



Local Community Development Committee Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 25th October 2023 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
Ms. Paula Phelan, HSE

Private Sector representatives:

Ms. Joan Bolger, Laois Public Participation Network (Vice Chairperson)
Mr. Caroline Hoffman Business Sector
Mr. John Oxley, Laois Public Participation Network
Mr. Ray Harte, Laois Public Participation Network
Ms. Nina Horan, Laois Public Participation Network
Mr. Naeem Iqbal, Laois Public Participation Network
Ms. Caroline Lydon, CEO Laois Partnership Company

Apologies:

Ms. Evelyn Reddin, Laois Local Enterprise Office
Mr. John Mulholland, CE Laois County Council
Mr. Kevin Geoghegan, DSP
Mr. Harry Lalor, Farming Sector (I.F.A)
Ms. Rosey Kunene, Youth Sector (Youth Work Ireland Laois)

In Attendance:

Ms. Donal Brennan, Chief Officer
Ms. Suzanne O'Connor, Senior Staff Officer, LCC
Ms. Danielle Keane, Clerical Officer, LCC
Ms. Karen Bambrick, Laois Partnership Company

Ms. Suzanne O'Connor LCC registered all members present on the meeting attendance sheet.

Mr. Joe Thompson, Chairperson, opened the meeting welcoming the new business representative Ms. Caroline Hoffman.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of LCDC meeting held on 27th September 2023

The minutes were adopted following a *proposal from Ms. Joan Bolger seconded by Cllr. John King.*

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Correspondence

Ms. Suzanne O'Connor informed members of email received from Dept of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) titled ""Call for Applications – 2023 Dormant Accounts Funds, Action 6.3 National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy". Ms. O'Connor advised that the dormant accounts fund outlines measures of funding across 9 government Departments, with €54.5 million funding 44 measures in line with relevant legislation. The DRCD have responsibility for a number of actions in the **National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy** to include *Action 6.3 - Take measures to ensure that existing community infrastructure is inclusive and welcoming to LGBTI+ people and consider the provision of pop-up LGBTI+ services.*

Funding will be available to organisations locally for the provision of services that will include:

- Extending drop-in hours, developing information and guidance tools, holding additional community events
- Delivering LGBTI awareness/sensitivity training in healthcare settings, businesses, schools etc.
- Providing outreach support
- Providing sporting/physical activity programmes to promote inclusion, community participation, health and wellbeing.

Laois LCDC have made contact with Youth Work Ireland Laois and will make an application before the closing date of 27th October 2023.

4. SICAP

(a) SICAP 2024+ Tender

Ms. Suzanne O'Connor noted that the closing date for receipt of tenders for SICAP 2024+ programme was Friday 8th September. The tender evaluation committee convened on 22nd September to undertake an in-depth review of the response and a number of clarifications were sought. A tender negotiation meeting ensued on the 16th October at which the tenderer made an in-dept presentation followed by a two way conversation. The tenderer is now reviewing their tender response and will submit a best and final offer by 31st October.

(b) SICAP Case Study

Ms. O'Connor advised members that the 2023 SICAP Case Study was titled "Well-being through community gardening and community spaces" as agreed by LCDC member. The case study was submitted to Pobal as per deadline of 13th October.

The 2023 Case Study looked at the O'Moore Place allotments focusing on the people that use the space and who have found great solace in being part of this project with some participants engaging in training opportunities and QQ1 Level 3 container gardening course. A short video presentation

was also submitted and viewed by members during the meeting with a brief overview of the project made by Ms. Karen Bambrick of Laois Partnership Company.

5. Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

Objectives and Actions

Ms. Suzanne O'Connor advised members that we are currently nearing the end of Stage 3 LECP process for which objectives, and impacts have been prepared in line with the 10 High-Level Goals which will be presented to members for their consideration.

It was duly noted that 33 sustainable objectives were developed under the five themes set out in the LECP guidance document being:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Development
- Community and Local Development
- Climate Action
- Integrated and Ongoing

In order to establish objectives, 8 public workshops were held across the county which included 2 on-line workshops. In addition, an online survey was launched with over 509 responses received.

Ms. O'Connor proceeded to present the proposed objectives, impacts and outcomes to members noting that actions would be formed as part of the implementation plan.

