**Laois Local Community Development Committee**

**Minutes of Meeting held in Executive Conference Room, Aras an Chontae, Portlaoise on Friday 24 July 2015 at 11.30am**

Present

Anna Marie Delaney, Cllr John King, Chairperson, Cllr Paschal McEvoy, Evelyn Reddin, Linda Tynan, Robbie Quinn, Mary White, Dave Fingleton, Anne Goodwin, Paddy Buggy, PJ Campbell, Michael Bergin

Apologies

Cllr Jerry Lodge, Olivia Clarke, Mary Delaney, Joe Thompson

In attendance

Ian McCormack, Chief Officer, Rose Doolin, Assistant Staff Officer.

Introduction & Welcome

Cllr John King introduced and welcomed Mary White, Dave Fingleton, PJ Campbell & Robbie Quinn as the new PPN representatives to the committee.

Confirmation of minutes of LCDC Meeting held on Friday 26th June 2015

Upon the proposal of Mr Paddy Buggy and seconded by Mr Michael Bergin, the minutes of the LCDC meeting held on Friday 26 June 2015 were adopted.

Other Matters Arising

It was agreed that:

* A list of the PPN members on various Council Committees together with a list of the members of the secretariat to the PPN would be circulated to all members of the LCDC
* Booklet which outlines the role of the PPN members on the LCDC to be circulated to all members for information purposes.
* LCDC Training Agenda (Longford) on Wednesday, 29th July 2015 to be circulated to all members for information purposes

Rural Economic Development Zone Update

Ian McCormack informed the members that a Committee had been set up for the purpose of making a submission under the Rural Economic Development Zone pilot initiative.

The aim of this initiative is to support a number of REDZ Projects (18 in total) throughout the country with a view to determining best practice with regard to such projects and how they are structured and implemented on the ground.

Closing date for receipt of submissions is Monday, 31st August, 2015. Laois County Council is required to make the submission.

Anne Goodwin indicated that Portlaoise and Rathdowney were chosen as they were identified as Community Hubs. Dave Meredith, Teagasc, to explain the rational for choosing Rathdowney as a Community Hubs. This funding (if we are successful) could be used to place an aminator in the community to promote entrepreneurship.

Pilot projects in the UK have worked with Enterprise Centres and Third Level Institutes to deliver projects is under similar type initiatives.

Michael Bergin stated that local input is essential in order to foster a sense of ownership of the REDZ Development process.

The Committee were supportive and agreed that Laois County Council should make a submission under the Pilot REDZ Initiative.

Training for LCDC Members

Ian McCormack informed the members that the first of a number of training sessions for LCDC members will take place in Longford on Wednesday 29th July, 2015. The Chief Officer and three members of the Council have been invited to this session. Dave Fingleton requested that a copy of the Agenda for this session be circulated to all members for information purposes. PJ Campbell also suggested that the booklet which has been prepared for PPN representatives with regard to their role on the LCDC be circulated.

Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 – Local Development Strategy, Presentation by Anne Goodwin, CEO, Laois Partnership

Anne Goodwin commenced the presentation by informing the members that the Joint Expression of Interest submitted by Laois LCDC and Laois Partnership Company for the Leader element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 had been successful (Stage1).

Laois LCDC would be the contract holder and Laois Partnership Company would implement the programme on its behalf.

The recent information session in Tullamore focused on the development to the Local Development Strategy (Stage2). Laois Partnership Company will be preparing the Strategy on behalf of Laois LCDC.

Work has commenced on the socio economic element of the plan, some consultation had been carried out and more consultation will take place. Draft Local Development Strategy to be submitted to the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government by Friday, 25th September, 2015.

The closing date for the final Local Development Strategy has been set at the 16th January, 2016. However, a National Committee has been set up to appraise strategies on a rolling basis from September 2015 to February 2016. It would be our aim to submit our Strategy for approval by October 2015.

The Local Development Strategy will focus on the following 3 themes:

* Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation
* Social Inclusion
* Rural Environment

Sub themes include:

* Rural Tourism
* Enterprise Development
* Rural Towns
* Broadband
* Basic service targets at hand to reach communities
* Rural Youth
* Protection and sustainable use of water resources
* Protection and improvement of Local Biodiversity
* Development of renewal energy

Rural Development funding will be spread across each of these areas and cannot be matched with EU Funding.

The Operational Rules for the implementation of this programme will issue in the near future. Laois Partnership Company intend to commence the process of preparing the Local Development Strategy in August and will use the PPNs and LCDC to organise consultation sessions. This will be a more user friendly programme with a series or more realistic objectives. Fortyper cent of funding will be subject to open calls, Laois Partnership Company will be inviting calls on behalf of the LCDC.

Evelyn Reddin cautioned in terms of duplication of funding for economic development projects. Anne Goodwin indicated that they will be consulting with the Local Enterprise Office and all partners.

Anne Goodwin proposed that a subcommittee of the LCDC be established to assist with this process. The following members subsequently expressed an interest in participating on the subcommittee:

* Paddy Buggy
* Michael Bergin
* Anne Goodwin
* Robbie Quinn
* Linda Tynan

The Committee also agreed that Laois Partnership Committee should commence the process to prepare a Draft Local Development Strategy which will be considered at its next meeting in September.

Press release also to be prepared for the local newspapers.

Anne Goodwin in response to a question raised by Dave Fingleton confirmed that the date for submission of the Draft Strategy (26th September, 2015) was not “set in stone”.

Anna Marie Delaney in response to a question raised by PJ Campbell confirmed that the secretariat to the PPN would circulate information to its members.

Time and Date for next meeting

Friday, 11th September, 2015, County Hall, Portlaoise at 11.30am.

This concluded the business of the meeting.

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Cllr John King Ian McCormack

Chairperson Chief Officer

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