

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Causeway Labour Market Partnership Strategy &amp; Action Plan</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>The Leisure &amp; Development Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>17 August 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	Strategic Projects Manager

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	N/A – 100% funded by DfC
Included in Current Year Estimates	Yes
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	Not applicable
Staffing Costs	Yes

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

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

The Department for Communities (DfC) have developed a proposal for the formation of Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) in Northern Ireland.

**The purpose of this report is to request approval for the attached draft Causeway Labour Market Partnership Strategy & Action Plan.**

## **2.0 Background**

Action 29 of the Causeway Community Plan aims to:

*‘Support in developing of the Causeway Workforce Development Forum supporting educational and skills initiatives within the Causeway Coast and Glens Area’.*

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Causeway Coast and Glens labour market had been recording strong growth and improvement across a range of indicators. Since the beginning of lockdown restriction in March 2020, the economy has suffered significant impacts. Monthly claimant numbers show the damage inflicted by Covid-19, with claimants in the Borough increasing from 2,540 in March 2020 to a peak of 5,225 in May 2020. Some improvement has been registered since then, but claimant numbers of 3,710 in June 2021 are still 1,170 more than the pre-pandemic level. Furthermore, economic inactivity rates have been a long-standing issue. The economic inactivity rate across the council area is one of the highest within Northern Ireland at 29.9%.

Employability NI is DfC’s new approach to providing support services for unemployed individuals seeking to get back into to work. Rather than a stand-alone programme, it is a series of interventions that will evolve over time, as legacy programmes (such as Steps to Success and Access to Work) end. It has been designed to:

- Deliver a reduction in economic inactivity and long-term unemployment to bring NI closer in line with UK rates;
- Provide increased support for those with health conditions (esp. mental health) and disabilities; and
- Create a mechanism for government to collaborate with Councils and other Departments to offer local solutions.

One of the key elements of the programme design was the proposal to create “Local Labour Market Partnerships” in each council area. They intend to:

- Provide leadership and lead on the integration of services;
- Develop local area plans including setting targets for performance;
- Manage devolved funding and its delivery; and
- Manage arrangements for the evaluation of local interventions.

## **3.0 Proposal**

The attached draft Causeway Labour Market Partnership Plan for 2021-2022 (**Annex A**) aims to contribute to the strategic local objectives and the NI Executive’s strategic objectives. As lead authority for Causeway Coast and Glens economic growth, it is important that we play a convening role which brings partners together and drives a LMP with purpose. In light of this fast changing labour market support context, the purpose of this LMP Action Plan will be to support NI initiatives, ensure that local knowledge and insights are ‘surfaced’ and develop solutions based on local context.

In considering the role of the LMP, a wide range of key stakeholders were consulted including businesses, training and education authorities. The consultees suggested the following:

- *The LMP offers an opportunity to be more agile. Regional intelligence = local solutions;*
- *Create a partnership with a primary focus on employability supports for the economically inactive and (in the near term) the newly unemployed;*
- *The LMP is a conduit through which local labour market intelligence is passed to ensure skills demand and supply are matched. Intelligence is therefore key, resulting in a need to maintain comprehensive labour market intelligence that will drive the work of the partners, particularly the linkages between employment/unemployment and barriers to accessing a job (e.g. childcare, skills);*
- *Engage employers/sector bodies to understand likely demand and to develop targeted interventions, focusing particularly on LTU/economically inactive;*
- *Explore how partner (e.g. Council) interventions can add value to the DfC offer;*
- *Co-design interventions that can help move people back into work as quickly as possible – this will be particularly important for the “new unemployed”; and*
- *Review the progress of specific interventions regularly to understand what is working and to share insights with partners.*

The following five actions have been identified within the draft LMP Action Plan and are consistent with the labour market activation proposals in the Borough’s economic development strategy.

1. **Establish a Labour Market Partnership** - Ensure labour market information is comprehensive and up to date, including a collation of opportunities across the LMP Area. Three staff members are proposed to deliver upon the Plan.
2. **Deliver comprehensive labour market intelligence and job matching** - Ensure labour market information is comprehensive and up to date, including a collation of opportunities across the LMP Area.
3. **Labour market activation** - Tackle the immediate labour market challenges brought about by the pandemic and ensure the appropriately skilled people are available in priority sectors.
4. **Improve employability and skills through lifelong learning** - Support the development of a culture of lifelong learning among unemployed/inactive people.
5. **Co-design /support intervention measures** - As ESF programmes wind down and are replaced with a (as yet uncertain) successor programme, Co-design appropriate supports and lead their delivery.

Further detail within each respective theme can be found in the full Action Plan at **Annex A**. Subject to funding, it is envisaged that DfC will provide funding of circa £580k on an annual basis to deliver upon the Causeway LMP.

#### **4.0 Risks**

DfC will be providing 100% funding on an annual basis to deliver upon the Causeway LMP. Before entering into agreement with DfC; all 11 local authorities have identified a number of key risks that they require clarity from the Department with i.e.:

- *Assurance that administration costs will be 20% post March 2022, no matter what the programme spend is. Staff costs need to be secured and have full cost recovery;*
- *Funding needs to be eligible to cover retrospective costs;*
- *Funding to be allowed to be carried over into new financial years, given Year 1 spend can't start until October 2021 at the earliest; and*
- *Funding to be guaranteed for longer than one year at a time, especially to secure staff.*

## **5.0 Options**

**Option 1** – do nothing. Do not enter into agreement with DfC for the roll-out of a LMP for the Causeway area.

**Option 2** – Sign-off on the draft Causeway LMP Strategy & Action Plan and enter into agreement with DfC to roll-out the Plan for the area.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

Subject to DfC providing confirmation in relation to the above named risks, it is recommended that members agree to support Option 2 i.e. enter into agreement with DfC to deliver upon a Labour Market Partnership for the area, in line with Action 29 of the Community Plan.



**Grant Thornton**

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# Causeway Coast & Glens Labour Market Partnership Action Plan

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

August 2021



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# **Executive Summary**

## **A new era of employability support...**

Employability NI is the Department for Community's new approach to providing support services for unemployed individuals seeking to get back into to work. Rather than a stand-alone programme, it is a series of interventions that will evolve over time, as legacy programmes (such as Steps to Success and Access to Work) end.

It has been designed in order to:

- Deliver a reduction in economic inactivity and long-term unemployment to bring NI closer in line with UK rates
- Provide increased support for those with health conditions (esp. mental health) and disabilities
- Create a mechanism for government to collaborate with Councils and other Departments to offer local solutions.

One of the key elements of the programme design was the proposal to create "Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships" in each council area. They intend to:

- Provide leadership and lead on the integration of services
- Develop local area plans including setting targets for performance
- Manage devolved funding and its delivery
- Manage arrangements for the evaluation of local interventions

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are in the process of establishing a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) and appointed Grant Thornton to prepare an initial one-year Action Plan.

## **In exceptional times...**

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Northern Ireland (and Causeway Coast and Glens) labour market had been recording strong growth and improvement across a range of indicators. Since the beginning of lockdown restriction in March 2020, the economy has suffered significant impacts. Monthly claimant numbers show the damage inflicted by Covid-19, with claimants in the Borough increasing from 2,540 in March 2020 to a peak of 5,225 in May 2020. Some improvement has been registered since then but claimant numbers are 3,710 in June 2021, still 1,170 more than the pre-pandemic level. Further, economic inactivity rates have been a long standing issue. The economic inactivity rate across the council area is one of the highest within Northern Ireland at 29.9%.

## **Labour Market Partnership is an opportunity for agility...**

A key element of any LMP will be the involvement of local stakeholders to ensure local issues are surfacing. That involvement was an essential part of developing this LMP Plan. Grant Thornton's team are grateful to the people who gave their time take part of focussed conversations to discuss:

- Labour market characteristics (and challenges) in the borough
- The suite of current supports available
- The purpose and types of activities a Labour Market Partnership could usefully undertake.

In considering the role of the Labour Market Partnership, consultees suggested the following:

- The LMP offers an opportunity to be more agile. Regional intelligence = local solutions.



- Create a partnership with a primary focus on employability supports for the economically inactive and (in the near term) the newly unemployed.
- The LMP is a conduit through which local labour market intelligence is passed to ensure skills demand and supply are matched. Intelligence is therefore key, resulting in a need to maintain comprehensive labour market intelligence that will drive the work of the partners, particularly the linkages between employment/unemployment and barriers to accessing a job (e.g. childcare, skills).
- Engage employers/sector bodies to understand likely demand and to develop targeted interventions, focusing particularly on LTU/economically inactive
- Explore how partner (e.g. Council) interventions can add value to the DfC offer
- Co-design interventions that can help move people back into work as quickly as possible – this will be particularly important for the “new unemployed”
- Review the progress of specific interventions regularly to understand what is working and to share insights with partners.

It is within this context that the LMP action plan for the next 12 months is proposed.

### **Labour Market Partnership Plan 2021/2022...**

An optimal role for the Labour Market Partnership will be to leverage resources towards achieving strategic objectives. As lead authority for Causeway Coast and Glens economic growth, it is important that Causeway Coast and Glens play a convening role which brings partners together and drives a LMP with purpose.

The following actions are proposed over the 2021-2022 period. These actions are consistent with the labour market activation proposals in the Borough's economic development strategy.

Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area

Indicators	% LMP members who feel supported in their role (LMP) % LMP members with increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues (LMP) # LMP meetings (LMP)						
Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
<b>Establish a Labour Market Partnership</b>	Establish a Labour market Partnership with a defined terms of reference, a broad membership of social partners which achieves strong attendance and meets regularly.	<p><b>SP1.1:</b> Develop a terms of reference for the LMP</p> <p><b>SP1.2:</b> Create a partnership with a defined terms of reference and broad membership of social partners (including a forum for employability programme users to feed back)</p> <p><b>SP1.3:</b> Facilitate a launch event to communicate the aims – this will raise awareness of the LMP as channel for skills and employability</p> <p><b>SP1.4:</b> Ensure baseline information and updated labour market intelligence is collated</p> <p><b>SP1.5:</b> Provide dedicated Council officer time to coordinating and mobilising LMP actions</p>	Q3 21	Q4 22	£1,000 establishment costs (marketing etc.)       3 staff members proposed	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LMP established</li> <li>Membership secured from across the Borough</li> <li>Bi-monthly meetings held</li> <li>Council officer time secured</li> <li>Launch event held</li> </ul> How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local media coverage of LMP establishment</li> <li>Number and percent of members who have an increased knowledge of employability and labour market conditions locally.</li> </ul>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>

Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally

- Indicators
- # or % Claimant Count
  - # or % Working Age Employment Rate
  - # or % Employee Jobs
  - # or % Vacancies notified Job Centres / Jobs and Benefits Offices
  - # or % Redundancies
  - % Economic Inactivity
  - % or # Employee Data by Disability and Age
  - # or % Participants on ApprenticeshipsNI
  - Gross Pay – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
<b>Deliver comprehensive labour market intelligence and job matching</b>	Ensure labour market information is comprehensive and up to date, including a collation of opportunities across the LMP Area.	<b>SP2.1:</b> Collect and collate labour market profiles, skills demand and supply projections and employability support programmes.	Q3 21	Q4 22	£15,000 p.a. (subject to procurement)	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of labour market profiles produced</li> <li>• # jobs listed on 'jobs board'</li> <li>• # job fairs</li> </ul>	<b>2, 4</b>
		<b>SP2.2:</b> Gather intelligence on job requirements across the borough's key sectors and in major borough developments (e.g. the NRC Campus development) to create an online 'jobs board' of current and upcoming opportunities in capital developments and key sectors.	Q1 22	Q4 22	£40,000 for development and ongoing management of an online 'jobs board'	How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # visitors to job board</li> <li>• # jobs listed and filled</li> <li>• # employers and #attendees at jobs fair</li> </ul>	
		<b>SP2.3:</b> Communicate opportunities to skills and employability providers.	Q3 21	Q4 22	N/A Officer time	Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of stakeholders who report improved coordination of employability and skills services</li> <li>• Decrease in claimants and economic inactivity to pre-Covid-19 (Feb 2020) levels by April 2022</li> </ul>	
		<b>SP2.4:</b> Deliver/Support labour market engagement activities	Q3 21	Q4 22	£7,500 for 2 careers fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in skills mismatches (reported by employers)</li> </ul>	

