

**Minutes of Galway City Local Community Development Committee
Meeting held on 26th February 2025 at 3.00pm
(Council Chamber and Virtually on MS Teams)**

Present:

Cllr. Helen Ogbu (Chairperson), Galway City Council
Mr. Derek Pender, Galway City Council
Ms. Linda Sice Brogan, Galway City Partnership
Ms. Elaine Harvey, Trade Union
Ms. Caroline McDonagh, Local Enterprise Office
Mr. Tommy Flaherty, Galway City Community Network / PPN
Ms. Joanne Laffey, Galway City Community Network / PPN
Ms. Lorraine Lally, Galway City Community Network / PPN

Apologies:

Ms. Sinead Morgan, Galway & Roscommon ETB
Ms. Fiona McDonagh-Delaney, Galway City Community Network / PPN
Cllr. Josie Forde, Galway City Council
Mr. Shane Touhy, Social Enterprise

In attendance:

Mr. Dermot Mahon, LCDC Chief Officer, Galway City Council
Ms. Claire Walsh, Galway City Council
Mr. Liam Kitterick, Galway City Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Helen Ogbu, Chairperson, welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted. Mr. Dermot Mahon informed the committee that Mr. Shane Tuohy has been appointed as the new member representing the Social Enterprise Sector on the LCDC.

Mr. Mahon updated members regarding recent meetings that were unable to proceed due to the lack of a quorum. He advised that he will be reviewing the current membership further and will contact members with poor attendance and alternative representatives may be sought where necessary. Mr. Tommy Flaherty informed the Committee that Galway City Community Network (GCCN) will be nominating a new representative to the LCDC at their April Plenary meeting, in place of a current GCCN representative.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Galway City LCDC meeting held on 6th November 2024

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th November 2024 were:

Proposed: Ms. Elaine Harvey

Seconded: Mr. Tommy Flaherty

And agreed by all members.

Mr. Mahon provided a brief update on the progress of the Ballybane Community Needs Analysis, following the presentation delivered at the November meeting. The report is being finalised, a copy will be requested and if available can be considered at the next meeting.

3. Local Economic & Community Plan Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 Year 1 Progress Report

Mr. Mahon provided an overview of the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) Implementation Plan 2024–2025 Year 1 Progress Report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report offers updates on actions under High-Level Goals 3 and 5.

Additionally, updates on High-Level Goal 4 actions were included, as this goal is monitored by both the LCDC and the Economic Development SPC, with actions spanning both economic and community themes. One of the primary functions of the LCDC is to monitor the implementation of the LECP. As throughout 2024, the LCDC will continue to invite key lead partners to present on the delivery of their assigned actions.

The LCDC will soon begin preparatory work for the next 2-year Implementation Plan (2026–2027), which must be agreed and the December meeting. A report will also be prepared in December 2025 upon the completion of the 2-year Implementation Plan for 2024–2025.

Members commended the thorough and detailed work done in preparing the report. A discussion followed about the importance of sharing the positive work of the LCDC, as highlighted in the report, with the public. It was agreed that efforts should be made to promote these achievements through the website, social media, and local press. Mr. Mahon advised that when press releases for funding are issued, Galway City LCDC is always referenced, but the possibility of creating a summary document for the website will be considered. He noted that this report was mainly intended as a progress update for the LCDC committee members.

Mr. Flaherty raised a query about whether an excel version of the report could be sent to members, as it would be easier to track. He also requested that the LCDC website be updated to reflect the most current minutes, agendas, etc. Both queries were addressed.

4. Draft Local Community Development Committee Annual Report 2024

Mr. Mahon provided an overview of the Draft LCDC Annual Report for 2024, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He outlined the process for approval, stating that, once agreed upon by members, the report would be forwarded for noting at the March Council meeting and then submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) for their records. The report highlights the activities undertaken throughout 2024 and details the progress of various LCDC functions and initiatives. Mr. Mahon briefly discussed some of the key elements and areas of work accomplished by the LCDC during the year.

Members expressed positive feedback on the report, noting that it effectively showcases all the positive work achieved by the LCDC throughout the year. A discussion ensued regarding the promotion of the LCDC's work to the public, with suggestions that social media videos or posts could be developed to further highlight the committee's progress. Mr. Derek Pender suggested that this idea be explored further, and that discussions could be held with the Communications team in Galway City Council.

A further discussion took place between members in relation to the Healthy Ireland Programme that is currently funded up until the end of the year. Members expressed their appreciation for the success of the Healthy Galway City Programme and the significant impact it has had in reaching the often hard to reach communities. Members emphasised the importance of continuing the programme's valuable work and the impact it would have on the community if the programme was not to continue.

Proposed: Ms. Linda Sice Borgan

Seconded: Ms. Elaine Harvey

And agreed by all members.

5. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

I. SICAP Annual Plan 2025

Ms. Linda Sice Brogan provided an overview of the SIACP 2025 Annual Plan to the members, highlighting the key areas of work for the year and outlining where resources will be primarily allocated.

