



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

**Minutes of Donegal Local Community Development Committee Meeting  
County House, Lifford & Via Teams at 10am on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

<b>Members in attendance</b>	Charlene Logue – PPN, Joe Boland – PPN and James O'Donnell - ICMSA
<b>Members in attendance via Teams</b>	Cllr. Niamh Kennedy – DCC, Cllr. Martin McDermott – DCC, Micheal Mac Giolla Easpaig – Údarás, Hegarty – LEO, Shauna McClenaghan – IDP, Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher – DCC, Siobhan McLaughlin – PPN, Paul Hannigan – ATU
<b>Apologies</b>	John McLaughlin – DCC, Anne McHugh – ETB, Liam McElhinney – ICTU, Brenda Hegarty – LEO, Padraic Fingleton – DLDC & Andrew McNulty – PPN.
<b>Chief Officer</b>	Paddy Doherty
<b>Attending</b>	Ciaran Martin, Claire McCallan, Adrienne Kelly and Charlene Gillespie

## **Welcome**

Cllr. Niamh Kennedy welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

### **1. Draft minutes of the LCDC meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

The minutes of the previous LCDC Meeting, as circulated with the agenda, were considered.

On the proposal of Joe Boland, seconded Siobhan McLaughlin, the minutes of LCDC Meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were adopted with no matters arising.

### **2. LEADER – Local Development Strategy Update**

Ciaran Martin advised the members that on September 20<sup>th</sup>, prior to the previous last LCDC, correspondence was received from Pobal requesting some clarifications with regard to the LDS submitted on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

Clarifications were sought on Sections 1,3, 5 & 6 and the written responses were discussed further with the Consultants and the Implementing Partners and a return document was formulated highlighting the updated information.

Pobal also highlighted that under the finance plan of the LDS, it was not acceptable to have no expenditure detailed for years 2028 & 2029 of the plan, which was the approach agreed

by the LCDC members prior to submission of the LDS in July, after representations from the Implementing Partners.

This approach was not accepted; therefore, the resubmission had to include costs for 2028 and 2029 keeping within the available budget of 25% of the overall budget with regards administrative spend.

A meeting was subsequently held with the Implementing Partners to review the budgets across the 2024 – 2029 period and this revision was submitted to Pobal on Wednesday 27th September, along with an accompanying note stating that following the Departments decision around the extension of the length of term of the funding, that further funding will be required in 2028 and 2029 to deliver and close out the programme.

### **3. SICAP Annual Plan Update 2023 and Case Studies 2023**

Ciaran Martin advised that at the LCDC meeting held on 12th July, members requested that both IDP and DLDC attend the October LCDC meeting to present a comprehensive update on the delivery of the SICAP Programme for 2023 within the respective lots, with a focus on Target achievement and Budget expenditure as no budget carryover would be permitted into 2024 as this was the final year of the current SICAP Programme

Pobal had also requested that the Local Development Companies are required to submit the 2023 Case Studies by 13th October 2023 therefore the partnerships were today to present on both topics to the members.

Ciaran further explained the PIs would present on the 2023 Annual Review followed by their case studies together for ease of presentation.

#### **Lot 33-1 Donegal Inishowen Annual Plan 2023 and Case Study 2023**

Shauna McClenaghan gave the members an update on the annual plan for Lot 33-1 indicating the overall performance of the company at the current time to include project numbers and people assisted under the SICAP programme. KPIs as determined for the Lot had been exceeded and spend was expected to be completed by the end of the year, as required.

Shauna then moved on to present the Case study for the Lot, which focused on the critical work of supporting families facing the MICA issue across the peninsula. “A Community Response to Inishowen’s Housing /Defective Concrete Block (DCB) Crisis” demonstrated how an issue such as MICA can have such a detrimental affect on all aspects of the community and its people.

The main aims delivered through interagency collaboration were:

- To provide support to people affected by MICA in their homes.
- Provide opportunities for a quality of life during this process.
- Share information on existing services with group members so these can be utilised by people affected by mica.

- Identify gaps/services needed and allocate to the appropriate groups/ organisations.
- Invite people affected by mica, members of mica groups to join meetings and/or give feedback and inform actions.

Shauna stated that overall, this case study clearly demonstrated the role that SICAP plays in the process of providing appropriate local solutions for local issues and the power of communities working together for a greater good.

### **Lot 33-2 Donegal Gaeltacht/Lot 33-3 Donegal and Case Studies 2023**

Margaret Larkin gave an update on the Annual Plans for both Lot 33-2 Donegal Gaeltacht and Lot 33-3 Donegal in her presentation. Again, this indicated the overall performance of the company at the current time to include project numbers and people assisted under the SICAP programme. KPIs as determined for the respective Lots had been exceeded or are expected to be exceeded once all projects are complete and spend was expected to be completed by the end of the year, as required. Some larger projects are due to complete in the coming months, so spend was not expected to be an issue.

Margaret then presented two videos as an example of their case studies, with each relating to a respective Lot.

The Lot 33-2 Donegal Gaeltacht case study focused on the work of the “Donegal Food Response Network: Addressing food insecurity in Donegal” and was aimed at helping local groups to deal with increasing issues around food need in the community. Working through a network of community groups and by centrally coordinating the service delivery, DLDC were ensuring that food provision aimed at those most in need was operational in the Donegal Gaeltacht area.

