

Mid and East Antrim

CITY DEAL PROPOSALS

Autumn 2020



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

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Belfast Region City Deal Key Takeaways:



22 integrated projects and sub-programmes underpinned by investment in employability and skills



Delivering up to 20,000 new and better jobs



Transforming our innovation and digital capabilities



Boosting tourism and regenerating our region



Connecting people to opportunity and services



Increasing GVA by £470 million per annum



The BRCD region

Caveat: Please note that the information provided on these Belfast Region City Deal projects is correct at the time of printing, however the projects may be subject to change going forward

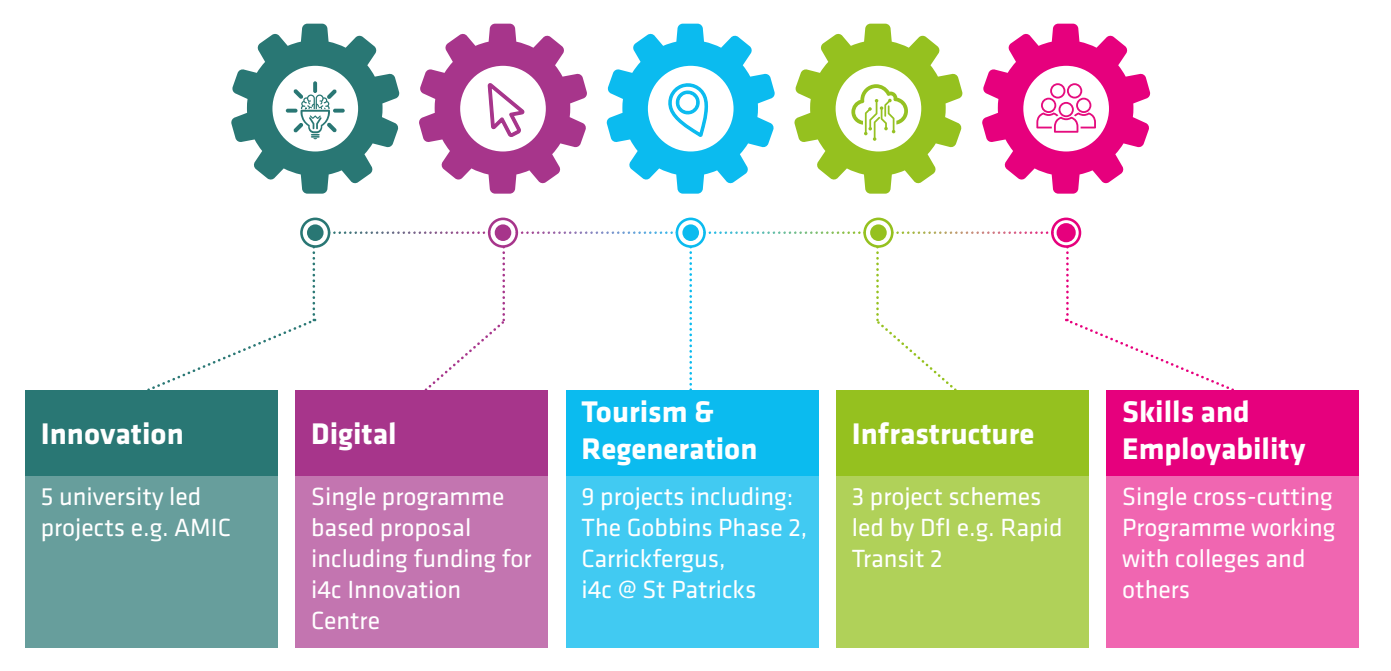
Introduction

A City Deal is a bespoke package of funding and decision making powers agreed between central government and local regions, aimed at helping to harness additional investment, create new jobs and accelerate inclusive economic growth.

The goal is to use this opportunity to secure £1 billion of investment from a range of sources. This

will accelerate inclusive economic growth for the whole region and deliver up to 20,000 new and better jobs across Northern Ireland, accessible to people from all communities.

The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) has five key pillars as detailed below:



The BRCD signals a new opportunity for collaborative working. The BRCD is comprised of the six councils of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, working in partnership with Queen’s University Belfast, Ulster University, the Further Education colleges across the Belfast Region and the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

To make a success of the Deal, it’s important that all stakeholders work collaboratively.

The BRCD councils have agreed an integrated set of projects to transform the region’s economy. The agreed programme will seek to address a number of key barriers to growth by taking measures to improve productivity, invest in innovation, tackle economic inactivity and deprivation, address skills gaps and inequalities, invest in additional world-class visitor experiences and develop the physical and digital infrastructure.

At the heart of the City Deal vision is a drive to deliver inclusive growth and to focus efforts on areas in which we can become genuinely world-class; namely digital / ICT, life and health sciences, creative industries, advanced manufacturing and tourism.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is taking forward three key projects under the BRCD:

- 1. Carrickfergus Regeneration
- 2. i4c Innovation Centre at Saint Patrick’s Barracks regeneration site
- 3. The Gobbins – Phase 2

Carrickfergus Regeneration and The Gobbins Phase 2 are being taken forward under the Tourism and Regeneration pillar, while i4c is being taken forward through both the Tourism & Regeneration and the Digital Programme pillars.



