



**Grow Causeway
Coast & Glens**

Connection | Destination | Innovation



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS GROWTH DEAL FINANCIAL DEAL

Invest, Grow, Transform

APRIL 2026



Grow Causeway Coast & Glens

Connection | Destination | Innovation

FUNDED BY:



Northern Ireland
Executive



UK Government



Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council

SUPPORTED BY REGIONAL
PARTNERS:



Ulster
University



north west
regional college
Derry-Londonderry • Limavady • Strabane



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FOREWORD

The signing of the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal marks a significant milestone for our Borough, representing the single largest investment package ever committed to our region. This Deal reflects a shared determination to transform the economic potential of Causeway Coast & Glens, positioning our towns, communities and industry sectors for long-term, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Through this Growth Deal, partners have secured a substantial programme of investment which will drive regeneration, innovation, tourism and improve infrastructure across the Borough. These projects are designed to stimulate new economic opportunities, attract private sector investment and support the creation of more and better jobs for local people. Collectively they will strengthen the foundations of our economy, enhance our unique natural and cultural assets and ensure our communities benefit from improved prosperity.

This moment represents the culmination of many years of collaborative working between central and local government, our education and industry partners and community stakeholders across the Borough. Together, we have developed an ambitious portfolio of catalyst projects that respond directly to the needs and potential of our region. Each project has been designed to deliver measurable economic, social and environmental impact, supporting vibrant town centres, advancing innovation, improving connectivity and building the skills and capabilities required for a competitive future economy.

The Growth Deal arrives at a critical time, offering a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate recovery, rebalance investment and unlock the full potential of Causeway Coast & Glens. The focus now shifts to delivery, progressing detailed designs, securing full financial approvals, leveraging further investment and ensuring that the benefits of this Growth Deal reach every community across the Borough.

Our ambition is clear: to build a thriving, inclusive and sustainable region that is recognised as a fantastic place to live, work, visit and invest.

We look forward to working with all partners as we move confidently into this next phase of delivery.





Our signing of this document confirms our joint commitment to full implementation of the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal. This Deal Agreement is the statement of commitment by all parties to support and deliver the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal in accordance with the terms and conditions of funding and is underpinned by a suite of detailed supplementary documents.

John O'Dowd MLA
Minister of Finance
on behalf of the NI Executive



Northern Ireland Executive

Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
on behalf of the UK Government



UK Government

Councillor Oliver McMullan
Mayor of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

David Jackson
Chief Executive of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



INTRODUCTION

The Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal represents a historic and transformational agreement between the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, and Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, together with its delivery partners. This Deal sets out a shared commitment to deliver an ambitious programme of investment designed to unlock the region's economic potential and to position Causeway Coast & Glens for long-term, inclusive and sustainable growth.



Building on the strategic priorities established within regional and local plans, the Growth Deal will deliver a suite of integrated and complementary catalyst projects across Tourism and Regeneration, Innovation & Enterprise, and Infrastructure. These investments are structured to stimulate economic activity, enhance productivity, improve connectivity, attract private sector investment, and create new employment pathways for local people. The Growth Deal is underpinned by a cross-cutting commitment to develop and deliver these projects in ways that promote environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and greater economic opportunities for all communities across the Borough.

This **£129 million investment** package comprises £36 million from the UK Government matched by £36 million from

the Northern Ireland Executive, alongside an anticipated £57 million contribution from the Council and project delivery partners including Ulster University and North West Regional College. This collective investment provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accelerate economic transformation in the region and deliver long-term benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Why a Phased Approach Has Been Adopted?

To ensure timely progress, strong governance, and effective use of public funding, the Growth Deal has been structured into two distinct phases. Phasing has enabled the more straightforward Phase One projects, those with fewer interdependencies and lower technical or delivery risk, to advance at a faster pace. This approach allows early momentum to be built, ensuring that communities begin to experience benefits sooner while maintaining programme stability.

Phase Two includes projects that are inherently more complex due to scale, design requirements, dependencies, technical considerations, and longer development timescales. These projects require more detailed feasibility work, extensive partnership coordination, and robust assurance processes to ensure they meet the highest standards of viability and value for money. The Programme Management Office continues to develop the Phase Two Outline Business Cases (OBCs), ensuring they are fully evidenced, strategically aligned, and capable of delivering sustainable long-term impact.



By adopting this phased approach, the Deal is sequenced in a way that manages risk, enables early delivery, and preserves the coherence and ambition of the overall programme. Critically, this approach also preserves the spending power of the investments against the erosion of inflation.

The Growth Deal arrives at a pivotal moment for the region. While Causeway Coast & Glens benefits from internationally recognised natural assets, a strong tourism base, and growing innovation potential, the Borough also faces significant structural challenges including rural connectivity, educational under-attainment, lower productivity, an ageing demographic, and a predominance of small and micro-businesses.

The Growth Deal's projects have therefore been designed to directly address these barriers by supporting high-value innovation, regenerating towns and villages, strengthening the visitor economy, and improving active travel and transport infrastructure. Collectively, these projects aim to deliver additional jobs, increase Gross Value Added (GVA), support new investment and business growth, and help establish a more competitive and resilient regional economy.

A strong focus on sustainability and inclusivity is central to our Growth Deal's ambitions. Delivery partners will work collaboratively with Government to ensure the projects support environmental wellbeing, contribute to net-zero objectives, embed social value, and create opportunities that reach all sections of the community. This includes all the Growth Deal

projects having to comply with a minimum standard of operational net zero (in line with Council's sustainability targets).

The Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal will be delivered through robust governance arrangements established between local and central government partners. Business cases for all projects have been developed in line with agreed processes to ensure each investment is viable, sustainable, and represents value for public money. These arrangements will provide transparency, accountability, and assurance throughout the lifetime of the Deal, ensuring that its objectives of positioning the Borough as the go-to region for both business and leisure, regenerating smaller settlements into thriving and sustainable rural economies, improving key elements of the tourism network, and enhancing employability and skills, are fully realised.

This Deal signing sets the foundation for a transformational programme that will reshape the economic trajectory of the Causeway Coast & Glens region. With commitment across Government, Council and regional partners, the Growth Deal marks the beginning of a decade of opportunity that will deliver meaningful, long-lasting benefits for communities across the Borough.



ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Despite its internationally recognised natural assets and strong tourism profile, Causeway Coast & Glens continues to face a series of deep-rooted structural challenges that inhibit inclusive and sustainable economic growth. There are a number of issues that the Growth Deal must directly address if the Borough is to fully realise its economic potential.

Low Productivity and Limited Innovation Capacity

Causeway Coast & Glens consistently performs below the Northern Ireland average on multiple productivity indicators. Labour productivity is the third lowest of all the Local Government Districts (LGDs), with output per filled job (£50,430) falling significantly below the NI average (£55,364). Business Expenditure on Research & Development (BERD) is also notably weak, at just 0.6% of output, compared with 1.5% for NI. These indicators reflect a limited local innovation ecosystem and a lack of specialist infrastructure to support higher-value activity, particularly in life sciences, agri-food innovation, digital and technology-led sectors.

Low Levels of Entrepreneurship and Business Growth

The Borough has the lowest early-stage entrepreneurial activity rate in NI (5.6%) and one of the lowest business birth rates (7.3%). Low rates of new firm formation, alongside a predominance of micro-businesses, limit productivity, business scaling, and wider private-sector dynamism. While business survival rates are comparatively strong, the pace of business growth and innovation is not keeping up with other regions.

