**Minutes of Laois Local Community Development Committee Meeting held on Friday 13th February, 2015 in the Executive Conference Room, County Hall, Portlaoise**

Present

Cllr John King, Paddy Buggy, Vice Chairperson, Chris Uys, Evelyn Reddin, Graham Touhy, Anne Goodwin, Margaret Guijt Lawlor, Mick Dowling, Joe Thompson, Cllr Pascal McEvoy, Mary Delaney, Cllr Jerry Lodge, Sheelagh Coyle, Michael Bergin.

In Attendance

Ian McCormack, Chief Officer, Rebecca Gillespie, Procurement Officer, Laois County Council.

Apologies

Gerry Murphy, Conal Bradley and Joe Cunningham

Welcome and Introductions

Cllr King welcomed everybody to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting held on 29th October, 2014

The minutes of this meeting were proposed by Cllr Pascal McEvoy and seconded by Evelyn Reddin.

Ethical Framework in Local Authority

Ian McCormack had circulated copies of appendices 1 and 7 from a recent Circular (LG2-2015) issued by the Department of Community, Environment & Local Government together with a copy of the Code of Conduct for Councillors to all non Councillor members of the Committee.

He informed the members that he was required under the terms of the Circular to circulate this information.

The purpose of the Ethical Framework is to promote and support the transition of honesty, impartiality and prioritisation of the common good that underlies the service of communities by Local Authority.

Guide to EU Funding

This document which was also circulated for information purposes included a step by step checklist for EU funding applications (Chapter 3) as well as an overview of current funding programmes (Chapter 4). The document follows three objectives:

* It gives local and regional Councillors and NGO’s an insight into the functioning of a huge variety of EU funds.
* It provides young people in the EU with information on how they can directly benefit from Europe by taking part in one of the numerous EU programmes.
* It offers guidance on how to set up your own EU project.

Conflicts of Interest

Mr Ian McCormack asked those people who would have a Conflict of Interest in the SICAP Tendering process to leave the room. The following people subsequently left the room in advance of the ratification process: Ms Anne Goodwin, Ms Mary Delaney, Mr Chris Uys, Mr Michael Buggy and Mr Paddy Buggy.

Ratification of SICAP Tender

Mr Ian McCormack checked to ensure that all Declarations of Confidentiality and Impartiality had been signed and submitted by all those members present for the ratification process. He also read 2 pieces of correspondence from:

* The Department of Community, Environment & Local Government dated 28th January, 2015 from Ms Clodagh McDonnell, Principal Officer, Community Division.
* An extract from the Guidance Document on SICAP Tendering Process dated 16th December, 2014

into the meeting. The most salient points in these pieces of correspondence referred to the following:

1. “The purpose of the meeting will not be to overrule or award the recommendations presented, but to satisfy yourselves that the recommendations of the SICAP Tender Evaluation Subcommittee were arrived at in a fair manner, consistent with the rules of public procurement”.
2. Outcome letters to issue on the same day nationally which is scheduled for Wednesday 18th February, 2015.
3. To maintain the confidentially of the tender evaluation process the wider LCDC (ie those members who have not been involved in the process due to possible conflicts of interest or for other reasons) should not be notified of the outcome until the successful tenderer has formally accepted the SICAP Contract”.

All members who were present for the SICAP Tender Ratification were reminded of their obligations to maintain the confidentiality of the tender evaluation/ratification process before and after the presentation was made.

