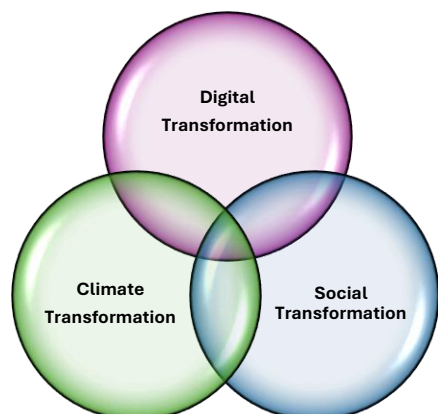


**Ards and North Down Borough Council – Economic Development Conference  
19 November 2024  
Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor, Co Down, Northern Ireland, BT19 1UR**

***‘A Transformative Vision for Ards and North Down’***

The theme for the conference is **‘Transformation’**. Business enterprises large or small, public or private are navigating unprecedented and transformative forces with significant pressure being applied in three distinct yet interlocking spheres:



**Digital Transformation** – Relentless advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI); business readiness to adapt; new opportunities for products and services.

**Climate Transformation** – Implications of the reporting aspect of the Climate Act; engaging with public sector procurement; customer expectation on social value.

**Social Transformation** – Emerging employment legislation; mindset shift to the psychological contract, new post covid working arrangements.

Transformation in each of these spheres has the ability to disrupt any enterprise, large or small, new or established. Business enterprises on the high-street, in enterprise zones, business parks, family run businesses and corporations alike continue to evolve to manage these changes in the external environment. For many it is as a Survival Strategy to mitigate the negative aspects of competitive pressures, while for others it is a Growth Strategy to capitalise on competitive advantages. The survival strategists are deemed to be reactionary, playing catch up; and growth strategists viewed as visionary, early adopters of new technology to shape and fashion new products and services and/or develop new processes and ways of working.

Survival Strategy or Growth Strategy, transformation is real, transformation is now, and this conference seeks to challenge and address the big transformation issues of the day and leave you with insights and resources to take the next step.

The Council’s Economic Development Team seeks to support all businesses in the Borough and is delighted to welcome you to this conference.

**Who should attend:**

- Local Business Enterprises owners and senior managers (Micro-SMEs, SMEs and large companies)
- Business Support Ecosystem representatives (enterprise agencies, colleges, council, other support orgs)
- Future Leaders/Business owners (HE staff and students)

**Agenda:**

08:00-8:30	<b>Registration and Refreshments</b> A networking opportunity with council representatives and services including Go Succeed
08:30 – 08:40	<b>Compere: Dr Wendy Austin Hewitt MBE</b> Opening of the conference
08:40 – 08:50	<b>Councillor Alistair Cathcart, Mayor</b> Welcome and opening words
08:50 – 09:10	<b>Ann McCullough, Director of Prosperity, Ards and North Down Borough Council</b> AND Place and Prosperity, Council Priorities,
09:10 – 10:10	<b>Keynote speaker: John Straw</b> <i>Speaker topics:</i> The five Pillars of Disruptive Innovation
10:10 – 10:50	<b>Speaker: Tracey Jeffery, Owner Tracey’s Farmhouse Kitchen</b> <i>Speaker topics:</i> What’s the point to being sustainable?
10:50 – 11:00	Arrangements for breakout session - Dr Wendy Austin Hewitt MBE
Break	Tea and coffee
11:30 – 12:30	<b>Six Breakout Questions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Digital Transformation</b> – (a) What does it mean to be human in a digital world? (b) How is digitisation changing your world-of-work?</li><li>▪ <b>Climate Transformation</b> – (c) Is carbon accounting the new ‘must-have’ for procurement? (d) Is greenwashing a viable strategy?</li><li>▪ <b>Social Transformation</b> – (e) What does Social Value really mean? (f) How has working from home and other work patterns changed the psychological contract?</li></ul>
12:30 – 12:45	Morning round-up Dr Wendy Austing Hewitt MBE
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch and networking
13:45 - 14:15	<b>Speaker: Brian Douglas, Coding Fury</b> <i>Speaker topics:</i> Local Employer perspective on Transformation
14:15 – 14:45	Feedback from breakout sessions and Q&A with speakers
14:45 - 15:00	Closing remarks – Dr Wendy Austin Hewitt MBE
15:00 – 16:00	Networking Opportunity



### **Compere: Dr Wendy Austin MBE**

Wendy Austin has one of Northern Ireland's best-known voices. A journalist and broadcaster for 45 years, she presented radio and television programmes from Good Morning Ulster to Woman's Hour and Inside Business for the BBC both in NI and nationwide.

Much in demand as a conference and awards host, Wendy has spent much of the last couple of years presenting podcasts and webinars for CCEA, Ulster University Business School, and Danske Bank as well as catching the bad guys on BBCNI TV CrimeNI.



### **Councillor Alistair Cathcart is the Mayor of Ards and North Down**

He has been elected to represent the Bangor Central DEA since 2014 and served as Chair of the Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) in 2023/24 before becoming Mayor in 2024. He is also a board member at Libraries NI and a director at North Down Development Organisation Ltd.

Councillor Cathcart is passionate about regeneration and has a particular affinity for his home city. He proposed city status for Bangor and led a cross-party campaign that successfully overturned departmental opposition to the Queen's Parade development.

He helped to secure Council funding to improve Ward Park's ponds and he sits on the Belfast Region City Deal Council panel that has secured funding for the Bangor Waterfront Scheme.

Councillor Cathcart takes a great interest in his community and is a regular volunteer litter picker as well as a keen supporter of Bangor Football Club. He is supporting the following three charities during his Mayoral term; Action Cancer, the Sea Cadets (Ards and North Down Units), and St. John Ambulance (Dufferin Cadets and Bangor and Ards Adults ambulance unit).

