



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSraitha B  in**

Derry Cittie & Str  bane
Destr  ck Cooncil



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Local Food & Drink Strategy and Action Plan

2019 - 2025

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Contents

Executive Summary	3	Strategic Pillar 1: Integrated Communication and Delivery	29
Introduction	6	Strategic Pillar 2: Business Support and Capacity Building	30
Food Tourism - Global Context	8	Strategic Pillar 3: World Class Food and Drink Visitor Experiences	32
The Value of Food Tourism - Examples From Elsewhere	9	Strategic Pillar 4: Enhance Reputation as a Food Destination	33
National and Regional Context	11	Glossary	34
Local Context	15	Future Funding Opportunities	35
Target Markets and Key Opportunities	18	Monitoring and Evaluation	35
Food Tourism Destination Audit	19		
What Will Success Look Like in 2025	21		
Strategic Pillars	23		
Action Plan	28		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Food has a vital role in driving tourism growth both in visitor numbers and spend, is part of the wider destination offer and reflects the regions heritage, culture and unique sense of place.

This strategy has been commissioned by Derry City and Strabane District Council, informed and guided by industry partners, in recognition of the successes to date and future potential of Derry City and Strabane as a leading food destination. The strategy was funded by EU Interreg project NICHE.

In line with the Tourism Strategy 'A New Level of Ambition' 2018-2025, the focus of this piece of work is on developing The Walled City as the hub of our leading food destination. While this acts as a significant attractor, it is supported by, and acts as a conduit to the towns and wider rural offer which supplies award winning artisan produce, restaurants and unique food experiences, in a beautiful landscape which stretches from the Sperrins to the Lough Foyle.

The strategy acknowledges that food tourism is one element of a much wider food value network and there are many other areas which feed into creating a flourishing food and drink sector.

Food has a vital role in driving tourism growth, both in visitor numbers, spend and as part of the wider destination offer, reflecting the local heritage and culture of our region, shaping our distinctiveness and unique sense of place.

Derry~Londonderry is already established as a stand out food destination within NI and ROI, recognised with numerous awards, international scale festivals and events, food experiences, restaurants and producers all supported by an established LegenDerry Food brand. There is also a strong sector of both private businesses and public bodies who are supporting and driving the food destination forward. New and existing businesses have the guidance and support of the Foodovation Centre.

As the sector continues to grow, the strategy provides clear direction and a plan to achieving the vision

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'To build on the achievements and successes to date, integrating our local strengths into a common approach to benefit the entire sector and ultimately placing Derry~Londonderry as the number one food destination on the Island of Ireland by 2025'

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Our unique food offer plays a key role in The Walled City visitor experience and supports in attracting new target markets, domestic and international, as part of a cohesive visitor offer.

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OUR KEY PROPOSITIONS



LOUGH FOYLE AND IRISH FLAT OYSTER

Derry~ Londonderry was built because of its proximity to food and in particular food from the Foyle. The Foyle is a great natural resource featuring many streams and rivers that start in the Sperrin and Donegal mountains which flow into the Lough and out to the Atlantic Ocean. The shores of Lough Foyle provide a vast array of shellfish with the Lough Foyle Irish Flat Oyster being the jewel in the Foyle's crown.



A UNIQUE FOOD HERITAGE

A strong cultural food offer providing experiences that have been shaped by the history and heritage of The Walled City. Strong traditions remain and are reflected in the regions new and innovative products. Once one of the largest whiskey distilling areas in the world, the city is currently undergoing a resurgence in distilling with a growing number of craft breweries throughout the district.



A CULTURAL, VIBRANT FOOD SCENE

There is an emergence of a cluster of street food vendors who are carving out their own niche following, with their distinctive, authentic food and vibe. This is also reflected in unique food experiences and festivals which are an integral part of the city and region's event and festival programme, both through standalone events such as the Slow Food Festival and wider events such as Halloween and Foyle Maritime Festival featuring Flavours of the Foyle.



GATEWAY TO THE WIDER REGIONAL FOOD EXPERIENCE

The city is the gateway to a wider regional food experience – award winning artisan producers, restaurants and Slow Adventures in the Sperrins. These are packaged and promoted in a modern interpretation of our history and heritage, creativity and culture and reflect our active lifestyle and spirit of adventure.



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN 2025?



The food and drink sector will have doubled its contribution to the local economy in line with the Tourism Strategy goals, to a value of **£33 million**.



Established **strategic food group** with quarterly meetings.



Full calendar of food events with a minimum of **2 food events every month**.



Adoption of the **'LegenDerry Food'** brand across the sector.



A strong food culture where **local produce** is prioritised by hospitality, retail and consumers.



20+ new food and drink experiences developed.



Established food and drink network with **90+ businesses** engaged and actively shaping and participating in the network activity.



50+ new food and drink products developed.



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INTRODUCTION

The Derry City & Strabane District Council Tourism Strategy 'A New Level of Ambition' 2018 – 2025, recognises the importance of the local food and drink sector which identifies the need **'To work closely with the food and drink sector and related businesses to continue raising the bar in terms of visitor experience'** and aims to double visitor spend to £100m by 2025 which will help sustain the 4770 jobs currently supported by the sector and will create approximately 1000 additional jobs.

The food and drink scene in Derry~Londonderry has evolved to become one of the finest on the island. The region has been on an exciting and inspirational journey. Food festivals have given producers and chef's a platform to showcase and sell their innovative produce and dishes, whilst restaurants are winning awards which place them front and centre stage among the best in Ireland.

Street food businesses are creating a cultural and vibrant food experience.

Producers, brewers and distillers place innovation at the fore. There are food and drink experiences which complement this offer and showcase the wider offer in rural areas in ways which imprint a sense of this place for visitors.



