



Draft final report

Progress in Education

Task and Finish Group

Theme Chair: Clare O'Neill, Northern Regional College

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/community/community-planning

This report has been produced as a follow up to the four workshops for the Progress in Education Task and Finish Working Group, which met between September and November 2016. These workshops brought together a range of stakeholders from across the sectors to discuss the priorities for the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Community Plan.

The objective for this Task and Finish Group is:

‘Developing educational achievement and aspirations’

This paper details the draft strategic priorities and actions in this theme over the next 10-15 years and a summary of how this theme can contribute to other cross cutting themes such as good relations, infrastructure, sustainable development, environment, etc.

This paper will be forwarded to the Community Planning Strategic Alliance who will use it to inform the priorities and actions within the final Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim.

This paper outlines the key priority areas which were identified by the Task and Finish Group in the first workshop. It is important to note here that the focus of the Task and Finish Groups is around collaborative gain; what can be achieved through working together, or that is not already being done well by other agencies, and that this has shaped the selection of priorities.

The paper will present each priority individually and with the following structure, which reflects the evidence based approach taken:

- What success will look like for each priority;
- The current challenge, including upon who and where we should focus;
- Statistical evidence to support the selection of this issue as a priority (much of the evidence can be applied across each of the issues raised);
- Actions which would allow progress to be made towards achieving success in each strategic priority

There is also a table, ‘indicator development’, which details the outcomes for this priority and illustrates how they tie in with the Northern Ireland programme for government. It also suggests some indicators which could be used to measure success.

Under the banner of ‘Progress in Education’ there are also several strategic infrastructure projects that are either ongoing, or are being considered. These are:

- Schools Area Development Planning - considerations around where we build schools, and how this might help towards addressing issues such as deprivation.
- Northern Regional College infrastructure.

1 INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION

1.1 What success would look like

‘There are no barriers to stop anyone achieving their educational potential in Mid and East Antrim’

The following statements set out what success will look like in Mid and East Antrim as we realise the vision over the lifetime of the Community Plan:

- Achievements in core subjects (English, Maths, ICT and Science) will be raised.
- All individuals and families value education.
- Families are engaged, empowered and supported in the education of their children.

1.2 The challenge

There are significant inequalities in educational attainment at a variety of levels in Mid and East Antrim. For example, there is a clear link between deprivation and educational attainment, and geographical inequalities persist, with Carrickfergus showing lower rates of attainment for key subjects than elsewhere in the borough. In addition, there is a retained legacy with the working-class communities, with significant pockets of educational deprivation within Protestant and Catholic communities which links to neighbourhood renewal areas and areas at risk. There is also the issue of deprived children who do not live in deprived areas, and therefore it will be important to ensure that the focus of interventions in this priority are not simply geographical.

This issue was considered vital, as good quality education impacts across the themes of the five task and finish groups and is a critical life opportunity issue. The challenge will be to ensure that all children and adults are provided with an enabling environment in which to learn. Within this, current structures and programmes must ensure that they are effectively targeting need and are not wedded to age bands or geographic areas. Finally, there needs to be consideration as to whether the education system is set up to allow newcomer children to integrate and reach their potential and also to consider what is **working well at successful schools and consider what can be ‘rolled out’ elsewhere.**

1.3 The evidence

Deprivation

- Of the 65 Super Output Areas making up the Mid & East Antrim Local Government District (LGD), 13 (20%) are classed as being in the 20% most deprived areas in NI when ranked by the Education, Skill and Training Domain.
- A quarter of the areas (16) lie within the 20% least deprived areas in NI.
- In terms of education Ballee, Northland, Love Lane, Dunclug and Ballyloran are the 5 most deprived areas in Mid and East Antrim.

- Galgorm 2, Knockagh, Ballyloughan, Academy and Bluefield 2 are the 5 least deprived areas in Mid and East Antrim.
- There is also some variation in areas when broken down by primary school, post-primary school and working age adults e.g. Ballykeel is deprived in terms of post-primary school and working age adults however not in terms of primary school.
- In 2014/15, there was a 27% difference between the proportion of all school leavers and the proportion of free school meal entitlement school leavers, achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C (including equivalents) including GCSE English and Maths.

As previously stated, of the 65 Super Output Areas making up the Mid & East Antrim LGD, 13 (20%) are classed as being in the 20% most deprived areas in NI when ranked by the Education, Skill and Training Domain. Starting with the most deprived these are:

Super Output Area	Education, Skills and Training Domain Rank
Ballee	32
Northland	40
Love Lane	61
Dunclug	73
Ballyloran	74
Ballykeel	84
Moat	91
Antville	97
Clipperstown	117
Sunnylands	125
Blackcave	154
Gortalee	161
Fair Green	174

With 1 being the most deprived to 890 being the least deprived.

The table below also shows total pupil enrolment by resident council area and the proportion of pupils that are entitled to free school meals (FSME) over the period 2012/13 to 2015/16.

The data for 2015/16 indicates that 24.2% of pupils enrolled in Mid and East Antrim are entitled to free school meals, this is lower than the national average of 30.5%. This is the 8th highest in Northern Ireland, where the range is from 17.6% in Lisburn & Castlereagh, to 45.6% in Belfast.

	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	Total enrolled	FSME (%)	Total enrolled	FSME (%)	Total enrolled	FSME (%)	Total enrolled	FSME (%)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	23,793	18.2	24,218	19.1	24,357	21.6	24,370	22.6
Ards & North Down	24,584	17.3	24,752	17.3	24,919	20	25,042	21.7
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	36,260	21.3	37,143	21.9	37,655	25.1	38,127	25.6
Belfast	53,267	39.1	54,049	39.4	54,749	44.4	55,049	45.6
Causeway Coast & Glens	23,714	23.4	23,807	24.8	23,795	28.9	23,736	29.2
Derry & Strabane	28,976	36.6	29,182	36.9	29,054	43.3	28,896	43.8
Fermanagh & Omagh	20,826	23.9	21,063	24.9	21,185	29.6	21,226	29.9
Lisburn & Castlereagh	22,841	14.3	23,104	14.5	23,492	16.8	23,741	17.6
Mid & East Antrim	22,408	18.3	22,425	19.7	22,397	23	22,269	24.2
Mid Ulster	26,053	22	26,560	22.3	27,010	25.6	27,272	26.2
Newry, Mourne & Down	32,784	24.6	33,287	24.9	33,425	29	33,549	30
Invalid/Missing/Unknown	2,839	29.4	763	10.2	621	4.3	1,230	23.7
Northern Ireland	318,345	25.2	320,353	25.7	322,659	29.6	324,507	30.5

Source: NISRA, DENI

Newcomer pupils

There were questions raised around the quality of the support on offer for newcomer children, and the degree to which they can integrate and thrive in the local education system. *A newcomer pupil is one who has enrolled in a school but does not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and does not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish.*

- In Mid and East Antrim, the number of newcomers has increased by 27% from 525 in 2013/14, to 665 in 2015/16; this compared to a 21% increase across NI, and the vast majority of these pupils were in primary school.
- In 2015/16, half of all the newcomer pupils were enrolled in schools in the 3 wards; Fair Green, Castle Demesne and Braidwater.
- The council was 3rd highest behind only Fermanagh and Omagh and Causeway Coast and Glens in terms of the number of newcomer children.

