

Local Development Plan 2032

Technical Supplement Paper 7

Tourism



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this document

- 1.1 This technical supplement is one of a number of topic-based documents detailing the evidence base used to inform the preparation of the Ards and North Down Local Development Plan (LDP) draft Plan Strategy (DPS) 2032. This suite of documents should be read alongside the policies contained within the draft Plan Strategy, in order to understand the rationale and justification for each policy.
- 1.2 In May 2019, the Council launched the Preferred Options Paper (POP), the first of three public consultation documents which will be issued through the LDP process. The POP outlined the vision and strategic objectives of the plan based upon the baseline information detailed in a suite of position papers. The technical supplements which complement the DPS will build upon the baseline information gathered in the position papers and show how this has been progressed through the LDP process to formulate the draft Plan Strategy.
- 1.3 This technical supplement builds upon and updates the Tourism position paper and, along with the full suite of technical supplements, topic papers and associated documents, sets out the evidence base that has formulated the tourism policies in the DPS. Public consultation processes and engagement with elected members have also been taken into account. It should be noted that this is based upon the best information available at the time of compiling this position paper. Amendments may be required as new data becomes available or as a result of any changes in policy or guidance.

Planning and Tourism

- 1.4 The planning system has a key role to play in facilitating a sustainable approach to Tourism which balances tourism growth and the protection of natural and built environment. A definition of Sustainable Tourism is, 'Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'.¹

¹ The World Tourism Organisation, United Nations (UN) Tourism, www.unwto.org

2 REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

[Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2024-2027](#)

- 2.1 The Programme for Government (PfG) Framework 2024-2027 was officially agreed on the 27 February 2025. It sets out nine core priorities aimed at addressing immediate needs and laying the groundwork for transformative progress. To grow a globally competitive and sustainable economy is one of the core priorities. The Planning (NI) Act 2011 specifically requires the Local Development Plan (LDP) to take account of the PfG, and LDPs are a key delivery tool for the achievement of a number of outcomes of the programme.

[Regional Development Strategy \(RDS\) 2035](#)

- 2.2 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide future development throughout Northern Ireland. One of five elements of regional guidance set out in the RDS is to 'promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure'² (RG4) and is aimed at underpinning sustainable growth in Northern Ireland.

- 2.3 The guidance seeks to apply this sustainable approach to tourism in the following ways:

- Promote a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
- Improve facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature Destination; and
- Encourage environmentally sustainable tourism development.

[Everyone's Involved — NI Executive Sustainable Development Strategy \(2021\)](#)

- 2.4 The Northern Ireland (NI) Executive launched the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 'Everyone's Involved', on 27 May 2010, reissued on 20 July 2021. The Sustainable Development Strategy is the current regional strategic framework guiding sustainable development. It encourages integration of economic, social, and environmental goals into policy across all Northern Ireland Government departments and district councils, primarily through the Programme for Government.
- 2.5 The strategy has been designed to provide a framework that can support and inform the decisions and actions taken by individuals, groups and organisations in progressing the sustainability agenda.

² The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, Building a Better Future, Department for Regional Development (DRD), www.drdni.gov.uk

2.7. The SDS contains six Priority Areas for Action, two of which are particularly key for tourism development policy:

- 'Priority Area 1- Building a dynamic innovative economy that delivers the prosperity required to tackle disadvantages and lift communities out of poverty; and
- Priority Area 4- Striking an appropriate balance between the responsible use and protection of natural resources in support of a better quality of life and a better-quality environment.

2.8. The Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) includes Guiding Principles which are particularly relevant to sustainable tourism:

- Living within Environmental Limits – Respecting the limits of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity – to protect and improve our environment and ensure that our natural resources are unimpaired and remain so for future generations; and
- Achieving a Sustainable Economy – Building a strong, stable economy that provides prosperity and equal opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.

[The Strategic Planning Policy Statement \(SPPS\)](#)

2.8 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) was published by the Department of the Environment (DOE) in September 2015. It states that the regional strategic objectives for tourism are to:

- Facilitate sustainable tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- Contribute to the growth of the regional economy by facilitating tourism growth;
- Safeguard tourism assets from inappropriate development;
- Utilize and develop the tourism potential of settlements by supporting tourism development of an appropriate nature, location and scale in rural areas; and
- Ensure a high standard of quality and design for all tourism development.

2.9 The SPPS indicated that LDPs should: bring forward a tourism strategy, together with appropriate policies and proposals that must reflect the aim objectives and policy approach of the SPPS tailored to the specific circumstances of the plan. The SPPS states that the LDP tourism strategy should reflect wider government tourism initiatives and should address the following:

- How future tourism is best accommodated;

- Safeguarding of key tourism assets;
 - Identification of potential tourism growth areas;
 - Environmental considerations; and
 - Contribution of tourism to economic development, conservation and urban regeneration³.
- 2.10 Work on developing a Sustainable Regenerative Tourism Strategy to maximise Northern Ireland's tourism potential had been delayed as a result of COVID-19, with the focus on recovery in the Tourism Recovery Action Plan. Work in the development of a regenerative tourism strategy has recommenced.
- [Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland: 10 Year Plan, November 2023](#)
- 2.11 The draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland: 10 Year Plan sets out the vision and mission for the growth of the tourism sector in Northern Ireland over the next decade. The Vision of the Strategy is to, 'Establish Northern Ireland as a year-round world-class destination which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage and culture and which benefits communities, the economy and the environment, with sustainability at its core'.
- 2.12 The Tourism Strategy includes Case Studies, one of which is Ards and North Down's Sustainable Giants who are a collaborative group of tourism businesses who actively demonstrate commitment to providing a sustainable choice for visitors to Ards & North Down, helping to make the destination climate-ready and recognised as a sustainable destination to live, work and experience.

3 LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

[The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032](#)

- 3.1 The Big Plan is the Community Plan providing an overarching framework setting out a shared vision and ambition that Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership has agreed to work towards over the next 15 years. The vision of the plan is that Ards and North Down is a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe and prosperous place to be.
- 3.2 The overarching, cross-cutting ambition of The Big Plan is, 'To have empowered, resilient individuals and communities, to reduce inequalities; to promote good relations and sustainability; and to improve the accessibility of all public services'.

³ The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS), Planning for Sustainable Development, The Department of the Environment (DOE), September 2015, Paragraph 6.263, page 99

- 3.3. The Big Plan contains five outcomes that the Plan hopes will reflect the position of the Borough by 2032. The following are of relevance to this technical supplement. All people in Ards and North Down benefit from:
- Outcome 2: Being equipped to enjoy good health and wellbeing;
 - Outcome 3: Communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure;
 - Outcome 4: A prosperous and inclusive economy; and
 - Outcome 5: An environment that is valued, well-managed and accessible.
- 3.4 The Local Government Act 2014 through an amendment to Section 8 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 introduced a statutory requirement that the preparation of the LDP must take account of the Community Plan. The Big Plan will work in tandem with the LDP providing the spatial framework to achieve the shared vision for the Borough.

[Ards and North Down Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#)

- 3.5. The priorities of the Corporate Plan are closely aligned to those within the Big Plan, and set out a long-term vision for the Council, local organisations and communities to work towards. The delivery of the Corporate Plan seeks to achieve better outcomes for all the people of the Borough, towards the longer-term vision outlined in the Big Plan.
- 3.6. The core of this new Corporate Plan is the vision of a sustainable Borough where environmental, social and economic wellbeing are interdependent. The three priorities of the plan are increased economic growth, attracting more businesses and jobs, reduced carbon emissions as we transition to net zero and improved wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

4 EXTANT AREA PLANS

- 4.1 It should be noted that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) was adopted in September 2014 but was subsequently quashed as a result of a judgment in the Court of Appeal delivered on 18 May 2017.
- 4.2 As a consequence of this, the North Down and Ards Area Plan (NDAAP) 1984-1995, the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001, and Bangor Town Centre Plan (BTCP) 1995 are now the statutory Development Plan, with the North Down area with draft BMAP remaining a material consideration. These plans remain extant until they are replaced by the new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the Borough. The existing plans are an important consideration in the LDP process, as they provide a starting point for the review of our spatial planning options.

Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP) 2015

4.3 Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP) includes a Tourism Strategy which comprises of the following elements:

- Promoting a sustainable approach to tourism development;
- Promoting a varied range of tourism development opportunities;
- Facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure; and
- Enhancing the urban environment, in particular 'first impression' points at major gateways and in city and town centres.

4.4 The Tourism Strategy recognises the potential of Bangor's maritime location and seafront development to enhance its role as a traditional holiday resort and promote the night-time economy. Furthermore, the natural environment of the Holywood Hills, Crawfordsburn and Redburn Country Parks and the Lough shore and beaches, such as Ballyholme, are key tourism assets. The Borough also includes woodlands at Ballysallagh Wood, Clandeboye Estate and the regionally significant heritage attraction of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

4.5 Consultants Roger Tym and Partners were commissioned for dBMAP to consider tourism across all six areas contained within the BMAP area and classified the potential for tourist development in the Plan Area into three categories for tourism potential, namely Vulnerable, Sensitive and Priority Areas.

