



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council

Minutes of Donegal Local Community Development Committee County House, Lifford, 9.30am, 22nd December 2015

Attendance

Members	Seamus Neely (Chair), Cllr Niamh Kennedy, Cllr Martin McDermott, Cllr Marie Therese Gallagher, Paul Hannigan, Jim Slevin, Martin McBride, James O'Donnell, Susan McLoughlin, PJ Hannon, Jan Feenstra, Emmett Johnston, Michael Tunney, Anne McHugh, Alan O'Baoid, Noreen Muldowney
Apologies	Maire O'Leary, Susan McCauley
Chief Officer	Paddy Doherty
Attending	Liam Ward, Denis Kelly, Sinead Harkin, Donna McGroarty, Barney McLaughlin, Margaret Fitzgerald, Eileen Burgess, Charles Sweeney, Eamonn Browne

Welcome

Seamus Neely chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted. Liam Ward was introduced as the new Director of Services for Community, Enterprise and Planning Directorate and it was noted that Alan O'Baoid is now the Údaras na Gaeltachta representative on the LCDC. A round of introductions took place.

Seamus Neely advised that the first part of the meeting would be used to consider matters of mutual interest to the LCDC and the EDC namely the LECP, following which, the EDC members would be excused from the meeting allowing the LCDC to consider its own agenda.

Seamus Neely invited Denis Kelly and Sinead Harkin to address the meeting. An update report was circulated. Sinead Harkin advised that consultations had now taken place with the Municipal Districts (MD) of Donegal County Council in accordance with section 66C of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended). Each MD was satisfied that subject to a number of amendments that the draft LECP was consistent with the County Development Plan 2012-2018 (as varied); the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and; that the community and economic elements of the draft Plan are consistent with each other.

Consultation also took place with the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) and confirmation has been received of the NWRA's satisfaction with the content of the draft LECP, subject to a number of amendments. All amendments arising from these consultations and including comments received from the LCDC and EDC members have been made to the draft LECP, which has been circulated to the group for consideration.

Seamus Neely advised that the substantive content of the draft LECP was approved by the committees at earlier meetings and it is proposed at today's meeting that the amendments be approved so that the draft LECP can be brought forward to the Council meeting to be held on January, 25th 2016 for consideration.

Cllr. McBrearty raised a number of areas which he felt the LECF should focus on including flooding prevention; heritage towns; the proposed A5; education and broadband; social housing; community development and; agriculture.

A lengthy discussion took place during which the following comments were made:

Emmett Johnston referred to a perceived lack of specialism within Donegal County Council in the areas of natural heritage, ecology and environmental science and felt that this gap should be filled given the importance of the Atlantic Coast to the county.

James O'Donnell concurred with Cllr. McBrearty's concerns in relation to flooding.

Councillors Paul Canning, Martin McDermott and Marie Therese Gallagher praised Denis, Sinead and the team for the development of the LECF. Cllr. Canning advised that many of the issues raised (above) are addressed within the draft LECF. Cllr. McDermott advised of the extensive consultation process that has taken place and of the need to progress to the next stage of the process.

Paul Hannigan advised of his support to the draft LECF proceeding for the consideration of the full Council, given that the original deadline had been missed.

Seamus Neely thanked the group for their input and acknowledged the serious consequences of the recent flooding on the county. Donegal County Council, although not the responsible body, has been working proactively to support and assist communities throughout the county and has been working with Derry and Strabane District Council on a cross-border flood defence strategy. Seamus Neely also advised that upcoming Interreg IVA funding may help assist in providing additional specialism in the area of environmental sustainability.

It was agreed that the issue of flood defences and prevention be examined and addressed as a specific and separate objective in conjunction with the responsible body, the OPW. In this regard, Seamus Neely received the support of the LCDC and the EDC in approaching the OPW in relation to developing a strategic approach to the issue of flooding.

Cllr. McBrearty advised of his support to submitting the draft LECF to the Council meeting and of his desire for the LECF to be as strong as possible for the benefit of the county.

Seamus Neely thanked Denis and Sinead for their contribution and the committee members for their unanimity in agreeing to proceed to the Council meeting to held on January 25th 2016. The community aspects of the draft LECF were proposed by Paul Hannigan and seconded by Martin McBride. The economic aspects of the draft LECF were proposed by Cllr. Paul Canning and seconded by Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher.

Seamus Neely wished all members a happy Christmas.

Date of next meeting – **Tuesday, 23rd of February 2016.**

Members of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) were excused from the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous LCDC meeting held 30th September

Two amendments were requested to the draft minutes of 30th September:

Martin McBride requested the following revision: Martin McBride asked for an additional representative from the PPN to the Tourism Linkage Group. Barney McLaughlin advised that two

members of the PPN currently sit on the Linkage Group and that the names of the current members would be confirmed at the next LCDC meeting.

James O'Donnell requested the following addition: James O'Donnell requested that a letter be issued by the LCDC to the appropriate Minister with regard to the impact of the closure of five Garda barracks in the county.

The draft minutes were proposed by Jim Slevin and seconded by Cllr. McDermott subject to the amendments requested.

3. Matters Arising

James O'Donnell queried the PPN representation on the Joint Policing Committee. Liam Ward confirmed that a workshop was held in July and that a Steering Committee meeting would take place later today. The first formal meeting of the JPC will take place on 22nd January 2016. Liam Ward / Charles Sweeney to confirm names of PPN representatives on the JPC.

