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| Title of Report: | Prioritising of Growth Deal Projects |
| Committee Report Submitted To: | Council |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th January 2021 |
| For Decision or For Information | For Decision |

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| Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23) | |
| Strategic Theme | Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity |
| Outcome | The Council will work with partners to maximise investment funding opportunities from external sources. |
| Lead Officer | Director of Leisure and Development |

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| Budgetary Considerations | |
| Cost of Proposal | |
| Included in Current Year Estimates | Yes |
| Capital/Revenue | Revenue |
| Code | Not applicable |
| Staffing Costs | Yes |

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| Screening Requirements | 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 purpose of this paper is to inform Members of the proposed approach to prioritising the longlist of Growth Deal projects identified for the Borough.

2.0 Background

Causeway Coast and Glens is set to receive £72m capital funding for a Growth Deal after the NI Executive agreed to match fund the UK Government's Growth Deal allocation. The Growth Deal capital fund will be used to support digital and innovation projects. The Executive investment will focus additional funding on supporting Infrastructure, tourism, and regeneration along with employability and skills.

In line with Growth Deal criteria, it is critical that Council prioritise key catalyst projects over the next 10-years to help shape and grow our local economy.

Growth Deals are models of economic growth which provide regions with the opportunity to:

- Take charge and responsibility of decisions that affect their area.
- Do what they think is best to help businesses grow.
- Identify priorities for economic growth in the region.
- Decide how funding should be spent to meet those priorities.

Following members commitment to a Growth Deal in October 2019, Council established a Growth Deal Working Group to deliver upon each of the key priorities identified above. The Working Group is made up of eight Councillors; with officer representation from Council and Ulster University staff.

3.0 Proposals

The Growth Deal Working Group has identified six key themes/ sectors to help grow our local economy in line with Growth Deal criteria i.e.:

- Innovation;
- Tourism and Regeneration;
- Infrastructure;
- Employability and Skills;
- Digital Connectivity; and
- Energy/ Green Economy.

Council has engaged Grant Thornton (author of Council's new Economic Development Strategy) to independently assess the longlist of Growth Deal projects proposed by the Growth Deal Working Group.

To enable the longlist of projects to be independently assessed, Grant Thornton has developed scoring criteria in line with Growth Deal criteria - see **Annex A**. This scoring criteria was presented to the Growth Deal Working Group on the 17th December 2020 and it was recommended that this should be brought to Full Council for consideration / agreement.

Grant Thornton propose to introduce a two-stage assessment approach. The first stage will be an assessment of general information provided by project promoters in relation to the project. General information has been provided pertaining to the projects, such as project type, summary of project indicative scope, location, capital cost etc.

| Criterion | Assessment approach |
|----------------------------|---|
| General information | <p>Project information should be provided to at least a basic level to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project description • Strategic alignment • High level costs • Delivery partners |
| Scoring | Pass/Fail |

The second stage assessment will score each of the proposed projects against three key criteria:

1. **Rationale and Strategic Alignment (20%)** - Strategic Alignment will assess how a project supports, either directly or indirectly, the strategic and policy focus at a UK/ NI/ CC&G level.
2. **Project Impact (60%)** - Project Impact will be assessed to ensure that projects with greatest impact on Causeway Coast and Glens are taken forward. This will be assessed through a project's ability to demonstrate impact on employment, productivity and/or inclusion for disadvantaged groups or communities.
3. **State of Readiness (20%)** - A Project's State of Readiness will be assessed to provide a view on the level of a project's development. Projects should be capable of being delivered within a 10-year timescale. Project State of Readiness will consider:
 - a) Level of appraisal development: the stage of a project's appraisal development.
 - b) Funding plan: An indicative high level funding plan to demonstrate the extent to which funding has been considered during the projects development to date.

As a result of the independent scoring process, Growth Deal Working Group members will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of which initiatives have the greatest potential to fulfil Growth Deal objectives; and
- Be able to identify why initiatives failed to meet Growth Deal requirements.

