Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

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August 29th, 2025

Chairperson: Councillor C Kemp

Vice Chairperson: Councillor J Harpur

Aldermen: J Baird, A G Ewart MBE, M Gregg and A McIntyre

Councillors: K Dickson, J Gallen, A Gowan, J Laverty BEM, D Lynch, U Mackin, A Martin, C McCready and T Mitchell

Ex-Officio: The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Alderman A Grehan
Deputy Mayor, Alderman H Legge

Notice Of Meeting

A meeting of the Regeneration and Growth Committee will take place on **Thursday, 4th September 2025** at **6:00 pm** in the **Council Chamber and Remote Locations** for the transaction of business on the undernoted agenda.

A hot buffet will be available in the Members Suite from 5.15 pm for those Members who have confirmed in advance.

DAVID BURNS
Chief Executive
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Agenda

1.0 APOLOGIES

2.0 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

3.0 REPORT FROM HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Balmoral Show

For Decision

1. Balmoral Show.pdf ***Page 1***

Appendix 1a Balmoral Show 2025 Evaluation v2.pdf ***Page 4***

Appendix 1b Balmoral Show -Tourism Events Equality policy EQ.pdf ***Page 10***

Appendix 1c Rural needs Impact assessment for events and event grants 2025.pdf ***Page 25***

3.2 Tourist Operator Familiarisation Trip Programme

For Decision

2. Tourist Operator Familiarisation Trip.pdf ***Page 34***

Appendix 2a Familiarisation Trip - 2025 Evaluation.pdf ***Page 36***

Appendix 2b Familiarisation Trip - Tourism Events Equality policy EQ.pdf ***Page 40***

Appendix 2c Rural needs Impact assessment for events and event grants 2025.pdf ***Page 55***

3.3 Department for the Economy (DfE) Sub Regional Plan – Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Update

3. Sub-Regional Plan Comm Item - LEP Update.pdf ***Page 64***

Appendix 3a LEP ITEM - FINAL LCCC Local Economic Partnership ToR Mar2025.pdf ***Page 69***

Appendix 3b LEP ITEM - LEP Minutes 24.06.25.pdf ***Page 72***

Appendix 3c Final LEP Minutes & Presentation 14.08.2025-combined.pdf ***Page 75***

Appendix 3d LEP ITEM - Annex B MOU Regional Balance Fund DfE Councils.pdf ***Page 96***

Appendix 3e LEP ITEM - Letter from Minister-Regional Balance Fund-Jan2025.pdf ***Page 114***

Appendix 3f LEP ITEM - APPENDIX -DFE Interim-Comfort Letter reStaffing Costs - June2025.pdf ***Page 117***

4.0 REPORT FROM HEAD OF ASSETS

4.1 Lambeg Turning Head

For Decision

4. Lambeg Turning Head.pdf ***Page 118***

Appendix 4a Turning Head Deadwall Plantation.pdf ***Page 120***

Appendix 4b CO402346A-AMY-GEN-XX-DR-CH-001-01.pdf ***Page 121***

5.0 REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & GROWTH

5.1 Rescheduling of date of January and February 2026 Committees

For Decision

5. Change of date for Jan & Feb 2026 R&G Committees.pdf ***Page 122***

6.0 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & GROWTH

6.1 Small Settlements update and additional funding request

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

4) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council or a Government Department and employees of, or office holders under, the Council.

1Confd Small Settlements Projects Update.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 1a - Small Settlements update by project.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 1b Main Street- Glenavy.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 1c Glenavy Main Street Pedestrian Crossing - Consultation Feedback.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 1d - Small Settlements Regeneration Programme - Equality Screening.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 1e - Small Settlements Regeneration Programme - Rural Needs Impact Assessment.pdf ***Not included***

6.2 Business Case for Wooden Huts (including purchase, maintenance, installation and storage)

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3)Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

2Confd Business case for Wooden Huts.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 2a Revenue_Business_Case_30k_to_250k_- Wooden Huts 25-28 Amended180825 YB.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 2b - Procurement of Wooden Huts - Equality Screening.pdf ***Not included***

6.3 Saintfield Road Roundabout Public Art Proposal

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3)Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

3Confd Saintfield Road Roundabout Public Art Proposal.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 3a - Saintfield Road Roundabout Public Art Proposal - Equality Screening.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 3b - Saintfield Road Roundabout Public Art Proposal - Rural Needs Impact Assessment.pdf ***Not included***

6.4 On-Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme (ORCS) - Update

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3)Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

4Confd On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) - Update.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 4a NI EV Consortium Concession Agreement - Final 14.08.2025.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 4b Concession Agreement Form of Licence 14.08.25.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 4c On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme - Table of chargepoint locations 190825.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 4d On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme - Maps of chargepoint locations.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 4e On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme - ORCS Equality Screening.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 4f - ORCS Rural Needs Impact Assessment.pdf	***Not included***

6.5 Maghaberry Green Spaces

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

5Confd Maghaberry Green Spaces Report.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 5a Maghaberry Green Spaces.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 5b Maghaberry--a4 map.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 5c Land at Maghaberry Community Centre, Maghaberry - 22-08-24 (MSM) (DRAFT).pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 5d Updated_S75_Equality__GR_Screening_Maghaberry Open Spaces.pdf	***Not included***

6.6 Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields Development Site

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3)Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

6Confd QE 2 Development Site.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 6a - Agreement for lease - Canal Boxing Club.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 6b - LEASE to Canal Boxing Club.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 6c - Equailty Screen QE II Playing Fields Dev Site.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 6d - QE II Site RNIA.pdf ***Not included***

6.7 Bradford Court

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3)Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

7Confd Bradford Court.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 7a Bradford Court CMT NIO.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 7b NIO Floor Plans.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 7c FInal HOT's - OB & PF Inquiry 6 August 2025.pdf ***Not included***

6.8 Longstone Street Car Park

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

8Confd Longstone Street.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 8a LongstoneStreetCarpark-Asset Map.pdf ***Not included***

Appendix 8b Draft 25-501189-VAL-Longstone Street Car Park, Lisburn-150825.pdf ***Not included***

6.9 Agreement in principle on Land Transfer

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

9Confd R&G Report re Land Transfer.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 9a - Map Dundonald.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 9b - Proposal Longstone & Moat Park Proposal_Ver 1.pdf	***Not included***

6.10 Disposal of Derriaghy Primary School

For Decision

Local Government Act (NI) 2014 – Schedule 6 - Access to Information : Exempt Information

3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

10Confd Derriaghy PS.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 10a Derriaghy Primary School.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 10b Valuation report - The Site of the Former Derriaghy Primary School.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 10c Leo Matheson SPV.pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 10d Derriaghy Community Centre-a3 dwg-CC 01 OPTION A..pdf	***Not included***
Appendix 10e Derriaghy Community Centre-a3 dwg-SH 02 OPTION A..pdf	***Not included***

7.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth
Date:	4 September 2025
Report from:	Head of Economic Development

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Balmoral Show

1.0 **Background**

1. For the 2025 Balmoral Show, the Council broadened its focus beyond food and drink to promote Lisburn & Castlereagh as a comprehensive tourism destination. This strategic shift was supported by an increased budget and aimed to highlight the area's accommodation, attractions, retail, and local produce.

2. The Council's stand, located in a prime position within the Annex Building beside the Main Hall, benefitted from high footfall and dual entrances, which enhanced visibility and airflow. The professionally fitted space featured custom graphics, lighting, and a welcoming layout that included external floral displays and branding.

3. A central hospitality area provided refreshments from local producers and acted as a hub for networking and meetings. Surrounding this were 28 local businesses, each showcased at individual podiums.

4. A launch event on the opening day welcomed Elected Members, traders and guests, while VIP visits — including the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, MLAs, and the NI Communities Minister — further enhanced the profile of the stand.

Key Issues

1. Attached (**see Appendix**) is the 2025 Balmoral Show Evaluation, which discusses visitor and exhibitor engagement and outlines the participating traders, lessons learnt and recommendations for future participation.

2. The recommendations are set out below:

   - Maintain Destination Focus: Continue positioning the Council area as a comprehensive tourism destination, highlighting accommodation, attractions, retail, and local produce.

   - Retain Key Features: Preserve successful elements such as the central hospitality area, the public competition and a diverse mix of participating businesses, as well as the visual presentations.

   - Enhance Visitor Conversation: Explore live booking options or digital tools to enable real-time engagement with local accommodation and experience providers.

	• Review Trader Contributions: Consider a modest increase in trader fees to support cost recovery, while ensuring participation remains accessible for local businesses. • Improve Visual Presentation: Refresh stand design to enhance visual storytelling, including potential themed zones to better engage visitors and traders alike, using as much existing material as possible. • Strengthen Collaboration with RUAS: Share trader feedback with RUAS to support ongoing partnership development, especially so as to seek permission for exhibitors to trade within agreed terms with the Council on their stands. • Frontage and accessibility to the stand to be enhanced especially entrance and egress pathway to be clear to visitors. 5. It is proposed that, in line with budget allocation, the Council prepares for the 2026 Balmoral Show incorporating as many of the enhancements outlined above as possible.	
2.0	**Recommendation** It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees: 1. To note the 2025 Balmoral Show Evaluation. 2. To the recommendations as highlighted above for to take forward a 2026 stand at the Balmoral Show in line with budget allocation.	
3.0	**Finance and Resource Implications** To be included in the 2026/2027 Economic Development budget estimates.	
4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out on the proposal/project/policy?	Yes
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out LCCC does not anticipate that the Policy will impact adversely on any Section 75 group, but rather promote equality of opportunity and good relations. Applicants will be made aware of Council's expectations around equality and good relations and the need to ensure that events are successful, not only in terms of meeting business objectives but in supporting equality and good relations objectives.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

	Economic development initiatives such as the Integrated Marketing Campaign and the marketing carried out by Visit Belfast on the Council's behalf will benefit the local rural population and visitors to the area as well as the urban areas. These projects will contribute towards the Council's overall strategic objective of increasing economic development in the L&CCC area for the benefit of all citizens.

Appendices:	Appendix 1a – 2025 Balmoral Show Evaluation Appendix 1b - Equality/Good Relations Screening Appendix 1c – Rural Needs Assessment

Balmoral Show 2025 Evaluation

you're welcome

Lisburn & Castlereagh

1.Background

In previous years, the Council's focus at the Balmoral Show centred primarily on promoting the local Food and Drink sector. For 2025, it was agreed to broaden the scope to showcase the entire Lisburn & Castlereagh area as a vibrant tourism destination. This strategic change was accompanied by an increased budget and a commitment to raise the profile of the area's retail, accommodation, attractions, and food and drink offerings.

The Council stand was located in a prominent position within the Annex Building, adjacent to the Main Hall and directly on a high-footfall thoroughfare. Measuring 26m x 11m, the stand benefited from dual entrances that increased visibility, enhanced ventilation during the warm weather, and supported easy visitor flow throughout the event.

The professionally fitted stand featured a shell scheme with custom graphics, lighting, and carpeting. External dressing included two branded towers, a tractor-shaped floral display designed by the Parks and Amenities team, and decorative planters provided by Hillmount Garden Centre, which created an inviting entrance.

At the heart of the stand was a branded reception and meeting area offering refreshments from local producers — Johnsons Coffee, Suki Tea, Café Vic Ryn, and The Daily Apron. This hub allowed for networking, informal meetings, and rest breaks for traders and Elected Members. Surrounding this area, 28 local businesses each had their own dedicated podium space to showcase their products and services.

A launch event on Day 1 brought together Elected Members, exhibitors, and invited guests, and the stand was subsequently visited by several VIP groups, including the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), facilitated by RUAS.



2. Marketing & Promotional Activity

A range of marketing activities supported the event presence:

Website Linkage: A direct accommodation link from the official Balmoral Show website to www.visitlisburncastlereagh.com ensured visitors were directed to local providers. Feedback indicates this was highly effective in generating bookings.

Video Content: Footage from across the four days was produced and shared on social media platforms to generate engagement and showcase the stand.

Social Media Campaign: Promotion began in the run-up to the Show and continued throughout the event. Regular posts invited the public to visit the stand and enter the competition.

Visitor Competition: An on-stand competition offering eight local prizes incentivised engagement. Entry was via completion of a short survey, resulting in 294 new contacts for the Council's tourism marketing database.



3. Visitor and Exhibitor Engagement

Two surveys were conducted to gauge impact:

Public Survey: Visitors to the marquee were encouraged to complete a short survey. Feedback was generally positive, with strong appreciation for the information provided about the wider Council area.

Exhibitor Feedback: Post-event feedback was gathered from participating businesses and again responses were excellent, raising awareness of their offering to an audience of over 120,000 visitors over the course of the event.

Trader Rotation: Some businesses noted limited footfall during quieter periods. A revised site plan may permit businesses to have an area that gets more footfall on a rotational basis.

On-Site Wi-Fi Reliability: Some exhibitors reported intermittent Wi-Fi connectivity, limiting card payment or promotional activities. This should be reviewed with providers in advance to the Show next year.

Traders' comments included:

- "It was an absolutely perfect location, cooler that the main hall in the hot sun, and with a lot of through traffic. I obtained 120 leads through my competition" – Helen McDaniel Photography.
- "The entire event was well organised with a representative from the Council available at all times" - Bay Tree Cottage.
- "LCCC are fantastic at working and exposing local businesses and attractions in the area" – The Plough Inn.
- 92% of businesses reported having business leads from the show.

4. Participating Traders

A total of 28 businesses participated over the four days:

Bay Tree Cottage, Cocktail Keg Company, Funtastic, Haslem Hotel, Helen McDaniel photography, Hinch Distillery, Historic Royal Palaces, Ispini Charcuterie, Jeffers Bakery, La Mon Hotel, Lisburn Photography, Lisnacurran Collection, McCalls Menswear Mud Ireland, Oasis Travel,	Rosies Emporium, Seymour Dougan, Smyth Patterson, Steeper Culture, Temple Golf Club, The Plough Inn, Johnsons Coffee, Suki Tea, Roger Wilson Interiors & Flatfield/Clocktower Cottages, Oasis Travel, Hillmount Garden Centre, Economic Development/ Go Succeed, Labour Market Partnership

Lisburn Chamber of Commerce was invited to participate however declined.





5. Lessons Learnt

Broader scope proved successful: Expanding from a food-and-drink focus to a comprehensive tourism showcase significantly increased engagement, allowing a wider representation of local businesses and amenities.

Strategic Stand Location: The high-traffic corner site with dual entrances proved ideal for exposure, access, and climate comfort, and should be requested again if available.

Partnerships Enhance Visibility: Collaboration with RUAS enabled high-profile visits and lent credibility to the stand. High-profile visitor included the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn and the NIO Junior Minister, Aisling Reilly, and Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons.

Effective Use of Incentivised Surveys: The visitor competition proved to be a highly effective tool for both engagement and data capture. By linking entry to the completion of a short survey, the Council was able to gather valuable visitor insights while simultaneously growing its tourism marketing database. A total of 294 new contacts were generated through this mechanism, offering a strong return on a relatively low-cost activity.



6. Recommendations for 2026

Repeat the Destination Focus: Continue promoting the Council area as a holistic destination including accommodation, attractions, retail, and local produce.

Retain Core Features: Keep the central hospitality space for meetings but reduce the scale slightly to allow more space for participating businesses. the competition element, and a mix of businesses across sectors.

Introduce Booking Capability: Consider a live booking station/ digital opportunities to accommodation or experience providers to drive immediate visitor conversion.

Seek Increased Trader Contribution: Explore modestly increasing trader fees to offset overall costs, while maintaining affordability.

Visual Impact: While professional, the interior graphics could benefit from a refreshed design with stronger visual storytelling and potentially themed zones.

Frontage and accessibility to the stand to be enhanced especially entrance and egress pathway to be clear to visitors.

Trader feedback regarding infrastructure to be shared with the team at RUAS.





8. Conclusion

Participation at the 2025 Balmoral Show was a strong success for the Council and local businesses. The expanded approach helped promote the area's full tourism and hospitality offering, generated significant public engagement, and strengthened relationships with key stakeholders including RUAS, traders, and tourism providers.

The initiative delivered positive outcomes and strong brand exposure for the Council and should be considered again for 2026, with the incorporation of the lessons and improvements outlined above.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened

Name of the activity/policy/project

Tourism Events

Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?

An existing policy?		A revised policy?	**x**	A new policy?	

What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?

The Economic Development Unit within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is involved in a number of distinct areas of operation aimed at developing prosperity throughout Lisburn and Castlereagh. This is achieved through creating opportunity, supporting local businesses and encouraging new investment. The Council recognises the importance of economic development initiatives to drive forward the local economy across the region and the Unit has played a pivotal role in securing significant investment.

It delivers its services through four sub-units: -

1. Business Solutions
2. Regeneration
3. Tourism
4. Rural Development

Tourism Events Support Policy – Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for supporting and facilitating tourism-focused events across the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area. These events play an important role in attracting visitors, promoting local culture and heritage, and contributing to the regional economy.

Support is available through two levels of Council assistance, aligned to the scale and reach of the event:

- **Major Tourism Events** – support of up to £10,000
- **Smaller Tourism Events** – support of up to £1,000

The number of supported events may vary from year to year, depending on available resources and alignment with Council priorities.

This policy provides a structured approach for assessing and approving requests for support through the relevant Council initiatives. Key principles underpinning the process include accountability, equality, value for money, and contribution to the local economy.

