LCDC
Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil na Mí
Meath Local Community Development Committee

Minontuairiscí / Meeting Minutes

Local Community Development Committee
Date – 21st November 2025 @ 10.37 a.m.
Held by phone conference/in person. Attendance was verified by roll call.

Presiding:

Mr Seamus McGee (SMcG)	Farming Sector

Present:

Mr Barry Lynch (BL)	Director of Services, Meath County Council
Cllr Edward Fennessy (EF)	Councillor, Meath County Council
Cllr Maria Murphy (MM)	Councillor, Meath County Council
Cllr Padraig Coffey (PC)	Councillor, Meath County Council
Ms Johann McKeever (JMcK)	Health Service Executive
Ms Sadie Ward McDermott (SWMcD)	Louth Meath Education Training Board
Mr Sean O'Coisdealbha (SOC)	Údarás na Gaeltachta
Mr Colin Ludlow (CL)	Meath Partnership
Mr Garret O'Brien (GO'B)	Community & Voluntary Sector
Ms Shola Yahya (SY)	Social Inclusion Sector
Ms Ciara Burke (CB)	Chamber of Commerce
Ms Nicky Bowman (NB)	Community & Voluntary Sector
Mr Michael Gunn (MG)	Environmental Sector

Officials:

Mr Brian Hora (BH)	Senior Executive Officer, Community Dept, MCC
Ms Valerie McHugh (VMcH)	Administrative Officer, Community Dept, MCC
Ms Angie Mitchell (AM)	Senior Staff Officer, Community Dept, MCC
Ms Anne O'Brien (AO'B)	Senior Staff Officer, Community Dept, MCC

Guest:

Ms Linda O'Grady (LO'G)	Senior Executive Planner, Planning Dept, MCC

Apologies/Absent

Mr Joe English (JE)	Local Enterprise Office
Ms Sharon Curran (SC)	Department of Social Protection
Mr Noel Maguire (NM)	Trade Union Sector
Ms Ger Hogarty (GH)	Youth Work Ireland Meath
Ms Marie Brennan (MB)	Social Inclusion Sector

Community Department, Meath County Council, Buvinda House, Dublin Road, Navan, County Meath, C15 Y291, Telephone: 046 9097400, Web: www.meath.ie Email: customerservice@meathcoco.ie

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Item	Discussion / Action
1.	**To agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th October 2025** The meeting commenced at 10.37 a.m. The minutes of the meeting held on 24th October 2025 were confirmed on the proposal of **PC** and seconded by **MM**.
2.	**Matters arising** There were no matters arising from the minutes.
3.	**County Development Plan (CDP) review process and alignment with the LECP (Local Economic & Community Plan)** **LO'G** gave a detailed and informative update in relation to the commencement of the review of the existing Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the preparation of a new County Development Plan for the period 2027-2033 and how this plan will align with the Meath LECP. She advised that the review process will take approximately 2 years, and it began on 22nd September last with the first stage being the publication of the pre-draft strategic issues paper. The closing date for receipt of submissions in relation to the pre-draft strategic issues paper was 18th November and between 100-180 submissions were received and will be responded to. She stated that the issues paper presented a broad overview of the main issues of consideration in the development plan review process and she stated that in relation to the LECP, that it is very important that if the LCDC wish to seek funding for any projects in relation to community development in the future, that this must be included in the county development plan so that long term plans can be supported by Council policy. She stated that the draft plan paper will be available by April 2026 and that Planning Department staff will be consulting with all Departments within Meath County Council as part of the process to get their input. She requested that if any consultations or research has taken place in relation to social infrastructure audits or Community facilities or buildings or if there are any plans for community development in Meath over the comings years, that all information must be shared with the Planning Department as the CDP will set out key policies and objectives for a new integrated land-use strategy, and for the proper planning and sustainable development of the whole county. Planning Department can then see where deficits exist in the Community & Economic Chapters, and how much land needs to be zoned to support the population in Meath etc . **SMcG** thanked **LO'G** for her update and opened to the floor for questions. **SWMcD** joined the meeting at 10.46. There were questions, concerns and observations raised by the following committee members: **MG, SOC, JMcK, EF, GOB, PC, CB, SMcG, BL.** A lengthy discussion ensued and the following points were made and discussed: • Who would be revising the chapters on behalf of the LCDC • The HSE can provide data in relation to Public Health to the Planning Department • The possibility of including Community Allotments will be considered in the review of the CDP

