

**Minutes of Donegal Local Community Development Committee
County House, Lifford, 2pm on 29th November 2016**

Members	Seamus Neely (Chair), Martin McBride, Micheal MacGiolla Easbuig, Jim Slevin, James O Donnell, Susan McLoughlin, Susan McCauley, Paul Hannigan, PJ Hannon, Cllr Niamh Kennedy, Cllr Maire Therese Gallagher, Cllr Martin McDermott, Jan Feeinstra, Nóirín Uí Mhaoldomhnaigh
Apologies	Anne McHugh and Michael Tunney
Chief Officer	
Attending	Liam Ward, Eimear McDermott, Adrienne Kelly, Kathleen Browne, Selina Russell

Welcome

Seamus Neely chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone and thanked the members present for attending. He advised that the Chief Officer, Paddy Doherty, was not in attendance at the meeting as he had another commitment.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Draft minutes of the LCD C meeting of 20th September 2016 were proposed by Martin McBride and seconded by Jim Slevin.

2. Matters Arising

James O Donnell advised the meeting that he was unable to attend the Meeting of 20th September but he wanted to concur with the comments made by Emmett Johnston at that meeting in relation to large areas of abandoned land in the uplands throughout Co Donegal. He expressed his grave concerns in relation to the plight of farmers in the county particularly in light of the decision by the UK to leave the EU.

Seamus Neely acknowledged the many challenges faced by the farming community and concurred that Brexit brought a new dimension to this. He advised the members that a joint event between Derry and Strabane Council and Donegal County Councils would be held for people who will be effected by Brexit in An Grianan Hotel, Burt, on the 6th December 2016 from 9am – 1pm. He advised that all LCD C Members were welcome to attend.

3. SICAP

Liam Ward advised the Members that the Annual Plans for 2017 for Lot 33-1 Inishowen, Lot 33-2 Gaeltacht and Lot 33-3 Donegal along with supporting documentation had been circulated to them previously. He further advised that it was the role of the LCD C to consider these Plans and, if they were deemed to be satisfactory, to approve them in principle

Members were advised that Shauna McClenaghan on behalf of Inishowen Development Partnership and Padraic Fingleton, on behalf of Donegal Local Development Company, had attended the meeting of the LCD C SICAP Sub Committee in Letterkenny on 24th November.

The IPs had made a detailed and lengthy presentation to the Sub Committee setting out the details of the Annual Plans for 2017. Following discussion and consideration the SICAP Sub Committee were satisfied to recommend approval in principle of the 2017 Annual Plans for Lot 33-1 Inishowen, Lot 33-2 Gaeltacht and Lot 33-3 Donegal.

Seamus Neely drew the Members attention to the following proposed changes to the targets set in the Headline Indicator Reports for each Lot as follows:-

Lot 33-1

- HI 8b includes a non-caseload target of 309 increasing the combined indicators for HI 8a and HI8b to 1056 (from 747 in 2016)
- HI 11 has been creased by 10% from 95 to 85.

Lot 33-2

- KPI- 1 has been reduced by 10% (416 to 375) with
- HI 4 has been reduced by 10% (209 to 188)
- HI 8a & 8b combined are equivalent to 2016 target
- HI 9 has been reduced by 10% (208 to 187)
- HI 11 has been reduced by 10% (60 to 54)
- HI 12 has been reduced by 10% (31 to 28)

Increases have been proposed to three headline indicators:-

- HI 5 (12 to 14)
- HI 10 (13 to 14)
- HI 15 (1 to 2)

Lot 33-3

- KPI 1 has been reduced by 10% (1274 to 1146)
- HI 4 has been reduced by 10% (673 to 573)
- HI 8a & 8b combined has been reduced by 10% (1275 to 1148)
- HI 9 has been reduced by 10% (637 to 573)
- HI 11 has been reduced by 10% (183 to 165)

Increases have been proposed to three Headline Indicators

- HI 3 – 1 to 5
- HI 5 – 35 to 39
- HI10 – 46 to 51

A rationale was provided for these amendments and the amendments fall within the parameters set down for altering the targets (10%).

Members attention was also drawn to the proposed increases in the administration costs for Lots 33-2 and 33-3 as follows:-

Lot 33-2 from 24.56% to 25%

Lot 33-3 from 24.76% to 25%

Members were advised that the original Tender for both lots was 25%.