Geographical inequalities

Achievements at key stage 2 for pupils in Mid and East Antrim were below the NI average for both English and Maths and ranked 3rd and 2nd lowest across the 11 councils (see table below)

There was notable variation between the 3 main areas within Mid and East Antrim. The level of achievement in Carrickfergus was significantly lower than the NI average for both

English and Maths (67.9% and 71.4% respectively) while Ballymena (77.9% and 78.9%) and Larne (81.1% and 81.8%) outperformed NI as a whole.

Attainment in Mid and East Antrim

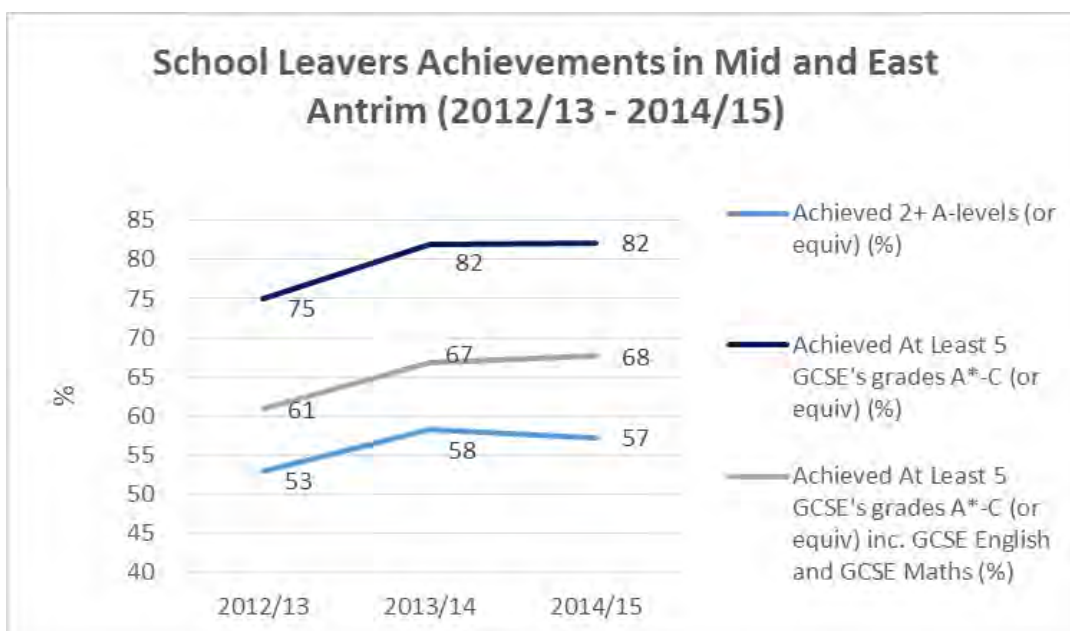
The level of educational attainment in the borough is a mixed picture when compared to the Northern Ireland averages. As the table below shows, for Key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or above in communication in English or Using Maths, were slightly down on national figures.

Achievement at Key Stage 2 -Years 5 to 7 (2012/13)

	Mid and East Antrim	Northern Ireland	Rank
Pupils achieving level 4 or above in Communication in English (%)	76.53	77.15	3rd lowest
Pupils achieving level 4 or above in Using Maths (%)	78.05	78.53	2nd lowest

For school leavers in 2014/15, pupils in Mid and East Antrim outperformed the national average for achievements in GCSEs but was ranked 4th and 5th lowest out of the 11 councils, with 82% achieving at least 5 GCSE's grades A*-C (or equivalent) and 68% achieving at least 5 GCSE's grades A*-C (or equivalent) including GCSE English and GCSE Maths, respectively.

In 2014/15, there was a 27% difference between the proportion of all school leavers and the proportion of free school meal entitlement school leavers, achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C (including equivalents) including GCSE English and Maths. The level of achievement in A-levels was slightly lower than the NI average and was ranked 6th lowest.



Previous data has shown that Mid and East Antrim has a comparatively smaller proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals to the Northern Ireland average. Additional data, in the table below shows the percentage point gap in qualifications achieved between the proportion of all school leavers and the proportion of free school meal entitlement school leavers for 2014/15. Across all the council areas there is a clear disparity between the two groups in terms of attainment. However, for Mid and East Antrim, there is around a two-percentage point increase in disparity compared to the Northern Ireland average.

	2+ A-levels A*-E	5+ GCSEs A*-C	5+ GCSEs A*-C Inc. GCSE English and Maths
Antrim & Newtownabbey	28.2	22.8	31.3
Ards & North Down	33.3	33.3	35.2
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	24.9	16.2	24.8
Belfast	22.5	16.5	24.6
Causeway Coast & Glens	19.7	12.0	21.1
Derry & Strabane	20.5	11.5	19.9
Fermanagh & Omagh	19.4	14.6	21.3
Lisburn & Castlereagh	31.6	22.7	31.0
Mid & East Antrim	24.4	18.6	26.8
Mid Ulster	16.8	13.4	20.4
Newry, Mourne & Down	20.2	15.7	20.9
Invalid/Missing/Unknown Postcodes	30.8	15.8	19.9
Northern Ireland	22.4	16.5	24.7

Source: NISRA, DENI

School leavers in the Borough not entitled to free school meals are more likely to continue their education with 79% entering institutions of Higher or Further Education compared with 58.3% of leavers who were entitled to free school meals.

