



26th March 2024

To/ The Mayor, Príomh Chomhairleoir and Each Member of Limerick City and County Council

Local Community Development Committee –Annual Report 2024

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A Chomhairleoir, a chara,

In accordance with the requirements of Chapter 2 Section 128B(1)(i) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 please find herewith the Annual Report on the activities of the Limerick Local Community Development Committee for the year ending 31st December 2024.

Is mise le meas,

Seamus O'Connor
LCDC Chief Officer
Rural, Community and Culture Development Directorate

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE LIMERICK LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE (LCDC) FOR YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2024

Introduction

This document constitutes the Annual Report for the Limerick Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) for the year ended 31st December 2024. The report has been prepared in the context of Chapter 2 Section 128 B(1)(i) of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, which states that one of the functions of a Local Community Development Committee is: "not later than 31 March in each year, to prepare, adopt and submit to the local authority a report in relation to the performance of its functions during the year immediately preceding the year in which the report is submitted".

Background Legislation

Section 49A of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, provides for the establishment of Local Community Development Committees for the purposes of:

- Developing, co-ordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.
- To prepare the community elements of a 6-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).
- To implement, or arrange for the implementation of, the community elements of the Plan.
- To review the community elements of the Plan at least once within the period of 6 calendar years and, if necessary, to amend the community elements of the Plan.
- To monitor on an on-going basis the implementation of the community elements of the Plan and, if appropriate, to revise the actions and strategies set to achieve the objectives of the community elements of the Plan.
- To coordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of local and community development programmes that have been approved either by the relevant local authority or by agreement between the LCDC and a relevant public authority (e.g. government department, State agency etc.).
- To improve the coordination of public-funded local and community development programmes and reduce duplication.
- In addition to public-funded programmes, to coordinate generally the local and community development programmes within the operational area of the LCDC.
- to consider a draft of the economic elements of the Plan and adopt a statement for consideration of the Council in this regard, and
- To prepare an annual report on the performance of its functions.

LCDC Membership

The Limerick LCDC was established in July 2014 and has 19 members, which includes representatives from the statutory ("public") and non-statutory ("private") sectors drawn from the Limerick City and County Council administrative area. The tenure for sitting on the LCDC expired for a number of members in 2024 and this saw new members being appointed to the LCDC during the year. Members are listed as at the date of this report. Following the Local Elections and the Directly Elected Mayor Election in Limerick in June 2024 a number of new members were appointed to LCDC. There is provision in the Local Government (Mayor of Limerick) and Miscellaneous Act 2024 for the Directly Elected Mayor to be a member of the Committee.

In accordance with Section 128A of the Local Government Act 2001, as inserted by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Director General of Limerick City and County Council has designated a person to act as "Chief Officer" of the LCDC: Mr Seamus O'Connor.

Councillor (Chairperson)	Stephen Keary	Limerick City & County Council
James Prior (Vice Chairperson)		Public Participation Network
Mayor John Moran		Limerick City & County Council
Councillor PJ Carey		Limerick City & County Council
Councillor Greg Conway		Limerick City & County Council
Councillor Joe Pond		Limerick City & County Council
Jennifer Moroney Ward		PAUL Partnership Limerick
Shay Riordan		West Limerick Resources
Pádraig Casey		Ballyhoura Development CLG
Linda Ledger		Public Participation Network
David Tobin		Public Participation Network
Maurice O'Connell		Public Participation Network
Mary McGrath		Public Participation Network
George O'Callaghan		Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
Fiona Casey		Department of Social Protection
Niamh Wallace		Health Service Executive
Vacant		Limerick Chamber of Commerce
Barry Murphy		Agricultural Sector
Richie Bowens		Foroige

Meetings and other supports are provided to the Limerick LCDC by Rural, Culture, Community and Tourism Development Directorate.

Achievements and Progress 2024

The members of Limerick LCDC continued to work together as partners for the betterment of developing sustainable communities for Limerick. This involved planning, delivering and evaluating interventions, and the policies, underpinning those interventions, for the good of individuals and communities. The members met 11 times in 2024 facilitating in person and blended meetings allowing members being able to attend in person or join online. This ensured the committee was very active in the performance of its functions

In January 2024, following an extensive procurement process a new contract for the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme in Limerick for the period 2024-2028 was signed between the DRCD and the LCDC, Limerick City and County Council and the three Implementing partners, Ballyhoura CLG, PAUL Partnership and West Limerick Resources. The LCDC oversaw, and made decisions, when required in relation to the SICAP during the year.

The LCDC in partnership with West Limerick Resources and the Council will deliver the new were successful in its bid to deliver the EU LEADER Programme 2023-2027 in Limerick. The LCDC oversaw the completion of the previous LEADER Programme which was successful in the delivery of various supports and capital projects across rural Limerick over the period of the last Programme.

In addition to the LCDC meetings, subgroup meetings also took place in relation to the SICAP annual performance review and preparation of the 2024 Annual Plans for the SICAP Programme, LEADER Programme and operational matters, Health and Wellbeing and evaluation committees for funding under the Community Enhancement Programme – Local Enhancement Programme.

