

**Minutes of Clare Local Community Development Committee
meeting (LCDC) on Monday, 20th April 2015 at 3.30pm in the
Training Room, Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare**

In Attendance:

Cllr. Bill Chambers
Mr. Dermot Hayes
Mr. Tom Coughlan
Ms. Helen Downes
Cllr. Johnny Flynn
Mr. Gerard Dollard
Mr. Andrew Dundas
Mr. Christy Leyden
Ms. Dóirín Graham
Mr. Martin McKeown
Ms. Aobhan Haverty
Mr. Jim Lynch
Ms. Mary O'Donoghue
Cllr. Richard Nagle
Ms. Esther Connellan
Mr. Jim Lynch
Cllr. Mike McKee

Organisation:

Elected Member
Social Inclusion Interests
Chief Executive
Employers/Business
Elected Member
Chief Officer
Agricultural Farmers Sector
Community & Voluntary Interests
Clare Local Development Company
Environment Interests
Education & Training Board
Department of Social Protection
Social Inclusion Interests
Elected Member
Health Service
Department of Social Protection
Elected Member

Also Present

Ms. Monica Meehan Tourism & Community
Mr. Michael Neylon Tourism & Community

Apologies

Mr. Gerry Kelly Age Friendly Alliance Board
Mr. Cillian Murphy Community & Voluntary Interests
Ms. Margaret Slattery Youth Sector

Cllr. B. Chambers welcomed all in attendance to the meeting.

Apologies were received from G. Kelly, M. Slattery and C. Murphy.

1. Local Economic and Community Plan – socio-economic profile

G. Dollard related to the meeting that he had received correspondence from G. Kelly who requested that there needs to be a greater profile of elderly people within the draft socio-economic statements.

G. Dollard invited M. Neylon to deliver a short briefing to the members of the LCDC on the draft socio-economic profile and statements.

M. Neylon referred to the 6-page document that was circulated prior to the last meeting of the LCDC. He explained that the objectives set out for

the Local Economic and Community Plan have been set at both National and European level. He referred to the intergenerational approach to the development of the profile, the male/female breakdown and the geographic presentation of data at Municipal District level and at electoral division level. He advised that the five objectives (Education, Employment & Enterprise, Agriculture, Poverty, Research & Development) and population have been presented in the draft document. He outlined the main points under each heading and the draft socio-economic statements associated with each.

M. O'Donoghue enquired regarding the availability of data on women in employment and on various schemes. M. Neylon advised that further data has been requested from the CSO and that the data indicates that women in employment are engaged in the 'other services' sector which includes the hospitality sector.

H. Downes queried how other stakeholders will be involved in the process and who they might be and how County Clare will contribute to the R & D national targets. G. Dollard confirmed that the preparation of the socio-economic profile is the first stage in the process and that the development of targets, actions etc will be set as the process develops. He also reminded the members of the protocol for engaging with other stakeholders which was circulated prior to the previous meeting. The stakeholders include all members of the LCDC, third level institutions and other relevant organisations.

D. Hayes highlighted that a lot has changed since the 2011 census. M. Neylon indicated that in terms of the profile that the dynamics of economic performance, quality of employment etc do not change and in that regard the 2011 data is reliable.

C. Leyden referred to the poverty figures as presented and expressed concern at the increase in poverty levels. He also made mention of the renewable energy target. M. Neylon indicated that the target for renewable energy will be difficult to achieve.

G. Dollard advised the meeting that the draft document will go before the Economic & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee for their approval. The data will be regularly updated and made available on the council's website to assist in the public consultation phase. The draft consultation document will also be circulated to the members of the LCDC.

The draft document as circulated was proposed by Dermot Hayes and seconded by Helen Downes and agreed.

2. Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 Guidance on LEADER Local Development Strategy Selection Process; Stage 1: Local Action Group Expression of Interest

G. Dollard referred to the previous meeting and the matter of the submission of the Expression of Interest by the LCDC for the Leader Programme. He confirmed that those unable to attend had been requested to submit any observation on the agenda items. Both G. Kelly and C. Murphy provided a written account of their views on the Expression of Interest process and both concluded that the LCDC should submit an Expression of Interest. Both items of correspondence were made available to the meeting.

G. Dollard also advised the meeting that his letter to the Department and the response from D. Enright has been circulated to all members. He advised that D. Graham indicated at the last meeting that CLDC had decided to submit an Expression of Interest. The CLDC is not willing to subscribe to the preferred model as suggested by the Department which is for the LCDC to be the Local Action Group and for the LDC to be the Implementing body.

D. Graham raised the question of whether or not the LCDC was obliged to submit an Expression of Interest and queried if it was a legal requirement. She also made reference to the Local Government Act 2014 and the functions of the LCDC as set out in the Act and also the resolutions of Council. She indicated that the Act states that the LCDC 'should have regard to Government Policy' and that it was clear that the LCDC can make its own decisions. She referred to the revised implementation framework for the Leader Programme and related to the meeting that it sets out what is required of the LCDC including the fact that the financial and administration roles would be undertaken by the Local Authority and therefore removed from the Local Development Company. She highlighted that with regard to the LDC that there would be funding cuts and job losses if the current model proceeds. She concluded by saying that CLDC would much prefer to work together rather than being forced to compete. She requested that the CLDC be allowed to be the Local Action Group as she felt it would be a better outcome.