The LegenDerry Food brand was established in 2013 as part of the city's inaugural food festival and is now a recognised brand that has gone from strength to strength. The 2016's Year of Food and Drink initiative was a pivotal year for LegenDerry Food and as a result was awarded NI's Best Food Destination in 2017. The city has also been shortlisted as one of Ireland's top 10 food destinations three times placing runner up in 2015 and 2016.

Local food and drink businesses already make a significant contribution to the local economy. The sector is dominated by a number of large manufacturing and processing companies, vital in terms of job creation and export potential.

In recent years the region has seen a rise in the number of small, mainly artisan food and drink producers. This has been driven by innovative approaches to stimulating business start and business growth, pioneered by the Foodovation Centre in the North West Regional College and Council's Business Support Team.

The local food and drink sector also has a vital role in driving tourism growth, both in numbers and visitor spend. In other successful food destinations, local food and drink businesses collaborate to provide rural food and drink experiences which tell the story and animate the hospitality offer in the city's hotels and restaurants and can contribute significantly to overnight stays by providing more reasons to visit and stay longer.

HOW WILL THIS STRATEGY BE DELIVERED?

We have ambitious targets for growth. **We aim to double food and drink related visitor spend to £33 million by 2025** which is in line with our ambition within the Tourism Strategy. A robust monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed to identify a baseline value of the food and drink sector to the local economy in terms of job creation and other economic indicators cited in the Strategic Growth Plan. This will allow the sector to set ambitious targets for growth for the duration of the plan and provide the evidence base for the sector to be positioned as a key economic driver.

The strategy is underpinned by a collaborative approach between the key stakeholders including the private sector, with defined roles and responsibilities. Delivery of this strategy will require meaningful collaboration and real partnership working. Food is cross cutting amongst many Council departments including Business Support, Tourism, Regeneration, Skills Development as well as business support agencies and organisations.

But also and most importantly - successful delivery will require the collective entrepreneurial drive and ambition of the private sector.

This includes food producers, hospitality and accommodation, food tours and activity businesses, as well as event organisers and attractions, underpinned by a sound commercially viable food network. This food network and strategic food group representing the aforementioned departments will be the delivery bodies.



We aim to double food and drink related visitor spend to £33 million by 2025



FOOD TOURISM - GLOBAL CONTEXT

Food tourism is defined as 'The pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences'

It has grown exponentially in recent years and is a particularly creative and dynamic segment of tourism. Visitors are seeking authentic, local tourism experiences which give them a real connection to a place and there's no better way to do this than through food and drink. Destinations are recognising this as a way to diversify tourism offerings and to help stimulate local, regional and national economic development. Every tourist eats about 3 times a day, and increasingly local food and drink is becoming a specific reason to visit a destination, making food one of the fundamental economic drivers of tourism.

'Food experiences have become more important in tourism as the 'Experience Economy' has developed. The consumer no longer pays for the basic service, but for the complete experience. In the case of food, people are willing to pay a premium for the added value offered by food experiences, which provide a gateway into local culture, creativity and landscapes. Tourist food experiences in particular are often contrasted with 'everyday' or basic eating, as people search for 'authenticity' and distinction in local food and gastronomy.'

UNWTO Global Food Tourism Report



A recent Mintel report on Artisan Food Ireland estimated that in **2016**, the sector was worth **706 MILLION EURO (500M ROI /206M NI)** which was up **3.7% FROM 2015**. The sector is set to grow **+13.7% BY 2021**.

The report also reinforced the consumer trend for authenticity: authentic ingredients and production processes, regional sourcing, handcrafted, ancient production techniques and food with a story.



THE VALUE OF FOOD TOURISM

EXAMPLES FROM ELSEWHERE



MELBOURNE – AUSTRALIA

Melbourne's food tourism centres on trendy dining and entertainment experiences found in planned cobblestone laneways that are decorated with graffiti and stencil art. The city positions itself as a gateway for exploring food and drink experiences on day excursions into neighbouring areas. Proactive planning and licencing enable the city to position itself as a leader of urban food and drink culture e.g. coffee, street food, roof top bars and craft beer, which visitors seek out for a 'local' experience.

Population – **5 MILLION**



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SAN SEBASTIAN – SPAIN

Food and drink is a core element of local culture and heritage and the development of food tourism is, in part, designed to create a better balance between urban and rural areas. Gastronomy is a main pillar of the marketing strategy and a destination strength, with lead products such as fish, seafood and pintxos. Eating and drinking is an affordable luxury - experiences to be lived out through "signature cuisine" with expert chefs as well as with family and friends in culinary societies.

The city's strong food cultural offer is available through e.g. 100% Basque immersive food experiences, gastronomic societies, gourmet dining, food routes and tours.

San Sebastian also hosts Gastronomika (the best high gastronomy world event according to Forbes magazine).

Population – **186K**

THE VALUE OF FOOD TOURISM

EXAMPLES FROM ELSEWHERE



ANTWERP – BELGIUM

Antwerp is the largest city in Flanders. It has a harbour and a 500-year history as the centre for European diamond trading. Buildings that elsewhere would be museums are still working buildings here. Good Food, Good Chefs and the Good Life are core pillars of the food tourism strategy, and Visit Flanders focus on food is deemed one of five world class products which differentiates the destination. Partly in recognition of a new diamond museum opening, 'Antwerp Baroque 2018. Rubens inspires' programme of activities and Smaakmeesters, the city's autumn culinary festival, Lonely Planet has named Antwerp as one of its Top 10 Best Cities 2018. Emphasis on food and drink is part of the Government strategy to raise awareness and differentiate from competitors. Focus falls on the innovators, artisans and chefs and what they do with the products, rather than the products themselves.

