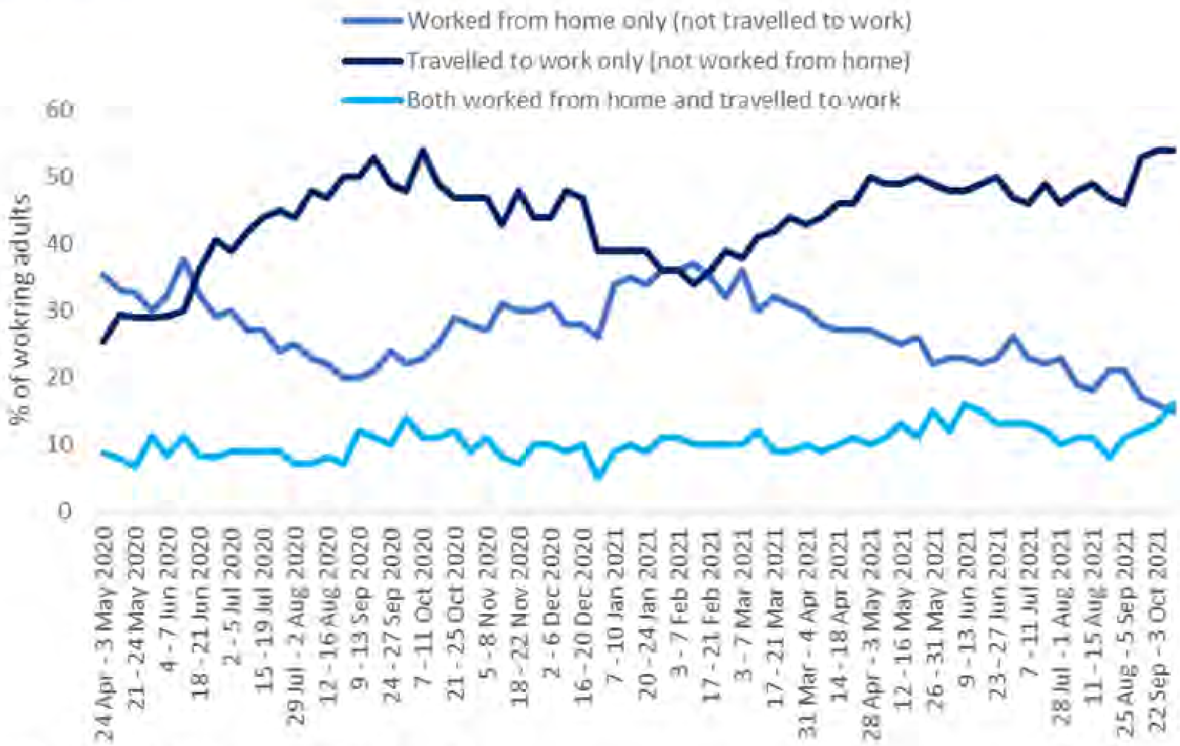
5. COVID-19 transformed this picture. In April 2020 – at the height of the first 'stay/work at home' restrictions - 41% of NI employees were doing some of their work from home. More than four in five employees (82%) attributed this practice to the effects of the pandemic.[4] This suggests that, had there not been a public health crisis at the time, 7.3% of employees would have worked at home in the previous week in April 2020. This is similar to the 2019 APS figures cited above.

6. The potential for remote working during COVID-19 has varied enormously between different occupations – following the ONS homeworking patterns above where professional occupations have much higher levels of potential compared to trades, operative and caring occupations with the need to work in closer proximity to clients and machinery. This has meant that the proportions working remotely across sectors have also varied – from 5% in Hospitality to 80% in ICT in the most recent Business Impact on Coronavirus Survey (BICS) results.

7. The impact of the pandemic on working patterns has also continued longer than might have been expected. The current levels of remote working from the BICS for the UK is that approximately 30% of employees have reportedly been working remotely whether on a full-time or hybrid basis since February 2021. This is similar to the Opinion and Lifestyles Survey from ONS for Great Britain (see Figure 10 below), which show that around 20% of adults were working from home ***only*** since June 2021 and a further 10% working from home and travelling to work. Since August the proportion of those working in what looks like a hybrid pattern – some days at home, some days in the workplace – has become larger than those working only from home.

[4] This data is from ONS, Labour Market Survey, April 2020.

Figure 10: Proportion of working adults reporting working from home, GB, May 2020-October 2021



Source: ONS, Opinions and Lifestyle Survey
Note: The proportions do not add to 100%, reflecting numbers furloughed or seeking employment.

8. As more workplaces move to reopen and the 30% of employees currently working entirely from home reduce in number, two possible outcomes suggest themselves:
   - Some or all of the 30% return to working only in the office; or
   - Some of this 30% move into the hybrid category of working between the workplace and home.

9. As we shall see below a significant number of employees expect and businesses accept that hybrid working is likely to form a major part of their thinking and operations in future. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how the theory of remote working can become practice for many people. However, this raises the question of how many people could potentially work remotely in the future?

10. To answer this the UUEPC estimated the potential scale for remote working after COVID-19. The estimate is based on recent research in this area which has used work activities and occupational data.[5] The research uses a US-based survey of the working contexts and characteristics of occupations. If occupations include factors such as the need to work in a specific location, a high amount of face-to-face interaction, higher exposure to work hazards, lower levels of digital communication and higher use of protective equipment then the occupation is judged unable to be done from home.[6]

---

[5] For examples see Dingel & Newman (2020); Crowley & Doran (2020) and Daly (2020).
[6] For more detail see ONS (2020) and Dingel & Newman (2020).

11. Taking a shorter-term horizon – as workplaces have re-opened fully and business and public sector organisations respond to the immediate challenge of hybrid working – we have used the occupational and sectoral estimates from Dingel & Newman (2020). They estimate 37% of US jobs could 'plausibly' be done remotely, with higher levels in other economies, such as the UK, where the economy has more service jobs. This research is close to the results of a similar occupation-based analysis by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI, 2021). MGI have produced a range of estimates in their research – from 'effective potential' (29% of US jobs) to 'theoretical maximum' (39% of US jobs).[7] Again, MGI take the view that the UK economy may have a higher potential for remote working than the US.

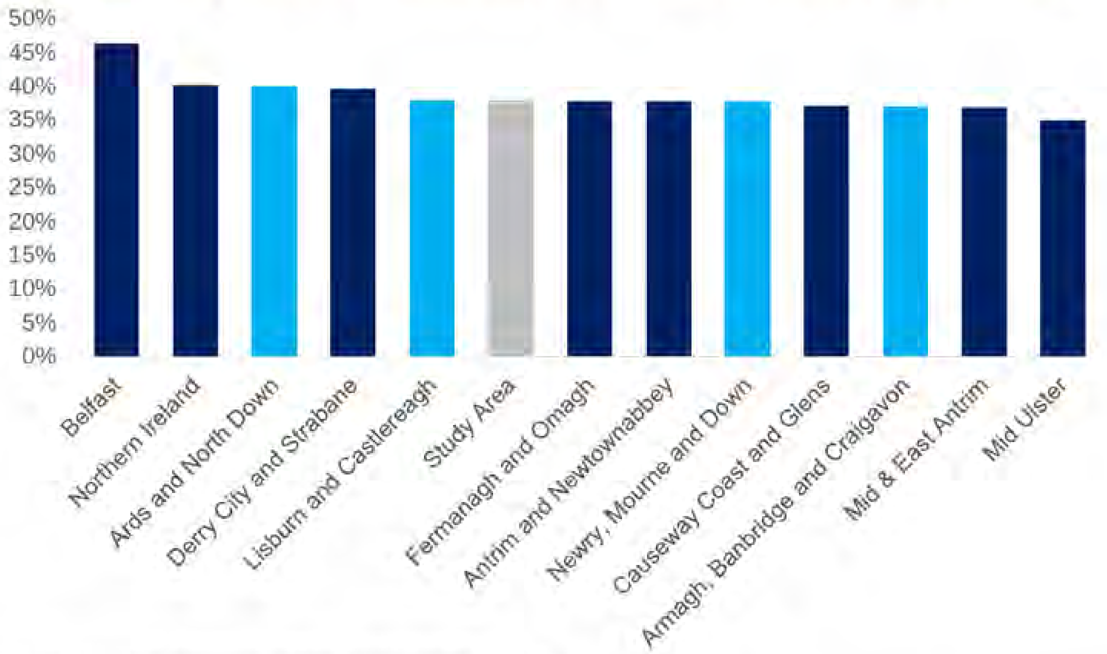
12. The Education sector provides a useful example of the difference between effective and theoretical potential for remote working. Using the MGI research this sector has the largest difference between 'effective' (33% of jobs) and 'theoretical' (69%). The later suggests that a significant majority of activities associated with the teaching and administration roles associated with Education can be completed remotely. However, we can then question whether this is the most effective way for children to learn and added to this is the desire of policy makers to have children return to school for all kinds of well-being and other reasons. Hence, the theoretical level of remote working in this sector is very high (same level as ICT), but the 'effective potential' is much lower.

13. By applying the Dingel & Newman (2020) sectoral 'share of jobs that can be done at home' and applying them to sectoral employment figures from the UUEPC local model we can derive an 'effective' estimate of the proportion of total jobs that can be completed remotely in NI as a whole and within each council area (see Figure 11 below). The UUEPC 'effective' estimate for NI would be that 40% of total employee jobs could be completed remotely. Across the study area it is estimated that 38% of jobs have the 'effective' potential to be completed remotely.

14. Figure 11 also shows the differences between councils from Belfast with 46% of employee jobs that could **potentially** be completed remotely to Mid Ulster with 35%. The differences arise from the varying sectoral 'shares' and the differing concentrations in sectoral employment in each council area. For example, higher concentrations in Agriculture, Construction and/or Manufacturing will lead to a lower remote working potential. A further detailed analysis of the estimates for remote working potential - alongside a sectoral breakdown – is provided for each council area in our study area in the annex section of this report.

[7] The 'theoretical maximum' would include all jobs that did not require any presence in the workplace, while the 'effective potential' only includes those jobs that can be done remotely without losing any effectiveness in completing work.

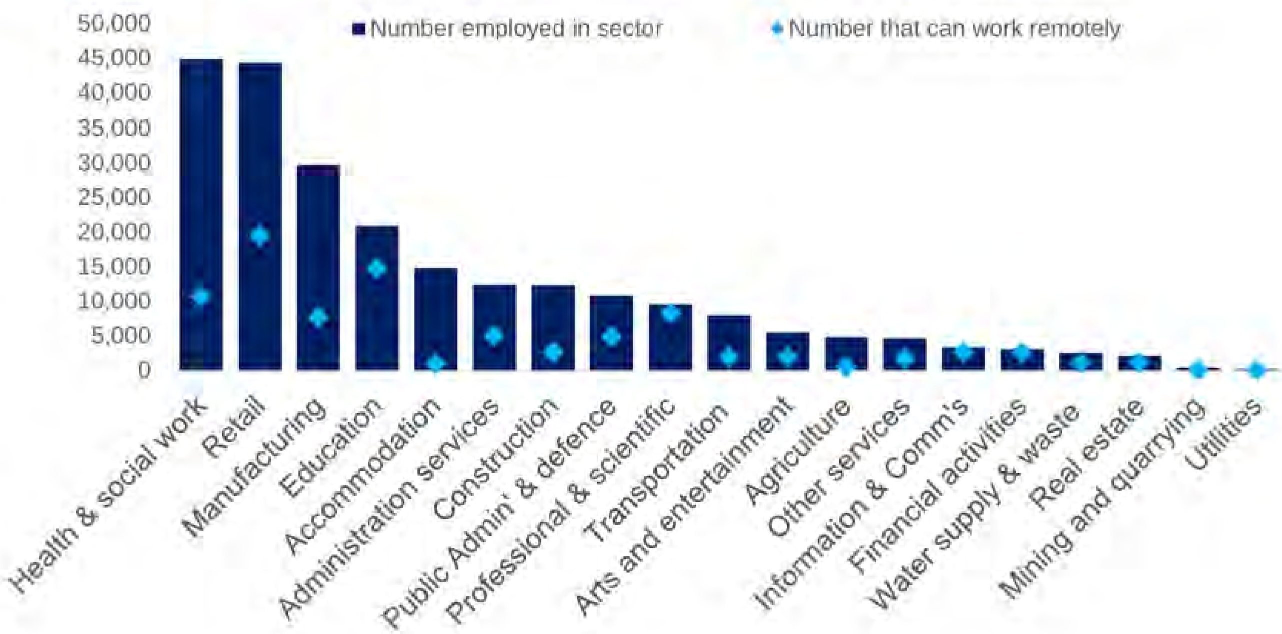
Figure 11: 'Effective' estimate of employees that could work remotely, NI LGDs, 2020



Source: Dingel & Newman (2020) and UUEPC analysis

15. Figure 12 below looks at the sectoral breakdown of the four councils amalgamated into the study area. This shows the total number of people employed in the sector (indicated by the bars) and the 'effective' estimate of jobs in each sector that can be carried out remotely (indicated by the blue diamond). This clearly reveals the differing sectoral 'scores' with much higher proportions of ICT or Professional Services jobs able to be completed remotely than say Health & Social Work.

