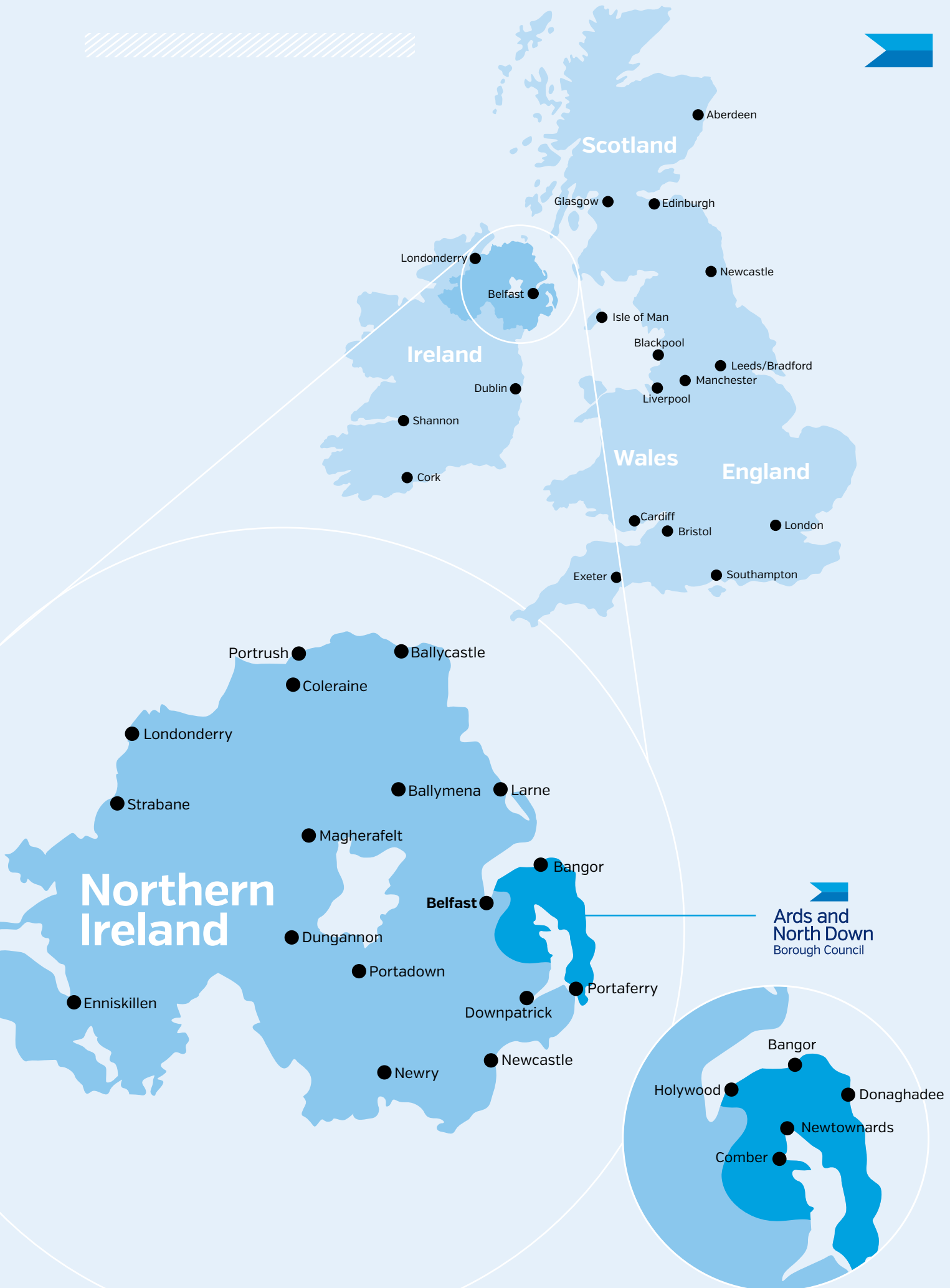


# DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

04 / 2023



Ards and  
North Down  
Borough Council



  
**Ards and North Down**  
 Borough Council



# Overview

Adjacent to Belfast, Ards and North Down includes two urban centres: the new City of Bangor and thriving retail town of Newtownards, and covers the southern shores of Belfast Lough, the scenic Ards Peninsula and Strangford Lough.

## Drivers for Business Success

With excellent infrastructure and digital connectivity, a talented workforce, strong industry base and vibrant tourism offering, it is rich in investment opportunities.