### **About Ards and North Down Borough Council**



Our vision of **A Sustainable Borough** is one where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change and economic growth.

Seven key outcomes aligned with the Corporate Plan 2024-28 are:

1. An engaged Borough with citizens who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high-performing organisation

## Speaker Profiles



### **Ann McCullough, Director of Prosperity (interim), Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Ann has more than 30 years' experience in Planning, gained within central and local government. In her substantive post as Head of Planning within the Council since merger, she has worked alongside colleagues in Regeneration, Economic Development and Tourism, and has been acting into the Director of Prosperity role for the past two years with responsibility for planning, economic development and tourism.

Ann is acutely aware of how the planning system can support economic development by creating a favourable business climate, which can lead to more jobs, income and wealth.

Involved in the development of the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy, Ann works closely alongside colleagues and stakeholders to deliver on the targets set out within the strategy, which include job creation and increasing economic productivity. Such objectives are closely aligned with the Council's new Corporate Plan which has a renewed focus on economic growth, leading to more and better jobs and create further opportunities for people to develop skills and take advantage of improved opportunities for employment.



### **Keynote Speaker: John Straw**

A leading speaker on disruptive innovation and disruptive technology, John Straw talks brilliantly about the 5 pillars of disruptive innovation - AI, Internet of Things, 3D printing, augmented reality and advanced robotics – in a style which is easy to understand and awe-inspiring.

John is a digital veteran with 33 years in IT and marketing and 4 technology startups to his name. In the past 22 years, his achievements can be summarised as an experienced digital entrepreneur with 4 consecutive exits and 3 institutional fund raises.

He is a FTSE100 Non-Executive Director, who possesses a deep understanding of technology disruptors and associated economics. He is a frequent public speaker and prolific author of iDisrupted book and blog. He also led the digital transformation of Thomas Cook and is an early stage investor in fintech and martech businesses.

His current roles include senior advisor to McKinsey and Co, IBM Watson IoT and his own portfolio of investments. In 2017, he became a NED for FTSE100, Provident Financial plc. He is a blogger on disruptive technology and a contributor to The Economist



**Speaker: Tracey Jeffrey, Owner Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen**

An artisan with sustainability at its core Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen experience qualifies under the UN Sustainable Goals 11 & 12 to preserve local traditions, protects natural and built heritage sites and promotes cultural vibrancy. The experience promotes sustainable food experiences, small scale farmer interactions and responsible consumption.

Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen is proud to be an 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' approved experience and recognised as an Ards and North Down Sustainable Giant; meaning that we demonstrate our care for the land around us by minimising our impact upon it.

"Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen" Experience is proud to qualify as a 'Make Travel Matter' awarded by – The Travel Corporation (TTC). Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen was awarded based on the positive social or environmental impact they have on their communities and those who experience them. Using a proprietary assessment tool endorsed by industry experts and developed exclusively for TTC 'Make Travel Matter' experiences are assessed against a robust set of criteria directly tied to the UN Global Goals. Travelers can identify with the 'Make Travel Matter' TTC seal of approval.



**Speaker: Brian Douglas, Founder and CEO Coding Fury Ltd**

Coding Fury specialises in training for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Technologies. We develop tailored training programs for our customers, emphasising the need to ensure that staff adopt the new technologies after we're gone and that organisations receive ongoing value from the training delivered.

Our customers include the Big 4 consultancy firms, local government, Universities, and a myriad of companies from across the Island of Ireland.

The courses we offer range from entry-level courses such as "Data Fundamentals" through intermediate-level courses using "Power BI" to advanced courses in "Deep Learning courses using Python."

Brian likes to maintain close ties with academia.

- In 2016, he was a finalist for the Times Educational Supplement "FE Teacher of the Year" award for his work on "Assured Skills Academies" for Belfast Metropolitan College.
- He is also a visiting lecturer at Ulster University, where he played a key role in helping them pioneer a new Master's in Business and Technology (MBT) that has since been replicated at Universities worldwide.

In March 2024, Brian was shortlisted as "Founder of the Year" in the Digital DNA Awards.

## A Sustainable Conference:

### Paper Reduction:

<b>Invite</b>	Social Media channels, E-Zine and email invites
<b>Registration</b>	Eventbrite
<b>Conference Brochure</b>	Readable pdf available on <a href="http://www.andbusiness.co.uk">www.andbusiness.co.uk</a>
<b>Business Survey</b>	In advance of attendance to gauge business needs (QR code)
<b>Evaluation Survey</b>	During the conference to get feedback on experience (QR code)
<b>Post Conference Report</b>	Readable pdf available on <a href="http://www.andbusiness.co.uk">www.andbusiness.co.uk</a>

### Breakout Sessions:

Facilitator brief and a notetaker lead and record each session and flipcharts will be used to record main themes, discussion points and any calls for action. They will be used during the feedback sessions and provide a record of responses for the post conference report. Following on the flipchart paper will be sent for recycling.

### Conference Merchandise:

Exhibitors will be encouraged to think '**sustainable**' and limit merchandise to practical items the participants ask for. Prepacked fully loaded conference bags will not be encouraged.

### Council Directorate Exhibitors:

- Economic Development, including Go Succeed
- Labour Market Partnership
- Environmental Health, Health and Wellbeing, Food Control and Consumer Protection, Public Health and Housing
- Parkes and Cemeteries
- Tourism
- Environmental, Waste and Cleaning

### Conference Venue:

Clandeboyne Lodge Hotel sustainability policy leading to waste reduction, food providence, water conservation, energy reduction and biodiversity.



*The Global Entrepreneurship Network operates programs in 200 countries aimed at making it easier for anyone, anywhere to start and scale a business.*