

Minutes of

**South Cork Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
Council Chamber, County Hall & Via Microsoft Teams**

Date: 28th March 2024

Time: 10.00am.

Present:

Name	Organisation	Public / Private
Cllr. Michael Hegarty	Cork County Council	Public
Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen	Cork County Council	Public
Cllr. Seamus McGrath	Cork County Council	Public
Mr. Michael Lynch	Divisional Manager South Cork	Public
Mr. Sean O'Sullivan	Head of Leo South Cork	Public
Ms. Ashley Amato	Cork Chamber	Private
Ms. Valerie Murphy	Avondhu Blackwater Partnership CLG	Private
Mr. Ryan Howard	SECAD Partnership CLG	Private
Ms. Arran O'Driscoll	West Cork Development Partnership	Private
Mr. Jimmy Hosford	IFA	Private
Ms. Mary O'Leary	Environmental Pillar	Private
Mr. Liam McCarthy	Cork County PPN	Private
Mr. Tom Howard	Cork County PPN	Private

Apologies:

Name	Organisation	Private / Public
Cllr. Marcia D'Alton	Cork County Council	Public
Mr. Donal O'Liathain	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Public
Ms. Leighann Kennedy	Dept of Social Protection	Public
Mr. John Fitzgibbons	Cork ETB	Public
Mr. Brian Williams	Youth Work Ireland	Private
Vacant	Civic Society	Private

Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Kay Keegan	Chief Officer	Cork County Council
Mr. Andrew Lewis	Project Accountant	Cork County Council
Ms. Caroline Costello	Staff Officer	Cork County Council
Ms. Ita Kirwan	Staff Officer	Cork County Council

Quorum = 11 (50% of 19 rounded up + 1 = 11)
In attendance = 13 (5 Public : 8 Private)
Apologies = 6
Total membership = 19

Welcome and Introduction.

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. It was noted that a quorum was in place and the meeting commenced.

1. Confirmation of Minutes of the Previous LCDC Meeting of 22nd February 2024.

The Minutes were adopted on the proposal of Liam McCarthy and seconded by Tom Howard.

Matters arising

None.

2. SICAP

- SICAP End of Year Reviews 2023

Andrew Lewis confirmed that the SICAP Sub Group had held meetings with Toni McCaul from SECAD to discuss the SICAP EYR 2023 performance and the Annual Plans for 2024. It was confirmed that the Local Development Company achieved KPI 1 and KPI 2 targets for year 2023. During the Sub Group meeting concerns were raised such as the prolonged impact on Community Groups of Covid. The KPI number achieved had been significantly boosted by the Ukrainian supports provided.

It was recommended by the SICAP Sub Group to recommend the acceptance of the End of Year Reviews for 2023 for Lots 18-4.

Mary O'Leary asked does the LCDC see the actions. Andrew Lewis responded that there is a Sub Group to monitor the actions, which then advises the LCDC. It is planned that SECAD would present the Case Study for 2023 to the full LCDC in May. Ryan Howard added there is a process for which the Annual Plan is based. The Annual Plan fits into the overall strategy including main areas of the community, with particular focus on disadvantaged areas.

Proposed by Valerie Murphy and seconded by Mary O'Leary.

- SICAP Annual Plans 2024

Andrew Lewis confirmed that the new IRIS system for the 2024-2028 Programme was having teething problems concerning the uploading and analysis of the Annual Plans for 2024, but that the SICAP Sub Group had been provided with the Actions proposed as part of the Plans. LCDC Staff would ensure that the Plans are fully input into IRIS in the near future. On this basis the SICAP Sub Group were satisfied with the plans of the Lot 18-4.

Proposed by Valerie Murphy and seconded by Tom Howard.

- SICAP Audit Reports 2022

Kay Keegan informed the meeting that Cork County Council's Internal Audit team undertook an audit of Lot 18-4 which SECAD Partnership are the Implementers for the 2022 SiCAP Programme and the report was received in December 2023. A sample was taken of the files including budget, key KPIs, insurance, costs, grant allocations, administration, etc.

The recommendation was that SECAD were in compliance with the SICAP programme and there were no further recommendations.

3. Local Enhancement Programme 2024 (LEP) and Women's Group Fund 2024 (WGF) Allocations

- Cork County Council launched this scheme on Monday, 29th January inviting applications from Community and Voluntary groups. The scheme is funded by the Department of Rural & Community Development (Department) with support from the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCCs) of Cork County Council.
- The scheme was an opportunity for community groups to access funding for capital projects only, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Closing date for applications was 3.00pm on Monday, 26th February 2024.
- There was an allocation of €245,559 for Cork County - €204,632 for capital projects and €40,926 allocated to Women's Groups. There are three types of grants available under this Programme:
 - Small-scale capital grant up to a maximum of €1,000
 - Capital grant in excess of €1,000
 - Women's Groups Capital Fund

A minimum of 30% of budget is required to be allocated to projects of €1,000 or less.