Figure 12: Number of people employed by sector and the 'effective' estimate of employees that could work remotely, study council areas, 2020



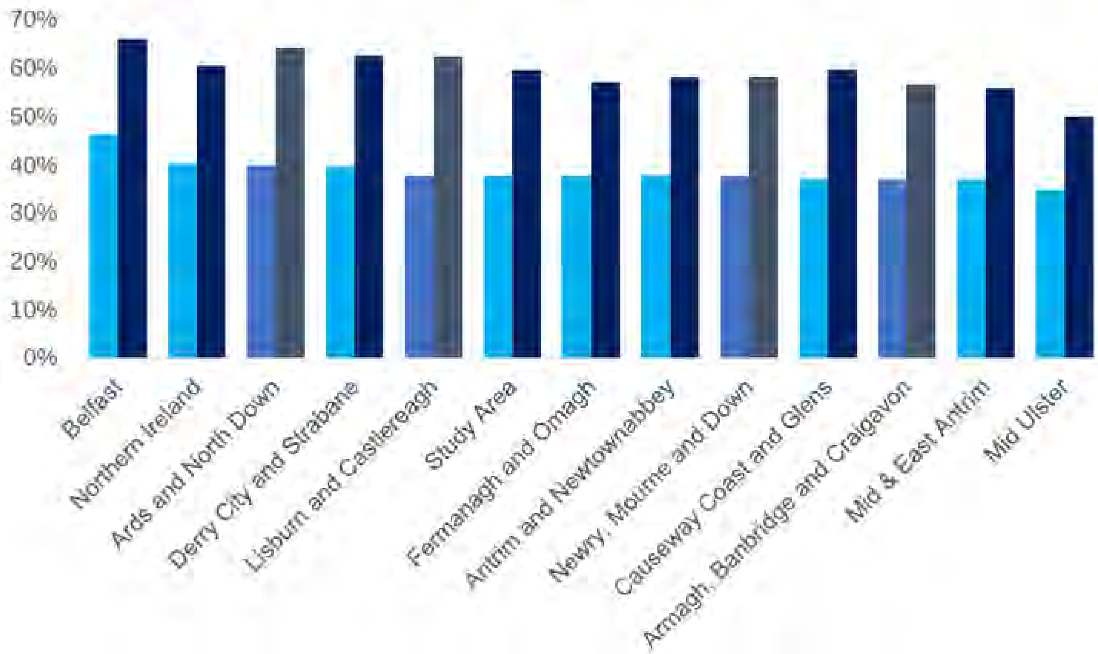
Back to Agenda

Source: Dingel & Newman (2020) and UUEPC Analysis

16. A different approach (albeit using the same occupations and survey results) used by Crowley & Doran (2020) also provides a remote working 'score' for 1-digit sectors in the Republic of Ireland. The sectoral 'score' is not a yes/no answer to the activity-based survey questions but provides an estimate based upon how often a task can be done. We have used these 'scores' as indicating a 'theoretical potential' estimate and again applied them to sectoral employment figures from the UUEPC local model to offer an upper scenario of total jobs that can be completed remotely within each council area.

17. For NI as a whole 61% of employee jobs could be completed remotely, with the study area slightly lower at 60%. Figure 13 shows both estimates alongside one another and shows the significant difference between the two, given much higher sectoral 'scores' in Crowley & Doran (2020) for large employing sectors such as Health & Social Work and Education.

Figure 13: 'Effective' and 'theoretical potential' estimates of employees that could work remotely, NI LGDs, 2020



Source: Crowley & Doran (2020), Dingel & Newman (2020) and UUEPC analysis

17 In summary, we estimate that between 38% and 60% of employee jobs in the study area might be done remotely in the future. These might be regarded as lower and upper bounds for the scale of change that ***may come in time***. The estimates show that Belfast city has the highest proportion of employee jobs (46% and 66%) that could be completed remotely, which has knock-on impacts on commuting patterns from the study area into Belfast for these employee jobs.

4. What are businesses thinking?

1. The previous section provides an overview of the current and potential future levels of remote working. To give a broader view of the topic we have consulted widely to establish both actual current responses and future intentions of business and employees with regard to remote working and travel to work patterns. This section provides some insights from this research.

2. The question of what happens after public health restrictions on working in a workplace come to an end remains an open one. This is largely because people are not yet certain about the longer-term effects of the pandemic on behaviour and how effective the mandated shift to homeworking over the past eighteen months has actually been.

3. Employees seem to believe that the change is here to stay. In February 2021 a survey of 4,200 professional workers across the UK asked respondents whether they felt the traditional 9-5 office working pattern would return after the pandemic passed.[8] Most respondents believe that the traditional pattern would return but a third (34%) in the UK answered 'No' to this question, with a higher proportion in places such as London (41%) and a lower response in NI (27%).

4. When asked to imagine what might replace the 'traditional' pattern there has been a growing expectation among many employees that some form of hybrid working – a mix of remote and workplace-based working – could become the norm. Data from the ONS Opinion and Lifestyles survey in May 2021 found that 85% of the working population in the UK said they expected to work in future in some hybrid fashion, 10% saying they would be solely office-based and 5% solely working from home. This varies by income with two thirds of those earning £20,000 or less saying they think they will work in a hybrid fashion and this rises to over 90% for those earning more than £50,000 per year.

5. The UUEPC ran an online employee survey open to anyone living in NI for five weeks from 31 June to 4 July 2021. More than 1,600 people responded to this, with 641 responses coming from people who live in the four Council areas under discussion (491 respondents work in the same areas). Of these 641 residents nearly 550 (or 85%) had worked from home at some stage in the previous, providing a good sample to analyse with regard to their experience of remote working and what they want as workers from future travel to work patterns.

6. The survey has the following key findings from the study area (with more detail in the annexes):
    - More than half (54%) of those working from home were currently working exclusively at home, with only 20% working two or less days there.
    - 71% want to return to their workplace on a bended or hybrid basis with only 13% wanting to go back on a full-time basis.

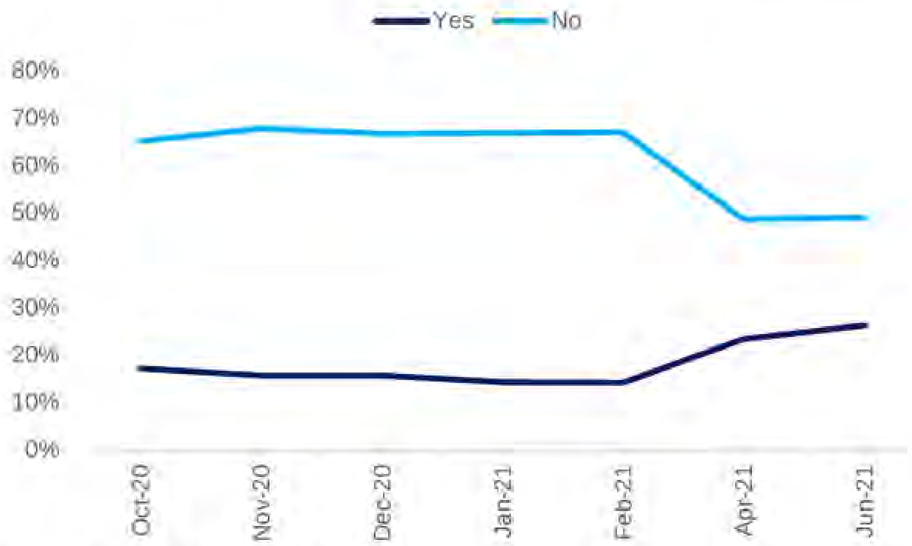
---

[8] Hays Recruitment, *What Workers Want* (March 2021), see https://www.hays.co.uk/what-workers-want

- The most popular number of days to continue working remotely was three days a week (30%), followed by two days (20%).
- When remote working most (64%) would prefer to work from home with 21% happy to work in a 'hub' dedicated to their organisation and 15% content to work from a hub in their nearest town centre.

7. Business opinions have changed to some extent over time. The BICS data (see Figure 14) shows a solid majority of UK businesses up until April 2021 did not intend to use an increased level of homeworking as part of their future business model. However, in April and June 2021 this is now 49% of all businesses and more than a quarter now intending to use homeworking. The picture has changed among the sectors. Those like ICT, Professional Services and Financial Services have always had more than a third of firms keen to use homeworking but since April 2021 this has increased to more than 50%. By contrast, the Construction sector has seen a previous level of 80% of businesses not intending to use homeworking fall to 60% in June 2021.

Figure 14: Intention of UK businesses to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward, October 2020 to June 2021



Source: ONS BICS and UUEPC analysis

8. An important part of the project has been the consultations with both employees and employers which took place in June/July 2021. Senior HR managers and COOs from 16 large (>150 employees) private sector businesses and public sector organisations were consulted and three sectoral focus groups for smaller firms were held. The aim was to better understand their views on current and future remote working, how these new arrangements might fit into their business models, and what this might mean for the NI economy generally and, more specifically, the sub-regional impacts.

9. The structured consultations (including the focus groups) all included a core set of topics, which included:
   - Organisational implications of tele/remote working within their business before and during the COVID-19 pandemic – including on firm productivity;

- Interest in the concept of hybrid working and how this shift will be managed;
- Views on the potential implications for management/employees with regard to well-being, work/life balance and attraction/retention of staff.

Organisational implications of tele/remote working

10. Most consultees had not made remote working a part of their business model before COVID-19. Allowing staff to work from home was generally a tightly controlled measure, governed by management approval and a scepticism about the benefits. As one consultee pointed out being tethered to one location was central to the way their organisation ran smoothly and efficiently. ICT firms were something of an outlier here but even there in NI few, if any, jobs in the sector were advertised with remote or homeworking being a feature of the post before March 2020.[9]

11. This meant at the start of the pandemic there were very few guidelines available to businesses on how to manage a shift where many of their staff were sent home and, if able to, continued to work there. If not, they were furloughed. Both decisions were made – back in March 2020 – on the basis the crisis would be over quickly. As one consultee said, "it was all supposed to be over in a month or six weeks, back into the office and back to normal."

12. Another consultee found that those who worked from home on a regular basis before the pandemic began settled into the mandated remote working more easily.[10] In the immediate period after March 2020 a lot of organisations were finding that there was much about their IT infrastructure that they did not know existed and that this allowed a smoother-than-expected movement of work to a distributed basis. "As far as the IT infrastructure went, we didn't know what we didn't know is a good way to describe the extent of our knowledge in March 2020", said one consultee.

13. A number of the consultees also commented on how the enforced change worked much better than they expected. The barriers they believed would be there – such as poor broadband, distractions at home and an inability to ensure work was done without close monitoring – did not materialise or, at the very least, not to the extent they expected.

    "It has worked better than we ever could have imagined and now gives us an opportunity to work in a different way based on trusting in our staff's autonomy. COVID has shown that something we said could never work can actually do so. The question now is how much do we want to continue to adapt to the opportunities technology

---

[9] An interesting article points to vacancy advertisements for programmers having slowly adopted remote working since 2016 (from 20% to 35%) with the real change coming with the pandemic; see 'For programmers , remote working is becoming the norm', *The Economist*, 11 August 2021, see https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/08/11/for-programmers-remote-working-is-becoming-the-norm .

[10] Evidence from Japan – Morikawa (2021) – supports the view that prior experience could lead to higher productivity.

allows us to move away from the old 9-5, bums on seats, in the office." (Professional services firm, >300 staff)

14. The focus groups were interesting as this set of consultees were comprised of sectors (such as Manufacturing and Construction) or size (micro-enterprises) of firms that would find it more difficult to move the entire operation to a remote working basis. The BICS data would certainly show lower proportions of firms of this type operating homeworking in the pandemic, not least because many activities and tasks could not be done remotely.

15. In two of the focus groups the discussion came to centre on the two questions of autonomy and trust of staff. Some consultees remained convinced of the need to manage processes very closely and that this meant they would not allow staff more autonomy than before the pandemic. However, others who had mainly monitored processes and hours worked in the past were now looking at outputs and quality. Along the way they were finding a higher level of trust in their employees.

"I know people say that not all sectors can do remote working and that it doesn't apply to us [in manufacturing]. But the last year has probably surprised many of us in the sector. Okay we have largely returned onsite, but we are trying to find ways of building some hybrid practices into that, perhaps because we can offer a flexibility I would not have been convinced we could without losing production." (Manufacturing sector focus group consultee)

16. When it came to productivity being enhanced there was a range of views on this topic. This is no surprise as the evidence for a relationship between remote working and improved productivity is mixed (NCPC, 2021). One survey for Microsoft found that 82% of employers believed productivity had held steady or increased with higher levels of remote working during the pandemic, but other surveys cast doubts on this.[11] A recent paper, based on data from monitoring software, is sceptical and points to more hours worked but little increase in output. This suggests that productivity may actually fall as more time is spent to trying to coordinate tasks remotely but less time on uninterrupted work. The quality of the coordination is also called into question in this study (Gibbs, Mengel & Siemroth, 2021).

