

# **The Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2016 - 2022**

**Volume 1**

**Strategy, Priority Goals & High Level Objectives**



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## 1.0 Introduction

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This is the County Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) for the period of 2016 - 2022, having a 6 year life. It is a partnership plan prepared by the County Donegal Local Community Development Committee & the Economic Development Committee. Donegal County Council adopted the Local Economic & Community at their meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

The purpose of the Plan is to identify and implement actions to strengthen and develop the economic and community dimensions of the County and to reflect and support the implementation of existing and proposed National and Regional spatial, community and economic strategies. The Plan has been prepared as a result of the provisions of section 66B of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and in line with the 'Ministerial Guidelines in relation to the Community & Economic Elements of the Local Economic & Community Plan.

The Plan demonstrates the significant work, capacity, knowledge and experience that currently exist in the County to respond to challenging and constantly changing needs and demands. Much of the activity envisaged in this Plan is long term and visionary and it is embedded within the very substantial and solid groundwork that has already commenced or been delivered by the various partners. In particular, exceptional capacity to work collaboratively has been evidenced in order to maximise resources and widen benefit to reach as many people and places as possible. This has to date, and will continue to involve internal County partnerships as well as partnerships with other counties and reaching out to our cross border neighbours and our international counterparts. The Donegal LECP 2015- 2021 aims to build upon the excellence that has already been established and to continue to exemplify real activity of benefit and change to the people of Donegal.

Therefore, working in partnership, 7 Priority Goals of the Donegal LECP have been identified:

1. To Develop Donegal as a **Connected Place**
2. To Harness Donegal's **Natural and Human Capital**
3. To Value, Sustain and Develop Our **Culture and Creative resource**
4. To Promote **Sustainable, Inclusive and Healthy** Communities
5. To Develop Donegal as a **Lead Region for Learning, Research and Innovation**
6. To Develop the '**Donegal**' Brand
7. To Promote **Entrepreneurship, Investment and Enterprise**

The Donegal LECP consists of 2 Volumes and 2 Appendices:

- Volume 1: The Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan- Strategy, Priority Goals & High Level Objectives
- Volume 2: The Action Areas of the Donegal LECP
- Appendix 1: The Profile of County Donegal
- Appendix 2: Participation; Policy Context Review; Key Funding Programmes

## 2.0 Strategic Environmental Assessment & Appropriate Assessment

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As part of the process to prepare the LECP, consideration is given to the potential effects that implementation of the Plan is likely to have on the environment and to this end, two Screening exercises have been undertaken in relation to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

In relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the screening exercise assessed the potential for likely significant effects on the environment, of implementing the LECP and concluded that the Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore a Strategic Environmental Assessment of it, is not required for the following reasons:

1. A significant portion of activity anticipated is 'soft' in nature and therefore only a limited portion of activity has a tangible physical output as a component of the action, and;
2. The nature of the Plan as a framework for activity but not as the statutory land use plan for the determination of development consents. In this regard, activity flowing from the LECP that involves tangible physical projects that require planning permission including the integration of environmental considerations will be subject to assessment and will be considered within the context of the adopted planning policy framework as the primary statutory land use planning framework within the County.

### **Appropriate Assessment (AA)**

In relation to Appropriate Assessment, the screening exercise assessed the potential for significant impacts on Natura 2000 Sites and Network, of implementing the LECP, and concluded that the Plan is not likely to have significant impacts on the Network of Natura 2000 Sites and therefore an Appropriate Assessment of it, is not required for the following reasons:

- (i) a significant portion of objectives and actions are 'soft' activities in nature and thereby having no impact on Natura 2000 sites and Network and;
- (ii) the portfolios of objectives and policies contained in the relevant Development Plans/ Local Area Plans are comprehensive and are a material consideration in the determination of proposals for planning consent thus ensuring the protection and safeguarding of environmental considerations including compliance with the Habitats Directive and providing appropriate mitigation as regards potential for significant impacts.

### 3.0 Proofing in relation to Sustainability, Equality, Poverty, Rurality, Age & Disability

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In accordance with the DECLG Guidelines on the preparation of Local Economic & Community Plans, the Donegal LECP has undergone a range of assessments as regards its impact on the plan across sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age and disability described as the 6 horizontal principles.

The integration of the horizontal principles of sustainability, equality, poverty, rurality, age & disability has been achieved from the outset of the preparation of the plan through the engagement and participation of the sectoral organisations working within these areas and also through the 'Review of Strategy and Policy Context' that is detailed in Appendix 2, of the LECP including strategy relevant in the context of the proofing of the plan. Furthermore, the high level objectives of the Plan that have emerged have been considered in the context of the scope of potential impact on the 6 horizontal principles set out in the Guidelines.

The proofing exercises recognise the significant work undertaken in the preparation of the Plan to further progress the 6 horizontal principles and have provided lessons learned. The emphasis and most significant element of the assessment is the importance of integration of the principles from the outset of the process through data capture, participation, goal/ objective/ action defining, monitoring and review mechanisms. The implementation of the Donegal LECP is a collaborative and iterative process and the lessons learned can be further embedded through the ongoing oversight of the LCDC as regards the community elements of the plan and the Economic Development Committee as regards the economic elements.

### 4.0 The Vision of the LECP

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The vision of the Donegal LECP is our high level statement of what we would like to achieve through implementation of the Plan. It underpins and connects the goals, objectives and actions of the Plan.

#### **Vision:**

**To connect Donegal's people and places, harness it's economic opportunities and to achieve strong, healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities**

A number of key values underpin the vision and represent an important reference tool to be considered in the implementation of the Plan. The underpinning values are that the Plan will;

- promote and mainstream equality;
- be built on objectives that are sustainable;

- maximise returns from available resources and reduce duplication;
- integrate and maximise health and wellbeing outcomes across all activity;
- ensure meaningful participation in the planning process, and consultation and engagement with communities generally;
- utilise community development principles of Collective Action, Empowerment, Social Justice, Equality & Anti-Discrimination, Participation;
- be grounded in collaborative and partnership approaches;
- set the local context for mainstream funding programmes;
- be consistent with the County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (as varied) and its core strategy, and with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines;
- identify clear targeted actions with responsibility for delivery assigned.

The underpinning values are cross cutting in cumulatively establishing the environment within which all of our work to strengthen and promote the economic and community dimensions of the County will be delivered. The Donegal LECP, is an integrated plan and this is derived right through from the vision and its underpinning values, to the Goals, Objectives and Action Areas, where there are many interdependent and mutual benefits to be realised in tandem to respond to both the economic and the community needs and opportunities of the County.

## **5.0 The Plan Preparation Process**

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Participation in the preparation of the LECP is identified as one of the key values underpinning the vision of the plan and to this end significant resources have been engaged to ensure inclusive, widespread and meaningful participation across all elements of the Plan. Appendix 2 of the LECP, 'Participation; Policy Context Review; Key Funding Programmes' sets out a detailed record of each element of participation and records the key outputs. Figure 1 shows the timeline for the participation process which commenced in August 2014 and which has been led through the LCDC and the Economic Development Committee of Donegal County Council. The Committees, through their representation across the sectors, connected at this initial phase of participation with the grass roots groups and organisations that are critical to the economic and community dimensions of the County. In addition, the public authorities and publicly funded agencies that are carrying out functions in relation to economic and community development in County Donegal were notified of the commencement of the process to prepare the plan and their participation in the process was secured. The participation of agencies primarily occurred through the Focus Group format.

In addition and as described by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, a 'public consultation process' was initiated on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2014 by the placing of a notice in local newspapers and on the Donegal County Council website inviting the public to make observations or submissions in writing regarding the development of the Plan. In total, 100 submissions were received made up of a combination of individual written submissions as well as a number of submissions completed

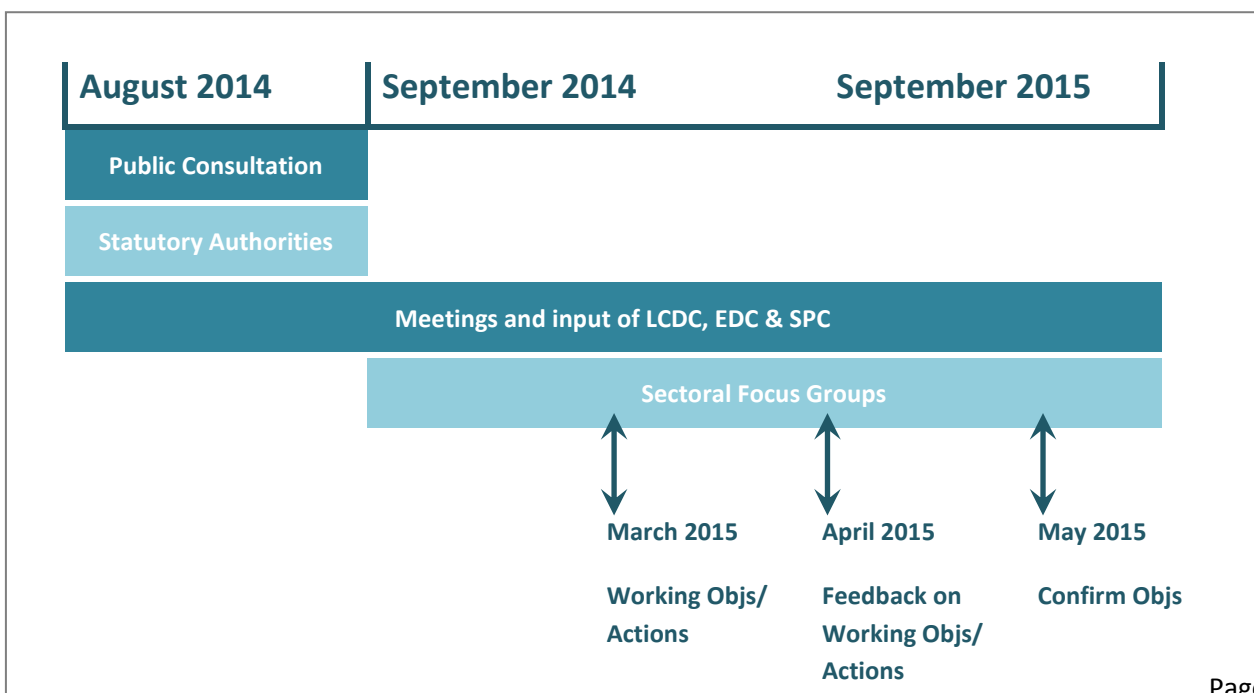


through an online questionnaire. A report on the public consultation process was prepared and was made available on the Donegal County Council website. Appendix 2 of the LECP examines the outputs of public consultation further to record the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that were identified in the submissions as well as recording the key areas suggested for targeted growth and resources.