		(e.g. job fair/role taster sessions, interview days).				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in economically inactive</li> </ul>	
		<b>SP2.5:</b> Support the Borough's school careers teachers with careers advisory resources	Q3 21	Q4 22	£10,000		
<b>Labour Market Activation</b>	Tackle the immediate labour market challenges brought about by the pandemic and ensure the appropriately skilled people are available in priority sectors.	<b>SP2.6:</b> React to the potential labour market threat of Covid-19 with labour market activation programmes (training, interview support etc.).	Q2 21	Q2 22	£30,000	How much did we do?	<b>4</b>
		<b>SP2.7:</b> Deliver assured skills programmes for local priority sectors (e.g. Hospitality) which face labour shortages (e.g. hospitality, agri-food, manufacturing).	Q3 21	Q4 22	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># labour market activation interventions</li> </ul> How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># assured skills programmes delivered</li> <li># people engaged through assured skills and academies</li> </ul>	
		<b>SP2.8:</b> Develop 'jobs academies' in priority sectors that provide job ready training and guarantee an interview. Provide financial support to participants to remove barriers to participation.	Q3 21	Q4 22	£50,000	Is anyone better off?	
		<b>SP2.9:</b> Develop a programme with Anchor institutions (Council, Hospital, HE/FE etc.) to develop apprenticeships and include social clauses in procurement.	Q3 21	Q4 22	N/A Officer time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in claimants and economic inactivity to pre-Covid-19 (Feb 2020) levels by April 2022</li> <li>Reduction in economically inactive/long term unemployed</li> <li>Increase in youth/disabled/lone parent employment rates</li> </ul>	
<b>Improve Employability and skills through lifelong learning</b>	Support the development of a culture of lifelong learning among unemployed/inactive people	<b>SP2.10:</b> Support Department for Economy in developing the Skills for a 10x Economy aim of having a 'lifelong learning Action plan'.	Q3 21	Q4 22	N/A Officer time	How much did we do?	<b>4</b>
		<b>SP2.11:</b> Develop a pilot scheme to provide Lifelong learning vouchers that support residents to undertake funded courses	Q2 22	Q4 22	£250,000 pilot scheme lifelong learning vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># lifelong learning vouchers allocated</li> </ul> How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of people achieving completion certificates</li> </ul> Is anyone better off?	

with Borough based training and learning providers relevant to Borough's priority sectors.

- Improvement in borough working age skills levels

Strategic Priority 3: To support delivery of Employability NI							
Indicators		% Increased awareness of regional programmes within local area (LMP) # LMP referrals to regional programmes (LMP) # Participants on ApprenticeshipsNI (NINIS - LGD2014) # Participants on regional programmes (i.e. WRES, Jobstart etc)					
Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
<b>Co-design/support intervention measures</b>	As ESF programmes wind down and are replaced with a (as yet uncertain) successor programme, Co-design appropriate supports and lead their delivery.	<b>SP3.1:</b> Co-design ESF Successor supports.	Q3 21	Q4 22	N/A Officer time	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # employability supports (childcare, transport, IT) provided</li> </ul>	<b>2, 4</b>
		<b>SP3.2:</b> Employment barrier removal: Childcare, 'distance' and disability are key barriers to employment across NI. The LMP will provide financial assistance to aid the removal of these barriers and ensure online delivery of programmes is available, including support with IT equipment to recipients.	Q3 21	Q4 22	Q4 22	How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # moving through training into employment</li> </ul> Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of claimants who gain employment by claimant type (by ESA, JSA, etc.)</li> <li>• Increase in employment rate</li> <li>• Increase in job quality (hours, salary, satisfaction etc.)</li> <li>• Increase in claimants' confidence, skills and efficacy</li> </ul>	

- Reduction in businesses reporting skills gaps



# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Introduction

Employability NI is the Department for Community's new approach to providing support services for unemployed individuals seeking to get back into to work. Rather than a stand-alone programme, it is a series of interventions that will evolve over time, as legacy programmes (such as Steps to Success and Access to Work) end. It is intended to be a cross governmental approach to co-designing and co-commissioning (including with local government potentially) a sustainable future strategic employment offer which provides a tailored level of support proportionate to need.

It has been designed in order to:

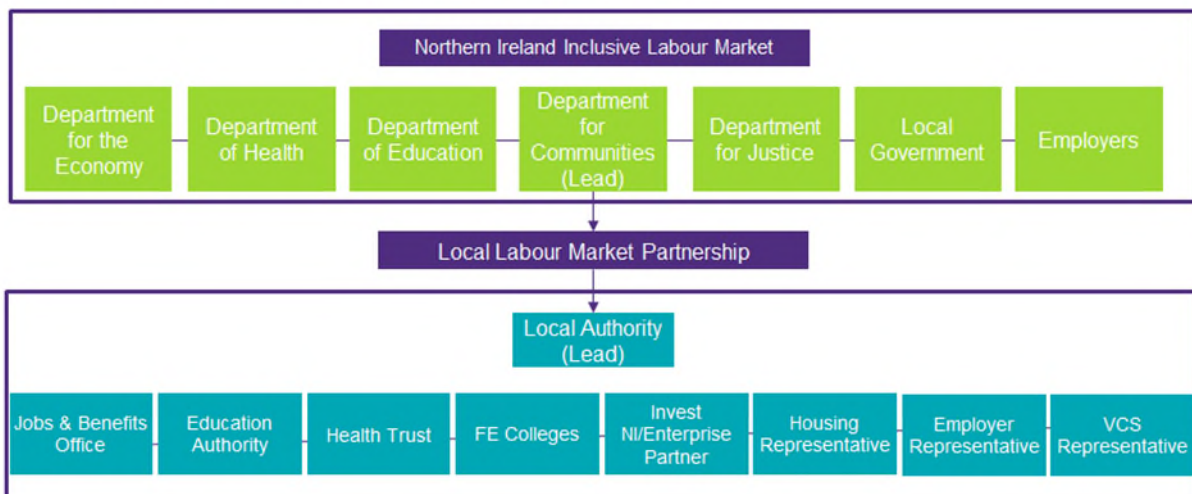
- Deliver a reduction in economic inactivity and long-term unemployment to bring NI closer in line with UK rates
- Provide increased support for those with health conditions (esp. mental health) and disabilities
- Create a mechanism for government to collaborate with Councils and other Departments to offer local solutions.

One of the key elements of the programme design was the proposal to create "Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships" in each council area. They intend to:

- Provide leadership and lead on the integration of services
- Develop local area plans including setting targets for performance
- Manage devolved funding and its delivery through a dynamic purchasing framework
- Manage arrangements for the evaluation of local interventions.

The proposed composition of the partnership model is set out below:

### Labour Market Partnership Model





Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are in the process of establishing a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) and appointed Grant Thornton to prepare an initial one-year Action Plan.

## 1.2 Process for Developing a LMP Plan

Causeway LMP wishes to develop a fair and inclusive Action Plan which reflects the diverse nature of the Borough. Grant Thornton have supported the development of the Plan by undertaking the following process:

- Undertaking a statistical review of the borough's labour market and employment supports. The Borough's economic strategy (developed by Grant Thornton) was accompanied by a comprehensive socio-economic assessment and data repository. The labour market module of this data repository has been updated to reflect current labour market performance and an assessment of current provision in employment supports has been undertaken.
- Engaging with labour market stakeholders from across the voluntary, business, education and government sector to seek views on what an LMP Plan should include.

The Action Plan that follows the statistical assessment will direct the work of the LMP for the first year, in conjunction with the overall Regional Partnership. The objectives for the Plan are to:

- Promote joint working and better co-ordination of services to unemployed people, employees and employers;
- Support targeted employability interventions to help people find employment;
- Provide active outreach to engage unemployed people and increase access to services in disadvantaged areas; and
- Maximise employment and training outputs from major regeneration and development schemes in the region (e.g. social clauses).



## **2. Findings from the consultations**

## 2. Findings from the consultations

A key element of any LMP will be the involvement of local stakeholders to ensure local issues are surfacing. That involvement was an essential part of developing this LMP Plan. Grant Thornton's team are grateful to the people who gave their time take part of focussed conversations to discuss:

- Labour market characteristics (and challenges) in the borough
- The suite of current supports available
- The purpose and types of activities a Labour Market Partnership could usefully undertake.

A list of consultees is presented as an appendix. The consultations produced a consistency of views on key issues and what a LMP can usefully do, and provided additional insight to the labour market profile.

### Labour Market Context

- There is significant seasonal employment due to the reliance on the tourism and agri sectors in the borough.
- There was a consistent ambition to see the borough evolve the tourism product to a 'year round' level. This will have implications for skills shortages so there a need to focus on addressing skills pipelines for priority sectors.
- Accessibility challenges are well known (e.g. childcare access, peripherality/lack of transport etc.) but one area that can be overlooked is 'confidence'.
- Returning to a place of learning after many years away can be daunting so the suggestion was to deliver more lifelong learning and employability programming in local community hubs.
- There is a lack of awareness of career paths and opportunities, particularly among the school age population. This point was made several times but a specific example captures the sentiment. One consultee noted that there are hundreds of different job roles in hospitality but awareness of this diversity is low. The proposal was for more 'taster sessions' and careers guidance.
- While the focus of an LMP is employability, the labour market context in the borough suggests a new cohort of unemployed people is emerging via Covid-19 impacts on jobs. The needs of these newly unemployed might be different from long-term unemployed and must be considered.

## Role for the LMP

The role of a LMP, and potential activities over the first 12 months of operation, was discussed with consultees. Key points emerging from conversation included:

- The initial role for the LMP should be to become established and build credibility amongst stakeholders as a purposeful entity
- The LMP offers an opportunity to be more agile. Regional intelligence = local solutions.
- The partnership should have a primary focus on employability supports for the economically inactive and (in the near term) the newly unemployed. Initially it should observe and support the various initiatives coming forward from DfC, then it should quickly evolve to co-design and delivery of programmes with local insights at the core of their design
- Intelligence is key to addressing local need. There is a need to maintain comprehensive labour market intelligence that will drive the work of the partners, particularly the linkages between employment/unemployment and barriers to accessing a job (e.g. childcare, skills). Collating this information could be centralised across/for local authorities but will require local insights.
- Engage employers/sector bodies to understand likely demand and to develop targeted interventions, focusing particularly on LTU/economically inactive.
- Partnership is crucial. There is no need to overlap with other provision. Explore how local interventions can add value to the DfC offer.
- Co-design interventions that can help move people back into work as quickly as possible – this will be particularly important for the “new unemployed”.
- Review the progress of specific interventions regularly to understand what is working and to share insights with partners.

It is within this context that the LMP action plan for the next 12 months is proposed.



### **3. Findings from the statistical audit – The Causeway Coast and Glens Labour Market**

# 3. Findings from the statistical audit – The Causeway Coast and Glens Labour Market

## 3.1 Introduction

The rationale for labour market interventions always hinge upon the scale of need and the challenges within the labour market. A comprehensive assessment of the NI Labour Market context is presented in Appendix 2 and CC&G's labour market context is below. Key highlights from the labour market assessment are presented here. In summary:

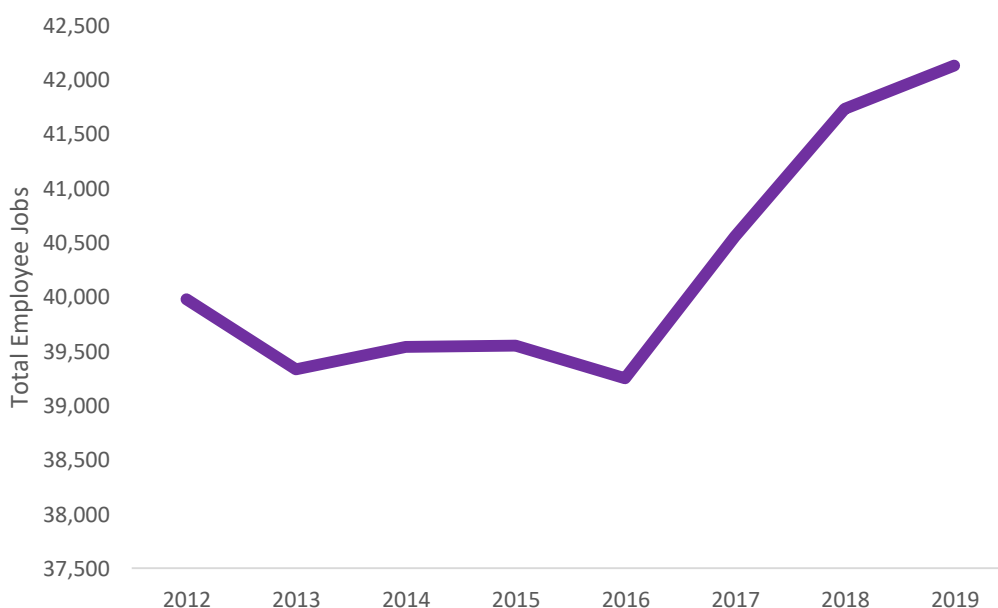
- There a total of 42,132 employee jobs located in the council area, with the number of employee jobs growing by 7.3% between 2016 and 2019;
- The pace of employee job creation across the council area has been one of the highest of all the council areas in Northern Ireland, with growth being 7.3% between 2016 and 2019;
- Much of this growth can be attributed to the expansion the council area has seen in sectors such as Accommodation & Food Services which grew by 11.6% between 2016 and 2019, as well as 'high value sectors' such as Professional, Scientific & Technical and ICT with both of these sectors growing by between 12.8% and 15%;
- Monthly claimant numbers show the damage inflicted by Covid-19, with claimants increasing from 2,540 in March 2020 to a peak of 5,225 in May 2020. Some improvement has been registered since then but claimant numbers are 3,710 in June 2021, still 1,170 more than the pre-pandemic level;
- The economic inactivity rate across the council area is one of the highest within Northern Ireland at 29.9%, with only Derry City & Strabane, Belfast and Fermanagh and Omagh having worse levels of economic inactivity;
- The Borough does have the highest proportion of working age people with no qualifications in NI, which will act as a drag on economic activity rates; and
- In terms of the council areas earning profile for full-time employees, on average residents within the council area earn £24,035 per annum, which is more than £4,000 per annum lower than the Northern Ireland average (£28,324).