4. Consideration of Financial Allocations – Donegal Local Development Strategy (LDS) – LEADER / RDP 2014-2020

Seamus Neely invited Paddy Doherty to address the group. Paddy Doherty advised that the draft Local Development Strategy (LDS) is now at an advanced stage and it is hoped that the final draft LDS can be presented to the next sitting of the LCDC for approval. In order for this to take place, the allocation of funding must be agreed. Paddy Doherty invited those with Conflicts of Interest to withdraw from the meeting for this agenda item.

PJ Hannon expressed his dissatisfaction with the process undertaken with regard the allocation of funding and felt that the process lacked clarity and leadership. PJ Hannon queried how the formula used to allocate the funding was arrived at.

Noreen Muldowney also raised concerns and asked for clarity in terms of the rationale used to allocate the funding.

Jim Slevin called for fairness and transparency in allocating the funding.

Alan O'Baoid advised that several meetings were held however no proposal was presented by Donegal County Council and so agreement was not reached.

Seamus Neely acknowledged the frustrations of board members and advised that Donegal County Council is very much intent in having a long-term relationship with all agencies across the county and to work collaboratively to ensure the sustainability of the PI's. Seamus Neely advised that the process undertaken aimed to involve key players in the decision-making process and to secure a decision that was agreeable to all parties.

The following people withdrew from the meeting:

Jim Slevin, PJ Hannon, Martin McBride, Noreen Muldowney, Alan O'Baoid.

Seamus Neely advised that it was unfortunate that agreement was not reached in advance of bringing the item to the LCDC and advised that lessons can be learned from the process. Seamus Neely informed members that they were free to agree / disagree / amend the proposal and in the case that the decision was not unanimous, a vote would be required. The majority of voters must be made up of Community sector voters and equate to at least 51% of voters. Seamus Neely invited Paddy Doherty to make a presentation to the group.

Paddy Doherty circulated a report and advised that in order to ensure the availability of funding to PI's, that it is necessary to secure the agreement of the LCDC by mid January 2016. Donegal County Council is the lead financial partner for the Local Action Group (LAG) and that a total allocation of €12,913,877.86 has been provided under the LEADER / RDP 2014-2020, which represents a 50% reduction in funding from the previous programme. 25% of the budget is permitted for use for animation and administration with 75% for direct project delivery.

Paddy Doherty outlined the series of meetings held with the LDS Working Group as well as the individual meetings with the PI's. This process concluded on the 2nd of December without agreement being reached. In order to complete the LDS, it is necessary for the allocation of funding to be finalised by the LCDC. Donegal County Council considered a number of approaches in developing a model of allocation including historical allocations, population, SICAP model, Trutz Haaze as well as a number of these models. The below table outlines the proposed allocations:

Name	Administration (94.8% of requested)	Projects	Total	%
IDP	€1,046,541.22	€2,563,355.81	€3,609,897.03	28%
Udaras na Gaeltachta	€607,842.16	€1,697,840.60	€2,305,682.76	18%
DLDC	€1,448,015.11	€4,879,128.34	€6,327,143.45	49%
Comhar na nOileain	€126,070.97	€545,083.65	€671,154.62	5%
LAG	€3,228,469.46	€9,685,408.40	€12,913,877.86	100%
%	25%	75%		
Total	€12,913,877.86			

Donegal County Council was very mindful of the need to ensure the financial viability of the PI's into the future and in this regard 95% of the total budget requested by each of the PI's under animation and administration has been provided for. The Chief Officer advised that project allocation budgets were determined on the default model of Trutz Haaze as provided by the Dept however a manual adjustment was required between Udaras na Gaeltachta and Comhar na nOilean in order to ensure a sufficient budget allocation to Comhar na nOilean and to ensure the viability of the programme for the islands.

In response to Emmett Johnston's query, Seamus Neely advised that Donegal County Council was not in a position to provide additional monies to co-fund the Programme.

Cllr McDermott acknowledged the sensitivity of the task at hand and queried if PI's could utilise any underspends in administration budgets for project delivery. Seamus Neely confirmed that this was acceptable.

Emmett Johnston queried if the allocation of funding was influenced in any way by dissatisfied PI's. Seamus Neely advised that Donegal County Council's decision was not influenced by any party and that the main aim was to ensure sustainability of all PI's.

In response to a number of requests for further clarity in respect of the project delivery budgets, Paddy Doherty advised that the Trutz Haase model, which has been recommended by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government has been used to allocate the project delivery budget. This model however did not provide sufficient funding for the Islands and accordingly a manual adjustment was necessary in this instance. The Trutz Haase model takes into account population, rurality and deprivation levels.

Paul Hannigan & Michael Tunney advised of their agreement to the proposal acknowledging that animation and administration budgets have been provided for at a rate of 95% of requested values.

Seamus Neely received consensus from members to proceed with the finalisation of the LDS based on the proposed allocation model. The financial allocations were approved on the proposal of Paul Hannigan and seconded by James O'Donnell with all LCDC present in agreement with same.

Seamus Neely conveyed his appreciation to members for their consideration and participation in the process.

The excused members of the LCDC rejoined the meeting. Seamus Neely thanked members for their patience and Paddy Doherty outlined the proposal and informed members of the decision.

Jim Slevin advised that the 49% allocation to DLDC was lower than expected 50% allocation and that he would bring the matter to the board of DLDC.

Alan O'Baoid and Noreen Muldowney advised of their satisfaction with the outcome and agreement to the respective allocations.

Paddy Doherty advised that individual meetings would be arranged with each PI in early January 2016.

5. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting of the Local Community Development Committee to take place on **18th January 2016 at 3pm in the Council Chamber, Lifford.**

Seamus Neely again thanked all members for their participation and wished everyone a happy Christmas.

This concluded the business of the meeting.