In parallel with the public consultation process, a number of targeted focus groups were identified as important groups from which sector specific participation be sought. The focus groups opened up ongoing exchange of information, consideration of the evidence base, identification of issues/needs through SWOT analyses and collaboration and input into the plan occurring from August 2014 leading right through to the publication of the draft LECP. A full record of the outputs is set out in Appendix 2 of the LECP. The focus groups feeding into the Plan are:

- ✓ Social Inclusion Measures Group
- ✓ Community Development Alliance
- ✓ Social Inclusion Linkage Group
- ✓ Public Participation Network Secretariat
- ✓ Digital Strategy Working Group
- ✓ Tourism Forum
- ✓ Economic agencies
- ✓ Business community
- ✓ Education & Training Board
- ✓ Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- ✓ Health Service Executive
- ✓ Farming representatives
- ✓ Creative Industries

**Figure 1: The Timeline for Participation**



In parallel, Donegal County Council has prepared its Corporate Plan for the period 2015- 2019 to set out the strategic direction of the Council over the next five years. The Corporate Plan identifies the LECP as a key local policy instrument for Donegal that will underpin the Council's enhanced role in economic and local community development. Having regard to the relationship between the Plans and to ensure complementarities, the issues raised through the consultation phase regarding the Corporate Plan have been considered for their crossover and relevance in the context of the LECP and thereby added value to the LECP. This integrated approach is documented in a separate report entitled, 'The Donegal LECP and the Donegal County Council Corporate Plan 2015- 2019' and is demonstrated through the 5 priority themes of the Corporate Plan as follows:

- **Economic Development and Job Creation:** Involving tourism development, WAW, Small Business Support, commercial rates, food, community enterprise, fishing, farming, FDI, renewable energy, green economy, broadband, cross border working, Diaspora.
- **Infrastructure:** Roads, broadband, air access, rail, signage, water, wastewater, transport, housing, footpaths, playgrounds and parks, local amenities, buildings, leisure centres, streetscapes.
- **Culture and heritage:** Involving languages, diversity, local history, conservation, monuments, structures of historical value, Gaeltacht islands, cultural facilities, museums, libraries, arts, community arts.
- **Sustainable and inclusive communities:** Involving revitalising towns and villages, local area plans/ town plans, walking/ cycling routes, amenities, physical activity, participation, PPN, Young people, older people, vulnerable people, people with disabilities, food, fuel, funding, safety, valuing volunteerism, mental health, engagement, community development, equality, interculturalism, anti- racism/ sectarianism, drugs/ alcohol misuse, road safety.
- **Collaboration and partnership working:** Co-operation, cross border working, linkages, critical mass, influence, local, regional, international, central government, funding agencies, sectoral organisations, Diaspora, intra-organisational collaboration.

## **6.0 The Socio- Economic Statement**

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Appendices 1 & 2 of the Plan outline the detailed evidence base upon which the Goals, Objectives and Actions have been developed and provide a comprehensive resource that will assist all the partners in the implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review of the Plan. The collation of the evidence base involved an extensive body of work and has been developed using a range of processes. The key messages coming from each detailed evidence base are set out in sections 6.1- 6.4 under the following headings:

1. The profiling of the County (Appendix 1)
2. The outputs of the participatory process (Appendix 2)
3. A review of the strategy and policy context (Appendix 2)
4. The profiling of the key policy and funding programmes (Appendix 2)

Each evidence base itself provides important key messages but taken as a cumulative, forms the clear and combined evidential basis of the socio- economic statement. To this end, the key messages arising from each detailed evidence base (1- 4 above) are brought together into a high level SWOT analysis set out on the following pages.

## The Strengths of County Donegal

- Positive and strong County population trends including strong Gateway population
- Diversity of the geography and characteristics of the County- Gateway, Border region, Islands, Gaeltacht, rural areas.
- Development Centres identified to strengthen 7 key towns
- Living rural areas
- Strong environment for Technology, Research & Innovation (e.g. North West Science Park, Donegal Clinical and Research Academy Development, CoLab, M2D2, Killybegs Offshore Service Centre and Wind Energy Centre and Donegal as a Centre of Excellence for Renewable Technology).
- Significant broadband projects/ increasing broadband coverage
- Diverse economic base
- Improving inward investment base
- Strong indigenous enterprise sector
- Strong and mobilising Creative sector
- Established network of primary, post- primary, FET, Lifelong Learning and 3<sup>rd</sup> level education providers in the region.
- Diverse and growing tourism sector supported by WAW strategy and strategic tourism locations
- County assets- Natural resources, Landscape, Environment, Heritage, Culture, Archaeology, Language, sports and recreation
- Diaspora resource
- Successful marketing/ branding (e.g. The Food Coast- Donegal Good Food Initiative, Go Visit Donegal, The Donegal Diaspora, The Donegal Portal
- Quality of life
- Environmental quality
- Extent, capacity and experience of C&V sector
- Experience in partnership and interagency collaboration

### Strategy alignment:

Supports and aligns with the implementation of County Donegal Development Plan 2012 (as varied) and the RPGs for the Border Region, 2010.

Also, aligns with economic, community and local sectoral strategies particularly the objectives and priorities of:

- Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of the Commission for the economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014 Driving Enterprise, Delivering Jobs, Strategy to 2016, Enterprise Ireland
- Údarás na Gaeltachta, Strategic Plan 2014- 2017
- Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), 'Harnessing Our Oceans Wealth,' July 2012
- The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, 2014
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara Strategy 2013- 2017
- Failte Irelands Wild Atlantic Way Strategy
- Healthy Ireland - Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025
- Further Education & Training Strategy 2014- 2019, SOLAS and DES
- Active Donegal - Strategic Plan 2011-2014
- Connecting For Life Donegal, Preventing Suicide Together, Action Plan 2015- 2012
- Local Development Companies
- Enterprise Development on the Gaoth Dobhair Business Park, 2015, Údarás na Gaeltachta
- The County Donegal Heritage Plan 2014- 2019
- LYIT Strategic Plan, Our Commitment to the North West Gateway Learning Region, 2014- 2017
- Donegal ETB Education Plan 2011 – 2015
- Donegal Digital Action Plan, 2015
- Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal

## The Weaknesses experienced in County Donegal

- Access infrastructure is predominantly road based.
- Progress on strategic infrastructure projects
- Exchange rate fluctuations
- Significant level of deprivation/ poverty in the County
- Access to service barriers: Primarily transport, broadband and language.
- Lack of training in social enterprises
- Lack of adequate rural transport
- Deficiencies in energy resilience and alternatives
- High unemployment level and high youth unemployment
- High age- dependency ratio
- Reduction in the County's young adult population
- Projected ageing population resulting in demographic and service challenges
- Availability & quality of Broadband
- Digital exclusion- the digital divide
- Rurally dispersed population
- Large number of small towns resulting in limited capacity for vitality and viability
- Collapse of the construction sector
- High rate of residential vacancy
- Substantial population percentage has no formal education (16%)
- External determinants outside our control
- Inadequate water and wastewater systems
- Lack of appropriate physical spaces for services and activities across the sectors.
- Lack of quality cycle network
- Lack of consistent funding stream for community organisations and financial support for SME's
- Diminished capacity in community organisations
- Gaps in tourism product/ service provision/ supporting infrastructure
- Lack of adequate brand
- Lack of marine infrastructure
- Matching education provision to industry needs

### Strategy alignment:

- The identified weaknesses reflect the needs & priorities identified across the strategic frameworks reviewed, particularly in relation to:
- Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014
  - Údarás na Gaeltachta, Strategic Plan 2014- 2017
  - Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), 'Harnessing Our Oceans Wealth,' July 2012
  - The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, 2014
  - National Broadband Plan, DCENR, 2012
  - Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007- 2016
  - SICAP 2015
  - Report of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues in 2006 and the National Strategy for Traveller/ Roma Integration, 2011
  - Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014 – 2020
  - Healthy Ireland - Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025
  - Further Education & Training Strategy 2014- 2019, SOLAS and DES
  - National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan, 2013
  - Active Donegal - Strategic Plan 2011-2014
  - Donegal Diversity Plan, 2011 – 2013
  - Donegal Intercultural Platform
  - Donegal Traveller Interagency Group
  - Donegal Youth Service
  - Donegal Women's Network
  - Connecting For Life Donegal, Preventing Suicide Together, Action Plan 2015- 2012
  - North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force Plan 2011- 2014
  - Local Development Companies
  - LYIT Strategic Plan, Our Commitment to the North West Gateway Learning Region, 2014- 2017
  - Donegal ETB Education Plan 2011 – 2015
  - Donegal Digital Action Plan, 2015

## The Opportunities for County Donegal

- Smart Regional Specialisations: Marine Resources, renewable energies, food, agriculture, tourism, creative's
- Maximise the potential of the Creative Strategy 2015 and the Donegal Digital Action Plan 2015
- To increase Broadband and availability through the National Broadband Plan 2015
- Maximise the potential of the County's built heritage
- The continued strengthening of the Letterkenny- Derry linked gateway as a regional driver of growth.
- To strengthen identified Development Centres
- To revitalise urban communities through reuse and regeneration of vacant/ derelict buildings
- To further develop partnerships and collaborate across all the sectors including cross border
- To capitalise on the diverse spatial characteristics - the border, the Gateway, the islands, the rural areas, the Gaeltacht
- To coordinate service delivery through key towns/ hubs to maximise the reach to vulnerable groups
- To tap into the resource of the living rural areas
- To develop innovation in tourism product development
- To maximise the potential of the Wild Atlantic Way
- To enhance the County's entrepreneurial culture
- To maximise the potential of the Donegal Food Strategy
- To increase the level of Innovation, Research and Development in the North West
- To coordinate & collaborate on planned and new investment in water & waste water infrastructure
- To further establish Donegal as a Learning region
- Enable people & reduce deprivation through increased, tailored & targeted training & learning.
- To be an exemplar in Donegal for the natural environment.
- Tourism priorities: product, marketing & capacity building
- Tourism product development opportunity: Heritage, culture, walking, cycling, Irish language, angling, fishing, marine, town regeneration
- To promote to Donegal as 'Healthy Donegal.'
- To improve health through walking and cycling.
- To learn new heritage and culture from the County's multi- cultural population.
- Enable the enterprise ecosystem including business supports
- Harness the Diaspora resource for inward investment.
- Young people: Embed entrepreneurship, encourage STEM uptake, create industry links

### Strategy alignment:

The opportunities identified aligns with the opportunities & priorities of the economic, community & local sectoral strategies particularly:

- The CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied)
- Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of CEDRA, 2014
- Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), 'Harnessing Our Oceans Wealth,' July 2012 & The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, 2014
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara Strategy 2013- 2017
- Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007- 2016
- SICAP 2015
- National Broadband Plan, DCENR, 2012
- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014 – 2020
- Healthy Ireland - Framework for Improved Health & Wellbeing
- FET 2014- 2019, SOLAS and DES
- Active Donegal - Strategic Plan 2011-2014
- Donegal Diversity Plan, 2011 – 2013
- Donegal Intercultural Platform
- Donegal Traveller Interagency Group
- Donegal Youth Service
- Donegal Women's Network
- Connecting For Life Donegal, Preventing Suicide Together, Action Plan 2015- 2012
- North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force Plan 2011- 2014
- Local Development Companies
- Enterprise Development on the Gaoth Dobhair Business Park, 2015, Údarás na Gaeltachta
- The County Donegal Heritage Plan 2014- 2019
- LYIT Strategic Plan, Our Commitment to the North West Gateway Learning Region, 2014- 2017
- Donegal ETB Education Plan 2011 – 2015
- Donegal Digital Action Plan, 2015
- Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal

## The Threats experienced by County Donegal

- Lack of alternative to drink culture undermining the objectives of the LECP e.g. Donegal Brand and Tourism.
- That heritage is not harnessed in an appropriate manner.
- Threat of blight and overdevelopment on the landscape and natural environment
- Limited existing economic base/ employment base
- Emigration- brain drain & lose of young people
- Impact of Irish water on the implementation of the County's water and waste water infrastructure and planned programmes.
- Reliance on community and voluntary sector especially volunteers, to reach marginally excluded groups.
- Continued high level of deprivation and poverty
- Deepening of the demographic differential between the north east and east of the County and the west and south west of the County.
- Diminishing capacity of towns as a result of the trend for rural living (77% of the population are rural dwellers)
- Threat to historic streetscape, public realm and quality in towns from continued vacancy and dereliction trends.
- Environmental threat as a result of dependency on road based transport
- Sustainability of community organisations.
- Further closure of services and facilities such as Garda Stations.
- Vulnerability of rural transport
- Impact of charges and taxes on SME's.
- Limitation on funding opportunities.
- Stability of regulatory and currency markets internationally
- Impacts of currency fluctuations on particular sectors such as the tourism sector, and spending/ disposable income power

### Strategy alignment:

The threats identified reflect the threats and needs addressed through the following particular strategies:

- Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of the Commission for the economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014
- Driving Enterprise, Delivering Jobs, Strategy to 2016, Enterprise Ireland
- Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007- 2016 (NAP inclusion)
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015
- Active Donegal - Strategic Plan 2011-2014
- Donegal Diversity Plan, 2011 – 2013
- Donegal Intercultural Platform
- Donegal Traveller Interagency Group
- Donegal Youth Service
- Donegal Women's Network
- Connecting For Life Donegal, Preventing Suicide Together, Action Plan 2015- 2012
- Enterprise Development on the Gaoth Dobhair Business Park, 2015, Údarás na Gaeltachta
- The County Donegal Heritage Plan 2014- 2019, County Donegal Heritage Forum

## 6.1 The Profiling of the County

A detailed profile of the County undertaken by the Research & Policy Unit of Donegal County Council is set out in Appendix 1 to the Plan. The profile provides an in- depth analysis and reporting on key statistical resources and on sectoral activity throughout the County. The principal strategic facts and the associated key messages are now derived from the detailed profile of Appendix 1 and set out hereunder.

### 6.1.1 Donegal, a Unique & Connected Place

Located on the Border Region, County Donegal is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest County in the State with a land mass of 4,861sq kms or 6.9% of the total area of the State. The County is magnificently bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the south west, west and north and shares its borders with Counties Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Leitrim. The landscape is varied and dramatic, comprising of mountains, valleys, and fertile plains with a deeply indented coastline forming natural sea loughs, bays and peninsulas and many islands both inhabited and uninhabited.

#### Donegal, a Unique & Connected Place

Principal Strategic facts	Key message
Letterkenny- Derry Gateway – 113,099 persons 2011	Strong critical mass underpinning Linked Gateway
Population of Letterkenny- grew by 28% (2002- 2011)	Fast growing population in the County Gateway
13 inhabited Islands in 2011	Unique resource- culture, tourism, biodiversity, other niche types of development
Donegal Gaeltacht population is 24,744 in 2011	Unique resource- language, economy, culture
Donegal shares 93% of its entire land boundary with Northern Ireland	Cross border complementarities & opportunities for cooperation- education, health, emergency services, policing, work, recreation, retail
Rurally dispersed County- 33.8 persons/km sq compared to State average of 67/km sq	Alive rural areas Implications for service delivery and infrastructure investment Landscape and environmental implications Rural transportation essential
Large number of small towns - only 9 towns with a population over 1,500 persons in 2011	Implications for service delivery and infrastructure investment Limited capacity for vitality and viability



	Retained rural town characteristics – Rich in heritage, culture, traditional architecture and the unique Donegal character
Northeast & East of County is more populated than West & Southwest in 2011	Exemplifies strong cross border relationship Greater barriers to service delivery in less populated areas
Higher levels of under 30 years population are located in Northeast & East than in West & Southwest in 2011	Spatial implications for delivery of services to young people- requires efficient, sustainable and equitable approach
Higher levels of +65 years population are located in West & Southwest than in Northeast & East in 2011	Spatial implications for delivery of services to older people- requires efficient, sustainable and equitable approach
Dependency on road based transport system and private car	Maintain & improve key routes: N13, N14, N15, N56, A5, A6 & regional network Maintain & improve rural transport provision.
Strategic transport Gateways include City of Derry airport, Donegal Airport, Knock Airport, Killybegs Port and Greencastle & Burtonport harbours	Maintain & improve airports and marine Gateways Road based connectivity to strategic transport Gateways essential
Increase in use of private car & decrease in use of other more sustainable modes of transport in 2011	Environmental implications Develop viable initiatives to provide alternatives to car based travel e.g. Walkway provision in towns Potential barrier to social inclusion

### 6.1.2 Repowering our Towns

There are 61 settlements in County Donegal ranging in size from just over 100 inhabitants to almost 20,000 persons and these settlements are vital in sustaining economic and social vitality and growth in the County. They provide a wide range of services and employment functions which both drive and are supported by their rural hinterlands. The towns have the potential to play a crucial role in regenerating economically stagnant areas of the County and such physical regeneration will have far reaching cumulative benefits to not only the town catchments but to whole areas of the County.

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**Repowering our Towns**


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<b>Principal Strategic facts</b>	<b>Key message</b>
54% of the population live in open countryside and 46% live in 61 settlements in 2011	Rural population characteristic
12% of the population live in the Letterkenny Gateway and 34% live in 60 smaller geographically dispersed settlements in 2011	Small settlements are important network of service centres Develop their vitality and viability Potential network to facilitate service delivery
Top ten fastest growing towns were located close to the border with Derry and near Letterkenny (2002-2011)	The linked Gateway is attracting people
Most towns in Glenties MD have grown in size (2002-2011)	Further support additional growth in West Donegal towns
Half of the towns in the Donegal MD have decreased in size (2002-2011)	Opportunities for targeted regeneration initiatives in the south west
Most towns in the Letterkenny MD grew in size (2002-2011)	Match population growth in towns in the Gateway region with vitality and support services.
All of the towns in the Stranorlar MD grew in size (2002-2011)	Further support additional growth in the Stranorlar MD
22 out of 26 Tier 1, 2 & 3 towns have a vacancy/ dereliction rate of 8% or more	Identify targeted regeneration initiatives to consolidate and rejuvenate town centres Reuse vacant and underutilised buildings
Average age dependency ratio in towns is 57.6% in 2011	Rejuvenate towns as attractive places to live for population of working age Implications for service delivery to young people and older people through our town networks
35% of all families living in towns are headed by a lone parent in 2011	Implications for delivery of family supports & services through our town network
51% of persons with a disability living in our towns were aged under 15 years or 65 years and over in 2011	Opportunities to coordinate delivery of services to young people and older people with services to persons with a disability through our network of towns
42% of people living in towns were not participating in the labour force in 2011	Rejuvenate and improve towns as attractive places to live Enable sustainable local employment in towns
28.4% of the total labourforce were unemployed and living in towns in 2011	Improve vitality and viability of town centres to attract sustainable business and employment

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Implications for delivery of training programmes and pathways to employment through our networks of towns

44% of non residential buildings are within towns

Strong established mix of residential and non- residential activity in our towns  
Solid base on which to improve vitality, diversity and viability in towns

### 6.1.3 Delivering Socially Inclusive Services

Deprivation and social exclusion continue to present challenges in the Donegal context. The Haase Pratschke Relative Deprivation Score attributed to County Donegal in 2011 was -6.25 making it the second most deprived local authority area in the State. An analysis of the indicators that make up Haase Pratschke Index reveals that the key drivers of Donegal low deprivation score are low educational attainment (26.1%) and high male unemployment rates (31.4%).

#### Delivering Socially Inclusive Services

##### Principal Strategic facts

##### Key message

County deprivation score of -6.25 in 2011

Significant deprivation throughout the County

Majority of Donegal ED's more deprived than national average

'Marginally above average' deprivation scores around Letterkenny, Bundoran and Lough Eske in 2011

Impact of the economic performance of the Letterkenny Gateway

72.6% of population are rural dwellers in 2011

Hard to reach communities are made up of rural dwellers, Gaeltacht and island communities

Donegal Gaeltacht makes up 24.5% of the total State Gaeltacht population in 2011

Implications for access to services and rural transport

13 Inhabited islands

Young people make up 23% of the population- higher than the State in 2011

Implications for number, type and level of services to young people

13.3% of the population are 65 years and over age category in 2011

People are living longer- Major future demographic and service related challenges

Higher concentrations of young people along the North East axis in 2011

Spatial implications for delivery of supports and services to young and older people

Higher concentrations of older people living in the West and North West & in

Gaeltacht areas in 2011	
County age dependency ratio of 56.9%- 2 <sup>nd</sup> highest in the State in 2011	Support initiatives to increase working age population such as the Diaspora connections
High level network of community infrastructure	Potential to perform as digital, community & economic hubs Capital maintenance and investment implications Potential for energy efficiency measures to add to sustainability
52% of homes are constructed pre- 1992 (pre first national building standards in Ireland) (2011)	Potential target for energy efficiency and sustainability measures
34% of households had no internet connection- compared to State average of 26%.	Drive improvements in access and capacity in digital technology Impact of digital exclusion
Decreasing number of persons at work (2012)	Further develop initiatives to attract investment, support indigenous enterprise and enable employment
Growth in employment in retail, health, education, agriculture, forestry and fishing (2011)	Target supports to further develop growing sectors
Decrease in employment in construction and Hotels and Restaurants	Particular implications for male population and component of deprivation score Target reskilling and upskilling and pathways to employment
Extensive education network of primary, post- primary, Digital Schools, 3 <sup>rd</sup> level (LYIT) and FET (ETB & SOLAS)	Support continued development of the sector Support and assist collaborative approaches
177 primary and special schools having a total enrolment of 19,073 in the academic year Sept, 2013/2014 (Source: Dept. Education and Skills).	Considerable education resource
Although improved, % of persons who had 'no formal or primary education' in Donegal is highest in the country (2011)	Target programmes for early school leavers, lifelong learning, FET and pathways to education Target vulnerable groups
Top 3 <sup>rd</sup> level qualifications by field of study-ranked 3 <sup>rd</sup> is science, mathematics & computing and also Engineering, manufacturing & construction (2011)	Continue to encourage uptake of STEM
3,300 full-time students at	Strong 3 <sup>rd</sup> level education base

Letterkenny Institute of Technology, with 70% of Donegal origin (Source: LyIT). Network of 13 libraries, 11 Taobh Tíre centres, a Cross Border mobile library (covering the east of the County and northern Ireland) (Source: Donegal County Council – Cultural Services).	Positive cultural resource
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#### 6.1.4 Protecting and Harnessing our Rural Environment

Donegal's environment offers huge opportunities for growth and development for enterprise creation and tourism product development whilst also improving recreational access. The environmental resource adds to 'Quality of Life' and contributes to the attractiveness of Donegal as a place to live. Protecting our most important habitat and promoting a pristine environment along with our green image is an integrate part of developing the 'Donegal' brand.