Weak Wages and Insecure Work Levels

Residents continue to experience below-average earnings, with median weekly wages (£459.10) among the lowest in Northern Ireland. The proportion of employees earning above the Real Living Wage is also well below the NI benchmark. Causeway Coast & Glens has the lowest secure employment rate of all LGDs (93.2%), highlighting persistent challenges around job quality, seasonal work patterns, and reliance on lower-productivity sectors including retail, hospitality, and visitor accommodation.

Labour Market Imbalance and High Economic Inactivity

The Borough's employment rate (68.3%) is the third lowest regionally, while economic inactivity (30.6%) is significantly above the NI average. Female economic inactivity is particularly high at 36.4%, the second highest across Northern Ireland. These factors reduce labour market participation, household incomes, and the ability of local employers to access the talent they require.

Lower Levels of Educational Attainment and Skills Mismatch

Tertiary education attainment (Level 4+) sits well below the Northern Ireland average (35.8% vs 39.7%), limiting access to higher-value jobs and contributing to the productivity gap. While the Borough has strong Further Education and Higher Education assets, the skills pipeline does not fully align with emerging industry needs in innovation-led sectors, digital skills, or advanced manufacturing.



Vulnerability of Local Economy and Limited Sectoral Diversity

The local economy is heavily weighted towards lower-productivity service sectors and public administration. Manufacturing is smaller, relative to other districts, and there is limited representation of high-growth sectors such as Information & Communication Technologies (ICT), professional services, and advanced engineering. This lack of diversity exposes the economy to seasonal fluctuations, external shocks, and slower long-term growth.

Structural Barriers in Rurality, Connectivity and Access

The Borough's geography creates additional challenges in access to services, education, skills provision, and employment opportunities. Rural isolation contributes to higher inactivity and lower participation in training and lifelong learning. While the area benefits from strong North-Coast tourism assets, transport pressures, particularly at peak periods, limit both resident mobility and visitor flow.

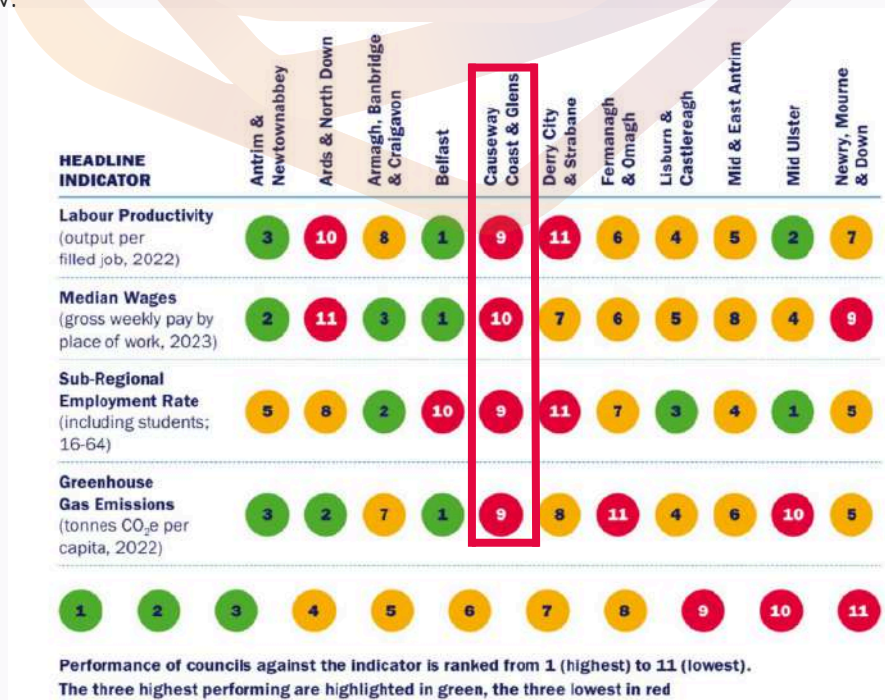
Low Disposable Income and Cost-of-Living Pressures

Causeway Coast & Glens has the second lowest gross disposable household income per head in Northern Ireland (£16,918). Lower wages, higher inactivity, and seasonal employment patterns contribute to economic vulnerability for many households, reinforcing inequalities and reducing local spending power.

Environmental Pressures Despite Strong Renewable Generation

Although the Borough is a strong performer in renewable electricity generation (16.8 MW/h per household—the second highest in NI), it also has proportionally high greenhouse gas emissions (13.5 tonnes per capita), driven largely by rural transport and agricultural activity. These create challenges for meeting climate obligations and supporting a just transition.

Source: DfE Sub-Regional Economic Plan -Technical Annex, 2025





EXECUTING THE DEAL

The progression of the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal reflects a long-term, collaborative effort to shape an ambitious programme of investment, capable of transforming the region's economic future. The journey formally began in 2019, when Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council submitted its Statement of Intent to the UK Government, setting out regional priorities and the foundational vision for a future Growth Deal for the Borough.

Over the years that followed, the Council and its delivery partners worked closely with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive to refine the strategic case for investment. This collaborative effort involved extensive research, economic analysis, community consultation, and the development of initial project concepts aligned with Government priorities and local needs.

In December 2021, the Council approved its Growth Deal Governance Framework, establishing a Growth Deal Executive Programme Board, Programme Management Office and Government Department Engagement Group. This created the structures necessary to advance work on Strategic Outline Cases, coordinate cross-departmental engagement and prepare the Deal for formal negotiation.

After extensive planning, refinement and partnership working, the Heads of Terms for the Growth Deal were formally signed in April 2024, confirming a £100 million funding package comprising £36 million from the UK Government, £36 million from the Northern Ireland Executive and approximately

£25 million in anticipated partner contributions. This milestone represented significant progress and demonstrated strong commitment from all partners to delivering transformational outcomes for the region.

