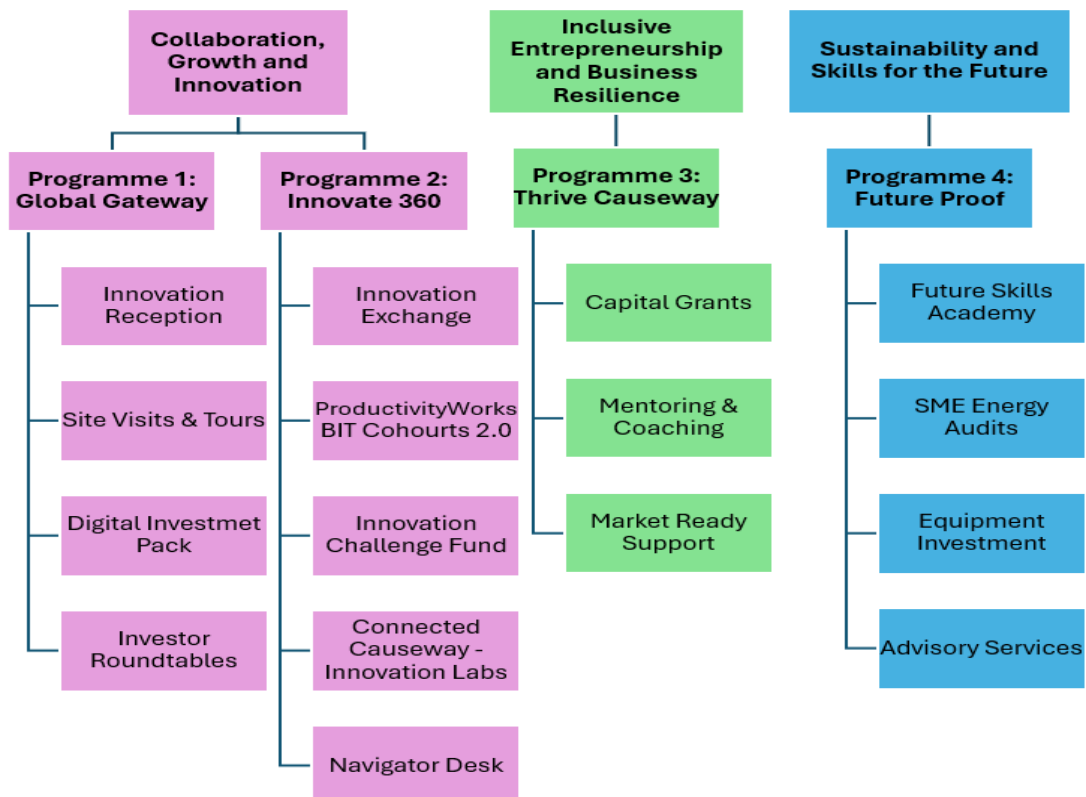


## Annex 2 Proposed Programmes

The Causeway Coast and Glens Local Economic Partnership has developed four targeted programmes to address the Borough’s most pressing economic challenges and opportunities. These programmes are the product of detailed strategic analysis and extensive engagement with businesses and stakeholders during August and September 2025. They respond directly to structural issues such as low productivity, high economic inactivity, and sectoral reliance on low-margin activities, while leveraging local strengths in tourism, agri-food, and emerging green technologies. Each programme is designed to deliver measurable outcomes within the funding window and to lay the foundations for long-term transformation, aligning with the Department for the Economy’s priorities of productivity, good jobs, decarbonisation, and regional balance.

Global Gateway positions the Borough for inward investment and buyer engagement through curated events, digital investor assets, and structured follow-up. Innovate360 accelerates innovation and productivity by connecting SMEs to anchor-sponsored challenges, applied training, and paid pilot pathways. Thrive Causeway enables rural and tourism enterprises to diversify and become market-ready through scaled capital grants and embedded mentoring. FutureProof tackles energy cost pressures and skills gaps by combining diagnostics, mobile green skills delivery, and audit-linked implementation. Together, these programmes form a coherent, mutually reinforcing portfolio that prioritises impact, deliverability, and community wealth building, supported by strong partnerships with FE Colleges, Local Enterprise Agencies, and the Causeway Chamber.