#### Protecting and Harnessing our Rural Environment

Principal Strategic facts	Key message
Large network of conservation sites- including 47 SAC's, 25 SPA's, 88 NHA's & pNHA's,	Implications for environmental protection of the resource Rich resource of habitats and biodiversity- potential as environmental exemplar, learning, tourism
Glenveagh National Park- one of 6 national parks in the country	Continue protection and development of the important County resource; environmental, biodiversity, habitat, built heritage, heritage, landscape, natural beauty
145 Irish Geological Heritage Sites- Geologically complex region	Potential as tourism and learning resource
Landscape and natural beauty- top reason for visiting tourists to Donegal/ Sligo followed by 'natural environment' (Failte Ireland's Holidaymaker Study 2013 – Donegal/Sligo)	Implications for protection of landscape from over-development Develop opportunities arising from the resource- recreation, health, wellbeing, education, tourism
Good and improving waterbody quality -40 groundwater reserves all have 'good' water quality status	Programmes to manage development, monitor, undertake innovative environmental initiatives essential
10 public water supplies serving a population of 35,508 persons were on the EPA Remedial Action List (2013)	Continued investment and improvement in water supply and quality systems required Collaboration with Irish Water essential and potential for local initiatives for schemes outside remit of Irish Water
Unaccounted For Water (UFW) rate	Potential for the development of water conservation projects

was 45% between 2008- 2013	
Deficiencies in waste water treatment	Continued investment and improvement in waste water treatment required Collaboration with Irish Water essential and potential for local initiatives for schemes outside remit of Irish Water
279.65MW of power generated from 28 windfarms in Donegal – total national wind power generation is 1,803MW	Collaborate on the development of the energy network Landscape implications
Significant wave energy resource	Support for advancement of pilot projects and development of test beds to become a world leader in harnessing ocean resources.
Large areas of commercial forestry and associated biomass potential	Potential for the development of sustainable and affordable fuel resources
Offshore oil and gas exploration	Develop the role of Killybegs and Donegal airport as strategic maintenance service facilities for offshore activities

### 6.1.5 Donegal's Primary Sectors

Farming, forestry and fisheries remain three important sectors in County Donegal. The various aspects of the County's food resource offers much potential for farm diversification, creation of rural enterprises, development of rural tourism and the long term sustainability of rural communities. Forestry and woodlands present considerable opportunities for the development of sustainable rural areas, providing for increased farm viability through diversification into primary wood production and value added products whilst also helping to meet the demand for access to rural amenities, activity and adventure tourism. As an island nation, fishing has always been economically and socially important to Ireland with Killybegs one of the most important fishing ports in the country.

#### Donegal's Primary Sectors

Principal Strategic facts	Key message
Number of farms decreased by 4.9% and farms are getting bigger (2000-2010)	Changes in management, production and output
54% of farm holders were aged 55 years or older in 2010	Develop initiatives to increase participation of younger persons in farming sector
Number of persons working on farms increased by 10% over 2000- 2010	Business training and supports essential to enable sustainable employment in the sector

8 Farmers Markets take place in the County ( <a href="http://www.bordbia.ie">www.bordbia.ie</a> )	Marketplace for fresh farm, garden and home produce and handcrafts. Supports the development and marketing of artisan food products Contributes to tourism product
Estimated total area of forestry is 12.25% of the total land area in 2012	Potential visual impact on landscape Potential for recreational space Contributes to enhancement of health and wellbeing
Significant uptake in willow plantations- significant potential economically and environmentally (National Forestry Inventory)	Develop further innovative initiatives for sustainable fuel products
A number of active forestry owner groups- Donegal Woodland Owners and Inishowen Forestry Owners	Support for further development of initiatives to assist forest owners to manage forests and add value to their timber
A number of Community Forests	Protect and further develop Community Forests as key asset for recreation, education, health and wellbeing
62% of fish landed in Irish ports was through Killybegs and Greencastle in 2013	National impact in the Irish sea fisheries industry Economically significant
Killybegs - strategic fishing port of national importance- 2009 total turnover in the area was around €250million with 82% attributed to fisheries sector	Potential for Innovation Hub to further develop and harness the resource Essential to maximise the use of the pier infrastructure Critical to continue to value- add Potential for sustainable jobs
13 Aquaculture Production Areas (2014-2015)	Existing established expertise on which to further develop the sector
25 seafood producers and processors identified by BIM (2015)	Existing experience in producing high value products and on which to further develop the sector
Donegal fishing communities have a high number of people in the 0- 19 and 65 plus age brackets	Implications for survival of fishing tradition and expertise Implications for training and education
Established Research, Development & Training in the Marine sector (Offshore training college in Falcarragh, LYIT Killybegs campus).	Significant expertise established- grow and develop further as a centre of research and innovation
3,175 businesses registered for taxation purposes (FAME 2013)	Diverse economic base

2,765 persons employed in Agency Assisted Foreign Owned Companies in all sectors in 2014 (Forfás- Special Tabulation from the Annual Employment Surveys)

Diverse economic base

5,089 persons employed in Agency Assisted Irish Owned Companies, in all sectors in 2013 (Source: Forfás Annual Employment Surveys)

A number of world renowned world class companies operating a range of sectors from Engineering, Medical Technology, Financial Services, Business Services , Clean Tec. (Source: Donegal CDB)

Strong inward investment base

### 6.1.6 Unlocking Our Cultural Resource

The physical geography of the County is a unique natural environment and the interactions of human geography with this environment have shaped a very rich and distinctive identity for Donegal and its people. Historic periods and events such as the Flight of the Earls, The Plantation of Ulster, The Great Famine and the Partition of Ireland have impacted in a particular way in Donegal, on our thinking, our language, our relations, traditions and our way of life. These impacts are evident through our ever changing economic, religious, social and political landscape. What we have today is a rich cultural heritage the legacy of which includes the thousands of artefacts in our museums, our dramatic landscape, our folklore and mythology, our writings, fine art, our festivals, music, architecture and dance.

#### Unlocking Our Cultural Resource

##### Principal Strategic facts

An extensive network of cultural infrastructure- 429 facilities

##### Key message

Maintain and sustain capacity and viability  
Widen access  
Promote and coordinate activity

Approximately 57,000 people engage through the Diaspora Project

Key resource for the region focussed on culture, heritage, tourism, business, education and enterprise  
Potential to create linkages providing skill, experience, networks and resources

Vibrant festival calendar

Valuable expression of culture and heritage- Builds and identifies communities  
Contributes to tourism product



	Promote and coordinate activity
An attractive film location	Consolidate and develop further through the Donegal Film Office
Irish language is a living language- the Gaeltacht population grew by 4% 2006-2011	Strong upward trend to contribute to sustaining the language Opportunities for learning Contributes to tourism sector Develop a Donegal Gaeltacht Language Plan
Donegal Gaeltacht has a lower % of Irish speakers than the State aged between 10- 59 years (2011)	Implication of longer term threat to maintenance of the language- develop initiatives to promote and integrate the language further
Letterkenny as a Gaeltacht Service Town	Implications for delivery of services and other business activity in Irish language- requires coordination, training & promotion
22% of Donegal's population originate from outside the State (2011)	Strong level of cultural diversity – adding to the culture of Donegal Implications for integration into the economic, social and cultural fabric and delivery of services
429 creative businesses/ bodies in the County (Creative Edge Project)	Vibrant, diverse sector- potential for employment and contribution to tourism sector.
Diverse built heritage- 375 buildings on RPS, circa 3000 structures on NIAH- 2015	Evidence of cultural legacy Contribute to place- making Contribute to tourism sector
5 Heritage Towns (Ardara, Ballyshannon, Moville, Ramelton and Raphoe) - 2015	Concentration of the heritage resource Potential for greater contribution to the tourism sector Further develop initiatives to reuse historic buildings in Heritage Towns to contribute to regeneration and place-making
Rich archaeological resource- 3129 monuments, 252 shipwrecks as part of maritime heritage -2015	Potential for greater contribution to the tourism sector

### 6.1.7 Capitalising on Our Rural Tourism Advantage

The number of tourists visiting Donegal is consistently on the increase driven by a number of factors including the establishment and promotion of the Wild Atlantic Way, along which there are a number of Signature Points like Slieve League, Fanad Lighthouse and Malin Head and other Discovery Points such as spell binding islands, breath taking blue flag beaches, world class golf courses, community forests and picnic areas and historical landmarks. Investment in tourism products has been targeted and this is testimony to the tourism offering however further targeted initiatives and investments to rural communities will help to harness the full potential of the Wild Atlantic Way.