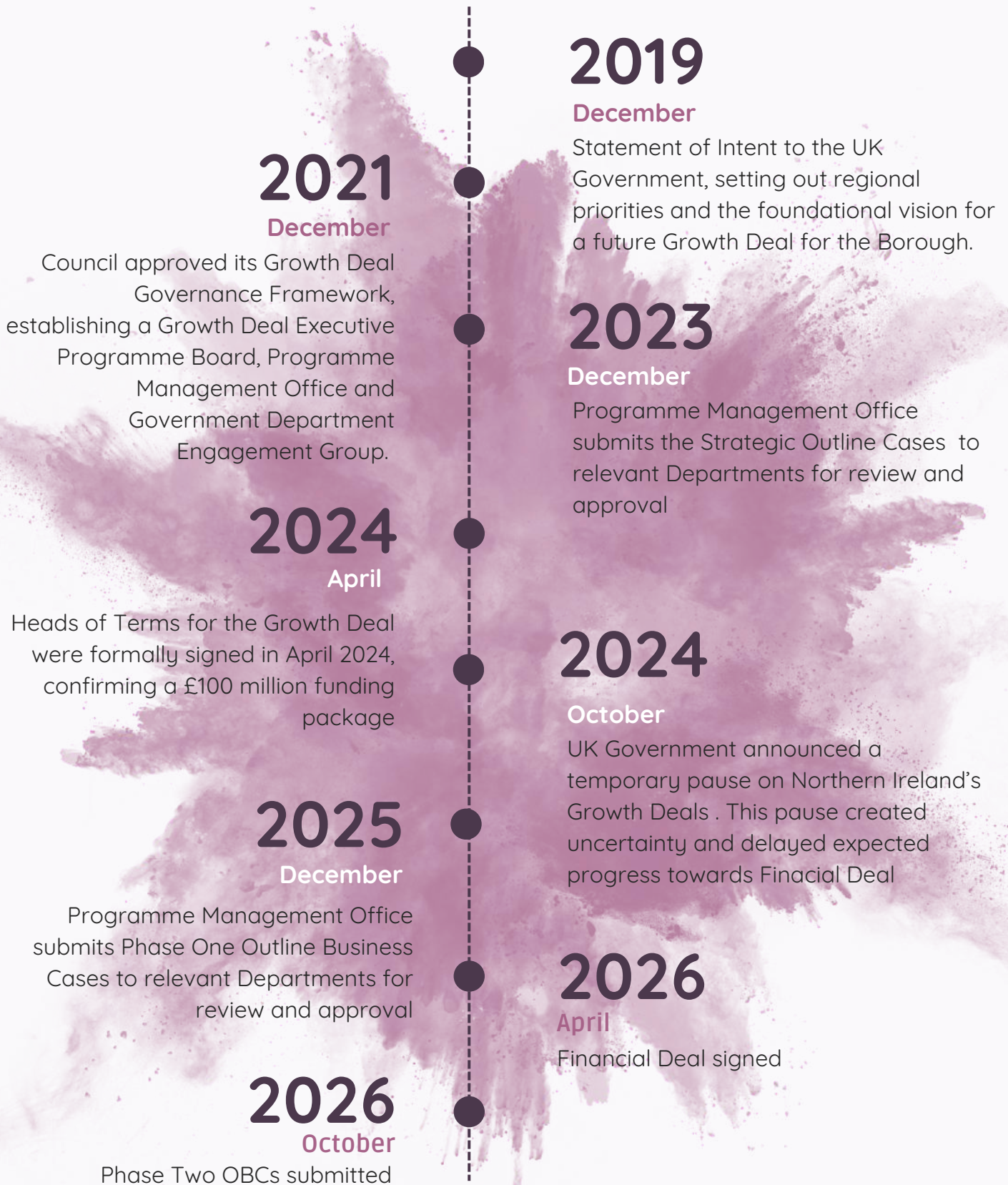
However, in September 2024, the UK Government announced a temporary pause on Northern Ireland's Growth and City Deals as part of wider fiscal consideration across Government. This pause created uncertainty and delayed expected progress towards final Deal documentation, business case assurance and project mobilisation. Despite this setback, local partners continued to engage proactively with Government, maintain programme readiness, and progress work where possible to keep the Deal on track.

Throughout this period, work continued on strengthening business case development, preparing delivery structures, assessing economic opportunities, and engaging with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that the Deal remains relevant, impactful and aligned to regional needs.

The Government lifted the pause in October 2024 which allowed the project development work to continue and the Outline Business Cases to be completed for Phase 1 projects. This Deal being signed in April 2026 is a milestone that will unlock the next critical phase of delivery, enabling Full Business Case development, procurement, design, and preparation for construction and implementation across the nine catalyst projects spanning Innovation, Tourism & Regeneration and Infrastructure.



This infographic charts that journey, highlighting the major milestones that have shaped the Growth Deal and set the stage for a decade of transformation across the Borough.





GROWTH DEAL PROJECTS

The following objectives have been set for Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal:

- Position Causeway Coast & Glens as the 'go-to' region for business and pleasure;
- Regenerate some of the area's smaller settlements into thriving and sustainable rural economies;
- Attract, support and grow more business, with a focus on export;
- Improve key elements of the tourism transport network and tourism destinations; and
- Work with education and employers to improve employability and skills.

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council has agreed nine projects for inclusion within this Financial Agreement with Government. These nine projects span three pillars:

- Innovation & Enterprise (increasing '**Innovation**');;
- Tourism & Regeneration (improving the '**Destination**'); and
- Infrastructure (more '**Connection**' of economic opportunity across the Borough).

The Innovation & Enterprise projects are aimed at supporting growth in sectors of industry and research where the Borough already has a strong track record or where there are clear gaps in provision, capacity, or investment at a local and/or Northern Ireland-wide level. Innovation is not like most other business functions and activities, in short, innovation is anything but business as usual. Collectively these projects will provide

the systematic approach which makes innovation within our local businesses a reality, not just a concept.

The Tourism & Regeneration projects present a major opportunity to tackle longstanding barriers to tourism growth and significantly enhance the region's visitor offer. In line with the Department for the Economy's emerging Tourism Strategy, the Growth Deal's Tourism & Regeneration projects aim to create a destination where tourism and hospitality businesses prosper, towns and villages are renewed, and visitors stay longer, spend more and visits are spread more equitably throughout the year.

By unlocking the Borough's full potential, these projects will position tourism as a driver of sustainable economic growth, community regeneration and improved quality of life for everyone who lives, works or visits the area.

The Infrastructure project elements provide the physical infrastructure required to connect communities and improve the flow of residents and visitors across the region thereby creating more economic opportunities.

All of the project proposals have the potential to deliver additional jobs, increase GVA, drive growth in output and wages and provide a population magnet as further people are attracted to come to the region.



PROJECT PORTFOLIO

An overview of the nine projects in Phases One and Two is provided below along with the indicative project costs which are subject to change up until the Full Business Cases are approved:

Phase One Projects			
Projects	Lead NICS Department	Project Promoter	CAPEX
Centre for Food & Drug Discovery	Department for the Economy	Ulster University	£22.2m
Foodovation™ & Skills Centre	Department for the Economy	North West Regional College	£5.8m
Coleraine Leisure & Wellbeing Centre	Department for Communities	Council	£50.7m
Dungiven Regeneration Programme	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs	Council/ Glenshane Community Development Limited	£6.7m
Total:			£85.4m

Phase Two Projects			
Projects	Lead NICS Department	Project Promoter	CAPEX
Bushmills Regeneration Programme	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs	Council/ Enterprise Causeway	£6.9m
Business Innovation & Incubation Hub	Department for the Economy	Council	£16.5m
Connected Causeway Traffic & Parking	Department for the Economy	Council	£9.7m
Portrush to Giant's Causeway Greenway	Department for Infrastructure	Council	£9m
Cushendall Innovation Centre	Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs	Grow the Glens	£1.7m
Total:			£43.8m

This Deal Document represents a point in time position based on the best information currently available. As is normal for major multi-year capital programmes, individual project allocations may change as individual project designs are refined, delivery requirements become clearer, or wider economic and geopolitical factors influence the broader fiscal environment. Any adjustments will be managed through established governance and change control arrangements to ensure the programme continues to deliver maximum impact, value for money, and alignment with the strategic priorities of the Growth Deal.

The feasibility of all the Phase Two projects is still being worked through with partners. Should any project, or aspects of any project, not proceed as currently envisaged, the Growth Deal has the flexibility to reallocate funding to other priority projects within the programme, ensuring resources continue to be directed in line with need and where they will achieve the greatest impact. This approach provides confidence that the investment will be fully utilised and strategically focused across the Borough.



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PHASE ONE PROJECTS





INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

The innovation projects are aimed at supporting growth in sectors of industry and research where the Borough already has a strong track record or where there are clear gaps in provision, capacity, or investment at a local and/or Northern Ireland-wide level. Innovation is not like most other business functions and activities, in short, innovation is anything but business as usual. Collectively these projects will provide the systematic approach which makes innovation within our local businesses a reality, not just a concept.

