

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**FOR**  
**MEATH LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**2021**

## **1.0 Chief Officer's Statement**

LCDC's are required under Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2014 (S128B of the Local Government Act 2001) to prepare, adopt and submit an annual report to the Local Authority no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> March each year in respect of the performance of its functions in the previous year.

This report outlines progress in respect of the various LCDC functions during 2021.

Since the submission of the last report, Meath LCDC and its sub-groups had a busy and productive year which saw the continuance of the Covid-19 pandemic and having to adapt ways of working to the level of restrictions in place at the time. The LCDC meetings continued to take place remotely via the Zoom platform. Each member has continued to embrace this way of working and the committee continue to deliver on the commitments for each of the programmes.

The current Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is ongoing with Meath Partnership as the Programme Implementer. The current programme was extended by 1 year and the SICAP programme will be completed in December 2023. The actions set out in the 2021 Annual Plan were completed and significant progress was made with the relevant groups. The sub-committee continue to work constructively in its review and monitoring of the SICAP programme.

The LCDC acts as the Local Action Group (LAG) for the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in Meath. The LEADER programme has added to the already significant role played by the LCDC in the oversight of public funding to bring about the improved social, economic and community development of the County.

The 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 saw the commencement of the Transitional LEADER programme with a total budget allocation of €1,412,003 plus a EURI budget of €627,557. At the end of 2021, there were nineteen projects approved with a total committed budget of over €884,000. Claims continued to be paid out to the applicants with fifty-seven claims processed during 2021. Covid has continued to have an impact on the delivery of projects and a number of promoters sought extensions to the term for project completion, these went to a postal vote and term extensions were granted in all cases.

The LCDC managed, implemented and collaborated in relation to a number of public-funded programmes under its remit which included the Community Enhancement Programme and the Covid-19 Emergency Fund. The LCDC ensured that these schemes complied with and delivered on some of the actions in the Local Economic

and Community Plan (LECP). The Social Enterprise Capital grant scheme was also administered under the LCDC.

Progress reports have been presented to the LCDC on a regular basis on the delivery of actions in the LECP. Guidelines for the development of the new LECP were published in December 2021 and it is expected that preparation work for a new LECP will begin in earnest at the beginning of 2022.

The Meath LCDC has 19 members and during 2021 there was 1 change in membership with Tom Oxley from the Health Service Executive (HSE) filling the vacancy left by Dorothy Kerrigan's retirement at the end of 2020. Tom attended his first meeting of the LCDC in February 2021.

I would like to sincerely thank the outgoing members for their contribution to the LCDC during their tenure.

The Membership of the LCDC at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 was:

- Ms Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive, MCC
- Cllr Yemi Adenuga
- Cllr Elaine McGinty
- Cllr Mike Bray
- Ms. Paul Carroll, Dept of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
- Ms Sadie Ward McDermott, Louth / Meath Education & Training Board
- Mr. Tom Oxley, Health Service Executive
- Ms. Pádraicín Bheilbigh, Údarás na Gaeltachta
- Mr Joe English, Local Enterprise Office
- Mr Michael Ludlow, Meath Partnership
- Mr Gareth O'Brien, Community Sector
- Vacant (Community Sector)
- Ms Susuana Komolafe, Social Inclusion Sector
- Ms Anna Melnick, Social Inclusion Sector
- Mr Donna Farrell, Business Sector
- Ms Suzanne Brady, Environmental Sector (Chairperson)
- Mr Seamus McGee, Farming Sector
- Mr Noel Maguire, Trade Union Sector
- Ms Geraldine Hogarty, Youth Work Ireland Meath

During 2021 a total of 10 meetings were held. Dates of the meetings are listed below:

- 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021

- 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021
- 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021
- 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021
- 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021
- 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021
- 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (LAG Only)
- 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

As set out in the Standing Orders, the quorum for LCDC meetings is 11 and for LAG meetings is 10. All meetings that took place in 2021 met the requirement for the quorum. No meetings during 2021 had full attendance and the meeting in October (LCDC & LAG) had to be cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

I look forward to supporting the LCDC in carrying out its functions during 2022 which will see the development of a new LECP and preparation for the new LEADER programme.

