

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR
MEATH LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
2019

1.0 Chief Officer's Statement

LCDC's are required under Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2014 (S128B of the Local Government Act 2001) to prepare, adopt and submit an annual report to the Local Authority no later than the 31st March each year in respect of the performance of its functions in the previous year.

This report outlines progress in respect of the various LCDC functions during 2019.

Since the submission of the last report, Meath LCDC and its sub-groups had a busy and productive year.

A current new Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is ongoing with Meath Partnership as the Programme Implementer. The actions set out in the 2019 Annual Plan were completed delivering results on the ground to the relevant groups. The sub-committee continue to work constructively in its review and monitoring of the SICAP programme.

The LCDC acts as the Local Action Group (LAG) for the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in Meath. The LEADER programme has added to the already significant role played by the LCDC in the oversight of public funding to bring about the improved social, economic and community development of the County.

During 2019, there has been substantial progress in the LEADER programme with 68% of the budget committed at the end of 2019. As per previous LEADER programmes, claims for payment of projects from the promoters are submitted towards the latter end of the programme, when all works are completed and inspected. At the end of 2019, there were seventy five projects approved for funding with twenty nine of these claims already paid out to the applicant.

The LCDC managed, implemented and collaborated in relation to a number of public-funded programmes under its remit which included the Healthy Ireland fund and the Community Enhancement Programme. The LCDC ensured that both these schemes complied with and delivered on some of the actions in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

It has been acknowledged that resources from all partners will be required to deliver on the actions of the LECP and all funding which will assist in the delivery is welcomed. Four quarterly reports have been presented on progress to the LCDC.

The Meath LCDC has 19 members and during 2019 there were 8 changes in membership with 3 new Councillors following the local elections in June 2019, Margaret Cranney, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, Eamon Cassells,

Community Sector, Jacinta O’Sullivan & Sheila Comiskey both of the Social Inclusion Pillar and John V Farrelly resigned their seats.

Replacements from each organisation were sought and Mr. Paul Carroll, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection and Gareth O’Brien, Community Sector attended his first meeting in September 2019, Susana Komolafe, Social Inclusion who attended her first meeting in October 2019 with Anna Melnick Social Inclusion Sector & Donna Farrell attending their first meeting in December 2019.

I would like to sincerely thank the outgoing members for their contribution to the LCDC during their tenure.

The Membership of the LCDC at 31st December 2019 was:

- Ms Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive, MCC
- Cllr Yemi Adenuga
- Cllr Annie Hoey
- Cllr Mike Bray
- Ms. Paul Carroll, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
- Ms Sadie Ward McDermott, Louth / Meath Education & Training Board
- Ms. Dorothy Kerrigan, Health Service Executive
- Ms Ita McGuigan, Údaras na Gaeltachta
- Mr Joe English, Local Enterprise Office
- Mr Michael Ludlow, Meath Partnership
- Mr Gareth O’Brien, Community Sector
- Mr John Higgins, Community Sector (Chairperson)
- Ms Susuana Komolafe, Social Inclusion Sector
- Ms Anna Melnick , Social Inclusion Sector
- Mr Donna Farrell, Business Sector
- Ms Suzanne Brady, Environmental Sector
- Mr Seamus McGee, Farming Sector
- Mr Noel Maguire, Trade Union Sector
- Ms Geraldine Hogarty, Youth Work Ireland Meath

During 2019 a total of 10 meetings were held. Dates of the meetings are listed below:

- 25th January 2019
- 22nd February 2019
- 29th March 2019
- 26th April 2019 (LAG only)
- 17th May 2019
- 28th June 2019
- 26th July 2019

- 17th September 2019
- 25th October 2019
- 13th December 2019

As set out in the Standing Orders, the quorum for LCDC meetings is 11 and for LAG meetings is 10. All meetings that took place in 2019 met the requirement for the quorum. No meetings during 2019 had full attendance and the meetings in April (LCDC), August and November had to be cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

I look forward to supporting the LCDC in carrying out its functions during 2020.