The Centre for Food and Drug Discovery (CFDD) is a flagship innovation project within the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal, delivered by Ulster University at its Coleraine campus. The project aims to establish the Causeway Coast & Glens region as one of the best places nationally and internationally for drug discovery, functional food innovation, and pharmaceutical health research.



Centre for
**Food & Drug
Discovery**

Improving health through nutritional
and pharmaceutical innovation

Total project costs: £22.2m

Growth Deal Contribution: £20m

Partner Contribution: £2.2m





Its central vision is to improve public health and drive economic growth by enabling companies, from SMEs to multinational firms, to access advanced technologies, specialist expertise and collaborative Research & Development pathways. The centre will act as a “one-stop shop” for innovation, supporting every stage of the discovery pipeline, from early-stage bioactive identification and compound screening through to Good Laboratory Practice toxicology, clinical trials, and near-to-market product development.

The Centre for Food and Drug Discovery (CFDD) is expected to deliver:

- **230 direct & indirect jobs (184 net of displacement).**
- **£155 million Net Present Social Value (NPSV).**
- **£22 million annualised GVA uplift by 2040.**
- **A Benefit-Cost Ratio of 2.59, demonstrating excellent value for money.**
- **Attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with two FDI companies already registering subsidiaries in Coleraine as a result of CFDD.**
- **Grant income is projected to grow from £2.5m to £5.65m per year.**
- **Industry-funded research increasing from £450k to over £1m per year.**





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INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

Foodovation

NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE FOOD INNOVATION CENTRE

The Foodovation™ & Skills Centre is a new specialist innovation, training and skills facility designed to support the growth, productivity and competitiveness of the food & drink sector in Causeway Coast & Glens and the wider region. It will be delivered as a major refurbishment of North West Regional Centre's Limavady Main Street campus, transforming two floors into a modern, fully equipped industry-standard centre.

The Foodovation™ & Skills Centre will provide comprehensive support to food and drink businesses by offering specialist training, support and skills in innovation and product development to help SMEs design, test, scale and commercialise new products. This will be complemented by access to technical expertise in areas such as food science, food safety, packaging, shelf-life and regulatory compliance. The Centre will also deliver a wide range of accredited and non-accredited training tailored to sector needs, supported by modern, industry-standard facilities including development kitchens, laboratories, processing equipment and specialist machinery.

Total project costs: £5.8m

Growth Deal Contribution: £5.2m

**North West Regional College (via
Department for the Economy): £0.6m**





The Foodovation™ & Skills Centre is expected to deliver:

- 75 new food sector jobs created and sustained.
- £47m Net Present Social Value (NPSV).
- £5m annualised GVA over 25 years.
- A Benefit-Cost Ratio of 3.80, demonstrating excellent value for money.
- 155 businesses supported of which 60% reporting additional sales.
- 140 innovation projects delivered annually, with new or improved products developed.
- 400+ individuals trained annually.
- 390 qualifications achieved per year.



TOURISM & REGENERATION

The Coleraine Leisure & Wellbeing Centre (CLWC) is a major redevelopment and replacement of the existing Coleraine Leisure Centre, which is over 40 years old and at the end of its economic life. The new centre will become a flagship Growth Deal project, combining leisure, health, wellbeing and tourism functions, and acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration in Coleraine town centre.

The proposed centre on the existing site on Railway Road, Coleraine will include:

- 25m swimming pool (6 lanes) and learner pool.
- Large wet play area with flumes and play units.
- Health suite/spa.
- 100-station gym and three flexible studios.

- Inclusive village changing facilities and Changing Places provision.
- Five consulting spaces for health and wellbeing services in partnership with Northern Health & Social Care Trust.

A core feature of the development is the inclusion of enhanced wet-play facilities, designed to create a high-quality, all-weather family attraction that fills a long-standing gap in the Borough's tourism offer. This premium leisure water zone, featuring flumes, play structures and dedicated family amenities, will not only serve local users but also draw significant visitor numbers from the wider Causeway Coast, strengthening Coleraine's position as a vibrant destination and boosting the town centre economy.

Total project costs: £50.7m

Growth Deal Contribution: £18m

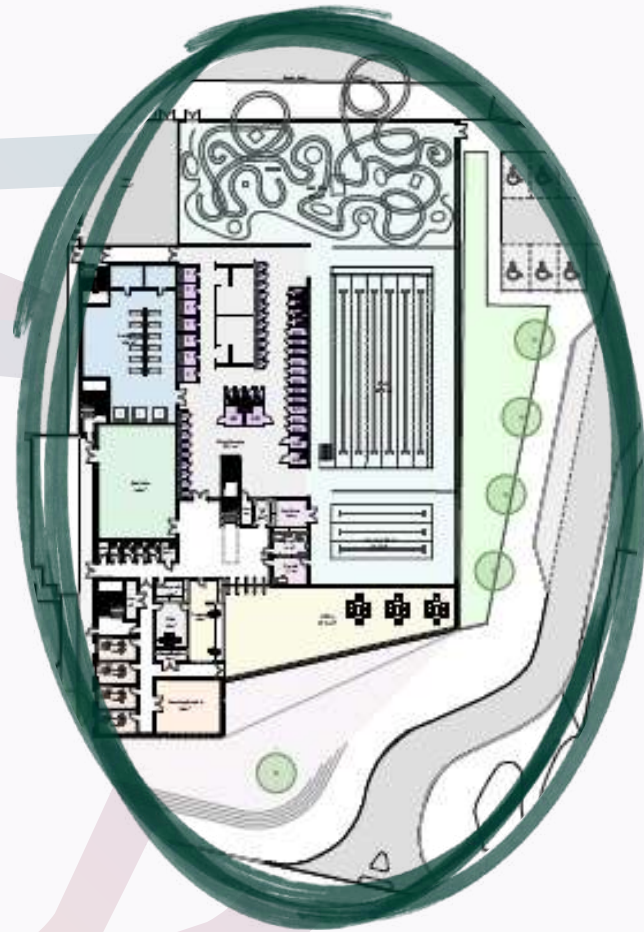
Council and External Contribution: £32.7m





The Coleraine Leisure & Wellbeing Centre (CLWC) is expected to deliver:

- Net Present Social Value of £9.2m over 25 years.
- Benefit-Cost Ratio of 1.5 representing good value for money.
- £12.1m in construction-related economic benefits.
- 346 direct/indirect jobs supported during construction.
- £65 million of social and wellbeing benefits over 25 years or £2.6m annually.
- £8.9m of tourism benefit from additional tourist spend over 25 years (£354k annually).
- £3.2m of carbon benefits from 57% reduction in carbon emissions over 25 years (£127k annually).
- 373k user throughput annually (67% increase on current throughput) including:
 - Northern Health & social Care Trust users rising to 24k per year (400% increase).
 - Gym membership growth to 2,800 members (40% increase).
 - Wet play visitors: 85k per year, including 35k from outside-borough.



Indicative design





TOURISM & REGENERATION

The Dungiven Regeneration Project is a transformation programme focused on revitalising Dungiven's Main Street and supporting local enterprise. It comprises three integrated components: a new Enterprise Hub, transforming a derelict building into a modern workspace offering serviced offices, flexible hot-desking, meeting and training rooms, high-quality digital infrastructure and space for community and business events.

Alongside this, Main Street will undergo major public realm enhancements, including new pavements, resurfacing, safer crossings, enhanced accessibility, increased greenery, and measures to create a safer, more attractive environment linking the town's heritage and natural landscape.