In addition to the above, to ensure the Local Economic Partnership remains agile and responsive to emerging priorities, a £200,000 capital funding pot is proposed. This allocation will provide flexibility to address critical challenges identified through recent engagement and strategic analysis, including short-term activation of vacant town centre properties to support business growth, exploratory work on industrial 5G/6G connectivity projects, and a scoping study on property and infrastructure constraints, estimated at a minimum of £50,000. While these examples are not exhaustive, the fund will enable the Council and its partners to seize time-sensitive opportunities, strengthen the enabling environment for investment, and accelerate innovation-led regeneration. This approach maximises impact without diluting the core programme structure and ensures that the LEP can adapt to unforeseen needs while maintaining compliance and value-for-money principles.

## Programme 1 – Global Gateway

### Proposed FDI-Focused Intervention for LEP Action Plan

#### Title: *CC&G International Investment & Innovation Showcase – The Open 2025 Platform*

#### Overview

Leverage the global spotlight of The Open Championship in Portrush (July 2025) to host a targeted investment and innovation showcase, positioning Causeway Coast & Glens as a destination for ethical AI, sustainable energy, agri-tech, and tourism innovation. This aligns with:

- The LEP’s vision of “*a bold, connected economy where businesses lead, ideas flourish, and people prosper.*”
- The Council’s strategic ambition to be a testbed for innovation and attract FDI in high-value sectors
- Use activity to showcase both the major Region Deal projects, both Foodovation and Food & Drug Discovery
- The FDI Action Plan’s goals to host delegations, define the borough’s offer, and convert leads into investment

#### Key Components

Element	Description	Funding Type
<b>Innovation Reception</b>	Invite global investors, DBT, Invest NI, and sector leaders to a curated evening event showcasing CC&G’s assets and opportunities	Resource
<b>Site Visits &amp; Sector Tours</b>	Host targeted visits to AICC, Atlantic Link, Foodovation, and tourism assets	Capital (transport/logistics)
<b>Digital Investment Pack</b>	Develop a high-impact digital brochure and investor portal with sector propositions and case studies	Capital
<b>Diaspora Engagement</b>	Invite NI diaspora business leaders to reconnect and explore investment opportunities	Resource
<b>Investor Roundtables</b>	Host thematic discussions on ethical AI, green energy, and agri-tech with Ulster University and industry	Resource
<b>Follow-Up Account Management</b>	Assign a dedicated Council officer to manage investor leads post-event	Resource

## Strategic Value

- Proves additionality: Builds on national efforts by DBT and Invest NI, but delivers localised engagement and sector-specific propositions
- Meets LEP goals: Drives innovation, collaboration, and business-led growth
- Delivers within timeframe: Planning begins Q4 2024; event delivered July 2025; follow-up managed through March 2028
- Subsidy compliant: No direct financial support to investors; all activity is promotional, infrastructure, or engagement-based

### Flagship+ (international media moment; highest conversion potential)

- Total: £350k (suggest seeking co-funding with The Honourable the Irish Society)
  - Revenue/Resource: £300k  
Includes paid international investor marketing (US/EU), concierge-level programme, expanded production, senior MC/moderation
  - Capital: £50k  
Investor portal + asset library in multiple languages, sector films, 3D site visualisations; exhibition-grade stands

What it looks like: 120–150 investor/partner delegates; multi-venue showcase; co-branded with national partners. Using the impact and visibility of the Borough from the 2025 Open at Royal Portrush and will require significant co-operation from Ulster University, Invest NI and DBT to deliver. For benchmark the 2023 NI Investment Summit cost around £2m.