Table 1: Vulnerable, Sensitive and Priority Areas

Vulnerable	Sensitive	Priority
The Coastal Zone	The Countryside	Urban Remainder
Areas of High Scenic Value (AHSV)	Lagan Valley Regional Park Nodes and Service Centres	Rural Settlements
Conservation Areas (CAs) other than Linen, Cathedral and Belfast City Centre	Conservation Areas of Linen, Cathedral and Belfast City Centre	
Historic Parks and Gardens and Demesnes and Sites of Archaeological Interest	Areas of Townscape and Village Character (ATCs/AVCs)	
Nature Conservation and Landscape Designation, including Landscape Wedges		

Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) 2015

- 4.6 The Ards and Down Area Plan (ADAP) was adopted in 2009 and relates to the legacy Ards Borough Council area. The ADAP also recognises that tourism is an industry with excellent growth prospects in the Plan area and that this potential rests firmly on the beauty of its landscapes and the variety of interests and heritage features to be enjoyed.
- 4.7 Strangford Lough is recognised for the rarity and quality of its landscapes and offers opportunities for touring and a diversity of individual and organised recreational activities. Apart from the attractions of the countryside and the seashores, the Plan area has a great variety of other places to visit including country and forest parks, historic houses and gardens, historic monuments, visitor's centres such as Castle Espie Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Centre, near Comber and Exploris Marine Life Centre in Portaferry.
- 4.8 The ADAP suggests that Newtownards offers limited facilities for tourists, although it is instantly recognisable as the northern gateway to Strangford Lough and County Down. Newtownards is also highly accessible from the Belfast Metropolitan Area and is therefore well located to provide accommodation and related facilities which would significantly benefit the growth of the tourism industry throughout the Ards Peninsula. The proximity to Belfast offers opportunities for business tourism with hotel accommodation and conference facilities linked to recreational, cultural and landscape/activity packages.
- 4.9 The ADAP recognises that the tourism industry offers economic rewards and social benefits. Advancing its potential requires that development should not be at the expense of the natural and built environment upon which the industry relies and in which local people live. Prevailing regional planning policy provides for the protection of tourism assets. Assessment of development proposals related to tourism will take account of the impact on the plan's assets, such as scenic routes and views provided along coastal and lough shorelines.
- 4.10 The plan recognised that realising the tourism potential of the Ards district would require investment in marketing, product development and physical facilities in terms of visitor infrastructure. However, since a vibrant tourism sector depends upon a quality host environment, its growth must be based upon the provision of quality tourism facilities and accommodation that contribute to the sustainability of the industry.

5 CROSS BOUNDARY POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Throughout the LDP process it has been important to take the position of other councils and particularly our neighbouring councils into account. Ards and North Down Borough is bounded by Belfast City, Lisburn and Castlereagh City and Newry, Mourne and Down Council areas, each of which are at different stages in the formulation of their own LDP.

Table 2: Neighbouring Councils Position in relation to Tourism

Council	Document
Belfast City Council (BCC) - Tourism Strategy	<p>The Council's 'Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020' outlines the priorities to double the value of tourism to £870 million per year by 2020. There is a clear industry-wide desire to grow Belfast as a city destination within Europe, for leisure and business tourism.</p> <p>Belfast City Council (BCC) adopted its Plan Strategy (PS) on 2 May 2023.</p> <p>Policy Aims of the Plan Strategy (DPS)</p> <p>Policies within the Local Development Plan (LDP) seek to support sustainable growth in tourism, leisure and culture over the plan period and aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the sustainable growth of a vibrant tourism, leisure and cultural sector in the City Centre, which would become a high-quality European city tourism destination of choice for business conferences, family holidays and cultural experiences; • To develop a critical mass of tourism, leisure and cultural uses capable of strengthening the appeal and attraction of Belfast to a wide range of visitors, as well as providing a coherent sense of place that offers sufficient things to see and do in a compact area to maintain visitor interest; • Promoting sustainable job creation within the tourism, leisure and cultural sectors; • To plan positivity for tourism, leisure and cultural uses in mixed use development schemes that contribute to the wider regeneration of the City Centre; • Promote the sustainable development of tourism, leisure and cultural clusters within the City to maintain the spatial

	<p>compactness of the built environs to create a legible walkable City destination for tourists and visitors;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing tourism, leisure and cultural facilities that recognises the importance of the City's culture, built heritage and natural environment; • To encourage visitors to stay longer in the city centre by supporting and enhancing the evening and late nighttime economy; and • To promote a sustainable tourism travel network, ensuring good access by public transport, walking, and cycling routes that are well signposted. <p>The PS contains policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TLC1: Supporting tourism, leisure and cultural development; • TLC2: Existing tourism, leisure and cultural facilities and assets; • TLC3: Overnight visitor accommodation; and • TLC4: Evening and night-time economy.
Lisburn Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) - Tourism Strategy	<p>The Council's 'Tourism Strategy 2018-2022' is a blueprint for developing tourism across the Council area and is summarised in the Council's Vision for Tourism, 2018-2022. It identifies several development priorities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillsborough; • Lisburn Historic Quarter; • Moira (as a 'foodie' destination); • Down Royal Racecourse; • Maze Long Kesh (MLK) and a new National Museum; • Lagan Valley Regional Park and Navigation; • Castlereagh Hills; and • Dundonald International Ice Bowl.
Lisburn Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)	<p>LCCC submitted its Local Development Plan (LDP) 2032 draft Plan Strategy (DPS) to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) on 22 March 2021.</p> <p>Independent examination by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) was conducted in April and May 2022 and DFI issued a Direction on the 28th of June 2023 directing the Council to adopt the DPS with the modifications specified in the Direction. The Plan Strategy was adopted on the 26 September 2023.</p>

Strategic Policy 13 states that the Plan will support development proposals that 'Plan Objective D' outlines those actions the Council will adopt to drive sustainable tourism, open space, sport & recreation within the Council area:

- 1) Support and develop tourism infrastructure as a key growth area;
- 2) Facilitate tourism development whilst protecting heritage assets, encouraging development in appropriate locations, including a wide range of tourist accommodation;
- 3) Safeguard key tourism/recreation assets from inappropriate development;
- 4) Support the recreation and leisure offer to grow in a sustainable manner;
- 5) Protect and enhance open space recognising its value in promoting health and well-being and resolving flood issues through the introduction of sustainable urban Drainage infrastructure; and
- 6) Support and encourage accessibility to open space including the Lagan Valley Regional Park and Lagan Navigation, as key assets within the Council area.

Operational Policy – Strategic Policy 16 Tourism

The Plan will support development proposals that:

- a) Promotes a sustainable approach to tourist development and accommodation across the district;
- b) Safeguard key tourism assets; and
- c) Provide further opportunities for tourism growth having regard to the environment recognising its contribution to economic development, conservation and urban regeneration.

TOU1: Tourism Development in Settlements;

TOU2: Proposals for Tourism Amenity in the Countryside;

TOU3: Proposals for Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside;

TOU4: Self-Catering Tourist Accommodation in the Countryside;

TOU5: Holiday Parks in the Countryside;

TOU6: Proposals for Major Tourism Development in the Countryside;

TOU7: General Criteria for Tourism Development; and

	TOU8: Safeguarding Tourism Assets.
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMD) - Tourism Strategy	<p>The Council's 'Tourism Strategy 2017-2021', published in January 2021 contains the vision of Newry, Mourne & Down is a premier, year-round mountain and maritime destination in Ireland, recognised for its EPIC experiences in outdoor adventure, its rich tapestry of cultural heritage, myths and unique stories, and its authentic local life.</p> <p>The strategy focuses on Redefining our destination experience focus – 'Mountains, Myths and Maritime'.</p>
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMD)	<p>NMD launched their draft Plan Strategy on the 27 June 2025.</p> <p>The LDP Tourism Strategy seeks to manage the provision of sustainable tourism in appropriate locations whilst taking account of the historic environment and natural heritage. There is a diverse and rich offering of tourism assets, accommodation and amenities across the district.</p> <p>Strategic Policy TS1 Sustainable Tourism The Plan will support tourism development proposals that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a sustainable approach to tourism development, including tourist accommodation and tourist amenities to meet future demand; • Protect and safeguard existing tourism assets; and • Contribute to sustainable economic development, urban regeneration and conservation. <p>Policy TOU1 Tourism Development in Settlements Policy TOU2 Tourist Amenities in the Countryside Policy TOU3 Hotels, Guest Houses, B&Bs, Tourist Hostels and Bunkhouses in the Countryside Policy TOU4 Major Tourism Development in the Countryside – Exceptional Circumstances Policy TOU5 Self-Catering Accommodation in the Countryside Policy TOU6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside Proposed Policy TOU7 New and Extended Glamping Accommodation in the Countryside</p>

- 5.2 The Council has engaged with each neighbouring Council's POP consultation as well as the DPS consultations of Belfast City Council and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.
- 5.3 Most recently, online engagement on the Council's draft Plan Strategy was held with the three neighbouring councils in March 2025. This included discussion around the proposed growth strategy, strategic housing and employment land allocation, settlement hierarchy, strategic approach to climate change and mitigation, alongside operational policies. This included the identification of specific cross-boundary issues.

6 OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Blue: Green Creatively Connected – Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030

- 6.1 The Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development represents the Council's vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough and centres around three key aims to create jobs, increase economic productivity and increase visitor overnight trips and expenditure.
- 6.2 The Strategy identifies a number of tourism opportunities in the Borough, such as the promotion of themed routes and trails along the coast, developing a diverse range of visitor accommodation, investing in the public realms of towns and villages and bringing heritage buildings back into sustainable use. These actions are to be achieved via an integrated approach involving the Council, external partners and private individuals.
- 6.3 This Strategy identifies that Ards and North Down has three particular strengths:
- The natural landscape of sea, loughs and land – a Blue Green Space. This provides a home to nature, beautiful scenery, natural produce and a place of inspiration for all our artists and creators. It is ingrained in our heritage and an important part of making the Borough, a great place to be;
 - The creativity of our people shaped from earlier to present day producers, artisans, designers and engineers. Engagement of our people, young and old, in purposeful, productive and creative endeavor across the Borough will be key for the future; and
 - Our proximity to places of opportunity, for example Belfast, neighbouring districts and also to the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, and then to Europe and the world beyond.

- 6.4 The Strategy recognises that the Blue and Green Economies are increasingly important models of economic growth on the global stage. They place the sustainability of our natural environment at the heart of approaches to prosperity through careful stewardship, the minimisation of harm and the pursuit of economic opportunities associated with our landscape. In doing so, they also move us closer towards a circular economy that derives local value from our local assets.
- 6.5 The value of our natural and built heritage is such that economic growth is required to be managed carefully, so that prosperity is brought to the Borough and its people without negatively impacting upon the environment. In fact, through good governance, planning, design and stewardship, all development should contribute positively to the physical richness and diversity of Ards and North Down. In other words, enhancing the quality of the environment and our economic prosperity are complementary, rather than competing objectives.