17. In addition, it should also be said that there was also a range of views on what exactly productivity was with some consultees attributing this to hours worked in the job (and almost all agreeing that this had increased for staff during the pandemic) and others tying it directly to outputs. A number of consultees – especially in the public sector and business services firms – linked their productivity levels to how innovative their staff are

---

[11] For this see Flexible ways of working are here to stay, finds new European research – with leaders focused on maintaining culture and innovation – Microsoft News Centre Europe, 15 Oct. 2020. A later survey (March 2021) of 600 UK directors for the IoD found that 40% believed remote working had been slightly/significantly more productive while 37% believed the opposite to be the case; see https://www.iod.com/news/news/articles/IoD-Directors-look-to-hybrid-working-for-the-future

and how able they are to collaborate with one another. In this case they felt that this had come under strain due to remote working and were keen for a phased return to the workplace.

"Our work demands not only collaboration within and between teams to avoid silos but also close management of employee performance. We are not convinced this is possible via Zoom and therefore will move back towards 3 or 4 days a week in the workplace for all staff. We need to do it for everyone so that we are treating people equally." (Public sector organisation, >500 staff)

Managing the shift to hybrid working

18. There were three distinct groups among consultees about the specifics of what might constitute hybrid working and how/whether they might shift towards this – "process-led", optimists and sceptics.

19. The first group were *"process-led"* and consisted mainly of HR professionals in the private sector and many of those working in public sector organisations. They were much firmer on what hybrid working was not (not an extension of mandated working from home during the pandemic and not traditional flexi-working), than what it might be. In this group, the discussion centred on who should be 'in charge' of the process (it should be employer-led followed by consultation with employees) if any shift to hybrid working takes place. In this view the shift is a process to be managed carefully so as not to allow any legalistic issues around fairness or discrimination to arise, an issue of terms and conditions as opposed to costs and benefits.

20. A second group of consultees – the optimists – were less concerned about the process and assume that hybrid working – or some blend of being in the office and working remotely – will be a fixed feature in future working. Among these consultees there was little emphasis placed on what changes might come next. Instead the key goals are staff retention and protection of any productivity gains made during the pandemic. Some of the Belfast-based firms and public sector bodies were concerned that they might lose staff to others who were happy to allow their staff to commute less and therefore see hybrid working as a 'given' for their organisation.

"Almost half of our staff commute more than an hour every day between home and work so we are going to have to tackle that time wastage or lose staff to competitors who do this. Within 12 months we will be a 'hybrid firm' taking a team-based approach as to who needs to be in the office at any time." (ICT business, >100 staff)

21. Among this second group were those who are most enthusiastic about the opportunities associated with a new hybrid working model. One part of this was the ability to tap into a larger labour pool (with less commuting requirements). These consultees were seeking support from Government and other agencies to ensure that broadband infrastructure was of a standard to allow the current levels of remote working to continue. They also mentioned the potential associated with hubs for remote workers which might

be more secure for handling of data and confidential information than homeworking could be.

"We are in a line of work where it is hard to recruit good people but two adverts in the past six months with the words 'hybrid working' in them brought a much larger pool of possible people to our door in rural Northern Ireland. Still not sure where we will end up with this model, especially when it comes to managing client expectations, but it seems like this way of working is here to stay." (Construction services firm, >50 employees)

22. Two different consultees referred to what was being called the 'clubhouse' model. In New Zealand as staff returned to work in the middle of 2020 this became a new way of organising the interaction of employees with the workplace. In this case they would come into work to contribute to the work and projects in hand to also to access the knowledge and experience needed to complete other work. An alternative model – which is being seen in the US and now spreading to Europe – is the clubhouse as a co-working hub where the coffee shop model of paying for a coffee and then taking up a table is flipped. This means that you pay a fee – often monthly – to a hub in order to have access to a space and a network of other people, often with coffee or refreshments provided as part of your fee.

23. Another positive factor which several of the more optimistic consultees referred to was better staff well-being. Two consultees – one from the public sector, the other from the manufacturing focus group – mentioned that their levels of absence due to sickness had more than halved in the period of remote working. This is consistent with ONS data which found that in 2020 those who did any work from home lost 2.0 days compared to 4.7 days for those who never worked from home.

"Where we are, with staff generally in the office two days a week, is where I think we will continue to operate. We will have to formalise this position at some point and maybe think about employment contracts, health and safety and other issues but for now the management team are happy and the staff morale is good. What we do with the lease and space in three years time is the next biggest question for us." (Professional services focus group consultee, <50 staff)

24. The final group of consultees – the sceptics and often COO consultees in parts of the private sector – were grappling about what would happen after what McKinsey have called the 'finish line' is reached at the end of the pandemic and a hoped-for return to normality takes place. This group tends to be among those who are sceptical about the benefits of hybrid working and keen to see a return to the workplace from remote working for as many employees as possible, as soon as possible.

25. The sceptical outlook towards a hybrid working model is probably more typical of the majority of UK firms who have consistently said in the BICS survey that they do not intend to make increased homeworking a permanent part of their future business model

(see Figure 14 above). In this view remote working – sometimes still dismissed as 'shirking from home' – is something associated with COVID-19 and will come to an end with it. The key point made by these firms is that an increased level of homeworking or remote working could never be a permanent feature, given the nature of their business. When teased out, there was acceptance that remote working might apply to *some parts* of the business but not to the whole of the parts.

26. However, another word that was stressed as a negative associated with any future hybrid model was 'fairness'. This was teased out to be a concern that remote working could lead to a two-tier system within workplaces where those able to work remotely become different to those whose activities need to be workplace-based. A number of consultees, in particular those in sectors such as Manufacturing and Construction, made the point that those who could not work remotely had faced additional challenges at work like wearing PPE and adopting new hygiene protocols and that these were sacrifices that needed to be recognised.

"During 2020 we moved from one way of working where all of us were in the workplace to another where some of us, who could, worked from home and the rest were either furloughed or then able to return to work. Now we are in a complicated place with most onsite and others still working from home where they don't have to be in the office. It feels like it might be too complicated to try and run very different systems and management styles for different staff. Probably easier for us all to come back in." (Manufacturing sector focus group consultee)

27. Whether they are sceptical or optimistic about how remote working might change the way we work, there is a consensus view among consultees that this shift will be challenging. The idea of decisions on remote working being "led by the work" rather than being "led by the want" is critical. However, this will still require business leaders to be as flexible as possible and avoid the temptation of addressing the issue solely as one of legalistic terms and conditions.

28. Many of the consultees were aware of the discussions happening in the Republic of Ireland about legislation for both the right to ask about remote working and the right to "switch off".[12] A number of consultees asked whether that would come to NI soon and several spoke about developing flexible or remote working policies that would allow them to decide on the cases made to them by staff and how best to decide on be "led by the work".

"I'd be keen to see some guidelines on how we might make decisions that are best for our business. I see a return to work where three quarters of my staff can do their work from anywhere and one quarter need to be in the office all the time. However, I'd be keen to see most of that 75% in the workplace most of the week, not least

[12] For more on these development see https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/f1b2d-tanaiste-publishes-views-on-right-to-request-remote-work/, accessed 20 Aug. 2021.

because I want us to be in place for clients when they come in." (Professional services focus group consultee, c.50 staff)

Remote working and the impacts on staff

29. The change brought about in the COVID-19 pandemic for all employees was enormous. For 'frontline' workers a whole series of additional health risks and safety protocols came into being for their daily work. Other, who were unable to continue face-to-face interactions, were either furloughed or lost their job. The final group, of between 30% and 40%, went home to work remotely, many for the first time.

30. Looking at this final group the impacts have been incredibly diverse and have changed over time, the longer that the pandemic has lasted. Survey evidence, including the results of the UUEPC survey (and in particular the many qualitative comments provided[13]), have pointed to many positives, including the following:
    - Employees saw a ***reduction in commuting times*** – estimated by some to 240 hours a year in saved time[14] - and experienced less cost and stress associated with the daily commute;
    - Where applicable, many employees found that they had more time to be spent with family, including being able to move quickly from work to time spent with children, and experienced benefits associated with this ***flexibility***;
    - Some staff referred to an ***'escape' from the downsides of work***, which included colleagues or managers they clash with, office politics, mundane work routines, etc.
    - An increased ***ability to do 'deep work'*** at home in an uninterrupted fashion, something which researchers have questioned whether it is available to all employees, given home environments.

31. The surveys also highlight a number of negatives experienced by remote working staff:
    - Childcare issues and the ***difficulty of attempting to juggle domestic and work duties*** outside the office, which is normally worse for female staff.
    - Two tier system depending on the ***quality of broadband connectivity***.
    - ***'Zoom fatigue'*** has become a new phrase and recent research has highlighted how it is indeed something real and impacting on eyesight and concentration, more so for females than males.[15]
    - ***Distractions*** – which can be as much to do with the homeworking environment – and the problems this causes for any efforts to undertake uninterrupted work.

---

[13] The results of this survey will be analysed in greater detail in a separate research paper for all of NI, to be released in September 2021.
[14] Calculation taken from a Nationwide UK survey of 2,208 adults in GB; see Nationwide UK, *The Future of Work*, March 2021.
[15] A good summary of the research can be found at Paul Levy, 'Zoom burnout: Ditch the video-conferencing calls', The Conversation blog, 17 March 2021, see https://theconversation.com/zoom-burnout-be-more-productive-ditch-those-video-calls-expert-156772

- ***Losses associated with a lack of access to the office***, from an absence of the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, to particular issues for new staff members and an inability to do the networking associated with progression.
- Longer or more imbalanced working days – a ***sense of being 'always on'*** – as dictated by the technology available to remote workers.

32. The consultations showed that most consultees were aware of and some concerned by both positives and negatives associated with remote working. With regard to the positives expressed by employees over the past year flexibility is certainly one which the consultees also returned to consistently. When addressed as a positive thing, which the organisations would like to build upon, it was regarded by businesses as something which allowed staff to complete their work as and when they liked, and had led to higher levels of productivity within their firm. Other consultees were less sure and spoke about the need for greater levels of monitoring of what staff were actually doing.

33. The different impacts which COVID-19 has had in the labour market – in terms of gender, age and housing type – has been widely recognised by governments and business leaders in the past eighteen months. There has been much commentary, also, about how mandated working from home has been different for people, depending on whether or not they have children, what their housing position is and how well-served they are by broadband and the IT infrastructure their employer has in place. Consultees all referred to the well-being and mental health impacts of working from home and included both positive and negative aspects of the merging of home and work.

"I've personally found remote working to be a huge bonus in terms of flexibility it allows me and the family. But then I know I have staff who share accommodation with others of their same age or have moved back home with their parents and they don't feel that same flexibility. Bringing people back soon and settling them into a 3 or 4 day week onsite seems the best solution to meeting people's needs, though I expect the battle will come from those who don't want to come back and give up their gains as they see them." (Public sector consultee, >80 staff)

34. In every individual consultation and focus group the individuals were keen to stress how far they had ensured that health and safety and well-being guidance and reference materials were circulated to staff. One point of discussion, and something that there was no consensus view upon, was whether they would be keen to have a "right to disconnect" for staff. There was a realisation that employees needed to be able to distinguish between work time and home time, especially when working remotely, but legislation was not favoured by most. As one Manufacturing sector COO said, "we know where the line is, our staff also know where it is and someone writing legislation will never have that same understanding".

35. A major concern of most consultees was that remote working works best for those who have spent some time within their organisation or business. For those who were new to the organisation or new to their current role the fear is that they could be missing out through working remotely. Induction of new staff over the past eighteen months has

been difficult for most and several consultees referred to instances in their own business where staff had joined and subsequently left without ever entering a workplace. Several made the point that an employee's productivity could depend on what they can learn by working alongside other colleagues.[16]

"I'm enthusiastic about what remote working can do for our business, but believe this does not work all of the time. Speaking to competitors they tell me the same story of worrying about how the skills their staff have will not develop if they are never around other staff. personally found remote working to be a huge bonus in terms of flexibility it allows me and the family. But then I know I have staff who share accommodation with others of their same age or have moved back home with their parents and they don't feel that same flexibility. Bringing people back soon and settling them into a 3 or 4 day week onsite seems the best solution to meeting people's needs, though I expect the battle will come from those who don't want to come back and give up their gains as they see them." (ICT focus group consultee, <50 staff)

What is next for businesses and remote working?

36. As noted above it remains an open question the extent to which homeworking or remote working will become a permanent feature of work in the study area or Northern Ireland more generally. At the very least, it can be expected that there will be larger numbers of people working remotely at least some of the time than was the case before 2020. Some surveys, from both the UK and US, suggests that between and third of employees will want hybrid working models to be part of their future working patterns. This presents major challenges for businesses to meet.