Smaller-scale support is typically directed at locally-led events with community or heritage value — for example, the Table Tennis Championships or the Harry Ferguson Lectures. Larger-scale support is focused on events with wider visitor appeal and extended duration, such as the Festival of Racing or the Balmoral Championships.

Through this policy, the Council continues its commitment to nurturing a vibrant calendar of tourism events across the area, in line with the priorities set out in the **LCCC Tourism Strategy 2025–2030**.

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

This policy is intended to attract applications from a wide range of organisations representative of all Section 75 categories. It therefore has the potential to benefit all groups. In the past, groups representing women, older people and children have benefitted and events that have attracted all sections of the community have been supported.

This policy will be open equally and be accessible to all organisations in the participating council area.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Tourism Development Unit of LCC

Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?

Owned by LCCC Service Transformation Directorate; implemented by the Tourism Development Unit

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

Financial - The delivery of the Tourism Events policy will be dependent on the annual budget estimates process. Some activity may be curtailed should budgets be tightened.

Legal - Tourism development is a non-essential service.

Other - Tourism Development supports economic development, generating jobs and economic wealth to the local area.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon?

Staff - LCCC staff to administer and implement the policy.

Service users - Local businesses & organisations; wide range of local and out of state visitors.

Other public sector organisations: Tourism NI, Forest Service NI, DAERA etc

Voluntary/community/trade unions - All Local Voluntary and Community bodies within the LCCC area

Other - including Elected Members

Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements policy?
Community Development Plan	LCCC
Tourism Masterplan	LCCC

Tourism and Development Strategy	LCCC
Corporate Plan	LCCC
Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22	LCCC

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

The primary aim of this policy is to promote the sustainability and competitiveness of local businesses and organisations through grant funding opportunities. These grants will be available through group initiatives being delivered as part of the overall annual Economic Development Programme of activity.

We have reviewed the previous operation of the Programme and have not identified any obvious gaps or missed opportunities from local businesses and organisations.

We have looked at research relevant to the Council's economic development functions. Socio-economic research commissioned by LCCC and undertaken by Oxford Economics published its findings in June 2015. This research outlines key economic trends which have identified the need for public sector intervention at a local level across a range of areas. Examples include:

- Gaps in Business Support Provision
- Need to address the Low Value Sectoral Structure of the Local Economy
- Unemployment Levels
- Long Term Unemployment
- Skills Shortages.

The economic trends, outlined by the research, which require levels of intervention are all interlinked into the services of the department through four sub-units:

1. Business Solutions

2. Regeneration

3. Tourism

4. Programmes

We have also considered the most up to date NISRA population data from Census 2021 (published 22/09/22) Lisburn and Castlereagh Census Data

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from all sections of the community, regardless of religious beliefs.
Political Opinion	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from all sections of the community, regardless of political opinion.
Racial Group	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of racial group.
Age	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from adults regardless of age.
Marital Status	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of marital status.
Sexual Orientation	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of sexual orientation.
Men & Women Generally	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of gender.
Disability	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of disability.
People with and without Dependants	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of dependants.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 Category	**Details of needs/experiences/priorities**
Religious Belief	No different needs identified by religious belief other than the need for grant programmes to be promoted to, and applications encouraged from, all sections of the community.
Political Opinion	No different needs identified by political opinion other than the need for grant programmes to be promoted to, and applications encouraged from, all sections of the community.
Racial Group	Potential applicants from racial minorities need to be aware of Council grant programmes and may need additional support to apply, particularly if there are language barriers.
Age	The application process needs to be fully accessible to those who may not be online or additional support provided if needed.
Marital Status	No particular needs identified
Sexual Orientation	.No particular needs identified other than the need to ensure that the process is open and welcoming for all groups who may wish to apply.
Men & Women Generally	No different needs identified by gender
Disability	Information about grant programmes needs to be fully accessible for potential applicants with different disabilities. Alternative formats need to be provided

	if necessary and additional support with the application process provided where required.
People with and without Dependants	No particular needs identified for this group

Part 2. Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

The introduction of a Tourism Events Policy will have an all-inclusive approach to welcoming all Section 75 Categories.

Section 75 Category	**Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none**	**Level of impact - major or minor*** - see guidance below
Religious Belief	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Political Opinion	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Racial Group	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy	**None**

	is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	
Age	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Marital Status	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Sexual Orientation	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Men & Women Generally	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Disability	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
People with and without Dependants	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism	**None**

	Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	

2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

The different needs of each of the Section 75 categories will continue to be recognised and reflected in the distribution of resources.

The Tourism event policy is promoted on the LCCC and Visit Lisburn Castlereagh websites and is available to all sides of the community. All previous applicants are contacted annually to advise when the Major and Small grants are open for applications.

The policy already recognises that some groups may face barriers to accessing grant funding. These are addressed in the way the programme is promoted and administered. For example, information is available in electronic or paper format (to collect or be posted) and applications accepted in paper format (hand delivered or posted) or electronically via e-mail.

Procedures will be kept under review and further changes made if other issues are identified.

Section 75 Category	**IF Yes, provide details**	**If No, provide details**
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group Age Marital Status Sexual Orientation Men & Women Generally		The programme is already promoted widely to reach all sections of the community. Funding under the policy is available to those who meet the criteria, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial orientation, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

Disability People with and without Dependants		providing there is budget available.

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

No, however the policy will be kept under review to ensure that requests for information in various formats are monitored and provided across the Council, i.e. to ensure information is accessible to all.

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

• to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

• to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

No, activities conducted under this policy are available to all, regardless of Section 75 category.

3 To what extent is the activity/policy/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	**Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative?** [if no specific impact identified, say none]	**Level of impact – minor/major***
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group	The programme itself will not necessarily impact directly on good relations. However, depending on the nature of the events/activities funded, there may be opportunities for some impact. For example, if an	Minor

	organisation applies for funding to run a community based event or an event that will attract a wide range of participants from different backgrounds, there may be some incidental benefits. In previous years, there have been examples of successful cross-community events. All successful applicants will be encouraged to promote equality.	

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	**IF yes, provide details**	**If no, provide details**
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group		No opportunities identified to directly promote good relations but some successful applications may do so, depending on the nature of the event/activity that is supported.

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

We have taken into account the needs of different multiple identities in the development of the Tourism events policy. For example, children with disabilities or older people with disabilities will benefit from enhanced accessibility measures.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	**Reasons/Evidence**
Option 1 **Screen out** – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	The main reasons are: 1. No adverse impacts on any group have been identified and any incidental impacts are likely to be positive. 2. Applications are welcome from all, inclusive of the Section 75 groups 3. Procedures are in place to make the process accessible to all eg the Tourism Grant is advertised in the local press across the main newspapers and online. Applications are available online or via post and are accepted via e-mail and/or post for convenience to the applicant.

Option 2 **Screen out with mitigation** – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	N/A
Option 3 **Screen in** for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	N/A

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations? N/A

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3) N/A

If the activity/policy has been **'screened in'** for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.
Not applicable

Part 4. Monitoring

Monitoring Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007). Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development. What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency?

Please give details:
The Tourism team will be responsible for monitoring of this project that will involve logging feedback and concerns from stakeholders, community and the public when required. The Council will proactively seek feedback on the Tourism Major and Small Events policy from all those that enquire about an application for same.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	**Date**
Screened by:	Margaret McAvoy Tourism Development Officer	26/01/2025
Reviewed by: Equality Officer	Annie Wilson. Equality Officer	28/01/2025
Approved by:	Andrew Kennedy. Tourism Development Manager	28/01/2025

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Tourism Events

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Adopting a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Implementing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Revising a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	x
Designing a Public Service						
Delivering a Public Service		X				

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Tourism Events

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

The Tourism Events programme is aimed at supporting third party event organisers and Lisburn Castlereagh City Council to stage events in the Council area and in turn generate economic benefits. These events will bring varying numbers of visitor trips, bed nights, and tourism revenue to the area.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).	X
Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).	
A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.	

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

N/A

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

N/A

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

N/A

SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes [X] No [ ] If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The Tourism Events programme generates footfall hroughout the whole LCCC area.

LCCC provides space at events where businesses can showcase their produce/attraction. These events boost the area representation by putting businesses in the forefront of visitor's minds which helps to increase dwell time in the area and drive economic growth.

These events will impact on people in the rural area and will promote economic investment by:

- Increasing tourism footfall
- Increasing spend in rural areas
- Increasing visitor dwell time in rural areas
- Promoting NI businesses to locals and visitors from further afield

The rural share of the NI population is growing. Over the years 2001-2011 the number of people living in rural areas of NI increased by 15% in comparison to a rise of only 4% in urban areas. According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

Tourism is an expanding sector and is being increasingly recognized for its overall contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

The Tourism Events programme is an annual initiative aimed at driving even more visitors across the Council area. The programme inlucdes the Council Tourism Minor and Major Events Programme and is open to all event organisers, including urban and rural areas, and as such most of the events supported will be in the rural area of Council.

Events, such as Balmoral Show, which the Council provide exhibition space in is aimed at showcasing local businesses giving them the opportunity to collaborate in an attempt to redress the current imbalance of tourism dwell time in urban areas.

The sustainability and stability of businesses is very important in a rural context as these businesses sustain the local community. By engaging in the exhibition space at events businesses will have the opportunity to explore ways of increasing sales.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	X
Rural Tourism	X
Rural Housing	
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	X
Education or Training in Rural Areas	
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	
Poverty in Rural Areas	X
Deprivation in Rural Areas	X
Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Rural Development	X
Agri-Environment	
Other (Please state)	

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

N/A

SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes [X] No [ ] If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	[X]	Published Statistics	[ ]
Consultation with Other Organisations	[X]	Research Papers	[ ]
Surveys or Questionnaires	[ ]	Other Publications	[ ]
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			[ ]

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

- Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government (2016-2021)
- Northern Ireland Economic Strategy – Vision for 2030
- Tourism NI- Operating Plan
- Tourism NI – Northern Ireland Tourism Priorities for Growth
- Forest Service NI Business Plan 2014-15
- OFMDFM – Together; Building a United Community (TBUC)
- OFMDFM – Lifetime Opportunities – Government's Anti-Poverty & Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2020
- Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act
- Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan. 2015
- Hillsborough Forest Economic Appraisal. 2017
- Public consultation and survey in Hillsborough Forest. 2016
-

The Socio-economic profile and forecast, Lisburn & Castlereagh (2018-2032) identified the LCCC area as showing marked distinctions between the rural and urban populations. According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas and the population forecast is set to grow by 8,300 residents between 2018-2032 (0.4% per annum, twice that of the NI equivalent). L&CCC's population growth outlook between 2018-2032 on average will be 1.65% making it the third highest across NI districts and 0.35 points above the NI rate.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

The Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) has identified the following as key areas:

- Rural Businesses
- Rural Tourism
- Jobs or employment in rural areas
- Education or training in rural areas
- Poverty in rural areas
- Rural development
- Agri-Environment

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

N/A

SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

The annual programme will have a positive impact on the local rural business community and the Council area as a whole.

According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the LCCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth – Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).

In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area. The business base in the region as a whole is predominently small to medium enterprises with a dominance of micro business. In terms of businesses located only in rural areas, 94% are defined as micro (having less than 10 employees). Agriculture plays a more important role in the economy of NI than is the case in the rest of the UK, it generates a higher proportion of total GVA (Gross valued added) in the economy and accounts for a higher proportion of our employment. Furthermore 78% of the total NI land area is in agricultural use. Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions. The slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 14% of tourism expenditure takes place in rural areas (compared with 86% in urban) are further examples of challenges facing the small rural businesses in Northern Ireland.

In 2018 there were 4,755 VAT/PAYE registered businesses in the L&CCC area (NISRA). The close proximity to Belfast puts the L&CCC area in an advantageous position whereby the population density is a way to generate an increase in sales and revenue.

Considering that almost half of the L&CCC district is rural, the economic benefits of tourism development will be realised across all the LCCC area. Economic development initiatives such as the Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme will benefit the local rural population and visitors to the area, The programme will contribute towards the Council's overall strategic objective of increasing economic development in the L&CCC area for the benefit of all citizens.

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes [X] **No** [ ] **If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C.**

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

The synopsis of the programme has been identified in Section 2B, fully considering the needs of the rural population. There have been no detrimental impacts identified.

If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled. X

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Margaret McAvoy
Position/Grade:	Tourism Development Officer
Division/Branch	Economic Development
Signature:	MARGARET MCAVOY
Date:	16/12/2024
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Andrew Kennedy
Position/Grade:	Tourism Development Manager
Division/Branch:	Economic Development
Signature:	ANDREW KENNEDY
Date:	16/12/2024

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth
Date:	4 September 2025
Report from:	Head of Economic Development

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Tourist Operator Familiarisation Trip Programme

1.0 **Background**

1. As a follow-up to the Council's successful participation in the Westminster Business Showcase in September 2023 — which highlighted economic opportunities around Royal Hillsborough and the wider tourism and hospitality offering in Lisburn & Castlereagh — a two-day familiarisation visit was organised in February 2024 for key tour operators and tourism stakeholders from Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

2. The 2024 visit generated strong engagement and direct business for several local attractions. Hillsborough Castle has reported additional tours from two commercial tour operators, and Hinch Distillery reported new tours from one new commercial tour operator as a result. Building on this success, and recognising the value of sustained trade relationships, a second familiarisation visit was delivered in May 2025.

Key Issues

1. A two-night familiarisation trip was held from 29–31 May 2025, welcoming nine representatives from seven tour operators based in GB and ROI.

2. Attached (**see Appendix**) is the Familiarisation Trip 2025 Evaluation. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with strong praise for the quality, variety, and market-readiness of tourism experiences across the Council area. Several operators indicated their intention to include the area in future itineraries.

3. Officers will maintain ongoing engagement with participating tour operators to maximise future promotional and commercial opportunities. While many operators are planning for the 2026 season, confirmed bookings for 2025 have already been secured for attractions such as Hillsborough Castle and Hinch Distillery.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees:

1. To note the successful delivery and positive outcomes of the tour operator familiarisation visit held from 29–31 May 2025.

2. To the Council delivering this initiative on an annual basis, subject to budget availability.

3.0	**Finance and Resource Implications** To be drawn from 2025/2026 Economic Development budget estimates.	
4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out Screening has concluded that there is no need to carry out a full equality impact assessment as no negative impacts have been identified for any group.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	Yes
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out. The Fam Trip is an initiative with the aim of enticing more Tour Operators to include the LCCC area in their programmes of tours for groups and individuals. This programme will assist in redressing the current imbalance of tourism dwell time in rural and urban areas.	

Appendices:	Appendix 2a – Familiarisation Trip 2025 Evaluation Appendix 2b – Equality Screening Appendix 2c – Rural Needs Assessment

Famaliarisation Trip 2025 Evaluation

you're welcome

Lisburn & Castlereagh

Evaluation Report:
Tour Operator Familiarisation Visit – May 2025

Project Overview
Dates: Thursday 29th – Saturday 31st May 2025
Theme: Food & Drink, Luxury Tourism, and Heritage
Format: Three-day, two-night familiarisation trip
Participants: 9 representatives from 7 tour operators (GB & ROI)
Objective: To showcase the region's tourism potential — particularly its food & drink offering and heritage experiences — with a view to encouraging future tour inclusion.

Programme Summary

Day 1: Arrival & Welcome

- Late afternoon hotel check-in at Haslem Hotel, Lisburn
- Evening visit to Mud Ireland, followed by welcome dinner at Wine & Brine, Moira
- Informal networking with Council representatives and trade partners.





Day 2: Full-Day Touring

- Morning visit to Hillsborough Castle and Gardens, including Hillsborough Fort Guard presentation
- Lunch at The Plough Inn, Royal Hillsborough
- Afternoon visits to Larchfield Estate and Hinch Distillery (tour and tasting)
- Evening meal at Era Restaurant followed by an immersive Irish Coffee and storytelling experience









Day 3: Heritage and Market Experience

- Morning tour of Irish Linen Museum, Lisburn
- Visit to Royal Hillsborough Farmers' Market
- Final engagement: Hillsborough Fort Guard investiture event
- Delegates transferred to airport/train stations





Successes and Outcomes
Strong Engagement: All participants remained engaged throughout the trip and praised the quality of experiences. The blend of high-end food, cultural heritage, and storytelling proved particularly impactful.

Positive Feedback: Verbal and written feedback highlighted Hillsborough Castle, Hinch Distillery, and the Irish Coffee storytelling session as standouts. Several operators commented on the region's authenticity and suitability for both coach groups and smaller bespoke tours.

Immediate Outcomes:
Two operators have already confirmed inclusion of Hillsborough Castle and Hinch Distillery in itineraries for late 2025. One operator expressed interest in packaging a "Taste of Lisburn & Castlereagh" tour themed around food provenance and craftsmanship.

New Relationships Built: The presence of Council officers and tourism partners during meals and site visits allowed for natural relationship-building and detailed destination Q&A.

Key Strengths
Well-Curated Itinerary: The balance of immersive experiences, high-quality hospitality, and heritage delivered a memorable and diverse showcase.

Strategic Partner Involvement: The involvement of representatives from Visit Belfast and key hospitality providers added value and credibility.

Smooth Logistics: All transfers, meals, and engagements ran to schedule, contributing to a seamless experience.

Areas for Improvement
Time at Farmers' Market: Feedback suggested slightly more time at the Farmers' Market would allow for greater interaction with local producers.

Digital Follow-Up: Immediate post-trip digital materials (e.g. image bank, supplier contacts, suggested itineraries) should be standardised for timely follow-up.