Members discussed the three Annual Plans as submitted. Clr Martin McDermott stated that Goal 3 required more funding nationally. P J Hannon advised members that the Goal 3

targets were very difficult to reach and that extra resources had been put into this area by DLDC for Lot 33-2. Susan McCauley concurred with this and stated that where no employment was available it was difficult to put people into employment.

Seamus Neely advised that with the growth in the tourism sector it was hoped that additional employment would become available. He advised that the realistic view was that these targets would be revisited in early 2017 and mitigating arguments could be put forward when seeking amendments to them.

Martin McBride advised the members that this issue had been discussed at the recent Pobal Workshop for End of Year Review in Cavan and that it was felt that it would be better if the 15-18 year old sector were targeted for training and education rather than putting them into employment. He further advised that the NEETs targets had been achieved nationally.

Paul Hannigan advised the members present that the Sub Committee had covered all of the issues arising with the P.I.s at the meeting on the 24th November and that the Sub Committee were very happy with their engagement with the P.I.s. He confirmed that the Sub Committee had no hesitation in recommending the approval in principle of the Annual Plans 2017 for Lot 33-1, 33-2 and 33-3.

Liam Ward read the recommendations to the Members and on the proposal of Clr Martin McDermott seconded by Jim Slevin the members approved the following recommendations:-

That the LCDC approve in principle the 2017 Annual Plan for Lot 33-1. It is further recommended that Programme Funding in the amount of €99530 for the period 1st January to 28th February 2017 be released to Inishowen Development Partnership.

That the LCDC approve in principle the 2017 Annual Plan for Lot 33-2. It is further recommended that programme funding in the amount of €56569.18 for the period 1st January to 28th February 2017 be released to Donegal Local Development Company.

That the LCDC approve in principle the 2017 Annual Plan for Lot 33-3. It is further recommended that Programme Funding in the amount of €172997.50 for the period 1st January to 28th February 2017 be released to Donegal Local Development Company.

4. Donegal LEADER Local Development Strategy

Liam Ward advised the members that a number of matters needed to be address in relation to Leader

a. Targeted Calls

Liam Ward informed the members that the four of the P. I's have now earmarked funding and are seeking approval to advertise a targeted call targeting the different themes -

- Economic/Enterprise Development
- Job Creation,
- Social Inclusion and Rural Environment.

He advised that under the operating rules Targeted Calls must make up 40% of the projects approved and that three of the P. I's were proposing a ceiling on the grants that could be awarded.

The measures proposed were set out to the members as follows:-

Inishowen Development Partnership - Targeted Call

	Measure	Budget	Grant Ceiling
12	Basic Services - Sustain rural, coastal & island Communities	€89,717.46	30,000.00
13	Basic Services - Inclusive Communities	€17,943.49	10,000.00
14	Basic Services - Community Space & Infrastructure	€269,152.35	150,000.00
15	Basic Services - Participation Digital Society	€8,971.75	7,000.00
16	Basic Services - Irish as Living Language	€8,971.75	7,000.00
17	Basic Services - Social Enterprise	€17,943.49	10,000.00
18	Basic Services - Environmentally Sustainable Initiatives	€125,604.44	40,000.00
	Total	€538,304.73	

Closing Date for this call - Friday 17th February 2017

(Closing date is for receipt of EOIs)

Donegal Local Development Company - Targeted Call

	Measure	Budget	Grant Ceiling
10	Rural Town - Stimulate Rural Towns & Villages	€130,000.00	€16,000.00
11	Broadband - Connected Place	€80,000.00	€10,000.00
14	Basic Services - Community Space & Infrastructure	€400,000.00	€100,000.00
15	Basic Services - Participation Digital Society	€20,000.00	€10,000.00
20	Rural Youth - Address Isolation	€250,000.00	€100,000.00
22	Protection & Sustainable Water - Coastal Protection	€30,000.00	€10,000.00
24	Protection & Sustainable Water - Improve Water Quality	€20,000.00	€10,000.00
26	Local Biodiversity - Enhance Rice Biosphere	€20,000.00	€5,000.00
	Total	€950,000.00	

Closing date for this call - 20th January 2017

(Closing date is for receipt of EOIs)