37. The public sector may be first to make its move. The NI Civil Service – which employs 23,000 people, 62% of whom commute outside their Council area and a majority of whom work in Belfast – is outlining plans for facilities to accommodate more working remotely form the central locations. The Connect2 Regional Hubs programme aims to have facilities (including re-purposed offices) opening over the next two years. The programme has been underway since 2018 – envisaged as a mix of reforming the use of existing facilities and dealing with the perennial issue of decentralising staff – but gathered pace in 2020. Hubs are due to be operating in Ballykelly and Downpatrick in 2021, followed by another four next year and a further four in 2023. This is a major programme which aims to "maximise the local economic and regeneration benefits in the towns and cities across the region". The same statement also refers to a "blended approach" for some units of the NICS into the future, while arguing that the "current

---

[16] This follows the findings of Corsello & Minor (2017) which argue that a person's productivity can be linked to who they sit next to and learn from. Gibbs, Mengel & Siemroth (2021) find that workers with longer tenure in businesses and better networks of colleagues to draw upon for advice and assistance tended to be more productive when working from home.

levels of remote working is not optimum in the long term".[17] Guidance on what jobs, occupational duties or teams are likely to be included in the Connect2 hubs is not yet clear.

38. The approach in the Republic of Ireland is different. A network of over 100 local hubs – some public buildings, but many run by local community groups and other cooperative efforts – are to see a minimum supply of 20% of public sector workers who will normally work from home or remotely by the end of 2021, approximately 20,000 employees. On top of that will be private sector employees who will be able to request the right to work remotely from later in the year. The extent to which these employees will always work remotely or on certain days of the week will depend upon the requests made and approved. Also, it remains to be seen how far people will choose to use the remote working hubs – much will probably depend on the facilities available and access to broadband connectivity – but the future of work is likely to look quite different in a few years.

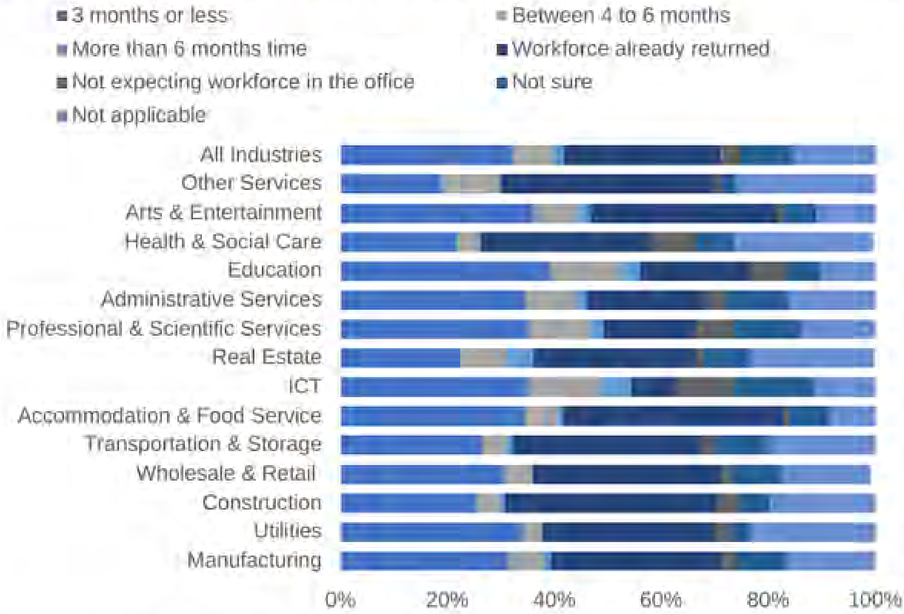
39. Whether other public sector organisations in NI will be able to use these Connect2 hubs or develop their own hubs, or will allow staff to remote work from home more regularly is also not clear. The consultations found a cautious view among public sector consultees, arising mainly from the equity and equality implications of who can remote work and the potential impacts on productivity and management of staff. The discussions appear to be focussed on the process by which remote working requests might be dealt with and the number of days that will be allowable.

40. In the private sector there is a greater diversity of views on the future of remote working, much of it leaning towards the optimistic if the businesses felt it was possible in their sector. Survey data of business owners, managers and directors point in different directions. If NI businesses were to mirror the views expressed by UK business (in the ONS BICS) on whether they intend to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward, then a majority of businesses in most sectors would not believe so. This might suggest little change to use of space and perhaps the flows of people into offices and workspaces across the local economy.

41. It does not appear as clear-cut as that, however. First, of the 55% of businesses whose staff have still to return to their normal workplace, 40% believe this will happen by the end of the year, and another 2% would return in 2022. Only 4% of businesses do not expect staff to return to their workplaces. This remains very much a phased return to the office in general and in some sectors – such as ICT and Professional Services – the percentage of business not expecting their staff to return can rise closer to 10% (see Figure 15).

[17] See Written Ministerial Statement on Connect2 Regional Hubs, 18 Feb. 2021, https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dfp/Written%20Ministerial%20Statement%20-%20Connect2%20Regional%20Hubs.pdf

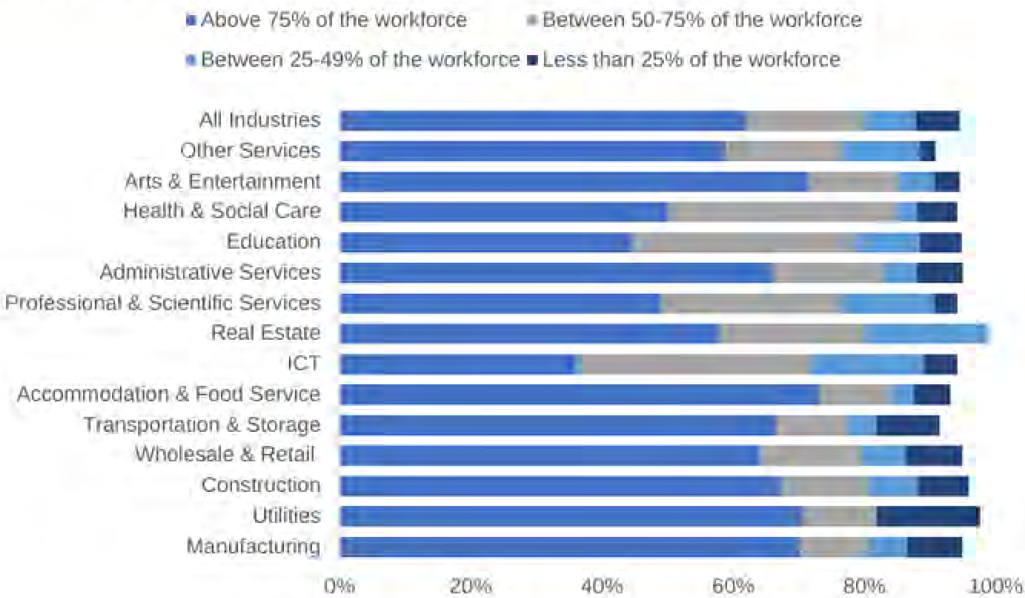
Figure 15: Expected period of return to workplace by sector, UK, June 2021



Source: ONS BICS and UUEPC analysis

42. A second point is that the proportion of staff expected to return in the phased timeframe varies between sectors and, across all industries, with almost 40% of businesses expecting the return impact less than three quarters of their staff. In some sectors (ICT and Professional Services again stand out), closer to a fifth of businesses expect that half of their staff or less will not return in the timeframe they have identified for the return to the office.

Figure 16: Proportion of employees expected to return to workplace in specific timeframe by sector, UK, June 2021



Source: ONS BICS and UUEPC analysis

43. These findings suggest both a phased return and one that will not affect all staff – in other words, the hybrid model will exist for a significant proportion of staff. This is supported in Institute of Director surveys for the UK and Ireland which point to more than 60% of directors seeing hybrid working as a key element of future work.

44. The majority of consultees took the view that, unless their work activities militated against it, they would be pursuing a hybrid or blended model for staff. They believed this could range from 30% (where most responses fell) to all their staff (in some ICT firms). The preferred number of days for those employees this applied to was four days a week in the workplace and one at home (in the case where all or a significant majority of staff would take up the hybrid model), with some ICT and Professional Services consultees thinking of a 3/2 split (based on this applying to staff who asked for a hybrid model). Some consultees were looking at the possibility of a mix of some staff working at home almost all of the time but others onsite for a majority of days.

45. The reasons given for such a shift chime with those businesses in the BICS who want to see an increased level of homeworking. When asked why – BICS wave 33 – they saw reduced overheads, recruitment from a wider pool, reduced sickness levels and improved staff well-being as key to this decision. The consultees echoed these with a particular emphasis on well-being and potential recruitment.

46. There was less optimism that a hybrid model would significantly reduce overheads with most referring to the need to maintain the space they had for staff to rotate in and out of. This is best summed up in the views of one: "We believed hot desks would reduce our footprint ten years ago and that came to very little saving so I don't expect hybrid working to be any different. This is more about getting the best out of our employees and retaining them as opposed to being able to downsize. If we were looking at a new office space, then that might be different." Another commented on the potential to use existing space better if occupation was less with more collaborative and group-working spaces, though this, again, will depend on how suitable these are for different businesses.

5. Bibliography

A. Ahrens, J. FitzGerald & S. Lyons (2020), 'Commuting across the Irish border', *Economics Letters*, 190 (2020), 1-5.

F. Crowley & J. Doran (2020), 'Covid-19, occupational social distancing and remote working potential in Ireland', SRERC Working Paper No. 1, May 2020.

J.I. Dingel & B. Newman (2020), 'How many jobs can be done from home?', NBER Working Paper 26948, June 2020.

J. Daly (2020), 'Regional Co-working analysis [in Ireland]', conference presentation, Nov. 2020.

Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (2021), *Making Remote Work: National Remote Working Strategy*, Jan. 2021.

F.H Gerpott, W. Rivkin & D. Unger (2021), 'Stop and go, where is my flow? How and when daily aversive commutes are negatively associated with employees motivational states and behaviour at work', *Journal of Advanced Psychology*, advance online publication.

M. Gibbs, F. Mengel & C. Siemroth (2021), 'Working from home and productivity: Evidence from personnel and analytics data on IT professionals', IZA discussion paper, no. 14336, May 2021.

A.E. Gillespie & R. Richardson (2000), 'Teleworking and the city: Myths of workplace transcendence and travel reduction', in *Cities in the Telecommunications Age*.

McKinsey Global Institute (2021), *The future of work after COVID-19*, Feb. 2021.

M. Morikawa (2021), 'Productivity of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence from a firm survey', REITI working paper, 21-E-002, Jan. 2021.

National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (2021), 'Remote working: Implications for competitiveness and productivity', research bulletin 21-3, May 2021.

A. Stutzer & B.S. Frey (2008), 'Stress that doesn't pay: The commuting paradox', *Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 110(2), 339-366.

Western Development Commission (2020), *Remote Working during Covid-19: Ireland's National Survey*, Phase II report, Oct. 2020.

Annex 1 – Ards & North Down

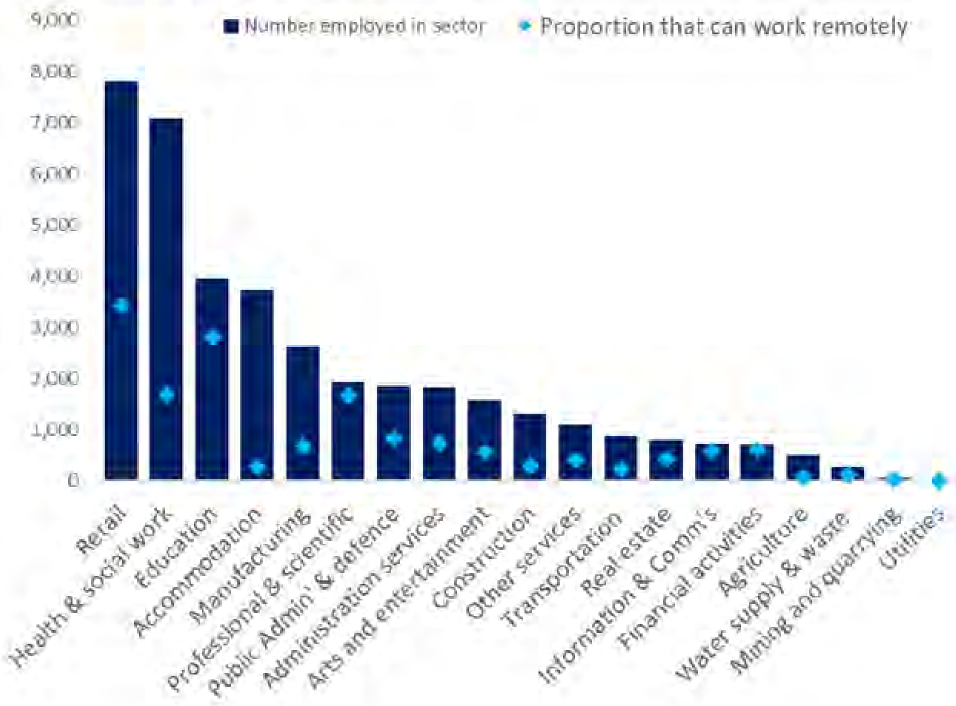
Within Ards & North Down it is estimated that across all sectors **15,500 jobs** could **effectively** be completed or from home. This equates to **40% of total employee jobs** which is lightly above the study area average of 38% and in line with the NI average which is also 40%**.** Of the three sectors that are most concentrated in Ards & North Down (retail, health and education), 42% of these can effectively be done from home or remotely.

