



Local Community Development Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024 in County Hall and via County MS Teams at 11.30am

Members in attendance:

Public Sector representatives:

Mr. Joe Thompson, LOETB (Chairperson)
Cllr. John King, Laois County Council
Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council
Cllr. Conor Bergin, Laois County Council
Mr. John Mulholland, CE Laois County Council
Ms. Evelyn Reddin, Laois Local Enterprise Office

Private Sector representatives:

Ms. Joan Bolger, Laois PPN (Vice Chairperson)
Ms. Nina Horan, Laois PPN
Ms. Caroline Lydon, CEO Laois Partnership Company
Ms. Caroline Hoffman, Business Sector
Mr. John Oxley, Laois PPN

Apologies:

Ms. Paula Phelan, HSE
Mr. Harry Lalor, Farming Sector (I.F.A)
Ms. Rosey Kunene, Youth Sector (Youth Work Ireland Laois)
Mr. Ray Harte, Laois PPN

In Attendance:

Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Chief Officer
Ms. Anne Marie Kirrane, A/Administrative Officer, LCC
Ms. Danielle Keane, Clerical Officer, LCC

Ms. Danielle Keane LCC commenced roll call and registered all members present on the meeting attendance sheet.

Mr. Joe Thompson, Chairperson, opened the meeting welcoming all members to the first LCDC of 2024.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of LCDC meeting held on 29th November 2023

The minutes were adopted following a *proposal from Cllr. John King seconded by Caroline Hoffman.*

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Correspondence

Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Chief Officer informed members of email correspondence received from Dept of Rural and Community Development on Friday 15th December titled “Laois Local Community and Development Committee”.

Ms. Caroline Lydon, CEO Laois Partnership Company disclosed a conflict of interest and excused herself from this section of the meeting.

Based on the content of the letter a lengthy discussion was had in relation to the above.

A proposal was put to the floor to Appeal and send a letter to the department being proposed by **Joan Bolger**, been seconded by **Cllr John King**.

This proposal was unanimously agreed by members.

4. Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

- (i) All 10 High Level Goals and 33 Sustainable Objectives have been agreed and approved.
- (ii) All documentation was submitted to the Eastern & Midlands Regional Assembly being approved by the Executive on the 8th December, It was noted that the assembly commended the work undertaken in the preparation of the draft documents and issued a statement of consistency for the Laois LECP as required under Section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act subject to the following recommendations:
 - The LECP documentation should include a specific Framework document and Implementation Plan that is prepared and presented in accordance with the requirements of the LECP Guidelines 2021. The Implementation Plan may be included as an appendix of the LECP.
 - The LECP is required to be consistent with the core strategy and objectives of the Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027, and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019- 2031. It is recommended that an additional section be included to clearly demonstrate this alignment with regional and local policy.
 - The LECP documentation should make reference to the retail hierarchy for the Region, as outlined in the RSES Chapter 6 Table 6.1 which identifies Portlaoise as Level 2 [Major

Town Centres and County (Principal) Town Centres], along with Portarlington and Graiguecullen as Level 3 [Town and/or District Centres and Sub-County Town Centres (Key Service Centres)] within the retail hierarchy.

- Specific reference to Climate Action should be made within the heading of High-Level Goal 2 in order to demonstrate a clear link to this Key Principle of the RSES. • The sustainable objectives should be differentiated between Sustainable Community Objectives (SCOs) and Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDOs), in line with the LECP Guidelines 2021.
 - The Socio-Economic Profile and Socio-Economic Statement should use Census 2022 data, where available.
 - All appendices of the LECP should be included. Public consultation information, a list of written submissions and the membership of relevant structures (LCDC, SPC), as detailed in Appendix 2 of the LECP Guidelines 2021, should be provided.
- (iii) In addition, all documentation was sent to the consultant Fehily Timoney & Company for Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment screening where it was determined that full screen was not required with the consultant noting:

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report Conclusion:

“SEA Screening was carried out to determine the need for a SEA for the Laois LECP 2023-2028. It has been concluded, based on pre-screening check, and review against environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required”.

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report Conclusion:

“The results of the s-p-r modelling process identified that – given the scale of the nature of the potential sources identified, there is no likely significant effects identifies to any European sites. The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during all phases of the draft plan. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the sources for impacts, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European sites”.

A screening determination has been signed in order to complete the AA & SEA process.

- (iv) The LECP framework document and actions that will form part of the implementation plan are been developed and reviewed with a view to going to the February LCDC and Council meeting for full and final approval.

5. Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme – SICAP

(A) SICAP 2024+

Contract to award the new SICAP programme was signed on the 20th December 2023 with Laois Partnership Company being appointed as the Implementing Partner for the new programme effective from the 1st January 2024.

An implementation plan has been developed and forms part of the contract to include timelines and milestones in order to demonstrate how the IP will implement recommendations from the 2022 Internal Audit of the SICAP programme.

The Dept have advised that the annual allocation has increased in 2024 from €715,706 to €763,890 with an additional separate allocation of €143,123 being ringfenced for New Arrivals.

