

Further to correspondence from Jim McManus to Liam Hannaway on the above, find attached reply from Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.

Regards,

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for a better night out

Newry Mourne & Down DC response to inquiry – Economic Growth & Job Creation

1. We believe the key economic drivers that the Executive can influence in order to maximise the potential of NI to attract inward investment, grow the economy and create jobs are:
 - Access to finance
 - Access to markets and suppliers
 - Business regulation
 - Communications infrastructure
 - Energy costs
 - Government support (financial and practical)
 - Education and skills
 - Innovation and R&D
 - Labour relations
 - Macro economic factors
 - Political climate
 - Public transport infrastructure and industry
2. Key Drivers that are priority for manufacturing sectors
 - Access to finance, markets and suppliers
 - Business regulations
 - Communications infrastructure
 - Transport infrastructure and networks
 - Skills and education
 - Political Climate
 - Labour Relations
 - Energy costs
 - Labour costs
3. What are the key drivers for the service sectors?
 - Business regulations
 - Access to finance
 - Communications infrastructure
 - Government support
 - Education
 - Political climate
 - Transport networks
 - Skills & education
4. Many of the economic drivers are well developed in their own right, however the bigger issue for government is how they connect and join up. There is no doubt the devolution of corporation tax powers would have

a significant impact on attracting FDI to the region, however the volume will be determined more by the world economy and how it is placed at any point in time.

Another key challenge for all stakeholders with a role to play in development of the economy and creation of jobs and growth is to ensure all work together. Those who deliver interventions must react to needs of investors. For example, we have a range of interventions around skills provision and education but is this meeting the needs of business?. Our experience from consulting with industry is that we could do better in this area to ensure industry has a pool of personnel with relevant skills to choose from. .

5. Each of the drivers have obvious licensed government agencies but the challenge is joining all this up to ensure we have priorities and clear actions with one entity taking responsibility to co-ordinate with community planning powers, local councils are well placed to coordinate on a sub regional basis as is the mechanism for much of our LED activity.

High speed broadband across the region is essential to assist business growth and develop through extension of voucher schemes.

The availability of land and appropriate supporting infrastructure for new businesses is a major problem and the growth of small home grown businesses is being stifled. Indeed the lack of available sites outside of key urban centres is a barrier to investors.

The executive should prioritise the release of publicly held land assets for existing businesses to develop / expand and for new affordable business start up units.

The executive should ensure that there is a joint prioritisation of schemes and programmes within the new council boundaries.

There is a need for more business zones to be developed.

Continue to invest in the development of tourism events and activities across the NI developing tourism events which will spread tourism throughout NI by build on the work of Tourism Ireland and Failte Ireland and gain international appeal allowing visitors to experience different activities e.g. an annual All-Ireland Air show and St Patrick's Celebration to help develop quality of life in region for those coming to set up businesses.