DLDC advised that at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, they identified the need to establish the Donegal Food Response Network (DFRN) to better support the community and voluntary organisations that mobilised to support the more vulnerable members of the community.

The video articulated that since the pandemic, there had been a significant increase in the number of people and families experiencing food insecurity in Donegal. DLDC & the Donegal Food Response Network have become a vital support for those community & voluntary organisations who work on the front line in our local communities supporting people experiencing food poverty and food insecurity in Donegal; the network is made up of 17 community and voluntary organisations who are geographically spread all across the county.

DFRN members have confirmed that the requests for food had increased substantially, so the need for this project was identified using a community development bottom-up approach.

The Lot 33-3 Donegal Central case study focused on the “Enterprise Client Engagement Strategy”. Margaret advised that the SICAP Enterprise team had noticed a significant downturn in referrals from the Department of Social Protection, both of clients availing of support through the Back to Work/Short Term Enterprise Allowance schemes and clients who wished to start their business but were ineligible for additional financial support. They

were also aware that a number of highly skilled individuals who had moved to Donegal from the Ukraine may also have an interest in starting new businesses in the county.

With this in mind, a targeted social media campaign was launched while the team engaged with a local training consultant, Stephen Friel to help develop workshops to provide high level information sessions tailored specifically to the needs of the respondents.

DLDC confirm that there has been 2 workshops delivered to date with a view to roll out additional workshops across the county to ensure they are accessible to all.

Two of the twenty-nine participants who have taken part so far were hoping to operate their business in the coming weeks and are currently in the process of developing their business plan. For others, the journey to self-employment will be over a longer timeframe with supports around viability, market research, business plans, cashflow forecast, potential grants, training options and additional workshops being offered to help support and develop their new venture.

For many of the participants, the workshop may highlight that their idea is not feasible or practical just now but will provide them with information regarding additional supports available as part of DLDC's wraparound service.

Cllr. Kennedy thanked Shauna and Margaret for their presentations and commended both Partnerships on the great ongoing work.

The members acknowledged the great ongoing work of the IDP throughout the year and especially around the issue of MICA support and DLDCs great work targeting food poverty and enterprise engagement was acknowledged.

Brenda Hegarty stated that it was important that the base for business development was widened, and that people were then aware of the pipeline of supports to help them further develop and that duplication must be avoided in terms of that support.

Siobhan McLaughlin stated it was important to acknowledge the Food poverty issue in the county and it should be monitored by the PIs and the LCDC going forward. Siobhan was also keen to ensure the inclusion of the Traveller and Roma communities in plans for food Poverty, believing that there were occurrences of some Roma children not attending school due to the issue. It was also important that new SICAP plans included supports for both communities.

#### **4. SICAP 2024-2028 – Tender Evaluation Sub Committee**

Ciaran Martin advised members that as part as part of the Tender Process for the procurement of SICAP 2024-2028, the SICAP Tender Evaluation Sub Committee of the Donegal LCDC met in person on October 6<sup>th</sup> to have an initial evaluation of the tenders submitted for the 3 SICAP lots in the county.

This Sub Committee consist of Paddy Doherty, Chief Officer and Chairperson, Cllr Niamh Kennedy, Michael Mac Giolla Easbuig and Andrew McNulty with support from DCC staff.

Each tender was evaluated under 7 differing award criteria, consisting of 15 sub-criteria and scored accordingly. That evaluation process is currently ongoing, with a date of the end of the year to award the tender lots and have the respective contracts signed between the relevant parties.

## **5. LECP Update**

Claire McCallan gave an update on the LECP and reminded members that the DCC had completed the Socio-Economic Profile (SEP) of the County and to Stage 2/Step 1 of the process in partnership with People and Places consultants. The SEP informed then a SE Statement which included a DRAFT Vision and a series of 6 DRAFT High-Level Goals, and this formed the basis of a programme of Joint Public Consultation evenings which run over 9 nights from 22nd May to 8th June in venues all across the County.

Findings from the stakeholder engagement this far showed that the DRAFT Vision and HLG are fundamentally sound but are likely subject to further refinement rather than wholesale change. The Consultation evenings showed the needs and thoughts of communities and this feedback in turn informed a number of key emerging themes.

And these key emerging themes will inform the detail of the LECP.

Claire also advised that DCC had sought tender returns to deliver the LECP from Stage 2/Step 2 through to Stage 5 Implementation Plans and confirmed that Friel Meehan Consultants from Donegal Town have been notified confirming they are the most competitive return, with an aimed completion of the contract by the end of Q1/2024.

DCC have also scheduled to meet the ASG online on Tuesday afternoon 17th October where the particulars of a programme of workshop engagement most specifically will be further explored targeting the groups associated with the key emerging themes e.g., Older Peoples Council, Age Friendly Alliance, the Youth Council, the Transport Forum etc.

DCC will convene up to 15 targeted workshops from October to mid – December bringing together persons with a particular knowledge base to listen and to learn from them and ultimately to further refine the DRAFT Vision and HLG and then develop objectives which will inform the Implementation Plan as part of Stage 5 of this process.

Claire also informed the LCDC members that DCC will also schedule a week of workshops with our Elected Members likely by the end of November and as part of our quarterly engagement with Members in relation to Rural Programmes.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023** at **10am in County House Lifford** and with the option of **online attendance** also.

This concluded the business of the meeting.