Destination of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim by free school meal entitlement and gender 2014/2015

	Boys		Girls		Total	
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
ENTITLED TO FSM						
Institution of Higher Education	19	14.2	33	28.0	52	20.6
Institution of Further Education	48	35.8	47	39.8	95	37.7
Employment	19	14.2	13	11.0	32	12.7
Training	32	23.9	17	14.4	49	19.4
Unemployment/ Unknown	16	11.9	8	6.8	24	9.5
TOTAL ENTITLED TO FSM	134	100.0	118	100.0	252	100.0
NOT ENTITLED TO FSM						
Institution of Higher Education	284	39.0	401	56.5	685	47.6
Institution of Further Education	251	34.4	201	28.3	452	31.4
Employment	79	10.8	54	7.6	133	9.2
Training	85	11.7	27	3.8	112	7.8
Unemployment/ Unknown	30	4.1	27	3.8	57	4.0
TOTAL NOT ENTITLED TO FSM	729	100.0	710	100.0	1439	100.0

Religious Inequalities

In Northern Ireland, Catholic school leavers have outperformed Protestants during each of the 3 academic years between 2014/15 and 2012/13. However, in Mid and East Antrim this has varied on a yearly basis. In 2013/14 Protestant boys outperformed Catholic boys in achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C including GCSE English and Maths. Similarly, in 2014/15 and 2013/14 Protestant girls also outperformed Catholic girls. In terms of achieving 2+ A-levels A*-E, Catholic school leavers consistently outperformed Protestant school leavers in the Borough.

Percentage of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim achieving 5+ GCSEs A*-C inc. GCSE English and Maths by gender and religion of pupil

	BOYS			GIRLS			TOTAL		
	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
PROTESTANT	62.1	63.1	56.1	74.1	73.8	64.0	67.9	68.5	60.0
CATHOLIC	70.1	60.0	57.1	71.6	68.3	68.5	70.8	64.2	63.7
OTHER	57.4	60.0	56.5	66.1	69.1	66.7	61.5	64.3	61.4
ALL RELIGIONS	63.2	61.9	56.3	72.5	71.9	65.4	67.7	66.9	60.9

Percentage of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim achieving 2+ A-levels A*-E by gender and religion of pupil

	Boys			Girls			Total		
	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
PROTESTANT	47.1	49.0	44.4	67.6	68.0	60.8	57.1	58.5	52.5
CATHOLIC	52.9	52.3	49.6	70.1	66.5	65.7	61.7	59.5	58.9
OTHER	38.5	48.4	42.9	65.1	65.4	54.6	51.1	56.4	48.5

Religious inequalities in the destination of school leavers is apparent in Northern Ireland as a whole and in Mid and East Antrim. A higher proportion of Catholic school leavers (51.8%) entered institutions of Higher Education than Protestants (42.2%).

1.4 Activity mapping

In the second workshop, the Task and Finish group was asked to complete a quick scoping exercise to allow better understanding of who is already involved in working on this particular strategic priority and also what is not currently being addressed. These are the outputs of that discussion.

Who is involved:

- Young Carers
- Foster Network
- PSNI
- Health visitors
- Youth clubs
- Carrickfergus YMCA
- FE colleges
- Careers service
- Training providers

- School based care team
- Homestart
- **Women's Aid**
- Sure Start
- **Barnardo's**
- Action for Children
- Churches (education / day care)
- Gateway team
- MAST (Multi-Agency Support Teams)
- Department of Education

What is not being addressed:

- There should be more targeting of interventions geographically in areas that have needs.
- Intervention at a family level to ensure a positive home environment which is conducive to learning.
- Follow up of specific programmes to assess impact
- There is a short-time frame for children with English as a second language to achieve specific goals

1.5 Actions

In Workshop 3 the Task and Finish Group discussed actions for each strategic priority, which would contribute towards achieving success, as defined by the statements in 1.1. Some of these actions are to improve existing behaviour or practice and others are new.

- Family/parenting programmes - **for example 'Incredible Years' which can empower families to engage and support their children in education.** These will look to deliver equality in provision and remove the stigma of parental support. A wide range of partners could be involved here, such as NHSCT, PHA, Parenting NI, Home Start and Sure Start, and Strengthening Families.
- Strategic Research project on how best to address inequalities and raise aspirations - this would target cultural change within schools and educational establishments. This will examine best practice and research findings, both within Northern Ireland and on the mainland, to create a greater understanding of alternative interventions. This Research will create a 5-year plan to address this issue and will recognise that input is necessary in the early years. Existing research from Tony Gallagher (QUB) and Peter Shirlow (PUL report) should also be utilised.
- **Use of schools' estate** - open the schools for clubs. If the school is a community hub this may inspire parents to build on their own education and not fear the school environment.
- Family liaison worker - **for example 'Toy Box' in which they go to the families and address their needs such as demonstrating educational play etc, or the 'Jigsaw' Project.**
- Reduce inequalities in gender - schools need more male teachers to be role models for boys. Ballykeel has seen an improvement in the achievement in male pupils with the introduction of more male teachers. Inequalities in attainment by gender must also be a focus. Partners such as Volunteer Now, the CVS and retired service personnel could be utilised to further this agenda.
- Ensure that all types of education are recognised and valued - tackle perception that sending a child to a technical college is inferior to a grammar school education

- all children should be treated the same regardless of whether they attend a secondary or grammar schools. Education champions for the borough could be utilised, along with employers, mentors, schools, industry experts and Sentinum Programmes.
- Assistance to accommodate newcomer pupils - schools require either a dedicated individual, or access to a shared member of staff. Older pupils can also be utilised to help with translation, and parents of newcomer pupils should be offered the opportunity to learn English. Funding for this must be flexible and allow for provision in cases where pupils arrive during a school year.

2 QUALIFICATIONS OF THE WORKING AGE POPULATION

2.1 What success would look like

‘People and communities in Mid and East Antrim place value on lifelong learning’

The following statements set out what success will look like in Mid and East Antrim as we realise the vision over the lifetime of the Community Plan:

- More people with qualifications at a higher level
- Everyone of working age has an accredited qualification
- Employers are encouraged to put training opportunities in place
- People are able to learn for enjoyment and the sake of learning
- There are opportunities to get involved in informal education opportunities that go beyond formal qualifications
- Equality of access to learning opportunities, regardless of location, religion or social standing
- There will be a different route for children and young people for whom school is not the most appropriate environment

2.2 The challenge

There are issues around the low proportion of the working age population of Mid and East Antrim who hold a higher education qualification, and also with the relatively high proportion who hold no qualifications. **This can have profound impacts on individual’s** ability to find and sustain employment, and also to adapt to the changing nature of contemporary skills requirements. It will be important to look at this issue by focussing on intergenerational solutions, which work with adults, who are able to foster ambition in their young people.

