

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Workforce Development Forum Proposal – ‘Causeway Up’ Programme</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>The Leisure &amp; Development Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Decision</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	Enhancement of skills and job creation opportunities
Lead Officer	Head of Prosperity and Place

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	£12,450
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO identified within this year’s agreed budget with further monies allocated against 2021/22 Business Plan
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

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

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

To request approval for Causeway Workforce Development Forum (CWDF) to support the 'Causeway Up' Programme - a bespoke 26-week pilot skills programme targeting the hardest to reach unemployed in the Causeway area. The 'Causeway Up' Programme has been developed and proposed by Roe Valley Community Education Forum (Limavady); West Bann Community (Coleraine); and BCW Training (Ballycastle).

## **2.0 Background**

Action 33 of the Causeway Community Plan aims to:

*'Co-ordinate actions to increase skills within Causeway Coast and Glens area. It is envisaged that this will be in the form of the development of a learning partnership which will take forward a range of specific targeted actions to meet the local industry needs'.*

The overarching purpose of the CWDF is to see more people working in better and sustainable jobs with less inequality in terms of poverty and deprivation. It will support the achievement of the Council's strategic aspirations and economic priorities as set out in the Community Plan supported by the new Employability and Skills Framework and the Local Works agenda within the draft Programme for Government.

An expression of interest for the 'Causeway Up' Programme was received by CWDF following an open call for financial support towards COVID-19 education and skills initiatives. No other expressions of interest were received within Q3.

## **3.0 Proposal**

The 'Causeway Up' Programme is designed as a pilot initiative to run for 26-weeks to provide flexible community based personal development and upskilling; bolstered by a recognised NVQ Level 2 qualification. The initiative does not displace any similar community-based training programmes in the Borough. Its uniqueness is reflected in the role on role off, blended learning approach to the provision of the training, along with the supportive mentor relationship which will identify and address the client's core personal and career development issues, and barriers to employment.

The aim of the 'Causeway UP Programme' is:

- 1. To combat poverty and enhance social inclusion to benefit people who are unemployed, underemployed, long term unemployed and/or economically inactive;*
- 2. To deliver direct employability skills and NVQ Level 2 training qualifications across the Causeway Borough to empower and benefit people including those unemployed and/or economically inactive;*
- 3. To provide personal development soft skills tutoring and supportive mentoring to build the confidence of people who have been out of work for more than two years;*
- 4. To offer actual live work placements in the thematic area pursued by the client to build their CV and gain valuable work experience (within Covid-19 restrictions); and*
- 5. To reduce economic inactivity, increase skills base and offer an increased motivation moving towards a working future for participants.*

The 'Causeway Up' Programme is a follow-on programme to the European Structural Funds (ESF) 'Causeway Learn to Earn' initiative. People who have completed this initiative gained a NVQ Level 1. The intention with the 'Causeway Up' Programme is to build upon the 'Causeway Learn to Earn' Programme, by delivering a recognised sector specific Level 2 Qualification in the following areas:

- City & Guilds Essential Skills Level 2;

- Literacy;
- Numeracy;
- ICT;
- OCN NI Customer Services; and
- OCN NI Childcare.

Each of these sector specific skills have been identified through consultation with industry and these skills have been identified by industry as key skills shortages. The Customer Services qualification is an important qualification for several sectors, especially in terms of both Tourism and Hospitality and Retail.

The 'Causeway Up' pilot programme will be delivered to 30 participants borough wide. Participants will be supported through blended learning during any ongoing lockdown restrictions by their personal mentor and their experienced, subject tutor. When normal working resumes this will revert to classroom attendance where possible, however the intention is to support participants on a one-to-one basis and look at each student's need individually.

The 'Causeway Up' Programme requests 50% funding (i.e., £12,450) support for tutoring, registration, certification, mentoring and marketing costs. The individual organisations delivering the Programme will also be contributing 50% of the costs.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

**It is recommended that members agree to support the proposed 'Causeway Up' Programme in line with Action 33 of the Community Plan.**