Carrickfergus Regeneration Summary

Introduction

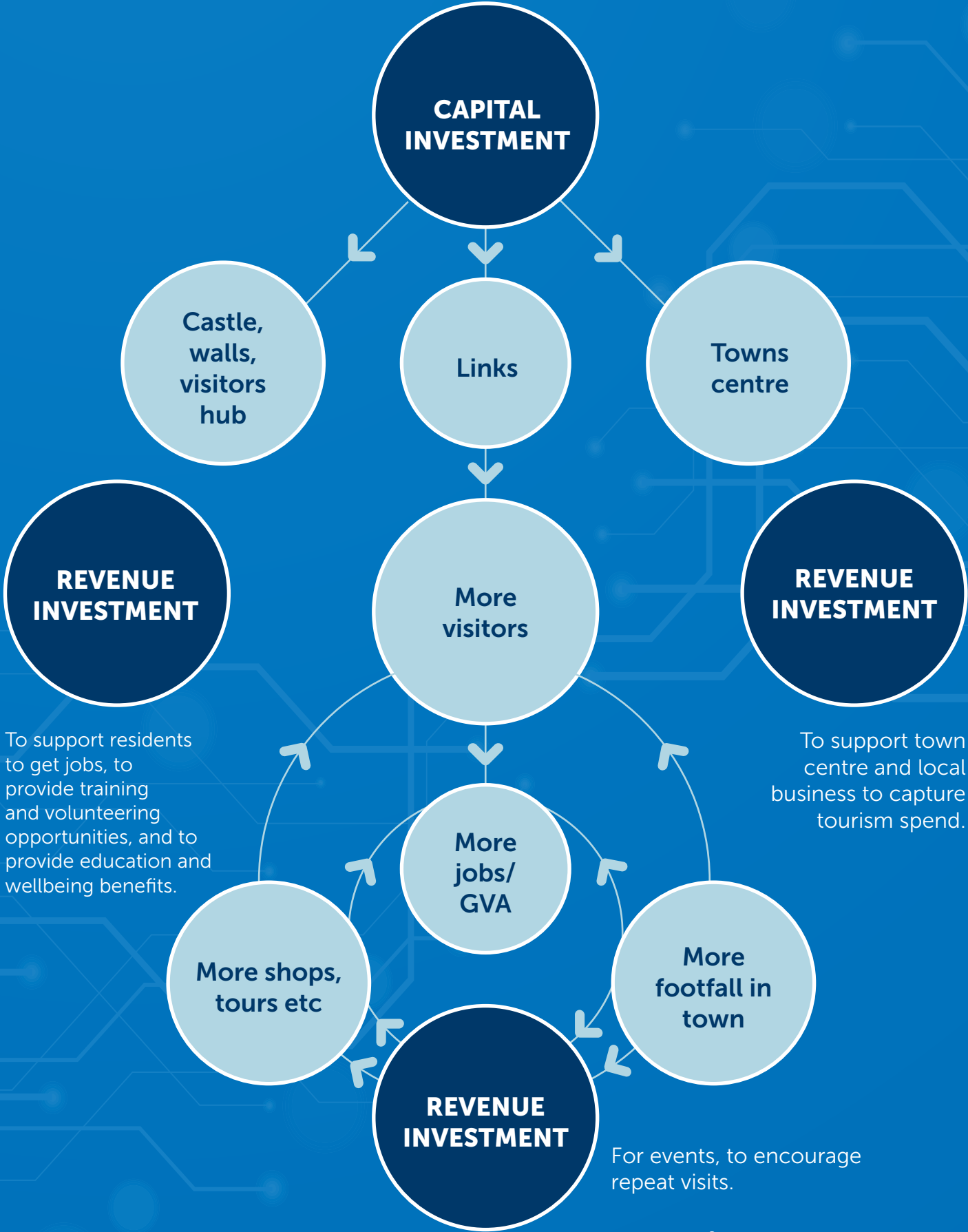
The project is a heritage-led regeneration of Carrickfergus which aims:

“ To regenerate, reposition and rebrand the town of Carrickfergus, placing it firmly on the map as an authentic heritage-led tourism hub and the ‘must visit’ starting point to the internationally recognised Causeway Coastal Route. ”

The project strategy rests firstly on investing in the heritage assets of Carrickfergus and its town centre in order to attract more visitors, to encourage them to stay longer and to spend more.

The strategy rests secondly on using revenue investment to further increase economic benefits, e.g. by helping town centre businesses to capture more visitor spend and to gain employment and training benefits for residents. The diagram below provides a visual representation of how the capital and revenue investment can benefit the town.

Capital and revenue investment Carrickfergus



Need and Opportunity

The need.....

"Carrickfergus should be one of the jewels of the Causeway Coast, yet it finds itself at a particularly low point in its long, fascinating history. Its image is tarnished and as a result of lack of investment, the confidence of the town is diminished; the town is tired and in need of revitalisation, and is suffering from a declining retail sector and high levels of vacancy and dereliction...."¹

The opportunity

"The strategic opportunity is compelling. Carrickfergus has real assets to harness: one of, potentially, the most impressive castles in the entire island of Ireland; an historic harbour and Lough-side setting; a stunning Norman church; impressive sections of medieval walls; and certainly one of the best series of stories and sagas running from the 11th century through to the present day. This is all in addition to the proximity to Belfast and the enduring and ever-rising appeal of the Causeway Coastal Route."²

1. MEABC, Strategic Outline Case, Carrickfergus Castle, Walls and Associated Public Realm, 2018.
2. Creative Tourism Consultants for MEABC and CRIP, Carrickfergus Castle and Walls, A cultural and heritage led tourism strategy, 2018

What investment is needed where and why?

The project comprises 9 capital elements for which BRCD funding is sought. The 9 capital project elements are inter-linked and dependent on each other – all are needed for the project to work.

The capital elements of the project are complemented by a raft of revenue funded programmes targeting (1) businesses to help

them capture as much visitor spend as possible (2) particular groups of people to support them to take up job and training opportunities and (3) residents to gain wellbeing benefits, e.g. volunteering, arts engagement, walking and cycling and so on.

The following map details all elements of the project and where they will be located.



Cost

The estimated costs for the various elements of the project are detailed below.