Next Steps
Officers will continue to follow up with participating tour operators to:

- Provide promotional assets and itinerary support
- Track inclusion of the destination in brochures and group programmes
- Offer trade-ready contacts for accommodation, venues, and experiences

Conclusion
The May 2025 Familiarisation Visit successfully showcased Lisburn & Castlereagh as a high-quality destination for heritage- and food-focused group tours. The combination of immersive cultural programming, high-standard hospitality, and proactive engagement has laid a strong foundation for future business development and inclusion in 2026 travel programming.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template

Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened

Name of the activity/policy/project

Tourism Events

Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?

An existing policy?		A revised policy?	**x**	A new policy?	

What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?

The Tourism Events Support Policy provides a framework for facilitating and supporting tourism-focused events within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area. These events are vital for attracting visitors, promoting local culture and heritage, and boosting the regional economy. In addition to this policy, the Tourism team also organizes Familiarisation Trips to showcase the area's offerings.

It delivers its services through four sub-units: -

1. Business Solutions
2. Regeneration
3. Tourism
4. Rural Development

Tourism Events Support Policy – Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for supporting and facilitating tourism-focused events across the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area. These events play an important role in attracting visitors, promoting local culture and heritage, and contributing to the regional economy.

Support is available through two levels of Council assistance, aligned to the scale and reach of the event:

- **Major Tourism Events** – support of up to £10,000
- **Smaller Tourism Events** – support of up to £1,000

The number of supported events may vary from year to year, depending on available resources and alignment with Council priorities.

This policy provides a structured approach for assessing and approving requests for support through the relevant Council initiatives. Key principles underpinning the process include accountability, equality, value for money, and contribution to the local economy.

Smaller-scale support is typically directed at locally-led events with community or heritage value — for example, the Table Tennis Championships or the Harry Ferguson Lectures. Larger-scale support is focused on events with wider visitor appeal and extended duration, such as the Festival of Racing or the Balmoral Championships.

Through this policy, the Council continues its commitment to nurturing a vibrant calendar of tourism events across the area, in line with the priorities set out in the **LCCC Tourism Strategy 2025–2030**.

Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.

This policy is intended to attract applications from a wide range of organisations representative of all Section 75 categories. It therefore has the potential to benefit all groups. In the past, groups representing women, older people and children have benefitted and events that have attracted all sections of the community have been supported.

This policy will be open equally and be accessible to all organisations in the participating council area.

Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?

Tourism Development Unit of LCC

Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?

Owned by LCCC Service Transformation Directorate; implemented by the Tourism Development Unit

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?

If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.

Financial - The delivery of the Tourism Events policy will be dependent on the annual budget estimates process. Some activity may be curtailed should budgets be tightened.

Legal - Tourism development is a non-essential service.

Other - Tourism Development supports economic development, generating jobs and economic wealth to the local area.

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon?

Staff - LCCC staff to administer and implement the policy.

Service users - Local businesses & organisations; wide range of local and out of state visitors.

Other public sector organisations: Tourism NI, Forest Service NI, DAERA etc

Voluntary/community/trade unions - All Local Voluntary and Community bodies within the LCCC area

Other - including Elected Members

Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project

Name of policy/strategy/plan	Who owns or implements policy?
Community Development Plan	LCCC
Tourism Masterplan	LCCC
Tourism and Development Strategy	LCCC
Corporate Plan	LCCC

Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2021-22	LCCC

Available evidence

What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.

The primary aim of this policy is to promote the sustainability and competitiveness of local businesses and organisations through grant funding opportunities. These grants will be available through group initiatives being delivered as part of the overall annual Economic Development Programme of activity.

We have reviewed the previous operation of the Programme and have not identified any obvious gaps or missed opportunities from local businesses and organisations.

We have looked at research relevant to the Council's economic development functions. Socio-economic research commissioned by LCCC and undertaken by Oxford Economics published its findings in June 2015. This research outlines key economic trends which have identified the need for public sector intervention at a local level across a range of areas. Examples include:

- Gaps in Business Support Provision
- Need to address the Low Value Sectoral Structure of the Local Economy
- Unemployment Levels
- Long Term Unemployment
- Skills Shortages.

The economic trends, outlined by the research, which require levels of intervention are all interlinked into the services of the department through four sub-units:

1. Business Solutions
2. Regeneration
3. Tourism

4. Programmes

We have also considered the most up to date NISRA population data from Census 2021 (published 22/09/22) Lisburn and Castlereagh Census Data

Section 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from all sections of the community, regardless of religious beliefs.
Political Opinion	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from all sections of the community, regardless of political opinion.
Racial Group	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of racial group.
Age	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications from adults regardless of age.
Marital Status	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of marital status.
Sexual Orientation	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of sexual orientation.
Men & Women Generally	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of gender.
Disability	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of disability.
People with and without Dependants	Based on previous years, we are likely to receive applications regardless of dependants.

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

Section 75 Category	**Details of needs/experiences/priorities**
Religious Belief	No different needs identified by religious belief other than the need for grant programmes to be promoted to, and applications encouraged from, all sections of the community.
Political Opinion	No different needs identified by political opinion other than the need for grant programmes to be promoted to, and applications encouraged from, all sections of the community.
Racial Group	Potential applicants from racial minorities need to be aware of Council grant programmes and may need additional support to apply, particularly if there are language barriers.
Age	The application process needs to be fully accessible to those who may not be online or additional support provided if needed.
Marital Status	No particular needs identified
Sexual Orientation	.No particular needs identified other than the need to ensure that the process is open and welcoming for all groups who may wish to apply.
Men & Women Generally	No different needs identified by gender
Disability	Information about grant programmes needs to be fully accessible for potential applicants with different disabilities. Alternative formats need to be provided if necessary and additional support with the application process provided where required.
People with and without Dependants	No particular needs identified for this group

Part 2. Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

The introduction of a Tourism Events Policy will have an all-inclusive approach to welcoming all Section 75 Categories.

Section 75 Category	**Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none**	**Level of impact - major or minor*** - see guidance below
Religious Belief	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Political Opinion	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Racial Group	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Age	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy	**None**

	is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	
Marital Status	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Sexual Orientation	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Men & Women Generally	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
Disability	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**
People with and without Dependants	No impact for majority of visitors coming into Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Tourism Major and Small Events policy is striving to be inclusive for all, wherever possible.	**None**

2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

The different needs of each of the Section 75 categories will continue to be recognised and reflected in the distribution of resources.

The Tourism event policy is promoted on the LCCC and Visit Lisburn Castlereagh websites and is available to all sides of the community. All previous applicants are contacted annually to advise when the Major and Small grants are open for applications.

The policy already recognises that some groups may face barriers to accessing grant funding. These are addressed in the way the programme is promoted and administered. For example, information is available in electronic or paper format (to collect or be posted) and applications accepted in paper format (hand delivered or posted) or electronically via e-mail.

Procedures will be kept under review and further changes made if other issues are identified.

Section 75 Category	**IF Yes, provide details**	**If No, provide details**
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group Age Marital Status Sexual Orientation Men & Women Generally Disability People with and without Dependants		The programme is already promoted widely to reach all sections of the community. Funding under the policy is available to those who meet the criteria, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial orientation, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. providing there is budget available.

Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the Equality Action Plan 2021-2025? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

No, however the policy will be kept under review to ensure that requests for information in various formats are monitored and provided across the Council, i.e. to ensure information is accessible to all.

2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our Disability Action Plan:

• to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

• to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

No, activities conducted under this policy are available to all, regardless of Section 75 category.

3 To what extent is the activity/policy/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	**Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative?** [if no specific impact identified, say none]	**Level of impact – minor/major***
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group	The programme itself will not necessarily impact directly on good relations. However, depending on the nature of the events/activities funded, there may be opportunities for some impact. For example, if an organisation applies for funding to run a community based event or an event that will attract a wide range of participants from different backgrounds, there may be some incidental benefits. In previous	Minor

	years, there have been examples of successful cross-community events. All successful applicants will be encouraged to promote equality.	

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	IF yes, provide details	If no, provide details
Religious Belief Political Opinion Racial Group		No opportunities identified to directly promote good relations but some successful applications may do so, depending on the nature of the event/activity that is supported.

Multiple identity

Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

We have taken into account the needs of different multiple identities in the development of the Tourism events policy. For example, children with disabilities or older people with disabilities will benefit from enhanced accessibility measures.

Part 3. Screening decision/outcome

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

1) **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
2) **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
3) **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

Choose only one of these and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

Screening Decision/Outcome	**Reasons/Evidence**
Option 1 **Screen out** – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section]	The main reasons are: 1. No adverse impacts on any group have been identified and any incidental impacts are likely to be positive. 2. Applications are welcome from all, inclusive of the Section 75 groups 3. Procedures are in place to make the process accessible to all eg the Tourism Grant is advertised in the local press across the main newspapers and online. Applications are available online or via post and are accepted via e-mail and/or post for convenience to the applicant.

Option 2 **Screen out with mitigation** – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below]	N/A
Option 3 **Screen in** for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below]	N/A

Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)

Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations? N/A

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3) N/A

If the activity/policy has been **'screened in'** for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.
Not applicable

Part 4. Monitoring

Monitoring Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007). Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development. What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency?

Please give details:
The Tourism team will be responsible for monitoring of this project that will involve logging feedback and concerns from stakeholders, community and the public when required. The Council will proactively seek feedback on the Tourism Major and Small Events policy from all those that enquire about an application for same.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	**Date**
Screened by:	Margaret McAvoy Tourism Development Officer	26/01/2025
Reviewed by: Equality Officer	Annie Wilson. Equality Officer	28/01/2025
Approved by:	Andrew Kennedy. Tourism Development Manager	28/01/2025

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

- approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
- included with Committee reports, as appropriate
- sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
- shared with relevant colleagues
- made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Tourism Events

1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Adopting a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Implementing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Revising a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	x
Designing a Public Service						
Delivering a Public Service		X				

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Tourism Events

1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

The Tourism Events programme is aimed at supporting third party event organisers and Lisburn Castlereagh City Council to stage events in the Council area and in turn generate economic benefits. These events will bring varying numbers of visitor trips, bed nights, and tourism revenue to the area.

1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).	X
Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).	
A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.	

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

N/A

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

N/A

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

N/A

SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes [X] No [ ] If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The Tourism Events programme generates footfall hroughout the whole LCCC area.

LCCC provides space at events where businesses can showcase their produce/attraction. These events boost the area representation by putting businesses in the forefront of visitor's minds which helps to increase dwell time in the area and drive economic growth.

These events will impact on people in the rural area and will promote economic investment by:

- Increasing tourism footfall
- Increasing spend in rural areas
- Increasing visitor dwell time in rural areas
- Promoting NI businesses to locals and visitors from further afield

The rural share of the NI population is growing. Over the years 2001-2011 the number of people living in rural areas of NI increased by 15% in comparison to a rise of only 4% in urban areas. According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban

2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

Tourism is an expanding sector and is being increasingly recognized for its overall contribution to the Northern Ireland economy.

The Tourism Events programme is an annual initiative aimed at driving even more visitors across the Council area. The programme inlucdes the Council Tourism Minor and Major Events Programme and is open to all event organisers, including urban and rural areas, and as such most of the events supported will be in the rural area of Council.

Events, such as Balmoral Show, which the Council provide exhibition space in is aimed at showcasing local businesses giving them the opportunity to collaborate in an attempt to redress the current imbalance of tourism dwell time in urban areas.

The sustainability and stability of businesses is very important in a rural context as these businesses sustain the local community. By engaging in the exhibition space at events businesses will have the opportunity to explore ways of increasing sales.

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

Rural Businesses	X
Rural Tourism	X
Rural Housing	
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	X
Education or Training in Rural Areas	
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	
Poverty in Rural Areas	X
Deprivation in Rural Areas	X
Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Rural Development	X
Agri-Environment	
Other (Please state)	

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

N/A

SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

Yes [X] No [ ] If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	[X]	Published Statistics	[ ]
Consultation with Other Organisations	[X]	Research Papers	[ ]
Surveys or Questionnaires	[ ]	Other Publications	[ ]
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			[ ]

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

- Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government (2016-2021)
- Northern Ireland Economic Strategy – Vision for 2030
- Tourism NI- Operating Plan
- Tourism NI – Northern Ireland Tourism Priorities for Growth
- Forest Service NI Business Plan 2014-15
- OFMDFM – Together; Building a United Community (TBUC)
- OFMDFM – Lifetime Opportunities – Government's Anti-Poverty & Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2020
- Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act
- Hillsborough Tourism Master Plan. 2015
- Hillsborough Forest Economic Appraisal. 2017
- Public consultation and survey in Hillsborough Forest. 2016
-

The Socio-economic profile and forecast, Lisburn & Castlereagh (2018-2032) identified the LCCC area as showing marked distinctions between the rural and urban populations. According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas and the population forecast is set to grow by 8,300 residents between 2018-2032 (0.4% per annum, twice that of the NI equivalent). L&CCC's population growth outlook between 2018-2032 on average will be 1.65% making it the third highest across NI districts and 0.35 points above the NI rate.

3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?

The Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) has identified the following as key areas:

- Rural Businesses
- Rural Tourism
- Jobs or employment in rural areas
- Education or training in rural areas
- Poverty in rural areas
- Rural development
- Agri-Environment

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

N/A

SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

The annual programme will have a positive impact on the local rural business community and the Council area as a whole.

According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the LCCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth – Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).

In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area. The business base in the region as a whole is predominently small to medium enterprises with a dominance of micro business. In terms of businesses located only in rural areas, 94% are defined as micro (having less than 10 employees). Agriculture plays a more important role in the economy of NI than is the case in the rest of the UK, it generates a higher proportion of total GVA (Gross valued added) in the economy and accounts for a higher proportion of our employment. Furthermore 78% of the total NI land area is in agricultural use. Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions. The slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 14% of tourism expenditure takes place in rural areas (compared with 86% in urban) are further examples of challenges facing the small rural businesses in Northern Ireland.

In 2018 there were 4,755 VAT/PAYE registered businesses in the L&CCC area (NISRA). The close proximity to Belfast puts the L&CCC area in an advantageous position whereby the population density is a way to generate an increase in sales and revenue.

Considering that almost half of the L&CCC district is rural, the economic benefits of tourism development will be realised across all the LCCC area. Economic development initiatives such as the Tourism Major and Minor Events Funding programme will benefit the local rural population and visitors to the area, The programme will contribute towards the Council's overall strategic objective of increasing economic development in the L&CCC area for the benefit of all citizens.

SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

Yes [X] **No** [ ] **If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C.**

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

The synopsis of the programme has been identified in Section 2B, fully considering the needs of the rural population. There have been no detrimental impacts identified.

If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled. X

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Margaret McAvoy
Position/Grade:	Tourism Development Officer
Division/Branch	Economic Development
Signature:	MARGARET MCAVOY
Date:	16/12/2024
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Andrew Kennedy
Position/Grade:	Tourism Development Manager
Division/Branch:	Economic Development
Signature:	ANDREW KENNEDY
Date:	16/12/2024

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth
Date:	4 September 2025
Report from:	Head of Economic Development

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Department for the Economy (DfE) Sub Regional Plan – Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Update

1.0 **Background**

1. The Department for the Economy's (DfE) Sub-Regional Plan was launched on 1 October 2024. The Plan recommends establishing Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) across Northern Ireland to drive regional balance by convening key stakeholders to improve local economic prosperity.

2. In March 2025, Members received the DfE guidelines for establishing the Partnership and approved the proposed membership structure of the Lisburn and Castlereagh LEP. The final Terms of Reference for the LEP which was agreed by the membership in August 2025 is attached (**see Appendix)** for members' information. The Terms of Reference includes details of the LEP membership.

Key Issues

1. Of the £45m for NI announced by the Economy Minister, Lisburn & Castlereagh has been allocated funding in the sum of £3,510,000 to March 2028. The Department has confirmed that this amount will contain an allocation of £2,340,000 Capital and £1,170,000 Revenue funding. A lower proportion of funding has been allocated to the current financial year to allow programme lead in and the development of the partnership along with the proposed programme of activity. In total a sum of £351,000 has been allocated to 2025/2026; this allocation is broken down as £88,000 Capital and £263,000 Revenue.

2. The first meeting of the LEP took place on 24 June 2025, and a second meeting was held on 14 August 2025. Minutes for both meetings are attached (**see Appendices**). It should be noted that Andrew Robinson, formerly of Boomer Industries and the current chair of Lisburn Enterprise Organisation, has been nominated and accepted to the position of Chair of the LEP Board.

3. A draft Letter of Offer has been received, with a final Letter of Offer to be issued, on agreement by the Department, of the LEP's Action Plan for proposed expenditure. A Memorandum of Understanding (for signing at a later date) is attached (**see Appendix**) and defines roles and the arrangements for decision-making, risk management, and reporting requirements for delivery. Also attached (see Appendix) is the Minister's original letter of funding confirmation, which includes details of the total allocation of funding across the eleven Councils and LEPs.

4. The Department has confirmed that staffing costs towards the delivery of the LEP programme are eligible for funding from the revenue allocation of the LEP grant. A 'letter of comfort' has been received by the Council in this regard **(see**

Appendix). It should be noted that these posts are now advertised with recruitment anticipated over the autumn period.

5. It is proposed that the resource requirements for the Lisburn and Castlereagh programme will comprise an LEP Programme Co-Ordinator and an LEP Project Support Officer, with both posts being additional to the currently agreed Economic Development structure.

6. A sum of £135,000 per annum has been agreed by the Department to go towards staffing costs. It is therefore anticipated that the two additional posts will be fully funded from the LEP revenue allocation. Other staff costs that relate to senior and middle management resourcing of the programme will also be eligible for part-funding.