Comhar na nOileán - Targeted Call

	Measure	Budget	Grant Ceiling
10	Rural Town - Stimulate Rural Towns & Villages	€5,000.00	
14	Basic Services - Community Space & Infrastructure	€37,713.00	
15	Basic Services - Participation Digital Society	€5,000.00	
16	Basic Services-Irish as a living language	€5,000.00	
19	Basic Services - Strengthen Island Communities	€40,000.00	
20	Basic Services - Address Isolation	€10,000.00	
22	Protection & Sustainable Water - Coastal Protection	€11,509.00	
26	Local Biodiversity - Enhance Rice Biosphere	€10,000.00	
	Total	€124,222.00	

Closing date for this call - 20th January 2017

(Closing date is for receipt of EOIs)

Udaras na Gaeltachta - Targeted Call

	Measure	Budget	Grant Ceiling
10	Rural Town - Stimulate Rural Towns & Villages	€38,200.00	€15,000 - €20,000
11	Broadband - Connected Place	€19,100.00	€5,000.00

12	Basic Services - Sustain Rural, Coastal & Island Communities	€31,800.00	€20,000 - €25,000
13	Basic Services- Inclusive Communities	€50,000.00	
14	Basic Services - Community Space & Infrastructure	€50,000.00	
15	Basic Services - Participation Digital Society	€19,100.00	
16	Basic Services-Irish as a living language	€19,100.00	€5,000.00
17	Basic Services - Social Enterprise	€19,100.00	
18	Basic Services - Environmentally Sustainable Initiatives	€12,700.00	
19	Basic Services - Strengthen Island Communities	€19,100.00	
	Total	€278,200.00	

Closing date for this call - 17th February 2017
(Closing date is for receipt of EOIs)

Members discussed the proposals. Seamus Neely clarified that the proposals were drafted by the Companies in accordance with what they wanted to do and had not been set down for them. Cllr Maire Therese Gallagher sought clarification in relation to the budgets and it was confirmed that the budgets covered the two year period 2017 and 2018. It was further confirmed that the budget for targeted calls was no more than 40% of the overall budget. Cllr Gallagher also stated that good consultation with community groups would be required on this matter.

Susan McCauley sought clarification in relation to the stipulation in the Leader Application form which advised applicants that if they were in receipt of €200,000 in Government Funding during the past two years they were not eligible to apply for Leader Funding. Eimear Mc Dermott advised that she would email out the current information on the De Minimis clause to Susan Mc Cauley.

Micheal MacGiolla Easpuig queried where the figure for the grant ceiling had come from. Liam Ward confirmed that this was in the Operating Guidelines. Michael further stated that he felt it would be better if the companies could have as much flexibility as possible.

PJ Hannon advised that the grant ceiling would allow as many groups as possible to get funding. Seamus Neely confirmed that where unique circumstances arose in relation to a particular project that required funding in excess of the grant ceiling it could be looked at. Members agreed that if this occurred it was important that the LAG had the flexibility to deal with it.

On the proposal of Cllr Maire Therese Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Martin McDermott, members recommended that the Implementing Partners proceed to roll out the targeted calls as outlined in 2017.

b. Evaluation Committees

Liam Ward advised the members that there were three Evaluation Committees (DLDC, Inishowen Partnership & Údarás and Comhar na nOileán combined), with a consistent blueprint for each EC. The composition was discussed at the recent LEADER operational group meeting and proposals were received and reviewed. Committees will make recommendations to the LAG as regards the suitability of projects for funding based on objective criteria. Liam further advised that as per LEADER Operating Rules Evaluation members cannot be LAG members and that no person associated with the Implementing

Partner can be a member if an in-house project is being considered. Liam also advised that Conflict of Interest must be declared at each meeting were appropriate

A 16 member Evaluation Committee was proposed and its establishment is a function of the LAG. The proposed make up of the Committee was as follows:-

LDS Headings	Proposed Representation	Number
Rural Development	IFA/ICOS (Irish Co-Operative Organisation Society)	1
	Teagasc	1
	DAHRRGA Rep (Dept of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs)	1
Environment	An Taisce/NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife)	1
	PPN Rep	1
Rural Tourism	Faite Ireland	1
	Local Tourism, Industry Rep	1
Social Inclusion	Community Reps	2
	PPN Rep/IP Board Member	
Rural Communities	Community Reps	2
	PPN Rep/IP Board Member	
Business & Enterprise Development	Nominee of Chief Executive	1
	ISME/IBEC rep	1
Economic & Job Creation	LEO rep (where practicable)	1
	Donegal County Council Rep (Finance)	1
	Department of Social Protection Rep	1
	<i>Max of two board members per IP on Evaluation Committee</i>	16

Liam Ward advised that it was hoped to have proposed names for the January meeting, pending further discussion with the IP's. Liam Ward confirmed that the size and membership of the board was not imposed structure.