A hub for Creative Industries, Services, Agrifood and Advanced Manufacturing, it is the chosen location for global leaders such as 3M, Denman, Navico Group, Teleperformance, Mash Direct and Lakeland Dairies.

Key visitor attractions include the National Trust's Mount Stewart, Pickie Funpark, Exploris Aquarium, WWT Castle Espie, Ulster Folk and Transport Museums, Crawfordsburn Country Park, and Scrabo Tower.

[Ards and North Down Borough Council \(AND\) has the highest percentage of premises connected with full fibre in NI and the 4th highest in the UK.](#)

### High skills and low operating costs

Combining a skilled and highly educated local workforce with competitive operating costs ensures that Ards and North Down is a highly appealing place to invest.

### Strong appeal to attract and retain talent

The region offers an ideal work/life balance location for employees with an outstanding quality of life, 185 km of coastline and beautiful landscape reached within minutes of Belfast City Centre. The thriving towns of Donaghadee and Holywood are regional winners of 'The Times Best Places to Live in the UK' in 2023 and 2021 respectively. As a result, businesses cite low staff turnover as a driver of success.

### A proven location for success on a global scale

Ards and North Down is home to a concentration of leading companies across a diverse range of industries including Creative Digital Technology, Agri-food, Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace, Tourism and Hospitality competing globally on cost, quality and on-time delivery. The region's existing diverse business base is made up of a successful mix of global leaders; locally grown international businesses with global reach; recent start-ups winning key contracts in the UK, Europe and beyond; and fast growing technology companies.

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## Creative region with strong tourism offer

Located on the most easterly point of Northern Ireland, Ards and North Down has an outstanding natural environment of land, sea and loughs. The region features Strangford Lough, an Area of Special Scientific Interest and designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has a thriving business base with a high proportion of creative industries and a strong established tourism, culture and food destination offer.

## A place of diverse development opportunities

The Council's 'Blue:Green, Creatively Connected' Integrated Strategy, sets out a confident and ambitious plan for the future with opportunities to enhance, promote and celebrate Ards and North Down as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest. This strategy's key focus is on growth, investment and regeneration and sets out exciting plans to support economic development and tourism potential. The region offers a diverse mix of land/sites for development ranging from greenfield to waterfront development opportunities. The Borough includes new business sites, FDI locations, and unique new tourism accommodation and experiences projects.



# Key strengths

### Our Place

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

A population of almost 164,000, comprising Northern Ireland's newest city of Bangor, 4 towns, and 17 villages.

### Our People

A strong talent base 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 UK Top 30 College.

### Our Connectivity

Highest percentage of premises connected with full fibre in NI and the 4th highest in the UK.

Bangor is home to a 5 Gold Anchor accredited Marina.

George Best Belfast City Airport and Belfast Docks within 3.2kms of the Borough.

Belfast International airport only 35kms away.

Travel times to major European capitals include: 2 hours to Dublin by road, 1 hour to London and 90 minutes to Amsterdam by air.

### Our Quality of Life

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

First choice for much of Northern Ireland's talent, to enjoy a balance of city access and coastal or 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 easily accessible (located just 3km from Belfast City Airport and seaport) and is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with 185km of coastline, the longest in Northern Ireland.

Easy access to airports and seaports. Dublin is only 2 hours by road. Major UK and EU cities within 90 minutes by air.

Bangor is home to Ireland's largest marina with 537 berths and is 5 Gold Anchor accredited. AND is also home to Northern Ireland's only Aquarium, Exploris.



## Lifestyle

AND is an ideal place to enjoy the great outdoors. The abundance of scenic locations includes 7 beaches (5 award-winning), 12 golf courses (5 Northern Ireland Tourism accredited), flying schools, and various sailing and water sports centres, as well as karting at Eddie Irvine's Sports Facility and Kirkistown Motor Racing Circuit.

Bangor has one of only two 50m Olympic size swimming pools in Northern Ireland and boasts 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, and has ambitious plans to develop one of the largest stretch of greenways in Northern Ireland, creating a 53km loop.



## Living

AND is a highly desirable place to live with superb amenities, high performing schools (47 primary, 12 secondary, 4 grammar and 2 colleges), excellent transport links and infrastructure. A range of housing options is available from affordable to exclusive (£30k to £3m). Donaghadee (2023), Holywood and Strangford Lough (2021) are regional winners of 'The Times Best Places to Live in the UK' and Newtownards is 'The Great British High Street Awards 2019 - Northern Ireland Champion Winner'.



