

**Minutes of Galway City Local Community Development Committee
Meeting held on 16th of July 2025 at 3pm
(In Person in Council Chamber and Virtually on MS Teams)**

Present:

Cllr. Helen Ogbu, Galway City Council
Cllr. Eibhlín Seoighthe, Galway City Council
Ms. Lorraine Lally, Galway City Community Network/PPN
Mr. Tommy Flaherty, Galway City Community Network/PPN
Ms. Linda Sice Brogan, Galway City Partnership
Ms. Sinead Morgan, Galway & Roscommon ETB
Mr. Shane Tuohy, Social Enterprise Representative
Mr. Donnacha Foley, Civic Engagement / Volunteering Rep

Apologies:

Cllr. Josie Forde, Galway City Council
Mr. Derek Pender, Galway City Council (represented by Dermot Mahon)
Ms. Caroline McDonagh, Local Enterprise Office
Ms. Fiona McDonagh-Delaney, Galway City Community Network/PPN
Ms. Joanne Laffey, Galway City Community Network/PPN
Ms. Elaine Harvey, Galway Council of Trade Unions
Mr. Laurence Gaughan, HSE

In Attendance:

Mr. Dermot Mahon, LCDCC Chief Officer, Galway City Council
Ms. Aisling Colreavy, Galway City Council
Ms. Sabina O' Connell, Galway City Council
Mr. Liam Kitterick, Galway City Council
Ms. Mags Dillon, Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce (for Item 4)

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Cllr. Helen Ogbu welcomed all and a round of introductions took place. A record of all apologies was also noted.

Ms. Aisling Colreavy informed the Committee that Ms. Tara Dawson, who had been invited to present on behalf of Galway City Partnership under Agenda Item 6, was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Ms. Dawson has sent her apologies, and her presentation will be rescheduled for the September meeting.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Galway City LCDC Meeting held on 30th April 2025

Mr. Tommy Flaherty raised a query regarding the previous meeting agenda item on the Ballybane Needs Analysis, seeking clarification on what specific actions or commitments were expected from the relevant stakeholders throughout the process. Mr. Dermot Mahon advised that he had been in communication with Mr. TJ Forde, who confirmed that the document in question remains in draft form and is currently under the responsibility of SCCUL Enterprises. Mr. Mahon noted that he will follow up with Mr. Forde to forward the relevant queries.

Ms. Linda Sice Brogan informed the Committee that the 'Start Your Own Business Supports' leaflet previously discussed is available in 8 different languages. Cllr. Ogbu requested that copies of the leaflets be circulated to all Committee members.

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30th of April 2025 were agreed by all members.

Proposed by: Mr. Tommy Flaherty **Seconded by:** Ms. Linda Sice Brogan.

3. Presentations on Link Galway and Galway Volunteer Centre

Mr. Mahon highlighted to the Committee that Mr. Shane Tuohy and Mr. Donnacha Foley have recently joined the LCDC committee. He proposed that it would be beneficial for both new members to provide a brief presentation outlining their respective services.

Mr. Tuohy introduced himself to the Committee and delivered an overview of the community initiative, Cafe Link Galway. The presentation outlined the project's objectives, the range of services it offers, and the impact it has within the local community. Mr. Tuohy informed the committee of plans to establish a Café Link in Ballybane, to be developed in partnership SCCUL Enterprises.

Cllr. Ogbu welcomed Mr. Tuohy to the Committee and thanked him for his presentation and commended the inclusivity initiatives undertaken noting its positive impact on the community. Members also expressed their appreciation for this service. Mr. Mahon advised the Committee that funding is available for the development of community cafés through the Housing Finance Agency and can be accessed via the Local Authority. Eligible applicants may apply for grants of up to €50,000 and that the application deadline is the 1st of August.

Mr. Foley introduced himself to the Committee and presented a brief history and overview of the services that Galway Volunteer Centre (GVC) provides to the communities of both Galway City and County. Cllr. Ogbu thanked Mr. Foley for his presentation and informed the Committee of her longstanding involvement with the GVC where she has served as a support worker.

Mr. Mahon requested a brief update regarding development of the proposed community hub. In response, Mr. Foley reported that Galway City Council has advertised an expression of interest for the Palas Cinema building. He noted that the GVC has expressed interest in the site with the proposed vision involving repurposing the building to provide accessible meeting and workshop spaces for community use.