[Food Destination Development Plan for Ards and North Down 2018-2021](#)

- 6.6 The Food Destination Plan contains recognition that food destination development forms an integral part of the wider visitor offer in the UK, Republic of Ireland and throughout Europe. The creation of a unique food tourism product differentiates a place from its competitors and provides a compelling reason to visit, to stay longer and to spend more.
- 6.7 A key outcome of the Food Destination Development Plan will be to create a commercially viable sector which significantly contributes to the delivery of targets for visitor numbers, visitor spend, and jobs outlined in the Integrated Strategy for Regeneration, Tourism and Economic Development. This outcome is to be achieved through a variety of actions, including the appointment of a Food and Drink Development Officer, rollout of a food and drink branding strategy and the establishment of 'Food Hubs.'
- 6.8 The Food Destination Development Plan 2018-2021 identified Comber, Donaghadee and Portavogie as settlements that have the capacity to deliver on food experience development opportunities whilst Bangor and Portaferry act as important 'gateway points.'

[Destination Strangford Lough – Tourism Management Plan 2013-2018](#)

- 6.9 This document was produced in 2013 by the legacy Ards and Down Councils. The NI Visitor Attitudes Survey identified that the appeal of Strangford Lough lies with families and individuals who wish to spend time somewhere they know well, that offers beautiful scenery and the chance to get close to nature and the natural environment.

- 6.10 The strengths of the area include the history and heritage including named historic properties, wildlife, and the beauty of the area including the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 6.11 The Destination Strangford Lough Tourism Plan objective is to maximise Strangford Lough's potential to attract and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more, by strengthening tourism performance and appeal across the whole of the Strangford Lough destination. This objective is to be achieved by implementation of the following four themes:
- Investment and Infrastructure;
 - Marketing and Promotion;
 - Distinctive visitor experiences; and
 - Building Business Engagement and Sustainability.
- 6.12 If successful, the outcomes of the plan should include increasing the appeal of the Lough region and increasing the revenue to tourism businesses in the area – thereby creating employment opportunities and increasing the Strangford Lough market share. The website www.visitstrangfordlough.co.uk provides a central resource for the potential visitor to research accommodation, activities, food and special offers.

7 PROFILE OF TOURISM IN ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

- 7.1 Located only a 20-minute drive from Belfast and in very close proximity to George Best Belfast City Airport, the Borough is ideally placed to benefit from both domestic tourism and visitors from further afield. With over 100 miles of coastline, much of the Borough's tourism assets revolve around the unique and varied seascapes.
- 7.2 These include the North Down coastal path, a 16-mile stretch from Holywood to Portavogie and the Peninsula coast road which winds down through towns and villages featuring harbours, antique shops, cafes, and pubs. The coastline also provides opportunities for a wide range of outdoor activities, such as water sports, sailing, walking, cycling, and fishing.
- 7.3 Visitor Infrastructure Centres are located in Newtownards and Bangor, with seasonal centres at Cockle Row Cottages (Groomsport) and Portaferry, with additional information on attractions and practical matters available on the website: www.visitardsandnorthdown.com.

Activity Tourism

- 7.4 Opportunities for Activity Tourism are in abundance in the Borough. Strangford Lough is a huge salt-water body separated from the sea by the Ards Peninsula and is a haven for angling enthusiasts whether it is by the shore or in one of the many chartered boats which can be hired for the purpose of fishing.
- 7.5 The island-studded sea lough is the largest inlet in the UK and Ireland covering 80 square nautical miles. It is approached from the Irish Sea through the fast-running tidal narrows which require a high level of expertise from the experienced paddler. By contrast, the calmer waters of the main shallow basin further north gave this Lough its old Irish name, Lough Cuan, meaning sheltered haven. Here paddlers will find a myriad of channels and routes to explore, as well as the chance to discover some of the country's finest scenery.
- 7.6 There are nine recognised canoe trails in Northern Ireland, one of which is directly accessible within the Ards and North Down Council area. There are numerous yacht and sailing clubs dotted along the maritime coastline, such as Ballyholme, Groomsport, Donaghadee, Holywood, Kircubbin, Newtownards and Cultra. Strangford Lough provides the challenges of coastal sailing, while encouraging exploration and relaxed cruising around the shores and islands.
- 7.7 There are currently 12 golf courses in the Borough, ranging from links to parkland, and championship to 9-hole courses.
- 7.8 There are a number of cycling routes throughout the Borough including a trail around the interior shores of Strangford Lough, the linear Comber Greenway, a circular route around Portaferry and also shorter routes between Whiterock and Killinchy.
- 7.9 There are also many equestrian centres in the Council area which provide experienced riders and novices with the opportunity to enjoy trekking and horse-riding activities.

Residential Activity Breaks

- 7.10 There are three facilities offering residential activity breaks in the Borough. Ganaway Activity Centre offers two-day residential breaks for school groups and visitors which includes accommodation, catering and outdoor activities such as caving, high ropes, abseiling and archery. Further accommodation for youth groups is also provided at Lorne Girl Guiding Centre, outside Holywood and Crawfordsburn Scout Centre.

Events Tourism

- 7.11 Events have an important and strategic role to play in delivering higher visitor numbers and increased spend in Northern Ireland. Event led short breaks are one of Tourism NI's key market segments. Whether home-grown events or major one-off international events, events in general have the capability to showcase our people and places on a global stage. They also have the capacity to increase civic pride. Ards and North Down have hosted a range of successful music events, including Eminem, Snow Patrol, Bono amongst others within Ward Park, Bangor and as part of the Open House Music Festival.

8 TOURISM STATISTICS

- 9.7 The Tourism industry across Northern Ireland was impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic, as was the collection of information, as a result, some statistics for tourism are not available. More information on the impact of the pandemic on tourism information is available⁴.

Visitor Attractions within Ards and North Down

- 8.2 Ards and North Down attractions frequently appear in Northern Ireland's top ten visitor attractions list, namely Pickie Fun Park and Mount Stewart House and Gardens. Table 3 and Graph 1 shows the visitor numbers for these attractions before, during and after the global pandemic.
- 8.3 It should be noted that the figures presented in Table 3 only include those attractions that choose to participate and make the results public. Country Parks are also excluded from the statistics but are very popular attractions in the Borough, most notably Crawfordsburn Country Park and Scrabo Country Park.

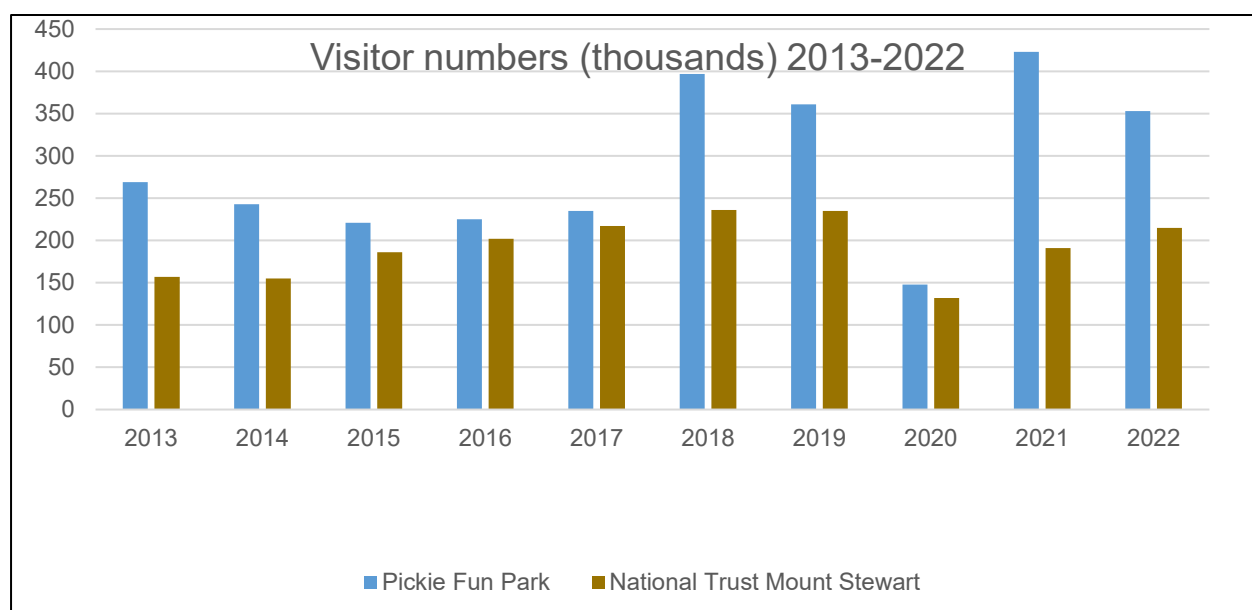
⁴ [Impact-of-COVID19-on-Tourism-Statistics-in-NI.pdf](#)

Table 3: Top 10 Northern Ireland Visitor Attractions (thousands)

Rating	Visitor Attraction	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change
1	Titanic Belfast	604	634	622	667	760	815	823	150	224	611	173%
2	Derry Walls	411	370	381	403	419	424	0	0	415	577	39%
3	Giant's Causeway	754	788	851	944	1012	1039	998	139	106	422	298%
4	Ulster Museum	416	466	465	460	533	585	522	0	127	387	203%
5	Pickie Fun Park	269	243	221	225	235	397	361	148	423	353	-17%
6	Guildhall (Derry City and Strabane District Council)	269	299	313	334	350	370	0	0	110	321	191%
7	W5 Science and Discovery Centre	270	324	372	370	323	318	277	36	34	277	718%
8	Ballyronan Marina	0	190	185	192	221	221	263	174	279	263	-6%
9	Centre for Contemporary Art Derry~Londonderry	0	0	4	6	0	7	0	167	342	241	-30%
10	National Trust Mount Stewart	157	155	186	202	217	236	235	132	191	215	13%

