

23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016

**To: The Cathaoirleach & Members of Westmeath County Council**

## **Westmeath Local Community Development Committee**

### **Annual Report 2015**

#### **Background**

The Local Government Act 2001 S.128B(1)(i) requires the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) 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 and its functions in the previous year. This report has been prepared in respect of Westmeath LCDC for the year 2015 for the consideration of Westmeath County Council.

#### **Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)**

The LCDC is a committee of the Council and its primary role is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The Westmeath LCDC was initially established in June 2014 and in 2015 the committee met 6 times.

This membership comprises of a range of statutory and non-statutory socio-economic partners drawn from the Councils administrative area. The LCDC membership is constituted so as to ensure an appropriate representational balance between public and private interests, while also facilitating an appropriate mix across the broad range of actors across the county. The Membership of Westmeath LCDC at the end of 2015 was:

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Statutory Agency</b>	WCC Elected Member	Cllr Tom Farrell
	WCC Elected Member	Cllr Aengus O'Rourke
	WCC Elected Member	Cllr. Avril Whitney
	WCC Chief Executive	Pat Gallagher
	WCC Head of Local Enterprise	Christine Charlton
	Dept of Social Protection	Des Henry
	Education and Training Board	Christy Duffy

	Health Services Executive	Joe Whelan
Non Statutory Sector		
	PPN Community & Voluntary	Des Sheridan
	PPN Community & Voluntary	Bob Morrison
	PPN Social Inclusion	Hugh Maguire
	PPN Social Inclusion	Joyce Furlong
	PPN Environment	Dave Raftis
	Westmeath Community Development Ltd.	Joe Potter
	Farming / Agriculture	Paddy Donnelly
	Business / Employers	Denis Hogan
	Trade Union	Denis Rohan

The work of the committee is supported by Chief Officer, Hugh O Reilly SEO, Community Development.

In 2015 the primary work of the LCDC has been in advancing the following initiatives:

1. The Community Element of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021.
2. The Local Development Strategy (LEADER) 2014-2020.
3. Completed the procurement of a Programme Implementer for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).
4. Monitored the implementation of the SICAP programme.

### **Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**

In 2015 the Westmeath Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 was prepared and approved. The purpose of the plan is to identify and implement actions to strengthen and develop the economic and community dimensions of the county. The preparation of the Community Element was undertaken by the LCDC with the Economic Enterprise and Tourism SPC overseeing the economic element. This single, integrated economic and community plan will provide the basis for a more coherent, streamlined and co-ordinated approach to service planning and delivery locally.

A LECP Steering Group representing the LCDC and the SPC was established to oversee the process of preparing the plan. The members of the LECP Steering Group were:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
David Hogan DOS Community Development	Westmeath County Council
Barry Kehoe DOS Economic Development	Westmeath County Council
Christine Charlton	Local Enterprise Office WCC
Terry McCague, Senior Planner	Westmeath County Council
Hugh O'Reilly, Chief Officer	Westmeath County Council
Joe Potter	Westmeath Community Development
Bob Morrison	Public Participation Network
Dave Raftis	Public Participation Network
Maria Fox	Longford Westmeath Education Training Board

Secretariat support was provided by Anne Galvin, Administrative Officer, Community Development Section.

The preparation of the plan involved the following work;

- Initial Consultation process
- Preparation of a Framework Statement
- Compile of a socio-economic profile of the county
- Review of relevant high level strategies and plans
- SEA Screening
- Public Consultation
- Finalisation of the LECP Plan

The Westmeath LECP 2016-2020 was considered and approved by Athlone and Mullingar Municipal Districts, the Economic, Enterprise and Tourism SPC, Westmeath LCDC, the East and Midland Regional Assembly and adopted by Westmeath County Council in December 2015.

## **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme**

The procurement process for the new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in early 2015 resulted in the appointment of Westmeath Community Development Ltd as the programme implementers. This contract for implementation of SICAP commenced in April 2015 and will run for 33 months with a budget in the region of €750,000 per annum.


The primary aim of SICAP is to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations, public sector agencies and other stakeholders

The LCDC monitor the implementation of SICAP in accordance with the terms of the contract and undertook a mid-year review of the implementation of SICAP.

## **Rural Development Programme (LEADER)**

At the beginning of 2015, the DECLG announced a public call for expressions of interest from suitably qualified Local Action Groups for the new LEADER Programme 2014-2020. The funding announced for the new programme for County Westmeath over the life of the programme is €7,384,206. Westmeath LCDC submitted an Expression of Interest and were successfully appointed as the Local Action Group for the new LEADER programme 2014-2020 in Westmeath with Westmeath Community Development Ltd. as the lead implementation partner.

Westmeath LCDC, in association with Westmeath Community Development Ltd, prepared a draft Local Development Strategy (LDS) which was approved and submitted to the Department of Environment Community and Local Government. This LDS will serve as the funding application for LEADER programme for Westmeath with the objective of commencing implementation in early 2016.

  
Pat Gallagher  
Chairman  
Westmeath LCDC