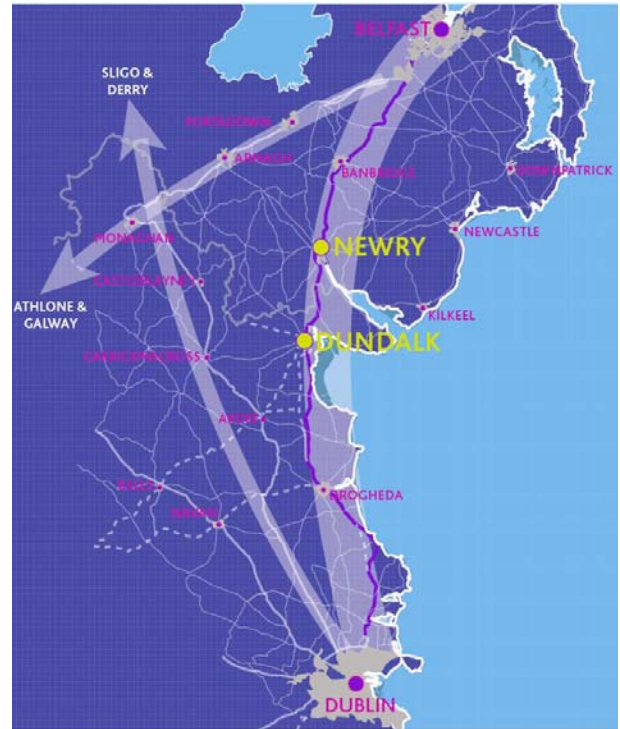


NEWRY-DUNDALK TWIN CITY – A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Project Description

Within the respective jurisdictions of the island of Ireland, the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Project presents an interesting innovative initiative based on creating a strategic alliance to create a twin centred urban cluster of sufficient critical mass to attract investment, service the needs of a cross border region, secure economic benefits and become a destination in its own right. Located 14 miles apart, and separated by a political border, the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Region is situated within the east coast corridor of the island and is positioned equidistant from the main capital cities of Belfast going north and Dublin going south.

The Newry-Dundalk Twin City Project offers an excellent opportunity to liberate a cross border region that has experienced a historical and political legacy of conflict over many years. In response to the economic challenges in the dispensation for the island of Ireland the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Initiative has the capacity to:



- Facilitate an integrated approach to the strategic planning of the region that takes as its starting point the particular and special social, economic and infrastructural needs of the area.
- Promote a view that the Twin City Initiative has as much to do with managing the development of the eastern seaboard corridor as it has to do with the regeneration of the region.
- Address the particular problems of the border region which result from its perceived peripheral location on the edges of two, centralised jurisdictions and confront the legacy of higher than average levels of overall and long term unemployment.
- Harness the potential of the neighbouring settlements to fulfil their strategic gateway status in driving forward a sustainable central corridor strategy on Ireland's eastern seaboard.
- Recapture a regional influence for the two settlements at the centre of the corridor, restore their natural hinterland and enable them to power a regional economy that is competitive as opposed to dependent.
- Enable the two settlements to reassert their authority as progressive centres of a coherent and thriving region rather than to be relegated to the status of peripheral location.
- Unlock a city region relationship that can harness the economic benefits of a wholly untapped environmental resource including a potential trans-national or geo park mid distant between the islands respective capital cities.

The perspective on the development of a Twin City is founded on principles of cross-border collaboration that have a long established pedigree despite political differences and which have been shaped by a growing confidence in regional self-awareness, fuelled by an appreciation of shared problems, a commitment to the joint pursuit of remedies and a capacity to exploit financial measures. Characterised by a strong spatial agenda led by local government collaboration, the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Project has the potential to deliver a spatially integrated approach to problem solving that involves actors from local, regional and central levels in both jurisdictions. The challenge to the Newry-Dundalk Region is how best to arrive at new forms of regional governance above and beyond traditional administrative and nationally orientated frameworks. In the planning, development and investment interests of the Newry-Dundalk area the practical benefits of cooperation should be reflected in the cost savings on economic infrastructure; pooling of expertise; sharing of good practice and efficiencies in enterprise development.

Building upon progress to date, collaboration between key stakeholders is on-going with the purpose of adopting a practical orientated approach to facilitate the implementation of a non-statutory integrated spatial planning and development framework capable of delivering on economic competitiveness, attracting investment and services and securing economic benefits for the Newry Dundalk sub-region. In this context the research is assessing the potential to deliver a spatially integrated approach to the management of key strategic projects at the local/sub-regional level in the cross-border context of Newry-Dundalk.

In progressing with stakeholder consensus, priority is being given to the respective delivery mechanisms which will operationalise the project implementation. The respective delivery vehicles will require a carefully brokered approach that engages with actors including the key decision makers and influencers from local, regional and central levels of government working in partnership with the private/business sector to provide the effective leadership and governance on a cross-jurisdictional and cross border basis for the Newry-Dundalk sub-region. In rolling forward the implementation of these significant strategic cross-border projects this will trigger the immense potential to be realised in delivering on the Newry-Dundalk Twin City.

A strategic catalyst for the Newry-Dundalk Twin City Project has been the recent opening of the crucial cross border link in the Trans-European Network on the eastern seaboard of the island of Ireland. This key infrastructure link, funded by the respective central governments, north and south, is repositioned the Newry-Dundalk Twin City as a strategic centre within the Belfast-Dublin Corridor.

Further Information

Colin Buchanan, Raymond Burke Consulting and Urban Institute Ireland (2006), NewryDundalk: A New Perspective on the Development of the Region, January, Colin Buchanan and Partners Limited, Belfast

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