At present, there is a misconception that education is a formal activity that must take place in a traditional learning environment; however, more people must be made aware of the variety of educational opportunities that are on offer in the borough. Engagement with employers is important here, as education must be viewed as something that is accessed continuously, including whilst in work, rather than merely as a route in to employment.

There is also a challenge to have education viewed as a lifelong process which is valued throughout the community; current evidence suggests this is not the case, as the area has high rates of unauthorised absences from school and a low take up of places on adult education courses. This could be achieved through working with 13-40 year olds, where provision could improve the relative performance of the borough, and also in areas with relatively fewer economic opportunities.

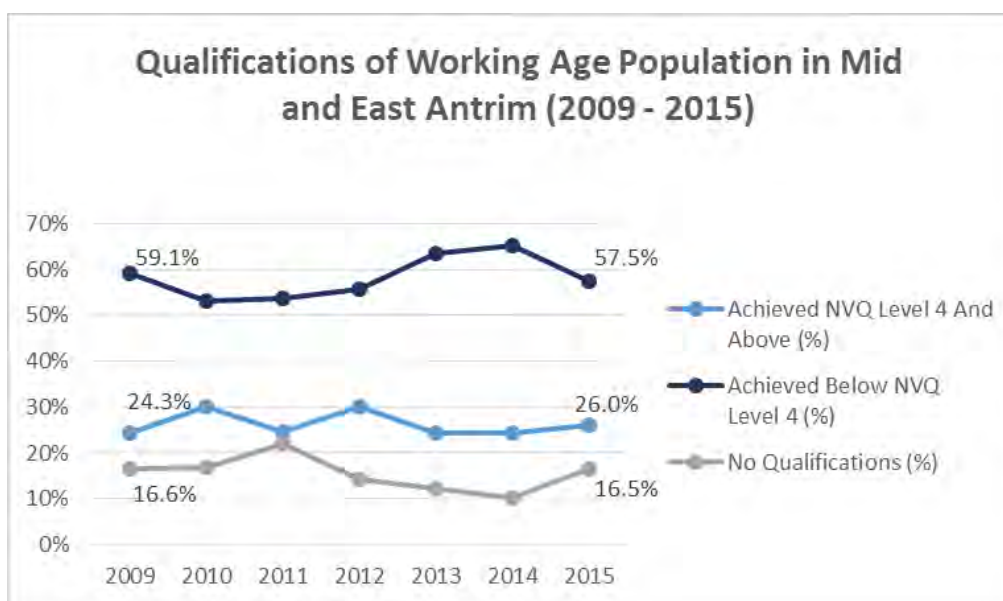
2.3 The evidence

Qualifications of the working age population in Mid and East Antrim

Compared to NI in 2015 the working age population in Mid and East Antrim had lower levels of qualifications, however the proportion with no qualifications was the same. Mid and East Antrim was ranked 3rd lowest across the councils in achieving NVQ level 4 and above qualifications.

	Mid and East Antrim	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Rank
Achieved NVQ Level 4 And Above (%)	26.0%	29.9%	9th highest
Achieved Below NVQ Level 4 (%)	57.5%	53.6%	8th highest
No Qualifications (%)	16.5%	16.5%	7th highest

The graph shows that while there have been some fluctuations in qualifications over the last 7 years, the position in Mid and East Antrim in 2015 is comparable to that in 2009. With just over a quarter achieving NVQ level 4 and above, 57.5% achieving below level 4 and 16.5% with no qualifications.



Qualifications of the working population

This information provides a slightly different insight, as it represents the qualifications of those who are currently in employment. This is important, as training and continuous personal development should be something that employers focus on for their staff. In addition, qualifications are not only important for people seeking work, but for those in employment they also contribute to individual resilience in the event of losing a job and may ensure more opportunities to progress in a business.

The data in the table below is from the 2015 Labour Force Survey and indicates that the working population in Mid and East Antrim has a lower proportion with a level 4 or above qualification and are broadly similar for the proportion with no qualifications.

	Level 4 +		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1		No qualifications		Total
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	
Antrim & Newtownabbey	23,000	37.7	11,000	17.8	8,000	13.5	8,000	13.8	11,000	17.2	61,000
Ards & North Down	30,000	42	15,000	21.7	11,000	16	9,000	12.6	*	*	70,000
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	28,000	29.7	21,000	22.8	17,000	18	14,000	15.3	13,000	14.2	94,000
Belfast	61,000	42.3	28,000	19.2	26,000	17.7	19,000	13	11,000	7.9	145,000
Causeway Coast & Glens	17,000	29.6	11,000	19	15,000	26.1	6,000	11.2	8,000	14	56,000
Derry & Strabane	23,000	38.2	12,000	20.9	7,000	12	9,000	15.4	8,000	13.5	59,000
Fermanagh & Omagh	17,000	30.4	11,000	20.7	10,000	17.8	11,000	19.4	6,000	11.8	55,000
Lisburn & Castlereagh	30,000	49	12,000	19.7	9,000	14.4	7,000	10.6	*	*	61,000
Mid & East Antrim	20,000	32.2	18,000	29.1	10,000	16	7,000	10.9	7,000	11.8	63,000
Mid Ulster	21,000	31.9	16,000	24.1	8,000	13.1	9,000	14.1	11,000	16.9	64,000
Newry, Mourne & Down	31,000	40.7	20,000	26.1	10,000	13.5	8,000	11.1	7,000	8.7	76,000
Northern Ireland	300,000	37.2	176,000	21.8	131,000	16.3	108,000	13.3	92,000	11.4	807,000

The value placed on education

Whilst there are many factors that influence rates of unauthorised absence from school, it does give an indication as to the importance that families place on education.

