

MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER, BURNAVON ARTS & CULTURE CENTRE, BURN ROAD, COOKSTOWN

1. What makes your area unique?

- Location – 1 hour proximity to everything and 1½ hrs to Dublin
- Locality in terms of ruralism
- Tourism – Sperrins – Lough Neagh
- Indigenous business base
- Skilled workforce
- Education – 3 Further Education Colleges – one each area
- High number of migrant workers
- Border region
- There is a young population
- New Public Sector Employment - New Police Training College, Fire and Rescue Service and Prison Service training facility
- All 3 main towns equal and not competing with each other – harmonious working relationship
- Strongest enterprise culture ie agri-food sector, engineering and retail

2. How can this be developed to give a competitive edge to your area?

- Better telecommunications ie broadband not available in all areas and those areas where it is available, it is more expensive than other parts of Northern Ireland
- Development of road infrastructure
- Better packaged tourism:
 - Lough Neagh potential under developed and recognised
 - Sperrins potential under developed and recognised
 - Natural Heritage sites need further development ie seating, shelter, toilet facilities, signage
- Further Improvements to skills training
- Provision of a 3rd level education in area
- Building on established brands
- Cross Border Shared Services

3. What skills underpin your area's businesses and how can these be improved to attract new business and encourage economic growth?

- Construction, Manufacturing, Engineering, Agriculture/Agri-Food Improvements
- Developing an environmental renewable approach to knowledge-based Industries and provision of a support package
- Skilling workforce
- Encourage specialist niches and added value
- Decentralisation of 3rd level education

4. What opportunities might exist to co-operate with nearby towns/areas to improve your area?

- External (Cross-Border)
 - Tourism
 - Health
 - Roads
 - Education
 - Communications
 - Training and Development
 - Retail
- Internal (Between Councils)
 - Tourism
 - Infrastructure
 - Waste Management
 - Leisure and Recreation
- An RDS that encourages a balanced approach regarding public/private investment (spatial equality)
- Encourage balance of scale within Council areas
- RPA with reference to control of area plans

5. Are there any particular equality or health issues in your area that need to be considered?

- Rural Needs
 - Housing
 - Social Housing
 - Rural Towns and Villages dieing
- Health
 - Lack of acute services
 - Lower life expectancy
 - Isolation, particularly those with disabilities with lack of access of health services
 - Health Impact Assessment for the Area under the RDS