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	• The use of Meath Public Participation Network for data gathering and input in the review process will be beneficial • The possibility of the Planning Department holding workshops in various localities for consultation purposes • Údaras na Gaeltachta hold data in relation to employment, community facilities, digital hubs and language planning in the Gaeltacht areas around Meath and will share same with the Planning Department • The possibility of Local Elected Representatives holding their own workshops and feeding the data back to the Planning Department • The Meath Outdoor Recreational Plan will also be included as part of the review of the CDP • There is a massive increase in referrals to the mental health department of the HSE for anxiety. **LO'G** advised that the Community Department will be revising the draft chapters on all matters relating to Community issues around the County and she stated that at this point in the review process, a huge data gathering exercise is required and must be completed by 1st April, 2026 to find out where deficits exists. She welcomed any data/reports/consultations that any agencies hold in relation to community matters/data and urged the holders of any such information to pass that on to the Planning Department. She welcomed the suggestions of Local Councillor or Groups holding workshops in various locations around the county to get an insight into the 38 settlements that currently exist and gather data in order to figure out what that current CDP has not succeeded in delivering and what has been achieved and what is needed in the new CDP that doesn't exist in the current plan. She agreed that using the Meath PPN as part of the review process is of great benefit. She advised that the next phase of the review process will be public consultation and this will commence in September 2026 when the draft CDP is published which will include face to face and online workshops and she stated that the Planning Department will use the PPN to reach out to as many groups of individuals as possible at that stage and that the input of the public will be vital at that stage. **LO'G** asked if the forward planning email address could be circulated to the LCDC and welcomed any submissions from the Committee and their networks as soon as possible and she advised that all submissions received will be broken down into themes and then into settlements for consideration. **SMcG** thanked **LO'G** on behalf of the Committee for attending today's meeting and giving an informative update.
4.	**Correspondence** **BH** confirmed that there were several items of correspondence circulated this month prior to the meeting. This included details of the LCDC Wellness Event which took place on 20th November in the Solstice Arts Centre, and which had approximately 50 attendees and the event received positive feedback. Details of the National and Local Communications Campaign for the LDCD Communications Plan, which is currently being developed by the DRCDG, were also circulated giving details of the dates of the various workshops that are taking place both online and in-person. **BH** encouraged LCDC member to attend as he found the workshop both he and **MG** attended informative, and he advised that there are a few workshops yet to take place. He will circulate hard copies of the communications training workbook that he received as part of the training to Members after today's meeting.

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	BH stated that under the Health Ireland Fund, €75,000 has been approved for Meath by the DRCDG for the coming year. The 2026 implementation plan will focus on two areas namely "Positive Mental Health" and "Reduction in Non-Communicable Disease Morality" and more details in relation to same will be brought before the LCDC in the new year for approval. Details of the "In Her Shoes" event that is taking place on 22nd January 2026 and of the consultations in relation to the National Strategy for the improvement of Community Safety were circulated. Finally, **BH** advised that details of the Mis, Dis and Mal Information Social Media Video Campaign by Meath County Councils Integration team were circulated. He stated that the there were over 22k views over Meath County Councils various social media platforms, and he encouraged LCDC members to like and share the post on their own social media platforms. **MG** asked if "Communications" would be included on the LCDC meeting agenda going forward as mentioned at the Communications Campaign workshop that he had recently attended. **BH** stated that once the final version of the outcome of the LCDC communications campaign is drafted and circulated, the recommendations of same will be considered.
5.	**PPN Update** **BH** advised that the PPN update for November had been circulated prior to today's meeting as follows: **National Conference** Awaiting final approval from DRCDG before the release of National Conference 2025 report. This will be circulated the the LCDC once received. **Plenary** Winter plenary will take place on 27th November. The evening will consist of updates from PPN, guest presentations and a networking opportunity for those present. **Supports** Meath PPN staff returned to core work in November in continuing the expansion of Healthy Meath Wellbeing Maps, development of Meath Disabled Persons Organisation, adjudicating at Laois Community & Voluntary awards and supporting Meath Pride of Place finals. **Membership** 811 groups are registered with Meath PPN broken down as follows: • 679 Community/Voluntary • 107 Social Inclusion • 25 Environment

