

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>New York Times Supplement</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	Leisure & Development Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	20 May 2025
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Information
<b>To be discussed In Committee</b>	No

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Local Economy
Outcome	Council contributes to improving levels of business innovation in the Borough. The performance of the economy of the Borough has recovered to pre Covid 19 levels.
Lead Officer	Head of Prosperity & Place

<b>Estimated Timescale for Completion</b>	
Date to be Completed	N/A

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>N/A</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the publication of a Northern Ireland feature within The New York Times.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 Officers have been working alongside the Brussels Research Group on an article highlighting the Causeway Coast and Glens area within their 'Spotlight on Northern Ireland' supplement which was featured within The New York Times.

2.2 Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council is joined in the article by a wide selection of Northern Ireland businesses, business support agencies and fellow Councils including:

- Invest NI
- NI Chamber of Commerce
- Confederation of British Industry Northern Ireland
- Ulster University
- KPMG
- Galgorm
- A&L Goodbody
- Norbrook
- Analytics Engines
- Axial3D
- Alchemy Technology Services
- Kiverco
- Belfast City Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

## **3.0 Supplement**

3.1 The supplement (**Annex A**) was published on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 and the article 'Causeway Coast and Glens: Beyond the Scenery' can be found on page eight.

3.2 In addition, an online campaign (**Annex B**) was delivered to help promote the Northern Ireland profile within The New York Times.

## **4.0 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Leisure & Development Committee notes the information in this report and Annex A.





Belfast's Titanic Quarter is one of Europe's largest urban waterfront regeneration projects. Based in the Innovation District, it is home to over 100 national and international businesses.

# A New Era: Unlocking Northern Ireland's Economic Potential

Over the past three decades, Northern Ireland has transformed its economic identity, emerging as a dynamic hub for innovation. The region's metamorphosis shifted the economy from being historically reliant on heavy industry, including building the famous RMS Titanic, to one driven by technology. The capital city, Belfast, became one of Europe's fastest-growing tech cities. This evolution has been shaped by political stability, and a growing reputation as a competitive business destination. A region once defined by its past is now shaping the future, nurturing world-class talent, and proving that a small nation can make a seismic impact on the global stage.



**Joe P. Kennedy III**  
*Former Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs*  
**US Government**

Reflecting on Northern Ireland's historic transformation, Joe P. Kennedy III, former US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs remarked, "Global discourse on Northern Ireland tends to remain anchored in its past challenges. It is time to re-frame this narrative, emphasizing the region's remarkable successes and vast potential for the future."

One of the success stories is gender inclusivity. 50% of the highest-ranking political executives, including the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are women. They serve as joint heads of government, a power-sharing model designed to build collaboration between opposing political parties. This arrangement reflects the region's commitment to cooperation between historically divided groups.

### Trade and Economic Strategy

In the wake of Brexit, Northern Ireland found itself in an exclusive position, with one foot in the UK, the other

in the EU's vast single market. It is now the only place in the world offering tariff-free market access to both Great Britain and the EU. Major global firms, from manufacturing giants to cutting-edge tech startups, are seizing the opportunity recognizing Northern Ireland as a strategic European gateway. It is a bridge between the US, EU, and UK, where businesses can thrive, trade flows freely, and a new chapter of prosperity is being written.

### Industrial Legacy to Modern Economy

Shipbuilding, textiles, and basic manufacturing once formed the backbone of Northern Ireland's economy. Today, Northern Ireland has diversified its economy across tech-heavy and high-growth sectors, with dynamic hubs laced across the nation. Businesses no longer need to rely on just the capital city to find all of their requirements. Highly skilled workers, competitive operational costs, and strong research and development ecosystems are found across the entire region.



**Kieran Donoghue**  
*CEO*  
**Invest NI**

Kieran Donoghue, CEO of Invest NI, the region's economic development agency, stated, "Operating costs in Northern Ireland can be up to 40% lower than in other European jurisdictions and up to 50% lower in real estate globally. This makes it an attractive destination for investment. Around 1,500 global firms, including 300 from the US already have operations in the region. We offer investors all of the capabilities that they're looking for, but with a very attractive price point. If our value proposition resonates with a company's needs, Invest NI can extend an invitation to visit Northern Ireland to see firsthand what we can offer."

### Sectors Driving Growth

Northern Ireland's economic renaissance is being driven by a diverse range of high-growth sectors fueling progress. Cybersecurity has become a cornerstone of this transformation, with global giants like Microsoft choosing Northern Ireland as a strategic hub. As a top European investment location for US cybersecurity firms, the region is attracting cutting-edge companies seeking a skilled workforce and a thriving digital ecosystem. The region also hosts the UK's largest fintech workforce outside London. Meanwhile, state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing facilities and life science breakthroughs are further transforming the industrial landscape.

The renewable energy sector is also expanding rapidly and ripe for investment. With Northern Ireland already generating nearly 50% of its electricity from renewable sources, the government is committed to reaching the target of 80% by 2030.

Beyond industry, Northern Ireland's creative sector, spurred by the global success of productions like *Game of Thrones*, *Derry Girls*, and *The Fall*, further cements its reputation as a world-class filming destination.



**Angela McGowan**  
*Director*  
**Confederation of British Industry Northern Ireland**

### Homegrown Multinationals

Angela McGowan, Director of the Confederation of British Industry Northern Ireland, stated, "Northern Ireland's entrepreneurial spirit and homegrown success stories are a testament to resilience, innovation, and strategic positioning. Many Northern Irish multinationals are expanding their global footprint and capitalizing on local strengths; they deserve recognition."

Susan Wylie, CEO of Northern Ireland's Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated, "One of Northern Ireland's most successful companies is Randox. It provides diagnostic tests and technology found in most testing kits worldwide. The company played a key role in developing COVID-19 tests for global distribution, and continues to expand their operations, focusing on early prevention to detect illnesses."



**Susan Wylie**  
*CEO*  
**Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

She continued, "Almac Group, another local player, conducts clinical trials for large pharmaceutical companies and reinvests profits into ongoing innovation. These two companies are strong examples of Northern Ireland's innovation and global reach."

### Happy Workers

Northern Ireland has consistently ranked as one of the happiest places to live in the UK, a distinction that speaks volumes about the region's blend of community, quality of life, and work-life balance. Residents report higher levels of life satisfaction, a deeper sense of purpose, and greater happiness than the UK average, while also experiencing lower levels of anxiety. This collective sense of well-being can be attributed to a strong community spirit, the beauty of its landscapes, and a growing culture that values mental health and work satisfaction.

### Forward Thinking

The nation stands at the crossroads of history and progress, proving that size is no barrier to ambition. From pioneering AI-driven cybersecurity to advancing life-saving pharmaceuticals, Northern Ireland is not just adapting to the future, but shaping it. As it continues to attract visionaries, investors, and talent from across the world, Northern Ireland's message is clear: this is a nation not defined by its past, but by the limitless potential of its future. ■

## Navigating Northern Ireland's Business Landscape

**A conversation with Johnny Hanna, Partner-in-Charge of KPMG in Northern Ireland. Hanna discussed KPMG's growing operations in Northern Ireland, how the business landscape has evolved, the unparalleled opportunities for the region, and other economic levers that could be unleashed to help it reach its full potential.**



**Johnny Hanna**  
*Partner-in-Charge*  
**KPMG in Northern Ireland**

### How long has KPMG been based in Northern Ireland?

KPMG is celebrating 50 years in Northern Ireland and in that time we have witnessed an incredible transformation in the region's economy and society. In 2021, we expanded our capabilities to meet the evolving needs of our clients with the launch of a Center of Excellence, dedicated to cybersecurity, AI, and data analytic services.

As an office, we're firmly in growth mode and because of a world-class education system, a dynamic broad-based economy, and a standard of living rated one of the best in the world,

we're able to call upon a diverse, highly skilled workforce from around the world to power those ambitions.

### What makes Northern Ireland competitive as a global business hub?

Over the past 20 years, we have seen a significant influx of international companies. From the US, major firms like Citi, Allstate, and Aflac have established a large presence in Northern Ireland. This trend reflects the region's attractiveness, with talent being a primary driver. Another factor is low operating costs, especially compared to countries like the Republic of Ireland, where rent and other expenses are considerably higher.

In our experience, the support offered by the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy's Assured Skills program has been a considerable benefit in terms of the availability of suitably qualified talent. In conjunction with employers and local colleges, the program enables bright and well-educated graduates from all academic disciplines the opportunity to undergo a bespoke training program over several months.

Post-Brexit, the piece of legislation which sets Northern Ireland apart competitively is the Windsor Framework. Under the terms of the Brexit agreement, this provides Northern Ireland-based businesses with unfettered ac-

cess to both the European Union and UK markets. This provides a competitive advantage for businesses dealing with goods, as they are able to operate with fewer trade barriers, including customs and VAT, as well as non-tariff barriers like checkpoints and inspections.

### What sectors offer the most opportunities?

For sectors with a heavy focus on regulation, the Windsor Framework can offer advantages in terms of an ability to align products to both the EU and GB regulatory frameworks, allowing them to streamline compliance, a key benefit to consider when mapping out supply chains and market entry strategies.

Northern Ireland has cultivated innovative, world-class expertise across a range of industries, including advanced manufacturing, engineering, agri-food, agri-tech, health, and life sciences.

As businesses across these and other sectors explore these opportunities, KPMG is committed to guiding them through the complexities of setting up operations, ensuring they understand the benefits and challenges of investing in Northern Ireland and navigating the dual market successfully.

### You mentioned other levers in Northern Ireland's economic toolbox?

While Northern Ireland companies

are subject to UK taxes (including a 25% rate of corporation tax), the UK Government has previously sanctioned the devolution of corporation tax-setting powers to the Northern Ireland Executive, powers which if finally implemented would allow us to reduce the corporation tax rate to 12.5% (15% in the case of certain large companies), on a par with the Republic of Ireland. This would further improve the competitiveness of Northern Ireland's overall investment proposition.

### What should potential investors remember about Northern Ireland?

Come and visit!  
It's only when you actually spend time in Northern Ireland you realize the friendliness of the people, the pro-business culture and appreciate the quality of life. You realize that you can leave your office and be in beautiful countryside in minutes; you can play golf on world class courses; you can visit the Mourne Mountains, the Antrim coast. There are so many things on your doorstep. For businesses there are huge opportunities in Northern Ireland; there's an abundance of talent, and some fantastic businesses established here, both indigenous and international investors, which took a leap of faith on Northern Ireland many years ago. They are now firmly part of the business landscape having reinvested many times! ■



# Bridging the Atlantic

## The enduring bond between Northern Ireland and America



As a seat of civic government, Belfast City Hall echoes the importance of local democracy, a principle closely aligned with American values.