Capital element to be delivered (Inc. Optimism Bias)	Cost
Castle (Inc. interpretive works)	£10,242,957
Visitor and Community Hub (Inc. interpretive works)	£6,545,315
Harbour Square	£3,617,383
Town Walls (Inc. interpretive works)	£6,998,346
Public Realm	£3,330,750
Lighting Scheme	£1,602,747
Radar Tower	£396,066
Marine Highway	£2,097,830
Railway Station	£1,235,726
Cycle Routes	£1,564,619
Rebranding	£1,083,481
Town Hall	£660,110
Grand Total	£39,375,330

The source of the capital funding required for the project is detailed below.

Capital Works Funding		
MEABC	BRCD	Total Capex
£13m	£26.4m	£39.4m

Ongoing Council Revenue Contribution

Substantial programmes of revenue funded interventions are required for town centre development and to provide employment and training opportunities. These programmes have been developed by MEABC and will be funded by them. They are summarised below together with the initial deficit funding required by the post project operating entity (PPOE).

Events	£ 350k
Business, town centre support	£ 770k
Inclusion, Employability and Skills, Wellbeing	£ 342k
Total annual revenue funding	£ 1,462k
Total Post Project Operating Entity (PPOE) deficit funding (for years 2023 to 2027. Note – from 2027 the PPOE is in an operating surplus)	£ 1,706k

PPOE

Following on from the construction phase a Post Project Operating Entity (PPOE) will have the following role:

- To market destination Carrickfergus and The Castle and the key visitor attractions.
- To market Carrickfergus as the “gateway, the atrium” to the CCR and the starting point for the journey to the Giant’s Causeway.
- To manage and operate the attractions.
- To deliver a programme of events that increases the tourism spend in the Town and which enhances the reputation of Carrickfergus as a “must see destination”.

Project Outputs

Objective – to increase economic activity - tourism

- Increase number of visitors to the Castle from 68,000 in 2018 to 250,000 in 2032 (i.e. 7 years after re-opening).
- Increase the % of OoS visitors to the Castle from 33% to 60%.

Objective – to increase economic activity - Town Centre

- Increase number of businesses who say turnover has increased compared to previous year from 24% to 50%.
- Increase average weekly footfall in the town centre from 57,000 to 90,000.
- Reduce vacancy rate in town centre by a third.

Objective – to increase employment

- To create new jobs in attractions as result of net visitor spend.

Objective – to increase inclusion – to support residents to take up and sustain job and training opportunities

- 20% of new jobs in attractions filled by residents from priority groups.
- 100% of social benefit opportunities filled by residents from priority groups.

Objective – to improve community wellbeing

- To have 200 residents volunteering at attractions.
- 15% increase in % of residents expressing positive perceptions of the town.

Objective – to maximise community value from the town's assets

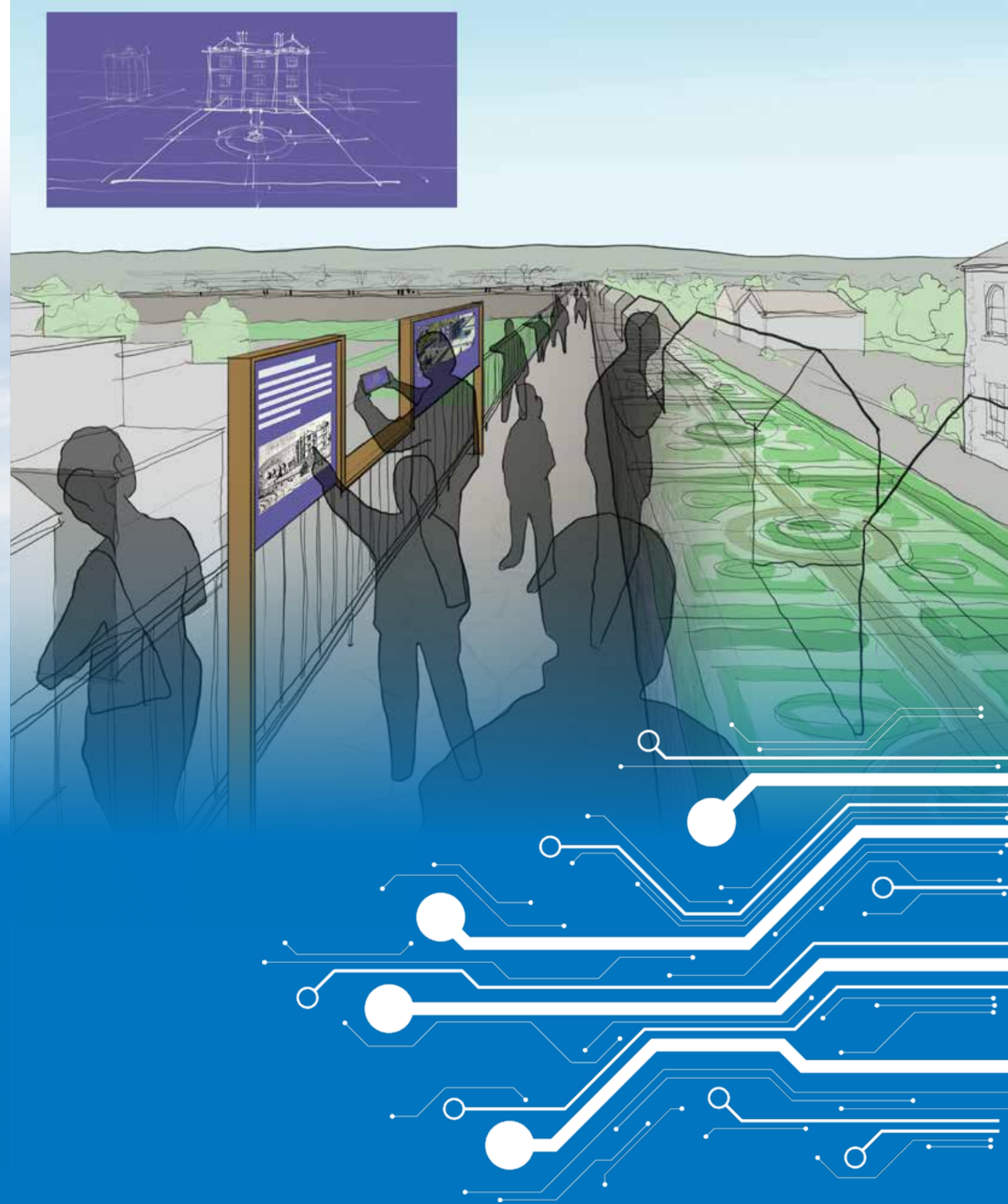
- 30% increase of the number of community events taking place in the Castle and in the town centre.