7. The Department's programme guidance confirms the following areas of activity as being eligible for funding support:

- Commercial property/land development
- Entrepreneurship support
- Sectoral entrepreneurship support
- Scaling support
- Sectoral scaling support
- R&D investment
- Energy efficiency
- Upskilling/reskilling in digital and engineering skills
- Sectoral cluster development

8. The LEP must develop a portfolio of projects and programmes of activity in line with these broad themes and submit the proposals in the form of an Action Plan to DfE. To this end the LEP plans to hold a workshop, supported by officers from the Economic Development team, in September, to develop the Action Plan. It is anticipated that the letter of offer will be received in October/November 2025.

9. This timeline will present significant challenges in spending the full year one allocation by 31 March 2026 within the normal governance parameters of the Council. One option to ensure that the funding opportunity is maximised would be to use LEP monies to deliver additional outputs by scaling up existing eligible Council business development programmes.

10. If this proposal is agreed by the LEP Board, it is proposed that delegated authority be given to the Director, Chair and Vice Chair of the Regeneration & Growth Committee to extend existing programmes or increase financial limits associated with those programmes only for this financial year, with retrospective approval being sought from the Committee at the next available meeting

11. This will allow officers to expedite delivery as necessary, with updated business cases being presented to the Committee for retrospective approval where an uplift in activity has been required to fully utilise the funding opportunity. It should be noted that the LEP membership would also have to agree to this course of action, and this will be considered by the LEP at its next meeting on 17 September.

12. The following existing and agreed programmes of the Council have the potential for scaling up to provide additional opportunities for more participating tradeable businesses:

- Westminster Business Showcase/London (including GB) Trade

Programme
- Republic of Ireland Trade Programmes
- EU (including NI/NL) Trade Programme
- Green Economy Programme

13. In the event of the LEP seeking to fund new initiatives that sit outside the Council's current portfolio of agreed projects and programmes (for example a new programme targeted at increasing businesses' rate of investment in Research and Development), then the necessary business cases would also need to be developed and presented to the Committee with the appropriate delegated authority conferred by Council for financial year 25/26.

14. It should be noted that while a degree of flexibility will need to be built into the delivery process, any new project will have to sit within the agreed eligible themes outlined in point 7 above.

15. The LEP will develop its Action Plan of eligible projects in due course, and the proposed way forward is not intended to restrict the LEP's choices in agreeing priority projects and programmes. Rather, it is a recommended course of action to ensure that the Council and the LEP has options to ensure that the full allocation of funding is utilised in year one when faced with a challenging timeline.

16. It is anticipated that the LEP will generate a range of other ideas for priority focus including proposals as to how the capital funding opportunity should be taken forward. These will be worked up by officers and the LEP members, and reported to the Committee in due course.

17. It should be noted that some of the above eligible themes, for example Entrepreneurship/Scaling, Skills and R&D are already provided by existing programmes and providers of support such as Go Succeed, the Labour Market Partnership and Invest NI respectively. It is therefore not envisaged that these themes will come forward for inclusion in the new LEP plan unless a particular justification can be provided.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees:

1. To note the agreed final Terms of Reference, details of the MOU, Minister's correspondence and programme update.
2. That any new programmes developed in order to meet LEP targeted objectives in Year 1 be delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair along with the Director, with retrospective agreement being sought through Committee.
3. That in order to provide maximum opportunity and flexibility in achieving programme expenditure as well as the targeted outcomes, delegated authority be given to the Committee to scrutinize and approve Business Cases and associated addendums to existing Business Cases for Year 1 of this programme.

3.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

A funding sum of £3,510,00 has been allocated to March 2028 – broken down as £2,340,000 Capital and £1,170,000 Revenue funding.

4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out. Equality and good relations screening carried out by DFE without mitigation. Screening can be found here SREP DfE S75 Screening template 2021(Published version) (1).DOCX	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out. Sub-Regional Economic Plan (SREP) was screened under Section 75 and found to have minor positive impacts across all equality categories, No specific rural issues were identified during the screening process.	

Appendices:	Appendix 3a Final Terms of Reference with appointed representatives Appendix 3b Actions from June meeting of the LCCC LEP Appendix 3c Actions from August meeting of the LCCC LEP and association presentation Appendix 3d Memorandum of Understanding Appendix 3e Ministers original letter of funding allocation to councils Appendix 3f DfE Interim/Comfort Letter re Staffing Costs

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Lisburn and Castlereagh Local Economic Partnership

Terms of Reference – March 2025

1. Introduction and Context

The Sub-Regional Economic Plan was launched 1st October 2024. The Plan outlined how the department will work with Invest NI, Councils and other key stakeholders to establish Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs).

2. Justification for the formation of Local Economic Partnerships

Local Economic Partnerships will play a key role in delivering regional balance, by bringing together central and local government, ALBs, and local stakeholders to create improved economic prosperity at a local level.

3. Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Economic Partnership (LEP) will be owned by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council with support from DfE (Regional Balance Team) and Invest NI (Regional Office Network). As part of this all expenditure proposals of the LEP will be subject to consideration and agreement by the appropriate standing committee and full council.

Roles and Responsibilities are outlined in the LEP Guidance document.

The programme of projects and activities will follow the governance requirements of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council in its implementation. All expenditure proposals will be subject to the Council's Accounting Manual and wider local government legislative framework including Section 75 of the NI Act (Equality legislation).

All expenditure proposals will follow a process of evidence-based decision making and will be subject to the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's procurement procedures. Any decisions in relation to grant-aid to third parties will be subject to the council's normal due diligence checks. As local government expenditure, the LEP programme will be subject to the normal internal and external audit review processes.

4. Membership & Attendance

Membership of the Local Economic Partnership is comprised of the following:

- Councillor Claire Kemp, Chair of Regeneration & Growth Committee
- Councillor Kurtis Dickson, Regeneration & Growth Committee
- Alderman Allan Ewart MBE, Regeration & Growth Committee
- Donal Rogan, Director of Regeneration & Growth or Paul McCormick, Head of Economic Development

- Heather McKee, Deputy Principal, Planning Performance & Engagement, South Eastern Regional College
- Andrew Robinson, Chair, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
- Shannon McShane, Goldsmith (representing Inspire Business Centre)
- Ruth Young, President, Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
- Erwin McKee, General Manager, Leckey or Catherine Griffiths Head of Finance, Leckey
- Peter Blair, Managing Director, AB Pneumatics
- Andrew Irwin, Strategic Director, On Track Technicians

Secretariat to the group will be provided by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

Attendance is important but in exceptional circumstances deputies may attend. Deputies should have the full delegated authority to make decisions and approve documentation on behalf of the appropriate member and be sufficiently briefed to provide accurate and timely information to the Local Economic Partnership.

A quorum will consist of 5 partnership members. When a quorum is not present, the meeting should be adjourned to another time.

The partnership should strive to reach decisions by consensus. If a matter cannot be agreed by consensus, the LEP should agree a process for handling i.e. decision by a majority of votes. In the event of a tie, Invest NI Regional Manager will have the deciding vote. Each local business representative or nominating body (including the council) has one vote.

The membership of the LEP will be kept under review by its members and the council in terms of its relevance to the issues identified in the assessment of need and emerging economic priorities proposed for inclusion in the Lisburn and Castlereagh sub-regional plan.

Members are expected to fulfil roles as outlined in the LEP Guidance Document.

5. Meetings – Timetable and Protocol

The timescale of this new partnership will be once a month initially as the programme of projects and activities is being developed. This will be reviewed and amended to potentially reduce the frequency of meetings with agreement from the LEP as the initiative enters the implementation phase.

The Local Economic Partnership will normally convene at the council offices at Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn. It is possible that meetings could take place at other appropriate locations by agreement of the LEP membership.

Each member of the partnership should take personal responsibility to proactively declare any potential conflict of interest arising on the group's agenda or from changes in the member's personal circumstances. The Chair should then determine an appropriate course of action with the member.

The secretariat will be responsible for circulating papers in advance of meetings.

Standing items at meetings will include:

- Conflicts of Interest
- Action points from previous meeting
- Local Economic Partnership Updates (including Deliverables, Risks and Issues Management)
- Invest NI Briefing

6. Terms of Reference – Authority and Review

The Terms of Reference for the Partnership will be approved by Giulia Ni Dhulchaointigh, DfE.

Overall responsibility for the Local Economic Partnership lies with the council's Director of Regeneration and Growth.

Document Control
This document provides the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. This ToR and any amendments to it will be subject to consideration and approval by the DfE (Department for the Economy) Regional Balance Team.

Key Personnel			
Role	Name	Position	Date
Author	Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development, LCCC	12/02/2025
Reviewer	Catriona McAllister	DfE Regional Balance	
Approver	Giulia Ni Dhulchaointigh	DfE Owner	

Document Status History			
Version	**Issue Date**	**Reason for Update**	**Updated by**
0.1	tbc	Initial Draft	Paul McCormick
0.2	tbc	Updated after DfE review	tbc, DfE
0.3	Tbc	Approved with Final Amendments	tbc, DfE

Distribution			
Version	**Name**	**Responsibility**	**Date**
1.0	LCCC	Regeneration & Growth, LCCC	tbc
1.0	Invest NI Regional Team	Southern Regional Office - INI	tbc
1.0	DfE Regional Balance Team	DfE	tbc

LCCC Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Meeting

Date:	Tuesday 24 June 2025
Time:	12.30 – 2:00pm
Venue:	Chestnut Suite, Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn
Chair:	Donal Rogan, Director of Regeneration & Growth, LCCC
Minute Taker:	Lisa Jardine, Economic Development, LCCC

Attendance

Present:	
Name	**Organisation/Role**
Councillor Claire Kemp	Chair, Regeneration & Growth Committee, LCCC
Councillor Kurtis Dickson	Regeneration & Growth Committee, LCCC
Donal Rogan	Director, Regeneration & Growth, LCCC
Paul McCormick	Head of Economic Development, LCCC
Patricia Mallon	Economic Development Manager, LCCC
John McKibben	Southern Regional Manager, Invest Northern Ireland
Martin Bowles	Senior Policy Advisor, Department for the Economy
Andrew Robinson	Chairman of the Board, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
Shannon McShane	Goldsmith, Inspire Business Centre Representative
Heather McKee	Deputy Principal, Director of Strategic Planning, SERC
Ruth Young	President, Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
Peter Blair	Managing Director, AB Pneumatics
Andrew Irwin	Strategic Director, AB Pneumatics
Erwin McKee	General Manager, Leckey
Catherine Griffiths	Head of Finance, Leckey
Lisa Jardine	Project Support Officer, LCCC

Apologies:	
Name	**Organisation/Role**
Alderman Allan Ewart MBE	Regeneration & Growth Committee, LCCC

Agenda Items & Actions:

Agenda Item No.	Update/Actions
1.	**Welcome and Introductions**
	The Acting Chair, Director of Regeneration & Growth Committee, welcomed members to the first meeting of the new LCCC LEP and outlined its background, purpose, and objectives. Apologies were received from John McKibben, who noted he would need to leave the meeting at 1pm.
2.	**Strategic Context and Programme Overview**
	Presentations: John McKibben, Invest NI provided an overview of the strategic objectives of the LEP and the 4 key areas that will help drive economic growth, including the associated outcomes (please refer to presentation slides 4-7). Martin Bowles, DfE to give an overview of the LEP from a Department for the Economy perspective including the Economy Minister's Economic Vision (please refer to presentation slides 8-22). **Actions/Decisions** • Funding of £45m over a 3-year period, had been allocated by the Minister for the Economy, across all councils, with £3,510,000 allocated to Lisburn and Castlereagh. • Funding is in place for 2025-2026. The intention is for the NI Executive to look at having a multiyear budget for the remainder of the allocation. • The next stage is to develop an Action Plan for Lisburn Castlereagh. The Economy Minister is currently signing off on 'letters of comfort' to each council for staffing costs to March 2028. • All projects must be completed by 31 March 2028.
3.	**Local Economic Partnership (LEP)**
	Terms of Reference (ToR): • The Council has agreed the circulated Draft ToR. Any changes to the ToR would need to go back to Committee and Council for approval. • The Partnership will play an active role in strategic planning. • All expenditure proposals will align with the Council's accounting manual and be subject to audit. • Membership of the group & attendance outlined – the Chair took this forward by consent. Actions/Decisions

Agenda Item No.	Update/Actions
	• All expenditure proposals must align with the Council's accounting manual and be subject to audit. • The LEP final Draft ToR will be agreed at the next meeting of the Partnership and any suggested amendments will be subject to decision by Council. • Standing items for future meetings will be Conflict of Interest, Action Points from previous meetings, and LEP updates (including risks and issues management). • State Aid rules and the UK's Subsidy Control measures will need to be considered in delivery of the Action Plan. • The LEP will be subject to both internal and external audits. • The Acting Chair informed the group that meetings will take place monthly in the first instance, continuing until an Action Plan is established.
4.	**Area Profile and Next Steps**
	Paul McCormick, LCCC provided an initial high level economic profile of the area and discussed potential priority areas to be considered for inclusion in the Action Plan. <u>Actions/Decisions</u> • We will aim to have a Draft Action Plan by autumn. • The next few meetings will be looking at facts and figures, emerging issues, and priorities for economic intervention.
5.	**Any Other Business**
	• The Acting Chair thanked everyone for their time. • Members were invited to get in touch between meetings if they had any questions or queries • LEP Members agreed to have their correspondence details circulated within the group.

Date & Time of Next Meeting:

A date and time will be agreed for the next meeting to take place in August and details will be issued to LEP members in due course.

LCCC Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Meeting

Date:	Thursday 14th August 2025
Time:	12.00pm – 2.00pm
Venue:	Chestnut Suite, Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn
Chair:	Donal Rogan, Director of Regeneration & Growth, LCCC passed to Andrew Robinson, Chairman of the Board, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
Minute Taker:	Gemma McCaughley, Economic Development, LCCC

Attendance

		Present:
Name		**Organisation/Role**
Councillor Claire Kemp	CK	Chair, Regeneration & Growth Committee, LCCC
Councillor Kurtis Dickson	KD	Regeneration & Growth Committee, LCCC
Donal Rogan	DR	Director, Regeneration & Growth, LCCC
Paul McCormick	PMC	Head of Economic Development, LCCC
Patricia Mallon	PM	Economic Development Manager, LCCC
Martin Bowles	MB	Senior Policy Advisor, Department for the Economy
Andrew Robinson	AR	Chairman of the Board, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation
Heather McKee	HMcK	Deputy Principal, Director of Strategic Planning, SERC
Catherine Griffiths	CG	Head of Finance, Leckey
Andrew Irwin	AI	Strategic Director, On Track Technicians
Alderman Allan Ewart MBE	AE	Regeneration & Growth Committee, LCCC

Apologies:	
Name	**Organisation/Role**
John McKibben	Southern Regional Manager, Invest Northern Ireland
Lisa Jardine	Project Support Officer, LCCC
Ruth Young	President, Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
Shannon McShane	Goldsmith, Inspire Business Centre Representative
Erwin McKee	General Manager, Leckey

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Item No.	**Agenda Item**
1.	**Welcome and Introductions**
	DR welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Local Economic Partnership for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.
2.	**Appointment of Chair for the Local Economic Partnership**
	CK proposed Andrew Robinson as Chair for the LEP. This was seconded by AE and agreed by the LEP
3.	**Apologies**
	John McKibben, Erwin Leckey Ruth Young, Peter Blair and Shannon McShane
4.	**Conflict of Interest Declarations**
Action:	This will be a standing item on the agenda and is required by the Department. PMC referenced a Conflicts of Interest Declaration form that the group will be asked to complete and asked all members to declare any Conflict of Interests DR proposed that this is circulated to Businesses only and that the Elected Members COI with LCCC would be accepted. The Chair informed the group that he will be asking all members to confirm that no COI has arisen at each meeting. **Conflict of Interest form to be circulated to businesses**.
5.	**Action Points from Previous Meetings**
	PMC confirmed that the three action points from the meeting will be covered later in the agenda i. Letter of comfort now received on behalf of Minister for the Economy ie staffing ii. Agreement on LEP Draft Terms of Reference – cover later in Agenda iii. Socio-Economic facts and figures, issues and priorities – Presentation later in agenda Acceptance of minutes of meeting: CK proposed. KD seconded the minutes. Minutes of meeting accepted.

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6.	**Consider and agree Terms of Reference**
	Paul discussed the Terms of Reference for the LEP DR proposed the agreement of the Terms of Reference CK seconded the terms of reference Terms of Reference accepted.
5.	**Local Economic Partnership Updates** **Programme Delivery/Draft Action Plan & Financials** Discussion areas included: - approach to running each meeting - standing agenda items - capital and revenue funding risks - the Council's approach to supporting social enterprises - potential future initiatives **Emerging Issues** - a Council Risk Register will be completed for the LEP Action Plan **Risks and Issues Management** - Risks will be reviewed at appropriate intervals and issues reported in an issues log.
5.	**Socio-Economic Positioning, Emerging themes and next steps**
	PMC presented the Socio-Economic Analysis A copy of the presentation has been appended to this minute. Discussion topics included; - Potential project and programme ideas - Emerging economic needs - Options for the development of land and property - Skills and the labour market - Best practice options to consider - The need to develop the LEP Action plan to secure the allocated LEP funding. - Plans for a workshop at the next meeting to review the areas of economic need, agree areas for priority focus - Options to consider in utilizing LEP funding to add value and scale up aspects of the Council's wider economic development programme to ensure funding draw down is maximised.