Cllr. Seoighthe inquired whether following the relocation of Galway City Council to Crown Square, the existing City Council building could be made available for use by GVC. Mr. Mahon responded that he is uncertain about the availability of the current City Council building, noting it may not be accessible for a period of 5 to 10 years. However, he advised that office locations at Eyre, Square, Fairgreen, and Yeats College annex, will become available for lease following relocation. Mr. Mahon will liaise with Mr. Foley regarding these and other potential upcoming spaces within the city.

4. Inclusive Recovery City – Recovery Hub.

Cllr. Ogbu welcomed Ms. Mags Dillon, representing the Western Regional Drug & Alcohol Taskforce (WRDATF), and acknowledged Galway City Council's financial contribution of €30,000 in 2025, provided through the LCDC, to support the establishment of the Recovery Hub Project.

Ms. Dillon delivered a presentation to the Committee outlining the mission and ongoing work of WRDATF, emphasising the critical need for a dedicated Recovery Hub in Galway. She informed members that the project is now in its final stages of development and thanked Galway City Council for its continued support and commitment to the initiative.

Cllr. Ogbu informed the Committee that the Galway Volunteer Centre is willing to assist with the development of the proposed Recovery Hub. She also noted the need for a Mental Health Hub in Galway City and suggested that it could be considered in the future as part of or alongside the Recovery Hub. Cllr. Ogbu stated that she would discuss the matter further with Mr. Mahon.

Ms. Linda Sice Brogan advised that Galway City Partnership is also willing to collaborate on the initiative and believes there is potential to expand the concept. Ms. Dillion agreed with the points raised. Cllr. Ogbu thanked Ms. Dillion for her presentation.

5. SICAP 2025 – Approval of SICAP Mid-Year Review for 2025 – Mid – Year Progress Report

Mr. Liam Kitterick advised the Committee that the purpose of the mid-year review is to assess the progress of the programme delivery by GCP against what was agreed in the SICAP annual plan and budget for 2025. He stated that the mid-year review is required to be formally approved by the LCDC by the 31st of July as per guidance

received from Pobal. GCP was required to complete their submission by the 17th of June.

Galway City LCDC support staff reviewed the submitted documentation and information uploaded to the IRIS system and submitted the completed checklist to Pobal in advance of the 1 July deadline. The review related to financial checks and performance checks up to the 31st of May 2025.

Pobal subsequently conducted a high-level review and provided feedback to the LCDC on 15th of July 2025. Pobal confirmed that they are satisfied with the information and documentation submitted by Galway City Partnership and advised that there are no issues to report. They further indicated that there is nothing to prevent the LCDC from proceeding with the approval of the Mid-Year Review.

Mr. Kitterick then proceeded to refresh the Committee of the KPIs set for 2025. He stated that at this midpoint of the year the KPI 1 achievement is at 88% equating to 52 groups supported and KPI 2 achievement is at 82% equating to 395 individuals supported through SICAP. The Progress on targets exceeds expected levels for the mid-year review and are well on track for achievement by end of year.

Under KPI 2 of the SICAP 2024–2028 programme, three Local Priority Target Groups (LPTGs) were identified:

- People living in communities affected by disadvantage
- International Protection Applicants
- People living in households that are jobless, low-paid, and/or precariously employed

Of the 395 individuals supported through SICAP to date, 85.32% belong to one of the designated LPTGs. This demonstrates clear evidence of targeted engagement and progress by Galway City Partnership in addressing the needs of the selected priority groups.

Mr. Kitterick advised the Committee that an additional allocation of New Arrivals funding from the DRCDG to GCP of €20,061 in early June making the total budget €1,047,857 for 2025. He also stated that in line with Pobal guidance, administrative costs for the 5-month period under review should not exceed 12.5% of the overall annual budget. Based on the financial information submitted by GCP, administrative costs up to the end of May stand at 9.95%, which is well within the allowable threshold.

He also stated that it was noted that a minor update is required on both the Galway City Partnership and Galway City Council websites to reflect the recent change in the Department's name from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) to the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG).