## Culture

AND offers cultural experiences to suit all ages and interests. Step back a hundred years at the Ulster Folk Museum and Ulster Transport Museum (Cultra); walk in the footsteps of monks and Saints at Bangor Abbey and North Down Museum; or explore the Ards Peninsula to see how it was shaped by early settlers.



AND comes alive with a vibrant annual calendar of festivals, concerts, and events with everything from Aspects, Northern Ireland's longest running literary festival to the Ultimate Strongman competition. Festivals including Open House celebrate local heritage, great local food, drink, craft and music. The recently opened Court House music venue in Bangor is a cultural hub.

Visitor attractions include 2 of Northern Ireland's Top 10 (NISRA 2019) - Pickie Funpark for seaside family fun and the National Trust's Mount Stewart also voted one of the top 10 gardens in the world.

## Creativity

AND demonstrates a strong presence in the digital sector and is also renowned for high quality craft and artisan makers offering unique products.

Our towns and villages thrive with independent shops, boutiques and award winning markets.



## Great Food & Drink Hub

Well known as a foodie haven, Northern Ireland was named 'World's Best Food Destination' at the International Travel and Tourism Awards in 2018.

AND boasts more award winning eateries than any other region outside of Belfast including Michelin Bib gourmand winners, best Asian and Curry restaurants, award winning bakeries, takeaways and a Best Fish 'n' Chips establishment.

The food and drink offering is internationally acclaimed with unique foods such as Portavogie Prawns, Strangford Lough oysters, grass-fed beef and Comber Earlies Potatoes (PGI status) and award winning producers making everything from dairy products to sauces. AND is home to Echlinville and Copeland Distilleries, producers of fine gins and whiskeys.





# A great place to visit



## ACCOMMODATION

8 hotels, 375 rooms, 767 bed spaces. 58 serviced accommodation (452 beds) providers and 223 unserviced (1182 beds). Tourism NI April 2023

## VISITORS

0.3m overnight trips with 1.1m bed nights.

£52m expenditure on overnight trips.

## ATTRACTIONS

15 visitor attractions with over 1.1m visitors per annum including:

Two of the Top 10 Visitor Attractions NI.

Mount Stewart House and Gardens National Trust property - voted one of the top ten gardens in the world with over 239k visitors per annum.

Pickie Funpark with over 1.7m visitors since re-opening in 2013 and over 390k per annum.

Crawfordsburn Country Park, with 643k visitors per annum.

Northern Ireland's largest aquarium, Exploris.

Ulster Folk Museum and Ulster Transport Museum, 170k visitors per annum.

## EMPLOYMENT

Second highest tourism sector related employment in Northern Ireland (outside Belfast).

## GOLF

Home to Ireland's oldest club 'The Royal Belfast' (founded in 1881) and Rory McIlroy's home course, Holywood. 10 clubs, 12 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 150 sqkm.

Stunning scenery including 26 km of coastal paths.

## HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Home to significant Monastic settlements such as Nendrum dating back to the 5th Century and Bangor Abbey [558], to the early settlements of Ulster-Scots, Sir James Hamilton and Sir Hugh Montgomery in the early 1600s.



**Trails & Routes**

- Strangford Lough Canoe Trail**
- East Coast Canoe Trail**
- Comber Greenway Cycle Trail**
- Strangford Lough Cycle Trail**
- North Down Coastal Path**
- Lecale Way**
- St Patrick's Trail (main route)**
- Trail leading to other associated St Patrick's Trail sites**
- Mourne Coastal Route**
- Comber/Andrews Titanic Trail**
- Ulster Scots Driving Tours**
- Great Wars Trail**
- Film Locations**
- Access points to the Lough**

2 miles  
3.2 km

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# Key facts

Highest percentage of premises connected with full fibre in NI and the 4th highest in the UK.

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

Belfast International Airport within 35km.

Travel times to major European capitals include: 2 hours to Dublin by road and within 90 minutes to London and Amsterdam by air.

590 sqkms area.

Longest coastline in Northern Ireland at 185 km.

AND has one of the highest educational achievement levels in Northern Ireland with 38% educated to higher levels (NVQ level 4 and above) against an average of 34.9%.

4,870 VAT/ PAYE registered businesses.



# Key sectors



## Creative and Digital

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

The Borough is home to a growing cluster of creative digital businesses including local start ups, award winning indigenous businesses with global reach and subsidiaries of multi-nationals. With plans to develop a Creative Innovation Hub, aligned to film/TV production and digital technologies, AND offers opportunities to join others in new and emerging technologies sectors.