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Action:	**The presentation to be circulated to LEP members**
6.	**Any other business**
	The Chair asked if any member of the group wished to declare a potential Conflict of Interest that had arisen from the discussion **No conflicts of interest were recorded.** The Chair closed the meeting and thanked the group for their contribution
6.	**Date and time for next meeting**
Action:	Wednesday 17th September 2025 12.00pm – 2.00pm Lagan Valley Island. **This will be a workshop event with details to follow.**

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Socio-Economic & Investment Profile









Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

SCOPE

1. Core Socio-Economic Analysis
2. Sectoral and Investment Opportunity Analysis
3. Infrastructure and the Environment
4. Strategic Insights and Positioning

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

1. Core Socio-Economic Analysis

A. **Demographic Profile**
B. Employment Structure & Labour Market
C. Economic Output, Productivity, Exports and Innovation
D. Education, Skills & Human Capital
E. Social Conditions & Quality of Life

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

POPULATION GROWTH

- Since 2011 up until 2021, the population grew by 10.6% to 149,100
- As of 2023 mid year figures, the population stands at 150,800 representing 7.8% of total NI
- These figures show that over the 10-year period to 2023,, LCCC exhibited the highest population growth of all 11 LGDs of 9.9%

HOUSEHOLD GROWTH

- Number of households grew to 60,100 in 2021, a 14% increase since 2011
- Reflects a boom in housing development and new household formation

WORKING AGE POPULATION STRUCTURE

- The proportion of the population defined as working age (16 – 64) has remained steady in recent years, and based on mid-year population estimates covers 61.6% of the total population in 2023

DIVERSITY

- LCCC's population remains relatively homogenous in origin, though diversity is gradually increasing
- The majority of residents 87% were born in Northern Ireland, with 7% born elsewhere in the UK or in the Republic of Ireland
- Around 6% of the population were born outside of the UK and Ireland, a figure that has doubled since 2011

1. Core Socio-Economic Analysis

A. Demographic Profile

B. Employment Structure & Labour Market

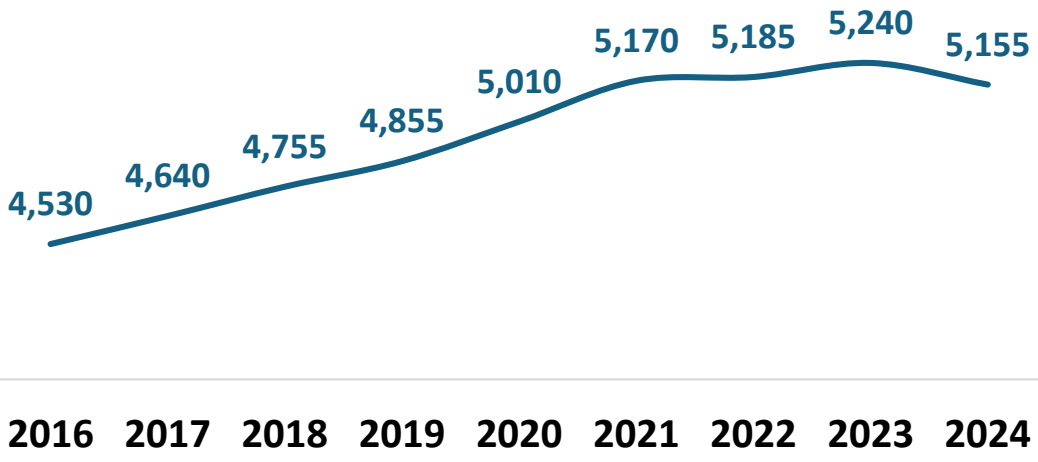
C. Economic Output, Productivity, Exports and Innovation

D. Education, Skills & Human Capital

E. Social Conditions & Quality of Life

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE & LABOUR MARKET

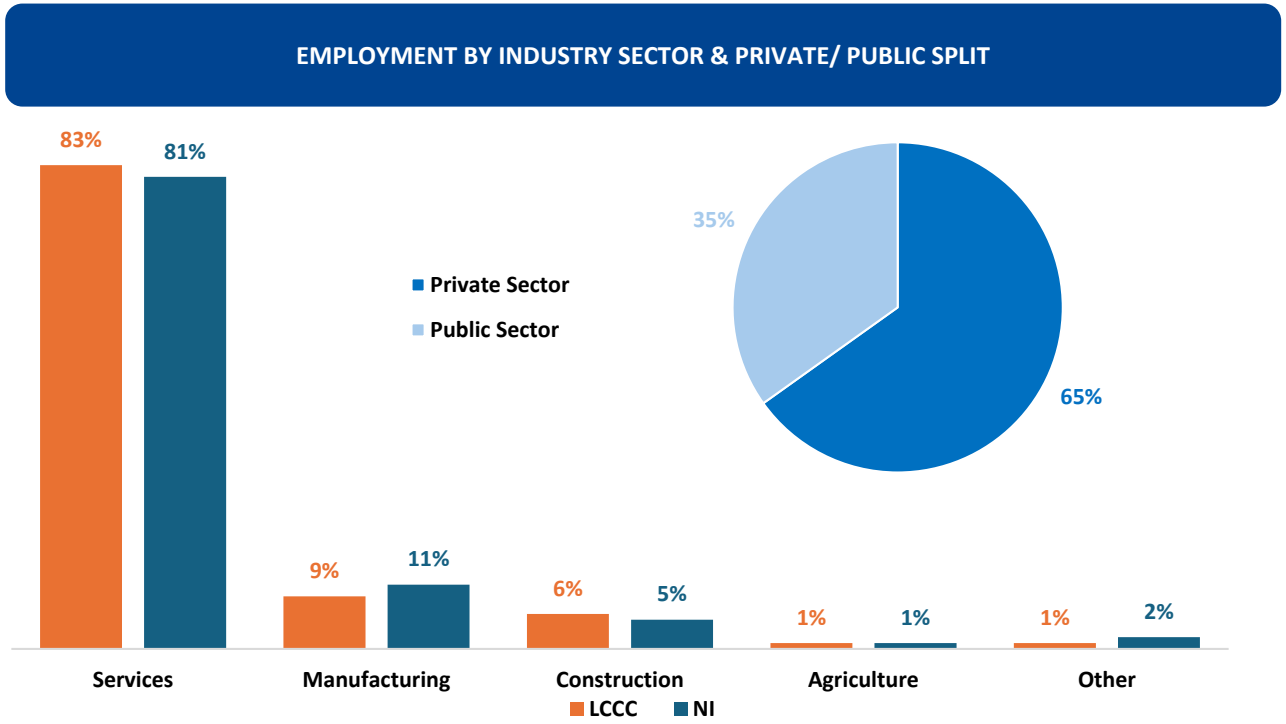
NUMBER OF BUSINESSES, LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH, 2016 – 2024



Comments:

- *As of 2024 LCCC has recorded **5,155 businesses**, the 3rd lowest of all eleven local government districts across Northern Ireland*
- *The 5,155 businesses in LCCC account for **6%** of all businesses in Northern Ireland with the majority (87%) being micro-firms (0-9 employees)*
- *In 2022, LCCC had a **business birth rate of 8.4%**, close to the Northern Ireland average of **8.3%***
- *In 2022, LCCC was home to **62,743 employee jobs** accounting for around **8%** of all jobs in Northern Ireland*
- *The Council area has experienced **steady growth** in employee jobs, with annual increases consistently **exceeding 3%***

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE & LABOUR MARKET



Comments:

- *LCCC has the **highest proportion** of public sector employment of all 11 LGDs in Northern Ireland at **35%** (**10% higher** than the NI average)*
- *Lisburn & Castlereagh has the **lowest proportion** of private sector jobs at **65%**, which is **8% lower** than the NI average*
- *Invest NI has KPIs relating to the categories of businesses that contribute most to the Northern Ireland economy. LCCC had 106 businesses in 2023 within these categories, with sectors of Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing; Construction; and Agri-Food strongly represented*
- *LCCC plays a key role as a regional services hub - employment in the health and retail sectors reflects the area's strategic assets - Ulster and Lagan Valley Hospitals, as well as Sprucefield and Forestside.*

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE & LABOUR MARKET

EARNINGS

Median annual earnings for **Northern Ireland**

£30,274

Lisburn & Castlereagh

Place of Residence
Median annual earnings

£34,731



Lisburn & Castlereagh

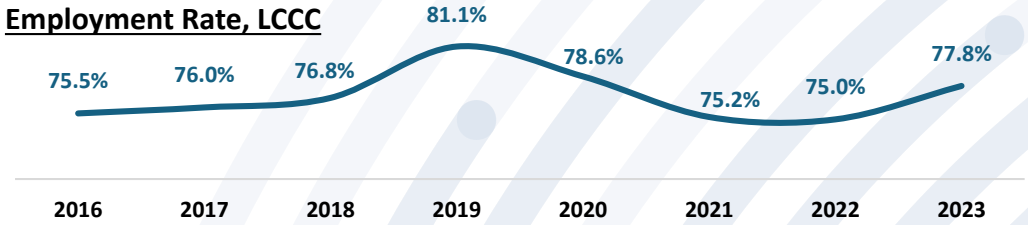
Place of Work
Median annual earnings

£31,819

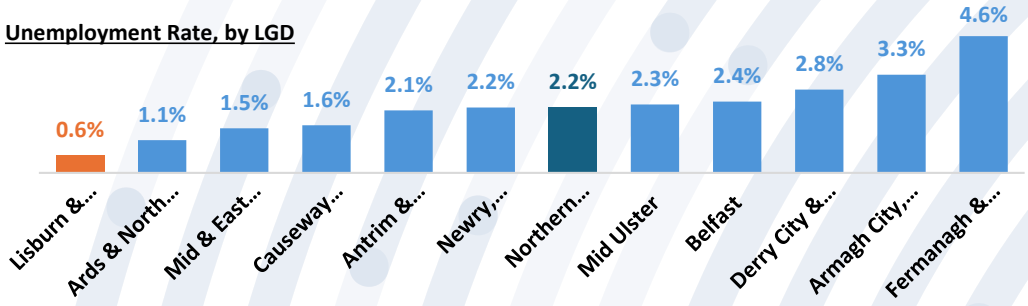


EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC INACTIVITY

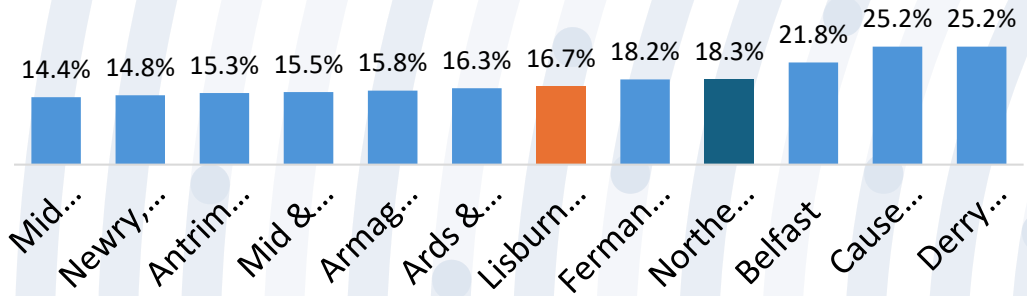
Employment Rate, LCCC



Unemployment Rate, by LGD



Economic Inactivity Rate (Excluding Students)



1. Core Socio-Economic Analysis

A. Demographic Profile
B. Employment Structure & Labour Market
C. Economic Output, Productivity, Exports and Innovation
D. Education, Skills & Human Capital
E. Social Conditions & Quality of Life

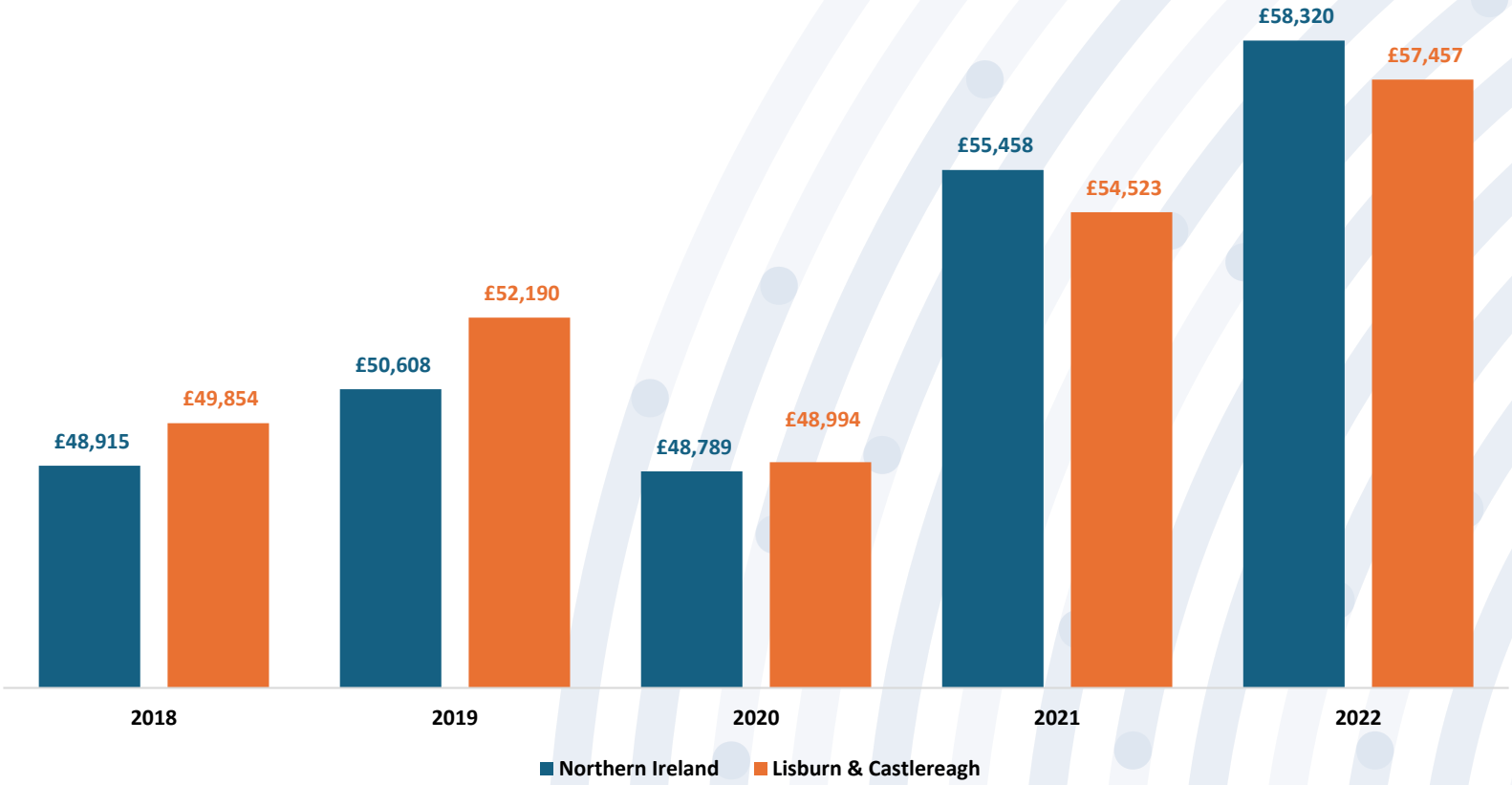
PRODUCTIVITY, EXPORTS & INNOVATION

Comments:

- ***Workplace-based productivity*** *as Gross Valued Added (GVA) per filled job was* ***£57,457*** *in 2022,* ***marginally*** *below the Northern Ireland Average of* ***£58,320***

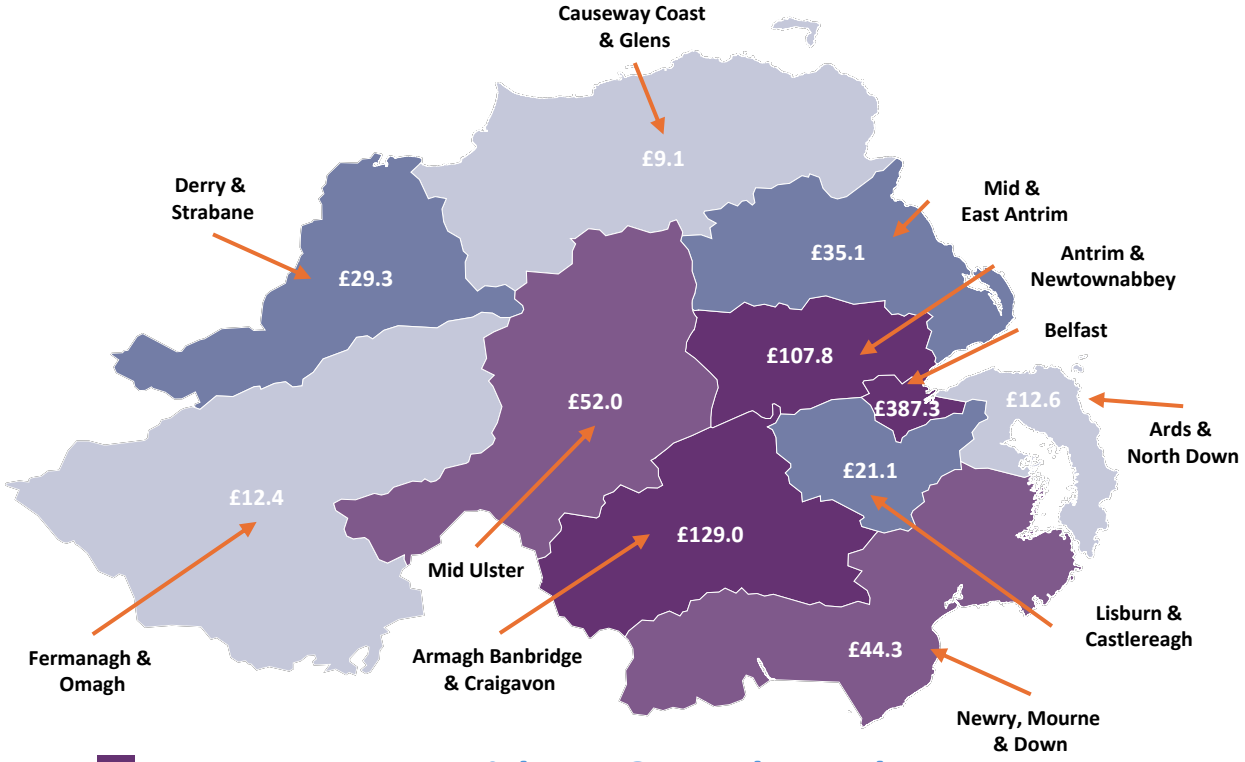
- *Over the* ***last 5 years****, productivity in the district* ***grew by 15%****, however, the growth rate is* ***less than*** *the Northern Ireland average growth rate of* ***19%*** *over the same period*