Complementing both elements is a Streetscape Improvement Scheme providing grants to upgrade façades, shopfronts and vacant units, boosting trader confidence, improving the appearance of the town centre and encouraging greater occupancy and economic activity.

The Dungiven Regeneration project is expected to deliver:

- **Net Present Social Value of £11m over 25 years.**
- **Benefit-Cost Ratio of 2.5 representing good value for money.**
- **49 direct/indirect jobs supported during construction.**
- **2 enterprise hub jobs directly.**
- **Hub expected to reach 75% occupancy by Year 3 and 85-90% by Year 5.**
- **4 jobs from new businesses occupying formerly vacant units.**
- **Streetscape Scheme expected to reduce vacant/derelict units by 10% by Year 3.**
- **Canopy cover increased as a result of increased foliage throughout town, helping to reduce CO² emissions.**

Total project costs: £6.7m

Growth Deal Contribution: £3.1m

Council Contribution: £3.6m





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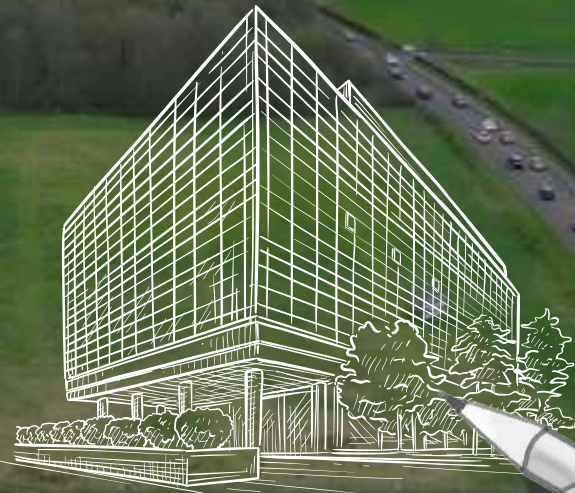
PHASE TWO PROJECTS

The Phase Two investment projects represent a critical next step in delivering the full ambition of the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal. These projects form an essential part of the overall programme, and their successful progression will ensure the Deal delivers maximum economic, social and environmental impact across the Borough. Work is now underway to prepare Outline Business Cases for all Phase Two projects, with submission to lead Department scheduled for October 2026.

While the anticipated costs, benefits and financial contributions are likely to change during the remainder of the project development work and OBC approvals process, the indicative project descriptions and costs are summarised overleaf.



INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE



illustrative drawing only

Business Innovation & Incubation Hub

The Business Innovation and Incubation Hub (BIIH) at the Atlantic Link Enterprise Campus in Coleraine recognises a gap in Northern Ireland's innovation infrastructure, specifically the shortage of wet-lab space and food-grade incubation units. Extensive consultation with industry, academia, government and existing innovation hubs confirmed strong and growing demand for specialist facilities to support research, development and early-stage commercialisation activities.

The Hub will create a dedicated centre offering high-quality wet labs, food-grade units, and tailored business and technical support to help Small & Medium Enterprises transition from start-up to sustainable growth, an identified critical period for business survival. The project will help attract both local and international enterprises seeking Research & Development space, stimulate innovation in key growth sectors such as food, health and life sciences, and create stronger synergies with the proposed Centre for Food and Drug Discovery at Ulster University and North West Regional College's Foodovation™ & Skills Centre.

Project Sponsor:



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

Total project costs: £16.5m



TOURISM & REGENERATION

Bushmills Regeneration

The Bushmills Regeneration Project is a major Growth Deal investment designed to unlock the untapped economic potential of Bushmills, one of the most strategically located gateway settlements to Northern Ireland's premier visitor attractions, including the Giant's Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede, the Dark Hedges and Dunluce Castle. Despite its proximity to these "honeypot" destinations, Bushmills has historically not benefited fully from tourism opportunities. This project builds on the long-established Bushmills 2020 Village Plan, developed through extensive community engagement, but which lacked the capital funding necessary for delivery until the Growth Deal.

Through targeted public realm and infrastructure improvements, the project aims to enhance the village's appearance, accessibility and visitor experience, strengthen its economic performance, and better position Bushmills as a vibrant service centre for the wider Causeway Coast visitor economy. Investment will focus on creating a high-quality environment that encourages visitors to stay longer, spend more locally, and explore businesses and attractions within the town. By improving connectivity, place quality and commercial vitality, the project is expected to stimulate job creation, raise median wages and contribute meaningfully to the Borough's overall economic growth.

Project Sponsor:



Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council

Total project costs: £6.9m



TOURISM & REGENERATION

Cushendall Innovation Centre - Phase Two

The Cushendall Innovation Centre Phase Two is a Growth Deal project led by Grow the Glens, building on the success of the organisation's transformation of the former police station into a thriving rural enterprise and co-working hub in 2023. Phase Two will deliver larger offices, open collaboration areas, training suites and flexible meeting and function rooms, significantly enhancing the Centre's capacity and long-term sustainability.

Informed by strong community demand and new market research, Phase Two will also integrate a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Facility, offering high-quality, flexible units for counsellors, physiotherapists, dieticians, holistic practitioners, yoga and mindfulness instructors, and other allied health professionals. By expanding its space, services and social purpose, the Cushendall Innovation Centre Phase Two will support new jobs, increased business collaboration, stronger community engagement, improved wellbeing, reduced commuting emissions, and a revitalised village-scape, delivering lasting social, economic and environmental benefits for Cushendall and the wider Glens area.

Project Sponsor:



Total project costs: £1.7m



TOURISM & REGENERATION

Portrush to Giant's Causeway Greenway

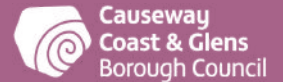
The Portrush to Giant's Causeway Greenway is a transformative active-travel project that will create circa 11.2km off-road route linking three key settlements (Portrush, Portballintrae and Bushmills) all of which experience significant increases in population during peak tourist seasons. Designed as a safe, attractive and accessible walking and cycling corridor, the greenway will serve both local residents and visitors, encouraging a shift away from car-based travel and helping to reduce congestion along the North Antrim Coast.

The route has been identified as a priority for Council and forms part of the phased development of the full 24km secondary route outlined in the Department for Infrastructure's Strategic Plan for Greenways, reflecting its strategic importance to regional connectivity and sustainable transport.

In addition to promoting health and environmental benefits, the greenway is expected to become an attraction in its own right, offering unique natural scenery and enhanced access to the wider Causeway Coast landscape.

It will also support major tourism assets by enabling new green travel options. When combined with future "green ticketing" initiatives from tourism operators, the project has the potential to significantly influence visitor behaviour, extend dwell time, and deliver meaningful economic uplift through increased footfall and reduced seasonal pressures on local infrastructure.

Project Sponsor:



Total project costs: £9m



INFRASTRUCTURE

Connected Causeway Traffic & Parking

The Connected Causeway Traffic and Parking Project is designed to transform how residents and visitors move around the North Antrim Coast, addressing long-standing challenges linked to congestion, parking pressure and limited public transport connectivity at major tourist destinations. The project will deliver an integrated network of enhanced travel solutions supported by real-time parking information, improving access to key attractions while easing seasonal strain on local communities.