## 3.2 Labour Market Context – Causeway Coast & Glens

### Current Outlook

Similar to the Northern Ireland labour market the Causeway Coast & Glens council area’s labour market had seen significant growth prior to the pandemic. Currently, there a total of 42,132 employee jobs located in the council area, with the number of employee jobs growing by 7.3% between 2016 and 2019. The council area has seen significant bounce back from the recession with 2,153 net total employee jobs added in the council area since 2012. Figure 3.1 below shows the trend in total employee jobs across the council area since 2012.

**Figure 3.1: Total Employee Jobs, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2012-2019**



**Source:** NISRA (BRES) & Grant Thornton Analysis

The pace of employee job creation across the council area has been one of the highest of all the council areas in Northern Ireland, with growth being 7.3% between 2016 and 2019. In comparison, over the same period, employee job creation in Northern Ireland as a whole only grew by 6.3%. Much of this growth can be attributed to the expansion the council area has seen in sectors such as Accommodation & Food Services which grew by 11.6% between 2016 and 2019, as well as ‘high value sectors’ such as Professional, Scientific & Technical and ICT with both of these sectors growing by between 12.8% and 15%. This shift in sectoral growth highlights the increased demand and need for higher value skills across the council area.

**Table 3.1: Employee Jobs Growth (%); Northern Ireland Council Areas; 2016-2019**

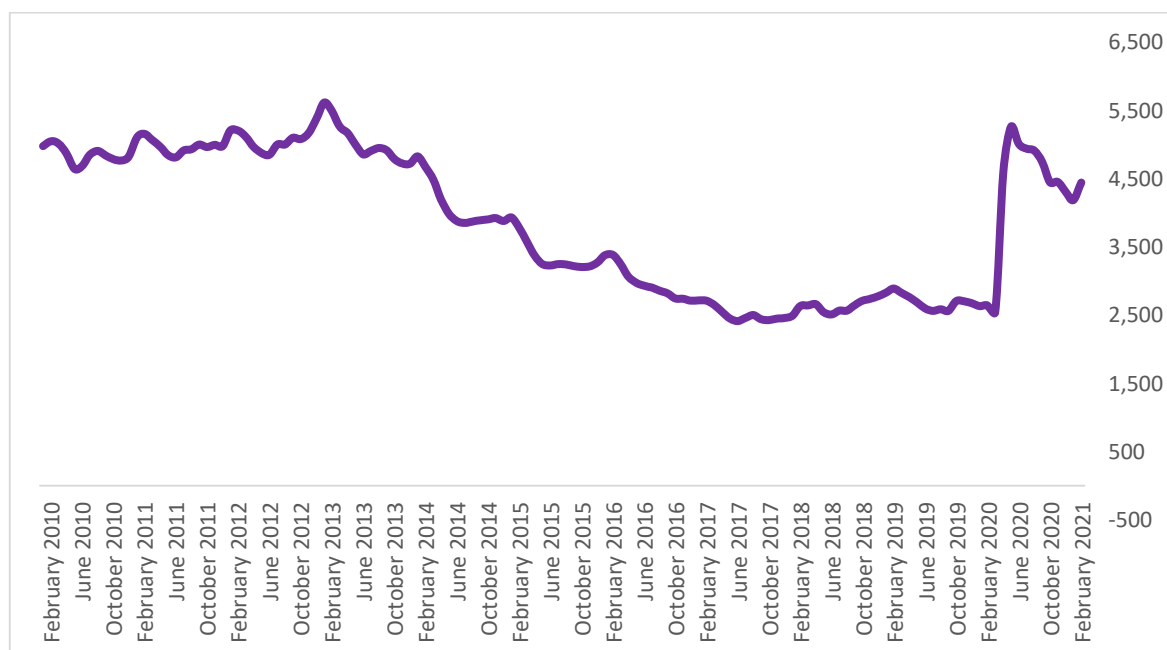
Employee Job Growth (%)	
	2016-19
Antrim and Newtownabbey	2.0%
Ards and North Down	3.5%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	6.8%
Belfast	5.6%
<b>Causeway Coast and Glens</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
Derry City and Strabane	10.0%
Fermanagh and Omagh	6.6%

Lisburn and Castlereagh	8.1%
Mid and East Antrim	2.8%
Mid Ulster	11.5%
Newry, Mourne and Down	6.3%
<b>NI</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

Source: NISRA (BRES) & Grant Thornton Analysis

The level of employee job expansion has an impact upon of claimants within the council area. Prior to the Covid pandemic the claimant rate had fallen from 3.3% in 2016 to 3.0% in 2019, almost 300 people moving off the register.

**Figure 3.2: Claimant Count, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2010-2021**



Source: NISRA & Grant Thornton Analysis

Monthly claimant numbers show the damage inflicted by Covid-19, with claimants increasing from 2,540 in March 2020 to a peak of 5,225 in May 2020. Some improvement has been registered since then but claimant numbers are 3,710 in June 2021, still 1,170 more than the pre-pandemic level.

The employment rate across the council area in 2019 stood at 67.6%, which was a record level for the council area. Whilst this is a record level for the council area, the overall level is below that of the Northern Ireland average of 71.9%. However, it should be considered the impact of Covid-19 will have an impact on the level of employment within the council area, as highlighted in Section 2.2 the overall employment rate level for Northern Ireland has fallen from 72.5% to 70.6%. It can be assumed that as a result of Causeway Coast & Glen's employment rate will also fall due to Covid-19 and the lockdown. In terms of resident employment<sup>1</sup>, Causeway Coast & Glens currently has a total employment level for those aged 16-64 of 55,400, which is below the previous peak of 56,100 in 2011.

The economic inactivity rate across the council area is one of the highest within Northern Ireland at 29.9%, with only Derry City & Strabane, Belfast and Fermanagh and Omagh having worse levels of economic inactivity. Much like the trend in unemployment the level of economic inactivity across the council has improved, a likely response to job-rich recovery both Northern Ireland and the council area experienced following the recession. The economic inactivity rate has fallen from 32.1% in 2009 to 29.9% a decade later. While this has been a positive response to the recession, the overall economic

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted this figure includes residents who work in other council areas as well as those that live and work in Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



inactivity rate in Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council remains above the Northern Ireland average, which currently stands at 26.2% for 2019. The Borough does have the highest proportion of working age people with no qualifications in NI, which will act as a drag on economic activity rates.

**Table 3.2: Economic Inactivity Rates (%); Northern Ireland Council Areas; 2016-2019**

	Economic Inactivity Rate (%)			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Antrim and Newtownabbey	19.5%	19.5%	19.9%	20.6%
Ards and North Down	22.5%	22.0%	25.5%	25.3%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	25.4%	24.9%	22.9%	25.7%
Belfast	26.1%	30.6%	32.7%	30.5%
<b>Causeway Coast and Glens</b>	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>33.8%</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>29.9%</b>
Derry City and Strabane	37.6%	36.9%	34.1%	30.4%
Fermanagh and Omagh	29.7%	30.1%	27.0%	33.1%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	20.2%	22.3%	21.1%	17.4%
Mid and East Antrim	23.9%	26.2%	25.5%	23.9%
Mid Ulster	23.9%	23.2%	23.5%	22.4%
Newry, Mourne and Down	24.3%	31.5%	31.0%	24.4%
<b>NI</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>

**Source:** NISRA (Local Area Database) & Grant Thornton Analysis

In terms of the council areas earning profile for full-time employees, on average residents within the council area earn £24,035 per annum, which is more than £4,000 per annum lower than the Northern Ireland average (£28,324). A similar result presents when examining the workplace earnings for those that work within the council area on average they can expect to earn £23,150, which is more than £5,000 per annum less than the Northern Ireland average. When comparing Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council against the other council areas in Northern Ireland, as can be seen in Table 3.3, the council area ranks bottom for both earning potential for both residents and workplace.

**Table 3.3: Resident & Workplace Earning Annual Gross Full-Time; Northern Ireland Council Areas; 2020**

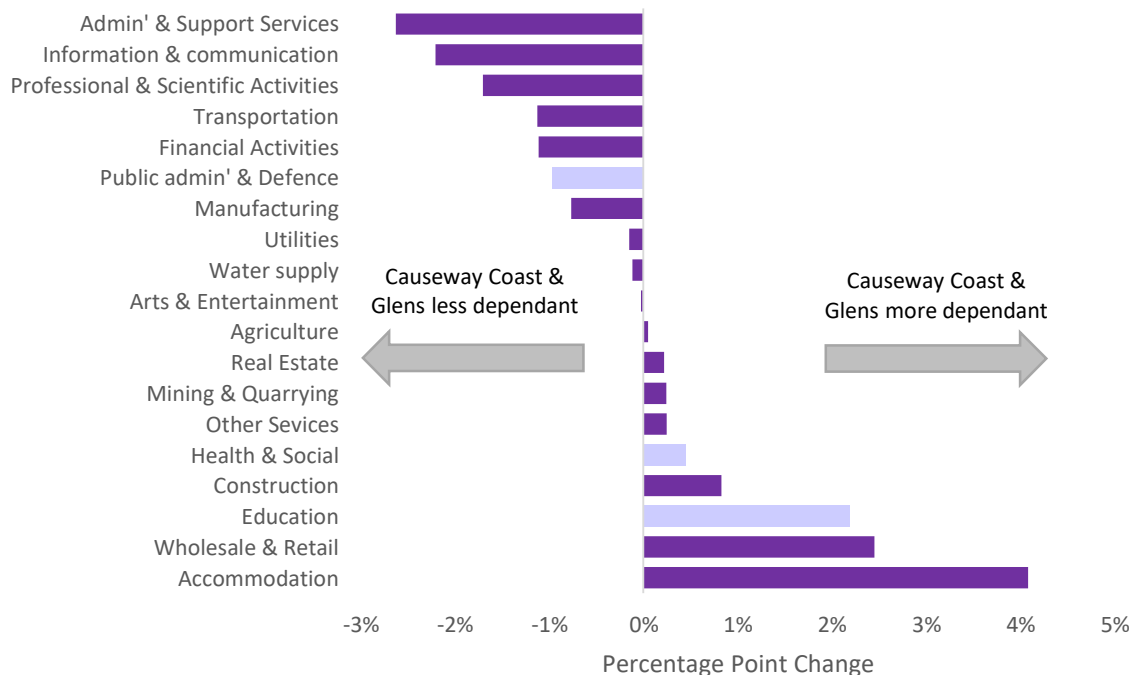
	Gross Annual Wage (£)	
	Residents	Workplace
Lisburn and Castlereagh	£30,789	£27,099
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	£29,202	£27,979
Antrim and Newtownabbey	£28,396	£28,849
Belfast	£28,326	£31,406
<b>NI</b>	<b>£28,324</b>	<b>£28,324</b>
Ards and North Down	£28,068	£25,171
Mid and East Antrim	£26,812	£25,146

Newry, Mourne and Down	£26,802	£26,884
Fermanagh and Omagh	£26,707	£26,332
Mid Ulster	£26,482	£26,473
Derry City and Strabane	£25,994	£26,191
<b>Causeway Coast and Glens</b>	<b>£24,025</b>	<b>£23,150</b>

Source: NISRA (ASHE) & Grant Thornton Analysis

The lower level of earning potential can be explained in two parts, the potential for workplace earnings is highly interlinked with the current sectoral composition. Figure 3.6 below shows the sectoral composition of the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council relative to the Northern Ireland average. It can be seen that the council area has a higher concentration of lower earning sectors such as Wholesale & Retail and Accommodation & Food Services, with both of these sectors accounting for 30.3% of total employee jobs in 2019 compared to 23.7% in Northern Ireland. Employment concentrations in higher wage sectors such as ICT and Professional Services are relatively lower in the Borough. These sectors accounting for 3.7% of jobs in the borough compared with 7.6% of jobs in NI. In addition, analysis conducted by the UUEPC<sup>2</sup> found that the relative skills for those in the North<sup>3</sup> were lower in comparison to the Northern Ireland average. Using data from the 2011 Census, they estimate that the North generally has more workers with no qualifications (17%) compared to Northern Ireland (14%), as well as having a lower level of workers with tertiary education (30%) compared to Northern Ireland (34%). Which potentially reflects the skills needs and the overall sectoral composition for the area.