### What impact can you reasonably expect?

Measure outputs, leading to outcomes and therefore impact using the same concepts DBT uses (projects, jobs, GVA, capex), so results align with national reporting

Outputs (0–6 months)

- Investors engaged (named firms, markets, sectors)
- Delegates (investors, DBT, Invest NI, diaspora)
- 1:1 meetings and site tours completed
- Media reach; investor-portal visits & downloads

Indicative ranges:

- Flagship+: 120–150 delegates | 200–260 1:1s | up to 6 site tours

Outcomes (6–24 months)

- Marketing-qualified leads (MQLs) → sales-qualified leads (SQLs) (firms with timetabled follow-ups)
- Prospectuses issued / NDAs signed / data-room access
- Live proposals (pilot/testbed, JV, expansion, greenfield)

### **Is this speculative—or measurable?**

It's measurable. This is a lightweight but rigorous M&E framework tied to DBT/Invest NI practice and NI business-case guidance:

### **Before the event (baseline)**

- Define target lists with DBT & Invest NI; pre-qualify “priority investors”
- Set KPIs and stage-gates (Lead to MQL to SQL to Proposal to Landed)
- Configure a simple CRM & data standard so everything is attributable (Council as data owner; DBT/Invest NI where involved)
- Align with Better Business Cases NI/NIGEAE for proportionate appraisal and post-project evaluation

### **During the event**

- Capture attendance, meetings, site-tour participation; collect opt-ins for follow-up; record sector interest and timeframes

### **After the event (12–24 months)**

- Account management cadence (30/90/180-day follow-ups), pipeline health checks, and conversion reporting to DBT standards (projects, jobs, GVA, capex)
- Take a cue from the NI Investment Summit 2023 evaluation: set clear targets (attendance, sector coverage), gather structured feedback, and plan legacy tracking for economic impact
- Be mindful that the Public Accounts Committee has urged stronger attribution/evaluation for investment promotion—our framework is designed to answer exactly those questions

### **Subsidy control and compliance**

- Activities like generic promotion, place-marketing, investor engagement, information provision, site tours and portals open to multiple firms are typically not subsidies if they *do not* confer a selective economic advantage to a specific enterprise. Keep the offer open, transparent, and non-discriminatory, and document the four-limb test
- If any direct financial support to named firms is contemplated (e.g., cash grants), a Subsidy Control self-assessment (and publication on the database where applicable) is required; we’re not proposing that here

### **Why this is timely?**

- The Open 2025 provided a global window when investor attention and media are already focused on the area
- Invest NI Strategy 2024–27 emphasises a more regionally balanced model and partnership delivery, this event is a practical, co-owned mechanism to deliver that at borough level

### **Risks & mitigations**

- Investor attendance risk: lock in via DBT/Invest NI channels plus diaspora business leaders; provide high-value site tours
- Attribution risk: adopt DBT definitions/CRM from day one; agree joint attribution protocols
- Compliance risk: keep activities non-selective and documented under Subsidy Control guidance

## **Programme 2 Innovate360**

### **Proposed Competitiveness & Growth Accelerator Focus for LEP Action Plan**

#### **Title: Accelerating innovation, productivity, and collaboration across the CC&G economy**

Innovate360 is a joined-up platform to help CC&G firms solve real problems, win real contracts, and lift productivity. It brings anchor buyers and public bodies to the table via Innovation Exchange challenges, couples that with BIT/lean cohorts to hard-wire process gains on shopfloors and in service ops, and deploys a small innovation challenge fund so SMEs can rapidly prototype with FE/HE expertise. CONNECTED-style showcase & buyer labs widen market access, while a dedicated Challenge Catalyst Fund underwrites the last mile—from prototype to pilot—so solutions don't stall at “interesting” and can move to proof of concept quicker. This will also lift potential for business in the Agri-Food sector to engage and participate in the Region Deal project at Limavady. A small Navigator Desk will provide mentoring and coaching while it keeps firms moving through the pipeline and the Impact Lab verifies outcomes so we can demonstrate value for money within the funding window and beyond.

What's genuinely additional?

- Paid pilot pathway: ring-fenced funds and lightweight contracts to move from concept to in-situ demonstrations.
- Buyer-ready challenges: more anchor/public sponsors, standard IP/commercial terms, and a cadence that ends with procurement-ready artefacts.
- Embedded delivery: BIT cohorts applied to live challenge sponsors' value streams, not generic training; Innovation Challenge funds include hands-on technical time (tooling, test rigs, data).
- Brokerage & measurement: the Navigator Desk actively routes firms to Invest NI, InterTrade, KTP, SBRI etc.; the Impact Lab tracks hard metrics so learning loops back into delivery.