Source: NISRA

Graph 1 - Visitor numbers to Pickie and Mount Stewart between 2013-2022



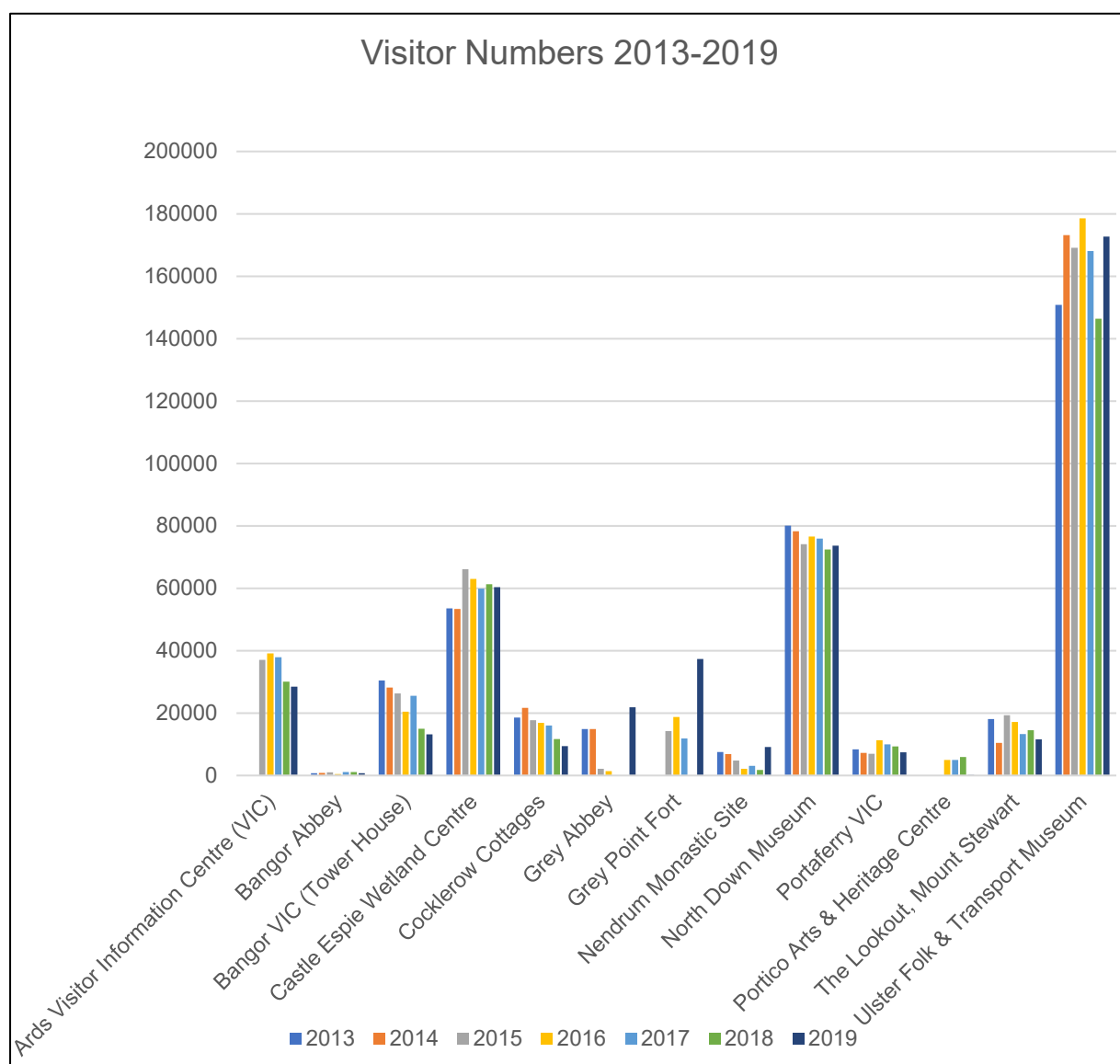
Source: NISRA

- 8.4 Graph 1 shows that visitor numbers to Pickie Fun Park and Mount Stewart increased until the years impacted by the Covid 19 Pandemic and have since recovered.
- 8.5 The borough offers a broad range of type and size of attractions, Table 4 shows attendance numbers of several. The table shows that visitor numbers vary annually (accurate visitor numbers are not available for all attractions every year). Available figures do show that visitors enjoy the natural assets of the Borough.

Table 4: Visitor Attractions and their Number of Visitors

Visitor Attraction	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Ards Visitor Information Centre (VIC)	*	*	37,058	39,100	37,864	30,041	28,451
Bangor Abbey	757	797	1,016	490	1,099	1,081	712
Bangor VIC (Tower House)	30,441	28,183	26,316	20,471	25,543	14,969	13,154
Castle Espie Wetland Centre	53,571	53,400	66,071	62,962	59,925	61,296	60,353
Cocklerow Cottages	18,587	21,639	17,714	16,908	16,051	11,697	9,385
Grey Abbey	14,896	14,912	2,178	1,366	*	*	21,870
Grey Point Fort	*	*	14,190	18,740	11,841	*	37,349
Nendrum Monastic Site	7,506	6,835	4,764	2,163	3,125	1,793	9,157
North Down Museum	80,034	78,264	74,139	76,561	75,944	72,445	73,664
Portaferry VIC	8,350	7,270	6,930	11,311	10,017	9,286	7,422
Portico Arts & Heritage Centre	*	*	*	5,000	5,000	5,900	200
The Lookout, Mount Stewart	18,111	10,470	19,352	17,188	13,263	14,503	11,613
Ulster Folk & Transport Museum	150,852	173,188	169,173	178,608	168,077	146,425	172,712

Graph 2 - Visitor numbers 2013-2019

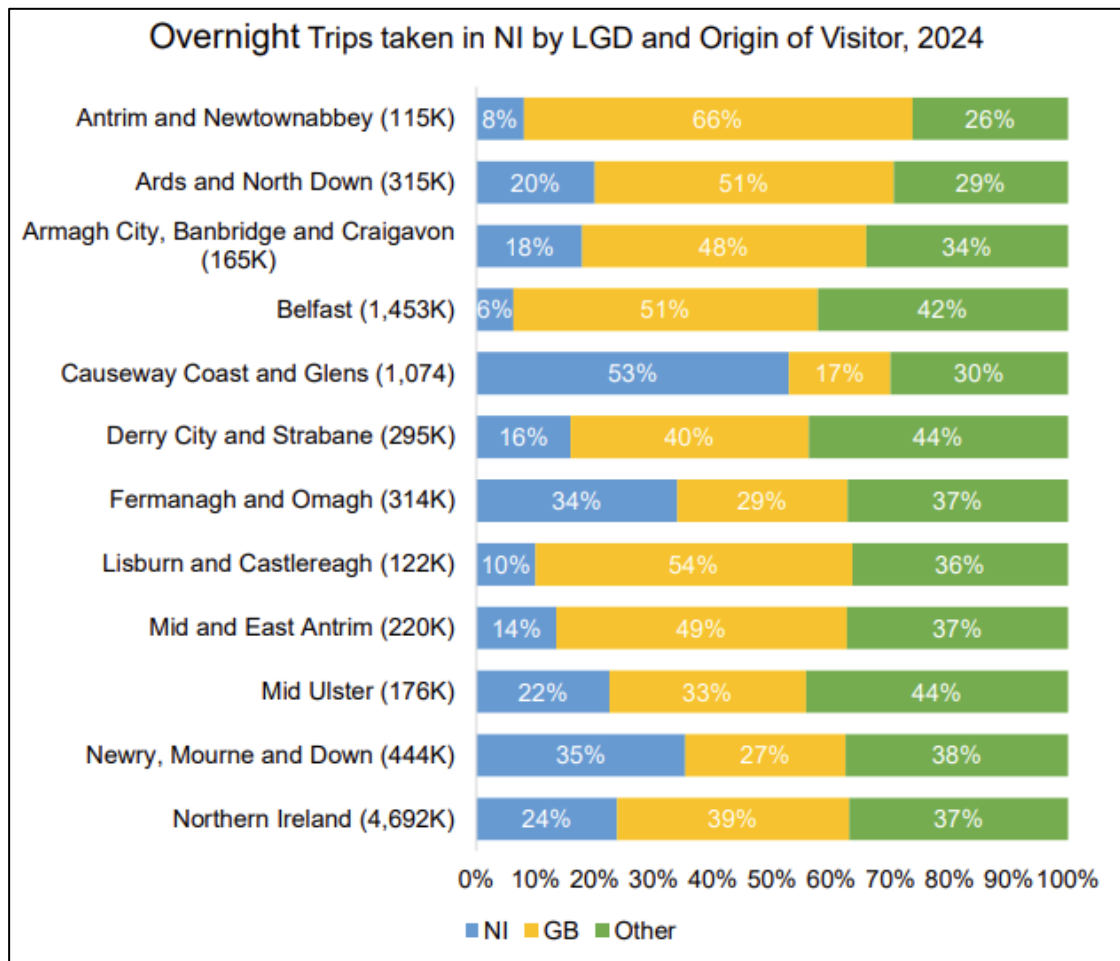


Accommodation

Visitors to Ards and North Down

- 8.6 According to the Local Government District (LGD) Tourism Statistics 2019, Ards and North Down ranks fifth in terms of the number of overnight trips secured in 2019. Whilst the overnight trip figure of 312,000 is considerably lower than Belfast and Causeway Coast and Glens (Belfast alone retains 30% of the overall visitor share), the Borough performs favourably compared to other Council areas that are much greater in geographical area such as Mid Ulster, and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon. Furthermore, the expenditure associated with overnight trips in 2019 was £52 million placing Ards and North Down in seventh place overall.