High Level Goal 1 <i>"Encourage civic participation and support local communities to lead their own developments."</i>				
Goal Breakdown This goal focuses on encouraging active participation and is intended to develop and enable individuals and communities within Laois. Goal 1 aims to ensure that members of our community can take part in all aspects of society				
Impact To have a strongly engaged population which will be positive for participative democracy and support bottom-up approach with increased participation of disadvantaged minority groups.				
Sustainable Development Goals 7,8,9,11,12,13,15				
Theme				
Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
		✓		
Sustainable Objective 1.1		High Level Outcomes		
To Increase the depth of community participation and civic engagement across the county.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in civic engagement, especially in those areas with historically lower rates of community activity. • More community groups and individuals actively participating in their local community. • That an equality perspective is integrated into civic engagement. 		
Sustainable Objective 1.2		High Level Outcomes		
Build capacity and skills within individuals and groups to take leadership roles within their communities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The personal skills development of community group leaders to take on leadership roles within their communities. • The development of capacity within community groups to enable 		

	<p>them to take on projects on behalf of their communities, with particular emphasis on those communities with lower activity rates and on communities impacted by Just Transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened capacity in target areas and groups. 			
Sustainable Objective 1.3	High Level Outcomes			
To increase the breadth of community led development across the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better designed and more appropriate social and physical rural and urban infrastructure/facilities (<i>including locally led business</i>) Increased initiatives led by communities to support their own needs. To help develop succession planning across the spectrum of community groups from youth right through to men's/women's sheds to older people. 			
<p>High Level Goal 2</p> <p><i>“Develop and promote ways of living and doing business that supports a sustainable environment and resilient communities.”</i></p>				
<p>Goal Breakdown</p> <p>Goals 2 seeks to support businesses and local communities in protecting and enhancing our local biodiversity in a sustainable manner so that we can reduce our carbon footprint. Sustainability and environmentally aware habits must be factored into all areas of life in Laois</p>				
<p>Impact</p> <p>Enhanced opportunities for businesses to shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economic activity and to mitigate the climate change impact of enterprise and commercial activity.</p>				
<p>Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>7,8,9,11,12,13,15</p>				
<p>Theme</p>				
Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustainable Objective 2.1	High Level Outcomes			
Support initiatives that allow businesses/enterprises to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly and to target environmentally conscious markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced opportunities for Laois businesses. Reduced environmental footprint and transition to a competitive low carbon climate resilient economy. Improved understanding on the impacts of climate change on our local environment Improved green and circular economy 			
Sustainable Objective 2.2	High Level Outcomes			
Assist communities and their citizens to take actions that address the causes and impact of climate change at local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in overall carbon footprint of the county Increase in Climate Action interventions tackling climate change and environmental protection by members of our communities. 			
Sustainable Objective 2.3	High Level Outcomes			
Protect the quality of life in rural communities, supporting a sustainable rural economy and environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better protection of biodiversity in the county Reduction in “carbon miles” of goods and services available to consumers in the county. 			
Sustainable Objective 2.4	High Level Outcomes			
Provide for public and community spaces and infrastructure that supports individuals to live in a more sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of remote working hubs. Increased access to sustainable travel options. EV chargers in place near key destination locations. 			

High Level Goal 3

“Encourage a sustainable culture of innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the county.”

Goal Breakdown

The third high level goal centres on supporting both new and existing businesses throughout Laois, taking advantage of our excellent road and rail transport networks in addition to our highly skilled local workforce. This goal aims to strengthen local employment in Laois.

Impact

Broaden a more diverse enterprise and employment base giving greater access to rural employment to sustain our towns and villages.

Sustainable Development Goals

4,8,9

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
	✓	✓		✓

Sustainable Objective 3.1	High Level Outcomes
To provide for practical encouragement, support, and advice to those looking to innovate or start their own business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate financial and mentoring supports. More entrepreneurs developed and SME's/micro-enterprises established in Laois. Local job creation without displacing existing businesses in Laois.
Sustainable Objective 3.2	High Level Outcomes
To enhance the attractiveness of the offering in hubs and co-working centres as part of providing supports to start-up companies and remote workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased remote workers in Laois, with less citizens commuting to neighbouring counties to work. Retained talent, young people and increased footfall in towns and villages in Laois. More remote working/innovation hubs in Laois joined that Nation hub network connectedhubs.ie
Sustainable Objective 3.3	High Level Outcomes
To encourage additional off-farm and alternative enterprises to support a changing rural economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased entrepreneurship and improved use of farm resources. Increased eco-tourism and local economy. Increased diversification of the rural economy
Sustainable Objective 3.4	High Level Outcomes
Promote business participation and enterprise among those currently underrepresented in the business sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More female entrepreneurs mitigating gender employment gaps, lessening income inequality and social exclusion. More resilient social enterprises that better realise their potential to positively impact their communities. Increase in employment participation rates. More diversity in the workplace.

High Level Goal 4

“Help the local economy to diversify in a long-term, sustainable manner, broadening employment opportunities in the county.”

Goal Breakdown

The fourth goal seeks to promote the local economy and provide Leadership in increasing employment levels in the county by attracting foreign investment as well as focusing on local enterprises.