Population – **498K**



REYKJAVIK – ICELAND

Reykjavik has experienced a food renaissance to become one of Europe's most dynamic gastronomic destinations. The city is full of exciting places to taste modern dishes using traditional ingredients, influenced by the philosophy of New Nordic Cuisine. This has equally seen a resurgence in traditional cuisine and cooking methods e.g. using geothermal energy. The food industry is a major part of Iceland's economy and increasing numbers of restaurants are focusing on local food to cope with the growth of tourist arrivals. Having been illegal to brew in Iceland up until the 1990's, craft beer is a relatively young sector, but breweries and beer festivals are now springing up to meet demand. Visible promotion of the food and drink offer naturally links with the strong story-telling culture and quirky sense of fun. This characterises Iceland's general tourism marketing, it appeals to visitors and is effective for gaining media attention.

Population – **123K**

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

FAILTÈ IRELAND FOOD AND DRINK STRATEGY 2018 – 2023

Estimates that **2 billion** was spent by overseas tourists and domestic holiday makers on food and drink in **2017** and equates to approximately **35% of overall visitor spend**. The strategy aims to grow this by **400 million to 2.4 billion by 2023** by:

€2.4
Billion by 2023



overseas
tourists



domestic
holiday
makers



Increased availability of great Irish food and drink experiences across the country and collaboration with relevant agencies to underpin the quality and sustainable practices of the Irish food and drink sector.



Increased capability of Irish food & beverage operators to deliver a world class offering that is consistent and profitable.



Intensified effort to ensure Irish food and drink features more prominently in the collective marketing and sales efforts of Ireland's tourism industry.



80% of the market is Leisure Tourists who want high-quality food and experiences, but this is not a primary motivation for travel. Culinary Tourists, those who seek unique, memorable eating and drinking experiences are only **10% of the market** and **“Food as Fuel”** Tourists who want to consume **food as quickly and as cheaply as possible** are the remaining **10% of the market**.

GOING FOR GROWTH AGRI-FOOD STRATEGY

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The strategic vision is to
“Grow a sustainable, profitable
and integrated Agri-Food supply
chain, focused on delivering the
needs of the market”

Northern Ireland Agri
food sector GVA is valued
at **£1.14 billion in 2016,**
employing over 40,000
people. This is **3.3%** of the
total GVA and **4.7%** of the
total workforce.



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“Grow a sustainable,
profitable and
integrated Agri-Food
supply chain, focused
on delivering the
needs of the market.”

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TOURISM NI

Identifies food tourism as an important component of the wider tourism offer and a significant contributor to ambitious targets for NI to grow visitor spend to £2 Billion by 2030.

YEAR OF FOOD & DRINK 2016

Northern Ireland's Year of Food and Drink 2016 provided a sound platform to develop the local food and drink sector. It ran from January 2016 to March 2017 and its overall aim was to put the quality of our local food and drink at the centre of the tourism experience. There was a themed calendar of events, so month by month, across the country, festival and food events provided the opportunity to tell visitors (and remind locals) about our traditional recipes, regional specialities and innovative award winning products.



The initiative provided the opportunity for key stakeholders to work together and develop a Year of Food and Drink programme. This programme was phenomenally successful across Northern Ireland and as a result Northern Ireland won 'World's Best Food Destination' at the 2018 International Travel and Tourism Awards in London.



FOOD NI - TASTE THE GREATNESS

2018 - 2021



Taking forward the legacy of the Year of Food and Drink, Food NI has developed a new campaign “Taste the Greatness” which aims to create standout and credibility in the GB and international arenas by 2021.

“By 2021, we will channel our food revolution and make a mainstream story that burns bright, instilling respect and love for NI food and drink. We want to create passionate consumer ambassadors, who can tell our food and drink stories in such inspiring ways that they travel far beyond our borders. We will move from surprising people with our phenomenal produce to creating standout and credibility in the GB and international arenas”

The purpose of the campaign is to promote NI food and drink locally, nationally and internationally & create networks, resources and assets that encourage:

- More support for NI food and drink from local consumers.
- A spirit of entrepreneurship in the NI food and drink sector.
- Increased awareness and ambition in terms of exporting NI food and drink.
- A broader international appreciation of the quality of NI food and drink.
- A better understanding of how NI food and drink links to our other cultural & tourism assets.

The campaign will profile NI as a tiny region with a huge food and drink heritage, using online editorial features on local producers, festivals, restaurants and chefs, including exceptional photography capturing the links between the landscape and it's food.

*At the time of writing, a definitive budget was not in place to formally launch and drive forward this strategy and it is currently being rolled out with key stakeholders as budgets and resources permit.

LOCAL CONTEXT

Derry City & Strabane District Council Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan 2017-2032 has highlighted tourism as a key sector for economic growth and jobs. Tourism sits under the Economic Pillar with the outcome **“We will live in the cultural destination of choice”** offering **“world class visitor experiences”**.

The **Integrated Economic Strategy** also underlines the importance of tourism for creating and sustaining jobs, as well as its importance for the positive impact it has for communities.

Food tourism has created a segment for itself within tourism as it promotes local economic development, involves many different parts of the supply chain and brings new uses to the primary sector.

Agri-Food is highlighted as one of the key sectors for economic growth under “Sustain and Grow” (Sectors which play an important role in supporting Derry City and Strabane’s business support, with the potential to enable incremental growth).

The Derry City & Strabane District Council Tourism Strategy 2018 – 2025 recognises the importance of the local food and drink

sector which identifies the need **“To work closely with food and drink sector and related business to continue raising the bar in terms of visitor experience”**



It aims to **double visitor spend to £100m by 2025** which will help sustain the **4770 jobs currently supported by the sector and will create approximately 1000 additional jobs**. There has been a 13% increase in tourism jobs from 2013 to 2017 and these make up 9% of all employee jobs in DCSDC. The largest sector by scale is food and beverage serving activities.