## Hospitality and Leisure

AND attracts 5% of all overnight trips to NI appealing to the Culturally Curious, Great Escapers and Time Together visitor segments. 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. Agri-food business success is largely 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

Highly educated 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.



## Advanced Manufacturing and Aerospace

Ards and North Down hosts international and locally owned world-leading companies 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.

## Connected

Highest percentage of premises connected with full fibre in NI and the 4th highest in the UK (Ofcom).

## Global

Global aerospace and production facilities.

## Skilled

Skilled highly educated workforce.

## Success

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

## Technology

Concentration of technology and e-commerce businesses trading globally.

## 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





# Queen's Parade

A unique opportunity to create Northern Ireland's premier public waterfront space at Queen's Parade, Bangor.

### Location

The subject lands are located on Queen's Parade in Bangor city centre, approximately 21 km/13 miles from Belfast city centre. Belfast International Airport is within approximately 48 km/30 miles and George Best Belfast City Airport approximately 18 km/11 miles. Belfast Port is within 23 km/14 miles.

The location is serviced with buses and trains with Bangor train station approximately 0.6 km/0.4 miles from Queen's Parade, with trains running directly to Belfast.

Bangor was granted city status as part of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in June 2022, making it Northern Ireland's newest city.

### Description

Queen's Parade in Bangor offers a unique opportunity to create Northern Ireland's premier public waterfront space in the country's newest city. Subject lands consist of approximately 13 acres (5.26 Ha), which now has formal planning approval for a truly mixed-use regeneration project. The site has two distinct parts: Marine Gardens: the creation of a new vibrant public space that overlooks a 450-berth marina, and the development site which offers a variety of leisure, hotel, retail, hospitality, office, and commercial opportunities. Find out more at [www.queensparadebangor.com](http://www.queensparadebangor.com)

### Neighbouring Occupiers

- Café Nero
- Barclays Bank
- Bangor Marina

13 acres  
5.26 hectares

Town Centre  
Development  
Opportunity

Queen's Parade  
Bangor

Landowner:  
Dept. for Communities  
and Bangor Marine Ltd

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+44 (0)28 9442 5600  
[info@queensparadebangor.com](mailto:info@queensparadebangor.com)



QUEEN'S PARADE

Queen's Parade  
13 acres  
5.26 hectares





### Potential Use and Opportunities

A unique opportunity to create Northern Ireland's premier public waterfront space at Queen's Parade, Bangor. Bangor is ideally located to be the coastal day out of choice for the burgeoning capital city of Belfast. The proposed £75 million scheme (subject to planning) is suitable for a variety of uses including hotel, residential, commercial, retail, restaurants and offices and made up of the following:

- 66 bed hotel with spa and swimming pool
- 137 residential units
- 6,503 sqm (70,000 sqft) of office space
- 1,858 sqm (20,000 sqft) of food & beverage/retail opportunities
- 1,503 sqm (16,178 sqft) destination/cinema building
- 1,440 sqm (15,500 sqft) indoor kids' recreational area
- refurbishment of 5,330 sqm (57,371 sqft) of commercial property along Main Street
- 255 space car park
- Marine gardens public realm combining external events space, cafés, sheltered promenade and kiosks, seafront lawns, children's play area and water feature
- Marketplace and courtyard squares

This development opportunity is located adjacent to Bangor Waterfront, soon to be greatly enhanced with approximately £72.8m of investment creating another prime regeneration site with a unique range of leisure and tourism opportunities.



**Sector Analysis for Each Use**

**Tourism Expenditure**

The tourism sector is an important part of Northern Ireland's economy, welcoming 5.3 million visitors in 2019 who spent an unprecedented £1 billion. In recent years, successful hosting of high profile global events has established Northern Ireland as a highly desirable destination. For example, in 2019, the 148th Open at Portrush attracted 238k visitors generating in excess of £100 million of economic profit.

Northern Ireland tourism has shown strong financial performance and exponential growth trends. Latest figures from 2019 show that the tourism industry accounts for 9% of all employee jobs in NI (growing by 6,000 jobs between 2017 and 2019). Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, a record breaking 3 million out-of-state visitors (from outside NI) took an overnight trip in NI, double the number welcomed in 2000 (1.5m)\*

Industry and consumer sentiment reports indicate that Tourism in Northern Ireland is set to rebound strongly during Covid recovery as restrictions have lifted and the region remains a highly appealing visitor destination.