Impact

High quality sustainable employment with a capacity for growth.

Sustainable Development Goals

4,8,9,10

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
	✓			✓

Sustainable Objective 4.1	High Level Outcomes
To support business to develop and expand a skilled and talented workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved workforce development and educational opportunities to meet the needs of the local business sector. Skills developed necessary to sustain, and be in demand, in the emerging economy. Better paid jobs with a more skilled workforce.
Sustainable Objective 4.2	High Level Outcomes
To work with the range of infrastructure suppliers (e.g., data, power, transport, water, public realm) to have a sufficient standard of infrastructure provision to attract and service new and developing economic sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased investment in key social, physical, and digital infrastructure More people living, working, and doing business in Laois. Good standard of data/broadband infrastructure and services across the county.
Sustainable Objective 4.3	High Level Outcomes
To market Laois as a vibrant destination for business and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced knowledge base of the business, tourism, and hospitality sectors in Laois. Realisation of the economic potential of the natural built environment for outdoor recreation, tourism, and hospitality.
Sustainable Objective 4.4	High Level Outcomes
To work with Midlands Ireland and national enterprise agencies to position the county as an attractive investment location for high value sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More employers considering Laois as a location to do business. Good quality local jobs reducing the need for outward commute.
Sustainable Objective 4.5	High Level Outcomes
To assist communities affected by changes in employment and economic decline especially those affected by Just Transition or climate change impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A workforce retrained to take advantage of new opportunities. Regeneration of local facilities in communities affected by economic decline.

High Level Goal 5

“Recognise and support diversity in the county, promoting equality, integration, and inclusiveness across all sectors.”

Goal Breakdown

Goal 5 intends to support all sectors of our society to ensure the voice of all, including the most excluded, is heard across all sectors while identifying, acknowledging an integrating the diverse need within Laois.

Impact

An increasingly inclusive county.

Sustainable Development Goals

1,3,5,10,11,16

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
✓	✓	✓		✓

Sustainable Objective 5.1	High Level Outcomes
To work to support equity in social participation and employment opportunities, particularly across areas of disability, disadvantage, diversity, and ethnic backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enriched social capital. Increased participation rates across people in the areas of disability, disadvantage, diversity, and ethnic backgrounds.
Sustainable Objective 5.2	High Level Outcomes
To target specific groups, by needs, in the promotion of broader health and physical activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved health and wellbeing for all in our county. Increased participation in sport and physical activity for all. Increase in safe and appropriate spaces for young people in our county. Increase in participation in the Older Peoples’ Council.
Sustainable Objective 5.3	High Level Outcomes
To reduce barriers to participation in the breadth of economic and social life by those in led advantaged sectors of society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to facilities and activities.

High Level Goal 6

“Sustain, develop and enhance town and village centres as focal points for their communities.”

Goal Breakdown

The sixth goal will aim to grow and enhance our towns and villages while safeguarding our cultural and natural heritage making Laois a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

Impact

Laois will have more vibrant towns and villages better equipped to face the future challenges

Sustainable Development Goals

3,11,13

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
	✓	✓		

Sustainable Objective 6.1	High Level Outcomes
To make our towns and villages attractive places to live and work through the provision and upgrade of both community and appropriate public infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality town centre living/regeneration with established town teams. More people choosing to live in our rural towns and villages.

Sustainable Objective 6.2	High Level Outcomes
To encourage opportunities for arts, culture and social events in our towns and villages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better access to arts and cultural events throughout the county. A vibrant cultural scene. Enriched cultural environment contributing to the overall quality of life in our communities making them more attractive places to live.
Sustainable Objective 6.3	High Level Outcomes
To encourage the re-use/re-purposing of properties and sites within our towns and villages to address vacancy and underutilisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased vibrancy, renewal and regeneration of towns and villages. Stimulation of economic activity.

High Level Goal 7

“Support an integrated and holistic approach to education, training and employment along with life-long learning.”

Goal Breakdown

Goal 7 seeks to encourage the development of training and employment opportunities in Laois and seeks to establish and maintain long-term working partnerships between agencies to ensure the development and enhancement of our existing workforce.

Impact

A workforce better equipped for employment opportunities and an improvement in the imbalance in unit income between regions of the county.

Sustainable Development Goals

1,4,8,9

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
	✓			✓

Sustainable Objective 7.1	High Level Outcomes
To continue to support improvements in educational attainment and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved employment/self-employment prospects and increased social inclusion (<i>addressing the Leave No One Behind principle</i>). Enhanced education and training attainment and capital. A more skilled and adaptable workforce assisting in the regenerating of deprived urban and rural communities.
Sustainable Objective 7.2	High Level Outcomes
To reduce barriers to participation in education and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation rates in TUS Learning Hubs.
Sustainable Objective 7.3	High Level Outcomes
To address the factors which result in imbalances in educational attainment statistics between different regions of the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More educational attainment in disadvantaged and geographically isolated areas. Improvements in income inequality. Increased number of citizens progressing to employment from SICAP target groups.