For primary schools:

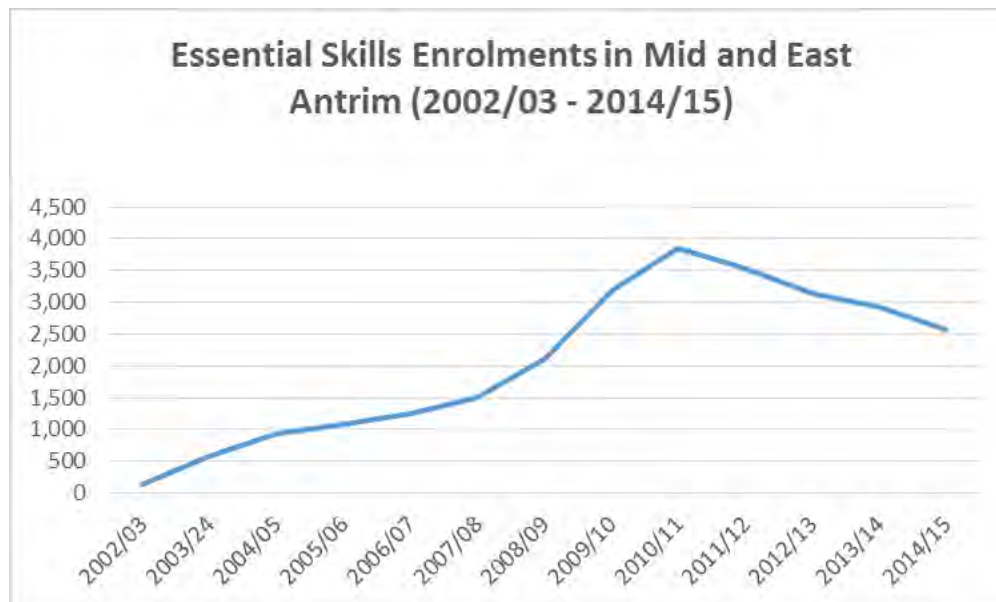
- In 2014/15, Mid and East Antrim had 1.04% of days due to unauthorised absence (1.12% NI) and was ranked 4th highest out of the 11 councils.
- There was variation in attendance rates at ward level with Green island having 0.39% of days due to unauthorised absence compared to 1.92% in Victoria.

At post-primary school age:

- In 2014/15 Mid and East Antrim had 2.25% of days due to unauthorised absence (2.07% NI) and was ranked 5th highest out of the 11 councils
- Again there was variation in attendance rates at ward level, with Galgorm having 0.67% of days due to unauthorised absence, compared to 5.41% in Castle Demesne.

Adult skills development and training

The demand for adult skills courses also gives an indication as to the importance placed on education by the working age population of Mid and East Antrim. The number of essential skills enrolments rose to a high of almost 4,000 in 2010/11, but has since fallen to approximately 2,500 in 2014/15 (see graph below). This is consistent with the trend across the other councils.



2.4 Activity mapping

In the second workshop, the Task and Finish group was asked to complete a quick scoping exercise to allow better understanding of who is already involved in working on this particular strategic priority and also what is not currently being addressed. These are the outputs of that discussion.

Who is involved:

- Achieve Northern Ireland
- Princes Trust
- Further Education Colleges
- Libraries NI
- Learning Forum
- Sports teams
- Businesses in the Community
- **Barnardo's**
- Youth groups
- The Youth Service
- Young Enterprise
- Universities (facilities are a good draw to get people to engage who would not normally have considered attending university)
- Start 360 (formally Opportunity Youth)
- Tailored return to work programmes for women
- Careers service

What is not being addressed:

- Not all employers value training
- There is a churning of young people around certain training providers (they are often only interested in claiming the per head funding)
- There is a lack of integration in terms of social class and other characteristics
- Too many poor-quality training providers
- Limited careers guidance
- Increase numbers of apprenticeships across Mid and East Antrim.

2.5 Actions

In Workshop 3 the Task and Finish Group discussed actions for each strategic priority, which would contribute towards achieving success, as defined by the statements in 1.1. Some of these actions are to improve existing behaviour or practice and others are new.

- An employer / stakeholder forum - with the Chamber of Commerce as a delivery mechanism. One of the core messages will be to encourage companies to invest in their staff. The idea is that this will provide a content workforce, which should be recognised as a core value of any business.
- Development of a volunteering programme with accredited qualifications as a bridge to employment. This should be a meaningful volunteer opportunity that allows you to come out with a qualification, but also places a strong **emphasis on 'softer skills', such** as communication and team work. The Borough should civically recognise voluntary work. This would require a partnership between Council, the CVS, large employers, community **networks, Volunteer Now, and the Prince's Trust.**
- Core skills need to continue to be prioritised. Although society, the education system and the jobs market are changing, core skills remain an **important feature of employability. The DFE 'skills focus programme'** could be used as a basis for a local programme, however, this could be improved through working with partners, such as trade unions.

3 DELIVERING THE SKILLS FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 What success would look like

'The development of an education system where all forms of learning are valued'

The following statements set out what success will look like in Mid and East Antrim as we realise the vision over the lifetime of the Community Plan:

- Education prepares young people for the working environment
- Technical, academic and soft skills are all seen as valued and of equal merit
- A more flexible curriculum
- Respect of risk and failure
- Greater levels of entrepreneurship

3.2 The challenge

There has, and will continue to be a shift towards a knowledge based economy in Northern Ireland. However, the NI skills barometer indicates that there is a mismatch between the skills needs of the economy and the current supply of skilled individuals. The skills barometer research analyses where the skills gaps are currently, where they are emerging and where they are likely to emerge in future; the implications for Mid and East Antrim need to be explored.

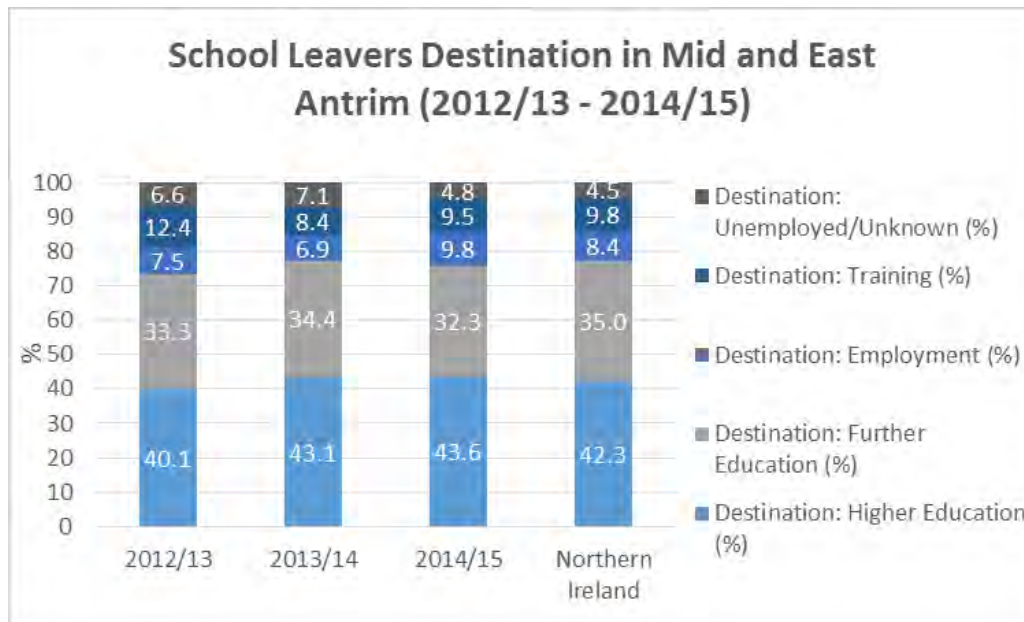
There has been a recent improvement in higher education at a national level, which has seen a larger proportion of graduates remain in Northern Ireland to study; however, continued revision of provision in this sector will be necessary. In terms of softer skills, there is also a weakness in the work readiness and life skills of young people in the area, which is exacerbated by the lack of an employability and skills strategy with a suitable long-term vision. In terms of the softer skills, engagement should be targeted across the borough and with all age groups, as this is a gap that has been identified throughout the area.

