

Donegal Local Community Development Committee – Annual Report 2021

Background

Putting People First – An Action Programme for Effective Local Government envisaged a range of reforms including an enhanced role for local government in community development. This enhanced role was provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, which included a requirement to establish a Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) in each local authority area. Donegal LCDC was established in June 2014 in accordance guidelines outlined by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. LCDC's replaced the County Development Board structure and aim to enhance the strategic planning and coordination of local and community development activity.

Key Responsibilities

LCDC's have been given a number of key responsibilities which include to:

- Prepare the community element of 6 year local economic and community plan (LECP).
- Co-ordinate all community development programmes in the local authority area such as the management and overseeing of the Local Community Development Programme and the Rural Development Programme (LEADER) and the Social Inclusion, Community Activation Programme (SICAP).
- Ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and avoid duplication of public funded programmes.
- Implement or arrange for the implementation of the community elements of the LECP and to review the community elements of the Plan at least once within its lifetime.
- Consider and adopt a statement for consideration of the Council in respect of the economic elements of a draft of the LECP.
- Administration of Community Enhancement Programme
- Administration of the Covid 19 Emergency Fund
- Administration of Social Enterprise Grant Scheme
- Administration of Healthy Ireland Programme
- Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme
- Prepare an annual report of the performance of its functions.

Composition

LCDC's are required to comprise both public and private sector members, including local authority members and officials, State agencies and private sector local and community development representatives to work in partnership to achieve its objectives. Donegal County Council provide administrative support to the LCDC and Paddy Doherty is the Chief Officer of the Committee Donegal LCDC is made up of 19 representatives as follows:

Donegal LCDC Membership at end of 2021

Name	Sector	Organisation
Cllr. Niamh Kennedy Chairperson	Local Authority, Councillor	Donegal County Council
Cllr. Martin McDermott, Vice Chairperson	Local Authority, Councillor	Donegal County Council
Michael Tunney	Local Authority Official, Local Enterprise Office	Donegal County Council
John McLaughlin	Local Authority Official, Chief Executive	Donegal County Council
Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher	Local Authority, Councillor	Donegal County Council
Paul Hannigan	State Agencies	LYIT
Anne McAteer	State Agencies	Health Service Executive
Michael Mac Giolla Easbuig	State Agencies	Udaras na Gaeltachta
Anne McHugh	State Agencies	Education Training Board
Andrew Ward	Local Development Company	Inishowen Development Partnership
Padraic Fingleton	Local Development Company	Donegal Local Development Company
Joe Boland	Social Inclusion Interest	PPN
Charlene Logue	Community Voluntary Interest	PPN
Kathleen Bonner	Community Voluntary Interest	PPN
Aengus Kennedy	Environmental Interest	PPN
Siobhan McLaughlin	Social Inclusion Interest	PPN
Liam McElhinney	Trade Union	ICTU
James O'Donnell	Farming & Agriculture	Famers Rep
Seamus Bonner	Islands interest	Comhar na nOilean

Meetings

Donegal LCDC met ten times in 2021 consisting of seven LCDC Meetings and 8 LAG Meetings. Minutes of the LCDC meetings are available on the community section of Donegal County Council's website. Meetings are held in accordance with Standing Orders established by the Committee with amendment to the Standing Orders being agreed at the March LAG meeting to allow for meetings to be held by Web Conference. Meeting dates for 2021 were also outlined on the website.

Key Achievements

Donegal LCDC has had a very busy and productive year despite the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. To date, the Committee has in accordance with requirements:

1. Review of the Local Economic & Community Plan (Monitoring & Evaluation)

Donegal LCDC continued to monitor and evaluate the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2022 through Donegal County Council's Research and Policy Unit. An agreed monitoring and evaluation framework was developed by a subgroup of the LCDC in 2017/18, whereby the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) was modified through the Information Systems Section, to provide an innovative and low cost solution for monitoring and evaluating the LECP.

Over 130 projects were captured through the system and success in delivering outputs, outcomes and impacts was determined. A substantial body of evidence and expertise now exists to support the review of the LECP which will take place in 2022.

Guidelines for the review of the LECP were received from DRCD in November 2021. The new revised guidelines build on the lessons learned from the current LECP cycle, as well as reflecting the needs of communities as we emerge from the pandemic. A new approach being taken to the process will ensure LECPs are more agile and allow for emerging needs.