SICAP 2023 End of Year Review

The SICAP annual performance review assesses the Local Development Company's (LDC) performance at the end of the year. It is an opportunity for the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to take stock at the end of the year of the overall performance of the LDC in delivering SICAP in accordance with the 2023 Annual Plan, Programme Requirements and the Funding Agreement. **The LCDC is the primary reviewer of the annual performance report and is responsible for this process.** Once the annual progress report (and Fin & Mon reports) is uploaded onto IRIS, Pobal will have access to it for information and for wider monitoring and guidance purposes.

The Annual Performance Review is based on the end of year Financial & Monitoring (Fin & Mon) report, and an Annual Progress Report submitted by the LDC.

One of the principal criteria to be evaluated at the Annual Performance Review will be delivery against the targets for the KPIs and compliance with Schedule A of the contract in terms of remaining within the set goal costs % and the maximum administration cost %. The LCDC will also review progress more holistically by taking the other deliverables and data into account. It may also engage in discussions with LDCs about particular elements of service delivery and targeting within 2023.

LDC to update all data on IRIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot cost charged report (signed) • Lot Summary Report • Individual Case Load by Target Group Report • Action Progress Report • Annual Progress Report 2023 • Goal 1 & Goal 2 Outcome Reports 	Tuesday 16th January 2024
LCDC staff to carry out AP checks and revert to LDC with queries.	Wednesday 24th January 2024
LCDC to revert to Ip with queries.	Wednesday 24th January 2024
IP to revert back with query response.	Thursday 25th January 2024
SICAP Sub Committee Convene to consider checks prior to issuing feedback to Pobal.	Tuesday 30th January 2024
LCDC provide feedback to Pobal on any issues identified.	Wednesday 31st January 2024
Pobal will carry out a high-level review (to ensure compliance with the Programme Requirements) and provide feedback to the LCDCs.	Friday 2nd February 2024
SICAP sub-committee to convene to consider Pobal Feedback.	Wednesday 14th February 2024
Laois LCDC to formally approve Annual Progress Report and Fin & Mon Report.	Wednesday 28th February 2024 (Pobal timeline Thur 29.02.2024)

(B) Approval for General SICAP Payment & New Arrival Payment

General SICAP Allocation

Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Chief Officer sought approval to pay the IP, Laois Partnership Company the sum of **€190,995.00**. The First Payment of **€127,330** representing Q1 General SICAP payment for 2 months with Final Month (**€63,665**) to be paid **ONLY** after successful completion of the 2023 SICAP End of Year Review.

Payment in the sum of **€127,330** was approved, being proposed by **Ms. Joan Bolger** and seconded by **Mr. John Mulholland**.

(C) New Arrival Payment

- Approval to pay the IP, Laois Partnership the sum of **€35,780.75**. The sum represents Q1 New Arrival SICAP Payment.

Payment in the sum of **€35,780.75** was approved being proposed by **Ms. Evelyn Reddin** and seconded by **Cllr. John King**.

6. Local Enhancement Programme

Ms. Pamela Tynan informed the group that Laois received an allocation of €153,591.05, this total amount comprises:

- €127,922.54 Capital funding for use towards carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency type projects, purchase of equipment etc.
- €25,598.51 capital funding ring-fenced for Women's Groups
- The maximum administration fee allowed is €7,679.55 (5% of total allocation), and this fee is only permitted to be deducted from the €127,992.54 Local Enhancement Programme funding stream. Note any unspent monies from the Community enhancement Programme (CEP) of the Community Support Fund (CSF) must be used against the 5% admin fee.

The Department requests that LCDCs ring-fence 30% of its funding for grants of €1,000 or less. This is guidance only, and the LCDC can adjust this depending on the needs in its area.

Inform LCDC	Wednesday 13 th December 2023
Documents received from Dept	Thursday 14 th December
Make application available to communities (on-line, via PPN and paper format)	Wednesday 17 th January 2024
Closing Date for Receipt of Applications	Wednesday 21 st February 2024 Dept noted that Should be no later the 8 th March 2024
CEP Sub Committee Appraisal	Wednesday 13 th March 2024
Included Recommendation on LCDC Meeting Papers	Wednesday 20 th March 2024
LCDC Approval	Wednesday 27 th March 2024
Notification to Dept	No later than Thursday 28 th March 2024
Dept end of programme	31 st December 2024.

Cllr Paschal McEvoy asked if they could change the CEP Sub Committee Appraisal date to the 8th of March and this was agreed.

7. Any Other Business

Ms. Pamela Tynan, A/Chief Officer proposed to move the February meeting to Wednesday 21st February to approve the framework LECP which will then go to Council meeting on Monday 25th February for full approval. LCDC members were in agreement with this date change.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Joe Thompson
SIGNED: _____ DATE: Wednesday 21st January 2024.
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Mr. Joe Thompson
CHAIRPERSON – LAOIS LCDC