**Figure 3.3: Relative Employment Concentrations, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council & Northern Ireland, 2019**



Source: NISRA (BRES) & Grant Thornton Analysis

As for resident's earnings potential this is likely to be impacted by the skills level within the council area. The UUEPC as part of their research estimated the skills needs within the North compared to its resident population, from which they estimated that there is a mismatch between residents and workplace skills

<sup>2</sup> North Region: Future Skills Needs Draft Findings; Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (2019)

<sup>3</sup> This area encapsulates the council areas Derry City & Strabane and Causeway Coast & Glens

generating barriers to labour market entry. As outlined above they estimate that 30% of workplace employment have education at tertiary level, when examining this at a resident level they note that only 22% of residents are educated to this level<sup>4</sup>, resulting in a skills deficit which needs addressing to satisfy future need either through skills importing or skills aimed employability programmes for residents.

### Skills Needs & Future Demand

To assess the impact of future skills needs and future sectoral demands within the North, the UUEPC conducted research into the Future Skills Needs of the North Region of Northern Ireland (which comprises Causeway Coast and Glens and Derry City and Strabane District Council). This analysis was undertaken prior to the Covid-19 pandemic but does provide important insight nonetheless. The UUEPC research suggests that in the North region will see employment growth all sectors with the exception of Agriculture. In particular, the UUEPC forecast that the Health & Social Care as well as Wholesale & Retail will see the biggest growth in employment between 2017 and 2027. Both of these sectors are expected to require the highest level of gross demand over the next 10 years, with between 14 and 15% of gross demand required for both sectors. Skills demand in these sectors are mainly driven by replacement demand (80%) in comparison to expansion demand (20%).

Sectors such as ICT, while not one of the largest employment sectors (0.8% of total employees), will see the largest growth and thus will require a substantial expansion demand (66%). To satisfy this level of expansion the North region is required to produce around 950 graduates per annum, with this accounting for 29% of their overall net requirement.

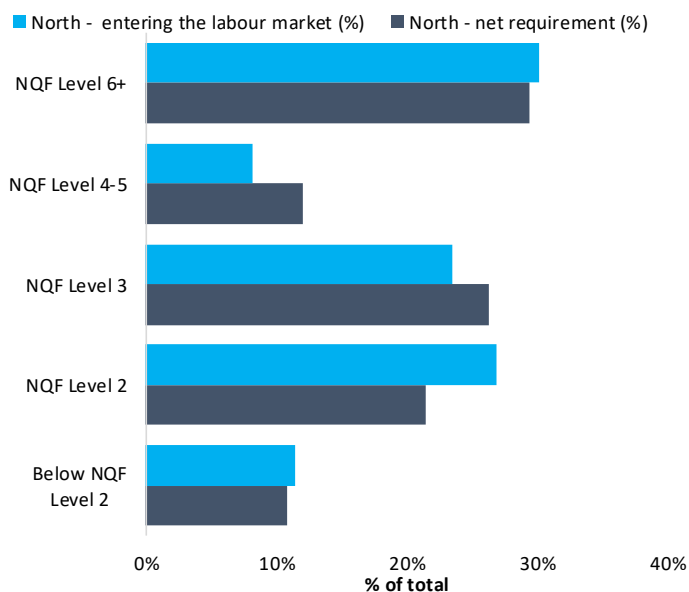
When considering future skill needs, the UUEPC calculate that the North will require 29% of current employment stock to have and NQF Level 6 or above, which compares to only 22% in 2016. This shift to a more skills intensive labour market is further reflected by the reduction in need of people with NQF 2 or below qualifications, from 11% from 2016 levels which accounting for 25% of current stock. Both of these findings highlight the current skills profile will not satisfy future need and the need to correct this, interventions will be required.

Similarly, the UUEPC estimated the likely supply of qualifications residents are forecast to gain over the next 10 years. They estimate that across the North region (which comprises Causeway Coast and Glens and Derry City and Strabane District Councils) 14,200 residents will gain qualifications with 7,430 of these entering the labour market. When comparing the future skills needs against the future qualifications supply, as can be seen in Figure 3.6 below, generally the need for high skills (NQF level 6+) are met, but the subject matter maybe an issue i.e. skills vs subject conundrum. Likewise, the lower skills the UUEPC estimate that the North will have an oversupply of lower skills compared to the future demand for these skills. However, the UUEPC have forecast that the North will suffer from a lack of mid-level qualifications (NQF Level 3-5), with many of these qualifiers preferring to proceed to educate at NQF Level 6+ rather than enter the labour market.

### Figure 3.4: Net requirement vs qualification profile (NQF) of labour market entrants, North, 2014-2027

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the UUEPC estimate that current employment with no qualifications account for 17% of employment in the North compared to 26% of residents within the North.



Source: UUEPC

Source: UUEPC North Region: Future Skills Needs Draft Findings

Future skills demand presents a challenge for the Causeway Coast and Glens area, based on qualification levels of the working age population. The borough has almost one in five people with no qualifications, one of the highest rates in NI and 4 percentage points worse than the NI average.

**Table 3.4: Qualification achievements among the working age population, 2019**

	Qualification Achievements		
	NVQ Level 4 and above	Below NVQ Level	No Qualifications
Antrim and Newtownabbey	37.5%	52.9%	9.6%
Ards and North Down	40.6%	51.0%	8.4%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	33.4%	54.6%	12.1%
Belfast	35.6%	46.2%	18.2%
<b>Causeway Coast and Glens</b>	<b>35.1%</b>	<b>47.0%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
Derry City and Strabane	34.0%	48.4%	17.6%
Fermanagh and Omagh	29.8%	51.4%	18.8%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	51.4%	43.5%	5.2%
Mid and East Antrim	41.0%	49.2%	9.8%
Mid Ulster	34.1%	48.9%	17.0%
Newry, Mourne and Down	34.0%	53.0%	13.0%
<b>NI</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>49.5%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>

Source: Nisra

### Destinations of School Leavers

Data on the destination of school leavers provides some insight into the immediate and future labour market in the borough. Of 1,525 school leavers resident in the borough in 2019/20, 38% went onto higher education (the lowest ranking council) while 45% went onto Further Education, the highest ranking NI council for this path. 4.6% of leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEETS). This is broadly similar to the rate for NI (4.7%).

## 3.3 Labour Market Supports

Causeway Coast and Glens Council area is well served by existing employment supports, delivered across a broad cohort of providers. The following outline the various employment supports that are available<sup>5</sup>. Awareness of, and access to these supports is via channels such as referrals from Jobs and Benefits Offices, word of mouth and some advertising.

### 3.3.1 Careers Service

The Careers Service provides an impartial, all-age careers information, advice and guidance service throughout Northern Ireland. Professionally qualified careers advisers can help young people and adults make informed choices about their future career paths. Careers advisers can also help parents/guardians with their child's future career plans.

Careers advisers can provide school pupils with information, advice and guidance on:

- choosing subjects for study at school, college or university
- current and future job trends and opportunities
- career planning and career options
- further and higher education
- apprenticeships and training
- entry routes and the skills and qualifications required for particular jobs

Careers advisers can provide adults with information and advice on:

- current employment trends, future job opportunities and job search techniques
- further and higher education, training and post graduate opportunities
- working overseas / gap years
- vacation / voluntary work
- career options and career planning
- learning opportunities
- transferable skills
- applying for jobs, including CV preparation, interview techniques and completing application forms

They also offer individually tailored guidance to help you analyse your personal preferences, strengths, skills, abilities and personality to realise your full potential.

### 3.3.2 Assured Skills Programme

When a company is interested in creating jobs in Northern Ireland, Assured Skills provides the necessary support to deliver a skilled workforce through the delivery of pre-employment training programmes. The Assured Skills programme is a short, demand-led, pre-employment training programme, which is fully funded by the Department for the Economy, to upskill individuals and help them compete for guaranteed job vacancies in companies that have current opportunities. There are also examples of companies clustering to provide a greater scale of opportunity in areas of skills shortages.

### 3.3.3 Bridge to Employment

The Bridge to Employment programme provides customised training to unemployed people to give them the skills necessary to compete for new employment opportunities. The programmes are run in response to employers with job vacancies.

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<sup>5</sup> While this section endeavours to be a comprehensive overview of the main elements of support available (based on desk research and consultations), it does not claim to be a directory or audit of every programme available.

### 3.3.4 Essential Skills

Support to people aged over 16 with reading, writing maths or ICT Skills. Essential Skills courses are delivered by further education colleges, both in their main campuses and in venues throughout the community. All Essential Skills courses are free and can be done in a college, at work or with a community organisation at different times of the day. The classes are small and informal. Crèche facilities may also be available.

### 3.3.5 Training for Success

Training for Success is designed for young people aged 16 - 17, with extended age eligibility for young people with a disability up to age 22 and up to age 24 for those from an in-care background. Training for Success is delivered across four strands:

- Skills for your life: address personal and development needs and gain skills and qualifications needed to get a job or progress to higher level education or training.
- Skills for Work Level 1: skills and vocationally related, professional and technical qualifications
- Skills for Work Level 2: skills and vocationally related, professional and technical qualifications
- Skills for Work Level 3: aimed at those who have gained a level 2 qualification through Training for Success, have not yet secured paid employment or an apprenticeship and who still possess training entitlement.

### 3.3.6 European Social Fund Employability Programmes

The Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme 2014-2020 is part of the Investment in Jobs and Growth Programme for Northern Ireland. The strategic aims of the NIESF Programme 2014-2020 are to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

The Programme implements these aims by extending employment opportunities in particular for those groups at a disadvantage in the labour market across four investment priorities.

- **Priority 1: Access to employment** – Projects that support long-term unemployment and economically inactive participation and access to employment, education or training;
- **Priority 2: Social Inclusion** – Projects that support people with a disabilities participation and access to employment, education or training;
- **Priority 3: Skills for Growth** – ApprenticeshipsNI programmes which aim to provide participants with the knowledge and skill base to be able to engage in a higher level occupation within their chosen field;
- **Priority 4: Technical Assistance** – This is the funding to enable the managing and implementation of the ESF programme.

EU funding allocated to the NIESF amounts to approximately €210m, representing 46.7% of programme costs. The total expected expenditure for the NI ESF is €451 million<sup>6</sup> when DfE, DfC and other public and private match funders are considered.

In priorities 1 & 2, funding has been allocated across two competitive grant application Calls. The first Call of the Programme was operational from 1 April 2015 until 31 March 2018 for Priorities 1 and 2. Sixty-six Letters of Offer of financial assistance were issued to successful project beneficiaries with 65 accepted.

