

Minutes of Meeting: Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Date: 10th July, 2023 at 4.00pm

Location: Railway Room, County Hall, Dundalk

- In attendance:** Ms. Joan Martin Chairperson, C.E. of LCC
Cllr. Liam Reilly
Cllr. Kevin Meenan – Via Zoom
Cllr. Eileen Tully
Ms. Carol Murphy, PPN
Ms. Sadie Ward-McDermott, LMETB
Ms. Bridie Pepper, HSE
Ms. Jasmine Mathew, PPN
Ms. Alison Quail, PPN
Ms. Una McGoey, Chamber of Commerce Dundalk
Mr. John Carroll, IFA
Ms. Kayleigh Mulligan, Louth Volunteer Centre
Mr. Ciaran Reid, LLD
- Officials:** Mr. Joe McGuinness, Chief Officer
Mr. Finbar Gethins, Senior Executive Officer LCC
Ms. Sinead McVerry, Administrative Officer LCC
Ms. Miriam Roe, Senior Staff Officer LCC
Mr. Eamonn Redmond, Staff Officer LCC
- Apologies:** Cllr. Dolores Minogue
Ms. Riona McCoy, LEO
Ms. Bernardine Quinn, PPN
Mr. Steven Rice, Chamber of Commerce Drogheda
Ms. Lisa Doyle, PPN
- Guests:** Ms. Mary O' Neill, LLD
Jamie McGrath, KPMG
Cristina Bucur, KPMG
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LCDC MATTERS

LCDC Minute No. 46/2023

1. To Approve, in principle, the Louth LEADER Local Development Strategy:

Ms. Joan Martin, Chairperson, welcomed the members to this special meeting of the LCDC. The purpose of the meeting is to seek approval, in principle, of the Louth LEADER Local Development Strategy to facilitate it's submission to Pobal before 14th July.

Mr. Jamie McGrath and Ms. Cristina Bucur, KPMG, attended to give a presentation on the draft Louth LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS) and to answer any questions from the members.

Ms. Bucur advised the members that County Louth has been allocated €4.9m in funding under the LEADER Programme 2023-2027. As the first step in developing the strategy, an extensive public consultation process was undertaken, which comprised online surveys, public meetings, focus groups and written submissions.

The overarching themes of the new programme are:

- Economic Development & Job Creation
- Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion
- Sustainable Development & Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation

These themes are similar to the previous programme. However, this programme includes the addition of a number of sub themes, such as the Green Economy, Rural Infrastructure, Optimising Digital Connectivity, Climate Change Capacity Building and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

Ms. Bucur went through the three themes, their sub themes, local objectives and strategic actions, in detail.

The financial allocations by sub theme were also discussed. This shows the allocation as 40%, 40% and 20% respectively across Theme 1, 2 and 3. The rationale for this allocation was based on the previous LEADER programme, consultation insights, the experience of the Local Development Company and new era/innovation focus. The figures in Table 7.4, Implementation of the LDS Operations/Projects follows a bell curve, showing a lesser allocation in the initial years of the programme reaching a peak in the middle two years and then reducing towards the programme end.

A discussion followed with regard to the strategy. No concerns were raised with regard to the selection of sub themes or local objectives. The members were also satisfied with the rationale for the allocation of funding across the three themes of the programme.

The final element of the presentation had regard to the Administration and Animation costs. The programme guidelines dictate that the total cost for the animation and administration must not exceed 25% of the total budget allocation. The programme itself spans four years 2023-2027, however the administration and animation costs required in the strategy must include the years 2028 and 2029 in this 25%.

The members raised concern regarding the Administration and Animation costs, focusing on the additional two years, referred to as n+2. It was felt that the 25% allocation would not

be sufficient to deliver the programme across the 23-27 and the (n+2). This had been considered when drafting the strategy and Mr. Finbar Gethins read out the full text from Section 6. Financial Plan, which outlined these concerns. A section of the text stated *“Our assessment strongly indicates that the existing funding will not suffice to cover the full duration of the programme and must be supplemented”*.

After much consideration, it was unanimously agreed by the members that this text in its entirety should be removed from the document. Instead, a footnote should be included on the Administration & Animation Costs template itself, with regard to the deficit in funding.

It was also unanimously agreed, that a letter should be sent under separate cover to the DRCD, which should highlight the LCDC’s concerns with regard to this funding allocation and the hope that there will be provision of adequate funding towards the end of the project to ensure its successful conclusion.

Ms. Joan Martin, Chairperson, then called on the members to make a recommendation to approve in principle, the Louth LEADER Local Development Strategy.

On the proposal of Ms. Carol Murphy, seconded by Cllr. Eileen Tully, the Louth LEADER Local Development Strategy was approved.

LCDC Minute No. 47/2023

2. Next Meetings:

Ms. Joan Martin, Chairperson, informed members that the scheduled LCDC meeting will be held on Monday 17th July at 4pm, via Zoom.

The business of the LCDC meeting concluded

Minutes confirmed at meeting held on: 17th July 2023

Chairperson: 