Over a third (35%) of employment opportunities within Ards & North Down are categorized within professional occupations. In 2020 at the UK level 41% of professional occupational respondents said they had worked at home at some stage in the week prior to being interviewed.

In terms of occupational commuting a greater number of residents in Ards & North Down travel further than the study area average with 35% travelling between "1- & 30km" compared to the 26% average. 9% of residents work "mainly at or from home" which is closely in line with the average of 10%. Very similar trends can be observed when looking at the sectoral data.

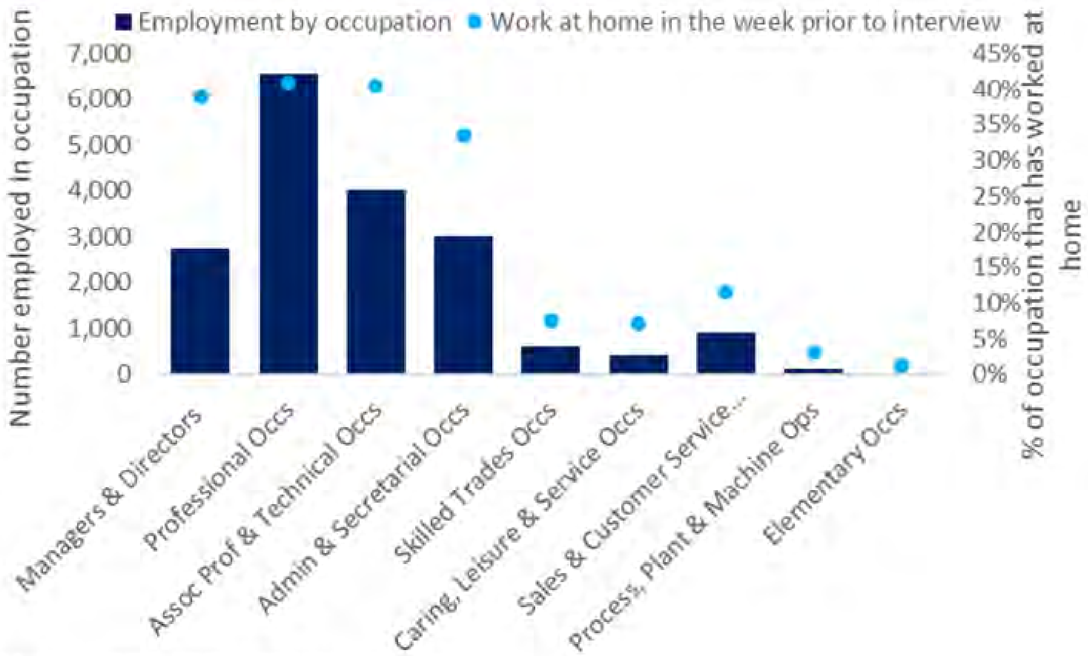
Residents of Ards & North Down fill 83% of workplace jobs within the council with the remaining commuters being concentrated between Belfast, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Newry, Mourne & Down and Antrim & Newtownabbey. Outflowing commuters outweigh inflowing commuters by approximately a 4:1 ratio giving a daily net commuting figure of 28,300.

Figure 17: Number employed by sector and the proportion estimated to be able to work remotely, Ards & North Down, 2020



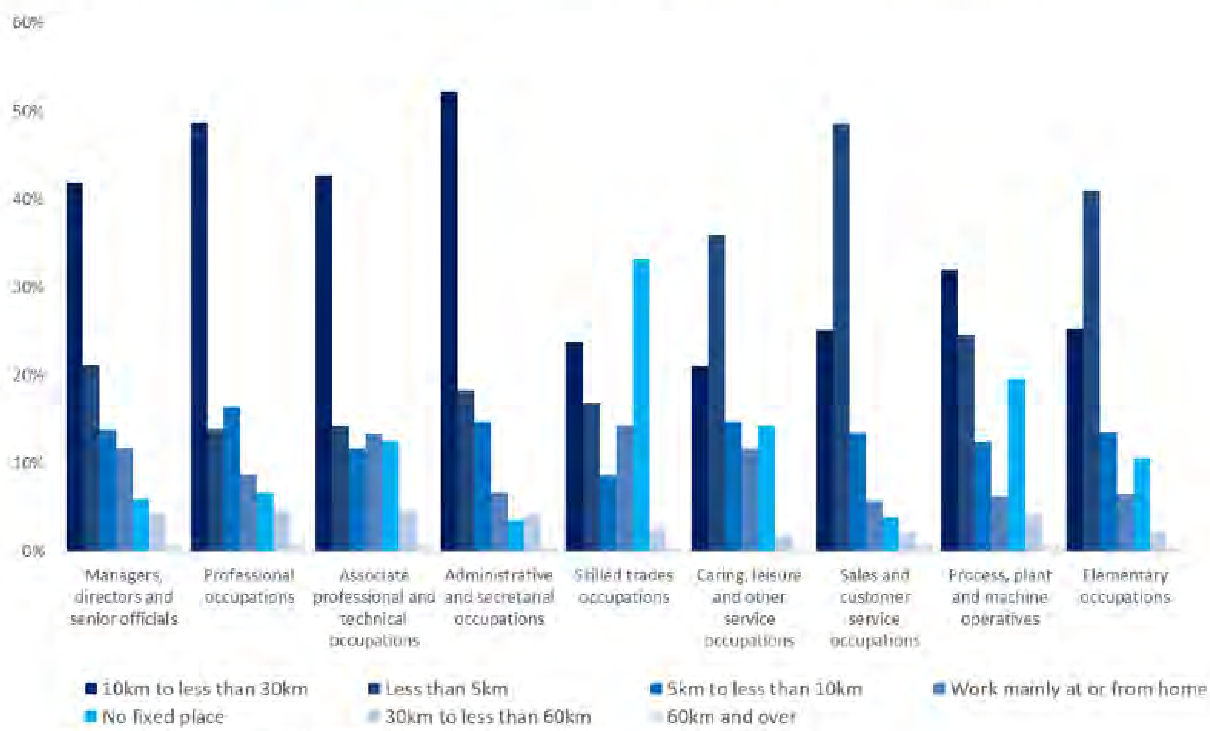
Source: Dingel & Newman and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 18: Employment by occupation in Ards & North Down and the % of the occupation group working from home, UK, 2019



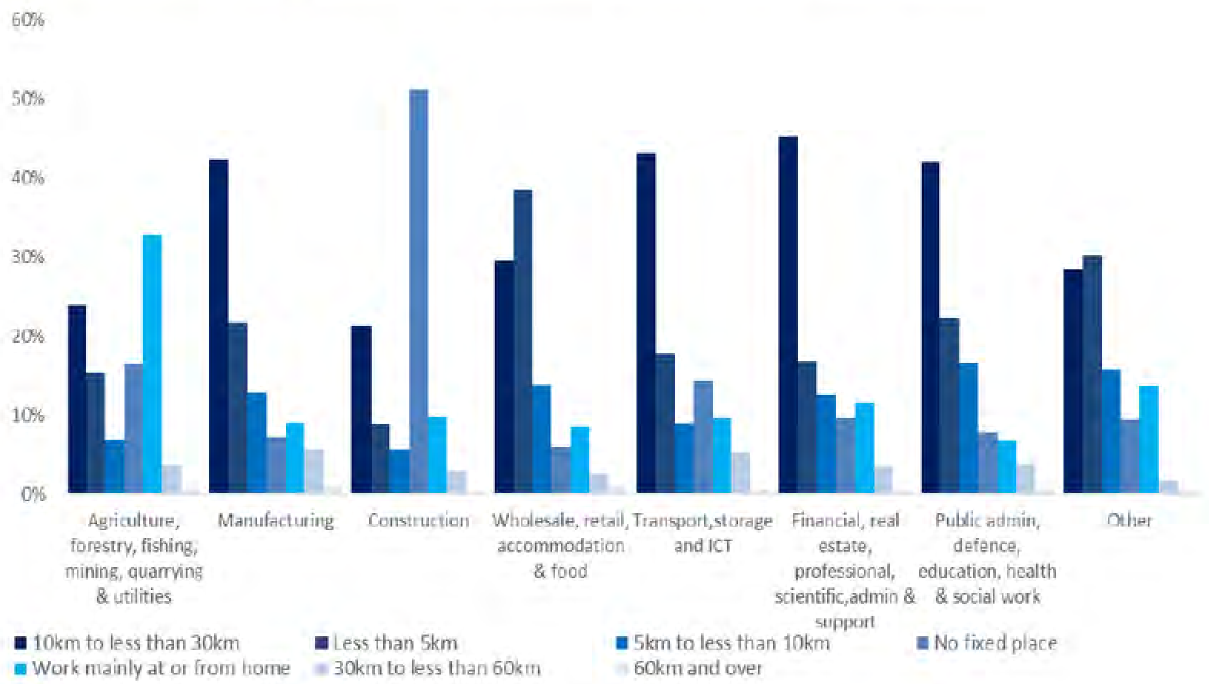
Source: NISRA, ONS, UUEPC analysis

Figure 19: Commuting distances by occupation, Ards & North Down, 2011



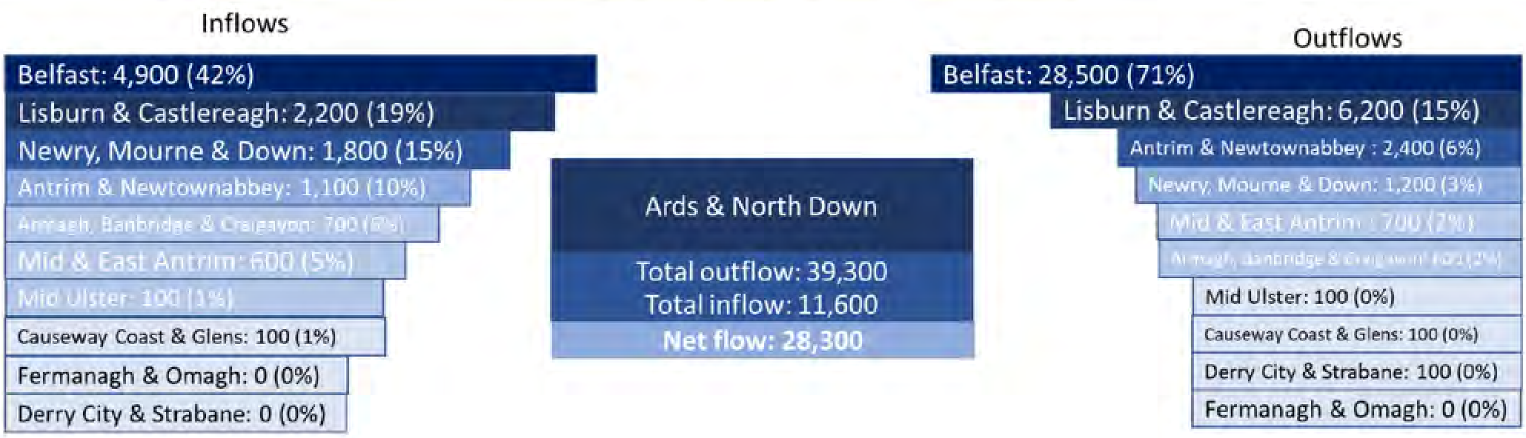
Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 20: Commuting distances by industry, Ards & North Down, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 21: Estimated commuting flows, Ards & North Down, 2020



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey Results, Ards & North Down, June 2021

How often employees are currently working from home

	Ards & North Down	NI average
0 days per week	9%	7%
1-2 days per week	7%	10%
3-4 days per week	26%	26%
5+ days per week	58%	57%

Whether employees want to return to the office

	Ards & North Down	NI average
Yes	16%	15%
No	17%	15%
Only on a hybrid basis	67%	70%

How often employees would like to work remotely after Covid-19 if they were allowed to set their own working patterns

	Ards & North Down	NI average
Don't want to work remotely	7%	5%
1-3 days per month	9%	5%
1-2 days per week	29%	32%
3-4 days per week	38%	44%
5 days per week	17%	14%

Whether employees would be interested in using remote 'hubs' or dedicated office space when working remotely in the future

	Ards & North Down	NI average
Yes, in a remote working hub located in nearest town centre	15%	12%
Yes, in a remote working hub dedicated to my part of the organisation	25%	21%
No, I am only interested in working from home	60%	67%

Source: UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey and UUEPC Analysis