The Task and Finish group felt that families and communities who have suffered from employment or industrial change would be important to engage with, as these areas may have large numbers of individuals with a need for training.

3.3 The evidence

Next steps for school leavers

In 2014/15, three-quarters of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim went into Higher or Further Education, compared to 77% in NI (see graph below). Over the three-year period between 2012/13 and 2014/15, the percentage of school leavers in Mid and East Antrim going into Higher Education, commencing employment or training has increased, while those going into Further Education or unemployment has fallen.

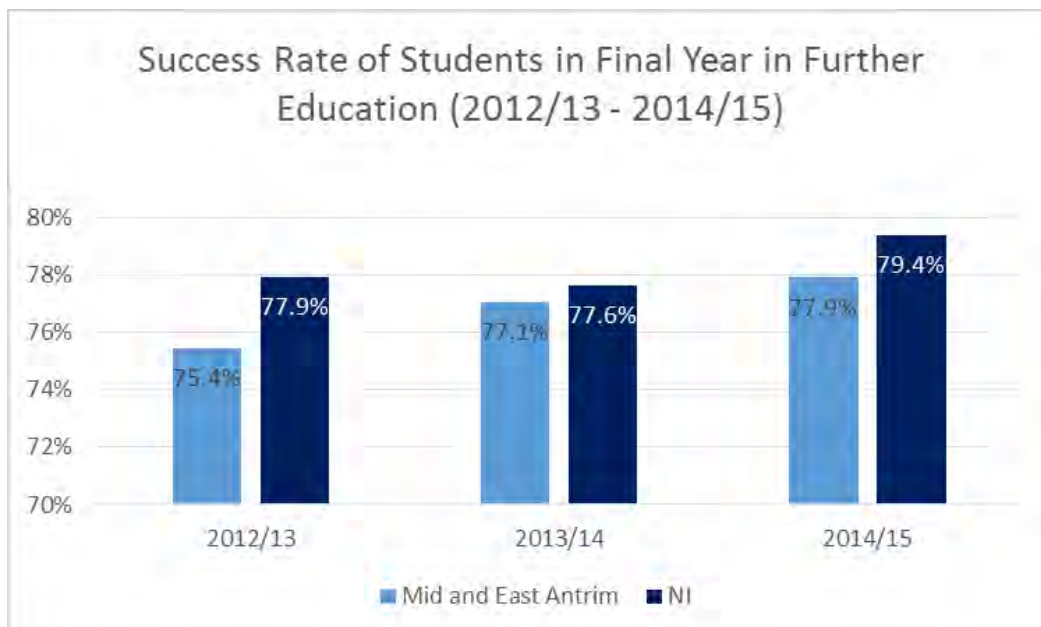


Success in further and higher education

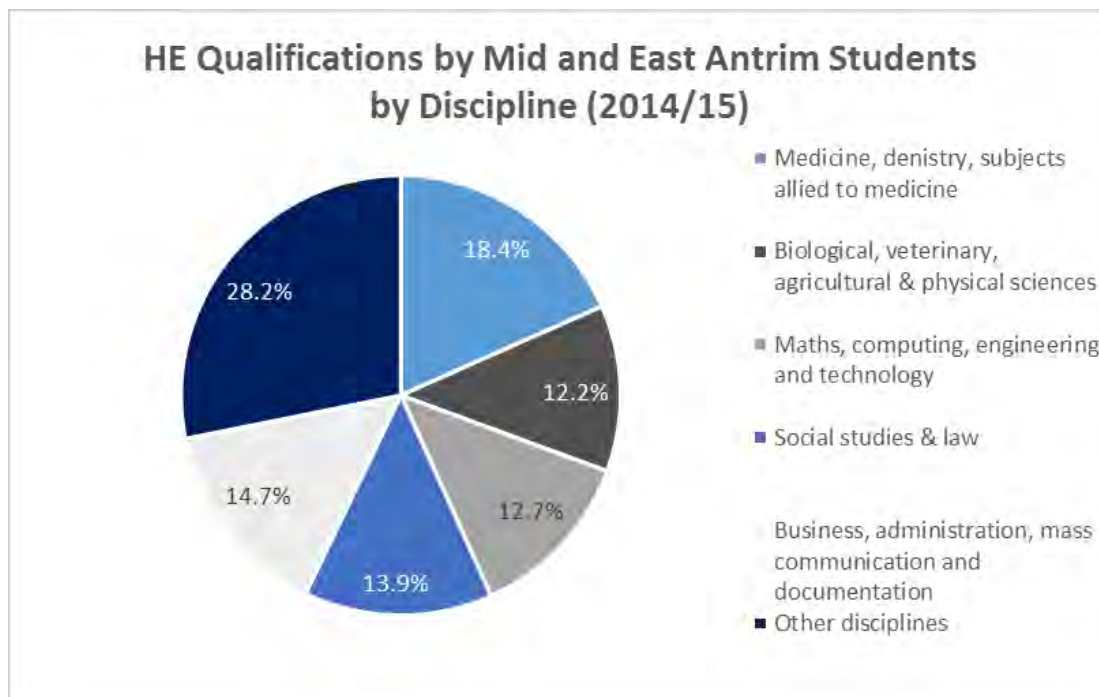
In 2014/15, 77.9% of students in final year in Further Education were successful in gaining their qualification (see graph below). This was lower than 79.4% in NI and ranked 4th lowest across the 11 councils. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15 the success rates in Mid and East Antrim have increased, but remain lower than NI.