- A considerable number of applications were received with a large number being supported. Those that were unsuccessful were either too large to be funded, the timeline unachievable, or the project was deemed ineligible under the scheme guidelines.
- The Chief Officer emphasised that applicants cannot be notified of the outcome of their submissions until the Minister makes an official announcement.
- A breakdown of the applications is as follows:

LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME - COUNTYWIDE BREAKDOWN

Total No. of Applications Received: 207 No.
 Total No. of Successful Applications: 136 No.
 Total No. of Unsuccessful Applications: 71 No.

LOCAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME – South Cork

Total No. of Applications Received: 78 No.
 Total No. of Successful Applications: 51 No.
 Total No. of Unsuccessful Applications: 27 No.

WOMEN’S GROUP FUND - COUNTYWIDE BREAKDOWN

Total No. of Applications Received: 37 No.
 Total No. of Successful Applications: 27 No.
 Total No. of Unsuccessful Applications: 10 No.

WOMEN’S GROUP FUND – South Cork

Total No. of Applications Received: 11 No.
 No. of Successful Applications: 9 No.
 Total No. of Unsuccessful Applications: 2 No.

The Chief Officer presented the proposed allocations for South Cork to the members for approval.

The Chair commented that some of the same organisations will have recently been awarded funding of considerable amounts from Eirgrid and asked should some of the allocations be reviewed.

Ryan Howard stated that the Eirgrid process was completed towards the end of last year and the process went on for about six months and confirmed that some groups are just very good with submitting applications.

Valerie Murphy added that she would concur that some groups are very good with submitting applications, but the process does have to be equitable. She asked should groups declare funding.

The Chief Officer confirmed that the application process does require groups to declare funding granted in the last three years, but we are relying on the groups honesty and don’t have resources to check the information provided.

Cllr. Seamus McGrath thanked Kay for the breakdown and asked for clarification with regards to refusal on the grounds of members only groups.

Cllr. Cathal Rasmussen had the same query regarding the members only criteria. Also, that Eirgrid and the LEP/WGF grants are two different pots of money and questioned if right to stop groups getting money.

Aaran O’Driscoll agreed regarding the members only query, this is a grey area. She also asked if unsuccessful applicants are notified and given reasons for refusal.

The Chief Officer responded that the pot for the grant is small. With regards to members only, groups were excluded where charging more than a nominal fee and not open to the public and sited one club as an example. However, she noted all the comments and stated it will be re looked at for future grant schemes.

Cllr. Seamus McGrath thanked Kay and said that it may not be possible to change on this occasion but to look at in the future.

The Chief Officer outlined that timelines are short, which are set out by the Department and reiterated that notifications to both successful & unsuccessful applicants including any public announcements cannot be provided until after the Department approval and announcement from the Minister as per LOU agreement signed by our CE.

Approval for the grants allocations as outlined were proposed by Liam McCarthy and seconded by Cathal Rasmussen.

4. Update on LEADER Programme 2024 – 2028

The Chief Officer gave an update to the members regarding recent decisions received on the bid by the South Cork LCDC in partnership with Avondhu Blackwater Partnership & SECAD Partnership. The final outcome is that IRD Duhallow who submitted a competing bid for part of the south cork area were successful and the South Cork LCDC bid with our two partners were successful in retaining LAG status for the remaining south cork area. West Cork Development Partnership who also submitted a competing bid for part of the south cork area did not qualify and were deemed unsuccessful. The outcome will mean that two separate LAGs will be operating in the South Cork area independently with separate budgets.

The decision for the South LCDC is whether to accept the decision or to submit an appeal which would have to be sent in by 11th April to comply with the one month appeal period. The criteria for making an appeal is based on process. An appeal would cause a further delay of at least a month, no definite timelines are provided from the Department.

If the LCDC does not submit an appeal, the next stage would be the Department issuing a Funding Agreement to the LCDC and a month is given from that date to submit a revised strategy to take in the changes in the areas.

The Chief Officer, together with Sharon Corcoran, DOS and Andrew Lewis met with our two partners Valerie Murphy (Avondhu Blackwater Partnership) and Ryan Howard (SECAD Partnership) to discuss if there was any benefit to submitting an appeal and all agreed to accept the decision if the LCDC agreed.

Valerie Muphy thanked Kay and Andrew. Ryan Howard concurred with Valerie. He added that the budget for the county is the smallest per capita nationally and that a strongly worded letter should be sent to the Department in this regard.

The Chair asked are we entitled to seek clarity through freedom of information (FOI).

Michael Lynch commented that an FOI request may give a false impression suggesting that not all information was released. He added that the parameters for appeal are so restricted, there appears little benefit in appealing.

The Chair concluded that we make the most of the current situation. Ryan Howard proposed writing the letter and this was seconded by Tom Howard. The letter would be based on the allocation of budgets model and would be drafted between the three partners.

With regards to the decision to not appeal the outcome of granting of LAG statuses in South Cork to the Department, this was proposed by Liam McCarthy and seconded by Mary O’Leary.


5. Any Other Business

None.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting is 25th April 2024.

Meeting Concluded

Signed:	 CHAIRPERSON
Dated:	<u>25/4/2024</u>