**Minutes of Laois Local Community Development Committee held on Friday, 8th May, 2015**

Present:

Gerry Murphy, Chief Executive, Cllr John King, Chairperson, Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Mary Delaney, Joe Thompson, Linda Tynan, Mick Dowling, Anne Goodwin, Pat Buggy, Chris Uys, Michael Bergin

Apologies

Cllr Jerry Lodge, Evelyn Reddin, Graham Tuohy, Sheelagh Coyle, Margaret Guijt Lawlor.

In Attendance

Ian McCormack, Chief Officer

Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Friday 17th April, 2015 were proposed by Pat Buggy and seconded by Cllr Paschal McEvoy.

Adoption of Standing Orders

Ian McCormack had circulated a Draft of set of Standing Orders to the members of the Committee for consideration. He informed the members that the purpose of the Standing Orders is to set out the rules and procedures for Laois Community Development Committee Meetings.

Members Contributions

Michael Bergin referred to the duration of the meeting (set out at 1 ½ hours) indicating that workloads at future meetings may take in excess of 1 ½ hours to be dealt with. Gerry Murphy stated that Standing Orders could be suspended should the need to do so arise.

Chris Uys proposed that the following be included in the Standing Orders:

* Summary of decisions on proceedings at the end of LCDC meeting for the purpose of communication back to the stakeholders groups without having to wait for minutes to be approved at the next meeting and to prevent breaking the Confidentiality Agreement.
* Minutes of meetings to be published on line.
* Neither Public Authority nor any single interest group shall represent more than 49% of the voting rights of the Committee, any vote taken where any single interest group or public authority represent more than 49% of the voting rights of the Committee at the meeting shall be deemed to be invalid.

LEADER 2014-2020 Expressions of Interest for Local Action Group

A copy of the Expression of Interest which will be submitted to the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government was circulated to members of the Committee for consideration. Anne Goodwin made a comprehensive presentation to the members and advised that:

The Expression of Interest was prepared by Laois Community and Enterprise Development Company Ltd on behalf of Laois Community Development Committee.

* The submission focused on the following areas:
  + Key contact details
  + Proposed geographic areas
  + Local and community participation
  + LAG companies
  + General description of proposed actions
  + Preparatory support and additional Information
* The actions are presented in such a way as to allow us to adapt to a given situation.
* The plan is to work with groups in marginalised areas who did not receive funding in the past to build capacity.
* A sum of €7.1 million will be available for projects in County Laois.
* It was proposed that a small steering committee of the LCDC/LDC be established to work on the strategy.
* There will be a low spend in the first couple of years of the programme as most of the work with people is carried out at this time, spend will ramp up thereafter.
* Article 28 checks on projects will be time consuming and will be carried out by Laois County Council.
* There is also a considerable amount of work and time involved in identifying eligible and sustainable programmes for funding.
* There will be no additional staff working on these projects and the administration costs at 20% will just suffice.
* We have to ensure that all funds are spent to avail of all administrative funds.

Members Contributions

* Joe Thompson stated that although it is a sizeable allocation of money, the actual spend when broken down annually is not so much.
* Mary Delaney was of the view that the big challenge will be to reach the most marginalised areas, get them to engage and bring them through the process.
* John King stated that it be crucial for community groups to be prepared in applying for grants.
* Gerry Murphy was of the view that significant development in tourism was crucial as this is a labour intensive industry that creates numerous jobs in rural areas. Tourism products should be clustered and packaged with other areas. The Rural Development Programme has huge potential.
* Michael Bergin said that Tourism can be hard to measure in terms of jobs. Promotion is paramount in terms of tourism development to attract visitors. It has yet to realise its full potential in County Laois and we have products that we can sell and a key part of the Local Development Strategy will be to encourage this.
* Joe Thompson focused on recreational facilities for young people.
* Anne Goodwin also referred to the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trail Project and possible spin offs such as hostels, cycle hire, cafes, etc.

The Committee thanked Anne Goodwin for the presentation and welcomed the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Pat Buggy proposed that we proceed to submit the joint Expression of Interest on behalf of the LCDC/LDC and Joe Thompson seconded.

Any Other Business

* Update on the Local Economic Community Plan to be provided for the next meeting. The Local Development Strategy will dovetail with the Local Economic Community Plan.
* The faster the Local Development Strategy is completed the faster money will be provided to evaluate projects.

Time and Date for next meeting

Friday, 26th June, 2015 in County Hall at 11.30 am.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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John King Ian McCormack

Chairperson Chief Officer

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