Table 5 – Overnight Trips taken in NI



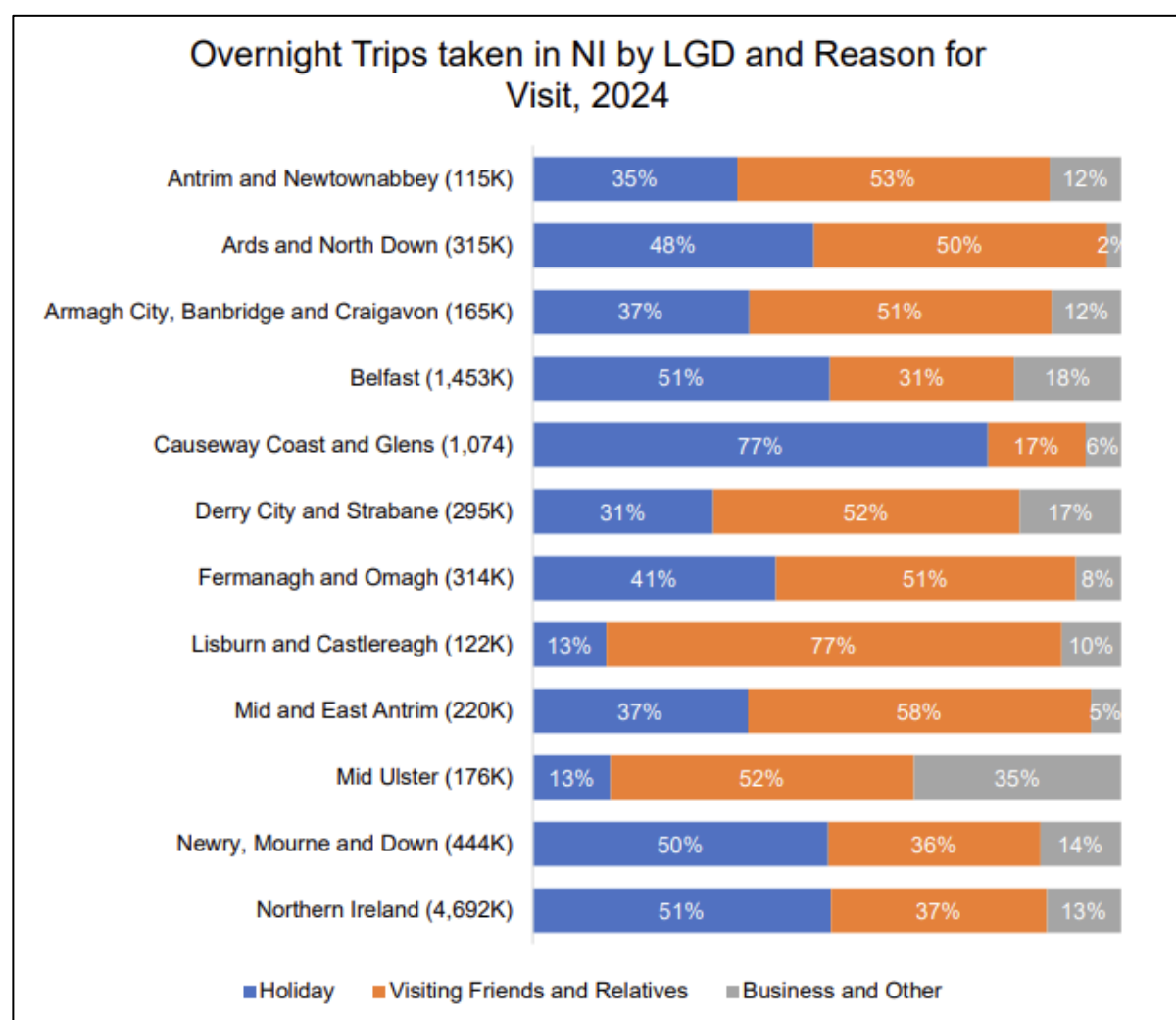
Source: NISRA

Figure 1: Reason for Visit to Ards and North Down (2019)



Source: NISRA

Figure 2: Proportion of Visitors in LGD by reason for visit (rolling average 2017-2019)

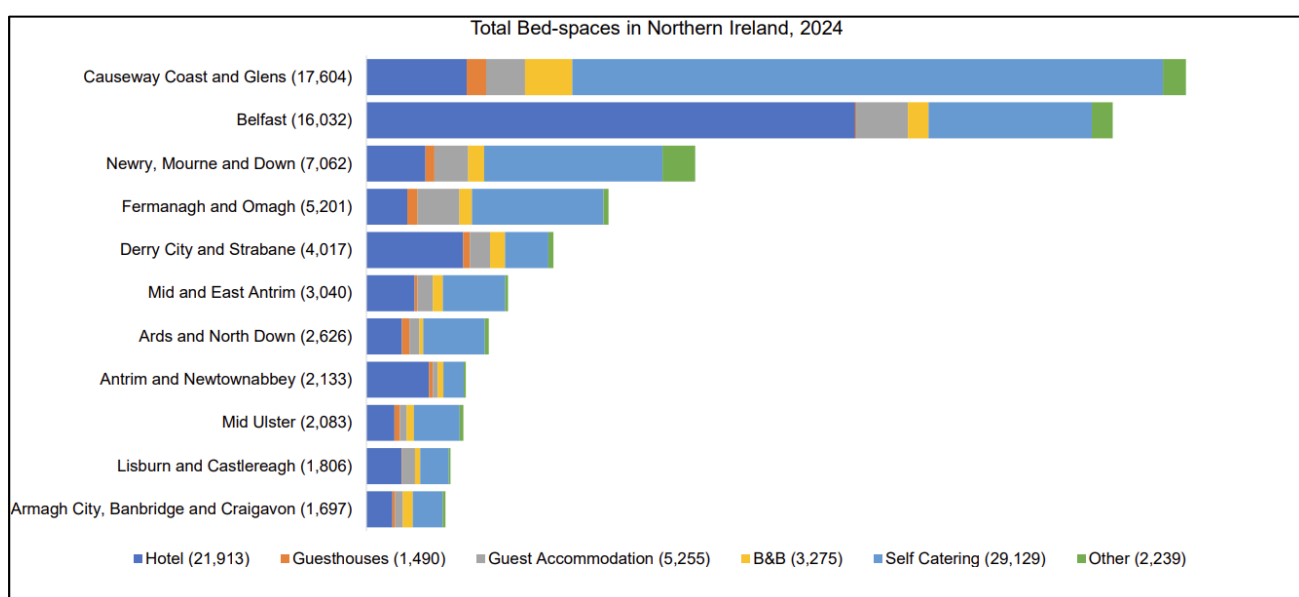


Source: NISRA

Accommodation Stock

- 8.7 Figure 3 shows the full range of accommodation available in Ards and North Down in 2024. Figure 4 depicts how the hotel accommodation stock in Ards and North Down compares to that elsewhere in Northern Ireland. The low volume of room availability and uptake is partly related to the small number of hotels in the Borough. In 2019 Figure 4 shows that Ards and North Down contained only 4% of hotels rooms and in 2024 most recent figures show that there are 8 hotels which correlates to 6% of NI's hotels.

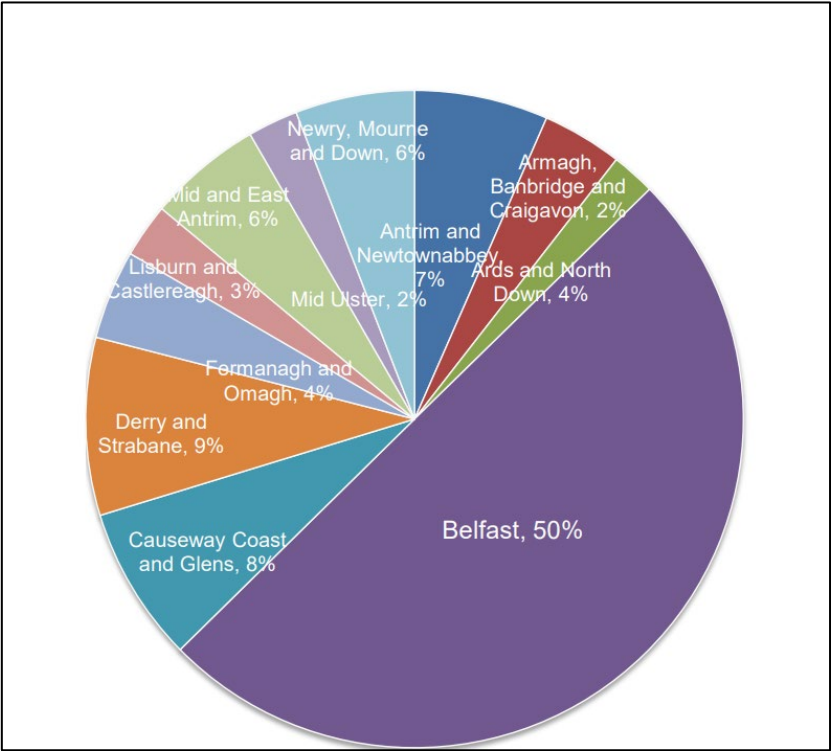
Figure 3 – Total bed spaces in Northern Ireland 2024



Source: NISRA

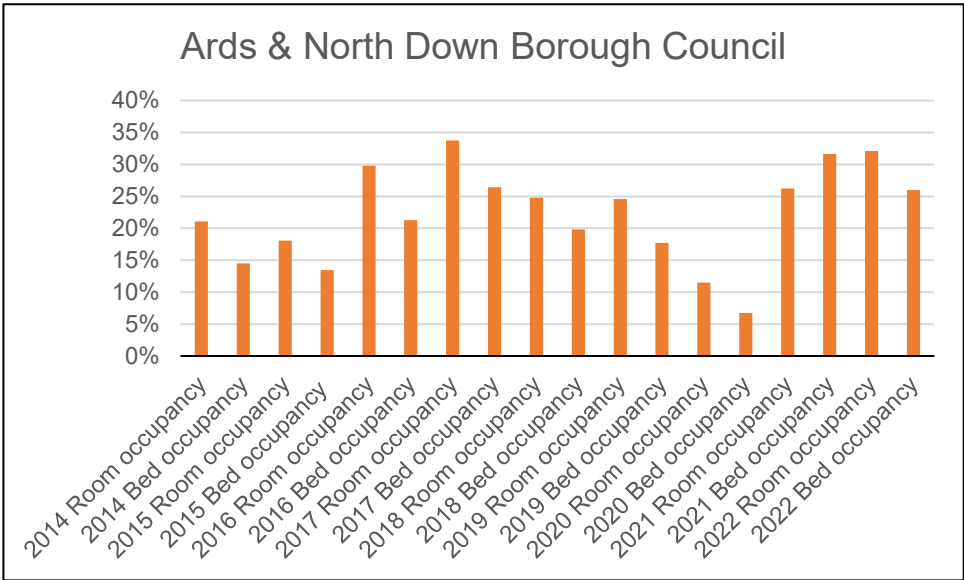
- 8.8 Bed and Breakfasts and smaller establishments supplement tourist accommodation in the Borough. Graph 3 shows the occupancy of rooms in this sector of tourism accommodation. The impact of Covid 19 is clear as are the peaks and troughs of guest numbers.