In terms of pupils from Mid and East Antrim achieving Further Education qualifications in 2014/15:

- The majority (60%) were aged 19 and under and part-time (83%).
- The level of study has increased over the past 3 years. In 2014/15 almost half (48%) were level 2 study compared to a third (33%) in 2012/13. Meanwhile entry and level 1 study has decreased.



The majority of students gained their qualification in subjects allied to medicine (18.4%), business, administration, mass communication and documentation (14.7%) and social studies & law (13.9%). This was broadly similar to NI as a whole.



A further measure of success in this strategic priority is the proportion of local graduates from local institutions in work or further study six months after graduation. The table below shows this data for each council area over the last four years, with Mid and East Antrim having the highest figure in 2014-15 at 93.5%.

	2011-12 (%)	2012-13 (%)	2013-14 (%)	2014-15 (%)
Antrim & Newtownabbey	90.3	92.1	93.9	92.9
Ards & North Down	91.3	92.0	91.3	91.8
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	90.2	89.7	92.1	93.2
Belfast	89.1	90.7	91.2	92.6
Causeway Coast & Glens	85.3	89.9	90.2	90.8
Derry & Strabane	85.1	87.7	87.7	89.9
Fermanagh & Omagh	90.1	90.1	89.0	90.8
Lisburn & Castlereagh	92.0	92.8	91.6	91.5
Mid & East Antrim	92.3	91.5	93.4	93.5
Mid Ulster	88.6	88.8	91.4	92.6
Newry, Mourne & Down	88.2	89.7	91.3	91.8
Unknown	86.5	90.4	98.1	96.2
Northern Ireland	89.2	90.4	91.2	92.1

Source: NISRA, DfE

Apprenticeships and training

Data around apprenticeships and training also add to the picture when it comes to delivering the skills for future economic development. The table below shows the number of participants on Programme-Led Apprenticeships for each council area over the last five

years. There has been a decline across the board in these figures as Training for Success was introduced from June 2013.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Antrim & Newtownabbey	401	371	149	17	0
Ards & North Down	320	315	135	11	0
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	515	467	202	13	0
Belfast	1,220	1,142	626	130	2
Causeway Coast & Glens	322	288	122	8	0
Derry & Strabane	532	533	301	41	1
Fermanagh & Omagh	393	399	190	12	1
Lisburn & Castlereagh	312	283	140	17	0
Mid & East Antrim	459	444	187	20	2
Mid Ulster	377	353	163	18	0
Newry, Mourne & Down	603	540	221	23	1
Not known	108	84	32	5	0
Northern Ireland	5,562	5,219	2,468	315	7

Source: NISRA, DfE

Training for Success has been adopted by council areas across Northern Ireland and the table below provides data for the number of participants by borough (see table below). Mid and East Antrim has seen a 31% increase in the number of participants between July and October 2015, this is in-line with the 30% increase for Northern Ireland.

	July 2015	October 2015
Antrim & Newtownabbey	292	385
Ards & North Down	336	472
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	361	570
Belfast	1,130	1,478
Causeway Coast & Glens	206	295
Derry & Strabane	662	765
Fermanagh & Omagh	328	357
Lisburn & Castlereagh	247	337
Mid & East Antrim	331	435
Mid Ulster	312	404
Newry, Mourne & Down	431	596
Unknown	195	202
Northern Ireland	4,831	6,296

Source: NISRA, DfE

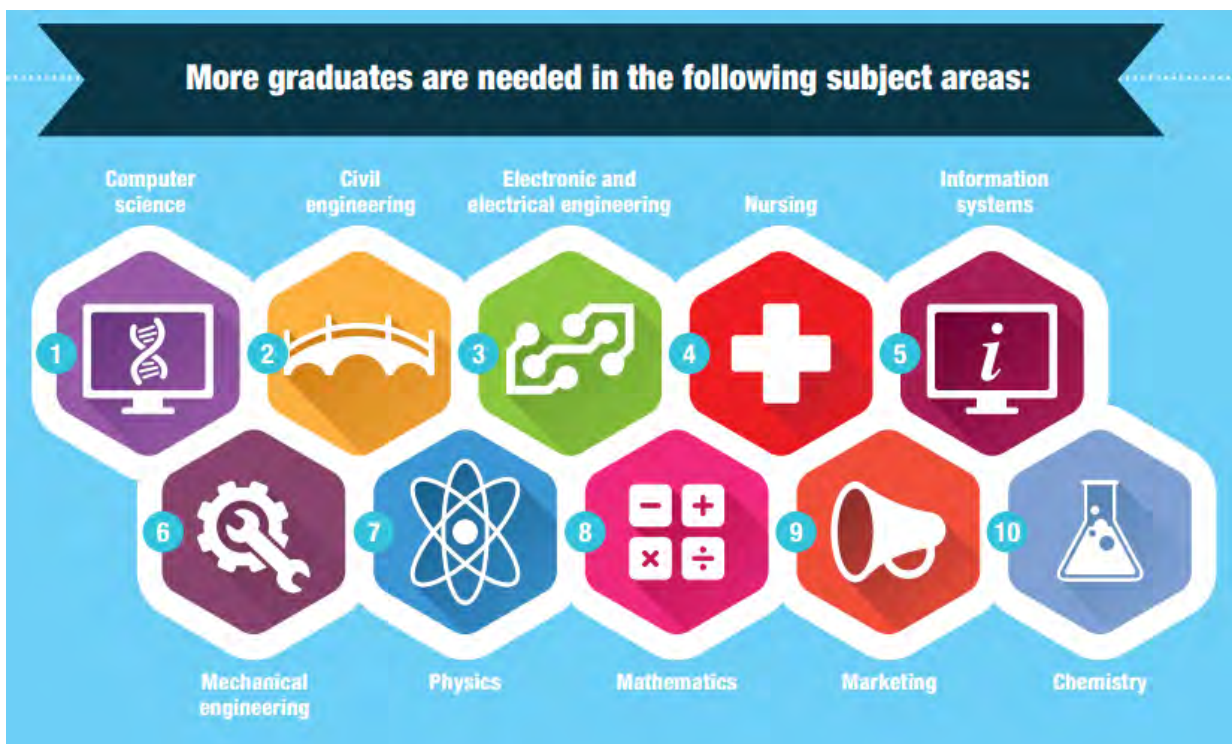
Further data around the Training for Success programme shows the number of participants at each level of the programme as of October 2015 (see table on the next page).