Annex 2 – Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon

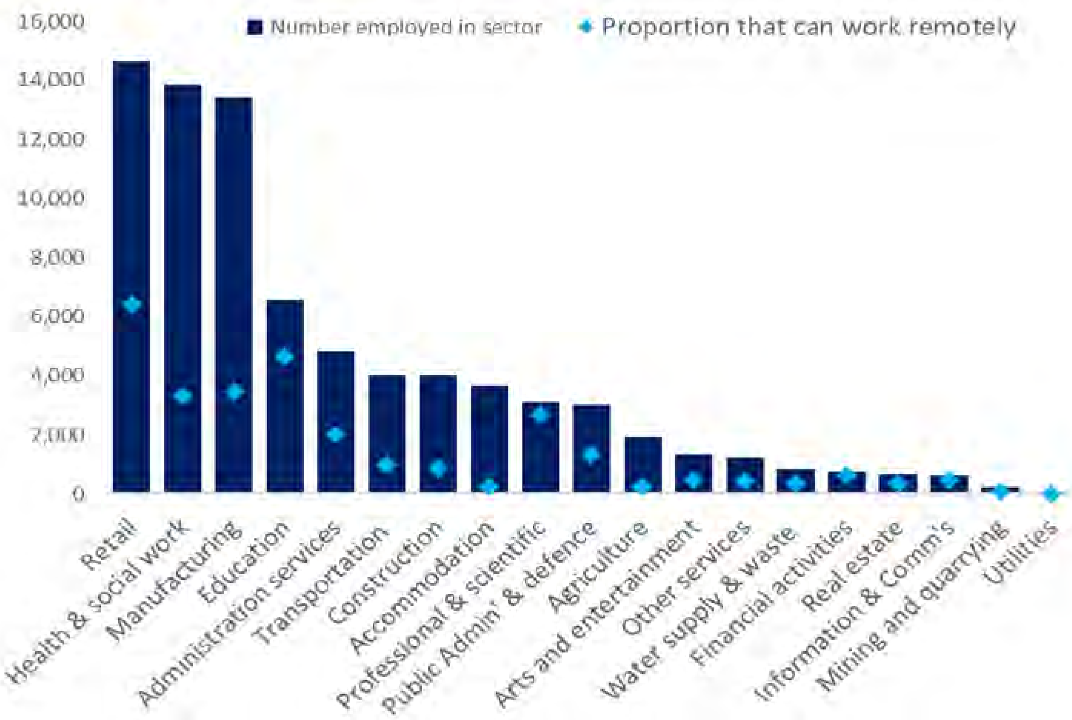
Within ABC it is estimated that across all sectors **29,200 jobs** could be **effectively** completed remotely or from home. This equates to **37% of total employee jobs**. This is marginally below the NI average and the study area average of 40% and 38% respectively. Of the three sectors that are most concentrated in ABC (retail, health and manufacturing), 32% of these can effectively be done from home or remotely.

Nearly a third (31%) of employment opportunities within ABC are categorised within professional occupations. In 2020 at the UK level 41% of professional occupational respondents said they had worked at home at some stage in the week prior to being interviewed.

In terms of occupational commuting the number of residents that commute less than 5km and the number that work "mainly at or from home" fall largely in line with the study area average at 27% and 11% respectively. However, a larger than average proportion fall into the 30km to 60km commute category with 10% of residents completing this journey compared to the average of 6%. Very similar trends can be observed when looking at the sectoral data.

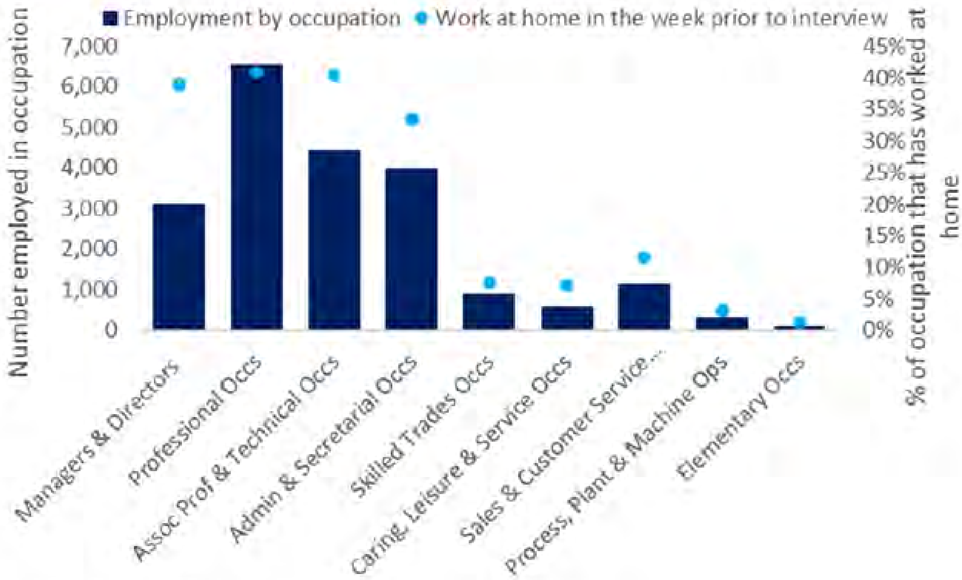
Residents of ABC fill 85% of workplace jobs within the council with the remainder commuting inwards from Newry, Mourne & Down, Mid Ulster and Lisburn & Castlereagh. The largest proportion of outwards commuters travel to Belfast and Lisburn and Castlereagh giving a daily net commuting figure of 17,500.

Figure 22: Number employed by sector and the proportion estimated to be able to work remotely, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, 2020



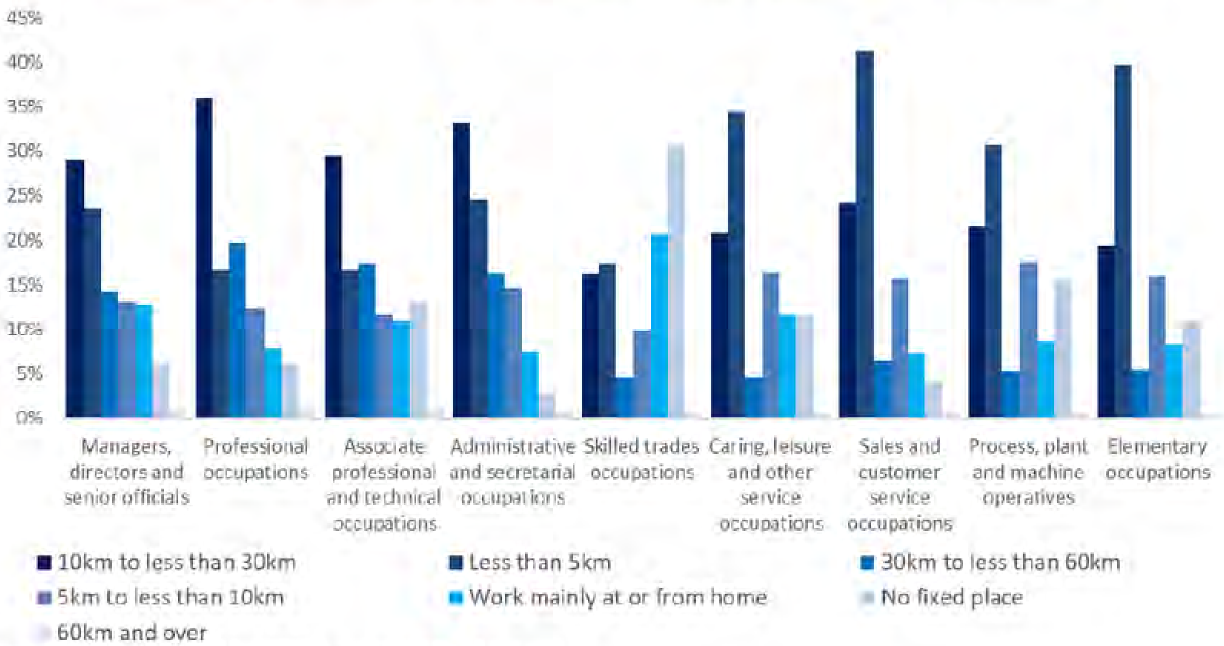
Source: Dingel & Newman and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 23: Employment by occupation in Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and the % of the occupation group working from home, UK, 2019



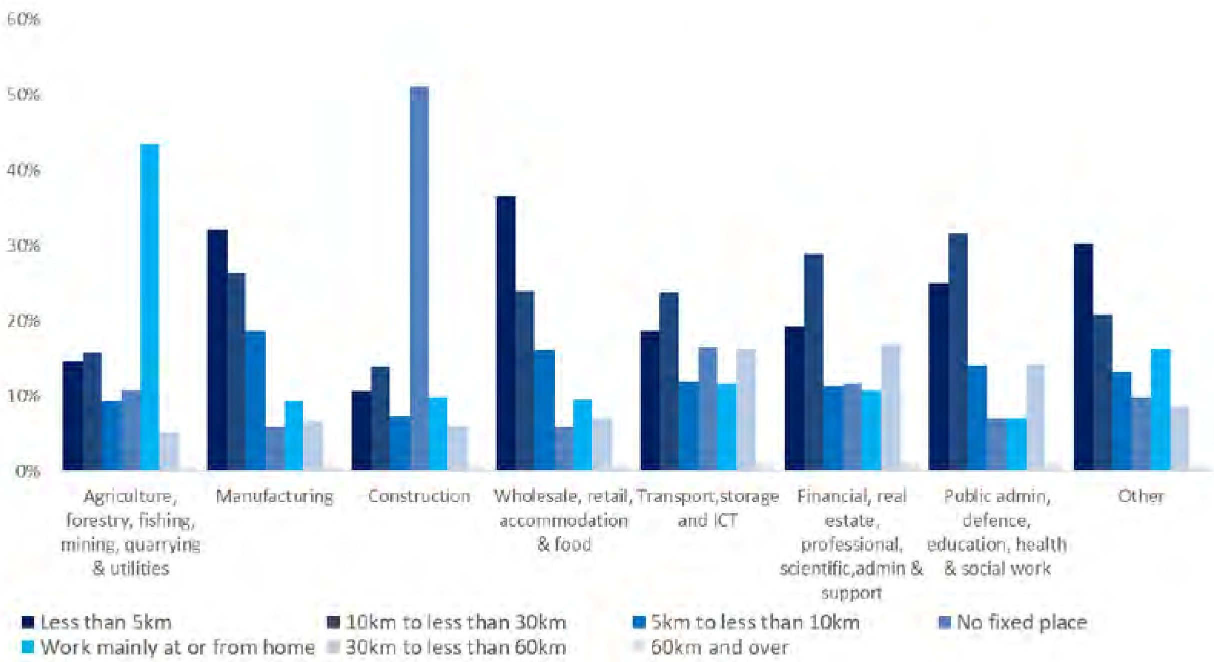
Source: NISRA, ONS, UUEPC analysis

Figure 24: Commuting distances by occupation, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, 2011



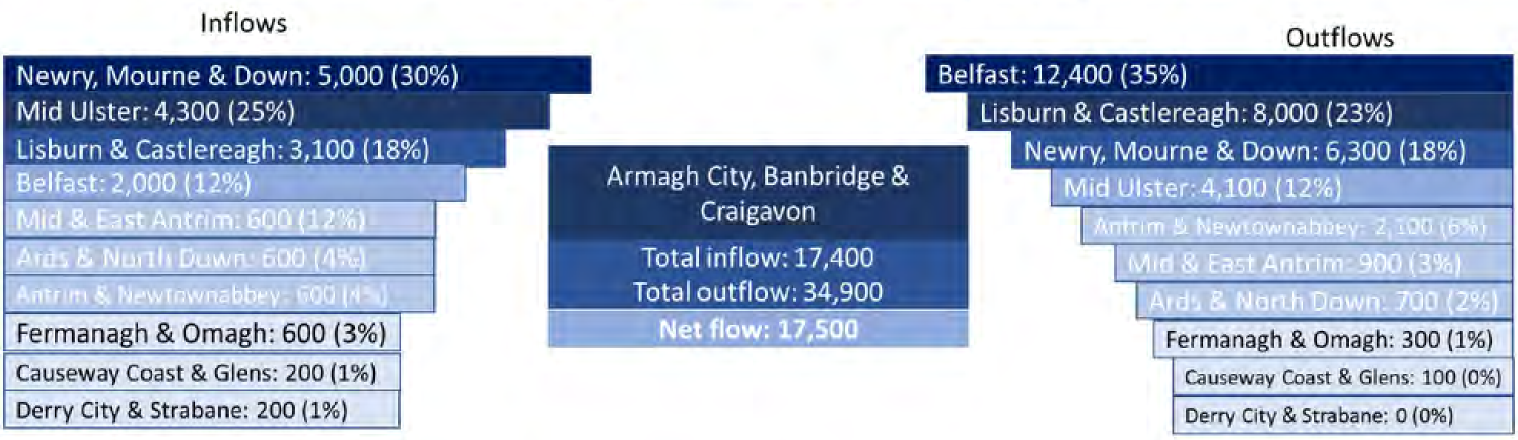
Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 25: Commuting distances by industry, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 26: Estimated commuting flows, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, 2020



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey Results, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, June 2021