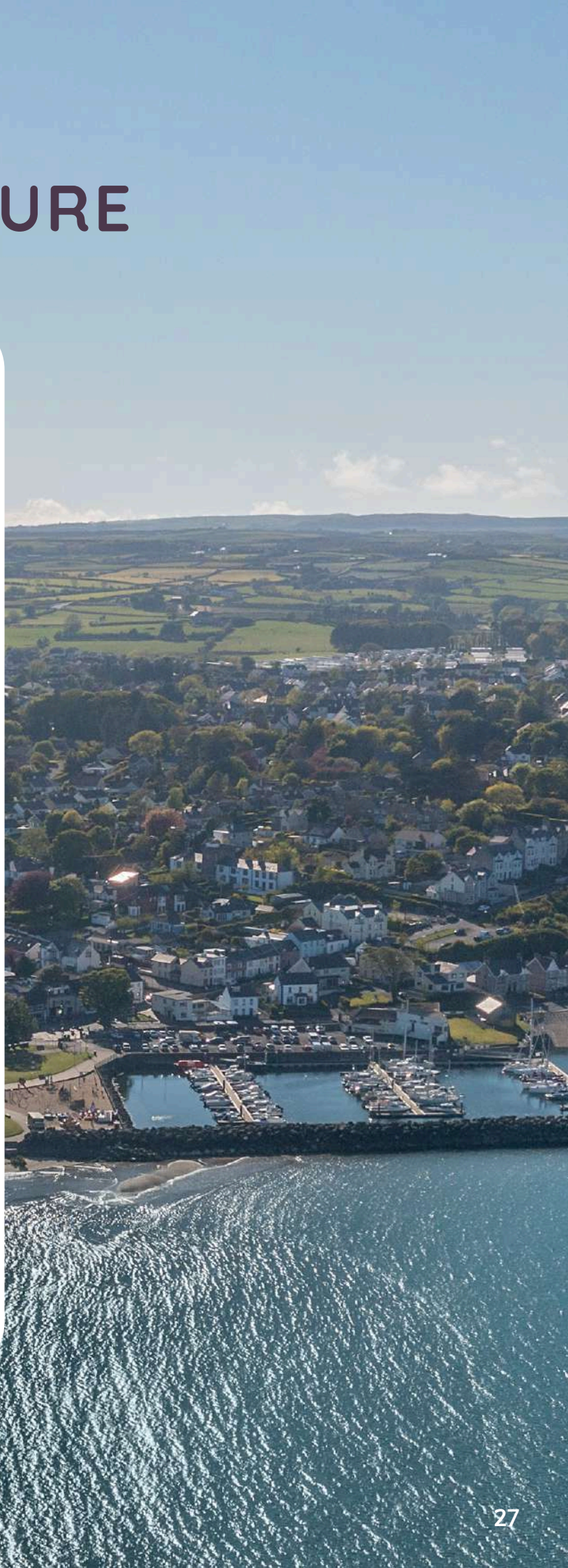
By providing a coordinated system that links improved parking provision with public transport, active travel infrastructure and new greenway connections, the project aims to encourage a modal shift away from private car use. This will help reduce congestion, improve environmental outcomes, strengthen the visitor experience and support the wider tourism economy. Ultimately, the Connected Causeway initiative will play a pivotal role in delivering a more accessible, resilient and environmentally sustainable transport network for the Causeway Coast & Glens.

Project Sponsor:



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

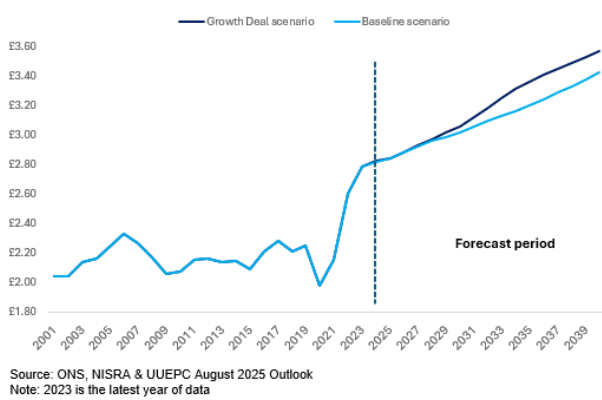
Total project costs: £9.7m



ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal is expected to deliver measurable improvements across the Borough's economy, strengthening productivity, employment and long-term economic resilience. The investment is projected to accelerate economic growth beyond baseline forecasts, supporting both sectoral development and overall regional competitiveness..

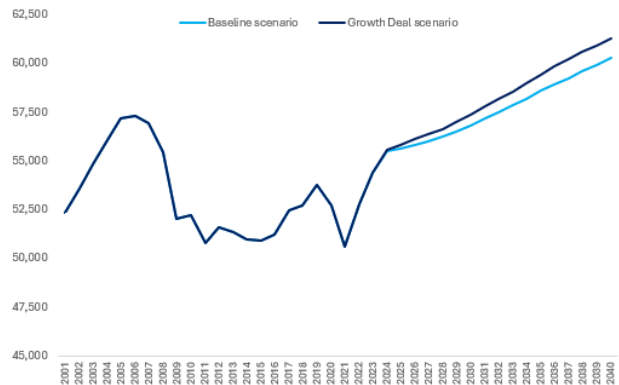
Real GVA Forecasts, £ billion (2022 prices), Causeway Coast & Glens, 2001 - 2040



A central area of impact will be economic output. Baseline forecasts project that Real GVA, measured in 2022 prices, will rise to approximately £3.4 billion by 2040. With Growth Deal investment, beginning with Phase One projects in 2029/30 and Phase Two shortly thereafter, Real GVA is projected to reach £3.5 billion by 2040, representing an uplift of £140 million above the baseline. This additional output helps address the Borough's historically slower growth relative to Northern Ireland, particularly since 2008, and supports a more robust long-term economic trajectory.

Employment outcomes are also expected to strengthen under the Growth Deal scenario. Baseline projections indicate that total employment will increase from around

Employment Forecasts, Causeway Coast & Glens, 2001 - 2040



55,840 jobs in 2024 to 60,320 jobs by 2040, reflecting average annual growth of approximately 0.7%. With Growth Deal investment, employment is forecast to reach 61,280 jobs by 2040, delivering 960 additional jobs beyond baseline levels. This reflects the role of Growth Deal interventions in stimulating labour market participation and job creation across the Borough.

Sectoral impacts are projected to be broad-based, with the greatest uplift observed in professional services, manufacturing, construction, and accommodation and hospitality. These sectors show the strongest contrast between baseline and Growth Deal scenarios and together play a significant role in diversifying and strengthening the Borough's productive base.

The Growth Deal will also underpin long-term economic resilience. Causeway Coast & Glens experienced a 12% decline in Real GVA during the COVID-19 pandemic, though output recovered to above 2019 levels by 2022. The additional investment and accelerated growth trajectory associated



with the Growth Deal will help reinforce recovery trends and narrow the performance gap with the wider Northern Ireland economy in the years ahead.

Overall, the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal represents a transformational programme of investment that will boost economic output, create additional employment opportunities, accelerate sectoral growth and enhance the Borough’s long-term economic outlook.

By addressing both structural challenges and emerging opportunities, the Deal will deliver a sustained step change in economic performance and help secure a more prosperous, balanced and resilient future for communities across the Borough.