Between 1845 and 1855, an estimated 5,000 ships braved the perilous Atlantic crossing, leaving the shores of Ireland during the Great Famine. The ships carried nearly two million Irish immigrants all hoping for a new life in America. Many of them would go on to become heroes in the American Civil War, playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of the United States. Countless stories embody the deep ties connecting Northern Ireland and America; a relationship forged through shared dreams of a better future.

**Ancestral Legacy**  
Irish immigrants helped mold the

foundation of the United States, impacting culture, politics, and the fabric of society. Setting sail in large numbers from Belfast during the 19th century, those arriving in the US went on to work building canals, railroads, and cities, often taking on dangerous and physically demanding jobs. Some of their descendants, spanning generations, rose to prominence in politics, with figures like President John F. Kennedy embodying the enduring influence and leadership of Irish-Americans. Historically, twenty-three American presidents have Irish heritage, and over 31.5 million residents claim Irish ancestry, second only to the 43 million of German descent.



**Joe P. Kennedy III**  
*Former Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs*  
**US Government**

**Peace Through Collaboration**  
Joe P. Kennedy III, grandnephew of President John F. Kennedy and former US Special Envoy to Northern Ireland for Economic Affairs stated, "It is extraordinary what the region has been able to accomplish in the past 27 years thanks to the hard work of the last generation, exciting present state, and bright future ahead. The United States remains committed to Northern Ireland's success, and the region's economic growth rate is currently outpacing that of the rest of the UK. The USA should be proud of its engagement in Northern Ireland. From the peace process and contribution to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, to helping build economic development today. There is no prosperity without peace, and no peace without prosperity. The locals go above and beyond to make sure Americans coming to Northern Ireland feel welcomed, valued, and understand that their investments are appreciated."

**The Business of Partnership**  
Beyond diplomacy, business ties are flourishing. Former US Ambassador to the UK, Jane D. Hartley said, "I've seen local businesses exporting their ideas and products to the world and young people who are committed to lifting up their communities. I have to mention the great American companies that are cre-

ating jobs and investment for the people of Northern Ireland; American businesses employ over 30,000 people in Northern Ireland. With the skills, talent, and creativity Northern Ireland has at its fingertips, and now, a lasting peace, I believe there's no limit to what the region can achieve in the coming years."



**Jane D. Hartley**  
*Former Ambassador to UK*  
**US Government**

**Historic Research**  
Since 1845, Queen's University Belfast's impact has stretched across the globe. In 2020, Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton became the university's first female Chancellor. Alongside Ulster University—Queen's plays a key role in shaping Northern Ireland's vibrant higher education landscape which has alumni in 137 countries. 99% of Queen's research environment has been assessed as world leading or internationally excellent. Both universities are known for their strong focus on innovation, research, and widening access to education.

**Cultural Currents and Shared Stories**  
From St. Patrick's Day to Hollywood's fascination with Irish heritage, cultural exchange continues to strengthen the bond. Musicians like Van Morrison captivate American audiences, another example of Northern Ireland's influence reaching across the Atlantic. As both sides navigate new political and economic landscapes, one thing remains clear: the relationship between Northern Ireland and the USA is not just historical; it is vital, evolving, and, above all, enduring. ■

## Belfast: A Testament to Resilience and Renewal

Belfast, the birthplace of the Titanic, has a storied tradition of engineering ingenuity and industrial progress. The city has continually reinvented itself from the famed Harland & Wolff shipyards, where one of history's most iconic vessels took shape, to its prosperous modern economy. Today, Belfast is at the helm of fintech and cybersecurity innovation, driving advancements in technology. A magnet for foreign firms from Europe and the US, and a launch-

pad for ambitious startups, it has spent the past two decades shaping an ecosystem propelled by research, innovation, and enterprise. Belfast's economic momentum is being steered by key industries powering its global standing. The city's engineering and advanced manufacturing expertise is driving innovation in state-of-the-art facilities, incorporating cutting-edge robotics, machine learning, and electronics. The creative and digi-

tal industries are increasingly integral to Belfast's identity, with companies producing world-class television programming, such as *Game of Thrones*, and pioneering virtual and augmented reality technologies. In addition, financial and professional services have flourished, attracting a diverse range of companies due to the city's digital capabilities and talented workforce. The city is rated as the world's top international investment location for US cyber security firms and the number one location globally for FinTech inward investment. Belfast hosts several international financial services firms, along with technology titans like NVIDIA and Microsoft, which have established substantial cybersecurity operations in the region. As well, the life and health sciences sector has gained significant prominence, with Belfast emerging as a leading hub for technological innovation. The city's beauty and history also attract a growing tourism sector. Belfast is cradled by the Belfast Hills and overlooks Belfast Lough. Literary connections run deep—Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is said to have been inspired by the Sleeping Giant formation seen from the city's east.

**How are innovative companies in Belfast making a global impact?**  
Innovative companies in Belfast are making significant strides in industries with global impact. Catagen, based in the Titanic Quarter of Belfast, started by testing catalytic converters for high-end cars using clean technology. It has since expanded into e-fuels, positioning itself for further growth while helping industry become more sustainable. Another company, Ionic, is tackling the essential issue of battery recycling, particularly for electric vehicles, an increasingly critical industry. Artemis Technologies, a company developing zero-emission hydrofoil tech for maritime transport vessels, is set to pilot a hydrofoil water taxi service between Bangor and Belfast, utilizing cutting-edge technology originally developed for racing yachts. This innovation holds promise for broader applications, such as for New York's Staten Island Ferry. From the creation of Viagra to the development of ejector seats, Belfast has consistently embodied a spirit of ingenuity and forward-thinking.

**"Belfast has consistently embodied a spirit of ingenuity and forward-thinking."**



**John Walsh**  
*Chief Executive*  
**Belfast City Council**

**A conversation with John Walsh, Chief Executive of Belfast City Council**  
**What factors contribute to Belfast's attractiveness as a business destination?**  
Belfast has a vibrant business ecosystem, with a mix of local and international companies. The city's two world-class universities, Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast, and other third-level colleges cater to over 50,000 students each year, providing a steady talent pipeline.

**"Belfast is a cost-effective alternative to other European hubs like London and Dublin, making it an attractive base."**

Belfast is a cost-effective alternative to other European hubs like London and Dublin, making it an attractive base. This supportive ecosystem has led to long-term investment. For instance, over 70% of companies re-invest and expand their operations once in Belfast. Citibank, for example, initially planned for a few hundred jobs but has grown to employ over 4,000 people locally, citing workforce quality, resilience, and loyalty as key factors.

**What is the Belfast Agenda?**  
The Belfast Agenda is a community-driven plan co-created by the city, its residents, and key stakeholders. It prioritizes inclusive growth and shared prosperity, recognizing its role in fostering social cohesion and long-term stability. Every investment made through this framework aims to strengthen economic opportunities and cement peace in the city. Tourism is a key focus, with the Belfast Stories project set to become a major attraction. While many visitors currently stay for just a day or a single night, this development aims to draw them into the heart of Belfast, encouraging longer stays. By connecting tourists with community-based experiences across the city, the project seeks to deepen engagement and showcase Belfast beyond its most famous landmarks. The Belfast Region City Deal is also driving investment into high-performing sectors. The Center for Digital Health and Technology is promoting medical device and diagnostics innovation with strong ties to Boston. Another promising venture is Momentum One Zero championing emerging technologies. Our overall strategic approach, encapsulated in the Belfast Agenda, is already paying dividends in terms of inclusive growth. Belfast is a great place to live, to work and it also offers superb opportunities for business and investment. ■



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Times Higher Education Awards 2024



# A Gem of European Tourism

A land of storybook scenery and five-star stays



Galgorm Resort, one of Northern Ireland's premier luxury hotels.

Few places in the world can claim a tourism tapestry as compelling as Northern Ireland's. Here, ancient landscapes whisper legends of giants, medieval castles perch dramatically over windswept cliffs, and centuries-old traditions echo alongside modern luxury. Once an overlooked corner of the UK and the island of Ireland, Northern Ireland is charting an ambitious course for its tourism sector, aiming to grow it into a GBP 2 billion industry by 2035. It already employs approximately 73,000 people, standing as the region's fourth-largest private sector employer.

The wild beauty of the Causeway Coast, the cinematic grandeur of well known filming locations, and cultural scenes have all played their part, but Northern Ireland's evolution into a luxury escape is perhaps its most surprising transformation.

At the heart of this reinvention lies Galgorm, a sanctuary where the natural splendor of the Irish countryside meets world-class hospitality. From its award-winning spa to its fine dining, Galgorm has redefined what it means to experience Northern Ireland, not

just as a place for a brief getaway, but as a destination to be savored, explored, and truly immersed in for an unforgettable stay.



**Colin Johnston**  
Managing Director  
Galgorm

Colin Johnston, Managing Director of Galgorm, a premier luxury hotel and spa situated just 30 minutes from Belfast, stated, "Northern Ireland has a wealth of experiences. While golf draws many visitors, the allure extends far beyond the fairways. Travelers can explore breathtaking coastlines, immerse themselves in the vibrant energy from Belfast to Derry, and trace their ancestral roots. Hidden gems, like the ancestral homes of US Presidents Chester A. Arthur and Andrew Jackson add unique local flavor. The warmth of Northern Ireland's people also plays a crucial role, with many guests appreciating the personal connections they make during their visits."



Bathing experience at The Thermal Spa Village, Galgorm.



Golf, at Galgorm Resort.

**“Northern Ireland has a wealth of experiences. While golf draws many visitors, the allure extends far beyond the fairways. Travelers can explore breathtaking coastlines, immerse themselves in the vibrant energy from Belfast to Derry, and trace their ancestral roots.”**

## A Luxurious Retreat

Tucked away in Northern Ireland's countryside, Galgorm is known for its warm hospitality. Johnston remarked, "Galgorm offers a luxurious destination and a peaceful escape that is still close to Belfast and all top attractions. We have a globally acclaimed spa and championship golf course, all set on 500 acres of lush parkland with the River Maine flowing through the estate. Located about 25 minutes

from Belfast International Airport, it offers easy access to top destinations across Northern Ireland.

"The resort provides a wide array of activities like falconry, horseback riding, and is attracting US visitors, particularly those seeking golf experiences. Many have already explored Ireland or Scotland but are now discovering the allure of Northern Ireland. Part of its appeal lies in its affordability compared to the Republic of Ireland and Scotland, coupled with the excitement surrounding the destination's fresh and uncharted offerings. Positive word-of-mouth from those who have already visited is a powerful tool, with many sharing their experiences and encouraging others to visit."