The review process will roll out in 2022 and will be facilitated by a series of focussed training webinars from DRCD.

2. LEADER

Donegal LCDC delivers the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme. The LCDC also acts as the Local Action Group (LAG) working in partnership with Donegal County Council as Lead Financial Partner, and with our four implementing partners, Donegal Local Development Company, Inishowen Development Partnership, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Comhar na nOileán.

Donegal LCDC, in its role as the LAG approved the full allocation of LEADER funding awarded to the county for the 2014-2020 programme to projects recommended by the Evaluation Committees of the local Implementing Partners. The total allocation to Donegal for the 2014 - 2020 programme was €13,413,875. Project funding of €10,063,586 was received with €3,228,467 for administration and animation of the programme by our Implementing Partners. 231 projects in Donegal were approved by the Donegal LAG for the programme in period 2014-2020.

In March 2021 the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys, T.D. announced details of the €70 million Transitional LEADER Programme. €45 million funding for the Transitional LEADER Programme will come into effect from 1st April 2021 and €20 million for the EURI (European Union Recovery Instrument) Programme which will come into effect after approval is granted by the EU Commission. The Transitional Programme will run for 2021 and 2022.

Transitional LEADER Programme Allocation to Donegal LAG

Fund	Project Funding 2021 & 2022 €	Administration 2021 & 2022 €	Total 2021 & 2022 €
Transitional Programme	1,981,106	660,369	2,641,745
EURI	880,492	293,497	1,173,989
Total	2,861,598	953,866	3,815,464

3. LEADER Food and Co-operation Projects

The Minister also advised that an additional €3 million was being allocated to the €10 million Co-operation Measure Call, which came into effect for Co-operation projects approved for funding by the Department from 1st April 2021

In addition to each LAGs allocation for the 2014-2020 programme, LAGs and Implementing Partners had the opportunity to apply to the Department for funding to develop projects under the Food Initiative and to pursue projects in cooperation with partners in other parts of Ireland or across the EU under the LEADER Cooperation heading. Donegal LAG has approved 16 projects in the 2014-2020 period under these themes.

4. Community Enhancement Programme

The Community Enhancement Programme (CEP), in its fourth year in 2021, was announced in May 2021 with a national allocation of €4.5million of grant funding to be awarded towards enhancing facilities available to communities.

The 2021 Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) provided small and large grants designed to assist in the re-opening of facilities such as community centres, men's and women's sheds, parish halls and youth centres. The funding was designed to help groups and clubs get back on their feet and could be used to carry out necessary renovations and repairs or to purchase equipment such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies, training equipment and so on. The fund placed a focus on supporting groups in disadvantaged areas.

The Donegal Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) administers the Programme in the county on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. Grant funding of €159,461.00 was allocated to Donegal by the Department for the scheme in May 2021 and applications for the scheme were received until the closing date of 1st July 2021. Thirty percent of the funding was awarded as small grants of €500-€1,000 with the balance being awarded as large grants of €5,000 - €10,000.

15 large grants and 86 small grants were awarded to Community Groups throughout the County.

5. COVID 19 Emergency Fund

Following the COVID 19 Emergency Fund in 2020, an additional fund was launched by the Department of Rural and Committee Development in January 2021 with a National allocation of €1.7m. The purpose of the fund was to address two fold: –

- (1) To assist groups to adapt their services and operations to fit the new COVID-19 reality. Examples of measures supported could be adapting premises to allow for social distancing; offering on-line activities; providing social supports and friendly calls by phone etc.
- (2) To help animate community groups to enable them to become more involved in the Government's 'Keep Well' campaign. It will seek to assist their participation in the campaign, in particular with the three themes: staying connected, switching off and being creative, and minding your mood.

Donegal Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) administered this fund on behalf of the Department receiving an allocation of €68,130 to award as grants under the scheme. Applications were received until the closing date of 19th February 2021.

Following receipt and assessment of applications from eligible groups, 10 large grants (€1500 to €2300) were awarded and 79 small grants (€387- €940) to Groups throughout the county.

6. Social Enterprise Capital Grant Scheme

The Department of Rural and Community Affairs launched the Social Enterprise Capital Grant Scheme 2021 for social enterprise groups in September 2021 with a national allocation of one million euro.

The Social Enterprise Capital Grant Scheme provided small grants designed to assist with the cost of capital projects such as refurbishments, repairs or the purchase of new equipment.