Ards and North Down is well placed to capitalise on heightened demand for staycations from the domestic, NI and ROI markets in the short term, and the return of international visitors to pre-pandemic levels.

**Commercial, Retail and Restaurants**

The retail sector has encountered well reported challenges. Although these have had a negative impact on market activity, the sector remains stubbornly resilient and activity levels remain at relatively positive levels.

**Office**

Availability of Grade A office space is currently limited in Bangor so there is opportunity to develop office space to target large scale occupiers and burgeoning creative industries.

**In 2019, almost 11.2 million overseas tourists visited the island of Ireland delivering revenue of almost €5.8 billion.**

[Tourism Ireland]

\*Most recent national statistics. [Tourism NI]







# Bangor Waterfront

Large multi-opportunity seafront site project to develop this prime water's edge location into a vibrant water's edge hub. To reinvigorate Bangor as a thriving city and premier visitor attraction in Northern Ireland.

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39.22 acres  
15.87 hectares

---

Town Centre  
Development  
Opportunity

---

Bangor

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## Location

Bangor is Northern Ireland's newest city. The seaside resort on the southern side of Belfast Lough in County Down was granted city status in June 2022 as part of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee celebrations.

The city is located approximately 21 km/13 miles from Belfast City Centre. Belfast International Airport is located approximately 48 km/30 miles from Bangor with Belfast City Airport 18 km/11 miles away and Belfast Port approximately 24 km/15 miles.

The subject area is well serviced with buses and trains with Bangor bus and train station approximately 1.3km/0.8 miles from the waterfront. Trains run from Belfast city centre to Bangor every half hour during peak times.

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[www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/business/bangor-regeneration/bangor-waterfront](http://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/business/bangor-regeneration/bangor-waterfront)



Bangor Waterfront is a flagship project in the Belfast Region City Deal programme of investment. The project aims to create a unique destination, enriching mind, body and soul with a mix of public spaces, creative events, activities, attractions and experiences for residents and visitors.

**Description**

The subject lands have a total of 39.22 acres / 15.87 hectares, which is zoned as town centre in the area plan. Redevelopment of the seafront to return Bangor to its former status as a thriving city and prime visitor attraction in Northern Ireland. The project focuses on providing economic, leisure, tourism and recreational benefits including the regeneration of the coastline between Pickie Funpark and Ballymacormick Point/Banks Lane [approximately 3.3 km/2.1 miles]. The Bangor Waterfront development aims to create a unique destination, encouraging more visitors and residents to enjoy the coastline, by regenerating Bangor into a 'destination of choice' connecting the rich cultural heritage with creative industries and blue/green experiences alongside an inspirational coastal backdrop.

**Planning Status**

Pre-Planning Stage; contract for funding received.

**Neighbouring Occupiers**

- Bangor centre
- Queen's Parade car parking
- Seacliff Road
- Ballyholme Esplanade



**Key Development Opportunities:**

**Redevelopment of Pickie Funpark into a national family visitor attraction**

Listed as a Top 10 Visitor Attractions NI 2019 (NISRA), attracting over 390k visitors per annum. Possible development opportunity to create new all-weather attractions broadening visitor appeal.

**Bangor marina supporting vision of Queen's Parade**

Possibility of redevelopment, design and build for a 450+ premier marina. Commercial food and leisure opportunities with key frontage to the Marina and the possibility of new unique attractions in a prime waterfront location.

**Tourism and Leisure**

Possible opportunities for tourism and leisure offerings such as glamping pods, skate/wheel parks, hospitality etc.

**Ballyholme Yacht Club**

Development of a new Sailing and Watersports Centre for Northern Ireland. Capability to hold major events attracting visitors and increasing dwell time.

**Opportunity to develop a unique new national visitor attraction targeting out-of-state visitors:**

**Re-imagined Ballyholme beach**

Opportunities to develop new and exciting all-weather family-oriented facilities such as café/changing/rental in this stunning sheltered bay.

**Public realm and new artwork [across 3.4 km/2.1 miles]**

Opportunity for the construction of a bespoke public realm solution connecting all of the above priority areas, to enhance the visitor experience to increase visitor numbers and dwell time.

**Bangor Waterfront**

Development compliments and works with the ambitious Queen's Parade regeneration scheme. A £75m+ private sector led proposal which will see a mix of retail, residential, hotel and hospitality offering alongside new open spaces interlinked with Bangor Marina. [see page 13]





# Whitespots Regional Park

This development of a new multi-use recreational facility with visitor attractions in the lands at Whitespots Country Park, Newtownards, focuses on enhancing the visitor experience with walking trails and potential new features such as a unique mining heritage attraction, Ireland's World War experience with outdoor recreation, visitor accommodation and event spaces.

