

***Minutes of Galway City Local Community Development Committee
Meeting held on 21st July 2021 at 3.00pm (MS Teams)***

Present:

Mr. Brian Barrett, Galway City Council
Cllr. Owen Hanley, Galway City Council
Cllr. Martina O'Connor, Galway City Council
Ms. Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha, Galway Roscommon ETB
Mr. Declan Brassil, Galway City Partnership
Mr. James Coyne, Galway City Community Network
Ms. Lorraine Grimes, Galway City Community Network
Mr. Niall Ó Brolcháin, Galway City Community Network
Ms. Breda Fox, Local Enterprise Office
Ms. Regina Higgins, Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
Ms. Anne O' Neill, Health Service Executive West

Apologies:

Ms. Elaine Harvey, Chairperson, Trade Union
Ms. Maria Molloy, Galway City Community Network
Mr. Frank Greene, Galway Chamber

In attendance:

Ms. Caitriona Morgan, LCDDC Chief Officer, Galway City Council
Ms. Theresa Donohue, Galway City Council
Ms. Angela Breslin, Galway City Council
Ms. Orlaith Lawless, Galway City Council
Ms. Helena Martyn, Galway City Council
Ms. Aishling Jennings, Healthy Galway City Co-Ordinator

1. Welcome and Introductions

As apologies had been received for the meeting from Ms. Elaine Harvey, Chairperson, Cllr. Martina O'Connor as Vice Chairperson welcomed all members to the meeting and apologies were noted for the meeting as per above. Cllr. Martina O'Connor advised members that the Galway City Community Network (GCCN) had been contacted seeking a replacement representative onto the LCDDC, noting that this appointment was taking place at the GCCN plenary meeting later on this evening.

2. Confirmation of the minutes of the Galway City LCDDC meeting held on 21st April 2021

In terms of matters arising Ms. Lorraine Grimes advised that she had requested that the LECP progress report would issue to all members of the LCDDC in advance of the meeting. Mr. Niall Ó Brolcháin enquired if there was any update on the Galway City Local Digital Strategy, noting the importance of Galway City Council considering and adopting this. Mr. Brian Barrett advised that this was included on the agenda for consideration at previous Council meetings however due to time constraints had not been taken. He further advised that this will be included on the agenda for the September Council meeting.

The minutes of the Meeting held on 21st April 2021 were:

Proposed: Cllr. Owen Hanley

Seconded: Mr. Niall Ó Brolcháin

And agreed by all members.

3. Implementation Plan for Galway City LECP 2020-2021

(i) Flagship 8 - Implement an action plan on homelessness and housing insecurity in the City

Ms. Helena Martyn, Galway City Council presented to members on the Galway City Homelessness action plan, which circulated to members after the meeting. She outlined the background to homeless services in Galway City which included the current situation and challenges. In terms of service provision Ms. Martyn highlighted the range and number of support services and accommodation types in place, noting the interagency and partnership response in place as required, including the HSE and other relevant statutory and voluntary bodies operating in the area. She also referred to the West Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2020 – 2022 which sets out a strategic framework for the delivery of homeless services at a regional level with Galway City Council the designated lead local authority on this for the region. Finally Ms. Martyn highlighted some future responses which included Housing First; Housing for All and Homeless HAP amongst others.

Following a number of questions and comments raised by members, Ms. Martyn advised that the Housing First service / approach was piloted in partnership with the HSE Community Mental Health Team for homeless people with Galway Simon in partnership with COPE Galway delivering the tenancy sustainment service under this project, now in its third year. The Modular family hub at Westside was completed in April 2020 and over the past year, 14 families have progressed from the Modular family hub into more secure housing solutions. In relation to Airbnb and impact it is having on the housing rental market she noted that this is a matter for the Planning Department to enforce. Finally she advised that the West Regional Homelessness Action Plan is the interagency framework for the administrative areas of Galway City and Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

(ii) Seed 3 - Map the strategies and initiatives in place to enhance educational transitions for disadvantaged groups and establish the further actions required

Ms. Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha presented to members a summary of the work collated in relation to the above. This included detail on a number and range of programmes / initiatives that are currently in place for a number and range of target groups. The summary included programmes / initiatives being delivered by GRETB in addition to those being delivered by Galway City Partnership; GMIT; NUI Galway Access Programme; Equal Ireland amongst others. She noted in relation to the action that the first step was to map the current provision and see what improvements are needed or where gaps are emerging, noting after school supports and homework supports for disadvantaged families was an emerging need in addition to access to third level courses. In relation to the outcomes of the mapping exercise being integrated into relevant public policies and plans, Ms. Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha advised that GRETB will put in place measures to address these gaps in their own plans, and linkages and ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders will continue as needed.

Ms. Theresa Donohue advised members that all updates had been received from the lead partners on the LECP Implementation Plan and responses were collated and summarised in the LECP progress report which circulated last week. The progress report will be updated on a quarterly basis as work across the range of actions develop. Finally she advised that we are still waiting on guidelines from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) on the next iteration of the LECP and will keep the LCDC updated on this in due course.