It is estimated that around **one third of total visitor spend is allocated to food and drink**. The 2017 NISRA tourism figures illustrated that **Derry City and Strabane District Council had an annual visitor spend of £55.8m (up 11% from 2016). This values the food and drink sector at around £16.8 million.**

WHO IS VISITING?

The region has been most successful at attracting the ‘culturally curious’ market segment.



56% visited the area to find out stories, history and legends of Northern Ireland.



82% of all visitors include a visit to The City Walls.

The profile of visitors is broadly ‘older’, currently 44% of visitors are aged over 55 and most travelling without children.

The strategy highlights the importance of developing the rural offering as a complementary visitor experience to the urban offering. The rural hinterland receives approximately one tenth of the visitor spend that occurs in the city.

In 2017, the Council area’s NI market share of overnight trips, nights spent and expenditure on overnight trips stood at 5%, 5% and 6% respectively. In the period 2015-2017 NISRA’s tourism figures estimated that 60% of overnight trips to Derry & Strabane were out of state visitors- above the 55% average across Northern Ireland.



LegenDerry
Food

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As confirmed by John and Sally McKenna, Derry has been flagged as the ‘**Next Foodie Capital of Ireland**’ and which they have been actively promoting nationally. To quote “**Derry City is the most happening urban place in Ireland, so get yourself up there before the hordes start to arrive.**”

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FOOD OFFER



35 artisan food producers and 10 larger scale manufacturers



2 monthly markets in Derry and Strabane



2 guesthouses, 58 B&B's and 6 guest accommodation



43 restaurants and 11 cafes



Annual Enterprise Week industry programme



121 self-catering units



6 street food companies



26 different food & drink related experiences



unique product of Lough Foyle Irish Flat Oyster



4 regular food & drink related festivals/events



13 hotels with 710 rooms and 1,710 beds



tradition of whiskey distilling

TARGET MARKETS AND KEY OPPORTUNITIES

A successful food destination must be underpinned by an active and informed **domestic market** to sustain the local food sector all year round and avoid supply and demand issues related to seasonality, economic fluctuations or infrastructural barriers. There is already evidence of this with the success of, and support for, local food related festivals. The strategy must continue to develop this important market, in particular targeting the wider NI domestic market and those “foodies” who have never visited the city and region.

A key opportunity identified in the Tourism Strategy is the need to attract more overnight stays and encourage visitors to stay longer. This will be primarily driven by out of state visitors. Based on our proposition, market research on the visitor markets and market segments with a strong propensity to visit the Island of Ireland, the following visitor target markets and market segments have been identified as offering the best prospects for future growth:

- **The Republic of Ireland (ROI) market**, particularly the ‘Open to Ideas’ market segment.
- **The Great Britain (GB) Market** particularly the “Culturally Curious” segment, but also targeting the growing “Social Energiser”.
- **Mainland Europe**, particularly the fast-growing French and German markets and the “Culturally Curious” and “Social Energiser” segments in line with Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI.
- In the longer term the **US and Canadian** market offers opportunities as this market continues to develop and seek new visitor experiences in Northern Ireland, as part of an Island of Ireland trip.

BREXIT CONSIDERATIONS

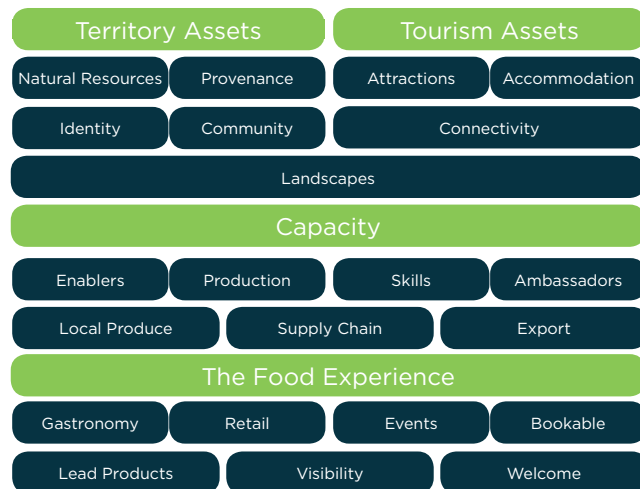
The region is at a tumultuous point given the uncertainty of Brexit and potential impact on tourism as well as the food and drink economy. There may be positive and negative effects particularly given the border location. Potential areas which need addressed include – protection of local food (PGI status), Rural Development Funding (Agri-Food programmes), Research & Development, access to labour and exports/imports. Councils have been asked to establish Food Resilience Teams to prepare for the potential impacts of BREXIT on food provision and supply.



