



**Minutes of Donegal Local and Community Development Committee  
County House, Lifford, 10am, 31 March 2015**

**Attendance**

<b>Members</b>	Seamus Neely, Michael Tunney, Cllr Niamh Kennedy, Cllr Martin McDermott, Cllr Marie Therese Gallagher, Graróid Ó Smolaín, Maire O'Leary, Shaun Purcell, Paul Hannigan, Anthony Doogan, Jim Slevin, Susan McCauley, Martin McBride, Jan Feenstra, PJ Hannon, James O'Donnell, Noreen Ní Mhaoldomhnaigh
<b>Apologies</b>	Susan McLoughlin
<b>Chief Officer</b>	Micheál Ó hÉanaigh
<b>Secretariat</b>	Charles Sweeney, Christina O'Donnell
<b>Attending</b>	Paddy Doherty, Margaret Fitzgerald, Caroline Britton, Loretta McNicholas, Barney McLaughlin, Denis Kelly, Sinead Harkin, Eamonn Brown, Adrienne Kelly, Catherine Friel

**Welcome**

Seamus Neely, Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. The meeting was advised that the members of the Economic Development Committee would be joining the meeting for a joint presentation in relation to agenda item no. 8 - Update on Preparation of Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan.

**1. Minutes of previous meeting**

Martin McBride asked that the names of those who were excused from the meeting in relation to agenda item no. 5 be noted in the minutes (i.e. Michael Tunney, Cllr Martin McDermott, Shaun Purcell, Anthony Doogan and Martin McBride) and it was agreed that this would be amended.

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Martin McBride and seconded by Cllr Martin McDermott.

**2. Matters Arising**

Jim Slevin suggested that in relation to Conflicts of Interest that people be excused when decisions are being made following related discussions.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh stated that the contracts were in the process of being signed and that this should rule out a Conflicts of Interest scenario arising going forward.

Maire O'Leary highlighted the situation with regard to community groups that are in danger of closing, for example CDP Rosses and Pobail le Cheile, which operate in the Donegal Gaeltacht region.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh advised members that Glenties Municipal District had agreed to allocate funding for Rosses CDP and Pobail le Cheile and that Udaras na Gaeltachta would be meeting shortly to consider funding possibilities for the two Gaeltacht projects also. Michael confirmed that there are moves at national level to integrate Donegal Women's Network and Donegal Travellers Project into National Projects and it is hoped to have clarification on their situation in the not to distant future.

### **3. Update on PPN Establishment**

Charles Sweeney reported that the Secretariat had been established and the PPN is meeting regularly. Work is also ongoing in relation to setting up the linkage groups / specific interest groups.

### **4. Update on SICAP Programme**

Paddy Doherty confirmed that decisions had been made in relation to the allocation of LOTs under the SICAP Programme as follows:

- Lot 33-1 Inishowen awarded to Inishowen Development Partnership
- Lot 33-2 Gaeltacht awarded to Donegal Local Development Company Ltd.
- Lot 33-3 Donegal awarded to Donegal Local Development Company Ltd.

Contracts and appropriate insurance details have now been returned and the SICAP programme is due to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2015. The LCDC will be responsible for monitoring the programme and for approving payments to the successful companies.

Seamus Neely added that all necessary paperwork has been signed and arrangements are in place for the release of the first payments.

Martin McBride requested that the report he had prepared with regard PPN membership be circulated to the LCDC members.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh thanked Martin for this piece of work and advised that the report would be circulated to the LCDC members.

Michael Tunney asked what the role of the LCDC is going forward in relation to the SICAP programme.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh advised the LCDC has a central oversight role in respect of the SICAP Programme including the approval of annual work programmes and the approval of payments to the successful companies.

Maire O'Leary requested that established targets in respect of SICAP be circulated and queried how monitoring would take place.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh said the targets would be circulated and the staff and structure are to be put in place for monitoring.

Seamus Neely added that clarification on the structure and how this will feed into the LCDC meetings and work of the LCDC will be sought from the Department and Pobal and relayed to the LCDC as soon as possible.

PJ Hannon added that targets appear high for a 9 month period and that it is important that monitoring takes place.

## 5. Update on Donegal LCDC LEADER / Rural Development Programme

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh circulated an update report with regard to the LEADER / RDP and advised that the deadline for submission of the Expression of Interest (EOI) is 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The allocation for County Donegal is €12.9 million. Michael also made the following points.

- In accordance with Departmental Guidance, it is the intention of Donegal LCDC to make an EOI in relation to the LEADER / RDP with a view to being the Local Action Group (LAG) for County Donegal.
- Should this EOI be successful, it is intended that Donegal LCDC as LAG will lead on the preparation of a Local Development Strategy (LDS) and implementation of the next phase of the LEADER / RDP in the county as a whole.
- Donegal LCDC represents all sectors – Local Government, State Agencies, Local Development and Sectoral Partners and the Community Sector. At present it is leading on the preparation of the Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and it is envisaged that this integrated plan prepared and signed up to by all sectors, will form the basis and provide a framework for future funding programmes in the county such as SICAP, LEADER/RDP, PEACE IV, and a range of other funds such as Interreg V.
- Should the Donegal LCDC be successful in its expression of interest and subsequent bid for LEADER/RDP, it would be intended to continue to work with the existing local development organisations, Inishowen Development Partnership, Comhar na nOileain, Donegal Local Development Company & Udaras na Gaeltachta which the Chief Officer has been engaging with since December last in the context of LEADER / RDP.
- Should the LCDC LDS proposal be successful, it is intended that detailed Service Level Agreements setting out key roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the Donegal LCDC LEADER/RDP would be entered into with these organisations with a view towards their delivering the Donegal LEADER/RDP on behalf of the LCDC and in partnership with Donegal LCDC in specified areas of the county.
- Formal arrangements will also be put in place with Donegal County Council with regard to financial and other necessary administration relating to the programme to be carried out on behalf of Donegal LCDC.