4. SICAP 2021

(i) Approval of SICAP Mid-Year Review 2021 – Mid-Year Progress Report (May 2021) & Guidance document attached

Ms. Caitriona Morgan advised members that communication had been received from Pobal since the last meeting to assist the LCDC on the process to be followed in relation to the above. She noted the timelines and steps followed as circulated in the guidance, with reference to the SICAP Mid-Year Progress Report 2021 which was circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr. Declan Brassil highlighted some of the key points as outlined in this report, including challenges in addition to the level of achievement to date. At this stage and in line with conflict of interest in relation to this item, Ms. Caitriona Morgan asked members to declare this,

noting that Mr. Declan Brassil and Ms. Lorraine Grimes confirmed this and agreed to abstain from any further discussion on this item.

Ms. Breda Fox, on behalf of the LCDC SICAP Subgroup briefed members on progress to date, noting that herself and Cllr. Martina O'Connor as members of the subgroup met online on Wednesday 28th June 2021 to carry out the mid-year review and complete the checklist as required. She advised members on the financial and non-financial reports that were examined in detail, with checks completed as required. She noted in particular the achievement of targets, with expected targets achieved by the end of May 2021 in KPI 1 1 (Supporting Groups) at 51% and exceeded in KPI 2 (Supporting Individuals) at 83.93%, with the percentage from disadvantaged communities also ahead of target at 26.68%. The mid-year review also showed compliance with budget parameters and programme requirements. It was noted by the subgroup that some areas had a low level of spend which was queried and responded to satisfactorily by Galway City Partnership. Finally the feedback received from Pobal following their high level review was noted. Overall and in line with Galway City Partnership demonstrating good progress against agreed actions, the LCDC SICAP Subgroup recommended the approval of the SICAP Mid-Year Review 2021, as follows:

Proposed: Mr. Brian Barrett

Seconded: Mr. James Coyne

And agreed by all members.

(ii) LCDC SICAP Subgroup - Appointment of One (1) member

Ms. Caitriona Morgan advised that since the last meeting of the LCDC she had received communication from Mr. James Coyne advising that he had to step down from this subgroup due to work commitments. She reminded members that there are currently two members on this subgroup, Ms. Breda Fox and Cllr. Martina O'Connor, noting the role and purpose of the subgroup in line with the annual planning requirement for SICAP and the associated timelines as set out by Pobal. She sought a nominee from members, however as no member expressed an interest at the meeting, she noted that this would be revisited at a future meeting.

(iii) SICAP 2021 Case Study Guide

Ms. Caitriona Morgan introduced this item, in line with the Case Study guidance as circulated to members. She reminded the LCDC on the purposes of the SICAP case study and how they will be used as part of the wider monitoring and evaluation of the SICAP programme. She noted that the specific themes for the case study remain unchanged and that the focus should be on deepening the analysis under each of the themes as outlined in the guidance:

1. Engagement Strategies with SICAP Target Groups/Communities
2. Collaboration
3. Goal One or Two Projects

As a follow up to an initial discussion on this, Mr. Declan Brassil spoke about engagement strategies with SICAP Target Groups/Communities, with a focus / highlight on a specific action targeting older people (as our agreed emerging needs group). He noted that the case study will show a response to an identified lack of access to, and ability to use, technology during the COVID-19 lockdown and the collaborative nature of the response. He further noted that a mix of written and video will be used to present the case study. Ms. Caitriona Morgan advised that the Pobal guidance document should be followed and the deadline for submitting the case study was Friday, 8th October 2021. This was agreed by all members.

Finally, Ms. Caitriona Morgan advised that she had received correspondence from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) confirming their decision to extend SICAP funding agreements for a period of 12 months, up to 31st December 2023. She confirmed that the process and steps had been followed in relation to the extension confirming the acceptance of Galway City Partnership to same until 31st December 2023. She further noted as outlined the DRCD request for a mid-programme review to be carried out locally, while focussing on certain national priorities to ensure SICAP remains focussed and continues to support those most in need.

5. Community Enhancement Programme 2021

Ms. Caitriona Morgan reminded members on the timeframe and allocation to Galway City under this fund which was €132,455. She noted that this iteration of the Community Enhancement Programme aims to provide grants towards projects or equipment enhancing facilities (similar to previous years) and one-off grants towards costs associated with reopening of a facility or the sustainability of a facility. She referred to the report on funding recommendations from the LCDC Subcommittee, following their assessment which had been circulated to the members for their information only in advance of the meeting. She reminded members on conflict of interest on this item. At this stage the following members declared a conflict of interest in this item: Mr. James Coyne, and Mr. Declan Brassil.

Cllr. Owen Hanley on behalf of the LCDC Subcommittee gave a verbal update to members, noting that the closing date for receipt of applications online was Friday 18th June 2021, with a total of 51 applications received totalling €341,666.79. He advised that the LCDC Subcommittee met online on Wednesday 7th July 2021 to review and carry out the assessment, noting that a conflict of interest has been noted by Ms. Elaine Harvey as a member of the subcommittee. He outlined the approach that was followed by the subcommittee with funding to 39 groups / organisations being recommended as set out in the report. Finally as noted in the report, 12 applications were deemed ineligible with reasons noted. Cllr. Martina O' Connor asked if a response could issue to those who sought funding for defibrillators advising of other funding options available to them.