How often employees are currently working from home

	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	NI average
0 days per week	14%	7%
1-2 days per week	18%	10%
3-4 days per week	25%	26%
5+ days per week	43%	57%

Whether employees want to return to the office

	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	NI average
Yes	20%	15%
No	11%	15%
Only on a hybrid basis	69%	70%

How often employees would like to work remotely after Covid-19 if they were allowed to set their own working patterns

	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	NI average
Don't want to work remotely	11%	5%
1-3 days per month	4%	5%
1-2 days per week	33%	32%
3-4 days per week	43%	44%
5 days per week	9%	14%

Whether employees would be interested in using remote 'hubs' or dedicated office space when working remotely in the future

	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	NI average
Yes, in a remote working hub located in nearest town centre	12%	12%
Yes, in a remote working hub dedicated to my part of the organisation	21%	21%
No, I am only interested in working from home	68%	67%

Source: UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey and UUEPC Analysis

Annex 3 – Lisburn & Castlereagh

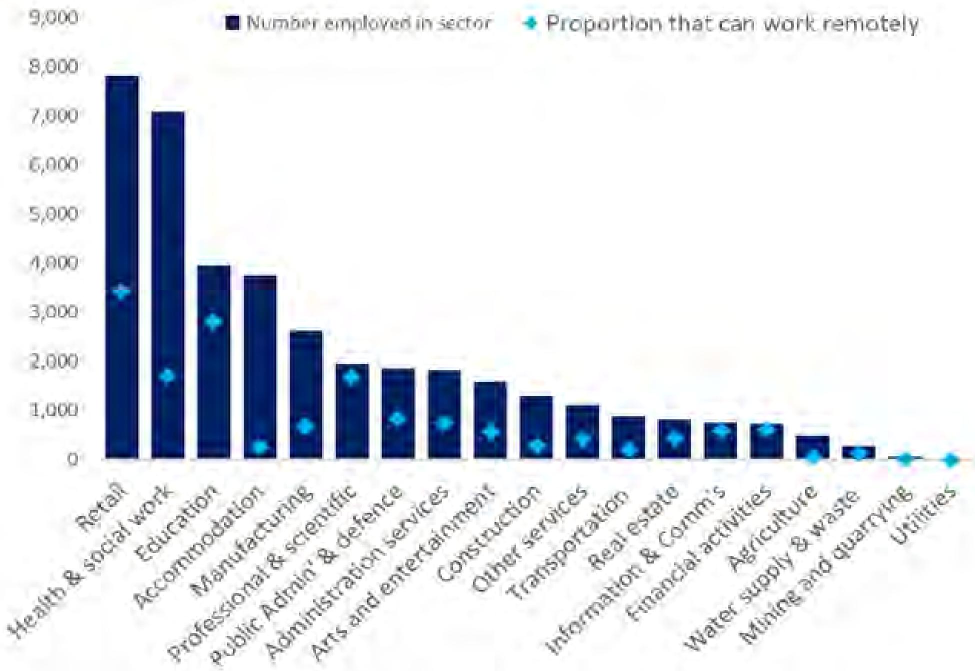
Within Lisburn & Castlereagh is it estimated that across all sectors **22,400 jobs** could **effectively** be completed remotely or from home. This equates to **38% of total employee jobs.** This is in line with the study area average of 38% and marginally below the NI average of 40%. Of the three sectors that are most concentrated in Lisburn & Castlereagh (health, retail and manufacturing), 32% of these can be done from home or remotely.

Over two fifths (44%) of employment opportunities within Lisburn & Castlereagh are categorized within professional occupations. In 2020 at the UK level 41% of professional occupational respondents said they had worked at home at some stage in the week prior to being interviewed.

In terms of occupational commuting the number of residents that work "mainly at or from home" fall largely in line with the study area average at 11% and 10% respectively. A smaller proportion fall into the shortest commuting category of "less than 5km" however the remaining commuters are evenly spread across the remaining ranges of commuting distances. However, when studying at the industry data a much greater proportion travel between 5-10km (32%), compared to the study area average of 16%.

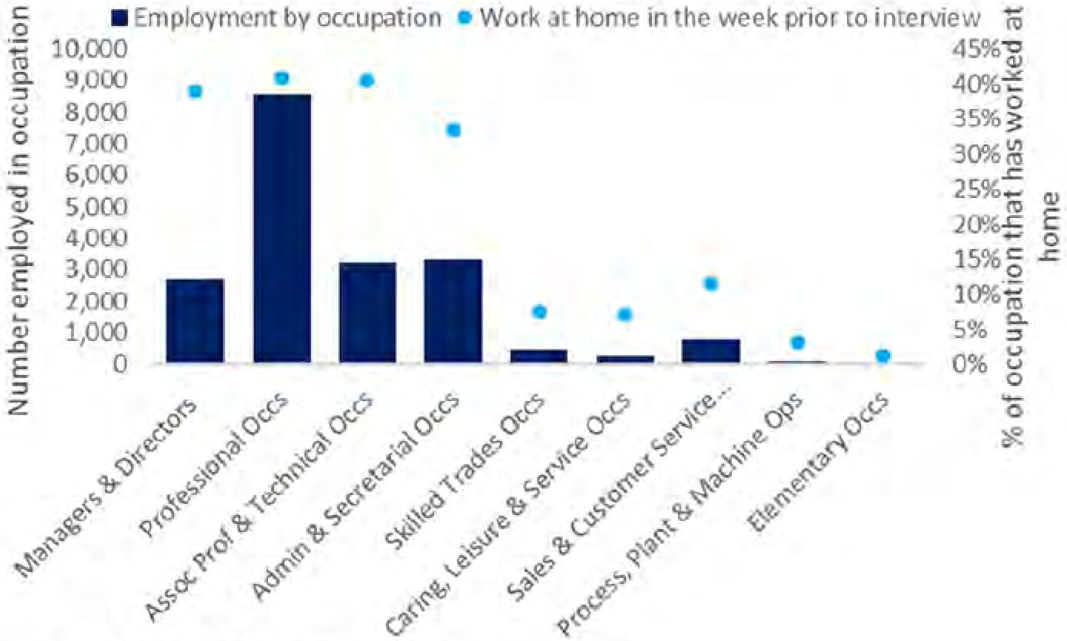
Residents of Lisburn & Castlereagh fill 55% of workplace jobs within the council with the remainder commuting inwards from Belfast, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon and Ards& North Down. The largest proportion of outwards commuters travel to Belfast giving a daily net commuting figure of 17,500

Figure 27: Number employed by sector and the proportion estimated to be able to work remotely, Lisburn & Castlereagh, 2020



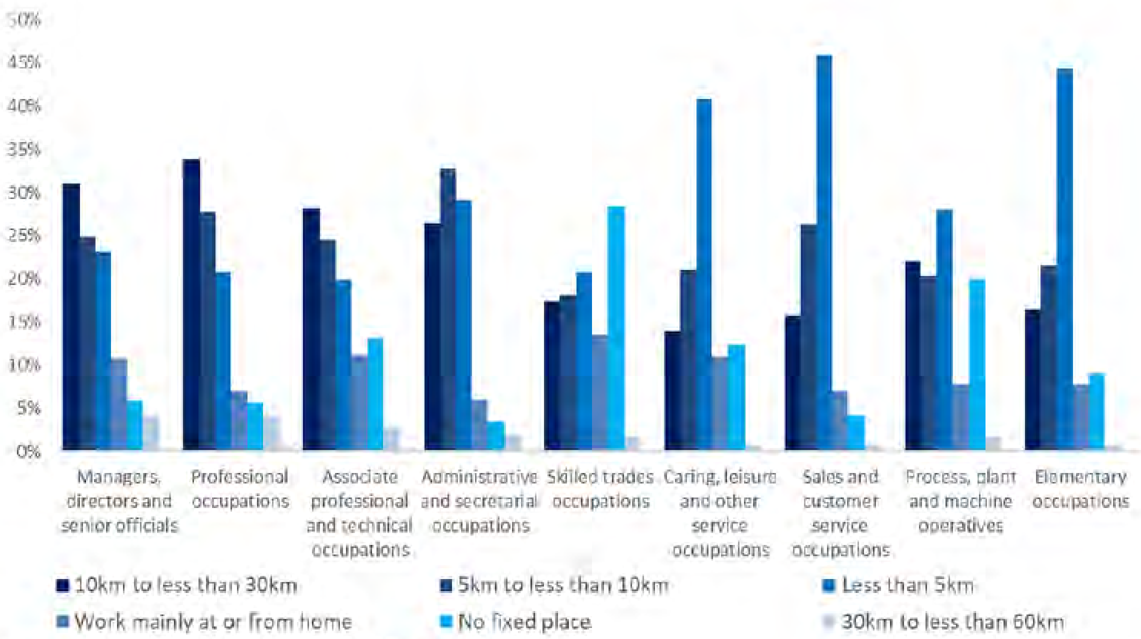
Source: Dingel & Newman and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 28: Employment by occupation in Lisburn & Castlereagh and the % of the occupation group working from home, UK, 2019



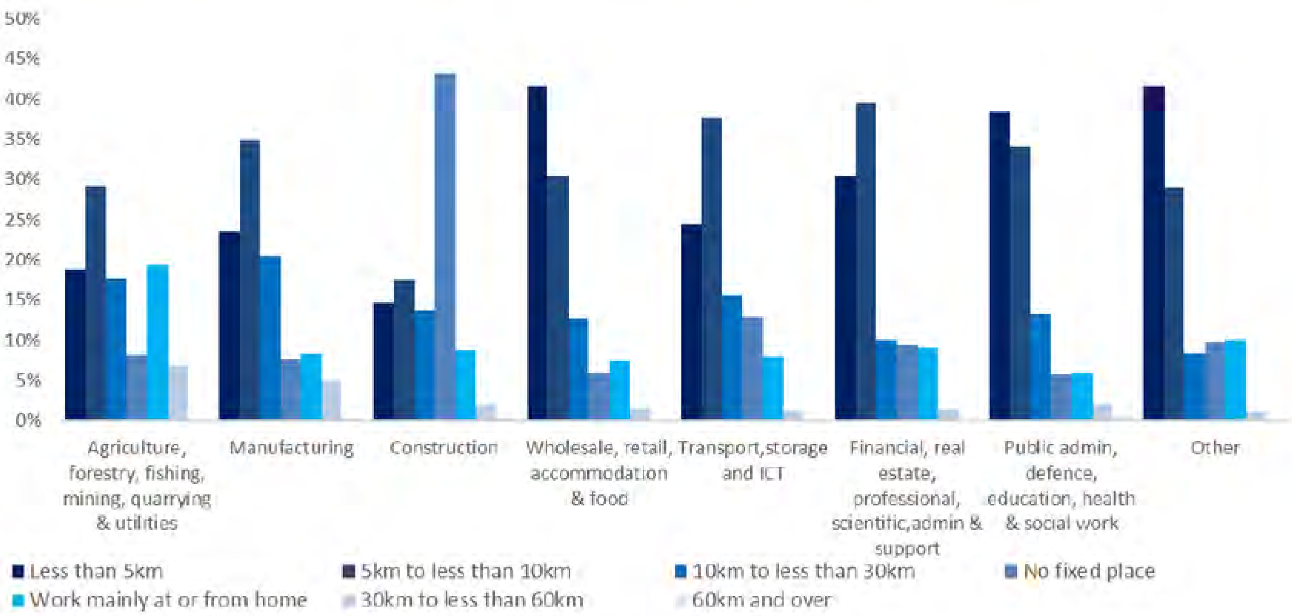
Source: NISRA, ONS, UUEPC analysis

Figure 29: Commuting distances by occupation, Lisburn & Castlereagh, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 30: Commuting distances by industry, Lisburn & Castlereagh, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 31: Estimated commuting flows, Lisburn & Castlereagh, 2020

UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey Results, Lisburn & Castlereagh, June 2021

How often employees are currently working from home

	Lisburn & Castlereagh	NI average
0 days per week	8%	7%
1-2 days per week	12%	10%
3-4 days per week	26%	26%
5+ days per week	54%	57%

Whether employees want to return to the office

	Lisburn & Castlereagh	NI average
Yes	13%	15%
No	15%	15%
Only on a hybrid basis	72%	70%

How often employees would like to work remotely after Covid-19 if they were allowed to set their own working patterns

	Lisburn & Castlereagh	NI average
Don't want to work remotely	4%	5%
1-3 days per month	4%	5%
1-2 days per week	33%	32%
3-4 days per week	49%	44%
5 days per week	10%	14%

Whether employees would be interested in using remote 'hubs' or dedicated office space when working remotely in the future

	Lisburn & Castlereagh	NI average
Yes, in a remote working hub located in nearest town centre	13%	12%
Yes, in a remote working hub dedicated to my part of the organisation	21%	21%
No, I am only interested in working from home	66%	67%

Source: UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey and UUEPC Analysis

Annex 4 – Newry, Mourne & Down

Within Newry, Mourne & Down it is estimated that across all sectors **22,400 jobs** could **effectively** be completed remotely or from home. This equates to **38% of total employee jobs**. This is below that of the NI average (40%) and is in line with the study area average of 38%. Of the three sectors that are most concentrated in Newry, Mourne & Down (retail, health and manufacturing), 33% of these can be done from home or remotely.