Ms. Sice Brogan provided a verbal update on SICAP progress at Galway City Partnership. She reaffirmed that the programme targets have been significantly surpassed and expressed confidence that all KPI targets will be met. She also highlighted the positive impact of having adequate resources available to support

communities and individuals. Members acknowledged and commended the ongoing work and achievements.

Approval of the SICAP Mid-Year review was:

Proposed by: Cllr. Helen Ogbu **Seconded by:** Ms. Sinead Morgan.

6. LECP Implementation Plan 2026 – 2027 – process and timelines

Ms. Aisling Colreavy provided an outline of the process for the development of the LECP Implementation Plan for 2026-2027. She stated that the current Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) provides a broad strategic framework that supports the development of two-year implementation plans, allowing the flexibility to respond to emerging needs and opportunities throughout the six-year lifespan of the plan. The updated plan will outline the core actions Galway City Council and other stakeholders will undertake to help achieve its stated goals.

It is anticipated that the draft plan will be presented and agreed at the December LCDC Meeting on the 10th of December and agreed at the January Council Meeting in early 2026.

She advised that the initial consultation phase involves circulating an email to heads of section and external partners, requesting updates, removals, or additions to existing actions as necessary. An update will be provided at the LCDC meeting on the 5th of November.

7. Grants Update

Mr. Liam Kitterick provided an update on the various grant schemes administered by the Community section in Galway City Council. He began by updating the Committee on the Community Recognition Fund 2024, stating that under CRF 24 GCC was allocated €1.7 million from the DRCDG. €936,000 approved under Window 1 for eleven projects in August 2024, €291,000 under Window 2 for two projects in February 2025, €390,000 recently approved under Window 3 for six projects on the East side of the city.

The Participatory Budget is a new initiative introduced in 2025, allocating €25,000 annually for community-chosen projects. This year the initiative was based in the East side of Galway City; 32 proposals were submitted and 8 were eligible, 3 were shortlisted for public vote. The winning project was Merve Playground Upgrades, focusing on improving the accessibility and is now being delivered by the Recreation and Amenity Department. Mr. Kitterick informed the Committee the scheme will operate in the City Centre in 2026, and to the City West in 2027.

Mr. Kitterick provided an update on the Local Enhancement Programme 2025. He reported that over 130 applications were received for both capital and current funding. €121,000 in capital funding and €20,000 in current funding was allocated by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCDG). Funding has been

awarded to 91 community groups and organisations, as announced on the 13th June. All recipients have been notified, and projects must be completed with funding drawn down by the 31st of October.

Mr. Kitterick informed the Committee that the CAIRDE grant is a new initiative launched by GCC, with funding allocated from the Annual Budget. In 2025, 111 applications were submitted. Following review and approval at the June Council meeting, €565,000 was allocated to 66 successful applicants. All recipient groups have been notified of their funding allocations. Projects must be completed by the end of October 2025, with all funding to be drawn down by the end of November.

Mr. Kitterick informed members that the Local Community Festivals Scheme is an annual grant initiative designed to support community led festivals, events and cultural activities. This budget for 2025 was increased from €15,000 to €25,000. Funding was approved for 24 community groups and organisations at the June Council meeting. Each group has since been notified of their grant award, and all necessary documentation has been issued. The purpose of this funding is to provide small scale financial support to local and voluntary groups, helping them deliver community events. All funded festivals and activities must take place before the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Kitterick provided an update on the Africa Day 2025 grant. He informed members that Africa Day is a nationwide celebration held annually on May 25th, recognising the cultural richness and diversity of African communities in Ireland. This year funding of €15,000 was allocated to GCC by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support Africa Day events. Grants were awarded to 8 community groups, each of which successfully delivered their planned activities. Following the completion of the events, a report was submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Mahon informed the Committee that multiple grant opportunities are advertised throughout the year. He noted that the submission deadline for the CAIRDE grant scheme for 2026 will be advertised in late 2025 to better support community groups in managing their timelines. Additionally, he announced that Mr. Kitterick has transitioned into a new role within Galway City Council, where he will lead efforts to streamline the grants process. He will be supported by a team of Urban Community Development Officers, who will work directly with community groups to facilitate grant drawdowns.

8. AOB

No other business was discussed by the committee.

Next Meeting is to be held on the 10th of September from 3-5pm in the Council Chamber.

The Meeting Concluded.