

**Miontuairiscí ó Chruinniú an Choiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil na Gaillimhe
a tionóladh ar 23ú Márta 2022, ag 10.30 a.m.**

Minutes of Galway County Local Community Development Committee held on
23rd March 2022, at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Cllr. Noel Thomas, LA Member (Chairperson)	Public
Cllr. Padraig Mac An Iomaire, LA Member	Public
Cllr. Gabe Cronnelly, LA Member	Public
Mr. Jim Cullen, Interim Chief Executive	Public
Breda Fox, Head of Local Enterprise	Public
Donal Walsh, GRETB	Public
Michael Keady, HSE West	Public
Steve Dolan, Galway Rural Development	Community
Terry Keenan, FORUM Connemara Ltd (Vice-Chairperson)	Community
Mairin Ni Chonghaile, PPN Community	Community
Peter Gohery, PPN Social Inclusion	Community
Gerard Costello, PPN Community	Community

Apologies:

Regina Higgins, Department of Social Protection	Public
Kenny Deery, Galway Chamber	Community
Venetia McEllin, PPN Environment	Community
Máire Uí Mhaoláin, Comhar na nOileán Teo	Community
Kevin Gavin, PPN Social Inclusion	Community
Tom Turley, IFA	Community

Also in Attendance:

Alan Farrell, Chief Officer
Mary McGann, Andrew McBride, Rita Tansey, Galway County Council

N. Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a special welcome to Cllr. Gabe Cronnelly as a new member of the LCDC committee.

N. Thomas noted that J. Cullen had to leave the meeting early and it was agreed by the members present that the discussion on the Ukrainian crisis which was due to take place under AOB would instead be moved to item No.3. on the agenda.

1. Miontuairiscí ó chruinniú an Choiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil (LCDC) a tionóladh ar an 15ú Feabhra 2022

Minutes of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) held on 15th February, 2022

N. Thomas asked if there were any matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting and none were declared. On the **PROPOSAL** of Mairin Ni Chonghaile, **SECONDED** by Michael Keady, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th February were **APPROVED**.

2. LCDC - Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2021 - Céadú

LCDC – Annual Report 2021 – Approval

The LCDC Annual Report had been circulated to all the members and it was noted that the LCDC are obliged to publish an Annual Report of activities each year which is then presented to the Plenary Meeting of the Council at their March meeting.

M. McGann stated that the report covers the fundamental schemes of the LCDC and outlines in a practical way how these schemes support individuals and communities and improves understanding of the work that the LCDC are doing throughout the year and the achievements within the various programmes. M. McGann noted that in the main, funding throughout the year was adapted to deal with Covid-19 and supports were delivered through grants, prioritising areas for SICAP, and delivering community-led initiatives through the Healthy Ireland programme such as “Healthy Food Made Easy” courses in community venues, and “Independent Living Skills for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities” through collaborations with Disability Organisations at local level.

N. Thomas thanked Mary for all her work on the formulation of the Annual Report and all the staff involved in the delivery of the work programmes, and this was reflected by the LCDC Members. Alan Farrell, Chief Officer, also expressed appreciation to the LCDC Members and Members of the various Sub-Committees for their work in managing the delivery of these programmes throughout the year.

On the **PROPOSAL** of P. Ridge, **SECONDED** by G. Costello, the LCDC 2021 Annual Report was **APPROVED**.

3. Géarchéim Teifigh na hÚcráine

Ukrainian Refugee Crisis

J. Cullen, Chief Executive, outlined the status regarding responding to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis to the members.

He commenced by confirming the national arrangements which were being coordinated by IPAS (International Protection Accommodation Services) and the DCEDIY (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth). He informed the members that the Red Cross and IPAS were the point of contact at national level for sources of accommodation and distribution of refugees throughout the country. During the previous weekend, the focus was to find emergency accommodation and Galway County Council sourced accommodation in hotels & B&Bs and made this available to IPAS. The Council was also put on notice to provide 50 emergency beds that weekend, these were sourced, and details given to IPAS.

