

Laois Local Community Development Committee
Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd February 2022
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
Ms. Honor Deevy, Laois Local Enterprise Office
Mr. Colm Purcell, DEASP

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. Henry Burns, Farming Sector (I.F.A)
Mr. Nina Horan, Laois Public Participation Network
Ms. Joan Bolger, Laois Public Participation Network
Mr. Ray Harte, Laois Public Participation Network
Mr. Naeem Iqbal, Laois Public Participation Network

Apologies: Mr. John Mulholland, CE Laois County Council
Ms. Ann Sheerin, HSE
Mr. John Oxley, Laois Public Participation Network

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

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

Mr. Joe Thompson, Chairperson, opened the meeting welcoming all present, expressing his joy at the opportunity to host the first blended of the LCDC.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of LCDC meeting held on 26th January 2022.

The minutes were adopted following a proposal from *Cllr. John King* seconded by *Mr. Clive Davis*.

2. Matters Arising

None

3. Correspondence

None.

4. SICAP

SICAP Annual Performance Review 2021

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer informed members that the SICAP subcommittee convened on Friday 4th February in order to undertake the 2021 Annual Performance Review. The purpose of the review was to allow the LCDC to assess the progress of the LDC for the year against what was set out in the SICAP annual plan and the 2021 budget allocation. It provided a picture of the actual achievements in relation to the actions and targets set out in the SICAP annual plan and budget for each Lot. In addition, the APR identified and addressed any issues that had arisen during the year and provided a mechanism for LDC's to report on and charge VAT costs to the programme.

Mr. Joe Thompson, commended Laois Partnership Company on work undertaken, and the comprehensive review carried out by SICAP subcommittee. Mr. Thompson added that 2021 had been an exceptional year with targets being exceeded across all KPI's. It was noted an underspend had been identified of which only 5% will be carried forward into 2022, compared to 10% in 2021. The underspend was attributed to the availability of funding from other sources which was leveraged against the SICAP programme.

It was duly noted that the 2021 SICAP Annual Performance review must be approved in advance of the 2022 Annual Plan.

Following a comprehensive discussion, the 2021 Annual Performance Review was *proposed by Cllr. John King being seconded by Ms. Joan Bolger.*

SICAP 2022 Annual Plan

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer noted that a review of 2022 Annual Plan was undertaken by LCDC staff with comments on issues arising communicated to Pobal in order to obtain feedback. A meeting of the SICAP subcommittee convened on Friday 4th February 2022 to review said feedback in order to finalise and approve 2022 annual plan prior to Monday 28th February deadline.

Ms. McNicholl advised members that during the course of 2022 Annual Plan review it was noted that the spend split between Goal 1 and Goal 2 was outside the recommended 40%-60% spend ratio. The deviation from the recommended split was attributed to increase in staffing costs particularly against Goal 2, working with individuals. The spend split will now be revised to Goal 1 (Groups) 35.79% and Goal 2 (Individuals) 64.21%.

Goal 1 Non-Salary Costs	€39,850	
Goal 1 Direct Salary Costs	€146,660	
Goal 1 Total Costs	€186,510	35.79%
Goal 2 Non-Salary Costs	€59,316	
Goal 2 Direct Salary Costs	€275,319	
Goal 2 Total Costs	€334,635	64.21%

A lengthy discussion took place amongst the membership with clarification on the spend revision being addressed by Ms. Catherine Cowap, A/CEO Laois Partnership Company.

The revised spend split was unanimously agreed being *proposed by Cllr. John King and seconded by Mr. Ray Harte*

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer proceeded to seek approval of the 2022 SICAP Annual Plan *being proposed by Cllr. Paschal McEvoy and seconded by Cllr. John King.*

5. Community Activities Fund

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer noted that the CEP subcommittee convened on Monday 7th February in order to appraise applications under the Community Activity Fund. Under the new funding stream Laois received an allocation of €273,048, which was divided into a current expenditure allocation of €166,863 and a capital expenditure allocation of €106,185. A total of 123 applications were received seeking funding of €573,491.

During the appraisal process the subcommittee noted that applications for capital expenditure outweighed those seeking current funding. A query was raised with the Dept seeking to transfer funds from the current allocation to the capital allocation. Ms. McNicholl advised that the Dept response confirmed that transfer of expenditure was not permitted under the terms of the scheme. As a result, a second-round call for current spend allocations only was advertised on Friday 18th February and will close on Friday 4th March. The subcommittee will once again reconvene on Monday 21st March in order to appraise new applications, with the final recommendation on disbursement of the CAF to come before the March LCDC meeting for full approval.

A lengthy discussion took place among the membership with all queries being clarified. Members also stressed the importance of the fund to small groups and organisations acting as a funding stream to address increased costs such as heat and electricity. It was further noted that the application was very laborious for community groups, in particular the need for co-ordinates. Members were advised that applicants are welcome to contact Laois Co Co Community Section for assistance in completing the form

6. Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP)

Ms. Carmel McNicholl, Chief Officer advised members that a review of the LECP 2016-2020 is being undertaken in which all lead agencies will be contacted in order to ascertain feedback.

In addition, a local LECP Advisory Steering Group is being established to focus on practical arrangements for the smooth preparation of an integrated plan, from determining its scope through to final adaption. The group would also have a role in supporting the implementation process to ensure that these plans are integrated and in line with high level goals and sustainable objectives outlined in the LECP framework.

Finally, Ms McNicholl noted that the guidelines set out the recommended composition of the Advisory Steering Group, and in line with this guidance nominations are being sought from various sectoral interests. The groups should consist of:

- At least one member of the LCDC, and
- The Chief Officer of the LCDC

Ms. McNicholl informed members that three members of the LCDC had been nominated to the LECP Advisory Steering Groups from their representative organisations as follows:

- Mr. Joe Thompson, Laois Offaly Educations and Training Board (LOETB)
- Ms. Catherine Cowap, Laois Partnership Company
- Ms. Ann Sheerin, Health Service Executive (HSE)

In addition, Ms. Vivienne Graham will represent the Dept of Social Protection (DSP).

Members will be furnished with further updates as the process unfolds and will be afforded the opportunity to partake in Department Webinars. The Dept will continue to provide guidance on a continued basis.

It was agreed that a soft copy of the current LECP will be circulated to members with Cllr. John King suggesting that a short presentation be made to members in order to summarise the process in preparing the new LECP. The Chief Officer confirmed that this will be arranged in due course.

7. AOB

None.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Joe Thompson

SIGNED:

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Mr. Joe Thompson
CHAIRPERSON – LAOIS LCDC

DATE: Wednesday 30th March 2022.