PRODUCTIVITY, GVA PER FILLED JOB



PRODUCTIVITY, EXPORTS & INNOVATION

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (2023)

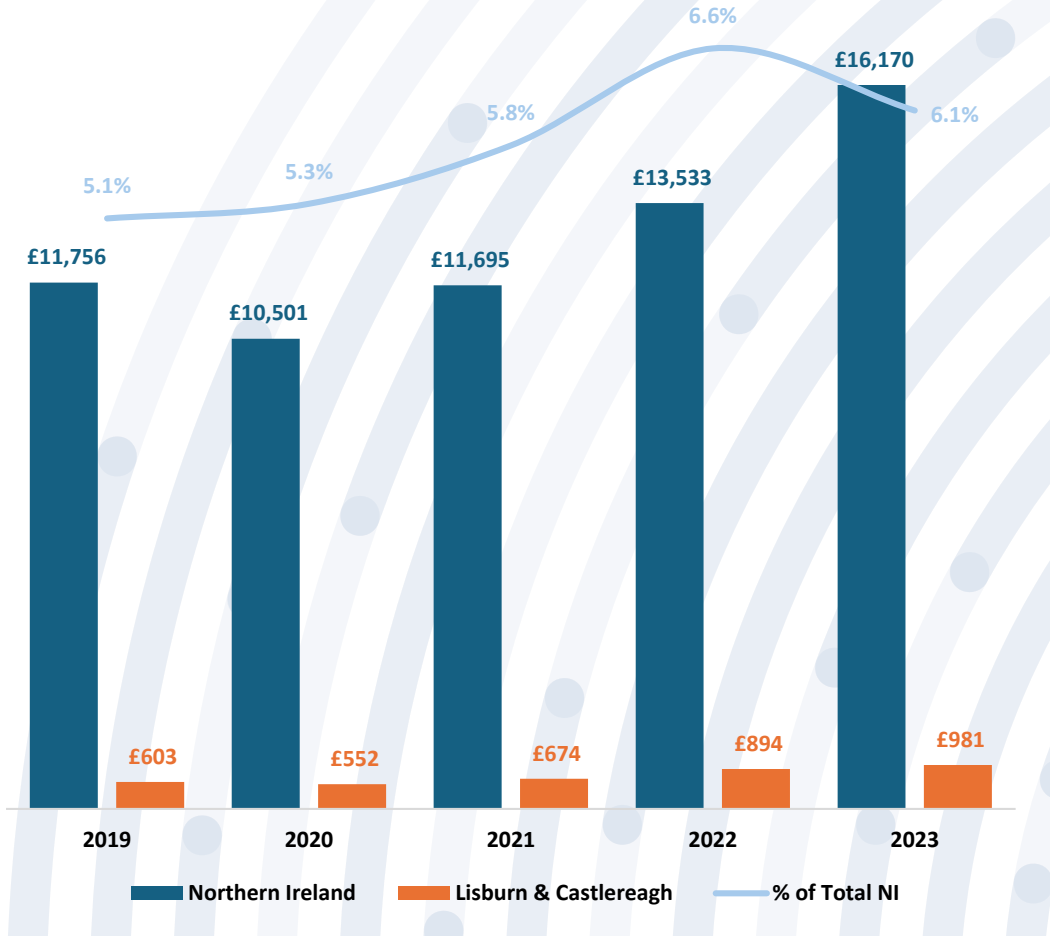


Lisburn & Castlereagh

£21.1m

3% of total NI spend (£840.1m)

EXPORT GROWTH TREND

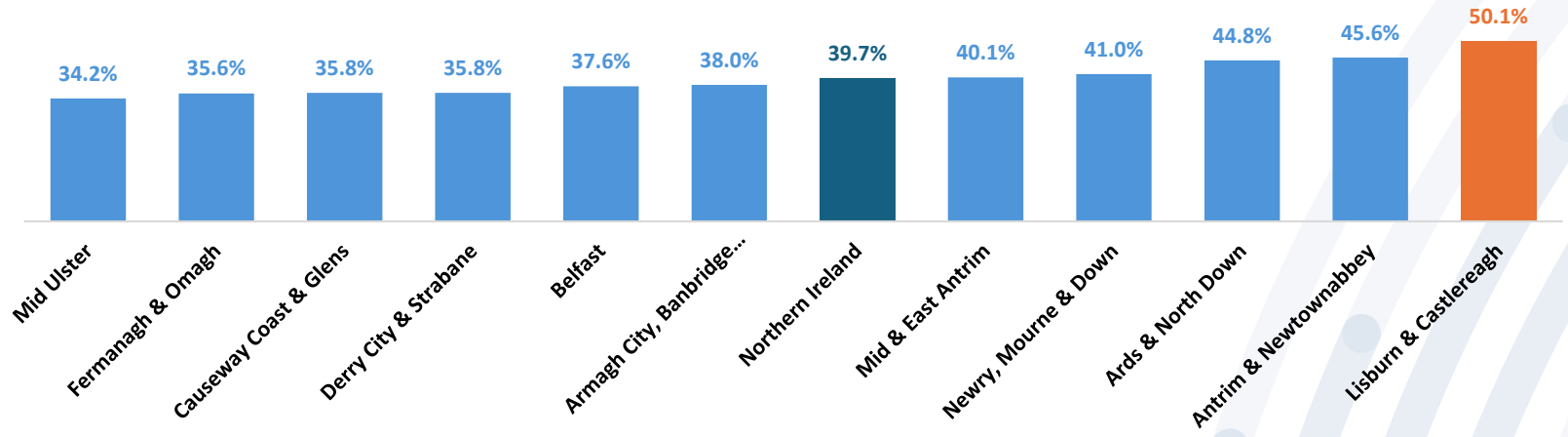


1. Core Socio-Economic Analysis

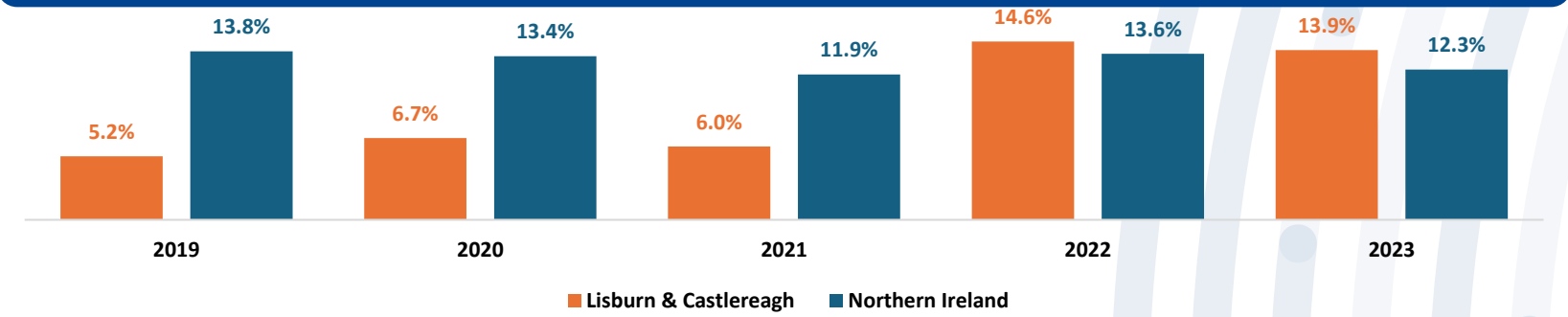
A. Demographic Profile
B. Employment Structure & Labour Market
C. Economic Output, Productivity, Exports and Innovation
D. Education, Skills & Human Capital
E. Social Conditions & Quality of Life

EDUCATION, SKILLS & HUMAN CAPITAL

ACHIEVED RQF LEVEL 4 AGED 16 – 64, 2023



NO QUALIFICATIONS, LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH, COMPARED TO NI, 16 – 64



Comments:

- *Among the working-age population (16 – 64),* ***50.1%*** *hold qualifications at RQF level 4 or above, the* ***highest proportion*** *of any council area in Northern Ireland*
- ***Exceeds*** *the Northern Ireland average of* ***39.7%***
- ***Despite generally high qualification attainment, there is a portion of the community with lower or no formal qualifications - an area of focus for LCCC Labour Market Partnership***

1. Core Socio-Economic Analysis

A. Demographic Profile
B. Employment Structure & Labour Market
C. Economic Output, Productivity, Exports and Innovation
D. Education, Skills & Human Capital
E. Social Conditions & Quality of Life

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

SOCIAL CONDITIONS – QUALITY OF LIFE



LCCC is widely regarded as one of NI's most desirable places to live, with residents enjoying an excellent quality of life. It is well served by parks, green spaces, and recreational amenities that contribute to this



Minimal crime rates and strong community cohesion add to the attractiveness and stability of LCCC

The main challenges are housing affordability, digital infrastructure gaps (in rural areas), and pockets of relative deprivation





The Council area has some of the best health outcomes in NI – including in respect of life expectancy, infant mortality rates and the prevalence of chronic illnesses

AREAS OF FOCUS EMERGING TO DATE

1. *Interventions centered on optimising productivity within the LCCC business base*

2. *Related to the above, increasing focus on embedding innovation within the LCCC business base*

3. *An ongoing focus on entrepreneurship supports to facilitate new business formation and self-employment*

Questions?



Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Memorandum of Understanding on the Regional Balance Fund between the Department for the Economy and [*District Council]*.

1. PARTIES

(1) The Department for the Economy of Adelaide House, Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FD ("**DfE**");

(2) Invest NI

(3) [District Council]

(each a "**Party**" and together, the "**Parties**").

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

2.1. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MoU. However, the Parties enter into this MoU intending to honour all their obligations and its terms to be followed.

2.2. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding ("**MoU**") is to set out DfE's, Invest NI's and [DISTRICT COUNCIL]'s respective duties, roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy, design, operation and delivery of the Regional Balance Fund (the "**Fund**") as a funding scheme ("the **Scheme**") in respect of its Local Economic Partnership ("**LEP**"), and the basis on which the Parties will collaborate and work towards a successful delivery of the aforementioned scheme.

2.3 The Scheme, which is funded by DfE as the Regional Balance Fund and will be administered by the councils to award grants to project promoters selected by the LEP and supported by the council to advance local economic projects in their area providing these align with the scheme criteria.

2.4 Total funding of £45 million over 3 years will be allocated by DfE to the 11 councils to deliver the Scheme. Funding will be transferred via S29 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Overall 3 year funding envelopes for each council in respect of their LEP are detailed later in this document.

2.5 The Annexes form part of this MoU and shall effect as if set out in full in the body of this MoU. Any reference to this MoU includes the Annexes.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1. The following definitions shall apply in this MoU:

"Accountable Body" The Accountable Body, for the purposes of this MOU, is the council which retains responsibility for….

"Promoter" A project promoter is a beneficiary that enters into a contractual relationship with the Accountable Body and is responsible for the fulfilment of all obligations against the Accountable Body during the project under the contract.

"Projects" Individual local economic projects advanced by the LEP, approved by the Council to be funded under the Scheme.

"**Eligibility Criteria**" means the criteria to be used to operate the scheme, which has been determined by DfE and provided to [DISTRICT COUNCIL] and is set out in Annex A;

"**MoU**" has the meaning given in paragraph 2.1;

"Payments" means any and all financial payments to be made to Applicants;

"**Post Payment Assurance Procedures**" (as set out in x) means the assurance procedures determined by DfE to assess compliance of applications to the Scheme with the Eligibility Criteria;

"Post Project Evaluation" means an assessment of the scheme success;

"**Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures**" means the assurance procedures adopted by the council to assess compliance of applications to the Scheme with the Eligibility Criteria;

"**Scheme**" has the meaning given in paragraph 2.2; and

"**SRO**" means Senior Responsible Officer.

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4. PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION

4.1. The Parties agree to adopt the following principles in relation to the Scheme:

(a) collaborate and co-operate. The Parties agree to work proactively together to deliver the policy objective as effectively as possible within the planned timescales;

(b) be accountable. Take on, manage and account to each other for performance of the respective roles and responsibilities set out in this MoU;

(c) communicate. Communicate openly about major concerns or issues relating to the Scheme;

(d) act in a timely manner. Recognise the time-critical nature of the Scheme and respond accordingly to requests for support;

(e) manage stakeholders effectively; and

(f) deploy appropriate resources. Ensure sufficient and appropriately qualified resources are available and authorised to fulfil the responsibilities set out in this MoU.

(g) Make arrangements to share information to support effective design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the scheme and projects supported by it, implementing improvements as needed.

5. OVERVIEW OF SCHEME

Regional Balance Fund

5.1 The rules and characteristics of the scheme will be set out in an annual Letter of Offer to be issued by the Department and signed by the Council on X.

5.2 The scheme will allocate [District Council] a total funding of:

- £Xm over the full 3-year funding envelope per the funding formula and allocations set by the Minister for the Economy on 27th January 2025.

- An annual allocation with a total annual fund, split into capital and resource funding, based on assessment of, and engagement with, the annual action plan submitted by the Council for the LEP, with associated financial forecasting.

5.1. The Scheme will be administered by [DISTRICT COUNCIL]. Full details will be included in the Letter of Offer a draft of which is attached in Annex X and section X,below.

5.2. It is the responsibility for the council to maintain relationships and processes with regards their LEP as it comes to project calls, applications scoring and prioritisation. This should align with best practice, LEP Terms of Reference and requirements applicable to the Council in line with Managing Public Money NI. [DISTRICT COUNCIL] should ensure this demonstrates that any criteria set link to the delivery of scheme outcomes as set out in Annex X.

6. DUTIES OF PARTIES

6.1 DfE, Invest NI and [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will perform a variety of roles in connection with the design, operation and delivery of the Scheme as set out below:

6.2 Scheme Establishment

(a) DfE shall:

(i) Appoint a SRO. The DfE SRO is accountable for the successful delivery of the Fund itself and not the delivery of funded projects;

(ii) obtain and retain any ongoing permissions/approvals required for the operation of the Scheme throughout the life of the Scheme;

(iii) secure funding for the Scheme on an annual basis and over the 3-year basis in respect of the overall scheme Outline Business Case;

(iv) define and design the Scheme to include: the scope/purpose of the Scheme; broad definition of qualifying projects; metrics, outcomes and annual action plans, ineligible costs, controls, reporting, expectations from annual action plan proforma in relation to LEP activity and implement and monitor any other stipulations required by the scheme OBC;

(v) Work with Councils on business case development to ensure these demonstrate clear alignment with spending objectives, development of metrics and support consistent monitoring and evaluation at an aggregate scheme level.

(vi) review submitted annual action plan and financial profiling and forecasting information for the financial year ahead based on this;

(vii) Issue an annual letter of offer which sets out financial and budgetary allocations for the year ahead;

(viii) be responsible for the securing resources to undertake the Post Payment Assurance Procedures for the aspects of which it has responsibility;

(ix) ensure regulatory and statutory impacts are screened for the overall scheme (for example Equality Impact Assessment);

(x) agree a process for making payments to the council and for monitoring and reporting on budgetary information and taking corrective action;

(xi) support council requests for information and engagement including in relation to thresholds for funding specific projects, requests to engage on project evidence and alignment with metrics, outcomes and baseline information.

(xii) support councils with PPE development.

(xiii) Ensure appropriate declarations of interest are made i.e. by Project Board members.

(xiv) Seek an internal review from DfE Internal Audit to ensure the fund has been developed, managed and overseen appropriately e.g. in line with the MoU, LoO.

(b) Invest NI shall:

(i) Support DfE in assessment of annual LEP action plans and strategic advice in relation to the delivery of the overall scheme;

(ii) Support [DISTRICT COUNCIL] in developing LEP project proposals;

(iii) Assist [DISTRICT COUNCIL] with data and analysis to assist in identification of areas of action, priorities, project selection and development, PPE etc;

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(iv) Work to ensure contact for [DISTRICT COUNCIL] with key Invest NI regional office staff to assist in project, policy and programme alignment.