Mr. Cullen advised that an “in-house refugee response team” were trying to source long term accommodation, for example, in Convents or Nursing Homes or through contact with Developers who have properties that have not yet come on-stream. He confirmed that these

types of accommodation have to be checked by the relevant local authority staff to ensure compliance with all building standards, fire safety certificates, etc. He informed the members that IPAS is now going through the catalogue of accommodation sources such as Hotels, B&Bs, Guesthouses and accommodation in private households.

He acknowledged that the coordination of information from national to local level needed to improve and has developed well as time is progressing. From the Council's point of view, we will continue to play a role in the provision of emergency accommodation and shelter as required and asked all members of the LCDC be available to do what they can to coordinate the provision of medical, welfare, education, transport and supports such as food parcels, information, social supports, and other identified needs such as enabling continued contact with their home.

N. Thomas thanked J. Cullen for the details provided to the LCDC Members. He stated that he felt the Ukrainian Response required better pre-planning and co-ordination at national level and that ringfenced funding was required immediately to enable agencies to respond. He also stated that there were associated cost issues with private householders taking a refugee into their home and that this option would also likely not be short-term which would add to the problems regarding this as a solution to the crisis.

N. Thomas voiced his concerns in relation to funding for the existing vulnerable groups and whether this funding will be diverted to provide supports for the influx of Ukrainian Refugees and this concern was echoed by other LCDC Members. In response, J. Cullen confirmed that the Department and IPAS are contracting Hotels and other accommodation outlets directly, and Galway County Council was operating on the basis that all funding related to emergency accommodation will be recouped in full by the Department, and he also confirmed that funding will not be reduced from other groups to fund the crisis at local level.

N. Thomas also stressed that the location of accommodation sources for refugees is important to access schools and overcome any associated transport difficulties.

In relation to health supports, M. Keady said that all refugees are given Medical Cards, and, in this regard, it was important for the HSE to know where all refugees are housed so they can assess where the demand for GPs will be, and plan supports accordingly. He acknowledged it was not easy to co-ordinate the flow of information however, there needed to be notification where people were being located as early as possible.

In relation to educational supports, D. Walsh stated that GRETB have been assessing needs, in particular, regarding language supports which could be a barrier to work and education and would be integrating the refugees into existing classes or providing additional classes as needs arise. He stressed that these are not economic migrants and will want to work and integrate, and the provision of PPS numbers and validation of qualifications at national level were the initial stages in this process.

In relation to accommodation options, T. Keenan queried if vacant properties, especially properties above commercial units, could be adapted or repurposed for accommodation as many of these properties are only used for storage. He also queried if the Council had a list

of vacant properties that can be repaired or adapted to accommodate refugees and pointed out that a lot of rural schools are being shut and the addition of refugee children would be a reason to keep them open. He added that the preferred location would be in towns/cities where there is access to services and a sense of community. In response, Mr. Cullen stated that the Department are considering amending the planning regulations so that vacant units can be adapted and used for accommodation, and that any accommodation options sourced had to comply with all regulatory requirements, and the relevant local authority staff were engaged in this process regarding any identified buildings.

4. Pleann Éire Shláintiúil - Céadú Healthy Ireland Plan – Approval

M. Keady outlined the background to the Healthy Ireland initiative and the distribution of funding to support its implementation under the Healthy Ireland Fund. He confirmed that Healthy Ireland is an all-of-government response to the risks that threaten Ireland's future health and wellbeing, and the draft Healthy Ireland Plan for the County, which was circulated to all members, was the local implementation of the national Healthy Ireland Framework. He outlined the vision of the County Plan was in line with the national vision which is to create a County where "everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility". He noted that the statistical analysis which underpinned the Plan was presented to the LCDC at their meeting in November 2021, and these consultations and consultations with a broad range of fora and committees through ongoing work of the Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee, formed the basis for the 5 objectives contained in the Plan.

A McBride then outlined the 5 high-level objectives of the Healthy Ireland Plan and the actions under each for the Members, with the 5 objectives being:

- Collaboration & Communication
- Mental Health & Social Wellbeing
- Physical Activity
- Spaces & Places for Wellbeing
- Healthy Lifestyle Changes

N. Thomas thanked all involved in the preparation of the Plan and stated there was a clear need to focus more on healthy eating through awareness, promotion and programmes. A. Farrell added that facilities such as the BIA innovator Campus could add value to initiatives promoting health eating and natural/local produce and other agencies such as GRETB could collaborate on these initiatives. D. Walsh complemented all involved on the Plan and stated that the GRETB would be happy to get involved and provide support in any area of the Plan.