**“The warmth of Northern Ireland's people also plays a crucial role, with many guests appreciating the personal connections they make during their visits.”**

He continued to discuss Galgorm's offering, "Our hotel's Thermal Spa Village is a highlight, having everything from riverside hot tubs to salt therapy rooms, making it a top spot for relaxation. Golf lovers can tee off on the resort's championship Castle Golf Course, which has hosted major tournaments. In August we will host the European Tour Legends event. This unique tournament allows non-professional golfers to play alongside legends like Paul McGinley, offering an exciting experience for guests. It is a major draw for golf enthusiasts."

The resort offers a range of luxurious accommodations, including deluxe rooms, suites, log cabins, cottage suites, shepherd's huts, forest dens, and exclusive residences, many rooms are dog friendly as well.

Galgorm's growth trajectory is impressive. With the same ownership for 25 years, the company has grown from 100 employees in 2008 to 1,100 today. This expansion reflects the broader potential for the region. Although Northern Ireland is trailing behind its neighbors in terms of tourism and hospitality size, Galgorm is confident that Northern Ireland's will exceed the GBP 2 billion target before 2035. For more information visit: [galgorm.com](http://galgorm.com) ■

## Maximizing Dual Market Access

A conversation with Michael Neill, Head of A&L Goodbody's Belfast office



Belfast city center.

**Northern Ireland's legal and regulatory framework operates within the UK's common law jurisdiction while simultaneously adhering to select EU mandates, reflecting its unique post-Brexit position.**



**Michael Neill**  
Head of Office  
A&L Goodbody  
Northern Ireland

Due to the Northern Ireland Protocol, which is part of the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement, Northern Ireland remains aligned with certain EU rules related to trade, preventing a "hard" border with the Republic of Ireland while allowing trade with both the EU and the UK. The Windsor Framework, introduced in 2023 to refine post-Brexit arrangements, modified the protocol by reducing checks and paperwork on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, creating a "green lane" for trusted traders while maintaining EU regulatory compliance for goods entering the single market. This adjustment helps preserve Northern Ireland's dual-market access and facilitates cross-border commerce.

**How well does Northern Ireland's legal and regulatory ecosystem support businesses?**

Corporations can have confidence in Northern Ireland's legal and regulatory system—it's predictable, reliable, and closely aligned with the English legal system, ensuring consistency and stability.

**“Corporations can have confidence in Northern Ireland's legal and regulatory system—it's predictable, reliable, and closely aligned with the English legal system, ensuring consistency and stability.”**

We are outperforming expectations for a small but highly specialized jurisdiction—one strategically positioned at the heart of key global markets, both geographically and economically. Historically we've been modest, but that's changing. Confidence is growing, and businesses are seizing new opportunities. Now, we're in a unique position—bridging the UK and European markets.

**“We're in a unique position—bridging the UK and European markets.”**

The Northern Ireland Executive has been in place since early last year, restoring devolved government and decision-making. The executive, composed of ministers from various political parties, allows Northern Irish leaders to address regional issues directly rather than relying on the UK government. This marks a return to local control and a step towards political stability. If stability continues politically and economically—without major

geopolitical disruptions or high interest rates—investors may see Northern Ireland as a more reliable destination under the Windsor Framework.

**How is US FDI driving business growth in the region?**

Northern Ireland is home to highly successful, sophisticated, and profitable businesses within a compact yet dynamic economy. Investing here offers a strong European platform for expansion into other markets. We benefit from close ties to the Republic of Ireland and the EU, a highly skilled workforce, and two world-class universities, both ranked among the UK's top 15 law schools.

For these reasons, US FDI in the region has historically been strong, with over 1,500 international companies investing in the past decade. At A&L Goodbody, we've advised over 500 US corporates on inward investment across Ireland. Last year was a record transactional year in Belfast, and we have grown operations by 50% over the past four years.

For those considering investment, the best advice is to speak with local firms with deep expertise in the market.

We can provide valuable insights into the economic landscape and opportunities available.

**Why should US clients choose A&L Goodbody as their legal partner?**

First, we are by far the largest law firm on the island of Ireland. Transactionally, we have the deepest ties with the US, making us a key player in cross-border legal matters.

Second, many international law firms operate in Northern Ireland as back-office legal support centers. A&L Goodbody stands apart as a fully Irish firm. We are independent, internationally recognized, and headquartered in Ireland, uniquely positioned to serve both domestic clients and international interests.

Third, unlike many firms that provide support to lawyers in other jurisdictions, we work directly with clients. We don't act as intermediaries advising lawyers based elsewhere—we provide legal counsel firsthand. As a result, our firm has developed deep specialization in regulation, merger control, technology, media, data, and renewables. This has become a defining strength of our practice. ■



# PERFECTLY POSITIONED



## A unique investment opportunity

Access to trade in both the UK and the European Union.



Belfast is Europe's leading FDI destination for new software development  
(iDi Markets FT 2021)



Belfast is the world's number 1 investment location for financial services technology inward investment projects  
(iDi Markets FT 2023)



[www.investinbelfast.com](http://www.investinbelfast.com)



**Belfast City Council**



# The Backbone of an Innovative Economy

## How universities develop talent while inspiring innovation



Ulster University's campuses in Belfast, Derry~Londonderry and Coleraine.

In the world of academia, innovation thrives where people meet to challenge the status quo and push boundaries. In Northern Ireland, that meeting ground is found at institutions like Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast, places where groundbreaking research becomes an engine for societal and economic growth. By attracting global investment and forming meaningful industry partnerships, these universities are reshaping the region's identity. They are not merely institutions, but catalysts, positioning Northern Ireland as an indispensable hub for international discovery and investment.



**Professor Sir Steve Smith**  
*International Education Champion*  
**UK Government**

### Talented People

Professor Sir Steve Smith, the UK's International Education Champion, discussed how people in Northern Ireland's laboratories, lecture halls, and research centers are elevating nation-

al competitiveness to new heights. He stated, "International rankings showcase the UK education system among the strongest globally in terms of critical thinking and skills development. Students in Northern Ireland actually perform better than in the English education system on many key metrics."

Northern Ireland boasts one of the top-performing primary mathematics education systems in Europe and ranks among the best globally. Students regularly achieve higher GCSE and A-Level results than their peers across the UK. Additionally, 72% of high school graduates pursue further or higher education, and more than 87% of research at universities is recognized to be either world-leading or internationally excellent.

At Ulster University, the pursuit of knowledge is more than an academic endeavor. As Northern Ireland's largest university, Ulster is home to a dynamic community of researchers, innovators, and thought leaders working at the cutting edge of discovery. Through its bold *People, Place, and Partnership* strategy, the institution seeks to bridge the gap between academia and society, allowing academic excellence to translate into tangible impact.

Professor Paul Bartholomew, Vice-Chancellor at Ulster University, stated, "We are committed to prioritizing skills development in research centers across multiple campuses in Belfast, Coleraine, and Derry~Londonderry. The Derry~Londonderry campus in particular, just miles from the border, encourages cross-border collaboration. We are able to secure funding from both the European Union and the Republic of Ireland for research and teaching support. In our view, people are at the heart of the university, and our focus is on creating the optimum environment for our people to surpass their career and research aspirations."



**Prof. Paul Bartholomew**  
*Vice-Chancellor*  
**Ulster University**

Ulster University is among the UK's top institutions for research excellence and impact, ranked in the top 10% of UK universities for research impact in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework. It was recently named UK and Ireland University of the Year in the Times Higher Education Awards. This prestigious accolade enhances its global recognition, opening doors to even greater international collaborations.

Professor Bartholomew added, "We are not content with rankings alone. We are also here to support people beyond studying and research, especially when they're ready to dive into entrepreneurship."

Building on this commitment, Ulster University nurtures entrepreneurship through a variety of initiatives. For instance, the Enterprise Hub gives students access to expert entrepreneurial advice, while Innovation Ulster Ltd aids in commercializing new inventions and providing funding to entrepreneurs. A recent support program, Connect to Success, empowers female entrepreneurs while promoting gender equality.

### A Place to Innovate

Ulster University leads research in AI, personalized medicine, next-generation materials, economic policy, and other emerging fields. Professor Bartholomew discussed the university's commitment to developing tailored research infrastructure. He stated, "The Artificial Intelligence Collaboration Center, developed in partnership with Queen's University Belfast and supported by Invest Northern Ireland and the region's Department for the Economy, is setting new benchmarks for AI applications in logistics, finance, life sciences, and agritech. The university also explores the role of generative AI in cybersecurity, aiming to improve threat detection and response through machine learning techniques."

For the healthcare sector, Ulster University's Personalized Medicine Center focuses on developing treatments and diagnostics for chronic and degenerative diseases by understanding genetic and molecular interactions, aiming to inform clinical decision-making. A remarkable milestone is the development of a rapid diagnostic method for chronic kidney disease, enabling timely detection and improved patient outcomes. Professor Bartholomew noted, "Next year, the university will launch additional City Deal projects, including a Center for Digital Healthcare Technologies in partnership with a local hospital trust for clinical research."

Another project is the Smart Manufacturing Data Hub, which equips small enterprises with the tools to harness the power of data. Nearly 10,000 manufacturers from industries ranging from food to aerospace are able to adopt the latest data-driven technologies to optimize productivity and test innovations.

Ulster University also drives innovation in composites, nanomaterials, and sustainable manufacturing in its Advanced Future Materials and Manufacturing research center. It pioneers next-generation materials shaping the future of advanced engineering, with cutting-edge expertise in aerospace, automotive, and the renewable energy sectors. A notable success is the long standing collaboration with Bombardier's Belfast division (now Spirit AeroSystems), which led to the development of the world's first resin-infused composite wing, lightening traditional metal wings by approximately 10%.

Through its Creative Industries Institute, the university provides high-end research capacity for the testing of modern technologies with industrial partners in disciplines such as product design, smart clothing, animation, music technology, film and broadcasting, and virtual reality.

### Collaborative Partnerships

Professor Bartholomew added, "We actively promote a research culture that emphasizes integrity and interdisciplinary engagement. The university supports a sustainable research ecosystem by forging alliances across sectors and continents. We're building partnerships so our work transcends academia, and directly influences industry and policy. International collaboration is a significant aspect of Ulster's research strategy. Over 61% of its research involves international partners, with 357 collaborations based in the United States."

Professor Sir Smith elaborated, "An example is the US-Ireland R&D Partnership, a transatlantic initiative funding 99 projects to date between the island of Ireland and the United States."

Ulster University is at the heart of Northern Ireland's drive for a smarter, more connected future. It is a hub for people to collaborate, spark innovation, and shape the world of tomorrow. ■



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## Small Nation, Big Breakthroughs

Across a fiercely collaborative landscape, R&D in Northern Ireland is being cultivated not in isolation, but in symphony. Advanced materials are reshaping aerospace; AI is enhancing diagnostics in healthcare; quantum research is no longer just theory, but applied engineering in motion. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), part-funded by companies, academia, Innovate UK, and Invest NI, help link firms with academia to deliver innovation-led projects.

