

Update report on Workforce Development Group.	12th February 2019
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	Enhancement of skills and job creation opportunities
Lead Officer	Head of Prosperity and Place
Cost: (if applicable)	Up to £8,000 –Within this year’s agreed budget. Further monies to be allocated within 2019/20 Business Plan

The purpose of this report is to update Members on Action 43 within the Community Plan i.e. the establishment of a Workforce Development Group (WDG).

### Context

Action 43 of the Community Plan aims to:

***‘Establish and promote a workforce development group, as well as developing business and education linkages using existing groupings and new participants to develop increased interaction between the two sectors. The focus will be on new and emerging sectors, as well as assisting development of existing larger sectors, such as tourism and agriculture’.***

Baseline statistics in 2017 identified that:

- 21.9% of the Causeway Coast and Glens population are qualified to NVQ Level 4 qualification or above, which is lower than the NI average by 8%;
- 60% of its population are qualified below NVQ Level 4 qualification, which is higher than the NI average figure by 6.4%;
- 18.2% of the Causeway Coast and Glens population have no qualifications which is 1.7% above the NI average figure; and
- The proportion of school leavers in Causeway Coast and Glens area achieving Level 2 or above (63.2%) was lower than the average for Northern Ireland (66%).

### Background

The development of a Workforce Development Group was included within the current business plan. The purpose was not to develop new projects or structures, but to ensure connectivity between those partners with an interest in the skills development agenda, including Council.

The first meeting of the WDG was held in November 2018 to address Action 43 of the Community Plan. A wide range of key stakeholders were in attendance including the Department for Economy (DfE); Department for Communities (DfC); North West Regional College; Northern Regional College; Causeway Chamber of Commerce; Invest NI; Tourism NI; and Local Enterprise Agencies.

Short terms objectives identified by the WDG include:

1. Setting the scene in terms of skill shortages in the Borough;
2. Capture existing training and employment activities and look at a potential direction for future activity;
3. Identify and address staff/skills shortages;
4. Formation of industry led sub-groups, focusing on new and emerging sectors (e.g. IT/digital, cyber security, health and life sciences, construction etc.), as well as assisting the development of existing larger sectors, such as tourism and agriculture.
5. Development of a Workforce Development Strategy for the Borough in 2019.

Council is currently working closely with both Department for Communities and Department for Economy in the preparation of a terms of reference for the group going forward. The need for the WDG was reinforced by all attendees and a few 'quick-win' employment support initiatives identified. A summary of each is set out below:

### **A Causeway Welcome 'Pilot Project'**

A Causeway Welcome is a new initiative from Causeway Chamber to grow the GVA of the hospitality sector in Causeway Coast and Glens, by increasing the number and quality of jobs available in the sector. This pilot project aims to deliver tangible, measurable outcomes for the hospitality sector to build trust between the various key stakeholders, so that longer-term programme to tackle structural issues around seasonality and sustainability can be built. The aim of A Causeway Welcome (Pilot) is threefold:

1. To connect businesses with education and training providers to develop the right types of training for new staff, as well as development opportunities for existing staff. With cost-effective training and development, businesses are more likely to retain good team members, and to keep high standards in their business.
2. To encourage young people, and those seeking to change career, to consider a future in hospitality and tourism, both 'front of house' and 'culinary arts', thereby helping local businesses to have a consistent pipeline of new talent coming through their doors.
3. Develop a voluntary 'code of practice', to enable businesses to source and develop more of the right team members. The Charter will encourage best practices in order to overcome the perception that hospitality and tourism businesses don't offer the right work/life balance to those working in the sector.

The pilot will be aimed at school leavers and their parents, those economically inactive, those seeking a career change, and tourism and hospitality sector businesses. It is proposed that a number of interventions will take place over a six month period of the pilot project, including:

1. Developing bespoke hospitality skills development programmes with both NRC and NWRC, recruit employers to take up on the programmes, and recruit 27 participants;
2. Developing relationships with local schools to promote hospitality as a valid career option for school leavers;
3. Developing relationships with job centres and recruitment agencies to encourage those economically inactive plus other career changers into hospitality; and
4. Programme a flagship hospitality careers promotion event on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 at the Lodge Hotel, where 1,600 young people will be in attendance.

Causeway Welcome requests £5,000 support for advertising, marketing and office resources, including a career ready student, to assist with developing 'A Causeway Welcome' brand, promotion of Skills and Recruitment Event within Hospitality & Tourism and engage with other sectors to identify skill gap/issues within industry sector.

## **Hospitality/Tourism Takeover Days**

This programme helps to develop links with schools and industry through a dynamic interactive programme of activity. The 'Take Over Days' will bring together up to 150 young people and their teachers from schools across the Borough to take part in "A day in Hospitality and Tourism." This project will be in conjunction with the Springboard Charity. The Springboard Charity supports disadvantaged and underprivileged young people into sustainable employment within hospitality, leisure and tourism.

Pupils will be given the opportunity to experience, first hand, what it is to work in the world of Hospitality / Tourism as a career of choice. Based in a local FE College and supported by industry, a series of interactive workshops will take place, engaging our local business and industry partners e.g. various hotel groups, FE colleges, as well as representation from the events sector and local tourist attractions and smaller businesses to host workshops.

Over the course of the day pupils will be able to experience how it feels to be both a guest and hospitality professional. Pupils will be very hands-on during the event taking part in a series of skills challenges, which may consist of including: practical cookery; leisure services, customer service, digital marketing etc.

The event will not only showcase the industry at its very best but also link directly to engaging schools / colleges with industry objectives, enabling young people to develop industry ready skills through the workshops, and allowing industry partners to talent scout for tomorrow's workforce and promote any opportunities, apprenticeships etc. that they may have within their business.

Throughout the day "Stars of the Future" will be spotted by industry partners and at a ceremony at the end of the day. These "Stars of the Future" will then be offered a further industry based learning experience.

The 'Take Over Days' are requesting £3k support from Council for advertising, marketing, management and delivery of the Programme.

Further update reports will be made to Council as the project develops.