Susan McCauley asked if the Family Resource Centres are eligible for inclusion in this scheme and Michael Ó hÉanaigh advised that clarification on this has not been received to date but that this would be sought.

Seamus Neely stated that a robust EOI would be submitted by Donegal LCDC by the deadline date and it was agreed to proceed to prepare the EOI.

Anthony Doogan expressed disappointment at the level of allocation notified for the county and would be hopeful that parallel funding may be available to supplement this.

Jim Slevin agreed with Anthony and added that it is critical to progress the EOI as soon as possible in the event that the fund operates on a first-come-first-served basis.

PJ Hannon queried if one EOI would be submitted for the county or if the submission of multiple EOIs would effect the level of allocation.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh advised that the submission of one EOI could be the in the best interests of the county in terms of timelines and accessing the funds allocated, however the process is open to any body submitting an EOI. The notified allocation of €12.9m is what is on offer at present regardless of the number of EOIs submitted. Michael reiterated the importance of submitting a strong EOI

and Plan to ensure that the county acquires the full allocation of €12.9m and to bid for further funding should the opportunity arise.

Cllr Martin McDermott referred to additional Rural Development Funding that had been provided in parallel to LEADER through the NDP during previous programmes.

Micheál Ó hÉanaigh agreed to make enquiries regarding any such availability for this programme.

Jim Slevin suggested that interested bodies work closely with the Donegal LCDC to process the application as quickly as possible and to ensure that the county access the monies available.

## **6. Plean Ghaeilge an Chontae**

Michael Ó hÉanaigh informed the meeting that this Plan would be submitted under the auspices of the LCDC. The following members of the group volunteered to assist in this process Anthony Doogan, Martin McBride, Cllr Maire Therese Gallagher, Cllr Niamh Kennedy and a meeting in relation to the Plan will be arranged between this sub group. The draft Plan will be worked on and brought to the LCDC meeting for endorsement and submission to the Department.

Paul Hannigan advised the group about Irish language learning programmes and the availability of funding specifically for these courses.

Martin McBride commended the Councillors for speaking in Irish at the recent Council meeting.

Cllr Gallagher suggested bringing the Irish language into the day-to-day business of the Council including meetings of the LCDC.

## **7. AOB**

Date of next meeting agreed - 27<sup>th</sup> May at 10am in Donegal County Council offices, Lifford.

## **8. Update on the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) – Joint Presentation**

Members of the Economic Development Committee joined the meeting. A copy of the current working draft of the LECP was circulated.

Sinead Harkin informed the meeting of the journey so far and referred to the collation of data obtained from the consultation process carried out which has ultimately informed the current draft of the LECP.

Sinead outlined the 7 priority goals of the LECP as well as giving examples of relating objectives and actions for each priority goal.

The members of both committees were invited to review the draft Plan and to provide feedback by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May on the following areas:

- Identification of appropriate amendments to objectives and/ or actions
- Identification of ability to lead or partner on actions
- Identification of gaps

Michael Ó hÉanaigh acknowledged Denis, Sinead and the team for their work on the LECP to date and thanked Sinead for her detailed presentation. The following questions / comments were received:

Martin McBride commended the good work carried out by the team and noted that the plan referred to Tourism in Bundoran and asked if other areas of the county could be considered for tourism initiatives. The meeting was informed that the reference to Bundoran was by way of an example and that tourism is a key priority for the county and objectives are contained throughout the Plan.

Cllr Frank McBrearty queried if proposed amendments to electoral boundaries would effect the implementation of the LECP and was advised that this did not have an impact on the overall Plan.

Maire O'Leary commended the work of the team and advised that the Suicide Prevention Action Plan is due to be launched shortly and will be entitled 'Connect Donegal'. Donegal is the first county to launch their Plan which will be used as a template for the other counties. Maire suggested that in order to facilitate the drawing down of potential future funding that the names of Plans are specifically referenced in the LECP.

Paul Hannigan also commended the level of work undertaken to date. Paul advised of the extent of the region which Donegal is included in with regard the development of Border Action Plan for Jobs which runs from Donegal (via Sligo) to Dundalk. Paul highlighted Donegal's unique position and emphasised the need to ensure the LECP is linked to the Border Action Plan for Jobs.

Seamus Neely agreed that the Border Region is not a unison region as each county has a unique set of needs. Michael Ó hÉanaigh advised that a submission will be made to the Committee responsible for the Regional Action Plan for Jobs.

Cllr Frank McBrearty who is member of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (formerly BMW Assembly) advised that the focus now appears to be moving away from the border and Donegal is being aligned with counties including Galway and Louth.

Cllr John Ryan praised the work carried out to date and noted that Goal 7 had particular relevance to rate payers in the county. Cllr Ryan advised of the need for economic development, job creation and further investment in this regard. Cllr Frank McBrearty noted the potential expansion of Apple in Co. Galway.

Cllr Maire Therese Gallagher commended the comprehensive detail included in the Plan and noted the importance of Donegal maintaining a membership on Regional bodies.

D Kelly thanked the members of the Committees for their comments; their continued participation in the consultation process and reminded the group to submit any further feedback by 1st May 2015.