**Fiona Fallon**  
**Chief Officer**

## **2.0 Progress on the Community Elements of LECP**

The LECP was prepared in a collaborative manner with the various agencies. The LCDC monitors and reviews the implementation of the LECP with the lead agencies who submit their progress updates on actions to the LCDC on a regular basis.

While acknowledging the initial successes in the implementation of the LECP it is recognised that ongoing progress requires continuous engagement between the various agencies and partners involved. As set out in 2021, of the 55 actions progressed, 6 miscellaneous actions could not be progressed due to resource issues.

Guidelines for the development of the next local economic and community plans were published by the Department of Rural and Community Development in December 2021. A number of workshops will take place in early 2022 to assist in the development of the next plan. It is expected that the next LECP will be completed and in place by the end of 2022.

## **3.0 Implementation, Management & Oversight of Public-Funded Programmes**

- **LEADER (RDP) 2014 – 2020 and Transitional LEADER Programme**

The LEADER 2014 – 2020 programme was completed in March 2021 with 100% of the budget committed at the end of 2020. The Transitional LEADER programme commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 with a total budget allocation for Meath of €2,039,559 which is comprised of €1,529,669 LEADER and EURI (European Union Recovery Instrument) project budget and €509,890 administration budget. It is expected that the next LEADER programme will commence in 2023.

At the end of 2021, there were 19 projects approved under the Transitional LEADER programme with €884,325 (58%) of the project budget committed. Fifty-eight claims were submitted by the promoters and paid during 2021. In total 72% of approved grants have been drawn down by the end of 2021. Submission of claims will be ongoing over the 12 months.

Eligible Expressions of Interest's continued to be received under the rolling calls under the Transitional Programme.

The Rural Development Programme monitoring committee met twice during 2021 - in February and October to review progress of the programme.

- **Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022**

SICAP is a national programme which aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration.

The SICAP sub committee met a number of times in 2021 to review mid-year progress, discussion on budget spend and progress for the year with the programme implementer. The targets set under Goal 1 (groups) and Goal 2 (individuals) were exceeded in 2021 with an allocated budget of €405,136. There has been very good engagement between the SICAP sub-group and the PI in raising issues that should be addressed or progressed. The main challenge during 2021 was again the Covid-19 pandemic and the adjustment to the restrictions in place at the time which forced a new way of doing things to engage with groups and individuals.

The Department of Rural and Community Development have provided additional funding for the Meath Wellness Hub which is linked to the SICAP programme. Meath Wellness Hub aims to support the culture of a modern recovery- orientated community based mental health system. It is recognised that a whole person approach and a whole society approach will ensure better outcomes for an individual. Through integrated area support services, the Wellness Hub aims to promote recovery in the community. The Wellness Hub will work with various organisations that represent and engage with the client groups that will benefit from the Hub services.

- **Funding Schemes**

A number of funding initiatives were made available to the LCDC in order to recommend funding allocations to applicant groups.

The Community Enhancement programme continued again in 2021. There was an allocation of €142,893 towards the cost of enhancing facilities or one-off reopening costs. The requirement to have 30% of the fund ring-fenced for small capital works up to a maximum of €1,000 and the rest of the fund allocated towards larger capital projects also remained in place. A total of 55 grants were awarded by the LCDC with projects to be completed by end of December 2021.

In December 2020, Meath County Council was allocated €52,730 for a second round of the Covid-19 Emergency Fund was announced to assist groups with costs that they would have incurred when taking part in the Community Call and also assisting with costs associated with getting their buildings Covid ready. During 2021, a total of 40 groups received assistance under this scheme.

This ongoing funding has been a welcome investment in the communities at a time when traditional fund-raising options were curtailed and any work that was carried out was very restricted.

#### **4.0 Joint Louth Meath Migrant Integration Strategy**

The Migrant Integration Forum continued to meet on a quarterly basis with meetings taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 11<sup>th</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

During Q3 of 2021, facilitator Bobby McCormack from Development Perspectives was appointed (following a procurement process) to assist in the development of the forum and the delivery of actions of the strategy. The next meeting of the Forum will take place on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

I look forward to working with all members of the LCDC to continue to deliver on the programmes and strategies which will ensure a better quality of life for the communities and individuals of the county.

**Suzanne Brady**  
**LCDC Chairperson**