Figure 4 - Hotel Room Stock by LGD (2019)



Source: Annual Hotel Occupancy Survey 2019 (nisra.gov.uk)

Graph 3 - Guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, Small bed occupancy graph 2014-2022



Source: Tourism NI and self-catering survey

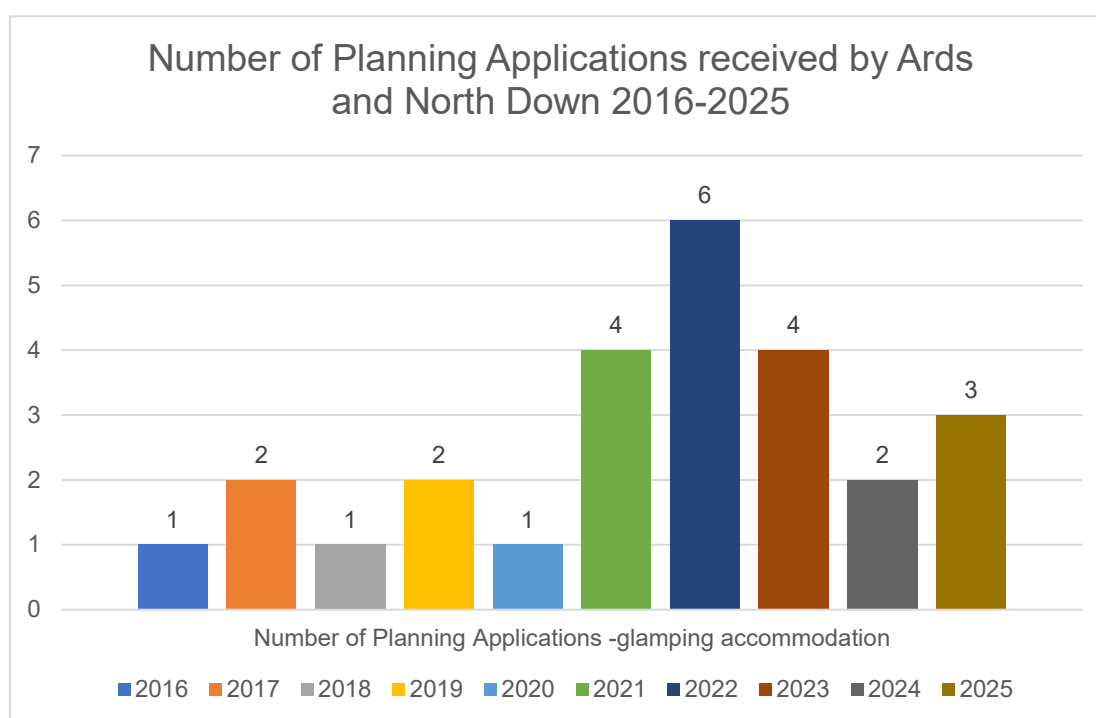
Holiday Parks

- 8.9 Accommodation type that has not been included in the figures, but features within the accommodation offered by the Borough, is Caravan/Holiday Parks, which are very popular on the eastern coastline, stretching from Groomsport at the north, to Portaferry at the south. There are a number of council-licenced caravan parks in Millisle, Ballywalter, Cloughey and Portaferry.
- 8.10 There are also a number of park home sites in Cloughey, Ballyhalbert and Groomsport. It should be noted that these are normally owner-occupied, semi-permanent residences and therefore may not make a contribution to the overall tourist accommodation stock in the Borough.

Glamping

- 8.11 Within Ards and North Down there have been several applications for tourism development in the form of pods, huts, yurts, tents, mobile cabins, and self-catering units. Graph 4 shows the details of planning applications for this type of development across the Borough.

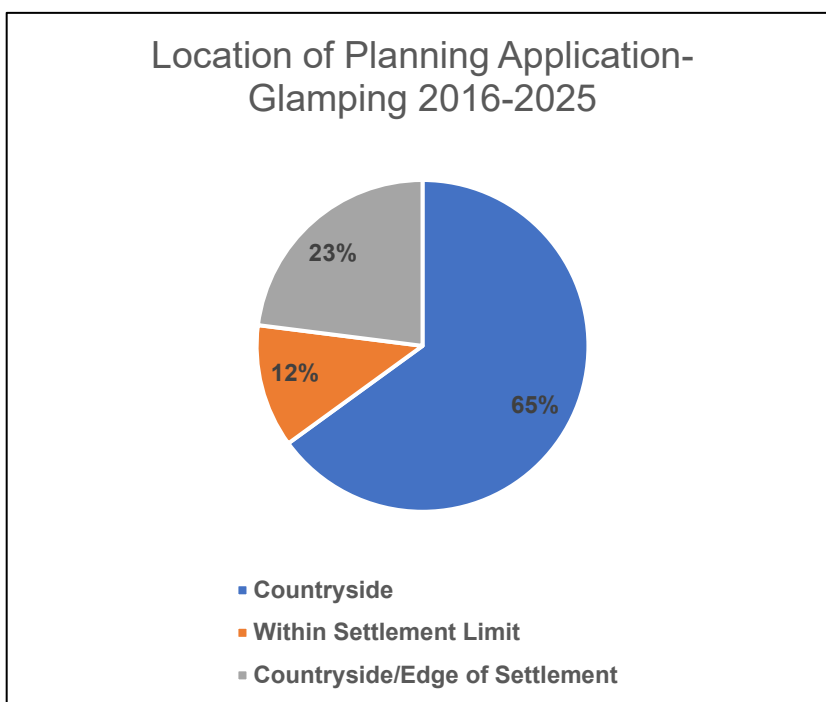
Graph 4 - Number of planning applications received 2016-2025



Source: NISRA

- 8.12 The location of these applications has been reviewed, and the pie chart below shows that the majority are located within the countryside, with only 23% of applications for glamping being located within settlement limits and 12% of applications are situated at the edge of a settlement.

Figure 5 - Location of Planning Application Glamping



Source: NISRA

- 8.13 Figure 5 which shows the location of planning applications which have included Glamping accommodation between 2016 and 2025⁵.

[Jobs created by Tourism](#)

- 8.14 Figure 6 illustrates the numbers of people employed in tourism-related jobs in the Borough compared to the NI totals and this is followed by a graph (Graph 5) to illustrate the totals.

⁵ 2025 applications- January -September 2025

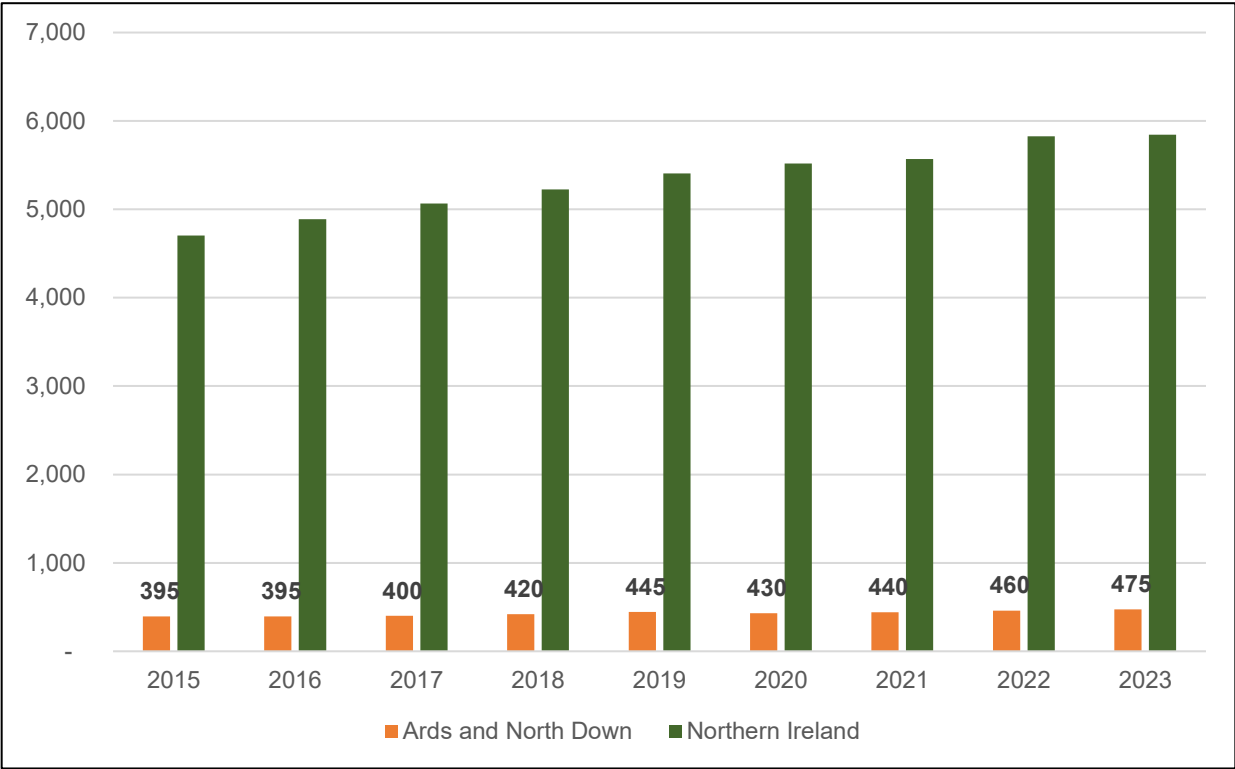
Figure 6: Employee Jobs in Tourism Characteristic Industries by LGD (2019)



Source: NISRA

- 8.15 The figures illustrate that tourism is a key employer in the Borough and there has been growth in the number of people employed across many areas of the tourism sector, particularly transport, food and beverage serving activities, as well as sport and recreation. The Northern Ireland trend shows a small level of growth across most areas of the tourism sector. This is in contrast to Ards and North Down, where the growth is more intensely focused on the key areas of sporting and recreation as well as food and beverage serving activities, with a significant fall in employment in transport and accommodation for visitors. There is opportunity for growth in the visitor accommodation sector and also to build upon the positive rate of growth in the food and beverage area.