Success Indicators

- By 2040, Real GVA in Causeway Coast & Glens will increase by at least £140 million above the baseline forecast, as measured in 2022 prices using Office for National Statistics, Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) data.
- By 2034, the Growth Deal will support the creation of at least 960 net additional jobs above the baseline scenario, as measured through NISRA employment statistics and UUEPC forecasts.
- Between 2024 and 2034, sectors including manufacturing, construction, accommodation & hospitality and professional services will record faster growth under the Growth Deal scenario than under the baseline, with positive net employment change in each.
- From 2030 onwards, Causeway Coast & Glens will achieve an average annual employment growth rate of at least 0.8%, exceeding the baseline forecast of 0.7%, as measured through annual labour market statistics.
- By 2040, the gap between Causeway Coast & Glens and the wider Northern Ireland economy in terms of GVA growth performance will narrow compared with the pre-Growth Deal period (2008–2023), based on consistent regional GVA datasets.

Sectoral employment net change by scenario, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2024-2034

	Baseline	Growth Deal
Agriculture	10	60
Mining and quarrying	-10	0
Manufacturing	270	330
Utilities	0	20
Water supply & waste	10	20
Construction	810	920
Retail	-10	20
Transportation	140	210
Accommodation & hospitality	800	920
Information & Comm’s	180	200
Financial activities	10	100
Real estate	10	90
Professional & scientific	260	430
Administration services	120	160
Public Admin’ & defence	90	90
Education	370	390
Health & social work	1,000	1,050
Arts and entertainment	180	180
Other services	240	250
Total	4,480	5,440

Source: NISRA & UUEPC August 2025 Outlook

Source: Ulster University Economic Policy Centre, Causeway Coast & Glens Employment and GVA Forecasts - Growth Deal analysis



SUSTAINABILITY

The Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal places sustainability, inclusivity and employability at the heart of this investment programme, ensuring that the economic, social and environmental benefits of the Deal are shared broadly across communities, businesses and places. These themes cut across all nine capital projects and reflect the joint commitment of the UK Government, the NI Executive and the Council to deliver long-term, transformative change for the region.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a defining principle of our Growth Deal, with delivery partners committing to enabling social, economic and environmental well-being throughout project implementation. All investments will support the transition to a smart, low-carbon, resource-efficient economy and align with the statutory obligations set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, including the requirement to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The region's distinct natural heritage, including the World Heritage Site, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and extensive outdoor assets, underpins the imperative for climate-sensitive and environmentally restorative development. Growth Deal projects will therefore:

- **Promote low-carbon transport modes, including new greenways and integrated public transport solutions.**
- **Enhance town and village environments through high-quality, durable and sustainable public realm investments.**

- **Integrate biodiversity protection, circular economy principles and sustainable construction practices across all capital projects.**
- **Use procurement processes that embed social value and environmental responsibility in line with Department of Finance policy.**

These measures collectively ensure that economic growth is delivered responsibly, reducing emissions, enhancing ecosystem health, and safeguarding the region's world-class natural assets for future generations.



INCLUSIVITY

Our Growth Deal has been intentionally structured to ensure that its benefits reach communities across the Borough from rural mountain settlements to coastal towns and the larger hubs of Coleraine, Limavady and Ballycastle. Inclusivity is embedded through:

Reducing regional inequalities - Causeway Coast & Glens faces challenges including rural isolation, pockets of multiple deprivation, low wage levels and uneven access to services. By targeting investment in major settlements and more isolated rural communities, the Deal supports a balanced spatial distribution of opportunity.

Supporting community wellbeing and cohesion - Our Deal commits partners to engaging communities in co-design and co-production, ensuring that projects reflect local needs and foster wider social participation. Facilities such as the Cushendall Innovation Centre Phase Two and enhanced public realm in Bushmills and Dungiven will provide shared, inclusive spaces for community activity, enterprise, learning and wellbeing.

Embedding social value in procurement - All major contracts will incorporate social clauses, ensuring that Growth Deal investment translates into measurable community benefits, including training placements, apprenticeships, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) access to supply chains and community engagement activity.

Together, these actions contribute to a more inclusive region where all people regardless of geography, background or circumstance, can participate in and benefit from economic growth.





EMPLOYABILITY

With more than £129 million of public and partner investment being delivered, our Growth Deal represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the region's labour market. The Deal recognises local challenges including an ageing population, skills gaps, lower educational attainment levels and a high proportion of microbusinesses, all of which inhibit competitiveness and wage growth.

To address these challenges, the Deal is supported by two complementary structures:

Labour Market Partnership (LMP) - The Council's LMP provides a local delivery mechanism, working directly with employers, jobseekers and skills partners to support:

- **Upskilling and reskilling programmes tailored to Growth Deal needs.**
- **Improved employability outcomes for unemployed or under-employed residents.**
- **Targeted support for people with barriers to employment**
- **Talent pipelines linked to specific Growth Deal projects and wider private-sector demand.**



Local Economic Partnership (LEP) - The LEP is about turning ambition into action, supporting local businesses to grow, innovate, and adapt. The LEP is built around three connected priorities:

Collaboration, Growth & Innovation - helping local businesses connect, innovate, improve productivity, and access wider regional and national opportunities.

Inclusive Entrepreneurship & Business Resilience - supporting start-ups, rural businesses, social enterprises, and under-represented entrepreneurs to build strong, sustainable local economies.

Sustainability & Skills for the Future - helping businesses cut costs, reduce carbon, and develop the skills needed for long-term success.





Across The Deal , the nine projects will create new jobs, directly through construction and operations, and indirectly through business growth, tourism spend and inward investment. The combined programme of skills and employability support ensures that local people are equipped and ready to access these opportunities.

Both Partnerships have been informed by the Cross-Deal Skills Group which accessed emerging labour market requirements across Northern Ireland's City and Growth Deals.

Through this integrated approach to sustainability, inclusivity and employability, the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal will not only deliver physical transformation but will also stimulate a more equitable, skilled and resilient regional economy. The Deal's cross-cutting commitments ensure that every major investment contributes to:

- 1.A greener and more sustainable Borough.**
- 2.A more inclusive society where rural and urban communities thrive.**
- 3.A skilled workforce prepared for the high-value jobs the Deal will create.**





GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Robust and transparent governance is central to the successful delivery of the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal. The UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council have committed to a governance model that ensures strong leadership, clear accountability and effective stewardship of public funds throughout the lifecycle of the Deal. These arrangements are aligned to best-practice models used across the Northern Ireland City and Growth Deals portfolio and reflect the requirements of Managing Public Money NI and Department of Finance Better Business Cases guidance.

Programme-Level Governance

Growth Deal Executive Programme Board

The Growth Deal Executive Programme Board, established by the Council in December 2021, provides strategic oversight of the entire programme. It is responsible for managing the interface with Government, making key recommendations, overseeing programme-level risks, and ensuring alignment with the region’s wider strategic objectives. The Board includes senior Council officers, elected representatives and Government observers, enabling collaborative decision-making and consistent assurance across the Deal.

Programme Management Office (PMO)

A dedicated Programme Management Office manages day-to-day coordination of the Growth Deal. The PMO supports project promoters, coordinates stakeholder engagement, manages programme

monitoring and reporting, and ensures compliance with governance, procurement and assurance frameworks. It also provides the central link between the Council, Government Departments and partner organisations.

Government Department Engagement Group

To support collaborative decision-making, a Government Department Engagement Group brings together the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and Departmental representatives, providing an ongoing mechanism to ensure alignment with departmental priorities, funding conditions and policy requirements.

Project-Level Governance

Project Promoters

Each Growth Deal project has a designated promoter responsible for developing and delivering the project. Promoters must prepare business cases demonstrating value for money, financial sustainability, statutory compliance and strategic alignment before funding can be released.