For instance, some successful KTPs include Ulster University's collaboration with CDE to create a Smart Data Mining System, improving design, operation, manufactur-

ing, and servicing of CDE machines. Another example is the university's collaboration with Fortress Protec. They developed a new range of hybrid steel/polymer doors, enhancing security, fire safety, thermal, and acoustic performance of traditional steel doors. Leckey, also joined forces with the university to place advanced sensory technologies into their mobility and postural aids, improving how children engage with the devices while equipping therapists with valuable data for evidence-based care.

R&D moves like a current—powering innovation while sharpening the competitive edge of local industry. ■



# How One Cat’s Recovery Showcases the Quality of a World-Class Life and Health Sciences Hub



Norbrook sustainably produces differentiated generics that are accessible to all, promoting the wellbeing of animals worldwide.

Bella, once a spirited cat chasing sunbeams and darting across garden paths, began to slow down. As she aged, something changed; she grew restless and irritable. Despite a constant appetite, she lost weight. Her once-glossy coat turned dull and matted. The culprit: feline hyperthyroidism, a common condition in older cats.

For her owner, the hardest part was the daily battle to administer a pill to help her feel better. Bella refused the pill, and the stress mounted for both of them. That’s when their veterinarian suggested a new alternative: Felanorm®, the first FDA-approved oral liquid treatment for feline hyperthyroidism, developed by Norbrook, a pharmaceutical company based in Northern Ireland.

Unlike traditional pills, Felanorm® blends seamlessly with food, making precise dosing easier and stress-free. Within weeks, Bella’s energy returned. Her coat softened. Her appetite normalized. And once again, she was found lounging in sunbeams, purring contentedly. Bella’s recovery is a testament to a growing movement happening across the Atlantic.

## A Powerful Force in Life Sciences

While often recognized for its history and scenic coastlines, Northern Ireland is redefining itself as a global hub for life sciences innovation. With over 250 companies spanning pharmaceuticals, biotechnology,

and diagnostics, the region is rapidly emerging as a center for medical and veterinary breakthroughs.

At the heart of this transformation are leading firms like Almac Group, Randox, and Norbrook. They are pioneering drug development, diagnostics, and veterinary medicine. Along with these key players, other strategic investments, R&D, and government-backed initiatives are fueling progress.

## A Veterinary Powerhouse with Global Reach

Headquartered in Newry, Norbrook is one of Northern Ireland’s standout success stories. Founded in 1969 by the late Lord Ballyedmond, the company has grown into one of the world’s largest family-owned veterinary pharmaceutical firms. It now exports to over 120 countries, specializing in veterinary pharmaceutical treatments for both companion and farm animals.

Norbrook is dedicated to improving animal welfare by specializing in antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and parasite treatments for both livestock and companion animals.

## The Growth of Pet Care

In recent years, global pet ownership has surged, especially in the US, where nearly 70% of households now include at least one animal companion. This shift has transformed veterinary medicine from a niche field into a fast-growing industry, driving

demand for smarter, safer, and more user-friendly treatments. Companies like Norbrook are rising to meet that demand and bringing pharmaceutical rigor to the world of pet care.



**Andrea Iucci**  
CEO  
Norbrook

Andrea Iucci, CEO of Norbrook, stressed how the company’s mission is rooted in accessibility. He joked, “Pets will eat anything, until you try to give them a tablet. Then they turn into dragons.”

He continued, “That’s why we focus on practical innovations, like Felanorm®. It’s not just effective for the animal. For hyperthyroidism, precise dosing is critical to balancing hormone levels. The problem with tablets is that cats don’t like them, and they can’t be easily adjusted for dosage. So, we introduced a palatable liquid form that can be mixed with food, making it easier for both veterinarians and pet owners to achieve the right dosage. This is where Norbrook can make the difference.”

He noted that Norbrook develops and manufactures 99% of its products in-house, delivering differentiated generic medications to the American market and allowing for greater quality control and affordability.

“We have secured more FDA approvals for bioequivalent products than most competitors. Norbrook is building a new category of differentiated generics. We rapidly innovate, embracing scientific progress while never compromising on safety. These are affordable treatments that are also easier to administer and more precisely dosed,” Iucci said.

## Fast, Affordable Veterinary Innovation for Livestock

Norbrook’s reach extends far beyond domestic pets. The company also serves the agricultural sector, providing farmers with cutting-edge solutions for livestock health. In addition, Norbrook manufactures private-label products for global distributors, adding to its role as a behind-the-scenes engine of progress in veterinary medicine.

Iucci noted, “What sets us apart is that we serve both farm and companion animals, which is a rare capability. Additionally, we offer solutions under our own Norbrook brand while also manufacturing private-label products for major distributors.”

One of its recent successes is a rapid diagnostic test that allows farmers to detect infections on-site immediately, improving livestock health and reducing the spread of disease, while minimizing the need for costly lab analysis or vet visits.

“The test sold out in the UK within two weeks of launch. It’s a sign of just how much appetite there is for fast, affordable veterinary tools, especially in the livestock sector,” Iucci added.

## High Quality Pharmaceutical Standards With Global Impact

Northern Ireland’s life sciences sector adheres to some of the highest regulatory standards in the world and surpasses those of major manufacturing centers like India and China. Its reputation for quality and reliability makes it a favored source for both human and animal health products.

For Norbrook, the commitment to excellence translates into real-world impact: fewer side effects, more precise treatments, and happier, healthier animals, like Bella, worldwide. ■

# AI-Powered Data Analytics

## The logic of algorithms

In the mist-laced mornings of Belfast’s old shipyards, where steel once met sea and the echo of industry still hums in the brickwork, a quieter ascent is unfolding. In glass-fronted labs and converted warehouses, Northern Irish firms are scripting a new industrial epic: not with iron and flame, but with algorithms. The region is becoming a nexus of data-driven innovation, and local code is crafting global clarity. Analytics aren’t just being used as a tool, but as a compass, for entire industries toward a smarter future.



**Dr. Scott Fischhaber**  
CEO  
Analytics Engines

Analytics Engines exemplifies the sector’s impact. Specializing in AI strategy, data engineering, and data science, it delivers human-centric technology solutions that address real-world challenges. Through the company’s Panoramic AI framework, they integrate Large Language Models (LLMs), data enrichments, and hybrid search capabilities to enhance AI-driven insights. Dr. Scott Fischhaber, CEO of Analytics Engines and an Oklahoma native stated, “Our roots are in Queen’s University Belfast. Thanks to our strong partnerships with leading universities and research institutions, we are positioned to translate the latest research into practical, real-world solutions. Because of these collaborations, we’re able to cross-pollinate ideas, taking insights from one sector and applying them to others. Through pioneering and innovative data and AI solutions, we accelerate our clients’ strategic aspirations and help them achieve their business goals with precision.”

A key concern in adopting LLMs is data security. Dr. Fischhaber emphasized, “Companies need to know how their data is protected. At Analytics Engines, we stress to clients the importance of maintaining data sovereignty and aligning AI solutions with existing governance frameworks. This involves critical considerations such as the origin and hosting of models, associated terms and conditions, and decisions between hosted deployments versus cloud native solutions. In today’s digital age, neglecting data protection can lead to severe con-

sequences. By ensuring the governance processes and policies are in place, we allow clients to securely integrate LLMs into their data infrastructure.”

The company’s tight-knit team makes sophisticated AI and machine learning systems tailored to unlock value for organizations. The solutions they develop offer faster decisions, sharper foresight, and measurable impact across sectors as diverse as utilities, manufacturing, construction, agri-food, and public services. Beyond security, Analytics Engines advocates for a business-first approach to AI adoption. Dr. Fischhaber added, “A lot of people try ChatGPT and assume it can do everything. But when they start using it, they hit limitations. We encourage organizations to identify priority challenges and assess where AI can deliver tangible business value. This involves defining clear ROI and success metrics, leading to the development of proof-of-concept projects that, upon validation, can be scaled across the organization. Crucially, this process includes managing the human aspect of AI adoption, allowing teams to be engaged and recognize the value of new technologies.”

He continued, “An illustrative example of our work involves a collaboration we had with a publisher. By implementing LLMs to reduce the manual metadata extraction from articles, the publisher automated a labor-intensive task. It improved search capabilities across the publisher’s archive, enabling more efficient and intelligent content retrieval.”

Analytics Engines has primarily focused on markets outside the US; however, with the launch of Big Data New York, the company is actively showcasing Northern Ireland’s technological capabilities in the States. Dr. Fischhaber mentioned, “Through our annual Big Data Belfast conference, which attracts around 700 business and technology leaders, we highlight local expertise in data and analytics. Big Data NY, showcases real business stories: how people are using data, analytics, and AI to drive meaningful change. It also promotes Northern Ireland as a location to do business and invest.”

Northern Ireland’s compact scale and collaborative ethos have proven fertile ground for innovation of this kind. In a world flooded with data but starved for understanding, their work resonates far beyond the nation’s borders. ■

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# Transforming Healthcare: The Power of Personalization



Surgeons are able to work with precise, patient-specific models that eliminate guesswork.

In the 1960s, a Northern Irish physician named Dr. James Francis Pantridge changed the course of emergency medicine. Recognizing countless lives were lost to sudden cardiac arrest before patients could reach a hospital, he pioneered the portable defibrillator, an innovation allowing life-saving treatment to be placed directly into the hands of first responders. His invention transformed global healthcare, creating a future where immediate intervention could mean the difference between life and death.

Today, we stand at a similar turning point in medicine. This time in the realm of surgery and medical implants. Imagine a world where every medical

procedure is tailored to the individual. Where surgeons work with precise, patient-specific models that eliminate guesswork. This isn't the future; it's happening now thanks to companies like Axial3D.



**Roger Johnston**  
CEO  
Axial3D

Born in Northern Ireland, this pioneering company harnesses the power of AI-driven 3D modeling. By reconstructing traditional MRI and CT scans into highly accurate, personal-



ized 3D models, Axial3D is advancing medical imaging, reshaping the industry. The company empowers surgeons to offer treatments that are as unique as the patients receiving them. Roger Johnston, Axial3D's CEO stated, "Traditional methods rely on generic anatomical sizes, which don't always fit the needs of every patient. Axial3D provides medical device companies with the tools to deliver fully customized solutions at scale, ensuring heart valve placements, joint replacements, stent fittings, and more are designed with precision for each individual. By enabling patient-specific planning and device optimization, we help medtech innovators bring next-level personalization to surgical care. Without this it

**"Axial3D provides medical device companies with the tools to deliver fully customized solutions at scale—ensuring heart valve placements, joint replacements, stent fittings, and more are designed with precision for each individual."**

The impact of these advancements cannot be overstated. With automation and AI, these solutions are now scalable. By partnering with major medical device manufacturers and imaging companies, including industry giants like GE HealthCare, Axial3D is making 3D imaging the standard. The company aims to integrate its solutions into many medical procedures, encouraging hospitals and healthcare providers to leverage the full potential of 3D technology. Now, hospitals of any size or location can deliver the same level of precision and care as world-renowned medical centers.