FOOD TOURISM DESTINATION AUDIT

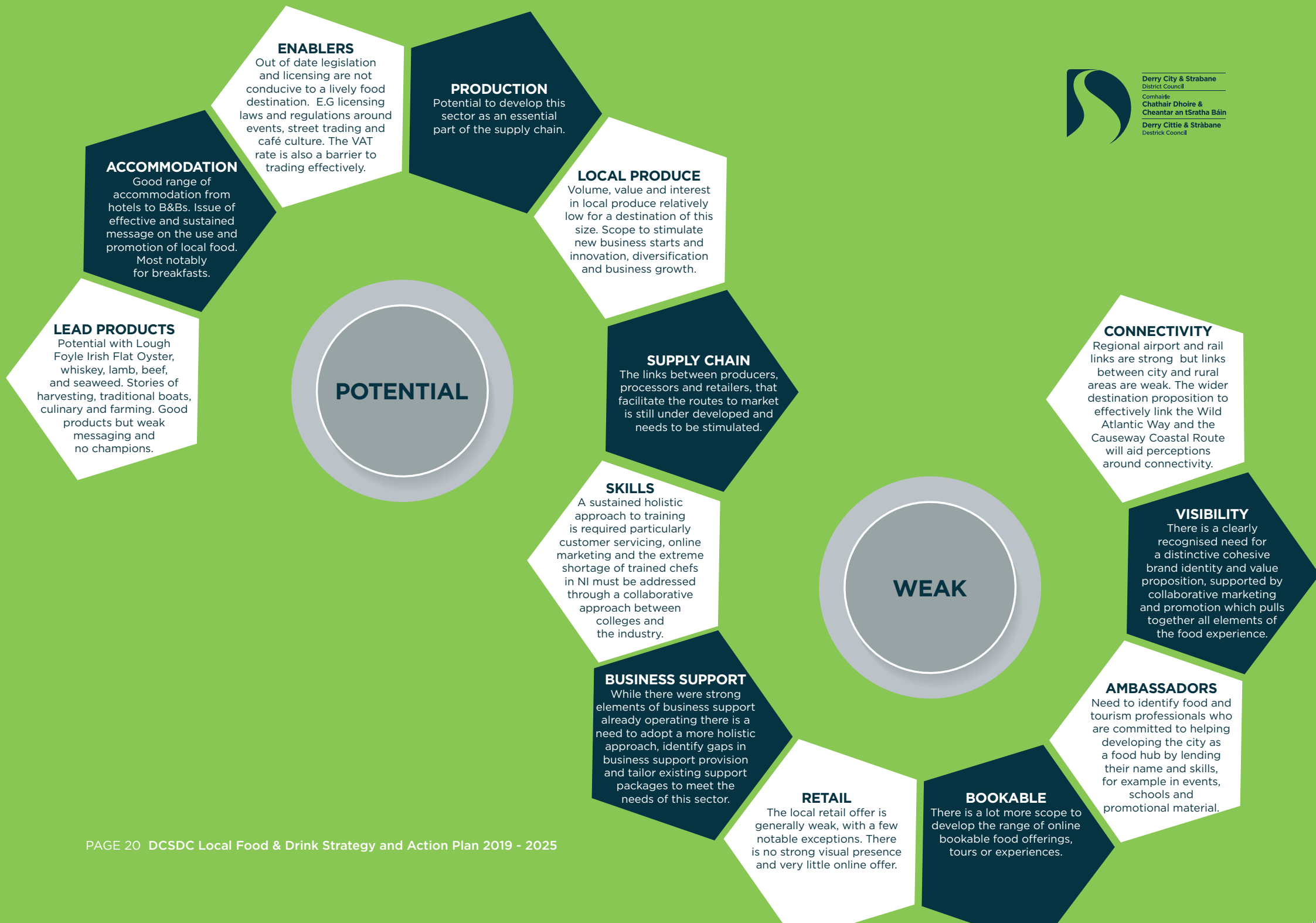
A successful food tourism destination is a combination of the following key elements, the Territory Assets, Tourism Assets, Capacity and Food Experience. To present this objectively, in an easy to understand format, Place Solutions used the Food Destination Evaluation Framework developed by TEAM Tourism Consulting and illustrated below.

This framework was used to determine the region's current position and what the USPs are. It has identified what components are strong, those which have potential and areas of weakness.



© TEAM Tourism Consulting





WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN 2025

Vision

'To build on the achievements and successes to date integrating our local strengths into a common approach to benefit the entire sector and ultimately placing Derry-Londonderry as the number one food destination on the island by 2025'

Proposition

The vision is underpinned by a proposition statement which sets out what makes us different, highlights the unique selling points and a strong sense of place. It sets out where the city and district want to be positioned in the market place. The proposition is the first stage in developing a food destination brand and should fit within the wider destination proposition. The Tourism Strategy sets out a headline destination brand The Walled City - where the Wild Atlantic way meets the Causeway Coastal Route with three supporting propositions of History and Heritage, Creativity and Culture and Activity and Adventure.

OUR KEY PROPOSITIONS



LOUGH FOYLE AND IRISH FLAT OYSTER

Derry- Londonderry was built because of its proximity to food and in particular food from the Foyle. The Foyle is a great natural resource featuring many streams and rivers that start in the Sperrin and Donegal mountains which flow into the Lough and out to the Atlantic Ocean. The shores of Lough Foyle provide a vast array of shellfish with the Lough Foyle Irish Flat Oyster being the jewel in the Foyle's crown.



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GATEWAY TO THE WIDER REGIONAL FOOD EXPERIENCE

The city is the gateway to a wider regional food experience - award winning artisan producers, restaurants and Slow Adventures in the Sperrins. These are packaged and promoted in a modern interpretation of our history and heritage, creativity and culture and reflect our active lifestyle and spirit of adventure.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

By 2025, the Strategy and Action Plan will deliver the following key outcomes:

- The food and drink sector will have doubled its contribution to the local economy in line with the Tourism Strategy goal to a value of £33 million.
- Adoption of the 'LegenDerry Food' brand across the sector.
- Established food and drink network with 90+ businesses engaged and actively shaping and participating in the network activity.
- Established strategic food group with quarterly meetings.
- A strong food culture where local produce is prioritised by hospitality, retail and consumers.
- 50+ new food and drink products developed.
- Full calendar of food events with a minimum of 2 food events every month.

- 20+ new food and drink experiences developed.

The research, consultation and baseline analysis, underpinned by the food destination evaluation framework which identifies the complex and inter-related factors to develop a successful food tourism destination, sets out where the region sits as a food destination today. The strategy sets out where we want to be by 2025. It articulates a clear strategic vision for all stakeholders working in collaboration and sets out a compelling proposition to differentiate us in the market and forms the basis of a food destination Branding and Marketing Strategy. The strategy highlights opportunities, target markets and potential outcomes. The action plan sets out a robust implementation plan for the first three year period of the strategy.



FOUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

The strategy identifies four strategic pillars complemented by an action plan which is designed to encourage innovation among the core ingredients of the local food and drink sector and develop them within the context of a wider tourism offer in support of growing visitor markets.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

Integrated Communication and Delivery

To effectively utilise existing resources and fully integrate the food and drink offer into the wider delivery and communications plans for the city & district.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

Business Support and Capacity Building

To signpost food and drink businesses to relevant training and business support channels and clearly identified routes to market.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

World Class Food and Drink Visitor Experiences

To facilitate food and drink businesses to develop unique, bookable packages and visitor experiences.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

Enhance Reputation as a Food Destination

To work collaboratively to position Derry-Londonderry as the number one food destination on the island of Ireland.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 1 INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AND DELIVERY

The creation of a sustainable and commercially viable food and drink sector, is dependent on the establishment of fully integrated delivery structures working collaboratively at a strategic and operational level to an agreed strategy and action plan.

STRATEGIC FOOD GROUP

This established group will continue to bring together the key Council departments and public stakeholders involved in local food and drink. It will be responsible for supporting the delivery and the monitoring of this strategy, signposting further funding opportunities and positioning the local food and drink sector in a regional and national context.

DCSDC CROSS DEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP

This internal group comprising of key departments within Council, will be set up to coordinate existing resources and direct budgets to this economic and tourism priority.

LOCAL FOOD AND DRINK NETWORK

This is the central building block of the strategy. It will be comprised of members from across the sector to steer the activity and actions of the network.

LEGENDERRY FOOD BRANDING AND MARKETING STRATEGY

This is a key element of this strategy which will review the Legenderry brand and develop a Branding and Marketing Strategy to develop it fully. It will be supported by a marketing and PR plan to drive awareness of the local food and drink offer.

DISTINCT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

It has been identified as vital to have distinct channels for business-to-business (B2B) promotion and communication, and consumer facing (B2C) communication and promotion. These will be developed in line with recommendations from the Branding and Marketing Strategy.

EDUCATION

It is vitally important to educate consumers and the industry of the importance of supporting local food and drink. This not only contributes to the local economy but also creates further employment in the food sector.





STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Delivery and success will be dependent on a collaborative approach across all Council departments and key stakeholders. DCSDC have identified local food and drink as a key economic driver in the Strategic Growth Plan which could contribute significantly to local job creation. It is also a vital component of the Tourism Strategy, again contributing to the ambitious target for increased visitor spend and job creation.

PRIORITISING FOOD AND DRINK

The local food and drink strategy ensures that the sector is prioritised within existing business support and capacity building initiatives in order to fully realise this potential and create an economically viable competitive sector. This is across all agencies including InvestNI, NWRC, DCSDC and DAERA.

FOOD TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Council Tourism Department, Visit Derry and the wider tourism bodies such as Tourism NI, NWRC and Foodovation will have a key role in positioning the local food and drink sector within their wider business support and capacity building initiatives.

AN ENGAGED FOOD NETWORK

The benefit of such programmes includes contributing to the development of an engaged stakeholder network, where peers can learn from each other and often leads to opportunities for collaboration and new product development.





STRATEGIC PILLAR 3 WORLD CLASS FOOD AND DRINK VISITOR EXPERIENCES

The delivery of world class food and drink visitor experiences will contribute to a key outcome within the Economic Pillar of the Strategic Growth Plan “We will live in the cultural destination of choice” offering “world class visitor experiences”. It will also support the development of a vibrant evening economy as set out in the Tourism Strategy. Local food and drink is a vital element in building a distinctive sense of place for a tourism destination.

FOOD CULTURE & SENSE OF PLACE

Local food & drink experiences capitalise on a strong cultural asset and help to define destinations sense of place which is both genuine and differentiates one visitor destination from another. This can play to a destination’s strengths, and provide memorable visitor experiences which are repeated and shared – leading to an increase in visitor spend and customer satisfaction.

VISIBILITY

It is crucial to help visitors to uncover local food and drink experiences and make it easy to do. It is about provenance, story-telling and championing fantastic local produce – through retail displays, hospitality menus, ambassadors and awards. These enable visitors to feel a connection with the destination, as well as creating benefits to the local economy.

THE UNIQUE LEGENDERRY OFFER

Building a distinctive sense of place which can encompass signature dishes, hero products, local events, food ambassadors, celebrity chefs and award-winning restaurants, each with a role to play. Local restaurant days or weeks can be off-season, can focus on a particular theme or can be low cost. High quality menus designed to introduce and encourage new, younger markets. Offering a critical mass of experiences is important for visitor choice.

STANDARD

Promising and delivering a world-class visitor experience are two very different things. A marketing promise raises expectations which the experience has to live up to e.g. offering what is promoted, adhering to advertised hours of operation, providing excellent customer service, and having knowledgeable front-line staff. Popular online review sites often show when these expectations and experiences don’t come close. The concept of delivering world-class visitor experiences covers the entire process, not just what happens on the ground. Ideally, today’s visitors expect to be able to research, buy tickets, and find other local things to do in the area and to buy products all in a single space.

BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH

Defining a world-class experience is difficult. Opportunities to learn from recognised best practice is an easy way for businesses and front-line staff to see how visitor expectations are shaped and to benchmark themselves accordingly.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 4

ENHANCE REPUTATION AS FOOD DESTINATION

The strategic vision will only be achieved by a deliberate, sustained collaborative effort to enhance the reputation of LegenDerry Food on the local, national and international stage.