### **Programme Components**

#### **Innovation Exchange**

What it is: A challenge-led marketplace where anchor firms & public bodies post problems; local SMEs and researchers co-develop solutions through 3 staged sprints:

- Discover (4–6 wks): problem framing, data access, site walks
- Develop (6–8 wks): solution design, rapid prototype, business case
- Demonstrate (8–12 wks): paid pilot on sponsor site (via Catalyst Fund see later in programme detail)

Innovation Exchange is currently delivered in Ireland by Skillnet / Futurus. At the Innovation Exchange members benefit from a structured and supported process for understanding corporate innovation challenges, developing appropriate solutions and

getting deals done. The benefits for scaling companies extend way beyond signing a contract. By building the right capabilities and engaging with prospective customers via the Innovation Exchange, scaling companies can gather valuable industry insights, market intelligence and direct feedback, benefiting product development and sales and marketing strategy.

*Delivery detail:* 3 cycles/year × 6–8 challenges each (incl. public-sector challenges). 10–15 SMEs per challenge at Discover to 3–5 to Develop to 1–2 paid pilots. Standard IP/licensing templates; privacy & data-sharing protocols; supplier onboarding pack.

*Outputs (p.a.):* 20–24 challenges; 60–80 SMEs to Develop; 25–35 paid pilots (see later)

*Budget :* £200k (£60k resource facilitation, legal/IP, platform ops; £140k capital prototyping materials, test fixtures, data/connectivity, sponsor-site setup)

### **ProductivityWorks – BIT Cohorts 2.0**

*What it is:* Sector-specific BIT/lean cohorts (manufacturing, food, construction, tourism ops) that apply tools to live sponsor value streams—OEE uplift, scrap/defect reduction, changeover time, service throughput. Includes on-site diagnostics, supervisor coaching, and digital lean (e.g., basic MES/OEE logging). This is about soft / transversal skills, building employee resilience, labour market mobility and creating improvement through skills that are sector agnostic.

*Outputs (average p.a.):* 6 cohorts × 12 firms; 72 firms; 300+ staff trained; typical 5–15% productivity uplift; 10–20% lead-time reduction in targeted cells/steps. All achieving an NVQ level 2 or 3 qualification that is transferable

*Budget (average p.a.):* £147.5k (£42.5k resource delivery; £105k capital for demo kits, sensors, visual boards, Innovation Coaching).

### **Innovation Challenge Fund (with Embedded Technical Time)**

*What it is:* £100k challenge fund routed through FE/HE with embedded expert days (sector specific). Optional top-up micro-grants for consumables, prototype tooling, user testing. Prioritised for those that would have potential in either of the two agreed region growth deal projects: Food & Drug Discovery and Foodovaiton. It would however benefit multiple sectors and can build on a similar concept within the DfE Connected programme.

*Outputs (average p.a.):* 4-6 projects; ≥60% progress to TRL 6–7; IP disclosures or route to KTP/INI innovation schemes.

*Budget (average p.a.):* £110k (£10k resource brokerage/QA; £100k capital for voucher awards & prototyping).

### **Connected Causeway – Showcases & Buyer Labs**

What it is: Quarterly mini-expos (50–100 delegates) with challenge sponsors, buyers, funders; includes reverse pitches, “ask an engineer” clinics, and a Demo Dozen zone for working prototypes. It would also allow the FE Colleges, universities, Invest NI, InterTrade Ireland and the growth deal projects to showcase their work and activity. These could be ran via the DfE Connected programme. They currently find these events always over subscribed.

Outputs (average p.a.): 1 - 2 events; 100–150 business engagements; 15–25 rapid buyer consultations; 8–12 new buyer–supplier matches.

Budget (average p.a.): £30k (£25k resource event delivery; £5k capital portable demo/branding assets)

### **Challenge Catalyst Fund – Prototype-to-Pilot Conversion**

What it is: Competitive micro-contracts to pay for in-situ trials that emerge from Innovation Exchange projects. Awards would be to support businesses develop their technology or product (up to £25k), covering instrumentation, safety & compliance, pilot integration, short-term insurances, materials and university or FE college support costs (to a point, would not be 100% for any party).