SICAP Public Procurement Presentation

Mr Joe Thompson, Chairperson of the Evaluation Subcommittee which focused on the following areas:

Part 1 – Overview of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

Part 2 – Overview of the Procurement Process

Part 3 – Evaluation of Tenders

Part 4 – Presenting the outcomes and next steps

* A two stage procurement procedure had been used to select programme implementers.
* Stage 1 was handled by Pobal on behalf of the LCDC
* Stage 2 was managed by the LCDC with assistance from Pobal
* Roles and responsibilities of the LCDC were clearly identified throughout the process
* The Tender was evaluated by an Evaluation Team consisting of the following employees from Laois County Council:
  + Mr Henry Ritchie, Senior Engineer, Roads & Environment
  + Ms Julie Bergin, Acting Head of Finance
  + Ms Fionnula Daly, Senior Social Worker
* The Evaluation Subcommittee consisted of the following people:
  + Cllr John King, Chairperson, Laois LCDC
  + Ms Evelyn Reddin, CEO, Laois Local Enterprise Office
  + Mr Joe Thompson, Chairperson, Evaluation Subcommittee
  + Ms Rebecca Gillespie, Procurement Officer, Laois County Council
  + Mr Ian McCormack, Chief Officer, Laois LCDC and Secretary of the Evaluation Subcommittee
* Pobal had an oversight/review role and facilitated information sessions and published clarification documents throughout the process.
* Very tight methodology for how to evaluate each tender was set. Each Evaluation Team and Subcommittee had to follow the same steps to ensure consistency of approach and equal treatment.

Steps

* Preliminaries were checked
* Qualitative Criteria (5) were evaluated
* If Qualitative Criteria met the threshold, the Cost Criterion was evaluated
* Total Scores (Quality and Cost)

The pass make was set at 40%

* Pobal’s role in the Tender process was also outlined to the members of the Committee.
* The role of the LCDC in the ratification of the Evaluation results was also outlined to the members of the Committee.
* The Lot outcome (marks achieved by the tenderer) were also presented to the members as were the next steps
  1. Following ratification, outcome letters will be issued to the tenderers by the Evaluation Subcommittee. They will be issued by email on the same day nationally – scheduled for Wednesday, 15th February, 2015.
  2. End of Standstill Period will be Wednesday, 4th March, 2015.
  3. LCDC’s issued SICAP contracts to successful tenderers on Thursday, 5th March, 2015.
  4. Programme Implemented sign and return contract to LCDCs by mid March.
  5. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme commences.

Discussion

Cllr John King thanked Mr Joe Thompson for a very comprehensive and informative presentation and stated that the tender was rigorously evaluated/reviewed at 3 levels by the Evaluation Team, Evaluation Subcommittee and reviewed by Pobal at National Level. He now opened the floor up for discussions.

1. Monitoring Role

Some concerns were expressed about marks achieved in certain criteria and the question was posed as to whether the LCDC would have an opportunity to monitor performance throughout the term of the contract.

Mr Ian McCormack advised that there would be an opportunity to monitor performance at the end of 2015 and the programme implementer would also have to present plans to the LCDC for 2016 and 2017.

1. Measuring Performance

The Committee were also of the view that it is hard to measure performance of the tenderer given that only one tender was received. The point was noted by the members. Mr Ian McCormack advised that the tender was evaluated on its own merit and there would be opportunities in the future for the LCDC to monitor the performance of the Programme Implementer.

1. SICAP Programme

The Committee noted that the SICAP is a local inclusion programmed focused on the most marginalised in society. It aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. They requested that a more refined presentation be made at a future meeting outlining exactly how this plan will have a positive impact on the most marginalised in society. The Committee undertook to conduct regular reviews of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme throughout its term.

Ratification

Mr Ian McCormack advised those present that the decision making weighting in favour of private sector members is required at all times.

The tender report prepared by the Evaluation Subcommittee was ratified by:

Public Sector

Cllr Gerry Lodge, Cllr Pascal McEvoy & Graham Tuohy.

Private Sector

Joe Thompson, Mick Dowling, Margaret Guijt Lawlor, Sheelagh Coyle

Abstentions

Cllr John King and Evelyn Reddin.

Cllr King thanked all of the members of the LCDC for their contributions and also thanked the members of the Evaluation Team, Evaluation Subcommittee and Pobal for their work on the Tender Evaluation Process.

Any Other Business

Ian McCormack undertook to circulate a schedule of meeting dates to the members of the Committee for the remainder of the year.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Cllr John King Ian McCormack

Chairperson Chief Officer

Laois LCDC Laois LCDC