

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

To: Leisure & Development Committee

Rural Development Programme Update

8th September 2015

For Information

Report to Committee

Linkage to Interim Corporate Plan	
Strategic Themes	Prosperity Cohesive Community
Lead Officer	Paul Beattie – Head of Service Prosperity and Place
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

Background

At its Annual Meeting, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council confirmed the nomination of the 8 elected members onto the Local Action Group (LAG). The process of appointing social partners on to the LAG has also been completed and the group met on 1st April 2015 with 18 members having been appointed.

The overall allocation to the Causeway Coast & Glens Council area is, at £9.6million, the third highest of the ten areas. Up to 22% of the overall budget can be used for administration and animation which means there is a programme budget of £7.78m and a technical assistance budget of £1.73m available for up to a six year period.

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council are responsible for providing administrative and advisory services to the Local Action Group (LAG) for the delivery of the new Rural Development Programme for the period 2014-2020.

Programme Update

DARD

The Department for Rural Development (DARD) received formal approval of the Programme from the European Commission on 25th August 2015.

The Department is continuing work on the range of templates for the Local Action Groups. These include templates for the Interim Strategy, the Application form, the Scoring documentation, and the Operating Rules.

Administrative Support

From 1st May 2015, the Animation Contract has been available from DARD for Council to employ staff to start the Animation of the Programme and the development of the Strategy.

The Service Level Agreement for this Animation phase has now been signed by both parties and formalises the arrangement between DARD and the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council to deliver administrative and advisory support services to the LAG.

Local Action Group (LAG)

The LAG continues to meet on a monthly basis. Since the last update in July 2015:

- Legal advice has been sought on the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association,
- The next compulsory training session for LAG Board members is scheduled to take place on 10th September 2015 and will cover aspects around assessment of applications;
- Strategy development continues –
 - Desktop research is being completed and analysed;
 - Five public consultation events were held in August to gather the views and priorities of the rural community in the Borough;
 - Stakeholder consultations are taking place with Agencies and Service providers in the Borough;
 - A workshop/consultation is being planned for Elected Members, should they wish.
- The Company Registration process has commenced.