(c) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] shall:

(i) work proactively with DfE to implement the Scheme;

(ii) provide resources to deliver the aspects of the Scheme they have agreed to undertake in this MoU;

(iii) submit an annual action plan prior to the commencement of the financial year and work with DfE to provide financial forecasting and profiling information and comply with requirements around eligible expenditure and delegated limits;

(iv) manage and maintain the submission of project applications and collection of application information from Promoters based on the Eligibility Criteria provided by DfE. In particular processes must be implemented to ensure no duplication of funding with similar schemes;

(v) develop and implement the infrastructure to facilitate the Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures.

(vi) Ensure compliance with the requirements of Managing Public Money NI. In particular, ensure the business case process is followed for each instance of funding a project under the auspices of the scheme. The Council should work with DfE at the outset of the scheme on business case template development to ensure these demonstrate clear alignment with spending objectives, development of metrics and support monitoring and evaluation at an aggregate level.

(vii) be responsible for Scheme delivery including delivery of Projects funded by the scheme;

(viii) collate and process the information collected during the application process in line with the requirements as set out in section 6.4 below;

(ix) Councils will each appoint a delivery SRO, with responsibility for all elements of procurement, audit, delivery and reporting. The Councils will therefore hold responsibility for the procurement and delivery of agreed projects funded by the grant, and as such will manage procurement processes for suppliers (including procurement call,

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selection process and award) according to their Council's Procurement Policy. This should align with the requirements of the NI Public Procurement Policy for each project.

(x) Any associated procurement should take into account social value considerations in line with DoF PPN/01/21.

(xi) SRO details should be shared with DfE;

(xii) carry out appropriate regulatory and statutory impact screenings for individual projects funded under the scheme;

(xiii) be responsible for the completion of the Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures. Consideration should be given to the expected controls set out by the Department in the LOOs including treatment of State aid and subsidy control requirements;

(xiv) The council is responsible for approving the grant awarded taking into account evidence submitted by the Promoters. Payments should be made in line with [DISTRICT COUNCIL]'s internal finance and payment processes;

(xv) issue LOOs to the successful Promoters – the LOOs should accurately reflect relevant evidence held by the council. Payment should not be made until a signed LOO has been submitted by the applicant;

(xvi) provide information on request to the Department to enable them to complete appropriate post payment verification checks in line with the letters of offer.

(xvii) agree a process with the Department for submitting claims and receiving payments.

(xviii) be responsible for developing and managing an appeals process. Details of the appeals process should be sent to the Department for information.

(xix) provide the Department with regular updates in terms of expenses and delivery monitoring reports as agreed.

(xx) Conducting PPE against scheme and project metrics, outcomes and baselines for a) each individual project funded under the scheme b) the overall suite of projects funded across each year by the Council

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and c) on overall completion of the 3-year scheme and at intervals beyond this as set out by DfE.

(xxi) Conduct interim evaluation of administration and delivery of scheme by end of year 1 to assess progress, lessons learned and implement improvements for future years to ensure continued value for money into year 2 and 3.

(xxii) Ensuring a timely Internal Audit Review is conducted on Council administration of the scheme and compliance with the MoU/LoO and provide DfE with the outcome

(xxiii) At all stages by all parties involved there should be adequate declarations of interest by those involved and these should be documented.

6.3 Eligibility Criteria

(a) Councils have autonomy to determine eligibility, in line with the spirit of the schemes and the broad guidelines/criteria set by DfE. They should engage with DfE directly, via DfE membership of their LEP, alongside central DfE contacts, on any questions around project eligibility and alignment with scheme objectives as set out in Annex X

(b) Although DfE will set out suggested controls in the LOO, it is up to councils to determine whether the evidence submitted by promoters adequately demonstrates eligibility. The council must be content projects which are approved for delivery are providing value for money, affordable, deliverable and aligned with the scheme outcomes and contribute to key indicators and objectives. They should follow the business case process in line with MPMNI and DfE stipulations to quantify this. The Council is required to use local knowledge to assess projects and where necessary seek further information from third parties.

(c) To the extent that the Eligibility Criteria is changed following the launch of the Scheme, the Parties acknowledge that it may not be possible to reflect the impact of such changes in the Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures already completed. The Parties agree to work together to determine how such changes can be managed.

(d) With regards delegated limits in relation to Council authority, expenditure and approval of individual project level business cases, DfE will not set a specific maximum financial threshold for individual project business cases at a Council level regarding resource or capital expenditure, to be submitted to DfE for approval other than the conditions outlined in DAO (DoF) 08/21 (Revised) and the DfE specific delegations within, provided other eligibility criteria and responsibilities set out in this MoU and in the annual LoO are met. Councils can engage with DfE if there are concerns or queries on this approach.

(e) A minimum project level financial threshold has been set at £20k per individual project per year to ensure projects are of sufficient scope and scale to impact outcomes. An exception process is in place to consider project business cases/proposals below this financial level which can be deemed to contribute to scheme objectives.

(f) Spending on ineligible projects will not accepted and will not be funded by DfE. In the unlikely event a Council issues payment to a supplier for a project for which funding is not eligible per the scheme requirements, as per previous line this will not be eligible for drawdown from DfE and the Council will have to assume the financial impact or contractual consequences. Overspending will not be funded by DfE.

6.4 Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures

(a) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] have autonomy in determining the Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures.

(b) Consideration should be given to the expected controls to be set out by the Department in the LOOs including no duplicative funding.

(c) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will be responsible for agreeing projects for progression for funding under the Scheme in accordance with those procedures and in line with the eligibility criteria referred to in 6.3

(d) The Parties recognise that DfE may seek to rely on the Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures completed by [DISTRICT COUNCIL] as part of its Assurance Procedures.

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(e) Where DfE are to source and provide data to [DISTRICT COUNCIL] to facilitate the completion of the Pre-Payment Assurance Procedures such data will be provided in a form and format to facilitate the procedures and will be provided in a timely manner.

6.5 Post-Payment Assurance Procedures

(a) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will provide suitable data sets to DfE upon request to assist with Post-Payment Assurance Procedures, the content and timing of such data sets to be agreed between the parties.

(b) DfE will undertake and complete, or procure the undertaking and completion of, the Post-Payment Assurance Procedures for which it is responsible for.

(c) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will undertake and complete whatever Post-Payment Assurance Procedures considered necessary to adhere to their internal processes.

6.6 Risk of Fraud, Error and Clawback

(a) DfE will retain the right to clawback any monies as a result of fraud or error or deemed to be ineligible in respect of the eligibility criteria. In such instances the appropriate action will be determined on a case by case basis. The Parties agree to consult in relation to this.

(b) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] shall be responsible for investigating instances of potential fraud or error, including the completion of any clawback procedures.

6.7 Payments

(a) The overall budget for the Scheme at the date of this MoU is set at a maximum of £45 million.

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(b) [DISTRICT COUNCIL]'s overall allocation as announced by the Minister for the Economy on 27th January is:

(c) DfE shall provide the budget required to facilitate payments under the Scheme in the current and next financial years via Letters of Offer. DfE shall transfer funds to [DISTRICT COUNCIL] to cover eligible payments. Eligible funding, per the requirements set out previously and in LoO, will be drawn down from DfE by the Councils for in-year, in arrears on the basis of expenses, for delivery of projects via suppliers.

(d) Templates for submitting claims/making payments will be agreed between the Department and the council.

6.8 Reporting

(a) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will conduct an Internal Audit Review on the administration of the Scheme and compliance with the MoU/LOOs. This should be conducted at the end of Y1 with improvements implemented. This is in addition to ongoing audit activities regarding expenditure, business cases etc. This should be shared with DfE.

(b) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will work proactively with DfE in relation to information which DfE requests for reporting purposes.

(c) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] shall provide DfE with updates on specific projects approved for grant support under the Scheme when requested.

(d) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will provide regular reporting on progress against action plan including RAG status, progress to date, milestones, issues and other considerations.

6.9 Post Project Evaluation

(a) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] should conduct interim evaluation of administration and delivery of scheme by end of year 1 to assess progress, lessons learned and implement improvements for future years to ensure continued value for money into year 2 and 3.

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(b) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will be responsible for undertaking a post implementation review on the administration and delivery of the scheme in line with the requirements of this MoU.

(c) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will be responsible for conducting PPE and other evaluations against scheme and project metrics, outcomes and baselines for a) each individual project funded under the scheme b) the overall suite of projects funded across each year by the Council and c) on overall completion of the 3-year scheme and at intervals beyond this as set out by DfE.

(d) DfE will be responsible for undertaking a Post Project Evaluation (PPE) of the scheme which will consider whether the scheme's objectives were met and whether value for money was achieved.

6.10 Costs of Implementation

(a) Given the collaborative nature of the project the Parties agree to provide reasonable resources to support the development and delivery of their respective roles on the Scheme.

(b) Councils are authorised to draw an element of resource costs from their annual LEP allocation, this should be proportionate and utilised to further increase their capacity and capability to deliver on local economic projects in line with the Scheme outcomes. This information should be detailed in annual financial profiling.

6.11 **Communications**

(a) Any media enquiries relating to the policy of the Scheme will be handled by the DfE Press Office.

(b) Any media enquiries relating to the operation of the Scheme will be handled by the [DISTRICT COUNCIL] Press Office.

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(c) The parties agree to collaborate where necessary on briefings or other communications where the source information is held across both Parties (including Freedom of Information requests).

6.12 Payment Mechanics

(a) [DISTRICT COUNCIL] will make payments to project promoters in line with its internal processes.

(b) Once satisfied that the overall Scheme budget is not going to be exceeded, [DISTRICT COUNCIL] shall make Payments accordingly as per (a).

(c) Payments in excess of the overall annual and 3 year funding envelope will not be accepted and will not be covered by DfE in its budget transfer.

6.13 Data and Sharing of Information

(a) The Parties agree to ensure that appropriate data sharing agreements are in place to facilitate all required data transfers.

(b) Each Party will take responsibility for completion of their respective Data Protection Impact Assessment.

(c) Where applicable, the Parties will retain and dispose of the data in line with their respective organisational policies or the relevant data sharing agreement.

(d) The Parties agree to share data in line with their respective organisational policies and other agreements which may be in place.

(e) If a Party receives any requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (or other regulations including the Environmental Information Regulations 2004) in relation to the Scheme, the matter shall be promptly notified to the other Party. No action shall be taken in response to any such request without prior notification to the other Party.

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7 CHANGES TO THIS MOU

7.1 Any proposed changes to this MoU, including the Annexes, will be made in writing and only implemented following the agreement of all Parties.

8 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

8.1 The Parties to this MoU will attempt, in good faith, to resolve any dispute arising out of, or in connection with the Scheme or any matter in this MoU.

8.2 The Parties agree to adhere to the following process as part of any 'good faith' resolution:

(a) the Parties shall try to resolve the problem through peer dialogue;

(b) if unresolved, the matter shall be escalated internally to the respective SRO for each of the relevant Parties.

8.3 If a Party receives any formal inquiry, complaint, claim or threat of action from a third party (including, but not limited to, requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 & EIR 2004) in relation to the Scheme, the matter shall be promptly notified to the other Party. No action shall be taken in response to any such inquiry, complaint, claim or action without the prior approval of the other Party.

The terms of this MoU are hereby accepted by the following signatories on behalf of the Parties.

Signed for and on behalf of

THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

Signature: _____

Name (block capitals): _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Signed for and on behalf of

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Signature: _____

Name (block capitals): _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Signed for and on behalf of

Invest NI

Signature: _____

Name (block capitals): _____

Position: _____

DRAFT

Date: _____

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From the Office of the Minister
CONOR MURPHY MLA

Department for the Economy
An Roinn Geilleagair
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
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BT2 8FD
02890 529333
Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk

David Burns
Lisburn & Castlereagh Council
David.Burns@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Our ref: SUB-0038-2025

Date: 27 January 2025

David, a chara

£45m Regional Balance Fund – Funding Formula

When I took up the position as Minister for the Economy, I announced that one of my four priorities was Regional Balance. One part of my work on this is Local Economic Partnerships and an associated fund. The purpose of these is both to bring forward projects that will improve the local economy and to help inform future government spending on economic priorities for the local area. I appreciate the work of councils in progressing these at speed. As you know I was considering a framework for funding allocation across all LEPs, and I have now made a decision on this.

Having considered council and other stakeholder views, I have decided on the following formula to distribute funding to councils in respect of the 11 Local Economic Partnerships:

- 30% - allocated equally to all councils
- 30% - based on productivity performance measured by output per job.
- 40% - based on peripherality, based on small area classifications as per the OECD's Regional Typology methods.

This would provide councils with the following allocations in respect of their LEP:

	Base 30% (£000)	Productivity 30% (£000)	Peripherality 40% (£000)	Total 1 Year* (£000)	Total 3 Year (£000)
Antrim and Newtownabbey	409	214	333	956	2,868
Belfast	409	214	333	956	2,868
Lisburn and Castlereagh	409	428	333	1,170	3,510
Mid Ulster	409	214	666	1,289	3,867
Ards and North Down	409	642	333	1,384	4,152
Mid and East Antrim	409	428	666	1,503	4,509
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	409	428	666	1,503	4,509
Fermanagh and Omagh	409	428	666	1,503	4,509
Newry, Mourne and Down	409	428	666	1,503	4,509
Causeway Coast & Glens	409	428	666	1,503	4,509
Derry City and Strabane	409	642	666	1,717	5,151

*if funding was split in equal amounts across 3 years – note engagement ongoing on deliverable spend profile across the three year period

In making this decision, I recognise that there were varied views from councils and that there is likely no perfect formula. However, I am satisfied that the above formula represents the best balance of different elements.

The productivity element of the formula is calculated based on output per job, the most recent figures of which are from 2022. This is split three ways: those above the NI average, those between the average and 10% below, and those 10% below.

The peripherality measure is a contextual rather than performance measure. This measure is based on the OECD Regional Typology and councils are separated into two groups: peripheral and non-peripheral.

The rationale for each element is as follows:

- **Base amount divided equally** – there is recognition that there is a level of work that all Partnerships will need to do and a common need across all council areas. The options of a 15% base or 30% base were tested with councils. No one option was more popular than the other. I decided on the 30% option to ensure that every Partnership would have the basic resources they need. It will be for the

Partnerships to use this funding, and although an element of this could be used to fund staff in councils to support the Partnership, this does not indicate that the Department expects councils to spend 30% on administration costs. Rather this seeks to encourage councils to build ongoing capacity and capability to support the advancement of local economic projects and engagement with NI Departments and other economic stakeholders going forward.

- **Productivity** – productivity performance has a pervasive positive impact on a range of other indicators including employment rate and median wages. The relationship of other important indicators to one another is not as straightforward, for example increasing median wages would not necessarily increase the employment rate and vice versa. As such, productivity performance is identified as an important measure for inclusion which will contribute strongly towards the objectives set out in the Sub-Regional Economic Plan.
- **Peripherality** – a contextual measure is required to provide some additional information around the challenges facing different areas. These include lack of access to peer or knowledge networks as well as distance from markets. People-centred interventions such as Labour Market Partnerships tend to use population as a contextual measure. For this place-centred initiative, the spatial context of economic development is an important context for future performance. The OECD Regional Typology classification systems provides two ways of looking at this, a degree of urbanisation within an area and one based on metropolitan / remote area status. These have been used in tandem to produce a composite measure of council area peripherality.

I know some councils were concerned that productivity performance in particular could change a lot as the post-Covid impacts unwind. I have asked my officials to keep this framework under-review and in particular to provide advice following the release of new productivity statistics. I have also asked officials to undertake further research on peripherality.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your engagement so far, particularly over the past few months to set-up the LEPs within the challenging timelines. My officials will continue to engage around the forecasting of the fund as well as governance arrangements and I appreciate council involvement via Solace NI representatives on the Project Board for this work.

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CONOR MURPHY MLA
Minister for the Economy

Department for the Economy
An Roinn Geilleagair
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD

Mr David Burns
Chief Executive
Lisburn and Castlereagh Council
C/O: david.burns@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Date: 27 June 2025

Dear David

LOCAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS – COUNCIL STAFF FUNDING COSTS

Local Economic Partnerships are a critical part of the Minister for the Economy's Regional Balance priority and Sub-Regional Economic Plan. It is positive to see the progress being made in setting up the Partnerships and I thank you and your team for the close collaboration already with my team in DfE and colleagues from Invest NI.

In our meetings with council officers a consistent ask has been that we provide a commitment to funding staff costs for the full period of the fund in order to enable recruitment for this entire period. The Minister has agreed to this.

I can therefore confirm that DfE is committed, through the Regional Balance Fund, to funding eligible Council staffing costs dedicated to supporting the work of the Local Economic Partnership. Your officers have indicated that the maximum spend for your council is likely to be ***£338,000***, from 26 May 2025 to 31 March 2028. I understand that this could change and we're happy to engage on any changes to spend, either through the action plan process or in advance of that if that would be helpful.

This letter is being provided in advance of the Regional Balance Fund Letter of Offer between DfE and Council. The terms and conditions in the letter of offer once signed will also apply to spend on staffing.

I trust this confirmation is helpful to your Council in putting in place the necessary staff resource to support the Partnership.

Yours sincerely



GIULIA NI DHULCHAOINTIGH
Director, Social & Regional Economy

cc Ms Majella McAlister

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration and Growth Committee
Date:	4 September 2025
Report from:	Head of Assets

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Lambeg Turning Head

1.0 **Background**

1. The Department for Infrastructure have carried out essential maintenance work to the sluice gates on the River Lagan at Hilden and Lambeg. This work has installed electrically operated gates to minimise future flooding of the river.