Governance: Transparent scoring (technical merit, ROI/benefit, additionality, scale-up potential). Lightweight Ts&Cs and post-pilot adoption plan.

Outputs (average p.a.): 3-4 paid pilots; ≥40% proceed to commercial PO or Phase-2 deployment within 6–12 months

Budget (average p.a.): £100k (£100k capital - micro-contracts/pilot costs)

This may be a challenge for subsidy and keeping a light touch bureaucracy. It would however be a way to prime activity and interest and demonstrate or test how much interest there is in with the Foodovation project and the concept of an Innovation Hub for Coleraine.

### **Navigator Desk – Innovation Brokerage & Account Management**

What it is: A small, proactive mentoring and coaching resource that routes firms through the pipeline (Exchange → Voucher → Pilot → Buyer), aligns with Invest NI, InterTrade, KTP/SBRI pathways, and curates sector clusters (food, tourism, manufacturing, construction). This could sit with the FDI resource or help create a number of FTE resources to both and build engagement with wider networks. Could also work alongside Funding Team to identify future funding opportunities.

Outputs (p.a.): 200–300 assisted brokerages; 50–90 formal referrals; 15–25 external funding applications supported

Budget (p.a.): £40k resource (brokers, CRM, comms), 5k capital for online tools

### ***Impact Lab – Evaluation & Learning***

What it is: A simple M&E spine: dashboards for OEE, defects, lead time, cost-to-serve, export wins, plus challenge conversion rates (Lead→MQL→SQL→PO). Case-study “playbooks” captured each cycle to accelerate replication. Could be done through UUEPC.

Outputs (average p.a.): 4 quarterly dashboards; 12–16 case studies; 1 annual learning report.

Budget (average p.a.): £10k resource (analytics, design, dissemination)

### **Budget summary**

Component	Capital (£)	Resource (£)	Total (£)
Innovation Exchange	280,000	120,000	400,000
ProductivityWorks – BIT Cohorts 2.0	210,000	85,000	295,000
Innovation Challenge Fund	200,000	20,000	220,000
Connected Causeway – Showcases & Buyer Labs	10,000	50,000	60,000
Challenge Catalyst Fund (Prototype-to-Pilot)	200,000	0	200,000
Navigator Desk – Brokerage & Account Management	0	80,000	80,000
Impact Lab – Evaluation & Learning	0	20,000	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>900,000</b>	<b>375,000</b>	<b>1,275,000</b>

There will need to be continued monitoring of spend, particularly around innovation activity being deemed capital in DfE activity.

### **Compliance & Additionality Summary**

- **Open, non-selective access** to challenges/events; **transparent scoring** for pilots and vouchers.
- **No direct firm subsidy** outside published criteria; pilot contracts delivered via standard, competition-based micro-procurement.
- **Additionality** is explicit: paid pilot pathway, embedded technical time, applied BIT on live sponsor problems, and structured brokerage to higher-level supports.

## Programme 3: Thrive Causeway

### A Capital Led Programme for Cross Borough Business Growth

**Title: Targeted programme to diversify their offerings, extend seasonality, and build long-term resilience**

**Thrive Causeway** is a focused, capital-led programme that enables local enterprises to **diversify, modernise and launch market-ready products/experiences**. It replaces micro-grants with **larger, outcome-oriented capital awards** and couples this with a **dedicated Mentoring & Coaching resource** embedded in Council and delivered in partnership with Local Enterprise Agencies (LEAs). The aim is **impact with pace**: simpler applications, proportionate evidence, and every award linked to a **live route-to-market** (e.g., booking/retail channels).

### Rationale for Thrive Causeway

Thrive Causeway is designed as a **targeted capital intervention** because evidence from the strategic analysis and stakeholder engagement shows that many local enterprises, particularly in tourism, hospitality, and rural sectors, face structural barriers to diversification and growth. These businesses often operate on thin margins, with limited borrowing capacity and restricted access to commercial finance. Without catalytic capital support, the risk is that they remain locked into low-value, seasonal models. By providing **larger, outcome-linked grants**, the programme enables firms to make step-change investments in product development, quality improvements, and digital readiness that would otherwise be out of reach. This is not about subsidy for survival; it is about **unlocking private co-investment and accelerating readiness for market opportunities**, ensuring that public funds leverage measurable business outcomes.