High Level Goal 8

“Promote well-being and excellent quality of life within the county.”

Goal Breakdown

Goal 8 will focus on promoting good health and well-being across all communities in Laos. This goal will aim to enable good physical and mental wellness for all and lessen inequalities for all generations.

Impact

A population which is healthier, both physically and mentally.

Sustainable Development Goals

1,3,11,13,16

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
✓		✓		

Sustainable Objective 8.1

High Level Outcomes

To support the availability of community level meeting spaces where people can meet and interact socially.

- Improved access to a physical environment which support mental health, social health, and wellbeing.

Sustainable Objective 8.2

High Level Outcomes

To improve access to recreational facilities to increase participation in foundation level sport and in exercise across all ages.

- Improved health of the community.
- Increased access to facilities and participation in physical activity.

Sustainable Objective 8.3

High Level Outcomes

To support the development of events and facilities that enhance cultural expression and creativity.

- Increased opportunities for cultural expression and creativity throughout the county.
- Increase in the number of Community Arts Groups across the county.

High Level Goal 9

“Strengthen and encourage a strong sense of pride in the county and promote our unique identity.”

Goal Breakdown

Goal 9 places a strong emphasis in advocating pride in places where we live and work in Laos.

Impact

A county with a positive self-identity is more likely to develop economically and socially.

Sustainable Development Goals

3,11,13,16

Theme

Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
✓		✓	✓	

Sustainable Objective 9.1

High Level Outcomes

Document and celebrate the achievements of individuals and local communities in achieving positive goals for the county.

- The presence of a palpable pride and confidence in the county which will be able to aid economic development in addition to the general wellbeing of our people.

Sustainable Objective 9.2	High Level Outcomes
Provide opportunities to record and publicise the extent of aspects of the county's heritage, biodiversity, and cultural achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of the attributes of the county. • Community and Voluntary awards.
Sustainable Objective 9.3	High Level Outcomes
Through festivals and events promote opportunities for people to celebrate locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events which assist in the wellbeing of local communities.

High Level Goal 10				
"Promote the county as a key location for foreign and domestic investment"				
Goal Breakdown				
Goal 10 centres on promoting all corners of the county to attract investment by both local businesses and large sale foreign investment. This goal will aim to promote Laois and its distinctive characteristics and skilled workforce.				
Impact				
Additional private sector investment in the county.				
Sustainable Development Goals				
8,9				
Theme				
Health & Wellbeing	Economic Development	Community & Local Development	Climate Action	Integrated & Ongoing
	✓			✓
Sustainable Objective 10.1	High Level Outcomes			
To research and regularly update key business data from Laois to support the competitive advantages of doing business in Laois.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of potential of Laois as an investment destination. 			
Sustainable Objective 10.2	High Level Outcomes			
Through research and regularly updating key social provision data (for example leisure, schools, preschools, youth provision, etc) to help ensure that social/community infrastructure continues to be available for a developing workforce (and their families) outside of their working lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That social and community infrastructure keeps pace with an expanding population and workforce • That the county remains as an attractive location for an incoming skilled workforce and especially for returning graduates from the county. 			
Sustainable Objective 10.3	High Level Outcomes			
Encourage and develop sector-based clusters to highlight quality outputs from the county.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise clusters encouraged to develop similar to Laois Taste. 			

Members commended staff on work undertaken on the LECP to date and unanimously agreed to sign off on LECP sustainable objectives and outcomes, being **proposed by Cllr. John King and seconded by Ms. Caroline Lydon.**

6. Any Other Business

Ms. Suzanne O'Connor noted that following the end of Mr. Martin Crowley's tenure on the LCDC, a vacancy has arisen on the Community Enhancement Programme Sub Committee in addition to the position of Vice-Chairperson.


Ms. O'Connor sought members to nominate a member to replace Mr. Crowley on the CEP sub Committee.

Nominated: Ms. Caroline Hoffman
Proposed: Cllr. John King
Seconded: Ms. Joan Bolger

Ms. O'Connor sought members to nominate a member to replace Mr. Crowley as Vice Chairperson

Nominated: Ms. Joan Bolger
Proposed: Ms. Caroline Lydon
Seconded: Cllr. John King

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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SIGNED:

DATE: Wednesday 29th November 2023.

**Mr. Joe Thompson
CHAIRPERSON – LAOIS LCDC**