LOCAL FOODIES

This will be underpinned by the local foodie community who must be educated and enthused about the local food and drink offer. They will be the biggest and most important advocates, providing a sustainable local market all year round as well as acting as ambassadors to the important visitor market.

AWARDS

DCSDC has already attracted many national and international awards. This must continue to be the case and be supported by proactive promotion of the destination's food related awards as well as support for

the award application process itself. High profile awards ceremonies such as Blas na hÉireann, Irish Food Awards and the Irish Restaurant Association's Foodie Destination award are all instrumental in raising the profile and awareness of food destinations.

FOOD BLOGGERS/CRITICS

Investing time and resources to attract prominent national and international food bloggers and food critics encourages engagement and commentary with target audiences. This means cooperating with Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland on targeted familiarisation trips etc.





ACTION PLAN

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The action plan sets firm foundations for the successful development of Derry City and Strabane District Council as a food destination. A three year action plan from 2019-2022 is designed to build on existing strengths and future potential, and to address the weaknesses identified in the Food Destination Evaluation Framework.

(Additional goals and objectives will evolve over time to sustain and support the sector as the strategy is being implemented. This will happen in ongoing communications with the key stakeholders and through the Food Network group.)



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STRATEGIC PILLAR 1: INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AND DELIVERY

Objective: To effectively utilise existing resources and fully integrate the food and drink offer into the wider delivery and communications plans for the City and District.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators
1	Creation of a unified Local Food and Drink Network (LFDN)	Y1	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bespoke model developed. Terms of Reference adopted. Quarterly meetings. Creation of a network database. Attract 90 DCSDC based food businesses as members. Activity plan developed. Increase activity on closed Facebook group.
2	Creation of an internal working group of key Council departments to ensure cross departmental communication and collaboration.	Y1	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings.
3	Review and continue the existing Strategic Food Group (SFG)	Y1-3	SFG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group members reviewed and revised as appropriate. Terms of Reference adopted. Quarterly meetings to review and monitor progress of the strategy.
4	Review the existing 'LegenDerry food' identity and create branding strategy including consumer engagement with the brand.	Y1	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SFG and LFDN agree brand. Clear, unique strong brand identity developed and implemented. Consumer engagement plan developed.
5	Develop an annual local food and drink PR and marketing strategy with associated marketing material.	Y1-3	DCSDC/ LFDN/ VD/TNI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 articles in press annually. Work closely with TNI and TI to attract food and drink bloggers and key influencers. Number and range of marketing materials available to food sector/network including image bank. Work with VD to ensure LegenDerry Food and drink features prominently in marketing and sales of overall tourism. Work with VD on promoting bookable food experiences online. LegenDerry Food presence at consumer shows, tradeshow and tourism expos.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2: BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Objective: To signpost food and drink businesses to relevant training and business support channels and clearly identified routes to market.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators
1	Co-ordination of all supports and initiatives with potential to impact on the food sector and identify any gaps	Y1-3	NWRC/ SFG/ Tourism Skills Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of mapping business and skills support database. • Identify gaps in current provision with SFG. • Costed action plan for local intervention and support.
2	Promote Business Start, Business Referral Programme, Invest NI and Business Support Export Programmes to food and drink sector	Y1-3	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support 20+ food and drink businesses through Business Boost and other programmes of support.
3	Local food and drink customer service training programme	Y2	NWRC/ Tourism Skills sub group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to further develop and tailor customer service training available to everyone in food and drink sector. • Identify funding pots and delivery partners with stakeholders. • Train 50 staff.
4	Develop a programme of short bespoke workshops for the food and drink sector as identified by the LFDN.	Y1-3	NWRC/ Tourism Skills sub group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with business support, education skills delivery partnership to develop programme. • Identify potential funding pots/delivery bodies and partnerships.
5	Review and develop food and drink element of Council led monthly markets.	Y1-3	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practice nationally. • Collate feedback from Food Network. • Run 2 pilot ideas at markets.
6	Encourage new food and drink business start-ups	Y1-3	NWRC/INI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support 50+ new food and drink businesses in. • Work with Foodovation, INI and Council's Business Support to deliver food and drink specific info day during Enterprise Week. • Scope topic specific info days for sector. • Hold minimum of 1 networking event per year through Food Network which is aimed at potential food and drink businesses. • Work with partners to ensure companies are aware of support available.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2: BUSINESS SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Objective: To signpost food and drink businesses to relevant training and business support channels and clearly identified routes to market.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators
7	Proactive planning and licensing to enable the city to fully realise street food & café culture potential.	Y2-3	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Working closely with licensing department.
8	Promote free advice and assistance offered by Environmental Health Department to all new and prospective food businesses, on aspects of food safety and hygiene.	Y1-3	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Respond to 100% of all food businesses or potential food businesses requesting advice or assistance.Provide 100% of new food businesses with advice and guidance following registration.
9	Develop a local food programme at the planned Walled Garden and Acorn Farm at St Columbs Park	Y2	SFG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Secure capital and revenue funding to deliver a city wide food programme.
10	Maximise horticultural training opportunities across the district in partnership with others	Y2	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhanced uptake of the horticulture opportunities at the Horticulture & Environment Training Centre with the Conservation Volunteers in Brooke Park.Work in partnership with the NWRC on future regional horticulture skills and training.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3: WORLD CLASS FOOD AND DRINK VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Objective: To facilitate local food and drink businesses to develop unique, bookable packages and visitor experiences.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators
1	Increased availability of food and drink experiences for key target markets	Y1 - Y3	LFDN/ DCSDC/VD/ TNI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a food experience development programme to help food and drink businesses to develop unique experiences. Work with industry to ensure experiences are easily visible and bookable.
2	Review and develop the annual programme of local food and drink events	Y2	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate feedback from industry on current festivals. Best practice research. Work with partners to ensure events are meeting the needs of target visitor markets and driving overnight stays. Investigate opportunities to promote local food element within other existing events. Based on outcomes of review and industry feedback, identify new annual events and continue to deliver existing events.
3	Best Practice Trips	Y1-3	LFDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for the sector to visit best practice areas and to gain insight and knowledge.
4	Benchmarking	Y1-3	VD/LFDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information on current visitor experiences around food and drink. Determine food and drink expectations.