The programme's design goes beyond transactional grant-giving. Every award is tied to **mentoring and market-ready support**, ensuring that capital spend translates into **new revenue streams, extended trading periods, and improved competitiveness**. This integrated approach addresses the root causes of fragility, low productivity, over-reliance on peak season, and limited digital capability, by combining financial enablement with capability building. In doing so, Thrive Causeway directly supports the LEP's "Turning the Curve" ambition: shifting key indicators such as business survival, off-season revenue, and GVA contribution in a positive direction. The model draws on the principles of the **LEADER approach**, community-led, locally informed, and focused on diversification—but adapts them for a more commercial, outcomes-driven context. It prioritises **impact over volume**, ensuring that fewer, larger interventions deliver visible change and create a stronger platform for future growth.

### What's genuinely additional?

- **Scaled capital**: moving from micro-awards to **£15k–£30k tiers** so investments are material enough to change capacity, quality and offering.

- **Embedded capability:** a **Council-employed Mentoring & Coaching** function (with LEAs) for **pre-award planning** and **post-award adoption**, ensuring ROI from capital.
- **Simplified access:** short, investigate possibility of **5-question application**, and **advanced milestone payments** with light evidence (photos, commissioning note, live listing/route-to-market).

## Programme Components

### ***Capital Diversification Grants (CDG)***

***What it is:*** Tiered **capital awards** for equipment and fit-out that enable **new products, added capacity, quality improvements** and **market-readiness** (e.g., production/serving kit, small-scale premises adaptations directly linked to the offer, digital-ready infrastructure such as POS/booking hardware).

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** 30 to 40 capital projects; 15 to 30 new or materially improved products/experiences

***Budget (average p.a.):*** £650k capital

### ***Mentoring & Coaching Hub (Council & LEAs)***

***What it is:*** A **Council-employed** specialist (with LEA delivery) providing **pre-award readiness** (investment planning, compliance, procurement tips) and **post-award coaching** (pricing, digital listings, packaging/merchandising, launch plans). Capped at **up to 6 hours per firm** to stay lean.

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** Up to 60 businesses supported; all grantees receive at least one targeted coaching session mapped to their capital spend.

***Budget (average p.a.):*** £35k resource (1 FTE + session delivery).

### ***Market-Ready Support (Vendor Panel linked to Causeway Chamber)***

***What it is:*** Light, **pre-procured vendor packages** to finish the job: compliance checks (H&S, accessibility, insurances), **booking/retail channel enablement** (OTA setup, inventory sync, payments), and **brand/asset touch-ups** (photography, copy) so funded products go live.

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** All grantees leave with a live listing or equivalent route-to-market; over 30 listings created/refreshed across the cohort.

***Budget (average p.a.):*** £15k resource

### Delivery notes and fixes to known issues

- **Simple, proportionate process:** investigate possibility of 5-question form → **10-day decision** → **70/30 milestone payments** (order proof; completion photos + live link). \*Must adhere with councils' requirements.
- **Clear eligibility & scoring:** borough location; sectors in scope; match funding confirmed; scoring on **additionality, readiness, value for money**.
- **Evidence that fits the work:** before/after images, commissioning note, booking/retail link; **90-day revenue snapshot in bands** (no sensitive raw data).
- **No proliferation of activity:** three components only; mentoring is integrated, not a separate scheme; vendor panel is call-off, not a new grant.