#### Capitalising on Our Rural Tourism Advantage

Principal Strategic facts	Key message
Extensive network of tourism offerings along the Wild Atlantic Way and throughout the County	Strong tourism offering- focus on integration, coordination, further product development, marketing
'Beautiful scenery/ countryside' the top reason for tourists visiting Donegal/ Sligo (Failte Ireland's Holidaymaker Study 2013 – Donegal/Sligo)	Protect the landscape resource and natural environment from over- development
A hub for adventure and activity tourism- 13 blue flag beaches, adventure and watersports activities, surf, golf, angling, walking trails, sporting and recreational facilities, parks and play areas, 2015	Adventure and activity tourism sector growing – continue coordination and promotion of activities
In 2013, overseas visitors spent on average €25million on food and drink in the County	Further develop the sector through the Donegal Food Strategy and The Food Coast Opportunities for rural communities to diversify and add value beyond primary agriculture and fishing production
Diverse cultural tourism sector- includes cultural and arts practitioners, facilities and services, natural heritage designations, archaeological heritage and built heritage (RPS & NIAH)	Vibrant cultural tourism sector Develop supports to ensure sustainability and build capacity
Predominantly road based tourist travel- 74% by private car, 15% by private coach (Failte Ireland's Holidaymaker Study 2013 – Donegal/Sligo)	Investment in a range of essential facilities necessary- public conveniences, picnic and viewing areas, motor home facilities, road infrastructure
3,750 (Failte Ireland approved)	Potential to cater for the growing demand for increased

accommodation units along the 550km route of WAW clustered around key settlements (2015)      accommodation through farm diversification

69% of all accommodation units are through the hotel sector (2015)

Employment opportunity for rural communities to make up deficit- e.g. small scale conversions, available land for camping and caravanning

## 6.2 The outputs of the participatory process

As indicated in Section 5.0, participation in the preparation of the plan included engagement through the number of consultations namely (detailed record of consultations set out in Appendix 2, 'Participation; Policy Context Review; Key Funding Programmes'):

- Public consultation
- Community & Voluntary sector consultation
- Economic sector consultation
- Focus groups

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats identified cumulatively through the participation process are set out in the table 1.

**Table 1: S.W.O.T arising from the Participation Process**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<p><b><u>County assets</u></b> Natural resources, Landscape, Environment, Heritage, Culture, Archaeology, Language</p> <p><b><u>Economic</u></b> Strong tourism sector Strong creative sector WAW Strategy Existing economic base Diaspora resource</p> <p><b><u>Community</u></b> Healthy Ireland Strategy Quality of life Environmental quality Extent, capacity and experience of C&amp;V sector</p> <p><b><u>Spatial</u></b> Letterkenny- Derry Gateway Donegal Gaeltacht Development Centres (Ballybofey- Stranorlar, Ballyshannon, Buncrana, Bundoran, Carndonagh, Donegal Town, Gaoth Dobhair and Killybegs). Strategic tourism locations</p>	<p><b><u>Economic &amp; Community</u></b> Availability &amp; quality of Broadband Digital exclusion- the digital divide Progress on strategic infrastructure projects External determinants outside our control Inadequate water and wastewater systems Lack of appropriate physical spaces for services and activities across the sectors. Lack of quality cycle network</p> <p><b><u>Community</u></b> Access to service barriers: Primarily transport, broadband and language. Lack of training in social enterprises Lack of consistent funding stream Diminished capacity in community organisations Lack of adequate rural transport</p> <p><b><u>Economic</u></b> Matching education provision to industry needs Gaps in tourism product/ service provision/ supporting infrastructure Lack of adequate brand Geographical location in North West Lack of financial support to SME's</p>

	Lack of marine infrastructure Lack of employment & high youth unemployment
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p><b><u>Economic &amp; Community</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be an exemplar in Donegal for the natural environment.</li> <li>- Further opportunities to work in partnerships and collaborate across all the sectors Enable people through increased training and learning opportunities.</li> <li>- Create local service hubs</li> <li>- Collaboration on education</li> <li>- Locations of strategic opportunity identified as: Development Centres, strategic tourism locations, tourism hubs</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Community</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To promote to Donegal as ‘Healthy Donegal.’</li> <li>- To improve health through walking and cycling.</li> <li>- To learn new heritage and culture from the County’s multi- cultural population.</li> <li>- Enable people through tailored education</li> <li>- Resource communities through a development levy on windfarms</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Economic</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smart Regional Specialisations: Marine Resources, renewable energies, food, agriculture, tourism, creative’s</li> <li>- Tourism priorities: product, marketing &amp; capacity building</li> <li>- Tourism product development opportunity: Heritage, culture, walking, cycling, Irish language, angling, fishing, marine, town regeneration</li> <li>- Enable the enterprise ecosystem including business supports</li> <li>- Harness the Diaspora resource for inward investment.</li> <li>- Young people: Embed entrepreneurship, encourage STEM uptake, create industry links</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <p><b><u>Economic &amp; Community</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of alternative to drink culture undermining the objectives of the LECP e.g. Donegal Brand and Tourism.</li> <li>- That heritage is not harnessed in an appropriate manner.</li> <li>- Threat of blight and overdevelopment on the landscape and natural environment</li> <li>- Limited existing economic base/ employment base</li> <li>- Emigration- brain drain &amp; lose of young people</li> <li>- Impact of Irish water on the implementation of the County’s water and waste water infrastructure and planned programmes.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Community</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reliance on community and voluntary sector especially volunteers, to reach marginally excluded groups.</li> <li>- Sustainability of community organisations.</li> <li>- Further closure of services and facilities such as Garda Stations.</li> <li>- Vulnerability of rural transport</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Economic</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact of charges and taxes on SME’s.</li> <li>- Limitation on funding opportunities.</li> </ul>

### 6.3 A review of the strategy and policy context

A detailed review of the relevant aspects of the Strategy and Policy Context, within which the LECP is prepared and will be implemented, is set out in Appendix 2, ‘Participation; Policy Context Review; Key Funding Programmes’. The detailed review describes the high level elements of the relevant strategy/ policy, provides information on how the strategy/ policy has impacted upon the LECP in terms of consistency and integration and identifies a number of particular objectives of the LECP that are most distinctly related to the strategy/ policy. The spatial strategies are particularly relevant in the context of demonstrating consistency of the LECP with the Border Regional Planning

Guidelines, 2010 and County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (as varied) as these are the statutory frameworks that set the context for development in the County. Table 2 scopes the relevant strategies reviewed in Appendix 2 of the Plan, across four areas namely:

- The Spatial Planning & Development Strategies;
- The Economic Strategies
- The Community Strategies;
- The Local Sectoral Strategies and Sectoral Organisations

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**Table 2: Scope of Strategies and Policy Context**

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### **The Spatial Planning & Development Strategies**

- National Spatial Strategy 2002- 2020
- The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region, 2010
- The County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (as varied)
- An Stratéis – Donegal Strategy for Social, Cultural and Economic Development 2012-2018
- Town Development Plans for Letterkenny, Buncrana & Bundoran
- The Gateway and Hubs Development Index (GHDI) 2012
- Development Centres/ Hubs

### **The Economic Strategies**

- Action Programme for Effective Local Government- Putting People First, DECLG, 2012
- Construction 2020
- Making it Happen- Growing Enterprise for Ireland, Forfás, 2010
- OECD LEED (Local Economic and Employment Development) Report on Delivering Local Development, 2014
- Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of the Commission for the economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014
- IDA Ireland, Winning Foreign Direct Investment 2015- 2019
- Driving Enterprise, Delivering Jobs, Strategy to 2016, Enterprise Ireland
- Údarás na Gaeltachta, Strategic Plan 2014- 2017
- Integrated Marine Plan (IMP), 'Harnessing Our Oceans Wealth,' July 2012
- The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan, 2014
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara Strategy 2013- 2017
- Delivering on Green Potential – Government Policy Statement on growth and Employment in the Green Economy, 2012
- Developing a Green Enterprise, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, 2011
- EirGrid, Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow, A Discussion Paper on Irelands Grid Development Strategy, 2015
- Faillte Ireland
- Border Region Action Plan for Jobs
- National Broadband Plan, Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, 2012

### **The Community Strategies**

- Our Sustainable Future: A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland , 2012
  - OECD LEED (Local Economic and Employment Development) Report on Delivering Local Development
  - Energising Irelands Rural Economy- The report of the Commission for the economic
  - Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) (2014)
  - Corporate Social Responsibility Plan, Good for Business, Good for the Community 2014- 2016.
  - 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010- 2030
  - Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007- 2016 (NAP inclusion)
  - Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015
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- Report of the High Level Group on Traveller Issues in 2006 and the National Strategy for Traveller/ Roma Integration, 2011
  - Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014 – 2020
  - Building a High Quality Health Service for a Healthier Ireland, HSE Corporate Plan 2015- 2017
  - Healthy Ireland - Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025
  - Further Education & Training Strategy 2014- 2019, SOLAS and Department of Education & Skills
  - An Garda Síochána Strategy Statement 2013- 2018
  - National Broadband Plan, Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, 2012
  - National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan, 2013

### **The Local Sectoral Strategies and Sectoral Organisations**

- Donegal County Council Corporate Plan 2015- 2019
  - The One Plan for Derry- Londonderry
  - North West Partnership Board
  - North West Region Cross Border Group (NWRCBG)
  - Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN)
  - Active Donegal - Strategic Plan 2011-2014
  - Donegal Diversity Plan, 2011 – 2013
  - Donegal Intercultural Platform
  - Donegal Traveller Interagency Group
  - Donegal Youth Service
  - Donegal Women's Network
  - Connecting For Life Donegal, Preventing Suicide Together, Action Plan 2015- 2012
  - North West Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force Plan 2011- 2014
  - Local Development Companies
  - Enterprise Development on the Gaoth Dobhair Business Park, 2015, Údarás na Gaeltachta
  - Coillte Northwest Business Area Unit (BAU) Strategic Plan 2011- 2015
  - Donegal Road Safety Plan 2010- 2015, Donegal County Council
  - The County Donegal Heritage Plan 2014- 2019, County Donegal Heritage Forum
  - LYIT Strategic Plan, Our Commitment to the North West Gateway Learning Region, 2014- 2017
  - Donegal ETB Education Plan 2011 – 2015
  - Donegal Digital Action Plan, 2015
  - Strategic Action Plan for Creative Entrepreneurship in Donegal
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### 6.3.2 The County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (as varied)