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<sup>6</sup> Terms of Reference for an Impact Evaluation of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2014-20; Department for the Economy (2019)

The projects currently on offer in Causeway Coast and Glens Council area in priority 1 (access to employment) and priority 2 (social inclusion) are:

Organisation Name	Project Title	Investment Priority
Customized Training Services	Community Family Support Programme	Community Family Support
ACCEPTABLE ENTERPRISES LTD	HOT PROGRAMME	Disability
Action Mental Health	AMH 'Working It Out' Project	Disability
Action on Hearing Loss	Specialist Employment Programme	Disability
Compass Advocacy Network	WE CAN (2)	Disability
Disability Action	Job Match	Disability
Greenlight Gateway	The L.E.A.P. Project (Learn/Educate/Achieve/Progress)	Disability
Limavady Community Development Initiative (LCDI)	LCDI ESF Programme – People with a Disability	Disability
Mencap	EmployAbility2	Disability
Orchardville Society Ltd	Ignite2	Disability
RNIB Northern Ireland	Eye Work Too (2018)	Disability
Specialisterne NI C.I.C	Recruit++	Disability
The Cedar Foundation	Inclusion Works	Disability
Triangle Housing Association Ltd	Progression to Employment Service 2022	Disability
Ulster Supported Employment Limited	STRIDE	Disability
Include Youth	Give and Take Scheme	NEETS
Network Personnel	Up for Work (UfW)	NEETS
South West College	College Connect	NEETS
The Prince's Trust	Journey to Success	NEETS
Youth Action Northern Ireland	GET SET for work	NEETS
Enterprise Northern Ireland Ltd	Exploring Enterprise Programme (EEP)	Unemployed/Economically Inactive
Network Personnel Ltd.	Jobmatch	Unemployed/Economically Inactive
NIACRO	Working Well	Unemployed/Economically Inactive
Roe Valley Community Education Forum Ltd	Causeway Learn to Earn	Unemployed/Economically Inactive

Specialisterne NI C.I.C	Recruit+	Unemployed/Economically Inactive
The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)	Training for Employment	Unemployed/Economically Inactive
The Prince's Trust	Reaching Further	Unemployed/Economically Inactive

Source: Department for the Economy

Activities under Priority 3 are delivered via the Department's ApprenticeshipsNI Programme.

### 3.3.7 Apprenticeships NI

ApprenticeshipNI is a work-based programme designed around the needs of employers. It offers recognised training and qualifications to new and existing employees aged 16 and over, across a wide range of apprenticeships at Level 2 and Level 3. An apprenticeship can give your employees the training and qualifications they need to get ahead and meet your business needs. Funding for Apprenticeships training costs are provided by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and an incentive payment (between £250 - £750 Per apprentice) is available for employers whose employees successfully complete the Apprenticeship programme at Level 2 and Level 3. The ApprenticeshipsNI programme aims to:

- provide apprentices with the knowledge, understanding, and competence to work at a high level in their chosen occupation
- offer quality training to fulfil the requirements of an appropriate apprenticeship framework
- contribute to raising the skills level of the NI workforce
- provide opportunities for progression to further and higher education and training
- support the direct involvement of employers in training key personnel

ApprenticeshipsNI provides participants with the opportunity to take part in a Level 2/Level 3 Apprenticeship where the apprentice, in paid employment from day one, works towards achieving an industry-approved Level 2/Level 3 Apprenticeship Framework.

### 3.3.8 Steps to Success

The Steps 2 Success employment programme was a significant element of NI's employability and skills network and helped prepare participants find and keep a job by offering a personalised service, tailored to meet your specific needs. Steps to Success has closed to new entrants and is being replaced with a new suite of supports including The Work Ready Employability Service and Skills for Life and Work. Between October 2014 and June 2020, 4,822 Causeway Coast and Glens residents were Steps 2 Success clients, 6% of the Borough's population. Average starts per month per 1,000 people is 0.81, the third highest rate in NI behind only Derry and Belfast. In terms of the proportion of Steps 2 Success clients moving into employment, 26% of starters in the borough secured a job. This is the third lowest employment conversion rate in NI, better than only Belfast and Derry. It is a worse situation in the Borough for those aged 18-24. 36% of this cohort moved from Steps 2 Success into employment, the lowest rate amongst all NI's council areas.

### 3.3.9 Employability NI/Work Ready Employability Service

As part of a move across government in Northern Ireland to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the significant rise in unemployment, the Department for Communities (DfC) has created the Work Ready Employability Service (WRES) project.

DfC will continue to be the primary provider of employability services via the 35 Jobs and Benefits offices (JBOs) and the Job CentreOnline employment portal. Due to the sudden rise in unemployment of 33,000 since March 2020 and the prospect of a further and steeper rise when the current furlough scheme is withdrawn at the end of October 2020 Work Coaches have had to be redeployed to other areas of work and with the issue of existing Work Coach capacity the WRES is seeking to put in place a work ready contract with private providers to supplement in-house provision.



The overall aim of the Work Ready Employability Service Project is to ensure continuity of work focused employment services within DfC's Work and Health Group in the face of an unprecedented and rapid rise in unemployment levels brought about by the impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent risk of Work Coach capacity to deliver work related services particularly to those individuals considered "work ready" i.e. those recently affected by job losses, experienced in their field and eager to find new employment but who perhaps need some support to re-enter the labour market through early, focused, agile and short interventions. In circumstances where an individual may require significant assistance the Work Coach will signpost to an alternative provision.

In response to the pandemic, DfC have launched new interventions:

- The JobStart scheme for young people. The £20million employer incentive scheme, which went live on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, is designed to support 16-24 year olds facing additional employment challenges due to the impact of Covid-19. The JobStart scheme is designed to create opportunities for 16-24 year olds by providing positions with employers for a period of six months, increasing to nine months for those who meet additional criteria.
- An Opportunity Guarantee strand has been added to The Work Experience Programme (WEP) featuring 13 week placements with the guarantee of an interview for a job or an apprenticeship on completion.
- An Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) can award up to £1500 in a year to eligible customers facing monetary barriers to entering, progressing towards or progressing within work.

### **3.3.10 Skills for Life and Work programme**

Skills for Life and Work will begin in September 2021. This is an interim programme as part of the ongoing work by the Department and its stakeholders towards new, fully reformed Entry Level and Level 1 provision for young people.

Skills for Life and Work aims to:

- provide participants with access to regulated qualifications;
- address individual barriers to learning where appropriate and relevant; and
- prepare participants for an NI Traineeship, Further Education, ApprenticeshipsNI or other employment;

The key elements of Skills for Life and Work which providers must deliver are:

- individual learning programmes to address barriers to learning and employment – normally at Level 1 or Entry Level, but some qualifications can be at Level 2 where there is clear evidence that this would be more appropriate;
- a common curriculum of personal and social development, employability, professional and technical skills, and Essential Skills, leading to regulated qualifications;
- a Personal Training Plan (PTP) that is discussed and agreed between each participant and the provider detailing the targeted outcomes, progression routes, and associated milestones;
- world of work activities; and
- a non-means-tested weekly Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) payable to the participant.

It is also expected that the majority of participants will undertake, when they are ready, a significant work placement (i.e. regular and sustained, with clear learning objectives recorded and systematically monitored).

## **3.4 Conclusion**

The labour market in Causeway Coast and Glens has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, as evidenced by sharp increases in claimants. Prior to the pandemic, the labour market

had demonstrated strong growth but challenges remained, with relatively higher economic inactivity rates, and a significant proportion of working age people with no qualifications. Reflecting the scale of labour market challenge, there are a broad range of supports available which seek to address economic inactivity. Many of these schemes are reaching the end of their funding cycle and so it is timely that employability NI is emerging, and a local perspective, via a LMP, is sought.



## **4. Strategic Context**


# 4. Strategic Context

## 4.1 Introduction

It is important that the LMP Plan is developed in full cognisance of the national and local policy context. This section will outline the aims and objectives of a broad spectrum of policy documents, all of which aim to deliver better economic outcomes, a shared aim with a Labour Market Partnership.

## 4.2 National context

Strategy	Aim & Objectives
Programme for Government: Draft Outcomes Framework Consultation Document	<p>This document sets out the potential future direction for the next Programme for Government. The new PFG will take an outcomes-based approach, seeking to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Create and develop of better jobs, through improved job security, wages, etc.;</i></li> <li>• <i>Address underachievement &amp; skills shortages through the alignment of FE &amp; HE colleges to the Labour Market demand/needs;</i></li> <li>• <i>Create varied, fulfilling &amp; quality employment opportunities, supporting skills attraction and retention of workers;</i></li> <li>• <i>Deliver high quality curriculum and enhanced careers advice, improving educational attainment &amp; life chances; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Address educational resource pressures, ensuring access for all &amp; all schools, etc. are 'fit for purpose'.</i></li> </ul>
A 10x economy: Northern Ireland's decade of innovation	<p>The ambition set out in NI's economic vision is for a '10x Economy'. Northern Ireland's decade of innovation will encourage greater collaboration and innovation to deliver a ten times better economy with benefits for all our people. This ambition will be realised by focussing on innovation in areas where we have real strengths and making sure these gains mean something to all businesses, people and places in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Five steps to success have been identified to realise the ambition of the 10x economy. These are summarised in the diagram below.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Our Vision for a Decade of Innovation will deliver a ten times better economy with benefits for all our people</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;"><b>Technologies and Clusters</b></th> <th style="width: 20%;"><b>Talent</b></th> <th style="width: 20%;"><b>Diffusion</b></th> <th style="width: 20%;"><b>Funding</b></th> <th style="width: 20%;"><b>Place</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Focusing on priority clusters where NI can be a global leader, building on existing strengths and capitalising on windows of opportunity.</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Inspiring and preparing a future generation of workers that can respond flexibly to future skills requirements. Ensuring everyone across NI has opportunities to thrive.</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Ensuring that innovation provides opportunities across all sectors, not just those at the cutting edge, and disperses economic and societal benefits to all.</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Taking a new approach to funding interventions including Challenge Funds, better participation in funding programmes and applying conditionalities to offer of Government support.</td> <td style="vertical-align: top;">Building on our successes in attracting visitors to our world class attractions, experiences and events, energising our ecosystem for innovation and developing our innovation infrastructure through the City and Growth Deals Programme.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Five steps to Developing Interventions to Deliver our Vision</b></p>	<b>Technologies and Clusters</b>	<b>Talent</b>	<b>Diffusion</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Place</b>	Focusing on priority clusters where NI can be a global leader, building on existing strengths and capitalising on windows of opportunity.	Inspiring and preparing a future generation of workers that can respond flexibly to future skills requirements. Ensuring everyone across NI has opportunities to thrive.	Ensuring that innovation provides opportunities across all sectors, not just those at the cutting edge, and disperses economic and societal benefits to all.	Taking a new approach to funding interventions including Challenge Funds, better participation in funding programmes and applying conditionalities to offer of Government support.	Building on our successes in attracting visitors to our world class attractions, experiences and events, energising our ecosystem for innovation and developing our innovation infrastructure through the City and Growth Deals Programme.
<b>Technologies and Clusters</b>	<b>Talent</b>	<b>Diffusion</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Place</b>							
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<p>Skills for a 10x Economy (consultation)</p>	<p>Delivering ‘a 10x Economy’ - an economy that is 10x stronger, 10x more prosperous, 10x more resilient - will require transformation in our skills system. That is the opening thought in the Department for the Economy’s Skills for a 10x economy consultation. The draft consultation document identifies three major policy objectives and three underpinning policy enablers. These align to the principles set out in the economic vision; addressing skills imbalances, providing opportunities for all and placing collaboration and co-design at the centre of our strategy, to support key strategic clusters while delivering meaningful change for everyone.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>The diagram features a central dark blue triangle labeled 'Skills Strategy'. To its left, under the heading 'Objectives', are three blue boxes: 'Addressing skills imbalances, Driving economic growth', 'Creating a culture of life long learning', and 'Enhancing digital skills, Developing a Digital Spine'. To its right, under the heading 'Enablers', are three blue boxes: 'Enhancing Policy Cohesion', 'Building Strong Relationships', and 'Investment in the Skills System'. Small blue triangles point from the objectives and enablers boxes towards the central triangle.</p> </div>										
<p>New Decade New Approach</p>	<p>This document represents the deal in which both the UK and Irish Governments have put forward in order to restore the NI Executive, addressing issues such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Invest strategically in ensuring NI has the right skills for a thriving economy;</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop an enhanced approach to career advice, such as apprenticeships;</i></li> <li>• <i>Tackling deprivation and improving opportunity.</i></li> </ul>										
<p>Economic Recovery Action Plan</p>	<p>This document produced by the Department for the Economy sets out the economic recovery roadmap for Northern Ireland following the Covid-19 pandemic. This document sets out aims to improve skills, exports, promote a green economy and R&amp;D/Innovation. The overall objectives of the document are to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Support a highly skilled and agile workforce;</i></li> <li>• <i>Stimulate Research &amp; Development and innovation;</i></li> <li>• <i>Promote investment, Trade and Exports; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Building a Green Economy.</i></li> </ul>										