M. O'Donoghue requested clarification on where the LCDC stands and also queried what the role of each member is with regard to the management of the Leader Programme. She also requested clarification on the role of the LCDC in terms of social inclusion.

T. Coughlan clarified that the people who make the decisions are those who are elected by the people. He also clarified that it was clear from Donal Enright's letter that government policy should be followed and therefore that the LCDC must make an Expression of Interest. He confirmed that he would be concerned if government policy was not followed.

H. Downes referred to the circular which was distributed at an earlier meeting confirming that the LCDC is indemnified and therefore the legal issue is dealt with.

D. Hayes asked if the two parties had met since the last meeting. He advised that while he knew the track record of CLDC, he doesn't know what the LCDC plan is and therefore that is a dilemma for him.

A. Haverty confirmed that she has consulted internally with her own organisation and recognised that we are all operating in a changed environment. She informed the meeting that the LCETB supports the submission of an Expression of Interest.

H. Downes also confirmed that in her opinion an Expression of Interest should be submitted by the LCDC.

Cllr. M. McKee advised that he had grave concerns over this matter and queried if this decision needed to go back to the full Council.

C. Leyden was of the view that the LCDC needs to become the Local Action Group and that CLDC be the implementing body.

G. Dollard responded to all the matters raised. He confirmed that with regard to the legal implications, that an indemnity exists and therefore this is not an issue. He clarified that the role of the LCDC would be no different to the role of the board of CLDC. The LCDC would not be involved in the day to day management issues and staffing. He also informed the meeting that he had been a board member of CLDC and that the relationship between the Local Authority and CLDC has always been an excellent one.

With regard to the Local Development Strategy he advised that neither the CLDC nor the LCDC can say at this stage what the strategy/plan is as there is a process to follow with regard to its preparation.

The preferred model is that the LCDC would be the Local Action Group and that the LDC would be the implementing body. He advised that there is an opportunity now for the LCDC to be part of the process.

He confirmed that currently the skill set is in CLDC. If the preferred model is not going to be agreed, then the skill set is also available in the Council.

M. O'Donoghue expressed concern regarding the independence of the LCDC and made reference to the Local Authority applying for this programme through the LCDC. She has no faith in the process.

As a consensus was not reached, the Chairman indicated that the Committee needed to move towards a decision. G. Dollard requested D. Graham to step out of the meeting prior to any vote being taken.

M' O'Donoghue advised that she was not clear on the process.

G. Dollard informed the meeting that, prior to any vote, there has to be a majority membership in favour of the non state sector and that due to the numbers in attendance, three people from the state/local authority side will be asked to step out.

B. Chambers appealed for a consensus.

Cllr J. Flynn related to the meeting his experience of the application process and also advised that local authority staff have participated on evaluation committees of CLDC in the past. He also confirmed that he was of the view that the LCDC should make an Expression of Interest.

C. Leyden asked if the LCDC can formally request CLDC to work with the LCDC at this stage so that the LCDC submits the Expression of Interest. He proposed that the LCDC would submit the Expression of Interest but that negotiations would then take place with the CLDC.

A. Dundas requested that a solution be worked out now.

G. Dollard advised the meeting that CLDC cannot be forced to work with the LCDC.

Cllr. R. Nagle said that a decision needs to be made at this stage and that there will have to be engagement.

M. O'Donoghue confirmed that she was not abstaining from the decision and she is not in agreement with the proposal. She proposed that the LCDC would not submit an Expression of Interest and this was seconded by D. Hayes.

G. Dollard advised the meeting that he would now put the names into a box and three names would be drawn out by the Chairman. The following

names were drawn; Cllr. M. McKee, A. Haverty, J. Lynch and they left the meeting.

T. Coughlan proposed and Helen Downes seconded that the LCDC would submit an Expression of Interest for the LEADER Programme.

G. Dollard confirmed that each person present would be requested to indicate 'yes' or 'no' to the proposal that the LCDC submit an Expression of Interest for the Leader Programme. He advised that he would call member's names in alphabetical order. The following is the result.

Cllr. B. Chambers	Yes
E. Connellan	Yes
T. Coughlan	Yes
H. Downes	Yes
A. Dundas	Yes
Cllr. J. Flynn	Yes
D. Hayes	No
C. Leyden	Yes
M. McKeown	Yes
Cllr. R. Nagle	Yes
M. O'Donoghue	No

G. Dollard confirmed that there were nine for and 2 against and therefore the LCDC will be submitting an Expression of Interest for the Leader Programme.

3. Agree time of meetings and schedules

G. Dollard advised the meeting that the schedule was not yet prepared and would be an item on the agenda for the next meeting.

With no other business the meeting concluded.

Signed: _____

Chair

Chief Officer