

DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

03 / 2019



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council





Overview

Ards and North Down [AND] is a unique location with easy access to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. It is adjacent to Belfast; offers excellent digital and transport connectivity; is home to a highly educated workforce and an outstanding natural environment.

A place of growth and opportunity, the Borough offers a highly compelling proposition for those choosing to live, work, visit and, critically, do business here.

The natural landscape of sea, loughs and land – our BLUE:GREEN space – stimulates creativity and growth in advanced engineering, creative digital, agri-food and business services. The area attracts visitors from around the world, with a few celebrities choosing to live here as well!

The Borough has developed a thriving tourism and leisure economy, with a burgeoning food and drink and agri-food sector, making it a prime location in Northern Ireland for culinary tourists.

AND has many attractions and the following unique strengths:

Our Places

An area of 590 sqkm and a coastline of 185km around our sea and loughs.

A population of almost 160,000, comprising five towns and 17 villages.

Our People

A talent base that is driving the growth of the [NI] economy in key sectors like financial services, technology, creative digital and advanced manufacturing.

NI has the best education results in the UK. In AND more people achieve higher qualifications than the NI average.

Access to two world class universities and a Top 30 UK College.

Our Connectivity

George Best Belfast City Airport and Belfast Docks are less than 3.2kms from the Borough.

Belfast International airport is 35kms away.

Travel times to major European capitals include: two hours to Dublin by road, 1 hour to London and 1.5 hours to Amsterdam by air.

We are the number one location in Northern Ireland for full fibre broadband connectivity, and we are seventh in the UK.

Our Quality of Life

AND is one of the most popular edge city locations for employers, employees and visitors.

AND is the first choice for much of Northern Ireland's talent, who can enjoy a balance of city access and coastal or lough-side town and village lifestyle.

Strangford Lough, an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and of global environmental importance, forms the central geographical and landscape feature of the area.



A great place to live



Location

Ards and North Down is only 3km from Belfast City Airport and Port but is renowned as an area of outstanding natural beauty with 185km of coastline, the longest coastline in Northern Ireland.

Bangor is home to Ireland's largest marina with space for 600 boats. AND is also home to Northern Ireland's only Aquarium, Exploris.

There's easy access to airports and ports. Dublin is only 2 hours by road and major UK and EU cities are only 1.5 hours away by air.



Lifestyle

AND is ideal if you love the great outdoors. The abundance of scenic locations within the Borough offer something for everyone including 14 golf courses (five of which are Northern Ireland Tourism accredited), flying schools, kayaking by moonlight (at the various sailing and water sports centres), as well as karting at Eddie Irvine's Sports Facility or Kirkistown Motor Racing Circuit.

We have seven beaches, five of which are award winning.

Bangor has the only 50m Olympic size swimming pool in Northern Ireland and a range of other sporting facilities including tennis courts, bowling greens and the largest indoor archery range in Ireland.

AND is home to the largest cycling club in NI which caters for all ages and abilities.

Living

AND has long been recognised as a very desirable place to live with many superb amenities, schools (47 primary schools, 12 secondary schools, 4 grammar schools and 2 colleges), transport links and infrastructure.

A range of housing options is available from the exclusive to the affordable (£30k to £3m).

AND had ambitious plans to develop one of the largest stretch of greenways in Northern Ireland, creating a 53km loop.





Culture

AND offers cultural experiences to suit all ages and interests. You can experience life in earlier times at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum or walk in the footsteps of monks and saints when visiting Bangor Abbey and North Down Museum or explore the Ards Peninsula where the land has been shaped by Ulster Scots settlers.

Many varied events take place throughout the Borough, including the Ultimate Strongman competition, the Open House Festival and Sea Bangor.

22 visitor attractions including Pickie Fun Park and the National Trust's Mount Stewart House and Gardens which was voted in the top 10 gardens in the world.

Creativity

As well as demonstrating a strong presence in the digital sector AND is renowned for its unique craft makers and suppliers offering 'not on the high street' products and experiences. Our art pods at Project 24 on Bangor Seafront allow visitors to watch the artists and crafters in action, as well to purchase unique gifts.

In each town and village throughout the Borough there are independent shops and boutiques as well as award winning local markets.

Culinary

In 2018, International Travel and Tourism Awards named Northern Ireland the 'World's Best Food Destination 2018' and Ards Down has the largest number of award-winning restaurants outside of Belfast, as well as award winning takeaways, the Best Fish 'n' Chips Establishment and the Wholesale Bakery of the year 2018.

The newly licensed Echinville Distillery is paving the way in the drinks industry as the first distillery in Northern Ireland for over 125 years. Combined with the local daily catches from the Irish Sea, including Portavogie prawns, local lobsters or oysters or the world-famous Comber potatoes, one of the few products awarded PGI Status which places this product on the same level as Champagne!