Objective – to use innovative approaches to improve effectiveness and efficiency

- To have 75% of Mid and East Antrim tourism businesses using a CCR marketing and booking platform.
- 90% of visitors to Carrickfergus attractions using a CCR marketing and booking platform.

Key Economic Outputs of Project

Gross GVA from project	£167.7m
Gross Jobs from visitor spend and associated with the project, including knock on impacts, so direct, indirect and induced jobs	329
Gross jobs per year from construction spend including knock on impacts, so direct, indirect and induced jobs total	226
NPV/(NPC) calculated using gross GVA, i.e. direct, indirect and induced	£121.2m





The Gobbins Phase 2 Summary

Background

Based in Islandmagee, outside Whitehead in Co Antrim, this internationally unique coastal path was a Victorian engineering feat when it was first opened to the public in 1902. In its heyday it provided some 3km of pathway and was reported to have attracted more visitors than the Giant’s Causeway, but in subsequent years fell into disuse.

The restoration of The Gobbins in 2015 saw The Gobbins Coastal and Cliff Path Phase I project complete works that opened just over 1km of the cliff face coastal path and a similar cliff top path at a cost of £7.5m, including investment in a Visitor Centre which provides the departure point for every tour.

Although The Gobbins has been successful in attracting visitors, there are a number of operational, health and safety and capacity

restrictions that are preventing the site from realising its full potential.

The case being presented to invest in The Gobbins Phase 2 project aims to address operational, health and safety and capacity restrictions, unlocking the potential of The Gobbins, significantly increasing capacity and making it a more complete and enjoyable visitor experience.

The improvements to be delivered under this project will make The Gobbins a world-class tourism offering and provide an anchor visitor attraction at the southern end of the Causeway Coastal Route (CCR), helping to ensure a more even distribution of visitors along the CCR and facilitating a more even spread of economic benefits across the Belfast City Deal region.

Strategic Mission

The Strategic Mission of The Gobbins Phase 2 Project is as follows:

“ The Gobbins will establish itself as one of Northern Ireland’s top 10 paid attractions by 2033. ”

Strategic Objectives

Key Strategic objectives of The Gobbins Phase 2 include:

- To provide a world-class, internationally renowned visitor attraction that can be used to attract more OoS visitors (Inc. GB and Rol) to Northern Ireland to benefit the entire region.
- To increase tourism spend in NI by 2033.
- To create inclusive employment opportunities for all.

Strategic Mission

There are a number of elements to be delivered through The Gobbins Phase 2 project including:

1

An ingress structure to connect the existing coastal path with the current cliff top path

2

A “Welcome Hub” building at The Gobbins site to act as a focal point for visitors and provide much needed amenity facilities

3

An upgrade and extension to the cliff top path

4

Virtual Reality Digital Enhancement at the existing Visitor Centre

5

Visitor servicing improvements

1. Ingress

Details on each element of The Gobbins Phase 2 are set out below.

- An ingress structure will be delivered to connect the existing coastal path with the current cliff top path – the development of a looped walk at The Gobbins has been identified as the primary requirement and this significant feat of engineering will enable this to happen.
- The investment in the ingress will allow visitors to access the coastal pathway from the cliff top, taking in the magnificent views of the Antrim Coast. Starting at the new cliff top viewing platform, visitors will descend the ingress to Gordon's Leap and then walk 1.2km along the coastal path, exiting through Wyse's Eye and looping back up to the cliff top path and finishing at the entrance to the ingress, thus creating a closed circuit and a one way flow of visitors.
- The investment in the ingress will significantly increase the capacity at The Gobbins coastal path (by a factor of 4), reduce health and safety concerns and enable The Gobbins to be opened up to unguided but technologically enhanced tours, thus ensuring a more commercially viable operation.



The ingress is a tiered staircase structure that breaks the journey down into three manageable sections. The structure has been designed to mimic the flow of a nearby waterfall.



A number of viewing and resting points are integrated into the design, including this "birds nest" feature.