Key Strategies

The LCDC, in the delivery of its functions, has full regard to all relevant statutory requirements and in particular the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) which was adopted by the Council in May 2024 and the Local Development Strategy for Rural Development (LDS). The objectives and agreed actions contained in above plans are critical to the operation and outcomes of the LCDC to ensure consistency and coordination of all LCDC actions.

The LECP is a statutory plan and the goals and objectives of the LECP must be consistent with higher level national and regional statutory plans – the National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 and the Regional Economic and Spatial Plan for the Southern Region (2021) - and with the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028. The LECP has two main elements – a Community Plan and an Economic Plan with the Community Plan led by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Economic Plan led by the Economic Strategic Policy Committee. An Advisory Steering Group was also established to oversee the development and implementation of the LECP.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028 provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion at a local level through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

The LCDC oversaw the delivery of the SICAP programme and approved payments to the three Local Development Companies contracted to deliver the programme in Limerick – PAUL Partnership in the city /urban Limerick, West Limerick Resources in West Limerick and Ballyhoura Development in East Limerick.

The programme budget in 2024 was €3,011,976.28. Social inclusion actions under SICAP are delivered under two goals:

Goal One: Supporting local community groups

Goal Two: Supporting individuals in or at risk of social exclusion to identify and take steps to improve quality of life and well-being and access lifelong learning opportunities.

The annual performance completed by SICAP Sub-committee of the LCDC saw engagement with the LDCs and Pobal. The overall performance was of a high level of performance across all Lots in most areas including grant compliance, communication & visibility and good level of data quality. The Case Studies 'Creating Community', 'Integration through sport; and 'Building the capacity of young people for active participation in society' were of excellent quality and illustrate the high impact SICAP has on communities. The strategic collaboration was key with well connected services strengthening networks (youth, travellers, migrants) There was very positive feedback from participants in the case studies whilst integrating new communities and involving them in planning and decision making processes.

EU LEADER Programme 2023-2027

The delivery of the EU LEADER Programme advanced in 2024 and applications from various community and specific interest groups were evaluated and considered. Limerick City & Council as Financial Partner continued to manage the EU LEADER audit checks (Article 48 audit checks) on projects and the LCDC support staff successfully managed the payment of claims to project promoters in this regard. The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), as the Local Action Group (LAG) for the LEADER Programme completed the full allocation of the 2014-2022 LEADER Programme Budget. In 2024, the LCDC approved 13 Projects to the value of €351,849.74 and saw the completion of the programme with a budget of €14,842,349.85 to support the delivery of a wide range of projects across the themes and subthemes of the Local Development Strategy.

In 2024 the LCDC oversaw the preparation of and commencement of the new LEADER Programme across rural Limerick. The overall budget allocated is €6.97834 million and there has been 1 call with a budget of €3,622,500 in October 2024. These projects will more than likely begin to come for approval to the LCDC in 2025.

Health and Wellbeing Programmes

The LCDC oversees the delivery of Healthy Limerick. Healthy Limerick was successful in its submission under the Healthy Ireland Fund for the period 2023 – 2025. Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in

Ireland. The Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025 provides a roadmap towards good health, access to services, healthy environments and the promotion of resilience in a manner that leaves no one behind. A number of initiatives were delivered in 2024 including Relaunch of the Not Around Us Campaign, Migrant Health and Wellbeing, Healthy Ireland Ukrainian Refugee Fund, Limerick Food Partnership (LFP), Social Health & Education Project (SHEP) and Limerick Sports Partnership Collaboration.

Other Programmes

Local Enhancement Programme

In 2024 €228,687 saw 103 groups funded to support small community groups and organisations. This funding is to support local community groups and clubs with small capital projects and to assist with equipment needs. In late 2024 a new LEP was announced to provide support for capital and current funding to support community groups across Limerick. An allocation of €278,644 was allocated with approximately 220 applying for this funding with priority to be given to Youth, Disability and Community Graveyard Groups. These are to be considered by the LCDC members in 2025.

Conclusion

The active participation of the members of the Local Community Development Committee during 2024 continues to build on the commitment and effort of former members who are passionate about developing Limerick. This year the LCDC delivered across all the key programmes and the targets and deadlines set out at the beginning of the year were achieved. The oversight and monitoring of the SICAP Programme in response to challenging times illustrates the important role SICAP plays across the county. Any funding approvals made by the members of the LCDC are notified to the Elected Members of the Council by 15:00 hrs the day after an LCDC meeting. As agreed previously the agenda of the meeting is notified to Elected Members of the Full Council in advance of the meeting.

The engagement of the Committee, at both local and national level, continues to yield many positive outcomes and the members are committed to continuing this for the betterment of all citizens and communities in Limerick. The implementation of the LECP 2023-2028 is underway along with the delivery of the new LEADER Programme 2023-2027 for Limerick. The Chairman acknowledges the commitment to date of all members, and particularly those who contribute on a voluntary basis and looks forward to building on the achievements to date.

Cllr Stephen Keary
LCDC Chairperson

Seamus O'Connor
LCDC Chief Officer