Council's Officers will work with Grant Thornton to ensure that they:

- Are provided with all available details on initiatives;
- Understand the key objectives of Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal; and
- Can deliver outcomes within agreed timescale

An anonymous short survey will also be issued to the Growth Deal Working Group Elected Members to gain a better understanding of key priority projects for the Borough.

Grant Thornton's proposed scoring criteria has been well received by both the Department of Finance's Growth Deal Working Groups and the Economic Advisory Group.

Further reports will be presented to Council in relation to the outcome of the prioritising process.

4.0 Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Council approves the proposed approach and scoring criteria to prioritise Growth Deal projects for the Borough.

Prioritising Growth Deal Projects

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

December 2020



High Level Assessment of Growth Deal Projects

The following approach has been applied to assess each of the proposed Growth Deal projects that have been provided to Grant Thornton by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Growth Deal working group. Professional judgement has been applied in assessing responses, based on the extent of information received for each project.

Project Information

General information should be provided pertaining to the project, such as project type, summary of project indicative scope, location, capital cost etc.

| Criterion | Assessment approach |
|----------------------------|---|
| General information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project information should be provided to at least a basic level to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project description Strategic alignment High level costs Delivery partners |
| Scoring | Pass/Fail |

Rationale and Strategic Alignment (20% of project Score)

Strategic sectoral alignment assesses how a project supports, either directly or indirectly, the strategic and policy focus at a UK/NI/CC&G level

| Criterion | Assessment approach |
|---|---|
| Does the project align with UK,NI,CC&G Strategy? | <p>Score 4 or 5: A strong rationale for intervention including market failures and opportunities facing the area. There should be a clear prioritisation of proposed activity at the local level. Plans will also need to have regard to national policy on growth e.g. the Government's Industrial Strategy and for example on jobs, transport, skills, and rural economies.</p> <p>Score 2 or 3: Medium evidence of a rationale for intervention including market failures and opportunities facing the area and medium evidence of strategic alignment</p> <p>Score 0 or 1: No/Little evidence of a rationale for intervention including market failures and opportunities facing the area and medium evidence of strategic alignment</p> |

Project Impact (60% of project score)

Project Impact will be assessed to ensure that projects with greatest impact on Causeway Coast and Glens are taken forward. This will be assessed through a project's ability to demonstrate impact on employment, productivity and/or inclusion for disadvantages groups or communities

| Criterion | Assessment approach |
|---------------------|--|
| Impact | High Impact (scores 4 or 5): Project demonstrates strong evidence of direct/indirect employment opportunities and/or productivity gains. |
| | Medium Impact (scores 2 or 3): Project demonstrates some evidence of direct/indirect employment opportunities and/or productivity gains |
| | Low Impact (scores 0 or 1): Project demonstrates little of no evidence of direct/indirect employment opportunities and/or productivity gains |
| Impact against cost | Are the impacts proportionate against proposed costs (scoring will be via ranking of proposed projects) Score 5: Ranks in top quintile Score 4: Ranks in quintile 2 Score 3: Ranks in quintile 3 Score 2: Ranks in quintile 4 Score 1: Ranks in bottom quintile |

State of Readiness (20% of project score)

A Project's State of readiness will be assessed to provide a view on the level of a project's development. Projects should be capable of being delivered within a 10 year timescale (projects do not need to be 'shovel ready' as it is not possible for all projects to commence in Year 1). Project State of Readiness will consider:

— Level of appraisal development: the stage of a project's appraisal development. This may include details regarding progress in relation to planning and wider community consultation and progress with sponsoring departments (if applicable); and,

— Funding plan: An indicative high level funding plan to demonstrate the extent to which funding has been considered during the projects development to date.

| Criterion | Assessment approach |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Level of appraisal development | Scores 4 or 5: Project demonstrates strong evidence of planning and engagement with direct/indirect employment opportunities and/or productivity gains. |
| | Medium Impact (scores 2 or 3): Project demonstrates some evidence of direct/indirect employment opportunities and/or productivity gains |
| | Low Impact (scores 0 or 1): Project demonstrates little or no evidence of direct/indirect employment opportunities and/or productivity gains |