A discussion took place regarding self-employment and the process of setting up new businesses. Cllr. Ogbu noted receiving inquiries from individuals, including those from new communities, who are interested in starting their own businesses but are uncertain about how to do so. Ms. Sice Brogan outlined the services provided by Galway City Partnership (GCP) to assist these individuals. Ms. Joanne Laffey informed members about the Bizmentors programme operated by SCCUL, which could also be of assistance. Ms. Caroline McDonagh shared details about the services offered by the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).

Cllr. Ogbu emphasised the importance of ensuring that the relevant information about available supports and resources is widely known and accessible. Ms. Sice Brogan agreed to take the information discussed during the meeting and work on sharing the information about the available supports to those who may benefit from them.

Proposed: Mr. Derek Pender

Seconded: Ms. Joanne Laffey

And agreed by all members.

II. Annual Performance Review of SICAP 2024

Ms. Claire Walsh delivered a report from the LCDC subcommittee meeting, which reviewed the SICAP Annual Performance Review for 2024. She outlined the key areas reviewed, including timelines, financial and non-financial information, KPIs, and the 2024 Case Study.

Ms. Walsh informed members that Pobal had completed their high-level review and found no issues that would prevent the LCDC from approving the Annual Progress Review for 2024. The SICAP subcommittee recommended that sufficient progress had been made, and they were satisfied with the performance of GCP in delivering SICAP in 2024, requesting formal approval from the LCDC.

Mr. Mahon informed the members that the SICAP programme is closely monitored and scrutinised by the LCDC, Pobal, and the DRCD through various reviews, checks, and audits. He reassured the LCDC that this process ensures the programme is being delivered effectively, with significant positive impact in the community.

Cllr. Ogbu, a member of the subcommittee that conducted the review, endorsed Ms. Walsh's report and had no objections to recommending the approval of the review by the LCDC. She also inquired whether it would be possible to arrange a visit to Galway City Partnership in the future to observe the work done through SICAP and see the projects in action.

Ms. Sice Brogan expressed her gratitude to the GCP staff involved in delivering the SICAP programme on the ground. She welcomed the opportunity for any LCDC or DRCD members to visit GCP and see firsthand the work and projects achieved through the SICAP programme.

Proposed: Ms Lorraine Lally

Seconded: Ms. Caroline McDonagh

And agreed by all members.

6. Local Enhancement Programme 2025 – Grants Approval of LCDC Subcommittee recommendations

Ms. Elaine Harvey provided an update to the members regarding the LCDC subcommittee meeting convened to review and recommend funding under the Local Enhancement Programme 2025. She referred to the comprehensive list of recommendations made by the subcommittee, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Key points discussed included the difference between the funding allocated by the DRCD and the amount requested by applicants, the high volume of applications received, and the process used to determine the recommended funding amounts. Ms. Harvey also expressed appreciation for the significant effort the staff put into preparing the reports and applications for the assessment.

Ms. Harvey then proposed that the grant amounts recommended by the subcommittee be approved by the LCDC. She reminded members that the information contained in the report is confidential and requested that members respect this confidentiality. She also reminded the members that the LCDC cannot inform successful applicants until the DRCD officially announces the successful projects and issues a press release. Mr. Pender, another member of the subcommittee, agreed with Ms. Harvey's statements.

Members raised queries regarding certain funding allocations and the process for notifying groups of their funding outcomes, which were addressed. Members discussed some challenges faced by community groups, particularly the difficulty in obtaining group bank accounts with banks and credit unions. Additionally, members suggested that unsuccessful applicants be provided with clear explanations for their unsuccessful applications and be sent the link to the recorded grant information webinar that was held to assist them in strengthening future funding applications.

The members expressed their gratitude to the subcommittee and staff for their efforts throughout the LEP and unanimously agreed that the allocated funding will have a significant impact on community groups throughout Galway City.

Proposed: Ms. Linda Sice Brogan

Seconded: Cllr. Helen Ogbu

And agreed by all members.

7. LCDC Membership and Sectoral Representation

Mr. Mahon informed members that he intended to seek approval to increase the LCDC membership from 15 to 17, a proposal that has been discussed and supported by the LCDC Chair, Cllr Helen Ogbu, who supports expanding the committee membership. He outlined the process required to facilitate this increase in line with the LCDC Regulations 2014, noting that approval from Galway City Council's Corporate Policy Group is necessary.

He also highlighted that Galway City LCDC currently has the smallest membership in the country, with 15 members, while all other LCDCs have either 17 or 19 members. The proposed expansion to 17 members would involve the addition of two new members. According to the Regulations, the two new members must be one additional elected representative and one representative from non-statutory "sectoral interests."

Currently, Galway City LCDC has two elected representatives, and the selection of the additional elected representative will be subject to the Council's decision. It is proposed that the sectoral interest to be represented may be the Civic Engagement / Volunteering sector.

A discussion followed among members regarding the membership proposal, standing orders, meeting quorum, and meeting times. The intention to seek an increase from 15 to 17 members was noted.

8. Any Other Business

Ms. Walsh provided a brief update on the various recent Galway City Council Community Funding Schemes.

Mr. Liam Kitterick informed members that the deadline for nominations for the Mayors Awards 2025 is Friday, 28th February. He encouraged members to submit nominations and share the information with their contacts.

The date for the next meeting of the LCDC was agreed for Wednesday 30th of April at 5:00pm online on MS Teams.

The meeting then concluded.