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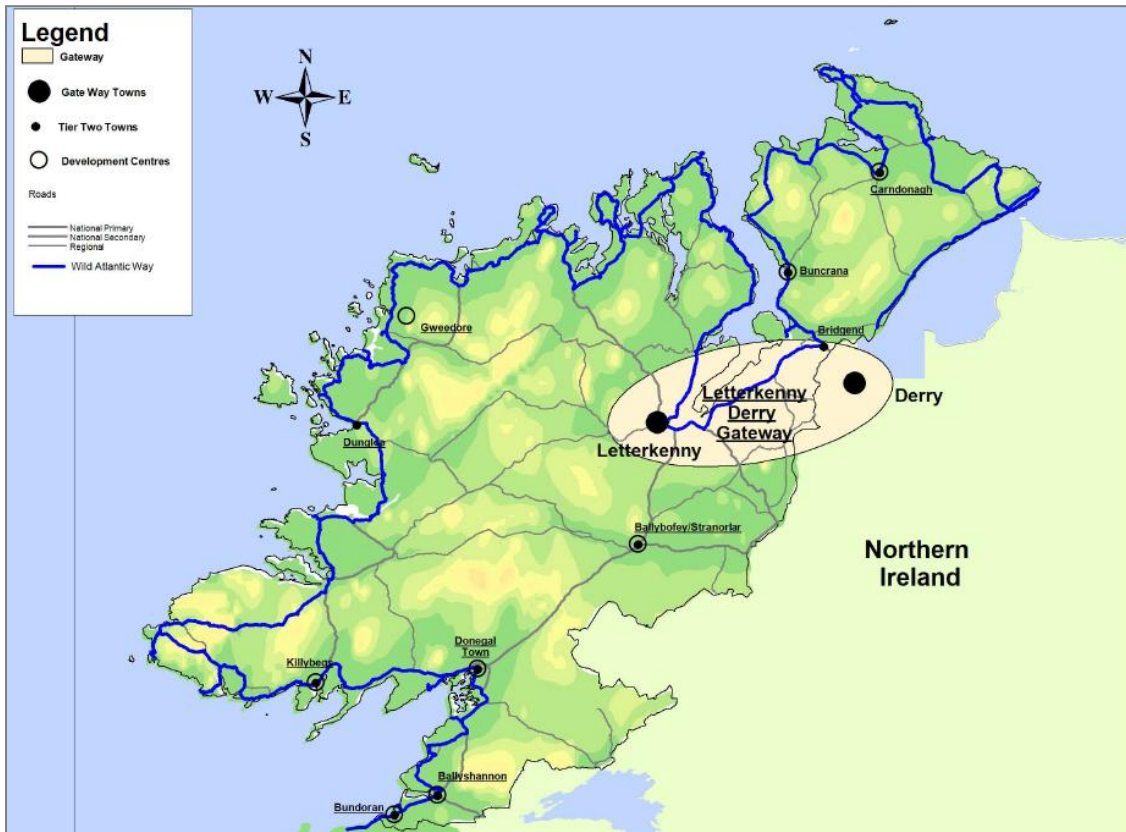
The County Donegal Development Plan (CDDP) 2012- 2018 delivers a Core Strategy and settlement hierarchy for the County of 5 levels with a focus on the Letterkenny- Derry Gateway followed by the strategic towns (Buncrana, Carndonagh, Bridgend, Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Donegal town, Ballyshannon, Bundoran, Killybegs, and Dungloe). The Core Strategy recognises the importance of the Donegal rural area and the extent to which future growth should occur there. The CDP emphasises the need for the coordinated, planned and joined up approach to investment and new development so as to contribute to the recovery of the national and regional economy and to improve quality of life indicators such as access to services. In particular, the following areas are identified as important policy areas for development:

- Investment in research and innovation in renewable energy development, knowledge based services, agri- food sector & environmental products.
- Development of sustainable economic models.
- Strengthen cross border collaboration.
- Maximise technology and digital capabilities.
- Develop Killybegs as a Centre of Excellence for Renewable Energy.
- Develop educational collaboration.
- Develop vibrant, sustainable communities ensuring social inclusion and equality.
- Facilitate a coordinated approach to the delivery of social, community and cultural infrastructure and services.
- Develop the potential of the rural economy.
- Integrate environmental considerations in decision making.
- Develop sustainable tourism opportunities.
- Ensure the development of strategic access to the County

The LECP is consistent with the spatial planning framework set out in the Core Strategy of the CDP 2012- 2018 as regards its settlement hierarchy, led through the identification of the linked Gateway and supported through Tier 2 towns/ Development Centres. Significant objectives of the LECP and their related activities support the implementation of the hierarchy. The LECP also recognises the potential of the rural areas of the County to contribute to culture, community and the economy and therefore targets rural and hard to reach areas, isolation, the power of broadband and the distinct rural resources that, if tapped appropriately, have the potential to result in significant and sustainable economic growth.

The objective of the identification of 7 Development Centres/ Hubs in the County, is to identify areas of potential to advance economic development through integrated Action Plans, one in respect of each Development Centre. The spatial context of this approach is shown on Map 2. This work requires a coordinated and integrated approach that will involve all stakeholders across the community, private, public and agency sectors. The shared ownership of this work is critical including the implementation phase of actions identified.



**Map 2: The Spatial Context for the Development Centres**

The Development Centres identified (their areas of focus listed below) largely reflects the Tier 2, 'Strategic Support Towns' identified in the CDP 2012- 2018 (as varied):

- Bundoran - Marine Tourism
- Ballyshannon - Cultural Heritage & Enterprise
- Donegal Town -Tourism Focus
- Ballybofey / Stranorlar - Sports Theme
- Buncrana / Carndonagh –Tourism
- Gweedore - Business Development
- Killybegs- Innovation Hub for Marine Resources including Food, Tourism and Ocean Energy

### 6.3.3 An Stratéis – Donegal Strategy for Social, Cultural and Economic Development 2012-2014

As an integrated strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the County, An Stratéis has provided the impetus and context for a range of innovative projects and for the identification and accessing of new and additional funding for the region. The 6 Goals focussed on access to supports and services; development of the cultural resource; promotion of enterprise and skills development; the Donegal Brand; tourism and; the green economy. The strong foundations of programmes and activities that have been delivered through implementation of An Stratéis are reflected in the continuum of the County's economic and community strategy that is now contained in the Local Economic & Community Plan. The LECP builds upon the success of An Stratéis, both in relation to the very tangible and visual achievements that have been delivered and

also in relation to the collaborative and partnership environment that has been strongly established in the County.

### **6.3.4 Other Strategies/ Policy context**

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Other National, Regional and Local strategies reviewed as part of the context for the LECP, significantly align with many of the emerging issues and priorities in Donegal demonstrating that the Plan is in step with National, Regional and Local priorities. In particular, the policy review demonstrates a national, regional and local emphasis on:

- Education, training, skills development
- The creation of a positive enterprise and business ecosystem
- The potential for rural economic development and the role of rural towns
- Developing the Gaeltacht and protecting the Irish language
- The necessity for sustainable communities
- The continued focus on social inclusion of key groups including children, young people, older people, women, Traveller & Roma communities, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, persons who are disadvantaged/ marginalised
- Enhancement of quality of life, health and wellbeing
- The needs of key growth sectors including, agriculture and food, forestry, fishing, the green economy, tourism, research and innovation
- The underpinning principles of collaboration including in the local cross border context and the role of broadband/ digital technology as a strategic enabling infrastructure

### **6.4 Key Policy and Funding Programmes**

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Overarching policy and funding frameworks at European level are given expression in Europe 2020 and in the multi-annual financial frameworks and programmes for the period 2014-2020. The ability to maximise and attract external funding to the County and wider region will be key in supporting the implementation of the LECP. A more detailed profile of key policy and funding programmes is provided in Appendix 2 to the Plan. In summary, emerging funding priorities include the areas of:

- Employment
- Innovation, research and development
- Competitiveness/ capacity
- Climate/ energy efficiency/ renewable energy
- Environment/ biodiversity/ resource efficiency
- Education
- Social inclusion & poverty reduction
- Sustainable transport
- Health
- Building communities/ building capacity

- Shared spaces and services
- Cultural and natural heritage
- Rural development

## 7.0 The Priority Goals - The Integrated Element of the Plan

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The Goals of the Plan have been developed through the consultation undertaken and analysis of the Socio- Economic Profile. The Goals are cross- cutting in nature, each relating in various ways to both economic and community needs in the County. This exemplifies the inter-relationships and inter-dependency between programmes of work and the importance of connecting programmes and work areas that may have more traditionally been identified as either solely economic or community. The Goals therefore, are identified as the integrated element of the Plan within which both the economic elements and the community elements of the plan find expression and from which they flow.

The 7 Priority Goals of the LECP are:

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1. To Develop Donegal as a **Connected Place**

2. To Harness Donegal's **Natural and Human Capital**

3. To Value, Sustain and Develop Our **Culture and Creative Resource**

4. To Promote **Sustainable, Inclusive and Healthy Communities**

5. To Develop Donegal as a Lead Region for **Learning, Research and Innovation**

6. To Develop the **'Donegal' Brand**

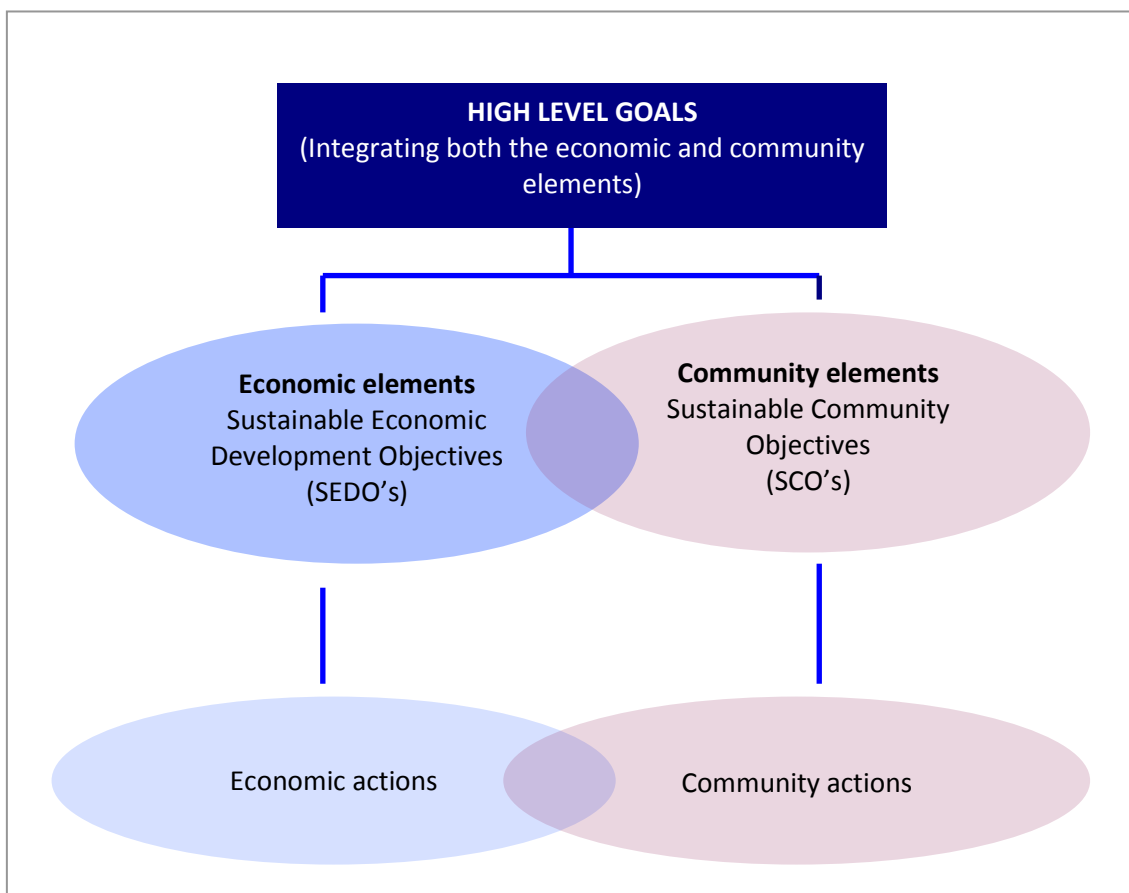
7. To Promote **Entrepreneurship, Investment and Enterprise**