Fiona Fallon
Chief Officer

2.0 Progress on the Community Elements of LECP

The LECP was prepared in a collaborative manner with the various agencies. The LCDC monitors and reviews the implementation of the LECP with the lead agencies who submit their progress updates on actions to the LCDC on a quarterly basis.

While acknowledging the initial successes in the implementation of the LECP it is recognised that ongoing progress requires continuous engagement between the various agencies and partners involved. Of the 55 actions progressed during 2019, 6 miscellaneous actions could not be progressed due to resource issues.

The Meath LCDC will continue to work in collaboration with all the relevant parties to deliver on the actions as identified in the LECP.

3.0 Implementation, Management & Oversight of Public-Funded Programmes

- **LEADER (RDP) 2014 – 2020**

The implementation of the LEADER programme continued during 2019 with 51 projects approved during the year by the LAG following the recommendation by the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC). 68% of the LEADER budget has now been committed for projects. Twenty three claims were submitted for payment by the promoter with all monies paid out. In total 11% of approved grants have been drawn down by the end of 2019. It is expected that there will be a substantial increase in the number of claims in the next 12 months.

Eligible Expressions of Interest's continued to be received under the rolling calls and there were two targeted calls towards the end of 2019. These were under Local Biodiversity and the Digi-Hub Initiative. These will be progressed accordingly and brought to an IEC meeting for consideration before recommendation to the LAG for approval.

The Rural Development Programme monitoring committee met 4 times during 2019 - in February, May, September and December to review progress of the programme. An in-house project, IGNITE Rural Youth Project, was approved by the LAG in September. The project will see the training of 60 young people from rural areas throughout the county in areas to address the skills deficit and ease the journey into employment. The project has commenced and is progressing well.

- **Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022**

SICAP is a national programme which aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration.

The SICAP sub committee met a number of times in 2019 to review mid-year and end of year progress with the programme implementer. The targets set under Goal 1 (groups) and Goal 2 (individuals) were exceeded in 2019 with all expenditure remaining within the allocated budget of €393,336. There has been very good engagement between the SICAP sub-group and the PI in raising issues that should be addressed or progressed.

- **Funding Schemes**

A number of funding initiatives were made available to the LCDC in order to recommend funding allocations to applicant groups. Under the Healthy Ireland scheme, €184,000 was allocated for a 2 year Healthy Ireland programme. Meath LCDC submitted three actions, which were approved, and will be delivered programmes over the 2 years. All projects must achieve or help to achieve action(s) related to these topics within the LECF. The projects are Walking Initiatives to be delivered by Meath Local Sports Partnership, Agewell project by 3rd Age Foundation and Health Matters by Meath Partnership. All projects must be completed by 30th June 2021.

Additional funding under the Community Mental Health Fund was also provided. The allocation for Meath LCDC was €62,050. Within this allocation €30,000 is ringfenced for a Community Mental Health Grants Scheme to be delivered in 2020. The remaining allocation is to deliver 3 actions, which were submitted by Meath LCDC and approved. The actions are: MAST (Multi Agency Safeguarding Team) to be delivered by Meath Partnership, Teenage Mental Health Initiative by Foróige and Poetry Therapy by Navan Library. These will commence in early 2020.

The Community Enhancement programme continued again in 2019. A total fund of €142,893 was made available with 30% of the fund ring-fenced for small capital works up to a maximum of €1,000 and the rest of the fund allocated towards larger capital projects. A total of 63 grants were awarded by the LCDC with projects completed by end of November 2019. Specific

funding, in the amount of €20,942, was also allocated for the Men's & Women's Sheds in 2019. Eighteen sheds in Co. Meath received funding under this scheme.

This funding has been a welcome investment in the communities. It is acknowledged by all that the delivery of actions in the LECP requires the input of resources and all funding streams which help in this regard are vital.

The LCDC will continue to work together and seek funding from other sources for their local area and community.

John Higgins
LCDC Chairperson