A Farrell also complemented M. McGann, A. McBride and M. Keady on the Healthy County Galway Plan and advised the LCDC Members that going forward, it was the intention that it would feed into the LECP.

On the **PROPOSAL** of D. Walsh, **SECONDED** by N. Thomas, the Healthy Ireland Plan was **APPROVED**.

5. Ballraiocht – LCDC & Advisory Steering Group
Membership – LCDC & Advisory Steering Group

A Farrell confirmed that he has written to the PPN representatives on the LCDC to request a representative for the Advisory Steering Group but has got no response to date, and he advised that the Steering Group can be finalised at the next meeting if a nomination is received.

M. Ni Chonghaile agreed to revert to all the PPN representatives on the LCDC with a view to agreeing a nominee and A. Farrell stated support and assistance will be available to the member to participate on the Advisory Steering Group if they feel they need it.

On the **PROPOSAL** of M. Ni Chonghaile, **SECONDED** by D. Walsh, the LCDC & Advisory Steering Group Membership was **APPROVED**.

6. An Scéim Infheistíochta do na hIonaid Phobail
Community Centres Investment Fund

M. McGann informed the members that a press release was issued on this new fund. She stated that there is no further information available to date on the funding scheme but it appears it will be operated directly by the Department and categorized into different measures aimed at varying financial levels of funding. M. McGann confirmed that concerns had been raised by various facilities regarding the issue of match funding and representations were made to the Department in this regard.

7. Suirbhé ar dhaoine faoi mhíchumas
Survey of People with Disabilities
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5DXN3TX>

M. McGann confirmed that a survey for People with Disabilities has been designed and requested the support of all LCDC Members in circulating it as widely as possible. She confirmed that the purpose of the Survey is to identify priority areas for people with disabilities to feed into the prioritisation of funding under the Disability Participation and Awareness Fund. M. McGann thanked P. Gohery and the PPN's Disability Forum for their support in designing the survey and bringing it to readiness.

P. Gohery stated that the issues of people with disabilities have been left for far too long and while the vision would be a City and County which is totally accessible to people with disabilities, the reality falls far short of this. He highlighted examples of places and areas, such as disabled parking spaces, which created real practical difficulties for people with disabilities and highlighted the importance of consulting with people with disabilities to identify problems and solutions. He informed the members that 13.5% of people in the County have some type of disability and feels the government need to provide more funding to address barriers to participation. He also outlined that Government guidelines are that 6% of the

people employed should be people with disabilities but this is also not being achieved. However, he welcomed the survey of people with disabilities as a starting point for integrating the views of people with disabilities into funding priorities and thanked M. McGann for all her work to date on this issue.

N. Thomas asked if the survey can be completed by a carer as it was not clear, and P. Gohery confirmed that it can be completed by a carer or family member on behalf of a person with disabilities.

A Farrell thanked P. Gohery for his input and said that the survey is very welcome and understood where P. Gohery was coming from in terms of highlighting the present difficulties for people with disabilities. A. Farrell stated that as part of regeneration and streetscape projects, there is public consultation, and any Disability Organisation or Group can feed into that process.

8. Formáid agus dáta a chomhaontú do na chéad chruinnithe eile
Agreed format and date for next meetings

N. Thomas felt that the online meetings were adequate but that it is also important to have face to face meetings. It was agreed that every 3rd meeting would be in person and the next meeting will take place in person in either the Council Chamber or Meeting room in the Tuam Road offices and a preliminary notice will be forwarded to the members.

The date for the next meeting was agreed for Tuesday, 17th May, 2022, at 6.30pm.

9. Aon ghnó eile
Any other business

N. Thomas noted that T. Turley was not in attendance but wished to thank him for his contribution to the LCDC. A Farrell added to this and welcomed the new members.

The meeting then concluded.



Cllr. N. Thomas, Chairperson



A. Farrell, Chief Officer

Date: 17-05-2022

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