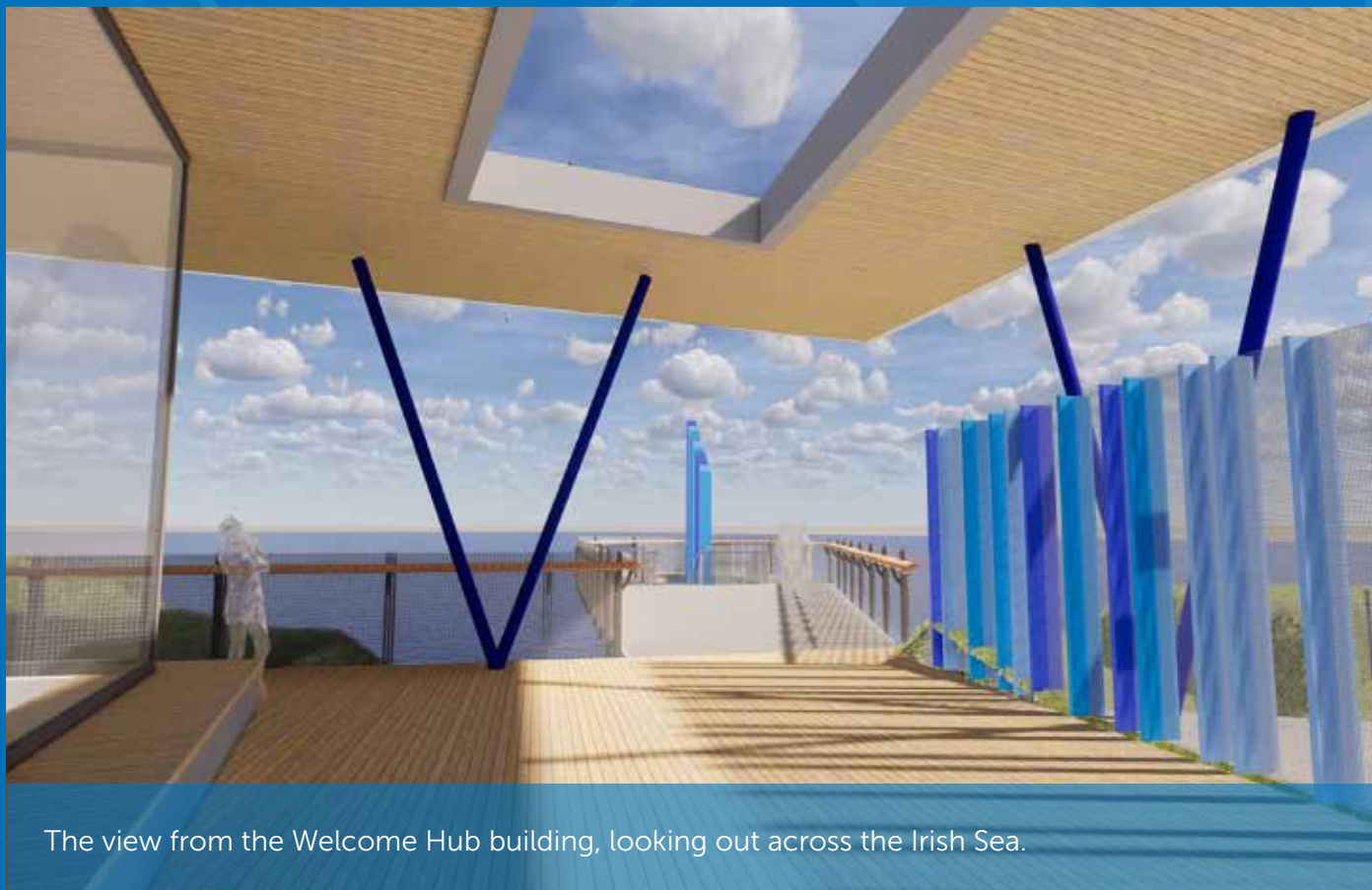
The structure will allow for stunning views across the Irish Sea.

2. Welcome Hub

The investment will include a new "Welcome Hub" building that will be connected to the ingress structure. This building will include much-needed amenity facilities for visitors, which are not available at The Gobbins site at present. This building will act as the starting point for both the coastal and cliff-top paths.



A side view of the new Welcome Hub facility, which will lead out to the Ingress structure.



The view from the Welcome Hub building, looking out across the Irish Sea.



3. Upgrade and extension of Cliff Top Path

- Extension of the cliff top path to Heddles Port – this would provide for a new cliff top walkway along the 3km of cliff to Heddles Port and offer full access to the spectacular views of the Antrim Coast shoreline, opening up The Gobbins experience to a wider range of ages and abilities.
- Visitors will be able to access four new cantilevered viewing platforms to enhance the journey. These platforms shall stretch out over the cliff, hanging many metres high above the water, allowing visitors to stare into the abyss below!
- For the even more adventurous visitors, two rope bridges will be installed along the cliff top path walk. Suspended high above the waves, these rope bridges will add a further thrilling dimension to the cliff-top path experience. For the less brave souls, an alternative route will be available.
- As well as extending the cliff top path walk and providing additional features, the existing cliff top path will be given a significant upgrade to provide a much enhanced visitor experience.



4. Virtual Reality Digital Enhancement at the existing Visitor Centre

- The Phase 2 investment also includes the establishment of a new 360° Virtual Reality (VR) tour of The Gobbins coastal path and cliff top path. This will be made available at the existing Visitor Centre and will cater for groups of up to 10 people in a shared immersive space.
- This all-weather facility will service a new target audience and cater for those unable to undertake the tour, due to physical ability, apprehension or simply a lack of time, or it may be used in part as a precursor to the tour.

Images of a Virtual Reality “Igloo” that could be used to deliver digital enhancement



5. Visitor Servicing

- Car Parking at the current Visitor Centre will be substantially increased to provide for increased visitor numbers. The revised and extended layout will increase parking to 167 spaces including 10 electric vehicle charging points, disabled bays, coach parking and turning.

Cost

The capital costs of the various elements of the project are detailed in the table below:

Capital costs	
	£
Ingress	£7,028,214
Access road and Welcome Hub building	£1,997,672
Cliff top pathways Inc. 4 new viewing platforms, 2 rope bridges	£3,221,193
VR Dome for Digital enhancement	£550,760
Reconfiguration of the existing Visitor Centre Car Park	£224,033
Estimated construction costs	£13,021,872
Other associated costs	£656,000
Total costs	£13,677,872

Project Outputs

The capital costs of the various elements of the project are detailed in the table below:

Increased number of visitors	387,151 pa
Increased number of coastal tour visitors	218,328 pa
Increased number of OoS visitors	191,991 pa
Increased number of bed nights	107,205 pa
Increased number of day trip visitors	330,991 pa

Key Economic Outputs of Project	
Gross GVA from project	£48.6m
Gross jobs from visitor spend and associated with the project, including knock on impacts, so direct, indirect and induced jobs	469 Direct, Indirect and Induced
Gross jobs per year from construction spend including knock on impacts, so direct, indirect and induced jobs total	138 Direct, Indirect and Induced
NPV/(NPC) calculated using gross GVA, i.e. direct, indirect and induced	£21.7m



i4c Innovation Centre @ Saint Patrick's

Background

The i4c proposal focuses on the development of a new Innovation Centre and innovation district ecosystem in the heart of Ballymena co-funded with financial support from the Belfast Region City Deal. The i4c building would comprise a mix of incubation labs and workshops for SMEs, premium innovation office accommodation including co-working space for rent, and the iLAB industry makerspace - a focal point for SME R&D and innovation activity in the Borough. This i4c offer would be creating an environment for open innovation and collaboration.