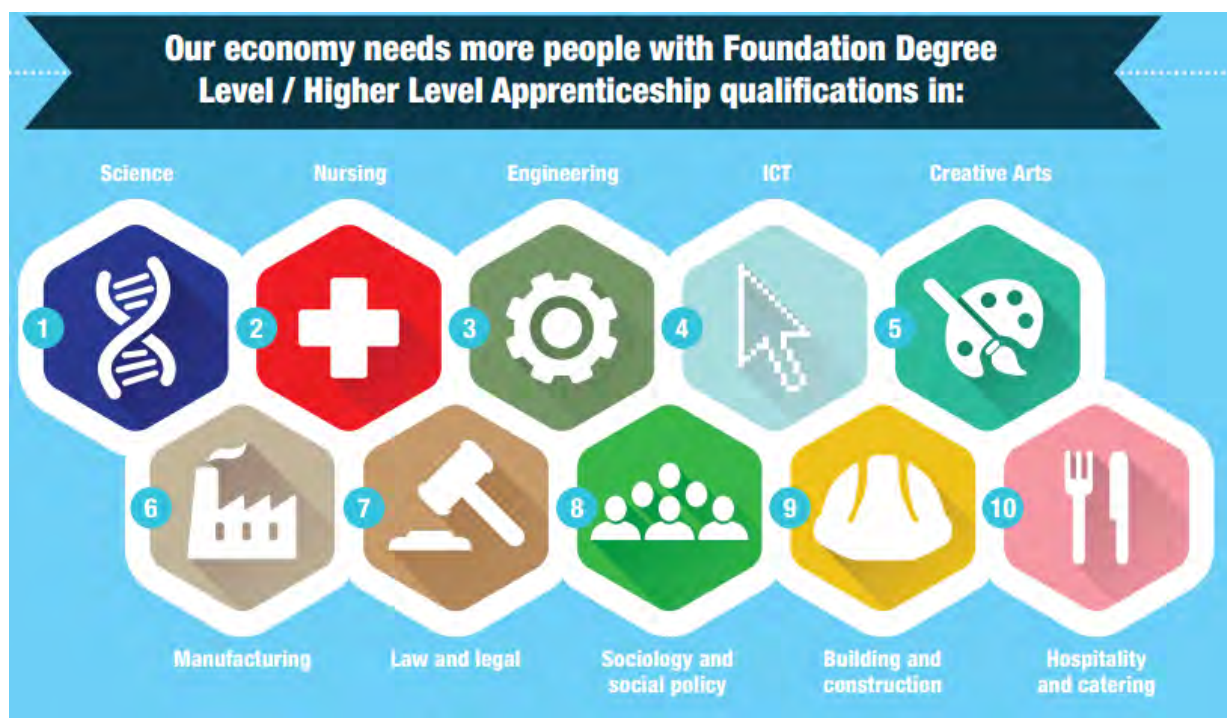
	Total	Skills for Your Life	Skills for Work Level 1	Skills for Work Level 2	Skills for Work Level 3	Option not assigned
Antrim and Newtownabbey	385	42	98	238	1	6
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	570	57	114	396	0	3
Belfast	1,478	173	616	677	0	12
Causeway Coast and Glens	295	23	88	183	0	1
Derry and Strabane	765	42	257	458	0	8
Fermanagh and Omagh	357	21	61	273	1	1
Lisburn and Castlereagh	337	18	111	206	0	2
Mid and East Antrim	435	90	87	254	0	4
Mid Ulster	404	27	81	296	0	0
Newry, Mourne and Down	596	44	108	434	1	9
North Down and Ards	472	95	79	298	0	0
Not Known	202	17	70	115	0	0
Total	6,296	649	1,770	3,828	3	46

Source: NISRA, DfE

Skills in demand

In addition, the ‘Skills in Demand’ report produced by the Department for the Economy gives a clear indication as to the subjects in which more graduates are required (these are listed by priority of demand):





Data has been requested from the Northern Regional College on enrolment figures and completion rates for students in the Ballymena, Newtownabbey and Larne campuses by discipline. If available, this will include data for the last 3 academic years to assist with identifying any trends. This will enable the group to identify gaps in the skills of our future workforce.

3.4 Activity mapping

In the second workshop, the Task and Finish group was asked to complete a quick scoping exercise to allow better understanding of who is already involved in working on this particular strategic priority and also what is not currently being addressed. These are the outputs of that discussion.

Who is involved:

- Education Authority Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS)
- Northern Regional College
- Ballymena Learning Together (community links, curriculum, implementation plan annually)
- Ballymena Area Schools Industry Liaison committee (Education Board)
- Rotary Club
- Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Sentinus - provider of science and technology programmes to schools
- Young Enterprise Programme
- Employers

What is not being addressed:

- The links between schools and businesses are not strong enough.
- There is short-term project funding in this arena with not enough focus on need and moving beyond a tightly defined set of outcomes.
- New courses to be developed to reflect changing skills needs.

3.5 Actions

In Workshop 3 the Task and Finish Group discussed actions for each strategic priority, which would contribute towards achieving success, as defined by the statements in 3.1. Some of these actions are to improve existing behaviour or practice and others are new.

- **'Muddy boots'** - working group to conduct an annual audit of available training, to understand the range of provision, whether this meets the demand, and also to assess the quality of provision.
- Facilitate social enterprise zones - use the Copenhagen model to ensure that skills are embedded in young people at an early age)
- Alternative provision as part of the curriculum - an occupational studies module to be expanded and promotion of vocational studies as a viable option. The purpose of this is to meet the learning needs of all and create a link between this and potential future employment opportunities.
- Review the Northern Ireland skills barometer

4 INDICATOR DEVELOPMENT

Key Outcome	Programme for Government Outcomes	Theme Outcomes	Indicators
Developing educational achievement and aspirations	We have a more equal society	There are no barriers to stop anyone achieving their educational potential in Mid and East Antrim	Percentage point gap between % of school leavers and % of FSME school leavers achieving 5 GCSEs (inc English and Maths)
	We give our children and young people the best start in life		The percentage of school leavers achieving 5 GCSEs (inc English and Maths) by District Electoral Area
	We care for others and we help those in need	People and communities in Mid and East Antrim place value on lifelong learning	The percentage of school leavers achieving 5 GCSEs (inc English and Maths) by Religion and Gender
	We are an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential		The percentage of working age population with no qualifications
	We have more people working in better jobs	The development of an education system where all forms of learning are valued	The proportion of the workforce in employment with qualifications at level 1 and above, level 2 and above, level 3 and above and level 4 and above
			<i>Indicator development required</i>

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council would like to acknowledge the support from CLES in the production of this document. CLES has been retained by the Council to support the task and finish working group process.