Clr Martin McDermott queried the frequency of the meetings and was advised that the meetings would be held monthly. Clr McDermott stated that the committees would be very busy initially due to the large number of applications.

The views of all the members present were sought.

Jim Slevin requested that the proposed board membership should be amended to allow four members of the IP Board to sit on the committees. He felt that it was important to have experienced people on the Evaluation Committees as they had complex situations to deal with. PJ Hannon agreed with this proposal as he felt that the members of the IP Boards would bring expertise and local knowledge of their area to the Evaluation Committee. Michael MacGiolla Easbuig also felt that there should be four members of the IP Boards on the Committee.

Seamus Neely advised the members that it was hoped that each of the 16 members would bring a level of experience and competence. It was important to ensure that the people selected come with a common set of experiences which would benefit the process.

Clr Marie Therese Gallagher felt that two IP members on a 16 person board was sufficient representation. Clr Gallagher also sought clarification in relation to the difference between

the Community Forums and PPN and whether these two bodies could be merged. The differences between the two bodies was explained and it was confirmed that it would not be possible to merge them.

Martin McBride agreed with Clr Gallagher and felt that the Evaluation Committee should be selected in a similar way to the PPN Structure which was in place to nominate representatives onto the various SPCs. He suggested that the Project Officer attend the PPN Plenary Meeting on 7th January to clarify this matter with Leader.

Susan McLaughlin stated that from a PPN perspective she was happy to accept four representatives out of a total of sixteen. Susan also queried how the representatives would be selected. Liam Ward advised that once the structure of the Boards was agreed the IPs would be contacted to agree this.

Susan McCauley was happy with the structure and felt that it was important for new people to come on board as well as those with experience.

PJ Hannon requested that ICTU be added into the proposed representation under the Business and Enterprise Development heading.

James O Donnell felt that it was important that the committee was not too big and stated that it was important that the Rural Development sector had representation on the Evaluation Committee.

Clr Niamh Kennedy requested that a representative from Donegal Tourism or the Tourism Sectoral Forum be nominated as the Tourism representative on the Committee.

It was further agreed that there would be no overlap in membership of the Committees so that no one person could sit on two different Evaluation Committees.

Paul Hannigan sought clarification on the number of Evaluation Committees. Seamus Neely confirmed that there were three. He advised that each Evaluation Committee would have the same broad approach in terms of decision making and that there would be a secretariat available to each group.

Seamus Neely proposed to forego the nominee of the Chief Executive under the Business and Enterprise Development Heading, to allow a third board member from the IP. Members confirmed that they were happy to accept this.

On the proposal of Clr Martin McDermott, seconded by P J Hannon, members to approve the composition of the Evaluation Committees as proposed.

c Expression of Interest Forms and Grant Application Forms

Liam Ward advised the members that the Department had issued draft procedures manual with appendices and forms and a working group has been set up to review the documentation.

Standard Expression of Interest Forms and Application Form and Guidelines for all IP's with individual logo and name had been drawn up. A copy of same was circulated to all members. These forms will also be made available in Irish.

On the proposal of Cllr Maire Therese Gallagher seconded by Michael MacGiolla Easbuig members to noted and approved the forms for issue.

A short discussion took place on the necessity for groups who had already made an application to have to resubmit their application on this new form. It was confirmed that they would have to fill out this form. However, assistance to do so would be provided by the Local Area Groups.

d Leader Co-Operation Project

Liam Ward advised the members that LEADER Co-operation is a specific element of the Rural Development Programme designed to encourage Local Action Groups (LAGs) to work together on a joint project which is of mutual interest to each participating area. Co-operation must involve a partnership of two or more LAGs from different areas – within Ireland or internationally - coming together to jointly deliver projects that benefit their respective local communities. It is a €10 million national fund and additional to funds already allocated.

The first tranche of €3 million was launched by Minister Humphreys' last week and it is an open call across all LEADER themes. This fund will be discussed further at LEADER operational meeting (made up of representatives of the Implementing Partners) on 8th December.

Liam Ward advised that a proposal from Inishowen Partnership has already been submitted.