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## 8.0 The High Level Objectives of each Goal

Cascading from each of the Goals, a series of high level objectives designed to deliver on each Goal and to respond to the particular areas of priority need have been identified. Consistent with the integrated nature of the Goals, a significant number of the cascading objectives will deliver actions that are dual purpose, delivering both economic and community benefit in equal measure and in tandem. Meanwhile, a number of other objectives will have a more focussed benefit that will be more evidenced on either the economic elements or on the community elements of the plan. The integrated nature of the Donegal LECP is demonstrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: The Integrated Nature of the Donegal LECP**



## 8.1 The high level objectives of Goal 1

<b>Goal 1: To Develop Donegal as a Connected Place</b>	
<b>1.1.</b> Digitally Connected	To fully develop and promote Donegal as a Digitally Connected County.
<b>1.2.</b> Digital Inclusion	To improve access to digital technology in order to ensure Digital Inclusion, reduce isolation and social exclusion, improve quality of life and to ensure comprehensive connectivity for the people of Donegal.
<b>1.3.</b> Rural Transport	To sustain and further develop rural transport services in Donegal
<b>1.4.</b> Collaboration	To foster and support collaborative partnership approaches to facilitate the delivery of sustainable community and economic development in the County across all sections and sectors.
<b>1.5.</b> Diaspora	To connect with Donegal's global community and to promote the County on the global basis.
<b>1.6.</b> The Gateway	To consolidate and further develop the Letterkenny Gateway as a 'Connected' place
<b>1.7.</b> Development Centres	To promote a connected network of Development Centres and supporting settlements in order to promote balanced and sustainable spatial growth
<b>1.8.</b> Donegal Gaeltacht	To ensure that the Donegal Gaeltacht is a fully developed and connected part of the County as a whole.
<b>1.9.</b> Walking & Cycling	To promote connectivity and access through walking and cycling routes
<b>1.10.</b> Marine	To develop marine connectivity and access within and to County Donegal.
<b>1.11.</b> Strategic Infrastructure	To ensure the coordinated delivery of 'Connectivity' and access investment to support economic and community development in the North West region
<b>1.12.</b> Library Network	To contribute to improved connectivity in County Donegal through continued provision of a strategic network of public libraries and the effective delivery of library infrastructure and library services through this network and related initiatives.
<b>1.13.</b> Connected people	To develop and promote Donegal as a county where individuals, communities and organisations are connected.

## 8.2 The high level objectives of Goal 2

<b>Goal 2: To Harness Donegal's Natural &amp; Human Capital</b>	
<b>2.1.</b> General	To develop and promote all aspects of Donegal's natural and human capital resources.
<b>2.2.</b> Natural Environment	To protect, enhance and promote the natural environment of County Donegal
<b>2.3.</b> Linguistic Heritage	To ensure that the Irish language, and our unique linguistic heritage, becomes more visible, audible and integrated into all activities in our County and that the Gaeltacht region is consolidated and developed.
<b>2.4.</b> Tourism	To realise the sustainable development of our natural asset to develop and promote Donegal's unique tourism product.
<b>2.5.</b> Wild Atlantic Way	To celebrate and utilise the County's natural capital through the Wild Atlantic Way.
<b>2.6.</b> Built Heritage	To protect and enhance the built heritage of the County as a valuable expression of natural and human interactions.
<b>2.7.</b> Communities & People	To build capacity in communities and people through the development of awareness and appreciation of community and place.
<b>2.8.</b> Diaspora	To connect with Donegal's global community and promote the County on a global basis.
<b>2.9.</b> Traditional Skills	To strengthen human capital by promoting the development and learning of traditional skills
<b>2.10.</b> Training, Education and Learning	To build human capital through training, education and learning
<b>2.11.</b> Marine Resource	To identify and fully harness Donegal's marine resource potential.

## 8.3 The high level objectives of Goal 3

<b>Goal 3: To Value, Sustain and Develop Our Culture and Creative resource</b>	
<b>3.1.</b> General	To maintain and develop cultural and creative resources in County Donegal and provide for its sustainability and growth as well as for economic and quality of life purposes.
<b>3.2.</b> Linguistic Cultural Heritage	To value, preserve, promote and increase the use of the Irish language across all areas of life in the County and to consolidate and further develop our County's Gaeltacht regions.
<b>3.3.</b> Community Engagement	To support local community engagement in harnessing the culture, language and creative resource of the County.
<b>3.4.</b> Sustainable Cultural Sector	To further develop and support a sustainable creative and cultural sector in County Donegal.

<b>3.5.</b> Tourism	To consolidate and further develop cultural and creative resources as integral parts in the development of a sustainable tourism sector
<b>3.6.</b> Wild Atlantic Way	To further develop and promote the cultural, creative, heritage and historic resources of County Donegal along the route of the Wild Atlantic Way.
<b>3.7.</b> Landscape Informing Heritage	To recognise the importance of the Donegal landscape in informing culture.
<b>3.8.</b> Diversity	To embrace and value cultural diversity in the Donegal community.
<b>3.9.</b> Built Heritage	To protect and engage with County Donegal's built heritage as an integral component of our culture.
<b>3.10.</b> The Donegal Islands	To nurture and harness the culture and creative resources of the Donegal Islands.
<b>3.11.</b> Diaspora	To engage with the cultural and creative resource that exists throughout the worldwide Donegal Diaspora.
<b>3.12.</b> Learning	To collaborate in the development and delivery of training and learning in the County's cultural and creative sectors
<b>3.13.</b> Creative	To develop the creative industries as an exemplar of local skill and knowledge recognising creative enterprise as a resource for the community.
<b>3.14.</b> Digital	To fully utilise the digital sector in informing and developing Donegal's cultural and creative resource and sector.
<b>3.15.</b> Vibrant Cultural Sector	To sustain and develop a vibrant cultural sector in the County, including both individual artists and professional arts organisations which embraces all art forms including; performance arts, visual arts, literature; traditional and contemporary; new artistic work; in Irish, in English and in the languages of Donegal's new communities.

#### 8.4 The high level objectives of Goal 4

<b>Goal 4: To Promote Sustainable, Inclusive and Healthy Communities</b>	
<b>4.1.</b> Digital Inclusion	To promote and facilitate local community participation in the Digital Society.
<b>4.2.</b> Broadband	To maximise High Speed Broadband provision in the County so as to enable the growth of sustainable and inclusive communities.
<b>4.3.</b> Participation	To promote and foster participation of disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups in decision making to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues.
<b>4.4.</b> Health & Wellbeing	To promote and support health and wellbeing in County Donegal
<b>4.5.</b> Social Inclusion	To reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration
<b>4.6.</b> Women	To promote social justice, equality and women's human rights.

<b>4.7.</b> Employment	To create and support pathways to employment for persons from marginalised and disadvantaged communities.
<b>4.8.</b> Island Communities	To work for the sustainability of the Island communities.
<b>4.9.</b> Rural & Coastal Communities	To support rural and coastal communities under threat and in decline.
<b>4.10.</b> Donegal Gaeltacht Communities	To support the sustainability of Donegal Gaeltacht communities..
<b>4.11.</b> Irish Language	To add to the number and proportion of Irish speakers within the total population of the County and beyond, including the diaspora
<b>4.12.</b> Age Friendly County	To develop County Donegal as an "Age Friendly" county
<b>4.13.</b> Children & Young People	To work towards the 5 national outcomes for children as set out in the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020.
<b>4.14.</b> People with Disabilities	To promote and support people with disabilities to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life.
<b>4.15.</b> Traveller and Roma Communities	To work in a partnership approach to identify issues, concerns and barriers to service delivery experienced by the Traveller, Roma and Ethnic Minority Communities and to develop programmes to address these barriers.
<b>4.16.</b> Learning	To enable individuals and communities to be sustainable by investing in education, training and Lifelong Learning.
<b>4.17.</b> Peace Building & Conflict Resolution	To develop opportunities for peace building and conflict resolution both within the County and on a cross border basis and develop strategies and activities which address sectarianism, racism and local conflict issues through a community development approach.
<b>4.18.</b> Volunteering	To develop and support voluntarism as a resource for County Donegal.
<b>4.19.</b> Community Organisations	To support the work of community/voluntary organisations within County Donegal as a resource for social capital in advancing economic, social and cultural opportunities.
<b>4.20.</b> Community Infrastructure	To optimise the use of existing community infrastructure and to seek to address any gaps identified in community infrastructure in the County.
<b>4.21.</b> Development Centres	To support and promote the urban strengthening of identified Development Centres and the settlements that support those centres so as to promote and facilitate sustainable and inclusive communities.



## 8.5 The high level objectives of Goal 5

<b>Goal 5: To Develop Donegal as a Lead region for Learning, Research and Innovation</b>	
<b>5.1.</b> Collaboration	To strengthen engagement, knowledge exchange and greater collaboration between educational providers and industry.
<b>5.2.</b> Marine	To realise the full potential of the marine sector through the provision of appropriate learning and promotion of research and development activity.
<b>5.3.</b> Digital Society	To promote engagement with the digital society in all forms of education provision.
<b>5.4.</b> STEM	To encourage the uptake of STEM subjects.
<b>5.5.</b> Health	To build on our medical heritage, enhancing human health for generations, by progressing new endeavours, innovation and collaboration in education, research and service.
<b>5.6.</b> Partnership R & D	To promote and advance Research and Innovation through networks, partnership and collaboration in this region and internationally including cooperation with the Donegal Diaspora.
<b>5.7.</b> Employment	To create and support pathways to employment
<b>5.8.</b> Natural Resources	To identify and harness all of the County's natural resources across all sectors.
<b>5.9.</b> Learning	To enable individuals to reach their full potential by investing in accessible education, training and lifelong learning.
<b>5.10.</b> Use of Infrastructure	To make best use of new and existing infrastructure and to identify and fill infrastructural deficits in the region.
<b>5.11.</b> A Connected Letterkenny	To ensure that the Letterkenny Gateway is a connected place in the context of learning, research and innovation.
<b>5.12.</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level Linkages	To promote greater linkages between third level educational providers, with a view to advancing long-term sustainable development, research and innovation in the region.
<b>5.13.</b> FET	To improve access paths into further education and training.
<b>5.14.</b> Literacy & Numeracy	To improve literacy, numeracy and communication skills in adults and young people
<b>5.15.</b> CPD in Education Sector	To provide continuous professional development opportunities for those working in the education sector.
<b>5.16.</b> Clusters	To facilitate the development of a number of clusters in order to promote entrepreneurship, investment and enterprise in the region.
<b>5.17.</b> Spatial Planning	To utilise existing resources to facilitate effective spatial planning in the region.
<b>5.18.</b> Enterprise	To strengthen the business management and capabilities of SME owner managers.