	<p>Of particular relevance to the LMP are the aims of the ‘Supporting a Highly Skilled and Agile Workforce’ with these being;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Making Apprenticeships available for all ages, increasing the supply of skills;</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop a digital careers platform that will provide advice and guidance on current/future skills needs;</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop a Women STEM Action Plan;</i></li> <li>• <i>The Launch of a ‘Flexible Skills Fund’ which will allow Government to be fast moving/acting in sectors at risk of automation, etc.;</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop a Capability and Skills Enhancement Programme which will provide training to the Tourism Sector, helping to fill skills gaps/capabilities;</i></li> <li>• <i>Work with sector/industry stakeholders to identify skills solutions at a regional, sectoral and local level; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify areas of opportunity to enhance productivity for businesses and ensure businesses have appropriate skills to grasp these opportunities.</i></li> </ul>
Pathways to Success (NEET)	<p>This document set out the aim of helping those aged 16-24 who are considered Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) re-engage and improve their overall prospects;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Raise standards and improving outcomes in literacy and numeracy</i></li> <li>• <i>Overcome barriers to learning; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Tackle barriers associated with health and social well-being.</i></li> </ul>
Success through Skills – Transforming Futures	<p>This document aimed to help re-engage people within the economy, in order to facilitate a dynamic and innovative economy, with skills forming a key element;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Raising the skills level of the whole workforce;</i></li> <li>• <i>Raising productivity; and increasing level of social inclusion by enhancing employability of those currently excluded from the labour market.</i></li> </ul>
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Skills Strategy Northern Ireland	<p>This document provided tailored findings and recommendations on Northern Ireland skills performance. This process will help shape future skills strategies within Northern Ireland, with recommendations including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reducing Skills imbalances;</i></li> <li>• <i>Creating a culture of lifelong learning;</i></li> <li>• <i>Transforming workplaces to make better use of skills; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Strengthening the governance of skills policies.</i></li> </ul>

### 4.3 Causeway Coast and Glens context

Strategy	Aim & Objectives
Causeway Coast & Glens Community Plan 2017-2030	<p>This document sets out the new vision and direction for the region, such as Action 32: Enhance and develop economic opportunities for individuals and businesses located within the Causeway Coast &amp; Glens and Action 33: Develop a co-ordinated plan to increase skills within the Causeway Coast &amp; Glens area targeting actions to meet the local industry needs. The document also outlines the need to support the work of the Causeway Workforce Development Forum which supports education and skills initiatives as set out in Action 29. The key outcomes for each of these actions are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All people of the Causeway Coast and Glens will be knowledgeable and skilled;</i></li> <li>• <i>All people of the Causeway Coast &amp; Glens will contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy built on a culture of growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and learning; and</i></li> <li>• <i>The population of the Causeway Coast &amp; Glens area will be knowledgeable and suitably skilled.</i></li> </ul>
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council: Council Strategy 2015-2019	<p>This document set out the vision of newly formed Causeway Coast &amp; Glens Borough Council for the period 2015 to 2019. With the key vision of the strategy being to “Maximise the benefits of our unique location and landscape by providing ambitious, accessible and efficient services which fulfil customer expectations”. In addition, the strategy set out the 5 key visions for the council over the 2015 to 2019 period, with these including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>provide effective and sustainable local services;</i></li> <li>• <i>develop our economy and create jobs;</i></li> <li>• <i>enhance our people’s health and wellbeing; and</i></li> <li>• <i>empower our local people to take ownership of projects in their community.</i></li> </ul>
Causeway Workforce	<p>The development of the Causeway Workforce Development Forum aims to ensure/see more people working in better and more sustainable jobs with less inequality and deprivation within the council. As such the key actions of the Forum are;</p>

Development Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing better connections between employability programmes delivered (both private and publicly) through referrals, etc.;</li> <li>Develop a holistic approach to employability and skills aligned to both national and local strategies;</li> <li>Create a pipeline of residents with the appropriate skills/vocational qualifications to avail of employment opportunities;</li> <li>Establish sector specific employability approach for economically inactive who are then supported throughout the process;</li> <li>Provide expertise, guidance, etc. in the development of overarching skills/employability strategies;</li> <li>Promote and contribute to the achievement of inclusive growth;</li> <li>Develop new employer/intelligence led approaches to tackle employability and skills issues; and</li> <li>Enable a consistent supply and demand conditions across the skills spectrum providing an equal supply and demand of skills.</li> </ul>										
Causeway Coast & Glens: Digital Strategy – Summary Report	<p>This document was developed to help support the social and economic development of the Causeway Coast &amp; Glens. With the aim of the strategy to address the inter-linkages between digital skills, infrastructure and the digital sector. This digital strategy forms a key input to the overall Causeway Coast &amp; Glens City Growth deal. The key aims of the strategy aim to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of basic digital skills, to allow everyone to participate in an increasingly digital economy/society;</li> <li>Development of sector-specific digital skills, to ensure businesses who are more reliant on digital technologies, businesses are able to source the appropriate skills; and</li> <li>Adequately support the move to remote working and the overall digital transformation.</li> </ul>										
Causeway Coast and Glens Economic Strategy	<p>The economic strategy for the Borough presents 6 growth themes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour Market Activation</li> <li>Business start/survival</li> <li>Business evolution</li> <li>Connected Borough</li> <li>Green Borough</li> <li>Renewed Place</li> </ul> <p>Under the Labour Market Activation theme, the strategy notes several areas of potential intervention.</p> <p><b>Labour Market activation</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="437 1308 1366 1939"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="437 1308 576 1402">Sub theme</th> <th data-bbox="576 1308 802 1402">Issue</th> <th data-bbox="802 1308 1082 1402">Implication</th> <th data-bbox="1082 1308 1366 1402">Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 1402 576 1742">Job search support</td> <td data-bbox="576 1402 802 1742">A significant proportion of the Borough's employees are on Furlough and there is a heightened risk of significant levels of unemployment</td> <td data-bbox="802 1402 1082 1742" rowspan="2">Sudden and significant numbers of people becoming unemployed can lead to economic depression, erode the skills base of the labour force and have significant mental health and wider health impacts if short term unemployment becomes ingrained/long term.</td> <td data-bbox="1082 1402 1366 1939" rowspan="2">Council can act as a key enabler in providing labour market activation programmes (training, interview support) and community employment programmes as well as providing a rapid response 'one front door' for job matching across the borough.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="437 1742 576 1939">Job matching</td> <td data-bbox="576 1742 802 1939">Redundancy announcements across NI are increasing and projected to increase further.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action	Job search support	A significant proportion of the Borough's employees are on Furlough and there is a heightened risk of significant levels of unemployment	Sudden and significant numbers of people becoming unemployed can lead to economic depression, erode the skills base of the labour force and have significant mental health and wider health impacts if short term unemployment becomes ingrained/long term.	Council can act as a key enabler in providing labour market activation programmes (training, interview support) and community employment programmes as well as providing a rapid response 'one front door' for job matching across the borough.	Job matching	Redundancy announcements across NI are increasing and projected to increase further.
Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action								
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	Assured skills	The Skills Barometer from Ulster University shows a mismatch between supply of skills and demand. Consultations bear skills challenges out	For companies that wish to grow, the inability to recruit staff is a key barrier, which can lead to delayed growth or companies locating elsewhere.	An assured skills programme would alleviate skills shortages
	Anchor institution social clauses	Anchor institutions in the borough can have a significant influence on labour demand either directly or through annual procurement expenditure.	Anchor institutions can be utilised to support the creating job opportunities for residents in the Borough	Devise a procurement strategy that promotes local delivery and promotes social clauses that provide opportunity for unemployed residents.

## 4.4 OECD Skills Strategy

As a recent comprehensive update to the skills and employability policy discourse, it is particularly pertinent to highlight the OECD Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland and the relevant issues for LMPs that the strategy raises.

Launched in October 2020, a key facet of the OECD’s work centred around how Skills imbalances can negatively affect economic growth through their consequences on increased labour costs; lower labour productivity growth; and slower adoption of new technologies. Additionally, OECD notes that skills mismatches can increase unemployment and reduce a government’s tax revenues. Businesses that suffer from longer-term skills shortages may be constrained in their productivity, innovation, competitiveness, and growth, and may also result in increased hiring costs and higher staff turnover. At the individual level, skills mismatches can cause people to experience higher risk of unemployment relative to well-matched workers, lower wages, lower levels of job satisfaction and the attrition of their skills over time. Reducing skills imbalances could, therefore, help Northern Ireland to enjoy significant economic and social benefits. Within this context, the OECD identify the reduction of economic inactivity as a key opportunity to minimise skills shortages. In light of Northern Ireland’s comparatively high levels of economic inactivity, consideration will need to be given to the most effective means of (re)activating those who are inactive in the labour market, as well as preventing them from becoming inactive in the first place.

The OECD report confirm that the “economically inactive” are a heterogeneous group with a range of differing barriers to skills activation and employment, which require separate consideration. This recognition of different barriers and complex needs should be a key feature in LMP’s thinking. The OECD Skills Strategy proposes opportunities for Northern Ireland across a range of areas. These are noted below, with those opportunities which OECD identified as being an area for Local Council involvement highlighted in bold.

- **Reducing skills imbalances in Northern Ireland**
  - Opportunity 1: Improving individual career choice through the provision of enhanced career guidance
  - **Opportunity 2: Strengthening the responsiveness and flexibility of the tertiary education and vocational education and training systems**
  - **Opportunity 3: Reducing economic inactivity to minimise skills shortages**
  - **Opportunity 4: Improving labour mobility to meet skills demand**
- **Creating a culture of lifelong learning in Northern Ireland**



- Opportunity 1: Starting the development of a culture of lifelong learning early in life
- **Opportunity 2: Increasing adults' motivation to learn**
- Opportunity 3: Removing barriers for individuals and employers to adult learning opportunities
- **Transforming workplaces to make better use of skills in Northern Ireland**
  - **Opportunity 1: Strengthening management and leadership capabilities**
  - **Opportunity 2: Developing engaging and empowering workplaces**
  - **Opportunity 3: Strengthening support structures for businesses**
- **Strengthening the governance of skills policies in Northern Ireland**
  - Opportunity 1: Making sustainable funding arrangements and committing to an overarching strategy for Northern Ireland's skills system
  - **Opportunity 2: Increasing co-ordination and information distribution across the whole of government**
  - **Opportunity 3: Improving employer engagement in the governance of skills policies**

Evidently, there is a broad selection of areas where councils are recommended to be involved. A key point from the OECD Skills Strategy is partnership working. Hence, a LMP can serve as an important vehicle in driving the employability and skills agenda.

## 4.5 Conclusion

The analysis and strategic context outlined in this section highlight the challenging circumstances of the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council's labour market and how it performs relative to the Northern Ireland average. From the analysis it can be seen that typically the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council labour market has long standing issues that need addressing, such as high levels of economic inactivity, unemployment and a lower level of employment rates relative to Northern Ireland and other council areas.

In turn, these issues impact upon earnings potential for both residents and workplace employees. It should also be considered, following the analysis conducted in Section 2.2, on how Covid-19 has already impacted the Northern Ireland labour market, similar impacts will be seen and felt in Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council further hindering an already lagging labour market. As such the analysis in this section heightened the need for labour market interventions in the form of an LMP 'Action Plan'.



## **5. LMP Action Plan**

# 5. LMP Action Plan

## 5.1 Introduction

The Labour Market Partnership Plan for 2021-2022 aims to contribute to the strategic local objectives and the NI Executive's strategic objectives. Causeway Coast and Glens is one of many important stakeholders in the skills and employability space. An optimal role for the Labour Market Partnership will be to leverage resources towards achieving strategic objectives. As lead authority for Causeway Coast and Glens economic growth, it is important that Causeway Coast and Glens play a convening role which brings partners together and drives a LMP with purpose. The development of this Labour Market Partnership Plan corresponds with a fast changing employability and skills policy landscape in Northern Ireland. Department for Communities supports such as Jobstart and Work Ready Employability Service are new and welcome additions to the employability support space. In light of this fast changing labour market support context, the purpose of this LMP Action Plan will be to support NI initiatives, ensure that local knowledge and insights are 'surfaced' and develop solutions based on local context.

