

**Laois Local Community Development Committee
Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 17th November 2021
At 11:30am via Microsoft Teams**

Members in attendance:

Public Sector representatives: Mr. Joe Thompson, Laois Offaly Education & Training Board (Chairperson)
Cllr. Conor Bergin, Cathaoirleach Laois County Council
Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council
Cllr. John King, Laois County Council
Mr. John Mulholland, CE Laois County Council
Ms. Ann Sheerin, HSE

Private Sector representatives: Mr. Martin Crowley, Business Sector (Vice Chairperson)
Ms. Catherine Cowap, A/CEO Laois Partnership Company
Mr. Clive Davis, Youth Sector (Youth Work Ireland Laois)
Mr. Nina Horan, Laois Public Participation Network
Ms. Joan Bolger, Laois Public Participation Network
Mr. John Oxley, Laois Public Participation Network

Apologies: Ms. Honor Deevy, Laois Local Enterprise Office
Mr. Colm Purcell, DEASP
Mr. Henry Burns, Farming Sector (I.F.A)
Mr. Ray Harte, Laois Public Participation Network
Mr. Naeem Iqbal, Laois Public Participation Network

In Attendance: Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer
Ms. Suzanne O'Connor, A/Senior Staff Officer, Laois County Council
Ms. Jenny Collier, Laois Partnership Company

Ms. Suzanne O'Connor, Laois Co Co took a roll call of all attendees and registered those present on the meeting attendance sheet.

Mr. Joe Thompson, Chairperson, opened the meeting welcoming all present.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of LCDC meeting held on 20th October 2021.

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

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Correspondence

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Office advised members of the newly announced Community Activities Fund, which was launched to support community groups. This €9m fund is being provided by the Government to support community and voluntary groups impacted by Covid-19. The fund was launched on the 11th November 2021 by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Joe O'Brien TD. This once-off fund will be allocated under the Department's Community

Enhancement Programme and in order to ensure there is sufficient flexibility to allow funding to be targeted to where it is needed in each Local Authority area it will be administered locally by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs). Under the scheme Laois has secured an allocation of €273,048

- The Community Activities Fund will support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with their running costs such as utility (Electricity, Heating charges) or insurance bills, as well as with improvements to their facilities.
- Groups will also be able to use the funding to carry out necessary repairs and to purchase equipment such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies and training equipment.

It was noted that the Dept indicated a closing date of no later than the 28th February 2022. As soon as the Community Dept receive full terms and conditions of the scheme it is proposed to advertise as soon as possible with a proposed closing date of the 2nd January in order to give groups ample time to apply with applications to be evaluated by the CEP sub-committee.

Members welcomed the announcement of the fund which will prove invaluable to local community and voluntary groups.

4. SICAP

SICAP 2022 Annual Plan

Mr. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer informed members that each year the LDC (Laois Partnership Company) are required to submit a SICAP Annual Plan to the LCDC, setting out their proposed SICAP plan for the coming year. The annual planning process provides LDCs with an opportunity to reflect on their work and identify emerging trends to be addressed in the Lot area.

Ms. McNicholl also noted a communication received on Wednesday 10th November referencing the recent announcement of an additional funding allocated to the SICAP programme. Minister O'Brien is currently considering his options in allocating this amount and it is expected that budget allocation for 2022 will be confirmed as soon as possible. Until the revised budget allocation/timelines are confirmed the IP are to continue to input the draft plan onto IRIS.

Ms. Catherine Cowap, A/SEO Laois Partnership Company noted that the Dept are extending the Annual Plan submission deadline with the IP awaiting formal clarification pertaining to the 2022 budget allocation. A high-level meeting took place between the Dept and the ILDN whereby various options regarding increase in funding was presented. As a result, Laois Partnership are uncertain of the SICAP budget allocation and staffing levels for 2022.

Ms. Catherine Cowap, further noted a current vacancy in SICAP which was not filled due to the closure of the Jobs Club. The IP recruited 3 persons until the end of 2021, with one expected to be retained to fill said vacancy, with the possibility of retaining 2 employees based on Dept clarification and budgetary allocation for the 2022 programme.

5. Healthy Ireland

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer advised members of correspondence received from Pobal confirming that Round 3 of the Healthy Ireland Fund has been extended to 31st March 2021. This will allow additional time for achievement of Round 3 actions and facilitate planning and preparation for HIF Round 4. The extension will be subject to the agreement by LCDC for the continuation of current HIF activities and existing terms and conditions of the grant agreement. We are currently awaiting receipt of an addendum which will be put forward to the LCDC once received.

6. Dormant Accounts Capital Grant Scheme

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer noted that the Social Enterprise Capital Grant Scheme sub-committee convened on Monday the 18th October in order to appraise applications received. It should be noted that the recommendation of the sub-committee was forwarded to the Dept for full approval in accordance with scheme conditions. The Dept

are scheduled to revert back shortly. Once LKCD decision is received membership of the LCDC will be notified of same.

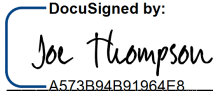
7. AOB

Mr. Joe Thompson, Chairperson asked if members could bring forward items under AOB in advance of the meeting. Ms. Carmel McNicholl Chief Officer referenced the meeting Standing orders which notes:

- 1.6 No business shall be transacted at a meeting other than that specified in the Agenda which related to the meeting or business required by the Act, or otherwise by law to be transacted at the meeting.
- 1.7 An Agenda which has been sent or delivered for this purpose may be altered (whether by way of addition, deletion or otherwise) if an Agenda specifying the alteration(s) is delivered or sent to each member not less than **2 clear days** before the meeting is to be held.

Ms. McNicholl further noted that members, if deemed necessary, may raise urgent matters of significance, otherwise all items should be submitted prior to the issue of meeting papers.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

SIGNED: 
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Mr. Joe Thompson
CHAIRPERSON – LAOIS LCDC

DATE: Wednesday 15th December 2021.