STRATEGIC PILLAR 4: ENHANCE REPUTATION AS FOOD DESTINATION

Objective: To work collaboratively to position Derry~Londonderry as the number one food destination on the Island of Ireland.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators
1	Establishment of a solid local food culture within the sector and community based on three foundations of quality, authenticity and locality.	Y1	LFDN/ DCSDC/VD / DCSDC Community dept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarisation trips around district.• Best practice trips to reinforce benefits of local food and drink.• Organise more events such as 'A Taste of LegenDerry' to support and encourage links between producers/retail and hospitality.• Integrate a project to educate residents on the benefits of local food and drink into the Community Awareness Programme.
2	Development of a local food accreditation mark to highlight food provenance.	Y1	LFDN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop criteria, governance framework and quality standards for a Local Food and Drink Accreditation Mark utilising the Food Destination Brand.
3	Develop and promote our USP's and lead products	Y1-3	LFDN/ DCSDC/VD/ LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop branding strategy utilising our USP's.• Work with industry partners to develop specific actions to develop and promote our USP's such as whiskey and seafood.• Scope ways to promote Lough Foyle Irish Flat Oyster.• Development of Street Food Culture.• Opportunities for Food Heritage and distilling tradition.
4	Continue working to secure accreditations and awards for the food and drink sector	Y1-3	LFDN/ DCSDC/VD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate businesses to enter national awards such as Great Taste and Blas na hÉireann and obtain professional accreditation.• Secure Foodie Destination status.
5	Support LFDN members to become food ambassadors	Y2-3	DCSDC/VD/ LFDN/SFG	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish who within LFDN are willing to be Food Ambassadors.• Identify support required.• SFG to facilitate training/skills building where possible.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4: ENHANCE REPUTATION AS FOOD DESTINATION

Objective: To work collaboratively to position Derry~Londonderry as the number one food destination on the island of Ireland.

No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Performance Indicators
6	Develop and promote Sustainable Food City Status	Y2	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a multi-disciplinary working group to cultivate sustainability.• Identify key areas which need addressed in order to achieve Sustainable Food City status and plan to address.• Prepare application with working group and establish timeframe for submission.• Deliver pilots through SAFER project addressing sustainability of Lough Foyle Irish Flat Oyster.• Produce a Sustainable Food Policy for DCSDC area.• Promote a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.
7	Promote Fairtrade campaign within DCSDC area	Y1-3	DCSDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain the Fairtrade City and District status achieved within DCSDC area.• Develop the membership of the local Fairtrade Steering Group across DCSDC area.• Increase the number of Fairtrade premises within DCSDC area (retail, catering, schools, colleges, workplaces and places of 2016 worship).• Support, promote and deliver Fairtrade Fortnight annually.• Promote Fairtrade ethos and produce at events.• Increase awareness of Fairtrade amongst citizens through various marketing and promotional campaigns.

GLOSSARY

Derry City and Strabane District Council
Visit Derry
Strategic Food Group
Local Food and Drink Network

DCSDC
VD
SFG
LFDN

Tourism NI
Tourism Ireland
North West Regional College
North West Partnership
Loughs Agency

TNI
TI
NWRC
NWP
LA

FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

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The Local Food and Drink Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2025, is first and foremost an integrated approach to the development of the sector. Kick started by major funded projects such as UK City of Culture and Year of Food and Drink 2016, and more recently through specific European 2016 projects such as NICHE and SAINT as well as annual funding opportunities such as DAERA Regional Food Programme. This will only be sustainable over the longer term by positioning the sector within mainstream Council Business Support and tourism programmes and initiatives.

While this has been the main thrust of the strategy and action plan, this does not preclude the inclusion of additional funding opportunities as they come on stream.

The strategy has also been carefully positioned within the wider strategic context to take advantage of future funding opportunities such as Tourism NI experiential development programmes, new events, international marketing opportunities and growth fund opportunities. Likewise, Tourism Ireland are featuring the local food

and drink offer in international marketing and promotional activity.

Emerging opportunities will include new funding initiatives from DAERA such as the Co-operation Programme. The Invest NI Collaborative Growth Programme also represents opportunities for the future. Both these projects are dependent on networking and collaboration. The integrated delivery structure advocated in this strategy will meet the criteria set by both these and other similar programmes.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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This strategy has baselined the current local food and drink offer in terms of quantity and perceived quality. It has also set out ambitious targets for growth. However, it was clear that there was a lack of information on the current and potential economic value of the sector. This type of information will be essential to continue to prioritise and develop the sector, for example, to avail of future funding opportunities such as Invest NI Collaborative Growth. It is highly recommended that the baseline information collected in the preparation of this strategy is further developed into robust economic data. Useful information will include growth of the sector over time and as a result of business support initiatives including innovation and diversification.

Another key element of continuous monitoring and evaluation is the collection of data on visitor satisfaction levels in relation to the food and drink sector. It is recommended that a programme of research in partnership with the Council Tourism Development Department and Visit Derry is put in place to measure and monitor visitor satisfaction levels and feedback on the food and drink offer.



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Comhairle
**Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin**

Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Deistrick Cooncil



WINNER

 **BEST FOOD
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**Taste^{the}
Greatness**