Graph 5 - Number of Tourism Related Businesses in Ards and North Down and Northern Ireland



Source: NISRA

9 BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL

- 9.1 The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) was signed in December 2021. The Deal represents a new way of working between central and local government and regional partners and secures a bespoke package of investment from central government and the BRCD partners of more than £850 million to support the delivery of our shared vision of an ‘Inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region’.
- 9.2 It was confirmed in January 2023 that Ards and North Down Borough Council will receive £40million from the Belfast Region City Deal.

10 QUEENS PARADE

- 10.1 The Queen's Parade area of Bangor waterfront is to be developed by Bangor Marine Ltd. It is a flagship project with the Department for Communities (DfC) leading on the of the Queen's Parade area of Bangor.

10.2 Bangor Marine Ltd (a joint venture between Oaklands Holdings and the Karl Group) was appointed by the Department for Communities and the Council as the preferred developer of the site in May 2019 and planning permission for a mixed-used development was granted in September 2022. The project includes a £50m private investment that will deliver:

- A 67-bed hotel with spa/ swimming pool;
- 138 new homes (37 x 1 beds/ 98 x 2 beds/ 3 x 3 beds);
- Over 6000m² of office space;
- 1,858m² of food and beverage/ retail opportunities;
- A destination/ cinema building;
- 1,208m² indoor activity space;
- 255 space car parks; and
- Marine Gardens public realm and open space.

11 URBAN WATERFRONT PUBLIC REALM DEVELOPMENT

11.1 The Council is also progressing ambitious plans to redevelop a 2.2 mile stretch of the seafront to help establish Bangor as a thriving town and prime visitor attraction in Northern Ireland. Bangor's coastline and stunning sea views are some of the city's most significant selling points. It is being led by the Council and is due to receive circa £40M of funding from Belfast Region City Deal. The remaining investment will come from the Council (£20M) and the private sector (£12M).

12 WHITESPOTS COUNTRY PARK DEVELOPMENT

12.1 There are redevelopment plans for Whitespots Country Park, which is located between Bangor and Newtownards, only 13miles/ 21kms from Belfast City Centre. Whitespots is at the centre of a network of greenways and set in a country park (80.55 acres/32.6 hectares) with breathtaking countryside and Lough shore views.

12.2 In March 2022, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister, Edwin Poots, announced £7.4million for the Whitespots Country Park project, which will support the creation of the park at the old industrial lead mines site between Newtownards and Bangor. Whitespots has a unique history and heritage, is a designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest due to lead mining in the early 19th century, and with the Clandeboye Estate 1st World War training camp, the Somme Museum is the gateway to the site.

13 PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER (POP)

- 13.1 The Council's Preferred Options Paper, (POP) published in 2019 was the first formal stage in the preparation of the LDP for the Borough. It was designed to promote debate in relation to key strategic planning issues arising in the area. The POP identified 42 key planning issues and examined options for addressing these issues. In each case, a preferred option was highlighted and the rationale for selection of this option was given.
- 12.2 The POP also includes a review of the existing operational planning policies, largely contained within the suite of Planning Policy Statements. This review stimulated public debate on whether the existing policies are still suitable or whether a different approach would be more appropriate to meet local circumstances.
- 12.3 Following a minor revision to the online version of the POP, the 12-week consultation period was relaunched and therefore the total consultation period from the official launch was 19 weeks.

POP Representations

- 13.4 Tourism was Key Issue 37 in the Preferred Option was Option 37b: Support appropriate sustainable tourism developments throughout the Borough. There was support for the approach presented which included a Tourism Hierarchy and tourism development across the Borough based on the tiers within it. The POP Tourism Hierarchy is contained in Figure 7.

Figure 7 - Extract from the Preferred Options Paper showing the Tourism Hierarchy

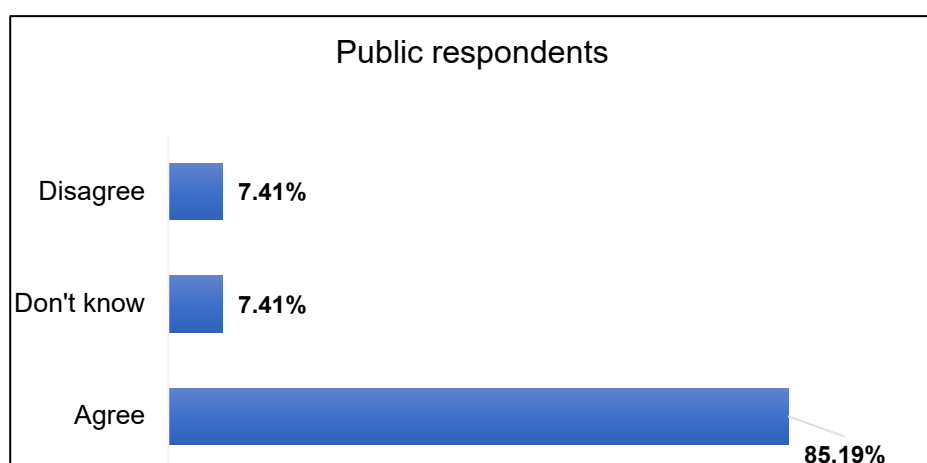
Vulnerable Areas: Areas where tourism development should not be approved to protect the tourism asset

Sensitive Areas: Areas where tourism should be strictly controlled to respect the local environment and particular characteristics of area

Priority Areas: Largely urban based areas where the majority of development for tourism uses will be expected to locate

Vulnerable Areas	Sensitive Areas	Priority Areas
The Coastal Zone	Countryside	Edge of Settlement
Conservation Areas	Areas of Townscape Character/Areas of Village Character	
Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes	Strangford and Lecale AONB	
Internationally and Nationally designated landscapes	Locally designated landscape sites	
Craigantlet Area of High Scenic Value		
Nendrum Area of Special Archaeological Interest		

Graph 6 - Public response to the Tourism strategy contained within the POP



- 12.5 Whilst there was support for sustainable tourism development, there were queries raised regarding the implementation of the Hierarchy. Comments were received in relation to the position of Historic Environment within the Hierarchy. The views expressed included that the setting of heritage assets such as Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes should be protected, and proposals should be allowed where they would secure the long-term future of a significant place (e.g. historic).
- 12.6 There was a desire to see ecotourism and the promotion of events to attract visitors. Others stated that they understood the economic drivers and benefits of tourism. However, parts of the Council area are particularly sensitive and therefore should not be compromised by tourist developments.
- 12.7 DfI Planning stated that the Council's acknowledgement that the majority of the tourism potential in the Borough exists along the coastline and in rural areas, therefore appears to conflict with the proposed tourism classification. Regional policy directs the safeguarding of tourism assets from unnecessary, inappropriate or excessive development, and identifies how this is a vital element in maintaining a healthy tourism industry.
- 12.8 DfI Planning also suggested that tourist amenities should also be steered towards locations benefitting from good accessibility to public transport provision, and wherever feasible, by walking and cycling. DfI questioned whether the preferred option is compatible with other policy areas, in particular, the approach to Coastal Management.
- 12.9 DfI Rivers advised that tourist facilities (other than water-compatible development) should not be located within areas at risk from flooding. The Department for the Economy (DfE) advised that they are content that the approach outlined seeks to achieve sustainable tourism growth coupled with the preservation of the built and natural assets. This approach is sensitive to the preservation of the natural environment while seeking to enable communities to prosper sustainably.
- 12.10 Natural Environment Division (NED) advised that clarification was required for Vulnerable Areas and the term 'Countryside', querying the policy test used to determine approval or refusal for a development proposal in such an area.

14 CONSULTEE AND COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT

- 14.1 In order to meet the requirements of Planning Act relating to the need for the Plan Strategy to take account of the RDS, other policy and guidance issued by

the Department and other relevant government strategies and plans, Council has engaged key consultees representing relevant central government departments and agencies.

- 14.2 Representatives from relevant Council departments have also been engaged to ensure that due account has been taken of Council's Community Plan, as well as other Council strategies and initiatives. Officers from the LDP team have taken part in a series of Community Plan Thematic Group meetings and engagement events. Furthermore, members of the Community Plan team have also attended LDP workshops and sustainability appraisal.
- 14.3 The Planning Act requires the Plan Strategy to be adopted by resolution of the Council, following approval by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Accordingly, Elected Members have also been engaged in the development of draft Plan Strategy to ensure that the document is generally aligned with the Council's strategic priorities. This engagement was facilitated through two separate workshops, one delivered in person and the other two delivered remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- 14.4 The first workshop on 20 March 2018 introduced public utilities and waste and the links to the planning system and the LDP. The second event was centred around policy development and took place on 15 October 2019. Associated topic papers were produced for members to consider in respect of all of these events. A further paper was presented to Council showing tourism policy development following discussion with Development Management colleagues.

15 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

- 15.1 Tourism planning policy was discussed with members of the Development Management Planning team. Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism contains policy for tourism development. It was suggested that this policy works well overall. There was discussion regarding the definition of proximity in the context of tourism development policy and clarification was requested. In addition, the difficulties encountered where units which receive planning approval for a tourism use, later become a residential unit, despite the design being unsuitable for this particular use. There was also discussion regarding glamping accommodation and the need for a specific policy, currently applications for glamping accommodation were assessed using TSM 6 New holiday parks and extension of existing sites.

16 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

- 16.1 The formal Sustainability Appraisal process was undertaken by the LDP team and Shared Environmental Services (SES) in March and April 2024. The Councils preferred policies and proposals were appraised against reasonable alternatives. The process proved useful in further refining policies in relation to sustainability objectives. The Tourism Hierarchy and the position of sites protected due to their natural environment value was discussed. The Local Development Plan role in protecting the environment whilst also facilitating appropriate tourism development was discussed.
- 16.2 Post Sustainability Appraisal (SA), a number of amendments to policy were made and brought before Planning Committee for agreement in 2024, with final approval secured at a Special Planning Committee meeting held on 20 January 2025 and ratified at the full Council meeting on 29 January 2025.