He explained to the members that Inishowen Partnership have been working with Mid and East Antrim LAG on a possible heritage "Eco Museum" project exploring the heritage theme of Dalriada and Colmcille. He confirmed that an application was being made by IP to the Department under Phase 2 (Pre development funding) in the sum of €6,000. This will allow for feasibility stuffy to investigate the merit and proposal of the project and will decide if it can proceed. 100% funded

Members discussed this matter and on the proposal of Cllr Martin McDermott, seconded by Michael MacGiolla Easbuig, the LCDC approve the submission of this application to the Dept for Phase 2 (Pre Development) Funding in the sum of €6,000.

Seamus Neely thanked members for their co-operation in this matter and confirmed that further applications will follow as they are developed.

5. PEACE IV

Liam Ward updated the members on the preparation of PEACE IV Action Plan. As members were already aware the approval of the Action Plan by the Special European Union Programme Body (SEUPB) was a two stage process. The Stage 1 application was approved by the SEUPB Steering Committee at its meeting on 12th September, 2016. Donegal Co. Council were given an opportunity to submit its Stage Two application earlier, in light of the Brexit decision, to ensure that it was considered in advance of the UK Treasury Statement, thus guaranteeing the UK portion of the funding, and the LCDC approved the submission of the Peace IV Action Plan at their last meeting.

The Stage Two application was completed and submitted to the SEUPB on Friday 23rd September, 2016

Following the submission of the Peace IV Action Plan to the SEUPB, the Council have since been responding to numerous queries on a weekly basis with final clarifications submitted to SEUPB on Wednesday 23rd November. The Council would expect a decision on the Stage Two application in mid December as the Peace IV Action Plan is due to come before the SEUPB Steering Committee in early December. All clarification sought has now been dealt with and it is hoped that the letter of offer will issue in January.

6. A.O.B.

a. Pobal Regional Support Sessions for SICAP End of Year Review Process

Members noted the content of report submitted by Martin McBride on Pobal Regional Support Sessions for SICAP End of Year Review Process.

b. Revised Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Local Community Development Committee

Liam Ward informed the members that Revised Guidelines for the establishment and operation of Local Community Development Committee had been received yesterday and were being circulated to members today. He was aware that members had no opportunity to consider this in any detail. The Guidelines set out amendments and possible future amendments. The Department had sought the submission of any comments on these proposals to be submitted to them by 12pm on 2nd December.

Liam Ward requested that the Members review the revised guidelines and submit any comments they wish to send to the Department to Kathleen Browne by close of business on 1st December. Seamus Neely confirmed that a composite submission would then be sent to the Department and a copy of same forwarded to the members of the LCDC within the deadline set.

c. Retirement of Maire O Leary

Seamus Neely advised the members that LCDC Member Maire O Leary had notified Donegal County Council that she was retiring from the HSE this month. He confirmed that a new nominee had been sought from the HSE.

Seamus Neely thanked Maire for her service and contribution to the LCDC. Members agreed that a letter of thanks issue to Ms O Leary

d. Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Liam Ward confirmed that all applications, which were approved at the last LCDC Meeting, have now been approved.

Carndonagh – Inishowen MD
Ballybofey/Stranorlar – Stranorlar MD
Dungloe – Glenites MD
Ballyshannon – Donegal MD
Ramelton – Letterkenny MD

Maire Therese Gallagher advised that as part of the Budget process a lot of work had taken place at Council level to draw up a priority list Towns in each Municipal District.

She queried whether the Community Groups or implementing bodies were aware of this work.

Seamus Neely advised that the Council were drawing up a report to summarise the ongoing and planned work for the next year. He further advised that a Baseline Economic Study for the County had been agreed at the Budget Meeting.

He agreed that the Summary of ongoing and planned works would be prepared and circulated at the next LCDC Meeting.

Jim Slevin advised that DLDC were still encountering difficulties with the signing of the SLA but hoped that it would be dealt with before the next meeting. Seamus Neely confirmed that he would be happy to commit to this.

Martin McBride informed the members that the first meeting of the Letterkenny Gaeltacht Service Town Committee would be held on 1st December.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Martin McDermott advised that the Department had indicated that they wished to attend an LCDC Meeting. Seamus Neely confirmed that they had made contact in relation to this and would attend a meeting in the summer of 2017.

Liam Ward advised that the LCDC would be required to approve the SICAP End of Year Reports and agree the Committees and Standing Orders of the LEADER Groups at the next meeting.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the LCDC would be held on 7th February 2017 at 2pm in County House, Lifford.