2. During maintenance work a temporary vehicle turning head was constructed under licence on Council land to the rear of Glenmore Place. This allowed the contractor's vehicles to park approximately 100 metres from the sluice gates. A map showing the location of the turning head and gates is attached (**see Appendix).**

Key Issues

1. The sluice gates at Lambeg are located close to Lambeg village and the road bridge over the River Lagan. Access is quite restricted, especially for vehicles. This has an impact on workmen carrying out maintenance to the gates as they must carry any necessary equipment long distances and over uneven ground.

2. Department for Infrastructure Rivers Directorate have requested that the temporary vehicle turning head is reinstated and kept on a long-term basis to facilitate the parking of maintenance vehicles for the purposes of maintaining the weir and associated lock gate infrastructure.

3. The current turning head is temporary in nature and constructed from hardcore. DfI have proposed that this will be enhanced with landscaping and fencing. A plan of the proposal is attached (**see Appendix**).

4. It is proposed that permission will be granted by way of a licence agreement to DfI which will include terms to cover insurance and liability and the mechanism for termination by either party.

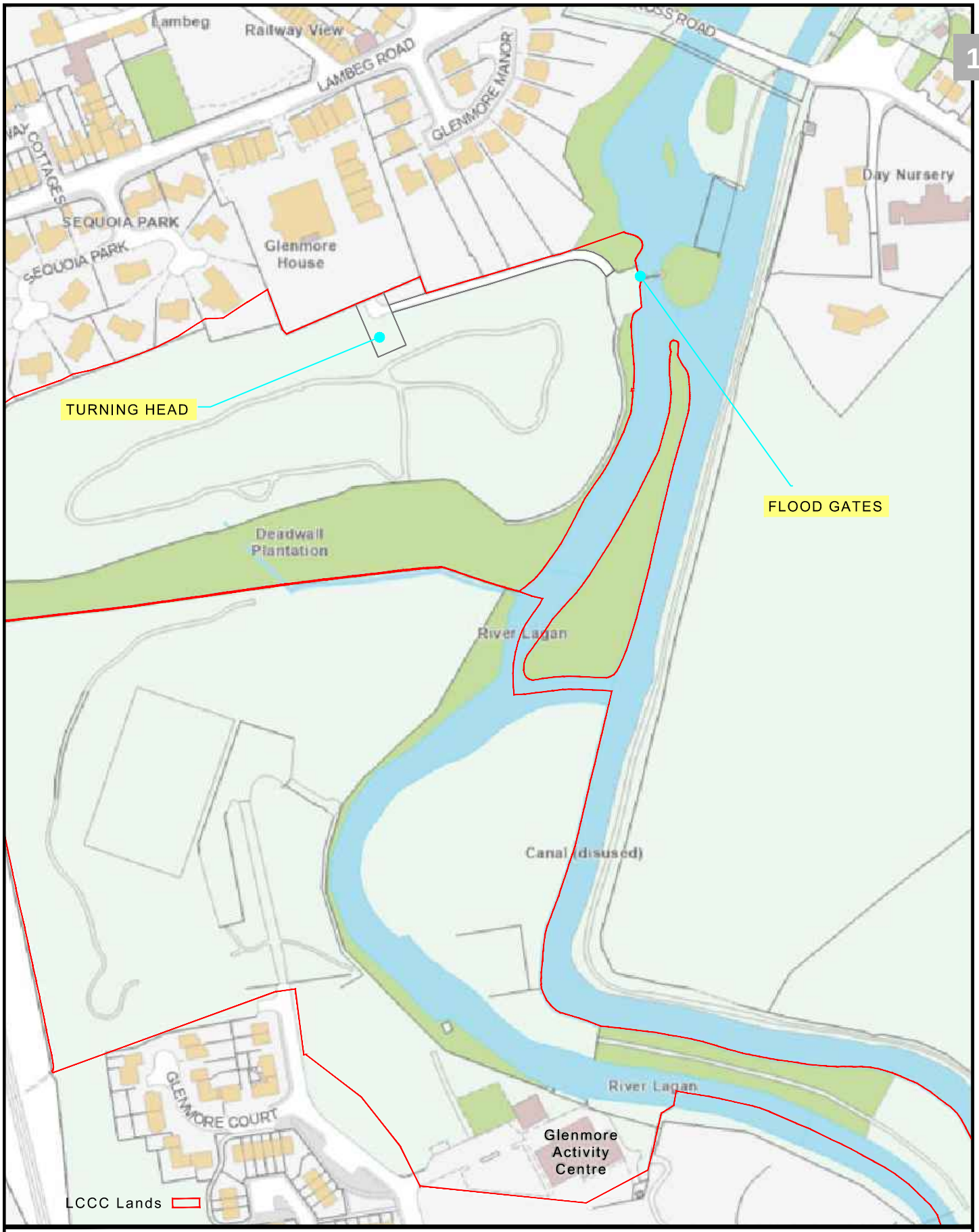
5. Consultation has been undertaken with colleagues in Parks and Amenities who are in support of the proposal and the design. There will be minimum maintenance requirements associated with the new parking arrangement. These works will be undertaken using permitted development rights and therefore not subject to a planning application.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees to give approval to a licence being granted to the Department for Infrastructure Roads Directorate to reinstate the turning head at Glenmore, Lambeg, including landscaping and fencing.

3.0	**Finance and Resource Implications** There are no finance or resource implications for the Council.	
4.0	**Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	This proposed licence agreement with DfI Roads Directorate is to facilitate the alleviation of flooding by the River Lagan. This has no bearing on equality or rural needs as it has the potential to affect everyone.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	This proposed licence agreement with DfI Roads Directorate is to facilitate the alleviation of flooding by the River Lagan. This has no bearing on equality or rural needs as it has the potential to affect everyone.	

Appendices:	Appendix 4a - Location Map Appendix 4b - Proposed Reinstatement Works

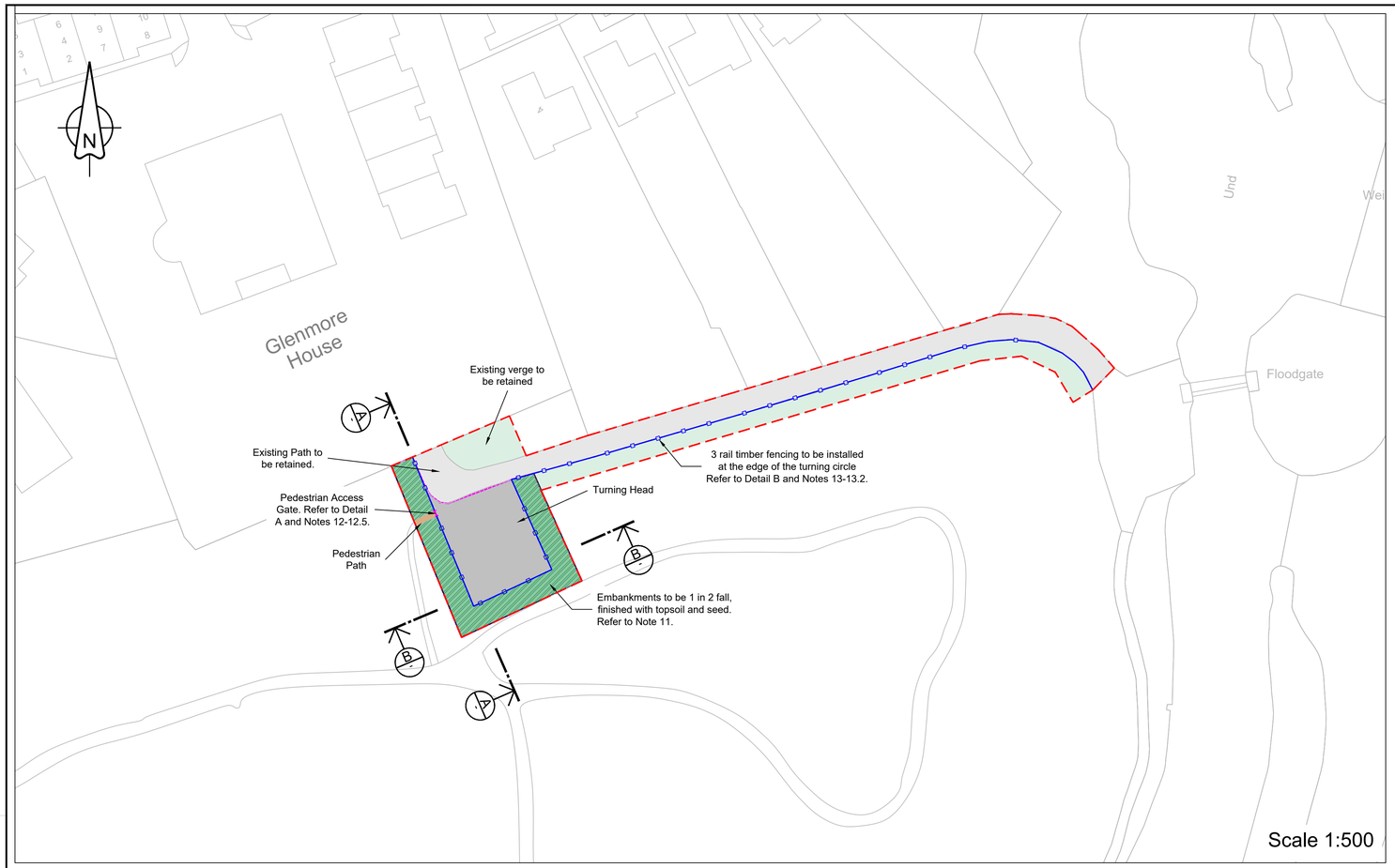


Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

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Donal Rogan *Director of Regeneration & Growth*

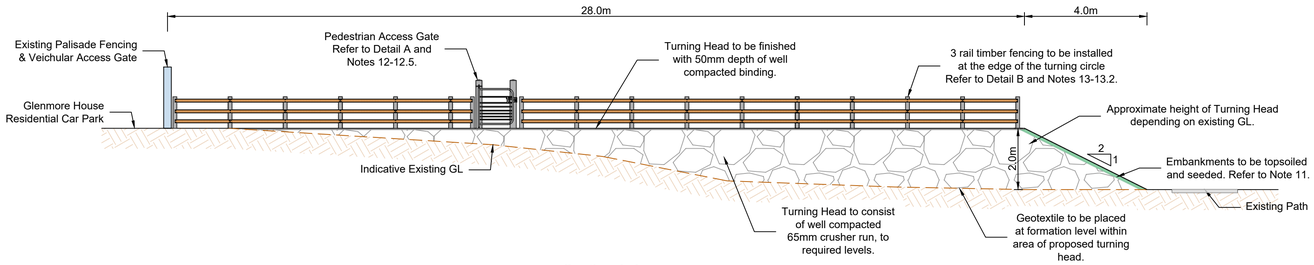
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date: August 2025	**drawn by:** T.Branniff

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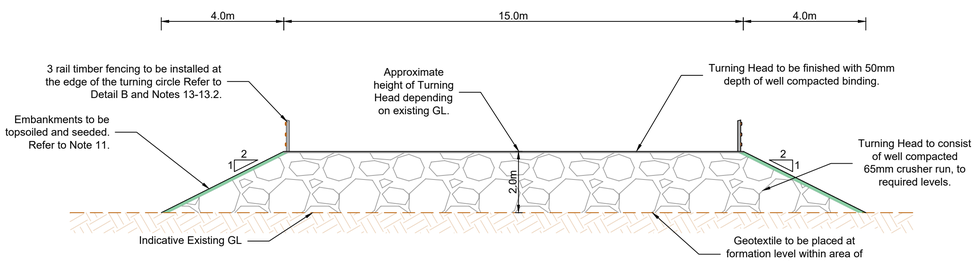


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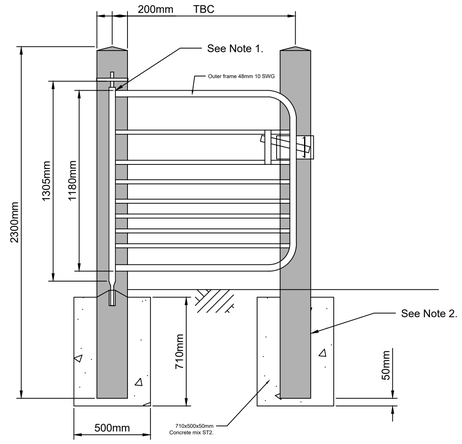
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- Gate
- Turning Head
- Working Area
- Land Take Boundary
- Proposed Embankment
- Proposed Pedestrian Path
- Existing Verge
- Existing Path
- Turning Head (Section)



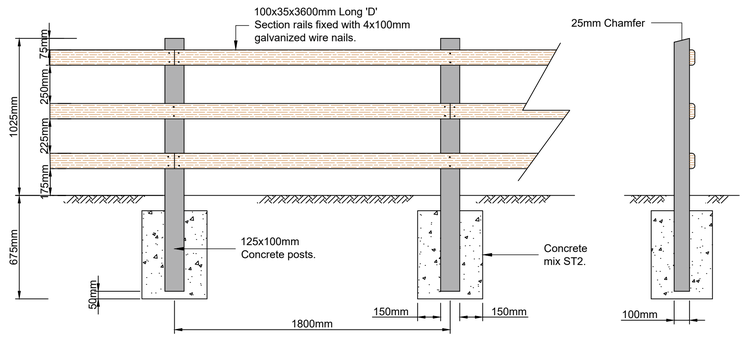
Section A-A
Scale 1:100



Section B-B
Scale 1:100



Detail A - Pedestrian Gate
Scale 1:20



Detail B - Post and Three Rail Fence
Scale 1:20

Zero Code
LOOKING OUT FOR ME, YOU AND EVERYONE
If in doubt Shout Out! - STOP - SPEAK UP - REPORT
To report a Close Call: 0800 521 660
To report a GSI: 0844 701 6515

RESIDUAL DESIGN HAZARDS

(The following information has been collected from Preconstruction Information and the Amey CDM Hazard Management Process.)

1. Hazards to be assessed during design stage

NOTES

1. All dimensions are in meters and levels are in meters above ordnance datum (mAOD), unless stated otherwise.
2. Setting out to be agreed on site with the Project Manager.
3. The Contractor may not encroach beyond the limits of the working area without the prior written approval of the landowner and the Project Manager.
4. Details are shown thus - Reference Detail / Drawing number -blank if shown on this drawing
5. All residential/private access routes to be maintained at all times.
6. The Contractor will be responsible for site security.Temporary fencing will be provided to all properties where fencing / hedges / walls have been removed to provide the works. Contractor to allow for removal and reinstatement of all fencing / hedges / walls that they require to facilitate the works. No fencing / hedges / walls should be removed until agreed with the property owner.
7. Roads and footpaths to be kept clear of mud and debris.
8. Under no circumstances should any tracked excavator or any other
9. tracked plant travel on a public road.
10. The Contractor must ensure protection to public roads, any damage must be re-instated as per existing at the Contractor's expense.
11. All grass areas to be reinstated with 150mm topsoil and seeding.
12. Pedestrian Gate
    - 12.1. Gate and fittings to be hot dipped galvanized to BS EN ISO 1461:2022.
    - 12.2. Concrete gate posts 175x175x2300mm long reinforced with 4 No. 10mm ø bars.
    - 12.3. If Timber post req'd size to be 200x200x2300mm long.
    - 12.4. If Steel post req'd size to be 150x150x2300mm long.
    - 12.5. Gates shall be hung to field side.
13. Post and Three Rail Fence
    - 13.1. Where the fence forms a boundary between the highway and private property, the rails shall be fixed to the private side unless otherwise stated in appendix 3/1 or 1/15.
    - 13.2. All post holes to be augured or excavated by hand.

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Revision	Revision details				
	Created	Checked	Reviewed	Approved	Authorised
	dd/mm/yy	dd/mm/yy	dd/mm/yy	dd/mm/yy	dd/mm/yy
P01	LMcC	RK	MS		
	02/06/25	02/06/25	03/06/25		

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Department for Infrastructure
An Roinn Bonneagair
Department fur Infrastructure
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Project Name
Hilden & Lambeg Repair Works

Drawing Title
Lambeg Turning Circle

Purpose	Stage	Scale: As Shown @ A1
Preliminary	NA	Dimensions: m

Drawing Number
Project | Originator | Volume
CO402346A - AMY - GEN - XX - DR - CH - 001 - 01
Location | Type | Role | Number

Suitability	Suitability Description	Revision
S3	SUITABLE FOR REVIEW & COMMENT	P01

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Committee:	Regeneration & Growth
Date:	4 September 2025
Report from:	Director of Regeneration & Growth

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Rescheduling off date of January and February 2026 Committees

1.0 **Background**

1. The first Regeneration and Growth Committee of 2026 is scheduled to take place on 1 January. As this is a Public Holiday it is necessary to reschedule this Committee meeting.

2. To finalise the annual Estimates process and the setting of the District Rates, officers are currently scheduling special Council and Corporate Services meetings in February 2026. Consequently it has been requested that the Regeneration and Growth Committee considers the rescheduling of the February 2026 meeting.

Key Issues

1. Within the Standing Orders the determination of date and time of Committee is for the Committee to determine.

2. Members are therefore asked to consider rescheduling the January 2026 Committee to Thursday 8 January 2026 and the February 2026 Committee to Thursday 12 February 2026 both at the usual time of 6pm.

2.0 **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees to rescheduling the January and February 2026 Regeneration and Growth Committee meetings to 8 January 2026 and 12 February 2026 respectively.

3.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

No additional finance or resource implications

4.0 **Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out on the proposal/project/policy?	N/A
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	N/A

4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions **or** rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

Appendices:	N/A