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6.	**To approve SICAP Local Priority Target Groups for 2026-2028** **BH** advised that a document detailing the Rationale for the selection of the Local Priority Target Groups for SICAP for 2026-2028 had been circulated to the Committee in advance of today's meeting. He noted that these target groups were discussed and agreed with Pobal at the annual engagement meeting between Pobal and the SICAP subgroup in September 2025. He confirmed that the three target groups are 1) People impacted by Educational Disadvantage 2) People living in Communities Impacted by Disadvantage and 3) People living in households that are Jobless or Low-paid and/or precariously employed. He gave details of the rationale for the selection of the target groups as per the document circulated which states that the targets are ambitions and grounded in reality and welcomed any questions from the Committee. **CL** stated that these local priority target groups were agreed by the LCDC prior to the start of the current SICAP Programme and commencement of the new contract and those 3 targets will remain in place until the end of this programme as there is no mechanism to change them during the programme. He noted that a lot of time had gone into setting the targets using all available data and he believes they are realistic and achievable. He advised that the 1st target group named above was not a previous target group and was only introduced for the current programme period and while early results show a fluctuation in the percentages achieved, it is expected that those fluctuations will level out and therefore a cautious milestone has been set for 2026 with greater ambition by 2028 as the category stabilizes. He noted that in relation to target group 3 above, historically, this group was reported under 2 separate headings of Unemployed and Low-Income Workers/Households and under the new programme, SICAP introduced a consolidated target group definition as it provides a clearer picture of the clients SICAP is designed to prioritise. These targets are set slightly above the long-term average to reflect the new classification and the persistently high levels of economic vulnerability that is currently evident across the County and if conditions change, they should be reviewed to ensure they remain both realistic and reflective of need. **CL** further added that if we want to be more ambitious, we require additional funding for SICAP, and this resource barrier needs to be noted. **GOB** left the meeting at 11.20 a.m. A lengthy discussion ensued and there were questions and observations from **CB, PC, MG** and **SMcG** in relation to SICAP educational support, the habits of young people nowadays and the question of what help is available to young people and those that are currently working to obtain a qualification or onto an apprenticeship programme. MG suggested that inventive thinking to overcome staff bottlenecks in industries is needed to get young people back to work. **CL** noted that educational disadvantage under SICAP is not limited to young people and support covers a wide cohort of people including adults with no education and early school leavers etc. and there is a reliance on SICAP clients to build relations and disclose their educational needs to support workers as there is sometimes a stigma attached to disclosing educational needs.

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	SWMcD advised that it is a legal requirement for young people to be in education up to the age of 16 and parents must be supported in helping to keep their children in education. She reminded the Committee that LMETB have a suite of funded programmes for young people who are challenged for many reasons, to engage in education and training. She noted that there are other alternatives to mainstream school and that there are 8 Youth Reach centres supported by LMETB and each of those are fully enrolled. There are also community training centres and local training initiatives providing education and training to children up to the age of 16 and over. She advised that there is also the "Earn as you Learn" initiative and LMETB is the largest provider of traineeship and apprenticeship programmes in the Country with over 2,200 apprenticeships awarded in 2025 alone. These apprenticeships are internationally recognised. Waiting lists for apprenticeships have been reduced and there is a national target to increase apprenticeships in Ireland. She stated that Louth and Meath also have 3 of the largest post leaving certificate colleges in Ireland. She added that from September 2025, LMETB will have more than 3,300 people engaged in further education training courses and of those 50% will go directly into employment with the other 50% going onto higher education. She stated that all these services and opportunities are available, however it takes commitment, motivation and perseverance for the qualifications to be obtained and for that student to become fully qualified and registered. **EF** and **NB** left the meeting at 11.41 The Committee agreed that barriers to achieving qualifications include excessive time spent by young people on social media, and all agreed that collectively, as parents, members of the community and also teachers, we must all continue to try and discourage children and teenagers from spending excessive amounts of their time on social media in order to remain in education, reach their potential and obtain qualifications. **CL** stated that he fully agrees with **SWMcD** regarding the abundance of training opportunities available for young people and adults in Meath and Louth, but he reminded the Committee that this initial discussion in relation to target groups relates to SICAP clients that are impacted by educational disadvantage, and these clients also have multiple needs and in some cases, complex issues that also need addressing and therefore this requires a more holistic approach in dealing with those clients. The proposed SICAP Local Priority Target Groups for 2026-2028 were agreed on the proposal of **CB** and seconded by **BL**.
7.	**Agency Updates** BH stated that there are no Agency Updates this month
8.	**A.O.B.** **SMcG** thanked all for their attendance and noted that the next meeting will take place in 3 weeks time on 12th December 2025. **The meeting concluded at 11.46 a.m.**

Signed: _____ **Date:** 12th December 2025

Chairperson