### Indicative KPIs (programme-level, 24 months)

*(Adjusted for remaining LEP funding window)*

**Capital projects funded: 30 to 40**

**Businesses mentored/coached: up to 60**

**New/updated products & experiences: 15 to 30**

**Median revenue uplift (grantees): +10–15%**

### Thrive Causeway Budget Breakdown

Component	Capital (£)	Resource (£)	Total (£)
Capital Diversification Grants (CDG)	1,300,000	-	1,300,000
Mentoring & Coaching Hub (Council × LEAs)	-	70,000	70,000
Market-Ready Support (Vendor Panel)	-	30,000	30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>1,400,000</b>

### Alignment & Compliance

- **Open, non-selective** application windows; **transparent criteria** and published unit rules
- Capital awards follow standard **asset retention** and **claw back for non-delivery**; mentoring and vendor support are service-based (resource)
- Format and component structure align with **FutureProof** and **Innovate360** for governance and reporting consistency across the Action Plan

## **Programme 4: FutureProof:**

### **Proposed Future Skills & Energy Transition Programme**

**Title: A targeted programme to upskill the local workforce in and support SMEs to reduce energy costs and transition towards a low-carbon economy**

FutureProof scales and sharpens the council's current green support offer. It broadens access, links diagnostics to implementation with verified savings, brings mobile skills to rural firms, pilots' circularity for direct cost reduction, and unlocks grid/PPA routes to harness CC&G's exceptional renewables base. The programme's structure is designed to deliver measured cost savings, emissions reduction and capability uplift across the borough within the funding window."

FutureProof is a practical, business-led programme to cut energy costs, build green skills, and accelerate implementation of proven measures across CC&G. It responds to what local businesses told us they need, targeted diagnostics, co-funding to act, and help navigating grid/planning, and it scales up from Council's current Green Support Scheme (50 firms; technical support + small grants) by adding mobile skills delivery, audit-linked capital, circularity pilots, and a grid/renewables enablement offer.

FutureProof also tackles bottlenecks surfaced in the council funded Scoping Study and stakeholder sessions (grid headroom, lengthy planning timelines, need for co-investment and clear communications), so that firms can move from plans to action at pace.

What's genuinely additional?

- Broader eligibility & fairer access: remove the VAT-registration barrier (replace with a minimum turnover threshold) and permit farm/combined-supply premises via sub-metering, two issues that excluded willing applicants under the current scheme.
- Audit to Implement, with M&V: tie grants to the Carbon Reduction Action Plan (CRP) and measure verified savings (kWh, £, tCO<sub>2</sub>e using Utility Regulator factors).
- Mobile delivery & circularity pilots: take accredited training to rural firms and trial waste-to-value solutions that reduce disposal costs (a council pressure) and increase resilience.
- Grid-ready & renewables enablement: pooled grid studies, a club PPA option to match local generators to business demand, and standardised connection/planning packs to help shorten cycles that currently average circa 72 weeks for renewables decisions.

### **Programme Components**

#### ***FutureProof Academy – Future Skills Hubs***

***What it is:*** Short, accredited modules in digital (AI, coding, automation) and green (retrofit, PV/heat pumps, energy auditing, M&V, circularity) delivered in mobile hubs across the borough with FE partners, aligned to CRP actions and vendor-neutral best

practice.

***Additionality:*** Moves beyond classroom pilots by bringing training to rural sites, linking learners directly to audit findings and grant pipelines, and embedding measurement & verification skills locally.

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** 120–150 individuals trained; 60 firms with staff certifications; 30 on-site toolkits deployed

***Budget (average p.a.):*** £110k (£95k resource delivery & assessment; £15k capital for mobile kits)

### ***Diagnostics+ – Energy & Circularity Audits with M&V***

***What it is:*** Enhanced CRP diagnostics with instrumented audits, implementation roadmaps, and 12-month M&V to verify savings (kWh/£/tCO<sub>2</sub>e using Utility Regulator factors).

***Additionality:*** Expands volume and depth (incl. circularity scans), aligns to club procurement, and feeds grant eligibility automatically—no duplication with Invest NI; it activates it.

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** 50–65 Diagnostics+ packs; 70% progressing to grant application; M&V dashboards for all grantees

***Budget (average p.a.):*** £67.5k (£57.5k resource audits/M&V; £10k capital metering & data loggers)

### ***Implement-to-Save Grants – Audit-Linked Capital***

***What it is:*** Audit-verified co-investment for measures that pay back (LED/process optimisation, controls, heat pumps where viable, insulation, compressors/variable speed drives, energy monitoring). Two tracks:

- Core Grants: up to £10k at 50% intervention (avg. £5k award)
- Pathfinder Awards: up to £25k at 40–50% for high-energy users with strong paybacks

***Additionality:*** Larger caps than the current £5k ceiling; no VAT-only gate; farms eligible where sub-metered; monitored savings; explicit link to the CRP.