Approval of the allocation of funding in the amount of €132,455 under the above programme as set out in the report was proposed by Ms. Breda Fox, seconded by Cllr. Martina O' Connor and agreed by members. Ms. Caitriona Morgan advised the members, that in line with previous programmes the Community Department would make contact directly with all groups within the next week, in addition to circulating a press release early next week. This was agreed by all members present. Following a query from Cllr. Martina O' Connor on the information webinar for potential applicants, Mr. Brian Barret advised that the quality and targeted focus of applications coming through was improving in line with the ethos of the programme, in addition to applications from new groups to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas which was welcomed.

6. Healthy Galway City

Ms. Ashling Jennings, Healthy Galway City Co-ordinator gave an update to the members in line with the written report as circulated in advance of the meeting. She noted the ongoing work in relation to the progress and financial reports that are due to Pobal on Friday 30th July 2021 for the period 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021. She updated members on progress in relation to the five actions in addition to online programmes delivered under the Community Resilience Fund. In relation to the *Not Around Us initiative* she noted that the uptake on sites signing up was slower. She also advised the LCDC that Helen Mortimer, Co-ordinator working with AMACH! LGBT Galway had finished up in her part time position at the end of June 2021 and that discussions were taking place with AMACH! on their recruitment of a co-ordinator in line with approved funding. Finally she advised that she attended the Active Cities information event during May 2021, organised by Sport Ireland and the HSE. She noted that the Sport Ireland Active Cities fund will invest in sport and physical activity initiatives in Ireland's city based Local Sports Partnerships, in Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford.

7. COVID-19 Community Response Forum

Ms. Caitriona Morgan gave a verbal update to members in line with the written report as circulated in advance of the meeting. She reminded members that the Community Call Helpline continues to operate by Freephone 1800 400 150 and email to covidsupport@galwaycity.ie. She referred to the data hub developed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage which is publicly accessible on <https://keep-well-campaign-geohive.hub.arcgis.com/>. She also referred to other updates as outlined in the report including the recent announcement of funding approved under the COVID-19 Stability Fund for community and voluntary groups in addition to the 2021 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding call currently open for applications from eligible groups, operating at national, regional and local level to support community services and promote visibility and inclusion of LGBTI+ people. Applications for funding remain open until Monday 26th July 2021.

8. Any Other Business

Mr. Declan Brassil referred to a new Regional Employment Service model being initiated on a phased basis to replace the employment service delivered by Local Employment Services (LES). A particular concern was raised in relation to the procurement / tendering process for Phase 1, in place by the Department of Social Protection which he believed would move from a local community based, person centred employment service to a regional payment by results model. He noted the impact this will have on SICAP in particular as direct referrals to the regional employment service will no longer be allowed from other programmes but will be restricted to Intreo case officers only. Mr. Brassil further noted that Galway City Partnership currently operate the LES under a contract with the Department of Social Protection which is due to finish at the end of December 2021. In line with the new model proposed he would have a concern as a company as they may not be in a position to tender for what has been put forward under Phase 1.

In relation to the LECP Implementation Plan and Seed 2 in particular which focussed on Unemployment, Mr. Declan Brassil advised that this interagency group had not met during 2021 and were unable to progress or advance because of the lack of engagement by the Department of Social Protection. He noted that the input and engagement from the Department of Social Protection as the main statutory agency with responsibility for the administration and provision of income / employment supports and schemes was crucial to the working of this group.

Mr. Brian Barrett noted the challenge raised in relation to the LECP, advising that the ongoing engagement and participation by all members of the LCDC was key to its sustainability and success. He noted that in certain cases greater buy-in to the LECP is required and the DRCD needs to take a strong role and improve cross Government buy in and commitment at both a national and local level. This issue was noted in the submission on the development of new Guidelines for the LECP submitted to the DRCD during March 2021.

Ms. Caitriona Morgan advised members that the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) have launched the online public consultation to assist with the development of the next Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) National Implementation Plan. The consultation will be open for submission for an 8-week period, from Friday 16th July to Friday 10th September 2021 with further details circulated. Ms. Morgan also reminded members on the Social Enterprise Start-Up fund recently announced by the DRCD noting that the fund will support social enterprises with small grants to help them expand their businesses and create jobs with a closing date of Tuesday 3rd August 2021.

Mr. Brian Barrett noted that Ms. Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha was retiring from GRETB shortly after many years of service and this was her last meeting of the LCDC. He acknowledged her contribution and thanked her for her participation and commitment over a number of years, wishing her a long and happy retirement. Members of the LCDC concurred with this and thanked Ms. Nic Dhonnchadha for her contribution to the LCDC.

Ms. Lorraine Grimes requested the timely circulation of progress reports / updates to members in advance of the LCDC meeting with a reference to highlighting any areas / issues useful for members to discuss.

The date for the next meeting of Galway City LCDC was noted for Wednesday 15th September 2021 at 3pm. The meeting then concluded.