Donegal Local Community Development Committee administered the scheme on behalf of the Department and received an allocation of €46,272.04 for this Scheme. Applications for grants were received until the closing date of 15th October. The applications were assessed and a recommendation for Grant Award was forwarded to the Department of Rural and Community Affairs for confirmation. Following a review, the Department issued confirmation of Grant Award in November 2020 and allocated an additional sum of €4,562 for award. This resulted in ten Social Enterprises in the County being awarded grants varying in value from €4,000 - €9,250.00.

7. Healthy Ireland – Healthy Donegal

Significant progress has been in the implementation of the Healthy Ireland Round 3 programme in Donegal with the approved budget of €374,100. The ethos of the Healthy Ireland Framework is about bringing people together from all different organisations in a national movement, all working together with one aim to have a healthier Ireland. The deadline for the delivery of the programme of works has been extended until 31st March 2022.

Healthy Ireland Action 6 Donegal Intergenerational Social Inclusion Project



Bealtaine flagship choir for 2021 Ceol le Chéile participated in a collaboration video with two other choirs, a Ceol le Chéile version of the video was also delivered and promoted locally, the video currently has 3286 views on Youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOaPiQy5Iz4&t=115s>

Healthy Ireland Community Engagement - Joint Policing Committee's Cyber Awareness



During the Joint Policing Committee's Cyber Awareness Week in October 2021, Healthy Donegal helped raise awareness of cyber bullying through the production of a Cyber Awareness Media and Broadcast Campaign. The campaign was devised by young people in Donegal and highlighted the concerns of young people, parents and the elderly. The social media campaign ran on Facebook and Instagram and the radio adverts were broadcast on all local radio stations during Cyber Awareness Week.

The videos gained great traction and had a multifaceted cross channel reach through Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and were liked and shared by Minister Frank Feighan with a following of over 8.6k, Donegal GAA with a following of over 56k, Donegal Daily online media outlet with a following of over 105k, Healthy Ireland with a following of over 10.5k, Donegal ETB with a following of over 9.2k, Cara House Family Resource Centre with a following of over 3k alongside Donegal CYPSC, Donegal Digital and numerous other GAA clubs and schools.

Healthy Ireland Community Resilience Fund - Keep Well Campaign

The Government Plan for Living with COVID-19: Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021 highlighted the important role that individual and community resilience played in contributing to our ongoing response to COVID-19. The Keep Well Campaign was aimed at showing people of all ages, in communities across Ireland, how we can mind our own physical and mental health and wellbeing by adding healthy and helpful habits to our daily and weekly routines and concluded on 30th June 2021.

Donegal LCDC and Donegal CYPSC received allocations of €67,225 and €18,519 and delivered a programme of activities under the campaign across three themes -

- Your County
- Switching Off & Being Creative
- Staying Connected

A total of 16 projects were successfully delivered, in partnership with Age Friendly Donegal, DCC Cultural Services Division, DCC Community Development Division, Donegal PPN, Inishowen Development Partnership and Donegal Local Development Company.

The Campaign was promoted over 357 posts across Healthy Donegal's four social media channels and garnered over 1.3million impressions over the six month campaign period.



Pictured above the 'Keep Well' Community Christmas Concert broadcast by Highland Radio, Ocean FM, Radio na Gaeltachta and on the Healthy Donegal YouTube channel as part of the Keep Well Campaign to a combined listenership of 93,000.

Social Media

A major benefit of social media promotion is the ability to reach and extend our audience. Alongside the webpage, Healthy Donegal is promoted by way of Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube – all of which have links to the national Healthy Ireland accounts and continually promote and include all key messages and campaigns in relation to Covid19 and other national Dept of Health campaigns.

Healthy Donegal continues to grow a strong social media following and has a combined following of approximately 3500 accounts. Over the last 3 months Healthy Donegal social media posts have had a viral reach of 905,313 people.

Feedback from Pobal

Healthy Ireland Fund

“While the impact of COVID-19 restrictions can be seen across several of your actions, it is obvious that you have responded to these challenges and continue to deliver on the programme of work. It is clear, that you are making progress in the delivery of your actions. There are a significant number of activities that need to be completed within different actions and while it is noted that once restrictions were to be lifted further delivery was planned, the extension to March 2022 will support this.”