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80.55 acres  
32.6 hectares

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Land  
Country Park

---

Whitespots  
Bangor Road  
Newtownards

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## Location

Located on the Bangor Road between Bangor and Newtownards, approximately 13.4 miles/21.5 km from the M2 Motorway and 14 miles/23 km from Belfast city centre. Belfast Port and Belfast City Airport are within a 24 km/15 mile radius.

## Description

The subject area comprises approximately 80.55 acres/33 hectares which was formerly a mining area [until 1910]. This area was established as Whitespots Country Park in 1995 with development ongoing.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is developing a long-term vision for a Regional Park connecting Whitespots to the other locations via greenways creating a strong greenway network to Belfast.

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**Whitespots  
Regional Park**  
80.55 acres  
32.6 hectares

### Potential Use and Opportunities

#### The Regional Park will:

- Bring economic, health and educational, community cohesion and other social benefits to the Borough, the Greater Belfast area and to Northern Ireland as a whole.
- Preserve and create access to a rich natural industrial and cultural heritage for the local community and visitors.
- Create a 'proposition of scale' linking many existing assets and successful attractions within the Borough with new ones to be developed.
- Development of a new multi-use recreational facility with visitor attractions in the lands at Whitespots Country Park, Newtownards.

### Planning Status

Pre-planning Phase

### Neighbouring Occupiers and Assets

- Somme Museum
- Whitespots Trail Bike Park
- Agricultural land
- Clandeboye Estate
- Golf Course
- The Ark Open Farm



# Baloo Road

Throughout Northern Ireland there is a shortage of space for small businesses; additional Enterprise Parks are required for incubation space to support and grow new businesses.

#### Site Area

Approximately 7.70 acres/3.1 hectares and building 1,607 sqm/17,300 sqft.

#### Location

The subject lands are located on the Balloo Road, approximately 3.2 km/2 miles from Bangor city centre. The subject is approximately 21 km/13 miles from Belfast city centre. Belfast International Airport is approximately 48 kms/30 miles and Belfast City Airport approximately 16 km/10 miles by road. Belfast Port is also nearby at approximately 23 km/14 miles.

Baloo is Ards and North Down's premier industrial and commercial location and home to a number of major businesses.

The Balloo Road is well serviced by public transport with buses running to Belfast Laganside Bus Centre, and located 10 minutes from Bangor train station.

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7.70 acres  
3.1 hectares

---

Building  
1,607 sqm  
17,300 sqft

---

Former Northern Ireland  
Electricity lands at  
Balloo Road, Bangor

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BALLOO ROAD

**Former NIE Site at Balloo**  
7.70 acres  
3.1 hectares

#### Description

The subject consists of 7.7 acres/ 3.1 hectares with approximately 1,607 sqm/17,300 sqft building.

The subject lands are zoned as existing employment by the area plan.

#### Neighbouring occupiers

- JK Motorcycle Service and Repairs
- Balloo House Recycling Centre
- Invest NI land zoned for investment

#### Potential Use and Opportunities

This location would be suitable for an innovation/light industrial unit or business units to support economic regeneration in the Borough through an Enterprise Park.

#### Sector Analysis for Each Use

##### Industrial

Currently a shortage of good quality industrial property ready to occupy across Northern Ireland. Industrial rentals are increasing due to lack of supply and increased demand.

##### Office

Limited suitable purpose-built office accommodation currently available in Bangor. Throughout Northern Ireland there is a shortage of space for small businesses, additional Enterprise Parks are required for incubation space to support and grow new businesses.



# Castlebawn

Castlebawn offers a wide range of potential commercial opportunities on a high-profile site for uses such as: retail/leisure, residential, care home, trade counter, and workplace business park, industrial/light industrial, data centres or R&D facilities.

## Location

Located in a highly prominent location with dual frontage and accessed off the bypass connecting the main A20 Belfast Road and A21 Comber Road. Located adjacent to Castlebawn Retail Park, this strategic location on the edge of Newtownards town centre provides an approximate 20 minute drive time to Belfast City Airport and the city centre is accessible within 30 minutes. The area is well served by public transport routes with a regular bus service to and from Belfast city centre.

## Description

Castlebawn comprises a mixture of greenfield and brownfield sites, which are generally level in topography, and previously had historic planning consent for a wide variety of uses.

