



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

Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Report on submissions received following period of public consultation on the proposed Local Economic and Community Plan

September 2014

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Introduction

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) will provide a 6 year framework to guide the strategic direction of future activity and relevant funding streams within Donegal at a National, Regional, Cross Border and European level. The scope of the Plan includes but is not limited to the agreed priority goals of An Stratéis 2012-2014, the current integrated Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development that the LECP shall replace.

A period of public consultation ran from 11th August to 9th September 2014 (both dates inclusive). Submissions were invited by e-mail, in writing and via an electronic on-line survey. The public consultation notice aimed to focus the submissions by setting out:

- A. The context of the plan as including but not limited to the agreed priority goals of An Stratéis as listed below
1. Development Donegal as a lead region for the **Green Economy**
 2. Promoting **Enterprise and Skills** Development in the region
 3. Development a **Donegal Brand** across all sectors
 4. Ensuring **Best Access to Services** for the community of Donegal
 5. Developing the regions **Natural Resources and Tourism**
 6. Fully developing the county's **Cultural Resources/Creative Economy**
 7. Promoting and supporting **Community Development** in Donegal

and

- B. Setting out the following questions to provide a comprehensive and structured response.
- What type of community do you live in?
 - What are the strengths of your community/area that you believe should be built upon in this plan?
 - What challenges does your community/area face, that your community would need assistance to overcome?
 - What activities is your community currently undertaking to address these challenges or to build on these strengths?
 - What services/facilities do you believe area required to support your community to thrive?

- What resources are available within your community, that could assist with a) addressing challenges or b) building on strengths?
- What changes would most improve your community?

Public submissions

A total of 90 submissions were received; 54 in writing and e-mail, and 36 via the on-line survey system, three of the submissions were in Irish. A summary of each submission is contained in Appendix 1, attached.

The public submissions covered a wide range of issues throughout the entire county relating to the economic and community development of the county. A large percentage of submissions followed the suggested topic themes and questions proffered in the advertisements for public consultation and as a result the submissions are targeted and on the whole relate to the new LECP. As a result, the public submissions are focused, meaningful and shall help shape and inform the plan process.

Most of the submissions received concerned more than one of the agreed priority goals from An Stratéis and table 1 below illustrates the number of times each topic (priority goal) was raised in the public submissions.

Table 1: number of individual references to each topic area across all submissions.

Topic	Number of references
Green Economy	16
Enterprise and skills	30
Donegal Brand	4
Best Access to Services	27
Natural Resources and Tourism	53
Cultural Resources/Creative Economy	34
Community Development	37

Natural Resources and tourism was by far the dominant single theme with 59% of public submissions referencing it, and many detailing the intrinsic and valuable natural resources that county Donegal has and the linkages and connectivity to other areas particularly 'Enterprise and Skills', the 'Creative Economy' and 'Community Development'.

The majority of submissions were in a positive and proactive vein although a number that referenced the green economy focused negatively on the issue of wind energy solely and potential benefits and threats that such development would bring and the resultant need for consideration in the plan. Others suggested addressing a range of renewable energies and technologies, both established and emerging.

Community development and social and community issues featured very heavily in the public submissions with a combined total of 64(71%) references. The spectrum of community related issues are covered throughout the submissions with access to services, lack of services (including

libraries), youth services, and isolation and associated health (including mental health) issues all being highlighted repeatedly. In tandem, the strength of the communities in a very large proportion of submissions is cited as the people, volunteers and unpaid grass roots work carried out by local and voluntary groups on the ground.

'Heritage' has been specifically referenced 12 times throughout the submissions, under its built, cultural and natural auspices and is recognised through the submissions, both as an important strength and significant resource within the county to be protected and potentially harnessed for tourism and educational purposes.

Another recurring theme throughout the submissions was the consideration of a Greenway for the County, with different submissions suggesting different locations throughout the county but generally suggesting using the old disused railway lines as a focus and citing the successful Great Western Greenway in Mayo; a total of 11 submissions specifically referred to the Greenway.

The issue of 'Landscape' is another topic woven through the submissions, referenced in descriptive terms and as an environmental and tourism asset, in the context of potential developments and marketing the county.

The submissions received referred to both specific areas and more general county wide issues and whilst the majority of submissions (29%) were either county wide or not specified, the remainder were specific to a location or area within each of the following electoral areas: Inishowen (23%), Letterkenny (2%), Stranorlar (6%), Glenties (13%), and Donegal (20%).

Conclusion

The public consultation process has proved very successful and the issues raised at this initial stage in the process shall be considered in detail and shall inform the development of the plan.

Appendix 2: tables of key statistics from submissions.

	Topic
1	Green Economy
2	Enterprise and skills
3	Donegal Brand
4	Best Access to Services
5	Natural Resources and Tourism
6	Cultural Resources/Creative Economy
7	Community Development

Table showing number of references to each topic (from An Stratéis goals)

Topic reference no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of references from e-mail and written submissions	10	19	4	19	27	22	20
Number of references from on-line survey submissions	6	11	0	8	26	12	17
Total	16	30	4	27	53	34	37

Table showing number of submissions specific to location

Electoral Area/location	Number of submissions	As a %
Stranorlar	5	6
Inishowen	21	23
Letterkenny	2	2
Glenties	12	13
Donegal	18	20
County wide/not specified	26	29

In addition:

- Heritage was mentioned specifically in 12 submissions,
- Greenways were mentioned specifically in 11 submissions,
- Library services, youth services, and connection with the Wild Atlantic Way have all been recurring themes throughout the submissions.