Community Engagement

“Under the community engagement action, excellent progress is reported. There is great evidence of activities targeting different groups and encouraging them to engage in a healthy lifestyle. The Initiative of a Smoke Free Campus by the local authority is also a noteworthy project and we also encourage the sharing of this initiative on the knowledge centre.”

Community Mental Health Fund

“Under the Community Mental Health Fund, progress is evident across both actions Action 11- Woodland for Health and Action 12 - Mind over Matter. Both actions delivery plans were adapted due to Covid 19 restrictions the extension to March 2022 will allow for further/full delivery.”

8. PEACE IV Action Plan

During 2021, the €5.5million PEACE IV Action Plan for Donegal under the PEACE IV Programme has continued to deliver on agreed outputs. The Action Plan has continued to build on the positive work done in Donegal, the border region and Northern Ireland over the last two decades through the delivery of projects, interventions and initiatives that play an important role in reinforcing progress towards a more peaceful and cohesive society.

The PEACE IV Programme focuses on a range of areas where it wants to make significant and lasting changes including Children and Young People; Shared Spaces and Services; and Building Positive Relations.

In Donegal 30 projects have been delivered across these three thematic areas, 9 projects have been supported under the Children and Young People theme, with an emphasis on projects focusing on fostering good relations, citizenship, youth training, leadership, conflict mediation and personal development through a range of interventions such as sport; drama and culture.

10 projects have been supported with a budget of €2m allocated to the theme of Shared Spaces and Services with the objective being to create more cohesive society through an increased provision of shared spaces and services which has the potential to have a transformative effect on local areas. These projects include a large multi-use sports pitch, a sensory garden, 3 playgrounds, an old Abbey and support to 3 community halls including 2 Orange Halls and a shared space in Convoy.

11 projects have been supported under the Building Positive Relations theme at local level and has promoted and celebrated cultural diversity where people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance. A range of interventions have been delivered under the this theme including restorative practices, events linked to the decade of commemorations that explore history in a sensitive manner and build mutual understanding; sport, arts, culture (including Irish and Ulster Scots language) and cross border media project, and 8 small grants projects supported to help communities promote positive relations and provide much needed interventions.

9. Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme

Donegal LCDC continues to manage and oversee the implementation of the Social Inclusion, Community Activation Programme (SICAP). 2021 was the fourth year of the new five year SICAP programme, which has a budget of €2,008,917 per year across the lifetime of the programme. Two Local Community Development Companies deliver the SICAP Programme on behalf of the Donegal LCDC across the three Lots in Co Donegal as follows:-

Lot 33-1	Donegal Inishowen	Inishowen Development Partnership
Lot 33-2	Donegal Gaeltacht	Donegal Local Development CLG
Lot 33-3	Donegal	Donegal Local Development CLG

Donegal LCDC will continue to work to ensure the implementation of these plans and programmes at a local level and to ensure the effective co-ordination of funding programmes for the benefit of local communities in the county.

In July 2021 The Department of Rural and Community Development confirmed that, following consideration of a request received from ILDN Representatives to the SICAP Forum, which had been supported by both LCDC and Pobal Representatives, they had decided to extend the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP 2018-2022) funding agreements for a period of 12 months, up to 31st December 2023.

10. Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme

The Healthy Communities Initiative is an interagency plan to improve the health and wellbeing of some of the most disadvantaged areas of society. The aim of the Initiative is to identify specific areas in which high risk factors to the health and wellbeing of the population are particularly prevalent due to deprivation, with a view to implementing targeted initiatives to tackle these challenges from within these communities. This will be achieved through partnership with a range of stakeholders and through the provision of dedicated services to build sustainable improvements in the health and wellbeing of those of all ages living in these communities.

Implementation of the services will follow a set of guiding principles:

- Target areas with greatest level of disadvantage combined with highest proportion of young families and aligned to existing SICAP areas.
- Ensuring interventions are evidence informed and aligned with national and international best practice programmes and government policies.
- Coordinate planning and delivery of the interventions with Local Authorities and local Community Development Organisations.
- Leverage existing cross sector community-based assets (leadership, people, structures, infrastructure) and strengthen cross sectoral partnerships.
- Align to the HSE clinical and operational governance structure and local SICAP areas.

The Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme got underway in 2021 with the commencement of 6 projects approved under the Enhancement Funding element of the programme. 2022 will see the programme develop and grow substantially across the selected areas of the county.

Paddy Doherty
Chief Officer
Donegal Local Community Development Committee