## 5.2 Underpinning Values

The values which underpin the LMP should be: professionalism, clarity, courtesy, inclusiveness, transparency, ambition, realism, practicality, adaptability and accessibility. The success of the group will depend on the ability to apply these values. Membership of the LMP should be open to a broad range of interested parties with appropriate skills and knowledge of the skills and employability landscape. There should also be a mechanism for users of employability programmes to be heard.

## 5.3 Action Plan

The following actions are proposed over the 2021-2022 period. These actions are consistent with the labour market activation proposals in the Borough's economic development strategy and reflect the key findings from the preceding statistical and consultative process, namely that the analysis and strategic context highlights the challenging circumstances of the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council's labour market which is impacted by long standing issues such as high levels of economic inactivity, unemployment and a lower level of employment rates relative to Northern Ireland and other council areas.

In turn, these issues impact upon earnings potential for both residents and workplace employees. It should also be considered how Covid-19 has, and will, impact the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council labour market, further hindering progress. Reflecting on the analysis, the Strategic Priorities proposed are:

- SP1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area
- SP2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally
- SP3: To support delivery of Employability NI

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Interim Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2020/21 Baseline
Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area	Form local multi-agency partnership comprised of members from relevant stakeholders	100%
	Development and effective delivery of local LMP Action Plan to meet priority needs, by reviewing available statistical information and engaging key stakeholders	100%
	Facilitated main partnership meetings and sub-group meetings	# of meetings
	LMP returns submitted on time and in order to DfC	100%
	Raised awareness that the LMP are working towards improving employability and labour market issues that matter in the local area and are effectively dealing with employability and labour market issues that matter in the local area	TBD
Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	Increased Employment	# or % Working Age Employment Rate
	Increased Job Opportunities within Local Area (By sector and job type)	# Employee Jobs #vacancies
	Reduced Economic Inactivity	% or # Employee Data by Disability and Age
	Increased Workforce Diversification (Age, gender, disability etc.)	Gross Pay – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
	Increased job quality (hours of employment, salary, satisfaction etc.)	# participants engaged on new local training programmes
	Increased uptake of employability / skills training programmes relevant to Borough's priority sectors	# or % Participants on ApprenticeshipsNI
	Increased Uptake of Apprenticeship Programmes	
Strategic Priority 3: To support delivery of Employability NI	Promotion of regional projects/initiatives and building confidence through locality based engagement	# LMP referrals to regional programmes
	Contribute to development of regional projects/initiatives	# Participants on ApprenticeshipsNI
		# participants on Steps 2 Success
		# Participants on new programmes (i.e. WRES, Jobstart etc.)

Baselines to be determined at DfC acceptance of LMP.

Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area

Indicators  
 % LMP members who feel supported in their role (LMP)  
 % LMP members with increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues (LMP)  
 # LMP meetings (LMP)

Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
<b>Establish a Labour Market Partnership</b>	Establish a Labour market Partnership with a defined terms of reference, a broad membership of social partners which achieves strong attendance and meets regularly.	<p><b>SP1.1:</b> Develop a terms of reference for the LMP</p> <p><b>SP1.2:</b> Create a partnership with a defined terms of reference and broad membership of social partners (including a forum for employability programme users to feed back)</p> <p><b>SP1.3:</b> Facilitate a launch event to communicate the aims – this will raise awareness of the LMP as channel for skills and employability</p> <p><b>SP1.4:</b> Ensure baseline information and updated labour market intelligence is collated</p> <p><b>SP1.5:</b> Provide dedicated Council officer time to coordinating and mobilising LMP actions</p>	Q3 21	Q4 22	<p>£1,000 establishment costs (marketing etc.)</p> <p>3 staff members proposed</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LMP established</li> <li>Membership secured from across the Borough</li> <li>Bi-monthly meetings held</li> <li>Council officer time secured</li> <li>Launch event held</li> </ul> <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local media coverage of LMP establishment</li> <li>Number and percent of members who have an increased knowledge of employability and labour market conditions locally.</li> </ul>	<b>1,2,3,4</b>

Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally

- Indicators
- # or % Claimant Count
  - # or % Working Age Employment Rate
  - # or % Employee Jobs
  - # or % Vacancies notified Job Centres / Jobs and Benefits Offices
  - # or % Redundancies
  - % Economic Inactivity
  - % or # Employee Data by Disability and Age
  - # or % Participants on ApprenticeshipsNI
  - Gross Pay – Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
<b>Deliver comprehensive labour market intelligence and job matching</b>	Ensure labour market information is comprehensive and up to date, including a collation of opportunities across the LMP Area.	<b>SP2.1:</b> Collect and collate labour market profiles, skills demand and supply projections and employability support programmes.	Q3 21	Q4 22	£15,000 p.a. (subject to procurement)	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of labour market profiles produced</li> <li>• # jobs listed on 'jobs board'</li> <li>• # job fairs</li> </ul>	<b>2, 4</b>
		<b>SP2.2:</b> Gather intelligence on job requirements across the borough's key sectors and in major borough developments (e.g. the NRC Campus development) to create an online 'jobs board' of current and upcoming opportunities in capital developments and key sectors.	Q1 22	Q4 22	£40,000 for development and ongoing management of an online 'jobs board'	How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # visitors to job board</li> <li>• # jobs listed and filled</li> <li>• # employers and #attendees at jobs fair</li> </ul>	
		<b>SP2.3:</b> Communicate opportunities to skills and employability providers.	Q3 21	Q4 22	N/A Officer time	Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of stakeholders who report improved coordination of employability and skills services</li> <li>• Decrease in claimants and economic inactivity to pre-Covid-19 (Feb 2020) levels by April 2022</li> </ul>	

		<p><b>SP2.4:</b> Deliver/Support labour market engagement activities (e.g. job fair/role taster sessions, interview days).</p> <p><b>SP2.5:</b> Support the Borough's school careers teachers with careers advisory resources</p>	<p>Q3 21 Q4 22</p> <p>Q3 21 Q4 22</p>	<p>£7,500 for 2 careers fairs</p> <p>£10,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in skills mismatches (reported by employers)</li> <li>• Reduction in economically inactive</li> </ul>	
<b>Labour Market Activation</b>	Tackle the immediate labour market challenges brought about by the pandemic and ensure the appropriately skilled people are available in priority sectors.	<p><b>SP2.6:</b> React to the potential labour market threat of Covid-19 with labour market activation programmes (training, interview support etc.).</p> <p><b>SP2.7:</b> Deliver assured skills programmes for local priority sectors (e.g. Hospitality) which face labour shortages (e.g. hospitality, agri-food, manufacturing).</p> <p><b>SP2.8:</b> Develop 'jobs academies' in priority sectors that provide job ready training and guarantee an interview. Provide financial support to participants to remove barriers to participation.</p> <p><b>SP2.9:</b> Develop a programme with Anchor institutions (Council, Hospital, HE/FE etc.) to develop apprenticeships and include social clauses in procurement.</p>	<p>Q2 21 Q2 22</p> <p>Q3 21 Q4 22</p> <p>Q3 21 Q4 22</p> <p>Q3 21 Q4 22</p>	<p>£30,000</p> <p>£50,000</p> <p>£50,000</p> <p>N/A Officer time</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # labour market activation interventions</li> </ul> <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # assured skills programmes delivered</li> <li>• # people engaged through assured skills and academies</li> </ul> <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in claimants and economic inactivity to pre-Covid-19 (Feb 2020) levels by April 2022</li> <li>• Reduction in economically inactive/long term unemployed</li> <li>• Increase in youth/disabled/lone parent employment rates</li> </ul>	<p>4</p>
<b>Improve Employability and skills through lifelong learning</b>	Support the development of a culture of lifelong learning among	<b>SP2.10:</b> Support Department for Economy in developing the Skills for a 10x Economy aim of having a 'lifelong learning Action plan'.	Q3 21 Q4 22	N/A Officer time	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # lifelong learning vouchers allocated</li> </ul> <p>How well did we do it?</p>	4

unemployed/inactive people	<b>SP2.11:</b> Develop a pilot scheme to provide Lifelong learning vouchers that support residents to undertake funded courses with Borough based training and learning providers relevant to Borough's priority sectors.	Q2 22	Q4 22	£250,000 pilot scheme lifelong learning vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of people achieving completion certificates</li> <li>Is anyone better off?</li> <li>Improvement in borough working age skills levels</li> </ul>
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Strategic Priority 3: To support delivery of Employability NI							
Indicators		% Increased awareness of regional programmes within local area (LMP) # LMP referrals to regional programmes (LMP) # Participants on ApprenticeshipsNI (NINIS - LGD2014) # Participants on regional programmes (i.e. WRES, Jobstart etc)					
Theme	Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance Measures	Reporting Quarter
<b>Co-design/support intervention measures</b>	As ESF programmes wind down and are replaced with a (as yet uncertain) successor programme, Co-design appropriate supports and lead their delivery.	<b>SP3.1:</b> Co-design ESF Successor supports.	Q3 21	Q4 22	N/A Officer time	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># employability supports (childcare, transport, IT) provided</li> </ul>	<b>2, 4</b>
		<b>SP3.2:</b> Employment barrier removal: Childcare, 'distance' and disability are key barriers to employment across NI. The LMP will provide financial assistance to aid the removal of these barriers and ensure online delivery of programmes is available, including support with IT equipment to recipients.	Q3 21	Q4 22	Q4 22	How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># moving through training into employment</li> </ul> Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of claimants who gain employment by claimant type (by ESA, JSA, etc.)</li> <li>Increase in employment rate</li> <li>Increase in job quality (hours, salary, satisfaction etc.)</li> </ul>	



- Increase in claimants' confidence, skills and efficacy
- Reduction in businesses reporting skills gaps



# Appendices

# Appendix 1 – Consultees

- Invest NI
- NWRC
- NRC
- DfC
- University of Ulster
- JBO
- DAERA
- Causeway Coasts and Glens Council Officers
- Roe Valley Community Education Forum Ltd
- BCW Training Ltd
- Roe Valley Learning Community
- Cafre (College of agri,food and rural enterprise)
- The Springboard Charity & Springboard UK Ltd

# Appendix 2 – Statistical Assessment

Various labour market data sources have been assessed and presented in an accompanying spreadsheet covering:

- Number of Employee Jobs by District Council Area
- Number of Employee Jobs by District Council Area and Industry Section
- Labour Market Structure:
  - Total 16+population ('000s)
  - Total 16 – 64 population ('000s)
  - Economically active (16+) ('000s)
  - In employment (16+) ('000s)
  - In full-time employment (16+) ('000s)
  - In part-time employment (16+) ('000s)
  - Economically inactive (16+) ('000s)
  - Economic activity rate (16+)
  - Economic activity rate (16 - 64)
  - Employment rate (16+)
  - Employment rate (16 - 64)
  - Achieved NVQ level 4 and above (16 - 64)
  - Achieved below NVQ level 4 (16 - 64)
  - No qualifications (16 - 64)
- Claimant Count data by Local Government District area
- Youth Unemployment
- Long Term unemployment
- Confirmed redundancies by Local Government District area
- Average Annual Salaries
- Furlough Scheme uptake by Local Government District area

The accompanying spreadsheet has been provided to Council as an Excel file.

# Labour Market Context – Northern Ireland

## Current Outlook

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Northern Ireland labour market had been recording strong growth and improvement across a range of indicators, despite the economy operating in an environment of heightened uncertainty. Brexit, a lower growth global environment and falling/stagnant labour productivity were driving slower economic growth rates<sup>7</sup>.

Despite this lower growth environment the Northern Ireland and UK Labour Market has seen substantial recovery following the Great Financial Crash, with Northern Ireland having created 101,955 jobs since 2012 – the beginning of the recovery. Almost 2 jobs have been created for every 1 job lost during the recession<sup>8</sup>. This exceptional level of recovery also impacted upon other labour market indicators, with Northern Ireland seeing a continual setting of employment rate records, with the employment rate even reaching unprecedented highs of 72.5% in December 2019 to February 2020. In comparison, during the recession (June 2009 to August 2009) the employment rate fell to 64.1%. To put this in perspective, the change in employment rate reflects 107,000 additional people finding employment

Similarly, Northern Ireland's unemployment rate also reaped the benefit of this rapid job creation with the unemployment rate falling to 2.3% in August-October 2019<sup>9</sup>, having reached highs of 8.1% (October 2010-December 2010) during the recession, with as many as 47,000 people moving from being classed as unemployed into another category. Unlike employment and unemployment rates, the level of economically inactive has remained relatively stable in Northern Ireland, with current levels being 27% (September 2020-November 2020). Northern Ireland's economic inactivity rates are consistently above the UK average<sup>10</sup>, ranging from 25% to 32% since the 1980's.

