



Memorandum of Understanding between **Newry and Mourne District Council** and the **Louth Local Authorities**



Louth
Local Authorities



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Preamble

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out the detailed workings of the Strategic Alliance between Newry and Mourne District Council and the Louth Local Authorities (the Parties) which will seek to support and promote the economic development and competitiveness of the region. The key objectives of the Strategic Alliance are:

- ♦ To promote, strengthen and stimulate the social, cultural and economic links within and between the peoples of the region;
- ♦ To provide an enabling framework to promote the region more effectively for inward investment and open up further opportunities for the sharing of services and coordinated management of key resources;
- ♦ To consolidate the long-established working relationships between the Parties, positioning them on a strategic long-term footing, and with an outward looking focus;
- ♦ To coordinate core functions of the Parties in selected areas of co-operation;
- ♦ To enhance the leadership position of the Parties within the cross-border region and bolster their influencing and coordinating role for the benefit of the entire community;
- ♦ To develop links with other local authorities and regional stakeholders.



Purpose of MOU

- ♦ To outline the key themes under which closer collaboration and joint actions will be pursued;
- ♦ To elaborate the arrangements for co-operation between the local authorities, including supporting structures and decision making mechanisms;
- ♦ To define a number of reciprocal activities to be undertaken by the local authorities.

Commencement and Operation

This MOU will take effect from March 2011 and will remain for a period of not less than 5 years and will be subject to renewal by agreement thereafter. This is a non statutory agreement and is subject to the applicable national and international laws of the states to which the Parties belong.



Co-operation Themes

The Parties agree to strengthen existing co-operation and further develop activities under the broad themes given below. Co-operation activities may involve working up and delivering joint projects and funding applications, exploring opportunities for the co-ordination and sharing of services, as well as other actions as deemed appropriate by the Parties.

- ♦ **Emergency planning** to optimise the use of resources through sharing of services, facilities and personnel in responding to emergencies;
- ♦ **Renewable energy and green technology** to reduce energy consumption, to promote the adoption of renewable technologies and help reduce carbon emissions;
- ♦ **Tourism and recreation** to capitalise on the unique location of the region and enhance capacity to attract increased investment and visitors by developing the tourism product and sharing resources;
- ♦ **Sustainable economic growth and job creation** by working together for the good of the region.

Other co-operation themes may be developed by the Parties and could include coordinated/shared services; non-statutory spatial planning; pursuing linked-gateway status; and developing a regional profile to enable evidence informed planning.

Parties to the MOU

The Parties to this MOU are Newry and Mourne District Council and the Louth Local Authorities, comprising Louth County Council, Dundalk Town Council, Drogheda Borough Council and Ardee Town Council.

Co-operation Tasks

In addition to the activities outlined under the co-operation themes, the Parties also commit to pursuing the following co-operation tasks:

- ♦ Developing joint policies and action plans in areas of mutual interest to increase efficiencies in the delivery of services;
- ♦ Incorporating the cross-border dimension, where appropriate, into the respective policies, programmes, plans and projects of each Party;
- ♦ Undertaking joint representation of the region in areas of mutual interest;
- ♦ Working towards furthering cross-border co-operation including the establishment of a legal entity;
- ♦ Encouraging exchanges of information, knowledge and know-how between the Parties, including exploring possibilities of staff secondments, work shadowing and other such initiatives as deemed appropriate.



Co-operation Structure

The Parties agree to work towards the establishment of a number of groupings within 6 months of the signing of this MOU. These will include:

- ♦ A joint **Committee of elected members** from the Parties;
- ♦ A joint **Senior Management Group** comprising the Chief Executive, County Manager and Directors;
- ♦ An **Advisory Forum** incorporating an agreed number of representatives of Industry, Commerce and the Voluntary Sector from within the region. InterTradeIreland, in its legislative role as a body established to exchange information and coordinate work on trade and business development will act as secretariat to the Forum and will support the interface between Central and Local Government;
- ♦ Project Teams to deliver on the four co-operation themes.

The Parties will agree the working arrangements, protocols and roles and responsibilities of each grouping in advance.

Communication

The primary contact points will be the County Manager of Louth Local Authorities and the Clerk and Chief Executive of Newry and Mourne District Council. A Secretariat will be provided by the Parties and will rotate on an annual basis or by agreement.

Resources

The Parties agree to identify joint initiatives and models for sharing resources to facilitate the delivery of the co-operation themes.

It will be the responsibility of the Secretariat to convene relevant meetings, take minutes of proceedings, prepare reports and action points, co-ordinate public relations as required, and provide administrative support. The Joint Senior Management Group will be responsible for monitoring and managing the Project Teams.

Review, amendments, dispute resolution and termination

The content of this MOU will be reviewed annually or at the request in writing of one of the Parties. Amendments can only be made on the agreement of both Parties.

Disputes and/or disagreements will be referred to the respective Directors from both Parties with responsibilities in the area or subject matter at hand. If not resolved at this level, the County Manager and Clerk and Chief Executive can elect to deal with the matter directly or to nominate a respective Director from each Party not previously involved. In the event of the dispute/disagreement not being resolved at Director or County Manager/ Clerk and Chief Executive level, the Parties reserve the right to identify, agree and appoint an independent arbiter.

The Parties will actively seek to develop co-operation, MOUs and other forms of agreement with other local authorities and regional stakeholders.





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Northern Ireland Executive Office, Brussels 2nd March 2011

signed by

witnessed by

.....
Councillor Mick Murphy
Mayor of Newry and Mourne District Council

.....
Councillor Karen McKeivitt
Deputy Mayor, Newry and Mourne District Council

.....
Councillor Conor Keelan
Chairman, Dundalk Town Council

.....
Councillor Peter Savage
Cathaoirleach of Louth County Council

.....
Councillor Paul Bell
Mayor, Drogheda Borough Council

.....
Councillor Pdraig McKenny
Chairman, Ardee Town Council