The future of orthopedics, cardiology, and beyond is not one-size-fits-all; it is patient-specific. Just as Pantridge's defibrillator reshaped emergency care, patient-specific solutions are driving precision medicine. For more information visit: [axial3d.com/patient-specific/](https://axial3d.com/patient-specific/) ■

## Ards and North Down: Exceptional Living Just Minutes from Belfast



Studio Ulster, Screen Northern Ireland, and post-production firms are transforming Northern Ireland into a hub for film, TV, and digital content with cutting-edge facilities.

Businesses are drawn to Ards and North Down due to its accessibility and affordability, while residents benefit from a thriving local economy and coastal charm. Boasting robust public infrastructure and a strategic location just minutes from downtown Belfast, this dynamic borough offers an exceptional environment for enterprises seeking to establish a foothold in Europe.

Susie McCullough, CEO of Ards and North Down Borough Council, stated, "We are ideally located just minutes from Belfast City Airport, making it easy for business people to connect with global markets. However, our true strength lies in our exceptional workforce—highly skilled, well-educated, and renowned for its low turnover. Beyond expertise, our local talent embodies a strong entre-

preneurial spirit, driving innovation and startups across a diverse range of industries."



**Susie McCullough**  
CEO  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

The creative industries are a major growth sector in Northern Ireland, with start-ups and SMEs thriving in fields like film, digital media, gaming, and design. Internationally recognized for productions, such as *Game of Thrones*, the region continues to attract investment and drive economic growth. Holywood, a dynamic town within the council area, has evolved



Bangor, a coastal city in Northern Ireland, known for its marina and maritime heritage.

into a hub for film and television services including production, post-production, and digital innovation. The town of Holywood is linked to Studio Ulster, playing a key role in the wider ambition for Northern Ireland to become a hub for the global screen industry. At the forefront of innovation for screen and performance technology, Studio Ulster offers world-class virtual production studios and research facilities. These cutting-edge spaces are driving advancements, redefining the next era of media production.

### Attracting Investment

"By exploring innovative approaches, such as offering ready-built facilities for businesses, we are dedicated to positioning Ards and North Down as the premier choice for investors," said McCullough.

The council offers tailored business support, developing business infrastructure, and fostering partnerships with key industry players. Land holdings in Bangor, the largest city in the council area, are being explored for commercial development, while initiatives such as business mentoring programs and market access strategies further strengthen the business landscape.

McCullough added, "We are already home to major investors like Brunswick Corporation, an American company focused on the production and distribution of a wide array of products, including marine engines, boats, and various parts and accessories. Bangor is a hub for Brunswick's marine parts and accessories division. They expanded their local facilities, and also now produce 99% of the pumps used in portable toilets around the world, right from Bangor."

**One of the Most Desirable Places to Live**

Ards and North Down boasts Northern Ireland's longest coastline, picturesque villages, and rich cultural heritage, making it one of the most desirable places to live. Strangford Lough and other natural attractions contribute to the area's appeal, while investment in public green spaces

and infrastructure aims to enhance residents' quality of life. A key initiative is the development of a 40-kilometer greenway network, a scenic trail seamlessly linking major towns such as Newtownards to Bangor.

Efforts to enhance hospitality infrastructure in Bangor are also underway, with funding for new developments, including a marina, water sports center, and creative arts hub. Additionally, the Queen's Parade regeneration project will strengthen the city's hospitality and retail sectors.

Tourism plays a crucial role in the borough's economic strategy, with an emphasis on experiential travel. Iconic attractions like Pickie Fun Park and the historic Mount Stewart estate draw visitors, while other activities—such as Strangford Lough canoeing tours paired with authentic Irish cooking classes—offer memorable experiences.

**"By exploring innovative approaches, such as offering ready-built facilities for businesses, we are dedicated to positioning Ards and North Down as the premier choice for investors."**

### Strengthening International Ties

"The region shares rich cultural and historical ties with the United States. Bangor played a crucial role during World War II, serving as a staging ground for American troops prior to the D-Day landings. This legacy is honored through ongoing commemorations, and we were recently privileged to host a visit from the US Consulate, further strengthening these enduring connections. The United States continues to be a key market for us, and we warmly welcome businesses seeking to explore opportunities in Ards and North Down," McCullough concluded. ■

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# Without Borders: Derry~Londonderry's Role in Powering Insurtech



The iconic Peace Bridge stands as a symbol of unity and connects Ebrington Square with the rest of the city center.

Once defined by its tumultuous past, Derry~Londonderry has dramatically transformed, prevailing as a peaceful and vibrant, economic and cultural hub. The city's historic center, including its famous 17th-century walls, remains well-preserved, while new projects like Ebrington Square have turned former military sites into thriving business and entertainment spaces. Recent road upgrades enhance connectivity, while Ulster University's Derry~Londonderry campus provides higher education and research opportunities. As Northern Ireland's second-largest city, it is capitalizing on its cross-border position to nurture digital transformation, making notable strides in the fintech, regtech, and insurtech arenas.

The insurtech sector leverages cutting-edge technologies, including telematics, advanced data analytics, cognitive computing, and predictive modeling to enhance fraud detection and improve insurance customer retention. The local insurtech sector is flourishing, with major American insurance providers establishing large-scale delivery centers in the region. Notably, Allstate Northern Ireland's Derry~Londonderry office serves as a key Digital Center of Excellence. At the same time, local firms are developing deep expertise in insurtech, further solidifying the region's reputation as a hub for insurance innovation.

## A Personal Mission

One of the companies leading Derry~Londonderry's revival is Alchemy Technology Services, a firm founded by a returning member of the Northern Irish diaspora. Headquartered in Derry~Londonderry, Alchemy reshapes digital infrastructure for major insurers while generating high-value jobs and contributing to the city's renewal. Alchemy's software implementation and consultancy services provide core system support directly to leading insurance companies.



**John Harkin**  
*Founder and CEO*  
**Alchemy Technology Services**

Founder and CEO John Harkin, a Derry~Londonderry native, left Northern Ireland in 1981, never expecting to move back. "After witnessing the city's revitalization, I saw an opportunity to bring my expertise back home. I wanted to build a company with the potential to export insurance services globally, creating well-paid, meaningful jobs in Derry~Londonderry while supporting the local economy."

Harkin continued, "I was confident that, with the right training and opportunities, Northern Ireland's talented,

English-speaking professionals could outperform traditional offshore teams doing similar work for American companies. As a smaller, highly skilled workforce based in Northern Ireland, operating in a time zone closer to the US, we are positioned to offer superior efficiency and exceptional quality.

"For example at Alchemy, we supported one of the largest insurance companies in the world with a dedicated team of 30 Alchemy specialists. With other firms, similar projects would involve 120–130 people, with a large offshore component. Our clients see first hand how smaller, agile teams in Derry~Londonderry deliver better results more cost-effectively than larger offshore operations in other jurisdictions.

"We have already secured several clients in North America and can diligently service the region. We view it as a tremendous growth opportunity.

"Alchemy specializes in implementing market-leading software, primarily Guidewire, to help insurance companies modernize their operations. Our team, largely dual nationals with UK and Irish passports, can seamlessly work across Europe and the UK, making us an ideal partner for Guidewire's European expansion."

Part of Alchemy's secret sauce is its collaboration with universities. The company works closely with Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast, and Atlantic Technological Uni-

versity in Donegal to help academic programs better align with their industry's needs. Harkin mentioned, "We invest heavily in training for our employees, including six months of intensive learning in insurance and technology. This guarantees they are competent and committed. Unlike offshore competitors, our employee turnover is exceptionally low, making the investment worthwhile."

By prioritizing training and workforce development, Alchemy is not only securing its own success but also strengthening Derry~Londonderry's economy and position as an emerging global insurtech center.

Harkin elaborated, "North American companies can turn to Alchemy as an alternative to lead their core technology transformations. In the last six years, we've made a significant shift, collaborating with multiple American clients as their primary partner for full-service implementation and digital transformation. We're driving technological change in their businesses, solidifying our role as a strategic ally."

Harkin concluded, "Our young professionals in Derry~Londonderry consider working at Alchemy as an incredible opportunity to build global careers while staying in their home country. There's a mix of humility and confidence that defines Derry~Londonderry's workforce, and this mindset is fundamental to our success." ■

## Optimizing Recycling and Material Handling for a Sustainable Future

Northern Ireland punches well above its weight as a global hub for material handling, recycling, and waste processing equipment. For a region with less than two million inhabitants, it has over 100 companies dedicated to the sector. Although Northern Ireland may be small, it manufactures more than 40% of the world's mobile crushing and screening equipment, serving an array of industries including construction, mining, and waste management. Many of these industries rely on equipment manufactured in Northern Ireland, operating around the clock in the world's most demanding markets and harshest environments, withstanding extreme temperatures ranging from -40°F to 122°F. With decades of engineering expertise, the Northern Irish sector continues to expand its reach in automation, sustainability, and resource recovery.

Always eager to stay ahead of the curve, Northern Ireland created the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center (AMIC) to accelerate the development of future technologies. AMIC provides a specialized environment for advanced manufacturing, materials, and engineering sectors to access the latest digital, automation and robotics technology supported by experienced engineers and underpinned by academic excellence. AMIC staff have core capabilities in digitizing manufacturing, smart design, sustainable composites and polymers, and smart nanotech.

The launch of AMIC marks a transformative milestone for Northern Ireland, and is set to "turbocharge" the country's manufacturing capabilities. Led by Queen's University Belfast in partnership with industry, AMIC's open-access innovation hub will further cement Northern Ireland's position as a global leader in advanced manufacturing, and net zero products and solutions.

John Irwin, Managing Director of Kiverco, a renowned engineering company known to have created the world's toughest recycling plant, and Chairman of the Board of AMIC, said,

"AMIC is creating a platform for companies to collaborate, leveraging our strategic location between Europe and the USA. AMIC's Factory of the Future, opening early next year, will focus heavily on digital transformation. Northern Ireland recognizes how embracing new technologies is critical for growth, innovation, and maintaining a competitive edge globally. Historically, there has been a gap between academia and industry, but we're bridging that divide. Academia and private sector collaborations have the ability to provide innovative solutions that can tackle global challenges. When these two worlds connect, it creates a powerful pipeline for technology development—one that strengthens our position for the future."