Project Steering Groups and Project Boards

For each project, a Project Steering Group has been established comprising representatives from Council, the relevant lead Department and technical specialists. These groups provide direction, review and assurance throughout project development, including at OBC. These groups ensure that risks, dependencies and investment decisions are carefully scrutinised.

As all projects transition from development to delivery and operational stages the Project Steering Groups will be reviewed and updated to now become Project Boards with associated decision making powers.

Assurance & Accountability

Business Case and Assurance Framework

All projects must follow the five-stage Better Business Cases Northern Ireland process and secure departmental approval prior to proceeding. Funding commitments from the UK Government and Northern Ireland Executive are contingent on:

- approval of business cases;
- compliance with subsidy control requirements;
- adherence to agreed governance arrangements;
- assurance on project-level

- accountability and risk management; and;
- confirmation of match funding from delivery partners where required.

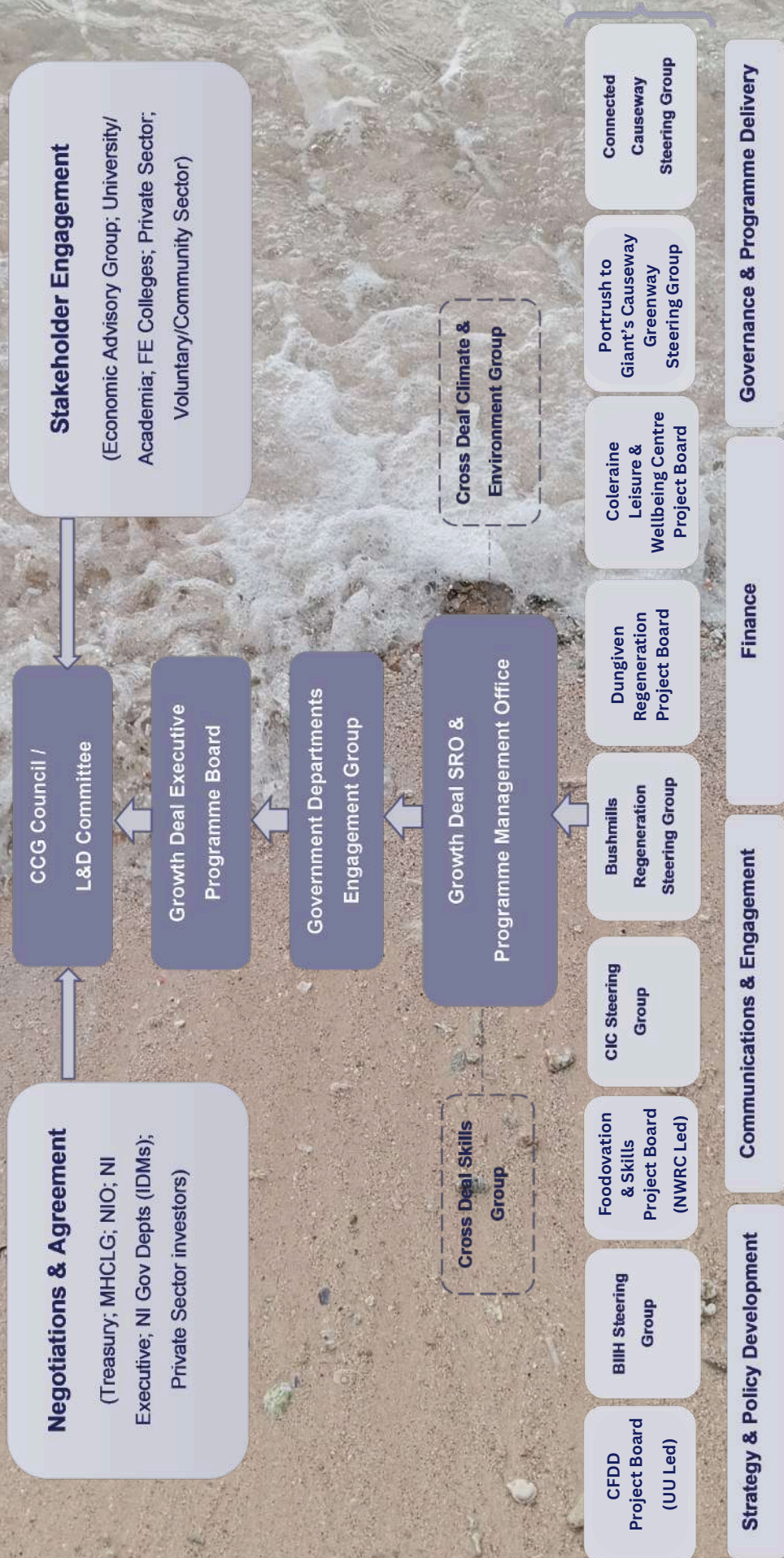
These steps ensure that all Growth Deal investments are viable, sustainable and deliver value for money..

Managing Public Money & Audit

The Council and project promoters are required to maintain effective accountability arrangements to meet the standards of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland and the assurance obligations of both Governments. This includes proper financial controls, evidence-based decision-making, risk registers, monitoring frameworks and reporting structures that enable scrutiny by public auditors and departmental oversight bodies.

The governance model for the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal provides a strong, reliable and transparent framework for decision-making and delivery. It ensures:

- clear lines of accountability;
- rigorous assurance and financial oversight;
- collaborative, cross-government working;
- effective project-level scrutiny; and
- meaningful engagement with communities and businesses.





MONITORING & EVALUATION

Performance Reporting

Performance reporting for the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal will be driven by a structured, multi-tiered reporting process overseen by the Programme Management Office (PMO) and monitored through the Growth Deal Executive Programme Board. Performance reporting will ensure that all projects are progressing against approved business cases, funding milestones and strategic objectives agreed with the UK Government and NI Executive. Project Promoters will be required to submit regular performance reports, which the PMO will consolidate into an Annual Performance Report, that will be made public.

Risk Management

Risk management will be embedded across the Growth Deal at both programme and project levels. The PMO will maintain a Programme Risk Register capturing strategic, financial, governance, delivery and interdependency risks. Each project promoter will maintain its own Project Risk Register and Issues Log, which will be aligned with the Deal's wider governance and reviewed as part of business case approvals. In addition, all Growth Deal partners are responsible for addressing and implementing any recommendations issued by the Northern Ireland Audit Office arising from audits conducted in relation to the Deal.

Benefits Realisation Plan

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and its Growth Deal partners will work collaboratively with central Government to agree a comprehensive Benefits Realisation Plan for the Deal. Together, they will also determine the need for check-point or gateway reviews at appropriate stages of the programme or individual projects. These reviews will provide an opportunity to assess progress against agreed milestones set out in the Implementation Plan and to evaluate performance throughout the lifetime of the Deal.

Change Process

Given the scale and duration of the Growth Deal, it is recognised that individual projects may require adjustment over time. To manage this effectively, Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council and its Growth Deal partners will work closely with central Government to establish a consistent, transparent and proportionate change management mechanism for the Deal.

A formal Change Management Plan will be jointly developed and agreed with the Northern Ireland Executive and UK Government. This plan will set out the processes, approvals and documentation required for any proposed change to project scope, cost, timeline or outputs. It will also define clear tolerances and thresholds, including what constitutes a minor change (manageable at project level) and what requires escalation to programme-level governance or central Government approval.



Grow Causeway Coast & Glens

Connection | Destination | Innovation

Photography Acknowledgements:

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