The building will have strong environmental design credentials and be designed for post-Covid working realities including touchless controls and smart ventilation and will be located in a high quality built environment at Saint Patrick's Barracks. It has been intentionally sited adjacent to the new campus planned for the Northern Regional College and is also situated in close proximity to the town centre services and amenities and key recreational and environmental assets including the extensive Ecos Parkland and the Ballymena Showgrounds complex.

i4c: Key Objectives

Support SME innovation activity

To address the low levels of innovation amongst SMEs and promote investment in innovation and uptake of programmes such as KTP's including in key areas of advanced manufacturing, agri-food and clean growth.

Spaces to innovate and for FDI

To ensure that Ballymena and the MEA area has an innovation-focused quality accommodation offering for new and growing existing FDI focused on a competitive workforce within NI's largest regional town.

House the iLAB Makerspace

To create Northern Ireland's first industrial led makerspace promoting innovation and knowledge transfer linked to MEA's key strengths.

Support Collaboration

To increase collaboration supported by industry and academic partners within MTF, NRC, AMIC, CASE and through the Michelin Fund.

Regeneration of St Patrick's Barracks

To make a positive significant scale contribution on the regeneration of the overall 15 hectare brownfield site at St Patrick's Barracks.

Skills and Inclusion

To create inclusive employment and digital skills opportunities for all.

Economic Growth

Alongside the NRC to create the critical mass for an integrated, enterprising environment to act as a catalyst for wider economic growth of the Borough and wider sub-region.

Hub of a new Innovation District

To serve as both the catalyst and hub for a new wider innovation district in Ballymena. This district would be underpinned by Smart digital technologies and sustainable design principles.

i4c OBC Concept Designs

A number of concept designs have been developed by the integrated consultancy team retained to produce the i4c Outline Business Case (OBC). These concepts relate to the i4c building design, its site location at the Saint Patrick's regeneration site and the concept for a wider Smart enabled 'Innovation District' opportunity for

Ballymena. For illustrative purposes the preferred 9,072m2 scale option as identified in the i4c OBC is some five times larger than the current Council owned incubation centre at Ecos, while the new NRC campus at Farm Lodge due to open in 2023/24 is 17,500m²

i4c Building Concept

This has been produced by Kennedy Fitzgerald architects, part of the i4c OBC Gleeds UK led integrated design team and who have consulted widely in the development of this concept taking into account the proposed usage and users of i4c, the site conditions and constraints and other types of mixed usage identified for the Saint Patrick's site.

The current preferred option is for a 9,072m2 building over five storeys while other design options for a 6,800m2 and a 7,500m2 building have been included in the workings of the i4c OBC i.e. 7,500m2 option is for a four storey rather than five storey building.



The south facing façade would have a series of industrial style jigsaw window openings to prevent overheating and to prevent the building overlooking new residential housing developed by Radius. The siting and building mass of the new NRC campus can be seen in the background.



The east and south facing façades would overlook the showgrounds and Ecos parkland. The light industrial SME workshop and makerspace usage on the ground and first floors will not involve creation of fumes or noise or require frequent access by heavy goods vehicles.

iLAB Industry Makerspace Concept

Located within the i4c building this concept has been developed by the Council development directorate in consultation with the Manufacturing Task Force and involves the creation of a fully staffed and equipped workshop offering a range of services for both i4c tenants and local SMEs and industry:

- Local resource – typically accessed by SMEs and industrial firms within a 30-40 minute drive time.
- Represent an industry owned and managed cooperative with a membership model – iLAB centre accessible 6 days per week.
- Focus on developing skills and capacity – making SMEs more technically and digitally proficient and resilient.
- Provide specialist equipment for process and materials testing, prototyping e.g. 3D printers, robotics, computers and specialist software.
- Full time iLAB technicians available to support short to long term R&D residencies with access to specialist staff from NRC, AMIC and others.
- Run bespoke & accredited training programmes using iLAB and NRC equipment.
- Support and signposting for R&D related issues – intellectual property and licencing.
- Potential for iLAB to generate own revenue streams for specified bespoke products and/or ability to take on batch based specialist sub-contract work.

Increased Collaboration:

“ The fully staffed and equipped makerspace at i4c will serve as the focal point of an integrated technology-based regional strategy for M&EA linking academia, industry, community & public sectors. ”

i4c and Clean Growth Opportunity

Mid and East Antrim Borough has many strengths and assets that can allow companies in the Borough to be at the forefront of the emerging Clean Growth Sector. The i4C Innovation Centre and iLAB makerspace can assist in developing and growing this sector.

A number of opportunities around clean growth particularly around hydrogen technology are currently being progressed by Wrightbus in partnership with Council and others. For example, Wrightbus, Energia & Translink have secured a £4m UK OLEV grant and are also partners on a £9m EU GENCOMM hydrogen demonstration project led by Belfast MET.