**John Irwin**  
*Managing Director*  
**Kiverco**

Irwin discussed challenges SMEs particularly struggle to overcome, and how AMIC can facilitate conquering these hurdles. He mentioned, "For SMEs, committing resources to R&D is always a challenge. There's a fear of getting involved in large, multi-year collaborative projects that may not yield results while consuming valuable resources. As a result, many have historically stuck to internal product development rather than engaging in broader R&D collaborations. AMIC enables SMEs like Kiverco to become involved in collaborative R&D in an eco-system with companies ranging from OEMs to small businesses, reducing the risk. SMEs can choose to be involved in projects more likely to generate revenue in the short term."

## Monetizing Waste

Kiverco's innovative recycling plants allow entities to monetize waste by turning discarded materials into valuable resources, reducing landfill waste and

generating profits. By processing plastics, metals, and organic waste, businesses create reusable products while benefiting from government incentives and eco-conscious consumers. This boosts sustainability, lowers production costs, and transforms waste into an economic opportunity.

Irwin mentioned, "Kiverco has a robust export strategy, with a significant share of its business across Europe, the USA, Australia, and the Middle East. As the demand for sustainable solutions increases, stronger legislation will follow. With over 30 years of expertise in designing resilient recycling plants, we've positioned ourselves as experts, advising on plant specifications tailored to material recovery."

Kiverco designs and delivers bespoke, recycling plant solutions, known as the "world's toughest." Kiverco's design principles ensure maximum strength, leading to more uptime, fewer repairs, higher sustained purity, and a longer useful life. Kiverco's plants efficiently process, separate, and recover waste streams to meet customer requirements.

Irwin discussed getting a foothold in the US market, "The American market presents a unique challenge because each state operates under different legislative frameworks when it comes to recycling and material recovery. Some states have advanced regulations that make recycling economically viable, while in others, landfills remain a cheaper and more accessible option. In the UK, the government played a pivotal role in shaping the recycling industry by introducing legislation making sustainability an economic priority. By increas-

ing landfill charges and mandating the use of recycled materials in certain products—such as food packaging—they effectively created a thriving and lucrative recycling sector."

He continued, "Our solutions are a proven 'plug and play' model. We can design and implement recycling plants that seamlessly integrate into customers' operations and deliver exceptional results."

Irwin added, "In addition to the monetary value of recovered commodities, there is the critical issue of environmental impact. Materials like PVC and plastics leach harmful chemicals into the earth, leading to long-term contamination. Recovering and reusing these resources not only reduces pollution but also lessens our dependence on virgin materials, which carry their own environmental costs in terms of extraction, processing, and energy consumption. By integrating recovered materials into manufacturing, companies reduce their reliance on newly sourced raw materials. This cuts down on energy use and lowers overall production costs—essentially, businesses can achieve more with less."

Irwin said, "Millions of tons of waste sit in landfills or form man-made mountains of discarded material—resources that could easily be repurposed, reducing the strain on natural reserves. Kiverco is well established, with hundreds of sites globally. We're the UK's biggest specialist premium recycling plant specifier, designer and manufacturer. There is a clear opportunity to apply our expertise worldwide in waste recovery, helping businesses achieve both financial and environmental benefits." ■

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**Ards and North Down**  
Borough Council



# Causeway Coast and Glens: Beyond the Scenery

## Driving economic development along the Causeway Coastal Route



The Causeway Coast is home to the Giant's Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, formed by volcanic activity over 60 million years ago.

Northern Ireland's rugged northern coastline offers a compelling blend of natural beauty and economic opportunity. The council area of Causeway Coast and Glens, 50 miles north of Belfast, is world-renowned for being home to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Giant's Causeway, but beyond its picturesque landscapes, it is also a hub for academia, innovation, and industry.



**David Jackson**  
CEO  
Causeway Coast  
and Glens Borough  
Council

David Jackson, CEO of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, is a passionate champion of the region's vast potential. He stated, "With a strong talent pool, thriving economic ecosystem, and deep historical ties to the United States, the region offers large potential for growth, investment, and international collaboration. Our Growth Deal initiative, a range of projects across Causeway Coast and Glens, will further foster ambitions to boost local innovation and competitiveness."

### Powering Talent through Academia

Ulster University, a multi-campus public research university based in Northern Ireland, has a branch in Coleraine, the largest town in Causeway Coast and Glens. The Coleraine campus, along with two other regional colleges, ensures a steady stream of highly skilled graduates entering the local workforce. As global competition for top talent intensifies, the region is positioning itself as a leader in producing professionals in high-value-added fields. Professor Paul Bartholomew, Vice-Chancellor of Ulster University stated, "Ulster University's Coleraine campus is fundamental to Northern Ireland. It enables skills development and contributes to advanced research. It is a hub for innovation, scientific excellence, and driving breakthroughs in biomedical sciences. For instance, we acquired funding for a Center for Food and Drug Discovery (CFDD) located at our Coleraine campus. This flagship initiative, in collaboration with the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal, offers local businesses a groundbreaking chance to drive innovation, utilize cutting-edge facilities, and collaborate on projects that will define the future of health, nutrition, and pharmaceuticals."

According to Jackson, "One of the most promising developments from the Growth Deal is the CFDD. This partnership with Ulster University will advance biomedical research beyond licensing into early-stage drug development. This initiative has attracted significant interest from global pharmaceutical firms, particularly those from the United States." The investment aims to create a one-stop facility for all aspects of the drug discovery and food innovation pipeline, accelerating development, testing, and bringing products to market. Beyond the CFDD, the Growth Deal includes a variety of other projects, including the development of an Innovation Hub at North West Regional College in Limavady, and the regeneration of key towns such as Dungiven and Bushmills. Such projects stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities.

### Tech-Driven Enterprise Campus

The Atlantic Link Enterprise Campus, is strategically located next to Ulster University in Coleraine. It is designed to drive economic growth by attracting and supporting businesses. With direct access to Project Kelvin—a high-capacity transatlantic fiber link landing in Coleraine, less than a kilometer from Atlantic Link—businesses enjoy ultra-low-latency global connectivity, making it an ideal location for technology, fintech, and cybersecurity firms. The site provides ready-to-go development land with streamlined planning approvals, ensuring a fast setup process for investors. As part of the Causeway Coast and Glens' economic vision, the enterprise zone plays a crucial role in fostering innovation, attracting investment, and positioning the region as a leader in the digital economy.

### Innovation

The region is renowned for its innovation in agriculture, food and beverage, and manufacturing, consistently setting new standards in quality and sustainability. This is particularly evident in locally grown, globally recognized brands, such as Bushmills Irish Whiskey, which exports over 81% of its products to the United States. "Several American companies, including Terex, have established a significant presence in the region, proving the location as a strategic and innovative business hub for international companies in other sectors," added Jackson. Terex is a global leader in the manufacturing of lifting and material-handling equipment. They selected Causeway Coast and Glens for their state-of-the-art facilities in Northern Ireland, where they integrate robotic welding and automation systems, and apply advanced technologies to improve thermal efficiency, minimize energy consumption, and enhance their manufacturing processes. The council area is home to numerous indigenous success stories, with local businesses innovating and exporting solutions worldwide. One standout example is Seating Matters, a family-owned company transforming health outcomes with its clinically tested, ergonomic chairs designed for individuals with mobility challenges. By integrating cutting-edge technology, lean manufacturing, and research, the company develops life-changing seating solutions that prevent bedsores, pressure injuries, and other complications that can increase mortality. Their products enhance care quality in healthcare and home settings and are trusted by influential organizations, including the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

### The Power of Tourism

American tourists are drawn to the region, not only for its breathtaking landscapes but also for its deep ancestral connections to the United States. For in-

stance, the historic port town of Portrush was a departure point for early settlers traveling to America. Notably, US President William McKinley's ancestral home lies in the village of Dervock, a stone's throw from the iconic Dark Hedges, made famous by *Game of Thrones*.



Discover Carrick-a-Rede Island via a rope bridge suspended above the Atlantic Ocean.

Just a short distance from Coleraine lies Benone Strand, a pristine stretch of golden sand contrasting beautifully against the surrounding green terrain. This seven-mile beach, framed by rolling dunes and vibrant wildflowers, offers the perfect setting for a leisurely walk or a relaxing day by the water. If you head east from Coleraine you arrive at the home of the famous Royal Portrush Golf Club. The Club will host The Open Championship this summer, attracting an estimated 270,000 visitors; 12% are expected to arrive from the USA. Tickets for the event have sold out, a testament to the growing interest in the region as a premier golf and tourism destination. Beyond golf, coastal walking trails, historic landmarks, and world-class beaches cater to an increasing demand for sustainable, nature-focused tourism. On the route further east, perched along the Causeway Coastal Route is Magheracross Viewing Point, a must-stop for panoramic vistas of cliffs, waves, and iconic landmarks like Dunluce Castle.



Magheracross Viewing Gallery.

Another jewel of the region is the Giant's Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Comprising over 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, this natural wonder was sculpted by volcanic activity nearly 60 million years ago. The unique geological formation of hexagonal-shaped stepping stones creates a mysterious landscape on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. The site is steeped in myth and legend, with the story of the Irish giant Finn McCool tied to its origins. Supposedly Finn McCool built a stone path to reach Scotland, but it was later destroyed by his Scottish enemy, another giant named Benandonner. A 15-minute drive east from Giant's Causeway suspended high above the crashing waves, Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge offers a thrilling walk between rugged cliffs and a tiny island known for its fishing heritage.




Mussenden Temple was built in 1785 as part of the Downhill Demesne. Inspired by Rome's Temple of Vesta, it offers stunning views over the Atlantic Ocean and Downhill Strand.


Another full-day escape into nature is the Glenariff Nature Reserve, a serene haven of cascading waterfalls, lush woodlands, and scenic trails.

### A Future Filled with Possibilities


With its focus on innovation, the council aims to attract FDI and further foster academic collaborations. Whether drawn by its economic potential, breathtaking landscapes, or the pull of ancestral heritage, Causeway Coast and Glens remains a destination of global appeal worth exploring, investing in, and celebrating. ■



Causeway  
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# Lisburn and Castlereagh: Where History Meets Modern Growth

Northern Ireland’s gateway to business, trade, and investment



Hillsborough Castle and Gardens is Northern Ireland’s only royal residence, featuring 100 acres of beautifully maintained gardens and serving as an official government and royal venue.

