**Laois Local Community Development Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Held on Wednesday, 9th December 2015 at 11.30am, Killeshin Hotel, Portlaoise**

**Present:** Mr. Paddy Buggy, Laois PPN (in the Chair)

Mr. John Mulholland, Laois County Council

Cllr. John King, Laois County Council

Cllr. Paschal McEvoy, Laois County Council

Ms. Evelyn Reddin, Laois LEO

Ms. Mary Delaney, HSE

Ms. Anne Goodwin, Laois Partnership Company

Mr. Michael Bergin, Farming Pillar

Mr. PJ Campbell, Laois PPN

Mr. Dave Fingleton, Laois PPN

Mr. Robbie Quinn, Laois PPN

Mr. Joe Thompson, Youth Work Ireland Laois

Ms. Linda Tynan, Laois/Offaly ETB

**Apologies:** Ms. Mary White, Cllr. Jerry Lodge

**In attendance:** Mr. Ian McCormack, Chief Officer, Ms. Georgina Ireland, Administrative Officer.

*Mr. Paddy Buggy opened the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.*

**Confirmation of Minutes of LCDC meeting held on Friday, 20th November 2015**

Upon the proposal of Cllr. John King and seconded by Mr. John Mulholland, the minutes of LCDC meeting held on Friday, 20th November 2015 were confirmed.

**Local Development Strategy Update**

Ms. Anne Goodwin circulated copies of the Local Development Strategy document to all members and advised that the document had very recently been submitted to the Dept of Environment, Community and Local Government, with a response awaited.

The members acknowledged the work of Laois Partnership in this regard and the part played by them in compiling the Local Development Strategy on behalf of the Local Action Group. Following a number of questions, Ms. Anne Goodwin clarified that the status of Graiguecullen would not change, and work would continue with colleagues in Carlow to ensure that the history of a good working relationship between the two counties is maintained for the benefit of the community in Graiguecullen.

**Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) Update**

Ms. Georgina Ireland presented the current status of the LECP process. *(copy presentation attached)*

The members thanked Ms. Ireland for her presentation and a number of comments were made as follows:

* Mr. John Mulholland noted with disappointment the comments made by the Dept. Of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the submissions report in relation to nature conservation. He also noted all the documents mentioned on Page 4 in the Socio Economic Statement, all of which will influence and require consistency within the LECP.
* Mr. Mulholland also stated that the Strategic Environment Assessment and Appropriate Assessment screening reports give some idea as to the challenges to be faced in delivering the objectives and actions in the LECP.

*(Mr. John Mulholland and Cllr. Paschal McEvoy left the room to attend to urgent business at this stage of the meeting)*

Mr. Ian McCormack asked that at this stage of the process, following the public consultation period, the members consider the updated version of the LECP Socio-Economic Statement and High Level Goals and if they deemed appropriate, adopt same in its entirety.

Upon the proposal of Cllr. John King and seconded by Mr. PJ Campbell, the Socio Economic Statement and High Level Goals in respect of the Local Economic and Community Plan were unanimously adopted.

Mr. McCormack outlined next steps for LECP preparation, i.e., the draft objectives and associated actions being developed would come before the members early in the New Year.

**Training**

Mr. Ian McCormack outlined a number of options in respect of training for members and he invited members themselves to suggest what training they feel they might need to assist in fulfilling their responsibilities on the LCDC. There was some discussion on this topic and it was agreed that some training was necessary in respect of the new Rural Development / LEADER programme, particularly in respect of the conduct of meetings and the many regulations governing the programme. It was agreed to seek guidance from the Dept of Environment, Community & Local Government in relation to this.

It was also agreed to investigate training in relation to members’ roles. Mr. John Mulholland highlighted the importance of this for PPN representatives particularly, in their role as representatives who need to communicate with the larger PPN network and this would be key to the delivery of processes such as the Local Economic & Community Plan.

It was agreed to investigate the possibility of a mixture of training both in-house and by an outside agent.

**Any Other Business**

Mr. Ian McCormack advised in relation to the establishment of a sub-committee to make recommendations to the larger LCDC group in respect of the End of Year Review and 2016 Annual Plan appraisal. The members agreed that Ms. Fionnuala Daly, Senior Social Worker, Laois County Council, with particular expertise in the area of social inclusion, should be invited to sit on this sub-committee.

Mr. Ian McCormack advised that he had spoken initially to Mr. Kieran Finnane in relation to the possibility of his representing the business sector on this Committee. Mr. McCormack advised that he would follow up and update the members accordingly. Other members made suggestions as to possible representatives also.

Mr. PJ Campbell enquired about the staffing of the Tourist Office in Portlaoise, stating that there is a need for a person working there to have local knowledge. Mr. John Mulholland mentioned the Tourism Board and advised that he was, at that time, examining issues surrounding the Tourism sector in Laois.

Cllr. John King highlighted the important role of PPN Representatives in communication between decision making bodies and the community. Mr. Paddy Buggy advised that four PPN Plenaries were planned for 2016, two countywide and two municipal district based.

Mr. Paddy Buggy thanked all members and staff of all organisations for their work throughout 2015 and wished all a Happy Christmas.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

***Date and venue of next meeting to be advised***