## 8.6 The high level objectives of Goal 6

Goal 6: To Develop the 'Donegal' Brand	
6.1. 'Donegal'	To develop the 'Donegal' Brand as a resource to support economic and community development.
6.2. People & Place	To promote the people and place of Donegal as a resource for the Donegal Brand.
6.3. Donegal Diaspora	To harness the resource of the Donegal Diaspora in promoting the Donegal Brand on a Global basis.
6.4. Media	To promote Donegal through a range of media.
6.5. Business & People Friendly	To market Donegal as a great place to live, work and do business

## 8.7 The high level objectives of Goal 7

Goal 7: To Promote Entrepreneurship, Investment and Enterprise	
7.1. The Ecosystem	To develop a coordinated entrepreneurship and enterprise ecosystem.
7.2. Inward Investment	To target, pursue and enable suitable high quality knowledge and skills based inward investment to County Donegal.
7.3. The Gateway	To support the continued development of Letterkenny- Derry linked Gateway as the primary growth centre for the Region.
7.4. Rural Economic Development	To promote and support rural economic development throughout the County
7.5. Collaborative approaches	To collaboratively support existing and new entrepreneurs, investment and enterprise
7.6. Tourism	To collaboratively develop and promote the full potential of the tourism sector in County Donegal.
7.7. Wild Atlantic Way	To collaboratively develop and promote the value of the Wild Atlantic Way
7.8. Development Centres	To promote and enable economic growth and strengthening of identified development centres and their supporting settlements.
7.9. Built & Cultural Heritage	To unlock the potential of the built and cultural heritage of County Donegal.
7.10. Language	To sustain and promote the Irish language, harnessing its economic potential across the County.

<b>7.11.</b> Diaspora	To develop the Donegal Diaspora as a global community in marketing and promoting Donegal on a global basis
<b>7.12.</b> Farming	To support sustainable farming, fishing and aquaculture in County Donegal.
<b>7.13.</b> Research & Innovation	To promote Donegal as a world class centre for Research, Development and Innovation
<b>7.14.</b> Clean Technology	To develop and grow the clean technology sector in County Donegal.
<b>7.15.</b> Killybegs	To promote and develop Killybegs as a Marine Resources hub and as an Innovation Centre for Marine Resources including Food, Tourism and Ocean Energy
<b>7.16.</b> Marine Resource	To identify and harness the economic potential of Donegal's marine resource across all parts of the sector.
<b>7.17.</b> Creative Entrepreneurship	To create the right conditions and provide support for Creative Entrepreneurship in County Donegal.
<b>7.18.</b> Digital Economy	To fully develop and advance all opportunities with regard to Donegal's digital economy
<b>7.19.</b> Food	To promote research, assist enterprise and create jobs in the food sector in Co. Donegal.
<b>7.20.</b> Social Enterprise	To develop sustainable social enterprise to tackle economic and social challenges.
<b>7.21.</b> Connectivity Infrastructure	To collaborate to provide connectivity within and to the County to enable economic development.
<b>7.22.</b> Strategic Infrastructure	To collaborate to realise the delivery of necessary strategic infrastructure investment e.g. road access, air access in the North West region to support economic growth.
<b>7.23.</b> Skilled Workforce	To develop and facilitate access to a skilled workforce to enable economic growth.
<b>7.24.</b> Business and People Friendly	To implement the Governments Corporate Responsibility Plan to ensure Donegal is a good place to visit or do business.

## 9.0 The Action Areas

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The Action Areas in relation to each high level objective are set out in Volume 2, 'The Action Areas of the Donegal LECP.' The activities identified will require the dual oversight of the LCDC and the EDC as they are cross-cutting in their nature and in many cases will contribute to the achievement of a number of goals and objectives of the Plan at the same time. The Action Areas are the primary mechanism to deliver the Goals and Objectives of the plan by bringing forward specific measures for economic and community development at a local level. Each action area is designed in order to implement a particular high level objective which in turn is directly related to the achievement of the Priority Goals of the Plan. Volume 2 outlines that there are four underpinning components to the Actions Areas- they are **robust, integrated, timebound** and **assigned**.

### **Robust Action Areas**

This is a robust programme of action areas from which, during the course of the implementation of the Plan, it may be desirable to develop alternative/ additional initiatives, projects and/ or incentives that will support the delivery of actions. This approach provides capacity for the Plan to respond to potentially rapidly changing or unforeseen circumstances such as funding programmes or organisational change as examples. Therefore, as the Plan is implemented but as a minimum, on an annual basis, the action areas identified may be amended, added to or discarded, so that the Plan remains flexible and dynamic to changing circumstances.

### **Integrated Action Areas**

Some action areas recur as implementing actions under a number of objectives and also across a number of Goals either as direct and purposeful duplication or as a variance of the particular focus. This exemplifies the integrated nature of the Economic and Community elements of the Plan where actions will address both economic and community needs at the same time.

### **Timebound Action Areas**

In so far as practical and possible, each action area has been assigned a timebound period for implementation in the context of short, medium or long term delivery. In some cases, action areas will have elements of delivery that will require immediate, short term activity in order to reach certain milestones that will subsequently lead to the longer term delivery of a larger or more strategic element. In these cases, a combination of short, medium or long term has been identified as appropriate.

### **Assigned Action Areas**

Each Action Area has been assigned relevant implementing partners cutting across the public, private and community & voluntary sectors. In most cases, a partnership approach is advocated exemplified by the identification of 2 or more implementing partners and made up of a combination of lead implementer(s) for particular timebound elements and associated collaborative partners.

## 10.0 The Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Framework

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The 'Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Framework for the Plan' is the framework to measure the effectiveness of the implementation of the actions. Given the integrated nature of the economic and community elements of the Donegal LECP, the Implementation Framework will require the dual oversight of the Local Community Development Committee and the Economic Development Committee and appropriate reporting structures will be established within the context of the operational procedures of the relevant Committees. This is a critical component in recognising that delivery of a number of actions will be through existing and new programmes of other stakeholders as well as by the local authority.

Notwithstanding the operational procedures of the Committees, implementation will be guided in the context of the key underpinning values set out at section 4.0 of this document. In particular and to assist in working to the key values, it is envisaged that all agencies endorse a memorandum of understanding supporting dialogue around barriers or challenges that emerge over the lifetime of the Plan and which impinge on implementation of the Plan. To recap, the underpinning values on which the Donegal LECP is built are that the Plan will:

- promote and mainstream equality;
- be built on objectives that are sustainable;
- maximise returns from available resources and reduce duplication;
- integrate and maximise health and wellbeing outcomes across all activity;
- ensure meaningful participation in the planning process, and consultation and engagement with communities generally;
- utilise community development principles of Collective Action, Empowerment, Social Justice, Equality & Anti-Discrimination, Participation;
- be grounded in collaborative and partnership approaches;
- set the local context for mainstream funding programmes;
- be consistent with the County Donegal Development Plan 2012- 2018 (as varied) and its core strategy, and with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines;
- Identify clear targeted actions with responsibility for delivery assigned.

To guide the establishment of an Implementation Framework, the DECLG Guidance Note, June 2015 and it's 'Implementation Monitoring Template' will be adapted to suit local implementation arrangements of best match to the content of the Donegal LECP and our local circumstances. The Implementation Framework will progress the Action Areas set out in Volume 2, so as to identify the actions, or elements of actions, that are to be prioritised over Year 1 of the plan and this will incorporate relevant targets, performance indicators and progress milestones. It is proposed that the approach to monitoring, evaluation and review of the LECP requires further consideration and development. This will take the following two- fold direction:

1. Monitoring – comprising the capture of periodic information on the success in achieving project outputs therefore focussed at project level.
2. Evaluation focussed at a strategic level – comprising
  - (i) the review of the impact of project outputs and outcomes against the LECP objectives;
  - (ii) examination of strategic fit of LECP objectives against local, regional and national strategies.

The Initial focus will be the establishment of an evaluation framework in respect of the goals and high level objectives of the LECP. To this end, Appendix 1 of the LECP, 'The profile of the County' provides the comprehensive economic, social and cultural baseline for a wide range of impact indicators (in respect of goals) and output indicators (in respect of high level objectives).

To determine the impact of the LECP interventions, it is proposed to establish at least 2 impact indicators against each of the 7 priority goals such as the example given below in relation to Goal 4:

**Example of impact indicator in relation to Goal 4:**

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target Year 1</b>	<b>Target Year 2</b>	<b>Target Year 3</b>
To Promote Sustainable, Inclusive and Healthy Communities	Relative Deprivation Score	-6.25,	-6.00	-5.75	-5.50

Furthermore, the outcome indicators will be established to measure the high level objectives contained in the LECP and an indicative sample is shown in the following table:

**Table: Sample of Outcome Indicators**

<b>High Level Objective</b>	<b>Outcome Indicator(s)</b>
To improve access to digital technology in order to ensure Digital Inclusion, reduce isolation and social exclusion, improve quality of life and to ensure comprehensive connectivity for the people of Donegal.	% of population having access to broadband No of persons accessing digital hubs
To develop and promote Donegal as a county where individuals, communities and organisations are connected.	Travel Times to & within Donegal. Routes/frequency operating Donegal-Derry Airports. Rural Transport routes/frequency. Broadband/Computer Access levels
To develop a coordinated entrepreneurship and enterprise ecosystem.	Number of micro enterprises, longevity of micro enterprise in the County. Employment Unemployment Rates
To collaboratively develop and promote the full potential of the tourism sector in County Donegal. To collaboratively develop and promote the value of the Wild Atlantic Way	Tourist numbers & Revenue to the County. Numbers to Flagship attractions. Tourism related employment levels

To ensure that the Irish language, and our unique linguistic heritage, becomes more visible, audible and integrated into all activities in our County and that the Gaeltacht region is consolidated and developed	No of persons who speak Irish outside of school or college in Gaeltacht % and no of persons who speak Irish outside of the educational system and outside of the Gaeltacht.
To protect and enhance the built heritage of the County as a valuable expression of natural and human interactions.	Built, natural & cultural heritage Reputation Built, natural & cultural heritage as a reason to visit the County Number of vacant cultural heritage buildings

This approach will enable the development of an Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review Framework for the Plan that complements the evidence based, robust nature of the action areas and will facilitate an annual assessment to ensure the plan and the framework is flexible and dynamic to changing circumstances.