However, given the current context and the changes the labour market has faced in light of the global pandemic, the level of expansion the Northern Ireland labour market experienced has been significantly impacted and reversed. To highlight the significant impact Covid-19 has had on the Northern Ireland economy, Figure 3.1 shows the vast change in the NI Composite Economic Indicator (NICEI) series over recent quarters. Since the beginning of the pandemic and lockdown in March 2020, the NICEI fell by a combined 15% across Q1 and Q2 2020. However, due to the easing of restrictions and the opening up of the economy in Q3 2020, the economy rebounded in part due to the reopening of non-essential shops and the increase in consumer confidence, with the economy growing by 15.4% between Q2 and Q3.

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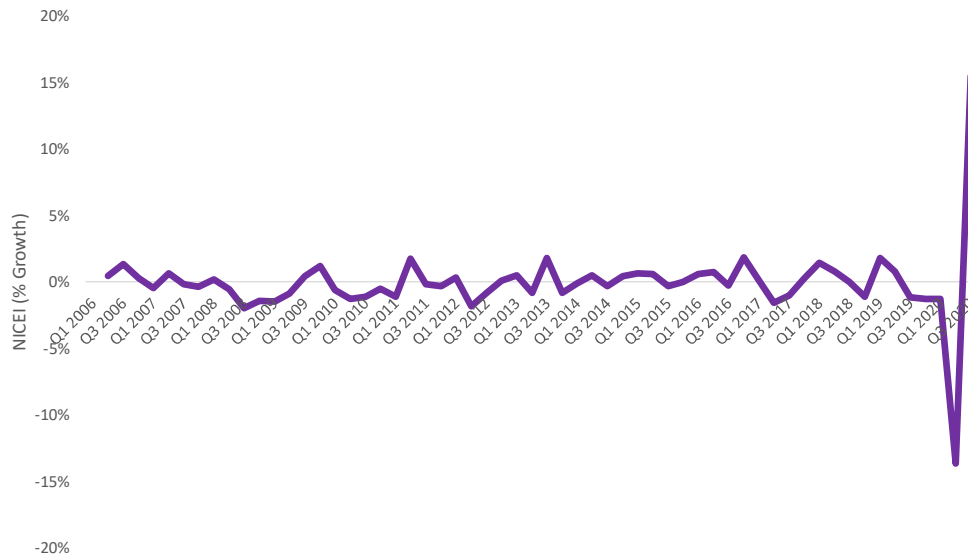
<sup>7</sup> The Labour Market Story: The UK Following Recession; UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2014); [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/344439/The\\_Labour\\_Market\\_Story\\_-\\_The\\_UK\\_Following\\_Recession.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344439/The_Labour_Market_Story_-_The_UK_Following_Recession.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> In total between 2008 and 2012, Northern Ireland lost 59,699 jobs.

<sup>9</sup> Labour Force Survey Time Series Data January 2021; NISRA (2021); <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/labour-force-survey-time-series-data-january-2021>

<sup>10</sup> Current economic inactivity rates in the UK stand at 20.7% (September 2020-November 2020) [Northern Ireland Labour Market Report; NISRA (2021); <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/labour-market-report-january-2021.pdf>]

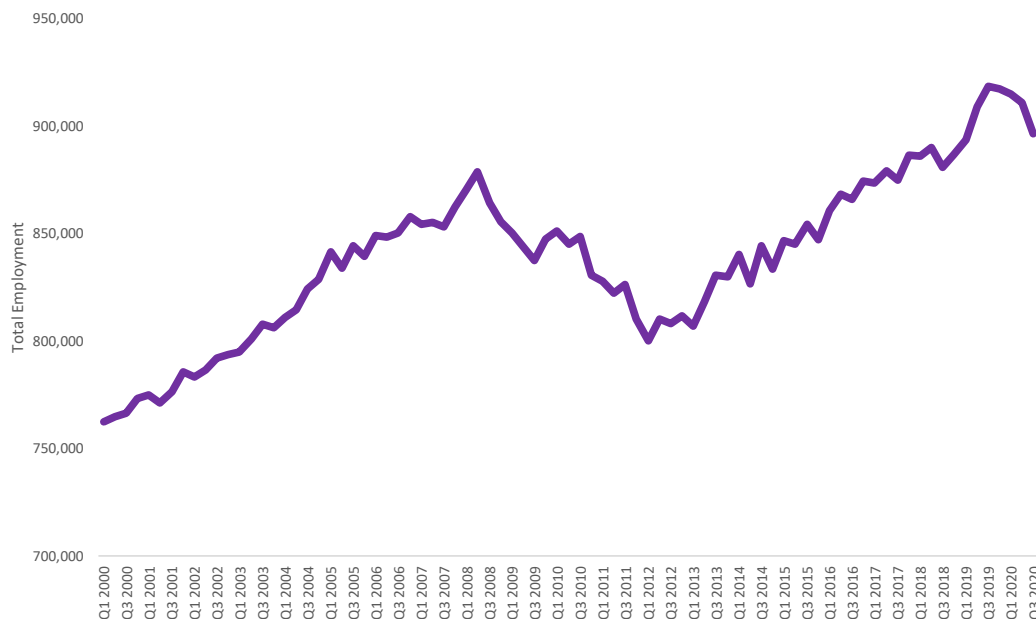
**Figure A2.1: NICEI Economic Growth (%), Northern Ireland, Q1 2006-Q3 2020**



**Source:** NISRA & Grant Thornton Analysis

Covid-19 has also impacted labour market performance dramatically. Northern Ireland has lost 20,618 jobs since Q4 2019. The trend in the level of total employment can be seen in Figure A2.2, with peak employment being reached just prior to the pandemic, and current employment levels are now akin to Q1 2019 levels.

**Figure A2.2: Total Employment, Northern Ireland, Q1 2000-Q3 2020**

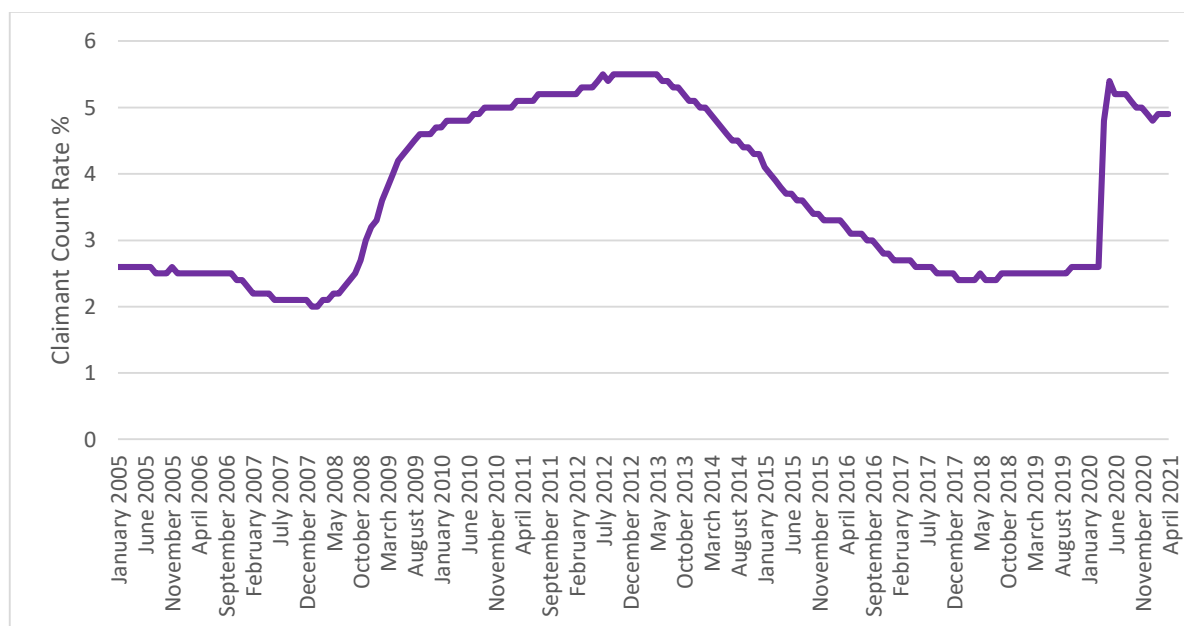


**Source:** NOMIS (Workforce Jobs) & Grant Thornton Analysis

The employment rate now stands at 70.6% (September-November 2020), which represents a 1.9% point fall from high of 72.5% in December 2019-February 2020. Similarly, as the employment rate has fallen, the level of unemployed has increased to 4.9% in April 2021, up from 2.6% in March 2020, which translates to 27,000 people being added to the unemployment register since the beginning of the pandemic. The impact could potentially have been worse without the interventions to protect jobs with these including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, better known as the furlough scheme. As of December 2020, there were 94,800 employees on furlough throughout Northern Ireland, with this representing a 12% take-up of the total employment eligible for furlough (791,000). The introduction of this scheme has gone some way to curtail and delay potential job losses that would have been lost as

a result of the pandemic. However, as the scheme ends (currently expected in September 2021) there is a risk that a proportion of jobs that had been protected due to the scheme will be lost.

**Figure A2.3: Claimant Count Rate (%), Northern Ireland, April 1997-April 2021**



**Source:** NISRA & Grant Thornton Analysis

Those most affected by the pandemic has been young people, with much of the change in the number of claimants since March 2020 having been driven by those aged 16-24 (6,245) and 25-49 (15,455). The main reason for this is due to the high proportion of young people working in sectors that have been most impacted by lockdown restrictions (such as Hospitality and Retail). These two sectors were responsible for almost 50% of all furlough staff in December 2020. This assertion was backed up by research conducted by the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC), which found that during the lockdown 40% of those aged under 25 had been furloughed or laid-off compared to 25% of those aged 45 to 54<sup>11</sup>.

### Skills Needs & Future Demand

The future outlook of the Northern Ireland labour market will be dependent upon how quickly the Covid-19 pandemic ends and responses to combat the main economic challenges which have presented themselves during the pandemic. There still have been shifts in the labour market which had begun prior to the pandemic, such as the increased need for programmers, data analytics, etc. To profile the future labour market needs in terms of skills and occupations, the UUEPC conducted research to profile the future skills and needs of the Northern Ireland labour market as part of their Skills Barometer<sup>12</sup> research. Under their high-growth scenario the UUEPC estimate that there will an additional 85,000 net new jobs created over the 2018-2028 period<sup>13</sup>. Sectors such as ICT are experiencing the highest level of expansion, with the ICT sector forecast to grow by 50%. Similar expansions are expected in other 'high productivity' sectors such as Professional, Scientific & Technical Services. In terms of job roles and skills requirements in this occupation grouping, it encompasses accountants, marketers, lawyers, management consultants, architects etc. The skills profile here is typically degree level.

<sup>11</sup> Labour Market Implications of Covid-19-19; Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (2020);

[https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/578263/Covid-19-19-Worker-characteristics\\_08.06.2020.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/578263/Covid-19-19-Worker-characteristics_08.06.2020.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Northern Ireland Skills Barometer: Summary Report; Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (2019); <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Skills-Barometer-2019-Summary-Report.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> However, it should be considered as this analysis was conducted prior to the pandemic it doesn't include the Covid-19 impacts.

Manufacturing will also continue on its strong growth from the recession. However, this is likely to have been impacted due to lockdown measures and social distancing measures.

In terms of future occupation demand, higher skilled occupations such as Managers, Professionals and Associate Professionals will account for the majority of employment growth. With sectors such as the scientific and technological sector seeing the highest level of growth, with the sector forecast to grow by almost a third over the next 10 years. Whereas lower skilled occupations such as Retail, Agriculture, etc. will have a much more subdued outlook, with retail only expected to grow by 2,410 jobs. The move within the Northern Ireland labour market to an increased need for higher skilled workers will become more evident as the UUEPC expect that only 1 in 10 of future vacancies will be accessible for those with an NVQ level 2 or below. 1 in every 3 job vacancies advertised will require at least an undergraduate level degree. Skills and employability programme therefore have to reflect this emerging context.

This research highlighted the future shift of the labour market and the economy to a more skill based economy, however it should be noted that as the impacts of Covid-19 on skills and future skills demand are yet to be fully understood, Covid-19 could shift these requirements further in part due to the increased shift to remote working and increased need/preference for IT skills/infrastructure.