Situated just south of Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh has evolved from its roots in Northern Ireland’s 19th-century Irish linen industry into a dynamic hub for global business and investment. With a strategic location and strong commercial sectors, the area offers compelling opportunities for businesses seeking to expand into the UK, Ireland, and Europe. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council is cultivating a business-friendly environment and acting as a catalyst for economic expansion—supporting both long-established family-owned enterprises and a new generation of businesses.



**Paul McCormick**  
*Head of Economic Development*  
**Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council**

## A Prime Location for International Trade

“We’re at the crossroads where North-South and East-West meet in Northern Ireland. This offers significant advantages in terms of market access as a key business location,” said Paul McCormick, Head of Economic Development for Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.

The district sits along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, providing seamless access to two capital cities and beyond, serving as a gateway for international trade. Businesses benefit from proximity to Belfast Harbour—Northern Ireland’s main port—and Dublin Port in the Republic of Ireland. Strong road and rail links further enhance connectivity, offering the area significant logistical advantages.

## A Thriving Business Ecosystem

Lisburn and Castlereagh is home to an impressive range of multinational corporations and innovative enterprises shaping the future of industry. “Our established businesses have a global reach, with US parent companies operating locally and homegrown firms also expanding into the US. The region has a rich history of trade, and as a council, we are committed to fostering even greater international commerce,” McCormick added.

Among the region’s standout businesses is Coca-Cola’s only bottling plant for the island of Ireland. Smiley Monroe, a materials-handling specialist, has expanded into the US, while local company Kelman, a leader in diagnostics technology for electrical transformers, was acquired by General Electric after successfully breaking into the US market.

“Creative Composites, another global player based here, manufactures components for Formula One cars and the automotive sector. Our region has a deep-rooted tradition in advanced manufacturing, and we are committed to building on that legacy. We are a pro-business region—open, forward-thinking, and globally connected,” McCormick highlighted.



**Donal Rogan**  
*Director of Regeneration and Growth*  
**Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council**

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council is committed to fostering a supportive environment for investment by streamlining processes and reducing bureaucracy. To facilitate significant developments, the council assigns senior planners to guide key applications through the planning system. “This proactive approach has enabled hotel planning approvals in as little as 12

weeks and large-scale manufacturing projects within 16 weeks,” said Donal Rogan, Director of Regeneration and Growth for the council.

## Strategic Investment Opportunities and Support

The council actively supports businesses through tailored investment incentives and financial grants. Companies investing in Lisburn and Castlereagh can benefit from several advantages. One of the most significant is access to dual markets, a unique post-Brexit benefit that allows businesses based in the region to trade freely with both the UK and EU markets. Additionally, Invest NI, Northern Ireland’s official investment agency, provides extensive support to foreign investors, offering financial assistance and guidance, research and development grants, and skills development programs to enhance business growth.

The council also fosters a business-friendly environment, a range of business support programs, business advice, and networking initiatives to help companies establish themselves and expand quickly. These initiatives ensure investors have access to essential resources, expertise, and infrastructure to be competitive in a global market.

## Key Sectors for Growth and Expansion

Investors and businesses will find strong opportunities across several key sectors in Lisburn and Castlereagh. Advanced manufacturing and engineering remain central to the region’s industrial success, with strengths in precision engineering, industrial machinery, and materials handling. The growing technology sector supports innovation, while renewable energy, sustainability, and construction benefit from ongoing infrastructure investment. The food and drink industry prospers alongside a strong agri-food base, where exports connect supply chains across Europe and beyond. As well, a vibrant mix of professional services, retail, and hospitality contributes to a diverse and resilient economy.

Finally, real estate and commercial development present exciting prospects, with major regeneration projects underway, including plans for new business parks and commercial spaces. While some areas are already available for development, others are in the pipeline as part of the council’s growth strategy. These sectors collectively position Lisburn and Castlereagh as a prime destination for those seeking long-term growth.

## Infrastructure Investments to Support Business Growth

Public sector investment is helping shape the region’s ecosystem. “We have land readily available for development and are actively working to secure more to be future-ready. One of the largest projects is the Maze Long Kesh development, a 380-acre site with enormous potential. Due to its historical significance, it falls under Northern Ireland’s central planning team,” explained Rogan.

Maze Long Kesh is one of Northern Ireland’s largest publicly owned development sites. While some areas are in use, including facilities for Air Ambulance, Ulster Aviation Society, and the annual Balmoral Show (the pinnacle agri-food event in Northern Ireland for over 150 years), much of its potential remains unrealized.

“Our council has secured planning permission for a privately led infrastructure project to enhance road access to this site. Alongside Maze Long Kesh, we have 75,000 square feet of land for employment purposes in Blaris. In addition, a new rail halt and park-and-ride facility at Knockmore Road is also in development, directly

linking the area to the main Belfast-Dublin railway line. This is part of a broader infrastructure strategy to attract investment,” Rogan said.

## Northern Irish Influence in the USA

Lisburn has a direct historical connection to America through the prominent figure of Arthur Lee, a key American diplomat during the Revolutionary War. Lee, born in Virginia, had strong ties to Northern Ireland, particularly to the Lee family estate in Lisburn. He played a significant role in securing French support for the American colonies and was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. His family’s connection to Lisburn links the region to this pivotal moment in American history.

Another notable figure is Lisburn native Lyman Bloomingdale, the founder of New York City’s iconic Bloomingdale’s department store. “He later funded ships to bring Irish immigrants to the US,” McCormick shared.

The area’s longstanding Ulster Scots heritage has influenced communities along America’s Eastern Seaboard. “Many Ulster Scots and

Irish emigrated to America, particularly in cities from Atlanta to Boston,” Rogan added.

## Business and Leisure: A Balanced Lifestyle

While Lisburn and Castlereagh is an economic powerhouse, it also offers a high quality of life. Companies relocating benefit from a skilled workforce, excellent schools, and a mix of urban and countryside living. The area is home to the prestigious Royal Hillsborough, Northern Ireland’s only village with a royal designation, and historic attractions such as Hillsborough Castle.

The local whiskey industry also presents significant opportunities. “Hinch Distillery is an excellent example of great local Irish whiskey, and they are increasing their operations,” Rogan noted.

Lisburn and Castlereagh presents a unique opportunity for investors and businesses looking for a well-connected, business-friendly gateway to Northern Ireland and beyond. Now is the time to explore this thriving region’s potential. ■

## Invest Lisburn Castlereagh Northern Ireland



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# Unlocking Opportunity on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

## A strategic choice: investing in Newry, Mourne and Down



Ballymacdermott Court Tomb is a Neolithic passage tomb over 5,000 years old. It offers a glimpse into Ireland’s prehistoric past.

Stretching across the 100-mile corridor between Belfast and Dublin, numerous untapped opportunities await. Newry, one of Ireland’s oldest cities, is a key commercial and transport hub. The nearby Mountains of Mourne, renowned for their rugged peaks, dominate the southeastern horizon, forming part of historic County Down.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is ensuring the region maximizes its potential, in part by acting as the administrative leader of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. This partnership brings together key stakeholders from across the area, working toward a common goal of inclusive economic development. Covering eight councils and home to a third of the island’s population, the corridor harnesses shared strengths to cultivate the economy. Newry, Mourne and Down is strategically based along the corridor, offering convenient access to three major airports, multiple ports, and well-developed road and rail networks.



**Marie Ward**  
CEO  
Newry, Mourne and  
Down District Council

### Entrepreneurial Spirit

Marie Ward, CEO of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council said, “We take pride in our strong educational standards and entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurship is deeply rooted in the region’s identity. When it comes to innovation, businesses in this region continue to break new ground and many local corporations have grown from small enterprises into global leaders.

“Consider our locally based FD Technologies. The company’s software platform is a world leader in data analytics and financial technology. Similarly, STATSports, provides cutting-edge analytics to some of the world’s top professional sports teams. Starting from a small operation, it has now become a global leader in athletic performance tracking.

“Another standout is Deli Lites, a sandwich company founded by two sisters 20 years ago. While it may sound like a simple venture, it has grown into a major supplier for airlines, supermarkets, and global food distributors. Then there’s MJM Marine, a cruise ship refit business that has secured hundreds of millions of euros in contracts with some of the world’s largest cruise companies. These local success stories showcase not only entrepreneurial determination but also the region’s ability to innovate and compete on a global scale.”

### Regeneration

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is undertaking extensive regeneration initiatives, with substantial investments fueling a transformation across the district. For instance, Newry City is developing Grade A office space, a new city park, a theatre and conference center, and widespread environmental improvements. At the heart of this effort is a commitment to collaboration—working closely with businesses, investors, and stakeholders to maximize opportunities.

“Our region has experience in advanced engineering, manufacturing, and the digital and creative industries, positioning it as a key destination for additional investment in similar sectors. However to fully leverage these strengths, infrastructure must be a top priority to attract foreign direct investment. Investors expect move-in-ready spaces with short turnaround times—often within six to twelve months—yet many areas outside Belfast struggle to meet this demand. At Newry, Mourne and Down District Council we are working to address these infrastructure gaps which are essential to unlocking the district’s full economic potential,” Ward explained.

**“Our region has experience in advanced engineering, manufacturing, and the digital and creative industries, positioning it as a key destination for additional investment in similar sectors.”**

### Tourism

The region is steeped in ancient history and mystical folklore, from the standing stones and legendary Giant’s Grave in Warrenpoint, to St. Patrick’s resting place at Down Cathedral, a major pilgrimage site.

Adding to its rich heritage, the Mourne Mountains famously inspired C.S. Lewis’ vision of Narnia. The mountain range is a UNESCO Global Geopark also known as a major filming location for HBO’s *Game of Thrones*, a testament to the landscape’s enduring magic. The Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark showcases three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, offering diverse topography from the rugged Mourne Mountains, to the volcanic Ring of Gullion, and the historic shores of Strangford Lough. With rich geological heritage, mythological history, and varied wildlife, the region provides opportunities for exploration, hiking, and cultural discovery.

To further develop the area, the council established the Mourne Mountains Gateway Project. It includes plans for a gondola, a cable car system leading to a new visitor center embedded in the mountainside. The aim is to deliver a world-class tourist attraction that will help position Newry, Mourne and Down as one of the premier tourism destinations on the island of Ireland.

Another recreational attraction is golf. Royal County Down recently hosted the Amgen Irish Open for the second time, reinforcing its status as a golf destination. In addition, Ardglass Golf Club, a coastal course, has gained popularity for its challenging layout and views, making it a choice for international players.

The whole region has scenic spots offering visitors a glimpse into Ireland’s prehistoric past. A fascinating historic landmark is Ballymacdermot Court, a Neolithic tomb dating back over 6,000 years.