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** 45–55 Core grants + 6–8 Pathfinders; average 8–12% energy reduction for participants

***Budget (average p.a.):*** £175k capital (adjustable with demand)

### ***CircularX Sprints – Waste-to-Value Pilots***

***What it is:*** Time-boxed pilots (12–16 weeks) to reduce waste volume/costs, reuse heat, valorise by-products, or redesign packaging—run as competitive cohorts with mentoring and supplier demos.

***Additionality:*** Connects circular economy opportunities to direct OPEX savings for firms and lower waste handling costs locally.

***Outputs (average p.a.):*** 12–15 pilots; 25–35% average reduction in targeted waste stream for participants.

Budget (average p.a.): £62k (£52.5k capital micro-capex/pilot kits; £9.5k resource design/evaluation)

Grid-Ready & Renewables Enablement (PPA Club & Connections)

What it is: A support package to help firms connect and contract—grouped grid studies with NIE Networks/SONI, standard “grid-ready” packs for planning, and a club PPA (power purchase agreements) option to match local business demand with CC&G’s strong renewable generation (second-highest installed capacity in NI).

Additionality: Tackles the connection/approval friction (average renewables decision time circa 72.4 weeks) with pooled technical/legal work and a ready-to-use documentation set.

Outputs (average p.a.): 20–30 firms supported; 8–12 PPAs explored; 4–6 connections progressed to application

Budget (average p.a.): £47.5k resource (grid studies, legal templates, facilitation)

**Delivery notes and fixes to known issues**

- Eligibility reset: Replace “VAT-registered” with minimum turnover (e.g., £50k) and allow agri-businesses with shared supply if sub-metered—directly addressing the early scheme’s exclusion effects.
- From plans to action: Tie all grants to Diagnostics+ CRPs and verify outcomes via 12-month M&V (kWh, £, tCO<sub>2</sub>e using Utility Regulator fuel-mix factors).
- Communications & peer support: Build on the Go Succeed peer network but add case-study toolkits and a live pipeline dashboard to show progress and encourage replication.
- Grid & planning friction: Provide pooled studies and standard packs; coordinate NIE/SONI touchpoints given the documented capacity and timeline constraints.
- A place-based renewables angle: Use the PPA club to connect businesses with CC&G’s significant local generation base, turning a borough strength into a price-certainty benefit.

**Indicative KPIs (programme-level, three-year\*)**

- People trained (accredited): 350–450; businesses engaged in skills: 180–220.
- Diagnostics+ delivered: 220–280; audit-to-grant conversion ≥60%.
- Projects implemented: 170–210 (Core + Pathfinders); average 8–12% energy reduction in participants (M&V).
- Circular pilots: 30–40 with 25–35% waste reduction in targeted streams.
- Grid/PPA support: 60–90 firms advised; 12–20 PPA deals explored; 10–15 connection applications progressed.

*\*Due to delays in programming, 2 years projections may be utilised, this will be based off 2 Thirds the value size of those referenced above.*

**Alignment and compliance**

FutureProof aligns with DfE’s Path to Net Zero (efficiency, renewables, green economy) and the Sub-Regional Economic Plan (productivity, good jobs, decarbonisation, regional balance). Activities are open and non-selective (promotion, audits, skills, pooled

studies), with grants issued on transparent criteria; M&V assures value for money and outcomes.

### FutureProof Budget Breakdown

Component	Capital (£)	Resource (£)	Total (£)
<b>FutureProof Academy – Skills Hubs</b>	30,000	190,000	220,000
<b>Diagnostics+ – Energy &amp; Circularity Audits with M&amp;V</b>	20,000	115,000	135,000
<b>Implement-to-Save Grants (Audit-Linked)</b>	350,000	-	350,000
<b>CircularX Sprints – Waste-to-Value Pilots</b>	105,000	19,000	124,000
<b>Grid-Ready &amp; Renewables Enablement</b>	95,000	-	95,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>600,000</b>	<b>324,000</b>	<b>924,000</b>