17 DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY APPROACH

- 17.1 The fundamental approach of the draft Plan Strategy is to support the aims and objectives of the RDS and the SPPS. The draft plan strategy has been informed by the POP responses and all of the other methods of engagement that are described above. The Tourism Hierarchy is divided into three areas which direct tourism development across the Borough to the most appropriate locations. The 'Priority Areas' are where the majority of development for tourism uses will be expected to locate. 'Sensitive Areas' are areas where tourism should be controlled to respect the local environment and particular characteristics of the area. 'Protected Areas' are the areas within the Borough that are considered to be unsuitable for tourism development.
- 17.2 Consideration was given to the Tourism Hierarchy and the position within the tiers for a range of areas. The POP responses from the public and statutory consultees focused primarily on the treatment of historic environment assets, the coast and the appropriate protection that should be offered to the natural environment.
- 17.3 We noted the responses regarding a potential perceived conflict between tourism development and coastal management. The consideration of the extensive coastline of the Borough within the DPS includes the suite of Coastal Policies, including the designation of the Undeveloped Coastal Zone (UCZ). It is considered appropriate to recognise that tourism development within the Tourism Hierarchy Priority Areas, direct tourism related

development within the coastal settlement limits in the Borough. The UCZ is applicable outside these settlements.

- 17.4 The natural environment is an attractive tourism asset, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The Natural Environment chapter contains relevant planning policies. Sites that are subject to natural environment designations, are positioned in the Tourism Hierarchy in the tier that contains the most protection, acknowledging the sensitivity of the natural environment. Permission for tourism development is excluded unless in exceptional circumstances.
- 17.5 The Tourism Hierarchy recognises that features of the historic environment can be benefited by appropriate tourism development. The hierarchy contains a range of historic features within the Middle Tier which offers flexibility for proposals which meet the policies for the Historic Environment within this document. The suite of tourism policies within the draft Plan Strategy also contain additional policy for glamping accommodation within TSM 6 New and Extended Holiday Parks in the Countryside. A distinction is contained within this policy for glamping accommodation, which is proposed within Priority Areas as defined in the Tourism Hierarchy.

18 TOURISM STRATEGY

- 18.1 The LDP will seek to tailor tourism policy to support sustainable tourism activity in Ards and North Down and allow areas within the Borough to respond to tourist demand whilst safeguarding the integrity of the assets upon which the tourism draw depends. The LDP:
- Encourages tourism infrastructure that is appropriate to the location to ensure that the natural assets are protected and enhanced;
 - Promotes a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy;
 - Offers sufficient choice of the right type of visitor accommodation in the right areas; there must also be an adequate supply of things to do; and
 - Safeguards tourism assets from inappropriate development and encourages future tourism demand to areas where it is best accommodated.
- 18.2 Any future development must balance visitor demands with the protection of the landscape. A key element of this is to focus new development in sustainable locations. In Ards and North Down these areas are defined as:

- Priority Areas - which are largely urban areas where the majority of development for tourism uses will be expected to locate.
- Sensitive Areas - which are which are areas where tourism should be controlled to respect the local environment and particular characteristics of the area
- Protected Areas - which are areas where tourism development should not be approved through the majority of their extent.

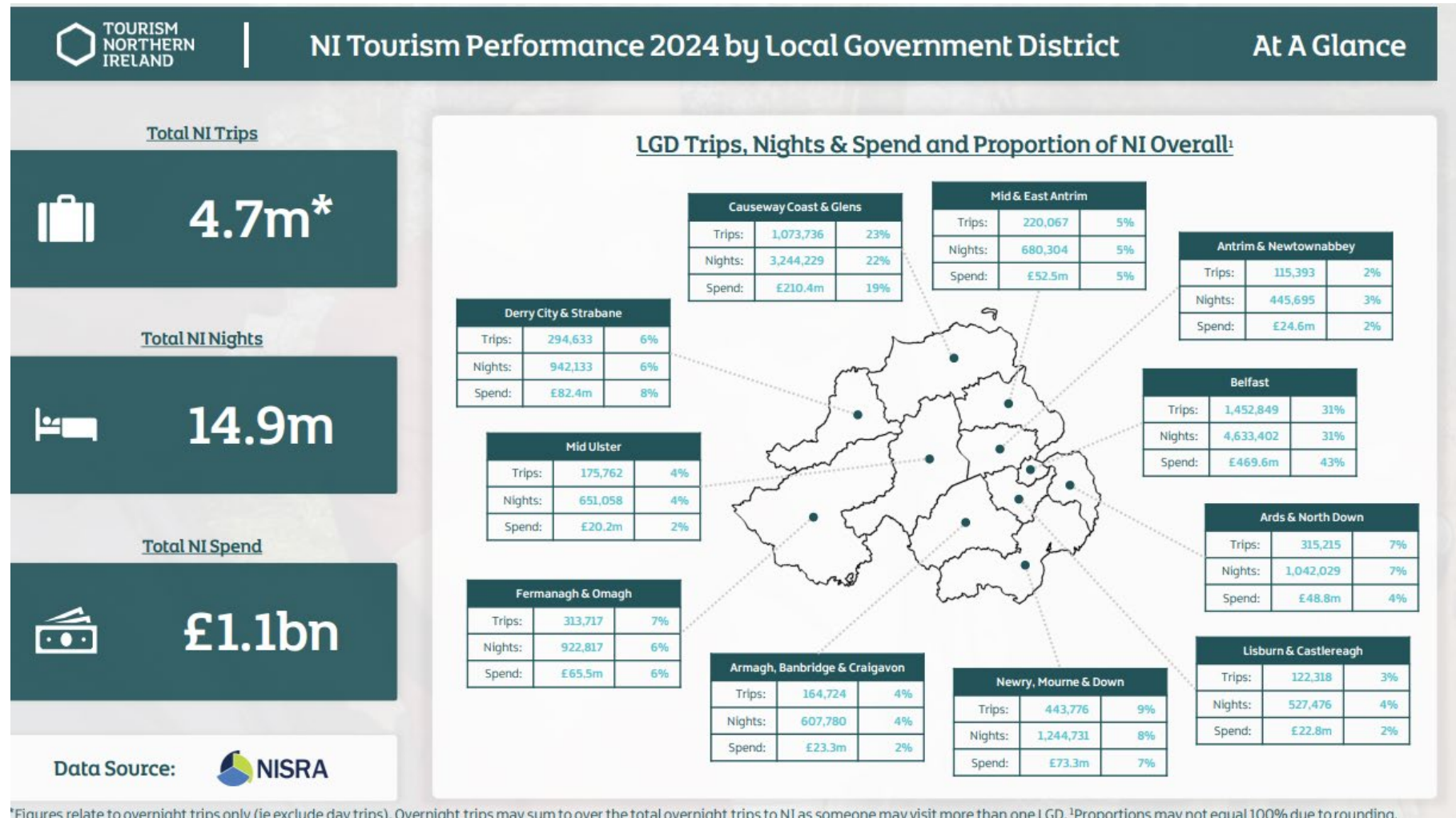
19 SOUNDNESS

Table 6: Consideration of Soundness

Procedural Tests	
P2	The Sustainable Tourism policies have evolved from the POP, POP Consultation Report and Consultee, Development Management and Councilor Engagement as described in earlier sections of this document.
P3	The Sustainable Tourism policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal. Further details are included in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.
Consistency Tests	
C1	The Sustainable Tourism policies have taken account of the RDS and the SPPS in paras 2.2-2.3.
C2	The Sustainable Tourism policies have taken account of our Community Plan, particularly outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5. Refer to paragraphs 3.1-3.4 of this document.
C3	The Sustainable Tourism policies have taken account of existing planning policies as contained within the SPPS, in particular paragraphs 2.8-2.10 to relating to tourism. Regard has also been had to other Central Government documents such as the SDS (Sustainable Development

	Strategy), as referred to in paragraphs 2.4-2.8 of this document. Account has been taken of Planning Policy Statement 16 Tourism.
C4	The Sustainable Tourism policies have taken account of the existing development plans within Ards and North Down, ongoing Council initiatives and the neighbouring council context.
Coherence and Effectiveness Tests	
CE1	The sustainable tourism policies have taken account of the emerging LDP's of our three neighbouring councils, and it is not considered to be in conflict with them.
CE2	The Sustainable Tourism policies are founded on a robust evidence base which includes the baseline information, Tourism Position Paper, the POP and responses to it and subsequent engagement with statutory consultees.
CE3	The monitoring framework within Chapter 26 illustrates how tourism development will be managed throughout the Borough.
CE4	The Sustainable Tourism policies will be reviewed at Plan Review stage. There will be flexibility at Local Policies stage to take account of and Council site specific requirements.

Appendix A – Ards and North Down Attractions with Visitor numbers 2024



^{*}Figures relate to overnight trips only (ie exclude day trips). Overnight trips may sum to over the total overnight trips to NI as someone may visit more than one LGD. ¹Proportions may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Hotels



8 Hotels

6% of NI Total



373 Rooms

4% of NI Total



762 Beds

3% of NI Total

■ LGD

■ NI



Guesthouse, Guest Accommodation & B&Bs



62 Properties

6% of NI Total



211 Rooms

5% of NI Total



457 Beds

5% of NI Total

■ LGD

■ NI



Self-Catering Accommodation



295 Units

5% of NI Total



673 Rooms

5% of NI Total

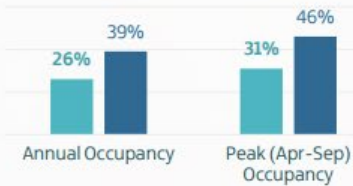


1,322 Beds

5% of NI Total

■ LGD

■ NI



*Accommodation stock correct as of the end of December 2024. Hotel, Small Service Accommodation, & Self-Catering Accommodation performance relates to Jan-Dec 2024.