## Neighbouring Occupiers

The surrounding area comprises of residential, commercial, retail and leisure uses, with Castlebawn Retail Park, Ards Shopping Centre and Scrabo Business Park within immediate proximity.

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c.47.0 acres  
c.19.02 hectares

---

Development  
Lands

---

Adjacent Castlebawn  
Retail Park  
Newtownards

---

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**Potential Use and Opportunities**

The former factory site comprises of approximately 16 acres. Historic Bawn Wall and adjacent South Street sites, comprising residential development of approximately 200 units. The lands have planning consent for showrooms, trade counter retail and approximately 13,935 sqm [150,000 sqft] workplace business park.

A number of sites have recently been sold nearby with development underway/ completed for a variety of uses to include a

new Lidl concept store, Starbucks and Tim Horton's Drive-thrus in the retail and FCB sectors, 66 residential units on South Street and an 80 bed specialist dementia care nursing home owned and operated by Dunluce Healthcare.

Alternative development opportunities are under consideration [pre-planning] for the creation of a retirement village, incorporating medical facilities, spa and wellbeing centre, together with an assisted living residential development.

**Planning Status**

Various.

A planning application has also been submitted for Phase 1 of a storage and distribution/light industrial development - an asset class seeing high levels of occupier demand in the AND council area.

**Highlights of the development include planning permission for:**

31,800 sqm/342,000 sqft of retailing

10,800 sqm/116,000 sqft business/office park

2,700 sqm/29,000 sqft of leisure/food & beverage units

Planning permission for a coffee shop drive-thru restaurants with car parking

**Notes**

The subject lands are located adjacent to a 7,400 m<sup>2</sup>/80,000 ft<sup>2</sup> Tesco store with associated retail units.



**Castlebawn**  
47.0 acres  
19.02 hectares

### Sector Analysis for Each Use

#### Retail/Leisure

Proximity to Castlebawn Retail Park makes this site an optimal location for retail development. Trade counter/warehouse developments are currently well occupied with vacancy levels remaining relatively low. Whilst the retail sector has encountered challenges during 2019/20, the NI sector remains stubbornly resilient; out of town retail market remains buoyant with limited vacancy and demand primarily driven by 'discounters' and grocery operators.

#### Residential

The site's connectivity to Newtownards town centre means that it is within close proximity of a host of amenities including hospital, surgery, shops and shopping centres, schools and the South Eastern Regional College. Planning permission has been granted within the bawn walls for 108 dwellings.

#### Workplace

Limited purpose-built workplace accommodation currently available in Newtownards. Neighbouring business start-up units have reached saturation with a shortage of space for small businesses.

#### Alternative Retirement Village Opportunity

Indicative plans to develop approximately 350 residential units, a medical centre, a nursing home, a spa/well-being centre and ancillary services, which are presently at an early conceptual stage.

#### Alternative Opportunity Storage and Distribution/Light Industrial Development

This asset class is seeing high levels of occupier demand in the AND council area.



# Crepe Weavers

The subject lands have previously benefitted from outline planning permission for mixed use development to include residential, nursing home, hotel, petrol filling station, neighbourhood centre, leisure and light industrial park use.

25 acres  
10.1 hectares

Land Site  
Area

Former Crepe Weavers  
Site, Comber Road  
Newtownards

## Location

This mixed use scheme covers a 25 acre site on the outskirts of Newtownards, located at the top of Strangford Lough on the Comber Road approximately 1.6km/1 mile from Newtownards town centre and 8 km/5 miles from Bangor. The subject benefits from ease of access to Belfast City Airport approximately 14.5 km/9 miles. Belfast Port is located 23 km/14 mile from the subject lands.

Newtownards is well serviced by public transport with the town's bus station located approximately 1.6km/1 mile from the area running services to Belfast city centre, Bangor and other key towns and villages.

The area is well serviced with amenities including Ards Shopping Centre and Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex.

## Description

The subject consists of 25 acres/10.1 hectares of a brownfield former industrial site which has now been cleared.

Outline planning permission was previously granted on 15 June 2015, for a mixed-use development to include residential, nursing home, hotel, petrol filling station, neighbourhood centre, leisure, business and light industrial park uses. Reference for planning; [LA06/2015/0283/O]. The subject lands are zoned as existing industry in the area plan.

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**Crepe Weavers**  
 25 acres  
 10.1 hectares

**Planning Status**

No Planning Permission - Application under consideration.

**Neighbouring Occupiers/ Assets**

Mix of residential, commercial and leisure uses.