Along with the local producers of exciting ranges of ice-cream, cheese and yoghurts. AND really is recognised as The Food Destination of Northern Ireland.





A great place to visit



ACCOMMODATION

8 hotels, 138,000 rooms per annum with 63% occupancy [occupancy based on 2016/7 hotels data].

60 serviced accommodation providers and 120 unserviced.

VISITORS

282,000 overnight trips with 1,340,258 bed nights.

£46.5m expenditure on overnight trips.

ATTRACTIONS

22 visitor attractions with over 1.5m visitors per annum up 10% on 2016 including:

Mount Stewart House and Gardens National Trust property - voted one of the top ten gardens in the world with over 217,000 visitors per annum.

Pickie Funpark with over 1m visitors since opening and over 235,000 per annum.

Crawfordsburn Country Park, with 625,000 visitors per annum.

Exploris Aquarium, Northern Ireland's largest aquarium.

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 168,000 visitors per annum.

EMPLOYMENT

Second only to Belfast in tourism sector related employment. [2015 figures]

GOLF

Home to Ireland's oldest club 'The Royal Belfast' founded 1881 and Rory McIlroy's home course, Holywood. Nine clubs, 11 courses including championship, links and parkland.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland's first Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and Special Area of Conservation (EU Habitats Directive) and the largest inlet in the British Isles, covering 150sq km.

Stunning scenery, 26 km of coastal paths stretching from Belfast to Bangor and beyond!

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Monastic settlements dating back to Nendrum, circa 5th century and Bangor Abbey [558] whose influence resonated across Europe in the 6th and 7th centuries.

Home of the Ulster-Scots, settled by Sir James Hamilton and Sir Hugh Montgomery in the early 1600's.



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Key facts

- No.1 location in NI for full fibre broadband connectivity No. 7 in the UK.
- George Best Belfast City Airport and Belfast Docks are less than 3.2kms from the Borough.
- Belfast International Airport is 35kms away.
- Travel times to major European capitals include: two hours to Dublin by road and 1/1.5 hours to London and Amsterdam by air.
- 590 sq kms area.
- Longest coastline in Northern Ireland at 185 km.
- AND has one of the highest educational achievement levels in Northern Ireland with 35% educated to higher levels (NVQ level 4 and above) against an average of 32.3%.
- 4,670 VAT/ PAYE registered businesses with 8 of NI's top 30 manufacturers.



Key sectors



Creative and Digital

AND's combination of talent and natural environment has created an environment where Creative Digital businesses are flourishing.

The Borough is home to a growing cluster of creative digital businesses including local start ups, award winning established and subsidiaries of multi-nationals.



Hospitality and Leisure

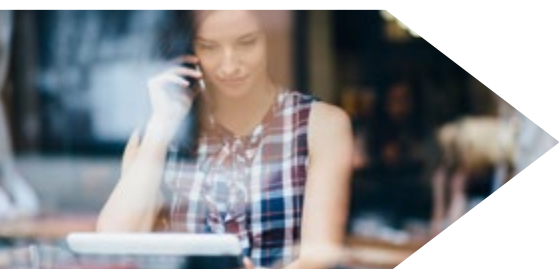
AND attracts 6% of all overnight trips to NI appealing to the Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Time Together audiences. To achieve our ambitious growth targets of 10% of trips and £82m visitor spend by 2030 the Borough requires:

- Up to 3 hotels (200+ rooms), at least one with spa facilities and one targeted at the group/tour market
- Serviced accommodation (70+ rooms) including high quality licensed inns and historic luxury guest houses
- Multi-accommodation developments including unique or quirky self-catering, glamping, water based and eco-friendly accommodation.



Agri-Food

Food and Drink from Ards and North Down is exported to over 80 countries. Our agri-food businesses' success is down to our pure, lush countryside, sea and loughs. Food provenance is important to our farmers and producers who are dedicated to traceability and passionate about quality.



Business and Professional Services

Talent, low staff turnover, superior broadband and competitive operating costs combine to make Ards and North Down a successful location for Business & Professional Services businesses as well as access to a substantial pool of well educated people.



Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace

Ards and North Down hosts international and locally owned world leaders operating in advanced plastics and engineering and providing the highest quality product to demanding customers worldwide



Ten reasons to invest

Ideal

An ideal place to live and attract talent.

Skilled

Skilled workforce. The most educated in Northern Ireland .

Global

Global aerospace and production facilities.

Technology

Concentration of technology and ecommerce businesses trading globally.

Local

Successful mix of multi-national, locally-owned and start-up businesses.

Number 1

Number one location for broadband connectivity in Northern Ireland, seventh in UK.

Reach

Excellent global reach through two airports and a major seaport.

Life

Outstanding quality of life with 185 km of coastline and beautiful landscape.

Tourism

Strong tourism, culture and food destination offer.

Mix

Diverse mix of land/sites for development ranging from greenfield to waterfront.



Development sites