For whiskey enthusiasts, Two Stacks offers a local Irish whiskey-tasting experience. Shane McCarthy, co-founder of Two Stacks, one of Ireland’s independent bonding and blending facilities, said, “Blending is at the heart of Newry’s heritage. Centuries ago, Ire-

land had hundreds of bonders, but today, only a few remain. We’ve dedicated years to research and development to make whiskey more appealing to the modern consumer. Our innovation brings an award-winning whiskey in a can, perfectly portable at 100ml and just 22g, for a smooth pour anywhere, anytime. We’re the only company in the country offering two canned spirits, with our concept of ‘dram in a can.’”

He continued, “Our products reach over 35 countries, with the USA as our largest market, despite its competitiveness. Interestingly, our best-selling bottle last year wasn’t a whiskey but our double Irish cream liqueur. We saw an opportunity for reinvention in this category, enhancing the recipe by increas-



Newry Town Hall.



The entrance to Tollymore Forest Park.

ing the premium whiskey content and doubling the cream. The response has been phenomenal. In January 2025, we introduced the first-ever Irish cream in a can, further pushing the boundaries of tradition.

“While we take pride in selling whiskey, we take even greater pride in showcasing our region. Visitors are often struck by the Mourne Mountains and the surroundings, as well as the warmth and hospitality that make this place unforgettable.”

Newry, Mourne, and Down’s tourism cluster can keep visitors engaged for extended stays. As the district continues to evolve, its blend of natural beauty, thriving industries, and ambitious regeneration efforts ensure it is set to thrive. ■

newrymournedown.org



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Comhairle Ceantair

an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin

Newry, Mourne and Down

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Friday, April 25, 2025

Today's Paper

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## Trump's Crimea Proposal Would End a Decade of U.S. Resistance

A peace plan that President Trump's administration has offered to Russia and Ukraine proposes U.S. recognition of the peninsula, which Moscow seized in 2014.

4 MIN READ

## Trump Issues Rare Rebuke of Putin After Deadly Attack on Ukraine's Capital

President Trump called on President Vladimir Putin to stop his bombing campaign as peace prospects faltered.

3 MIN READ



Alexey Pavlishchyk/Reuters



The Trustees of the British Museum

## A Roman Gladiator and a Lion Met in Combat. Only One Walked Away.

A discovery in an English garden led to the first direct evidence that man fought beast to entertain the subjects of the Roman Empire.

3 MIN READ

Trump Administration Major Moves Approval Ratings Lawsuits Tracker Tracking the Layoffs

## Lawyers Seek Return of Migrants Deported Under Wartime Act

An updated lawsuit filed in Washington challenged the Trump administration's use of the Alien Enemies Act to send migrants to a prison in El Salvador.

5 MIN READ



Jose Cabezas/Reuters

## What Elon Musk Didn't Budget For: Firing Workers Costs Money, Too

An expert on the federal work force estimates that the speed and chaos of Mr. Musk's cuts to the bureaucracy will cost taxpayers \$135 billion this fiscal year.

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## Opinion

HAMDAN BALLAL

## My Oscar for 'No Other Land' Didn't Protect Me From Violence

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DAVID BROOKS

## Trump's Single Stroke of Brilliance

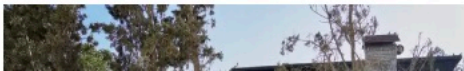
6 MIN READ



Middle East Tensions Israeli Attacks in Gaza U.S.-Iran Talks U.S.-Houthi Strikes Gazans' Agonizing Choice

## Israel Acknowledges Second Deadly Attack on Aid Workers in Gaza

In a rare apology to the United Nations, Israel said its forces had struck a U.N. compound in







## World News

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HONG KONG DISPATCH

### Where Bruce Lee Practiced on the Roof, a Shrine to Old Hong Kong Rises

At a formerly grand hotel where the famed martial arts star once stayed, a group of collectors is trying to preserve vestiges of the city's past as its political identity changes.

1h ago · By TIFFANY MAY and BILLY H.C. KWOK



Haijun Jiang for The New York Times

### Trump Urges Russia to 'STOP!' After Deadly Attack on Ukraine's Capital

President Trump also sought to divert blame should negotiations fall apart, a sign that he is perhaps more pessimistic about a deal than he was when he took office in January.

9h ago · By JONATHAN SWAN

### Russia Pummels Kyiv, Prompting Rare Rebuke From Trump

The attack, which killed at least 12 people, was the deadliest on



Ukraine's capital in nearly a year. President Trump called on President Vladimir V. Putin to "STOP!" in a post on social media.

10h ago · By KIM BARKER, MARIA VARENKOVA and BRENDAN HOFFMAN

### Crisis Deepens for India and Pakistan Over Kashmir Attack

The Pakistani government said that if India followed through on a threat to block rivers it would take it as "an act of war."

14h ago · By SALMAN MASOOD



Forced Labor Taints Brazilian Coffee, Say Complaints to U.S. Authorities

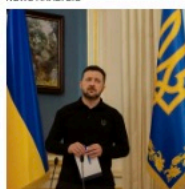


Trump's Crimea Proposal Would End a Decade of U.S. Resistance

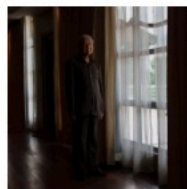


U.S. Says Blast in Yemen Was Caused by Houthi Missile, Not U.S. Strike

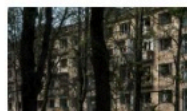
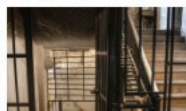
NEWS ANALYSIS



Red Line on Crimea Isn't Just Zelensky's. It's Ukraine's.



At 99, a Seminal Asian Leader Reflects on a Contentious Legacy





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# Spotlight on Northern Ireland

Thursday, April 24, 2025 | P.1



100 national and international businesses.

Susan Wylie, CEO of Northern Ireland's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stated, "One of Northern Ireland's most successful companies is Almac. It provides diagnostic tools worldwide. The company played a key role in developing COVID-19 tests, and continues to focus on their operations, focusing on innovation to detect illnesses."

Susan Wylie  
CEO  
Northern Ireland  
Chamber of  
Commerce and  
Industry

"Almac Group, which conducts clinical trials of pharmaceuticals into ongoing operations, are companies that Northern Ireland's reach."

connectivity

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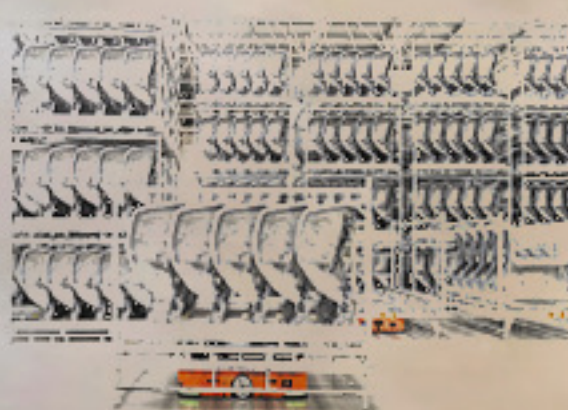
Price in Canada may be higher \$4.00

### THE WEATHER

Today, mostly sunny with light winds, high 72. Tonight, partly cloudy, cold, low 58. Tomorrow, a mixture of clouds and sun, high 75. Weather map, Page A12.



QUAN XIAO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



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ANNA WERRELL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

China's automation drive has been guided by government directives. Clockwise from top left: a robot with a humanoid hand, which is still in testing, at a Zowee auto-parts factory in Ningbo; China's robotic car with auto parts; a half-millionth of other advances in automation, featuring 20 humanoid robots and an assembly line.

### 11 Short Weeks To Meet Pledge On Trade Deals

By ANA SWANSON  
WASHINGTON — For a president who advertises himself as a permanent deal maker, the next 11 weeks will be a critical test, as his advisers race to accomplish what no other administration has done before and reach dozens of individual trade deals with other governments.

President Trump has promised his aides for American trade and

### Army of Robots Gives China Edge in Trade War

By KATHY BRADSHAW  
NINGBO, China — China's secret weapon in the trade war is an army of factory robots, powered by artificial intelligence, that have revolutionized manufacturing.

Factories are being automated across China at a breakneck pace. With engineers and technicians tending to fleets of robots, these operations are bringing down the cost of manufacturing while improving quality.

As a result, China's factories will be able to keep the price of many other exports lower, though it will have more robots for the trade

### Advanced Automation in Factories Keeps Exports Cheap

view and President Trump's high tariffs. China is also facing new trade barriers by the European Union and developing countries, including Brazil, India, Turkey and Thailand.

Factories are now more automated in China than in the United States, Germany or Japan. China has more robots for the trade

30,000 manufacturing workers than any other country except South Korea or Singapore, according to the International Federation of Robotics.

China's automation drive has been guided by government directives and backed with huge investments. And its robots replace workers, automation is positioning China to continue to dominate mass production even as its labor force ages and becomes less willing to take industrial jobs.

Xu Liang, founder and chief executive of Yizhuo Intelligent Manufacturing, one of China's top

### Cuomo's Tactic For Comeback: Try to Lie Low

By SHIRLEY G. FITZSIMMONS and JEFFREY C. MAYS  
He arrived at campaign events like a mid-powered relic of the political past, a little slower and more glib, but spy enough to worm his way from behind the wheel of his muscle car of the moment, a dark Dodge Charger.

Quarantined

He'll take a lot, perhaps, but

### U.S. PRESSES KYIV TO ACCEPT A DEAL FAVORING MOSCOW

#### 'FREEZE' OF TERRITORY

Zelensky Rejects the Plan — Trump Calls Him 'Inflammatory'

This article is by David E. Sanger, Michael D. Shear and Mark Landler.

WASHINGTON — President Trump and his top aides demanded on Wednesday that Ukraine accede to an American-designed proposal that would essentially grant Russia all the territory it has gained in the war, while offering Kyiv only vague security assurances.

The American plan, which would also explicitly block Ukraine from ever joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was rejected by President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, whose long-running dispute with Mr. Trump broke into the open two months ago in the Oval Office. The proposal also appears to call for the United States to recognize Russia's 2014 takeover of Crimea, a region of Ukraine.

"There is nothing to talk about," Mr. Zelensky said. "This violated our Constitution. This is our territory the territory of Ukraine."

Mr. Trump then took to social media that the Ukrainian president was being "misleading" and said he would only "poking the 'telling field'."

Mr. Trump suggested the proposal was on the verge of acceptance by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. "I think we have a deal with Russia," he told reporters at the White House. The problem, he suggested, was Mr. Zelensky.

"I thought it might be easier to deal with Zelensky," he said. "So far it's harder."

Vice President JD Vance struck a similar theme while traveling in India.

He said the United States would "work every" from the peace process if both Ukraine and Russia refused to accept the American terms. But Mr. Zelensky was