Hydrogen Training Academy currently being developed

A new Academy is being developed focusing on High Voltage System Operation and Low Voltage Competency training. This will help fill the demand for technicians to install, manage and maintain emerging hydrogen and wider clean technologies. i4c can play a pivotal role as a physical location for these future training needs.

Clean Growth is economic growth which is energy efficient, utilises sustainable practices and renewable energy sources and technologies.

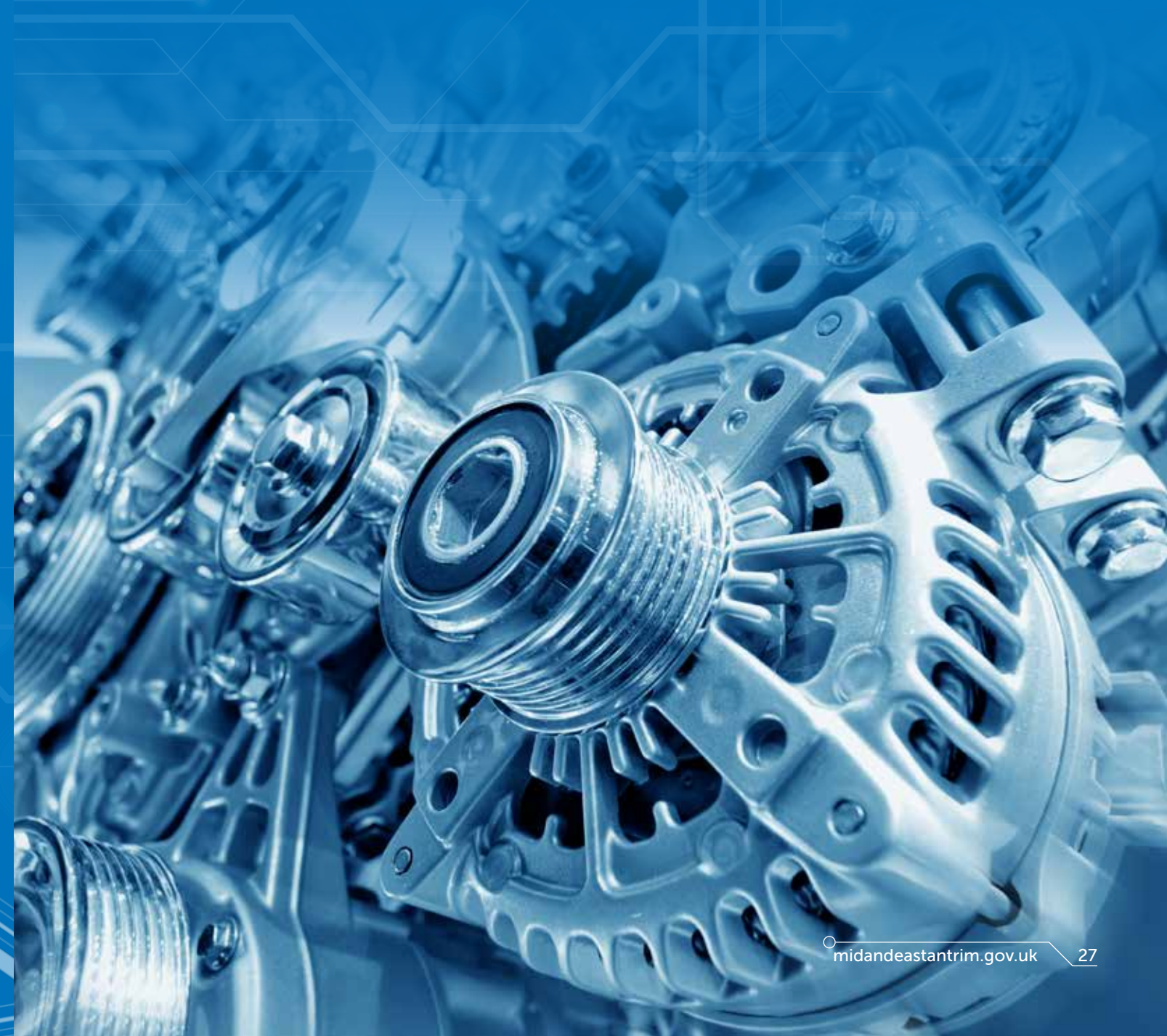
Cleantech is a process, product or service which reduces negative environmental impacts through:

- significant energy efficiency improvements;
- the sustainable use of resources;
- or environmental protection activities.