- Newtownards Airport (Ulster Flying Club)
- Creative Bathrooms
- West Winds Primary and Nursery School
- Tesco Extra
- Matalan
- Home Bargains

**Potential Use and Opportunities**

The subject lands cover approx. 25 acres [10.1 Ha] and previously benefited from outline planning permission for mixed use development to include residential, nursing home, hotel, petrol filling station, neighbourhood centre, leisure, and light industrial park use.

A further outline planning application is currently under consideration for an updated mixed-use regeneration scheme on the brownfield site comprising residential, nursing and care village, hotel, PFS, drive thru, leisure unit, neighbourhood retail centre and hot food outlets, light industrial/storage and distribution units and business units.



**Sector Analysis for Each Use**

**Hotel**

In 2019, NI welcomed 5.3m visitors, who spent a record breaking £1bn (8% more compared with 2018). Overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors was estimated to be in excess of £3 million.

Tourism in Northern Ireland is rebounding strongly during Covid-19 recovery and the region remains a highly appealing visitor destination. Ards and North Down is well placed to capitalise on heightened demand for staycations from the domestic, NI and ROI markets in the short term, and the return of international visitors.

**Commercial/Retail/Restaurants**

The retail sector has encountered challenges in recent years, but the sector

remains stubbornly resilient and activity levels remain at positive levels. The out of town retail market remains buoyant with limited vacancy and demand primarily driven by the discounters and the grocery operators.

**Residential**

The Ards and North Down housing market is both resilient and sustainable showing a trend of steady growth year on year. Standardised house price in Ards and North for Q4 2022 was £201,171 which was an increase of 1.3% compared to Q3 2022.

There was a 12% increase in overall average house price compared to the same period of the previous year (Q4 2021).

[Source: Northern Ireland House Price Index – NISRA and Land & Property Services].





# Tourism Accommodation

In 2019, NI welcomed 5.3m visitors, who spent a record breaking £1bn [8% more compared with 2018]. Overnight trips to Northern Ireland by external visitors was estimated to be in excess of £3 million.

Tourism in Northern Ireland is set to rebound strongly during Covid recovery as restrictions have lifted and the region remains a highly appealing visitor destination. Ards and North Down is well placed to capitalise on heightened demand for staycations from the domestic, NI and ROI markets in the short term, and the return of international visitors to pre-pandemic levels.

Tourism Northern Ireland has set targets to double the value of tourism to the local economy by 2030 to £2 billion, creating 25,000 new jobs.

Note - 2019 most current national statistics available.

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### Ards and North Down Key Stats:

- 5 mins drive to George Best Belfast City Airport
- Longest coastline in Northern Ireland at 185 km
- Strangford Lough (a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) has strong visitor appeal – a unique bio-diverse nature reserve and home to thousands of marine species
- 2 Top 10 Visitor Attractions NI - Pickie FunPark and Mount Stewart ranked in the world's top 10 gardens
- Bangor Abbey, 'home' to St. Columbanus who spread Christianity throughout Europe
- World class food and drink including Comber Earlies potatoes (European protected status) and two award-winning distilleries
- Home to more award winning restaurants than any NI region outside Belfast city

### Tourism Strategy

- Accommodation stock approx. 2375 bed spaces
- Generating in the region of 115,000 overnight stays per year
- Aim to double the volume of overnight stays in commercial accommodation to 232,000 by 2030

### Our Intentions

#### To support this growth in tourism we will:

- Redevelop Bangor waterfront, creating a must-see seaside destination [see page 17]
- Whitespots Country Park, developing a new multi-use recreational facility with major visitor attractions [see page 20]
- Coastal Touring Loop, create a touring route that offers a haven of unique towns, villages and harbours steeped in history just waiting to be discovered
- Support The National Trust with further development of their unique Irish domain site at Mount Stewart
- Further develop Bangor waterfront as a centre of excellence for international sailing and water sports

### The Opportunity

#### To achieve this ambitious growth, research shows the requirement for:

- 4 star, 25-30 bedrooms (minimum) with meeting facilities, high quality restaurant/bar, small spa facility with sea/lough views, and a mid-market 3-star family-friendly hotel with minimum 70 bedrooms and events space
- Serviced accommodation (70+ rooms) including high quality licensed inns, historic luxury guest houses
- Multi-accommodation developments including unique or quirky self-catering, glamping, water based and eco-friendly accommodation.

### Support Provided

- Non-refundable grant assistance may be available
- Support within planning guidance
- Business support programmes
- Borough marketing campaigns in key markets