Over two fifths (41%) of employment opportunities within Newry, Mourne & Down are categorised within professional occupations. In 2020 at the UK level 41% of professional occupational respondents said they had worked at home at some stage in the week prior to being interviewed.

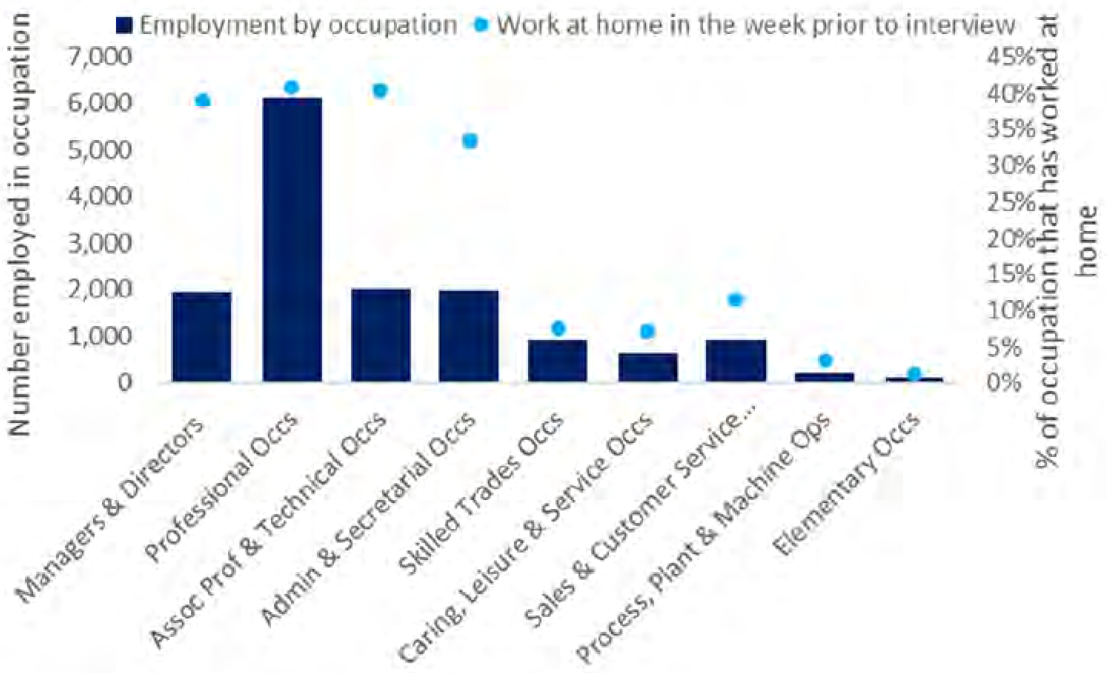
In terms of occupational commuting the data from Newry, Mourne and Down falls largely in line with the study area averages with a marginally higher number "working at or from home" (12%), compared to the study area average of 10%. Very similar trends can be observed with studying the industry data.

Residents of Newry, Mourne and Down fill 88% of workplace jobs within the council with the remaining commuters, both inward and outward, being based in Belfast, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon. This results in a daily net commuting flow of 14,000 people.

Figure 32: Number employed by sector and the proportion estimated to be able to work remotely, Newry, Mourne & Down, 2020

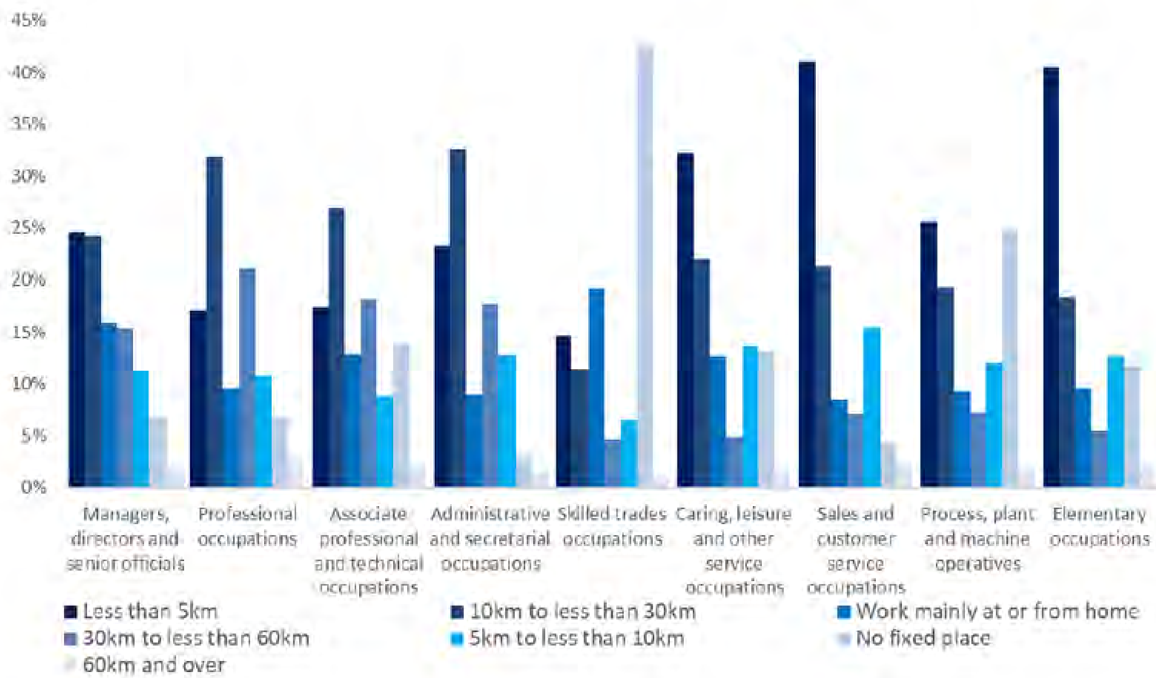
Source: Dingel & Newman and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 33: Employment by occupation in Newry, Mourne & Down and the % of the occupation group working from home, UK, 2019



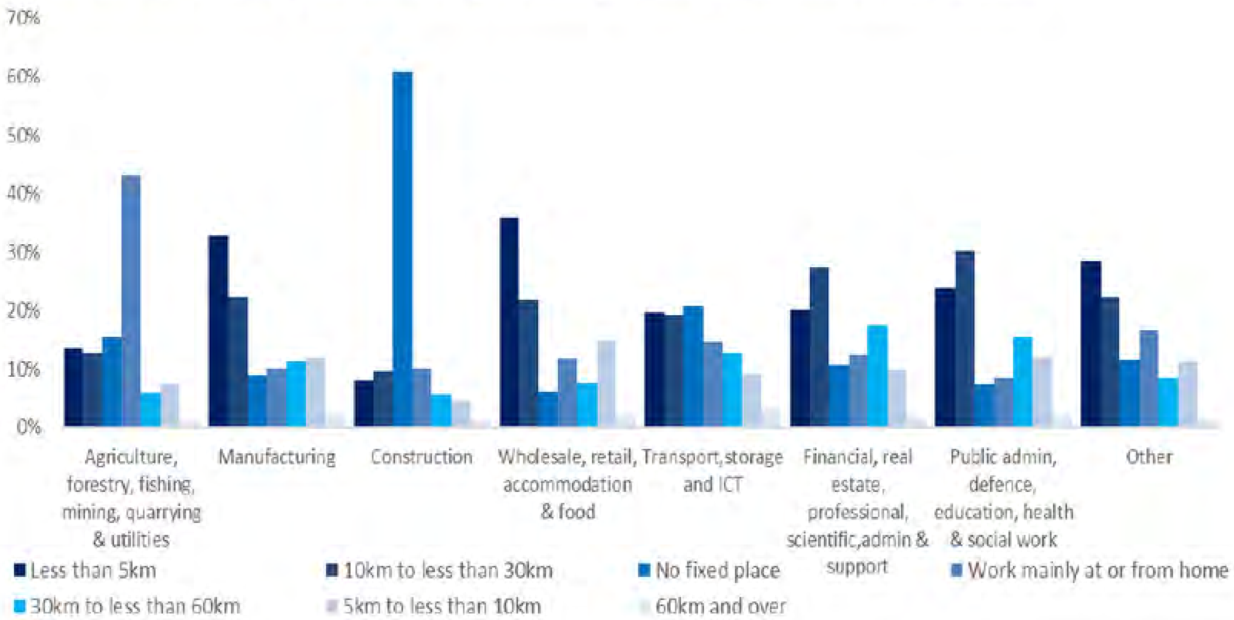
Source: NISRA, ONS, UUEPC analysis

Figure 34: Commuting distances by occupation, Newry, Mourne & Down, 2011



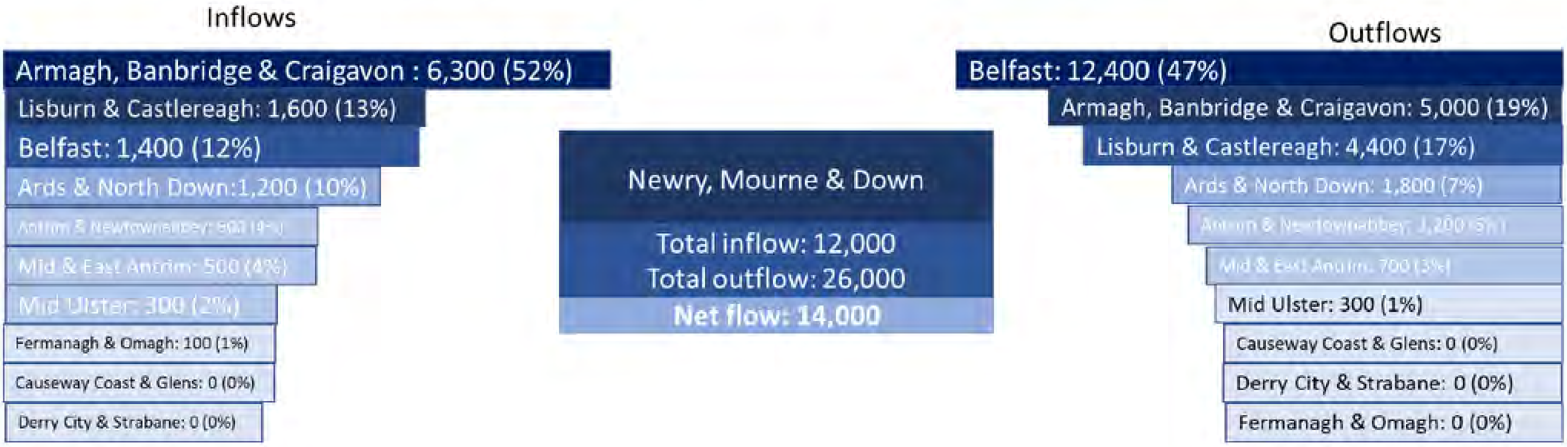
Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 35: Commuting distances by industry, Newry, Mourne & Down, 2011



Source: Census 2011, NISRA and UUEPC Analysis

Figure 36: Estimated commuting flows, Newry, Mourne & Down, 2020



UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey Results, Newry, Mourne & Down, June 2021

How often employees are currently working from home

	Newry, Mourne & Down,	NI average
0 days per week	6%	7%
1-2 days per week	9%	10%
3-4 days per week	26%	26%
5+ days per week	59%	57%

Whether employees want to return to the office

	Newry, Mourne & Down,	NI average
Yes	8%	15%
No	19%	15%
Only on a hybrid basis	73%	70%

How often employees would like to work remotely after Covid-19 if they were allowed to set their own working patterns

	Newry, Mourne & Down,	NI average
Don't want to work remotely	2%	5%
1-3 days per month	5%	5%
1-2 days per week	23%	32%
3-4 days per week	48%	44%
5 days per week	22%	14%

Whether employees would be interested in using remote 'hubs' or dedicated office space when working remotely in the future

	Newry, Mourne & Down,	NI average
Yes, in a remote working hub located in nearest town centre	17%	12%
Yes, in a remote working hub dedicated to my part of the organisation	23%	21%
No, I am only interested in working from home	60%	67%

Source: UUEPC Commuting and Remote Working Survey and UUEPC Analysis

About UUEPC

UUEPC is an independent research centre focused on producing evidence-based research to inform policy development and implementation. It engages with all organisations that have an interest in enhancing the Northern Ireland economy. The UUEPC's work is relevant to Government, business and the wider public with the aim of engaging those who may previously have been disengaged from economic debate.

Contact Us

Senior Economist: Dr Eoin Magennis

e.magennis@ulster.ac.uk

Assistant Economist: Anastasia Desmond

a.desmond@ulster.ac.uk

Centre Administrator: Danielle McKee

d.mckee@ulster.ac.uk

Ulster University Economic Policy Centre

economicpolicycentre@ulster.ac.uk

(028) 90 3 66561

@UlsterUniEPC

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/epc