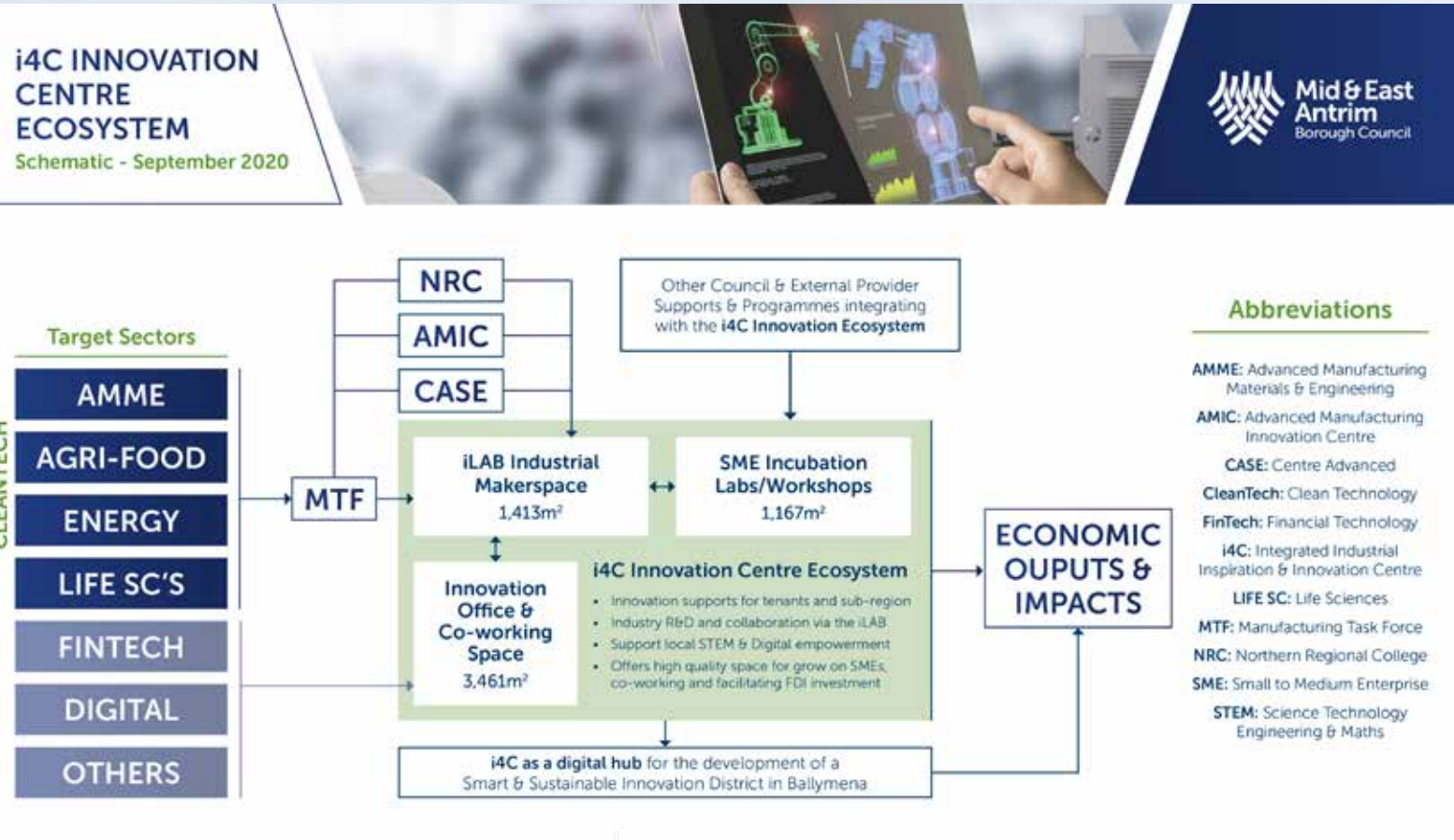
It includes technology that facilitates generating, storing, sharing and delivering energy, without contributing to carbon emissions, or options which can even take carbon emissions out of our atmosphere.



Fuel Cell Hydrogen bus manufactured by Wrightbus



i4c Innovation Centre Ecosystem



Smart & Sustainable Innovation District Concept

A key added value spin-off from i4c is that it will serve as the hub for the creation of a 'innovation district' in the heart of Ballymena radiating from Saint Patrick's and adding significant value to the economic regeneration of this brown field site. Ideally, the district will be characterised by low carbon mobility, smart grids, energy neutral

buildings, efficient water management and accessible, public green space, all underpinned by responsive technologies that optimise resources via digital connectivity. This will help create the ideal environment for collaboration and innovation at a number of levels, i.e. public and private and between industry and SMEs.



Project Costs and Outputs

The primary first phase focus of the i4c Outline Business Case is to secure BRCD funding for the construction of the Innovation Centre building.

However, as previously identified the OBC has scoped out opportunities for a wider smart enabled Innovation District in Ballymena for which i4c at Saint Patrick's would serve as a digital hub. These opportunities will be reviewed and progressed by Council and its partners in the coming months.

The i4c Innovation Centre cost estimate for preferred option is as follows:

Cost Estimates and Proposed Funding Package	9,072m² option
Construction Costs	£22.7m
iLAB Makerspace Costs	£1.5m
Total Cost Estimate	£24.2m
Funding ask from BRCD (c.90%)	£21.8m
Match funding from MEABC (c.10%)	£2.4m

Key Economic Outputs of i4c Project			9,072m2 option
QUANTATATIVE	1.	Gross Value Added (GVA) over 30 years	£205m
	2.	Gross Jobs associated with the project, including knock on impacts, so direct, indirect and induced jobs	346
	3.	Gross jobs per year from construction spend including knock on impacts, so direct, indirect and induced jobs total	241
	4.	iLAB makerspace businesses supported	100
	5.	Net Present Value calculated	£176m
QUALITATIVE	1.	Increase in levels and investment in product and process innovation and in SME knowledge transfer.	
	2.	Increased cooperation with key MEABC partners that are INI, MTF, NRC, AMIC as well as others including CASE and other innovation supports and competency centres.	
	3.	New Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) made into Ballymena and the wider Borough.	
	4.	Contribute significantly to regeneration of brown field site at Saint Patrick's and the wider town centre regeneration in Ballymena.	



Illustration of Façade of i4c building with industrial design inspiration showing window openings that provide practical sunlight and privacy screening benefits.



Spacious interior atrium space allowing for flexible collaboration and event space on first floor of i4c building.

Other City Deal Funding Opportunities

The Mid and East Antrim City Deal opportunity is not just restricted to these three key projects. There will be opportunities presented under the Skills and Employability pillar and future challenge fund calls made under the Digital Pillar where firms can bid for competitive funds most likely on a thematic or sectoral needs basis.

Next Steps

The Outline Business cases (OBCs) for the three MEA project proposals are currently being finalised and are subject to a checkpoint review exercise for alignment with BRCD and NI government strategy. It is anticipated they will be submitted to the City Deal funding programme for review in late 2020. Following this, it will be decided if the projects can proceed to Full Business Case, with a decision expected in early 2021.



Cross section illustration of i4c Innovation Centre (4 storey 7,500m2 option)



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