

**Crinniú den Choiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil Chontae na Gaillimhe an Dé
Máirt 17 Feabhra 2026 ag 10.30 rn (via Teams)**

Minutes of Galway County Local Community Development Committee held on
Tuesday 17th February 2026 at 10.30 am via Teams

Present:

Cllr. Michael Connolly, LA Member (Chairperson)	Public
Caroline McDonagh, Local Enterprise Office	Public
Cllr. James Charity, LA Member	Public
Donal Walsh, GRETB	Public
Laurence Gaughan, HSE West	Public
Karen Mannion, FORUM Connemara Ltd	Community
Kevin Gavin, PPN Social Inclusion	Community
Michael Owens, DOS, Galway County Council	Public
Máire Uí Mhaoláin, Comhar na nOileán Teo	Community
Peter Gohery, PPN	Community
Regina Higgins, Department of Social Protection	Public
Steve Dolan, Galway Rural Development	Community
Sean O'Coisdealbha, Udaras Na Gaeltachta	Public
Vincent Lyons, PPN	Community

Apologies:

Anne Mitchell, IFA	Community
Aoibheann O'Brien, PPN	Community
Cllr. Pádraig Mac an Iomaire, LA Member (Vice-Chair)	Public
Eveanna Ryan, Galway Chamber	Community
Gerard Costello, PPN	Community

Lorna Baek, Theresa Donohue, Helen Melia, Adele Rankin, Morven Brooks, Galway County Council, Anne Cassidy, Galway Rural Development, Daithí Ó Briain, Comhar na nOileán

Cllr. M Connolly, Chair of the LCDC welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies received.

- 1. Miontuairiscí an Choiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil (LCDC)
a tionóladh Dé Máirt 9 Nollaig 2025 (cóip faoi iamh)
Minutes of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) held on
Tuesday 9th December 2025 (copy attached)**

Cllr. M Connolly welcomed any matters arising from the minutes. No matters arose from the minutes.

On the **PROPOSAL** of James Charity, **SECONDED** by Steve Dolan, the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th December 2025 were **APPROVED**.

2. Athbhreithniú Bliantúil Feidhmíochta SICAP 2025 SICAP Annual Performance Review 2025 for Lots: East/West/Islands

Theresa Donohue outlined that the SICAP Annual Performance Review assesses the programme implementors performance at year end in line with the programme requirements. A progress report had been circulated with the agenda. **The LCDC is responsible for undertaking the annual performance review process and formal approval is sought today for this.** A SICAP Subcommittee meeting took place on the 13th January 2026 to discuss the end of year review and Dónal Walsh, as Chair of the subcommittee, provided an update to the members.

Galway East – Programme Implementer: GRD

- All financial and programme requirements were met; SICAP budget underspend of approx. €18,000 within the 5% threshold; New Arrivals underspend (€2,947) will be carried over.
- Both KPIs exceeded.
- Strong evidence of progression outcomes, collaborative work, and delivery across priority target groups.
- Action Plan demonstrates consistent implementation and community impact.

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Karen Mannion** and **SECONDED** by **James Charity** the SICAP APR2025 for Galway East was approved.

Galway West – Programme Implementer: Forum Connemara

- Fully compliant; SICAP underspend of €38,008.11, of which only the 5% maximum may be carried; remainder returned.
- New Arrivals underspend can be carried without restriction; long-term carryover template submitted.
- Both KPIs exceeded, with strong evidence of organisational capacity building, progression outcomes, and interagency collaboration.

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Vincent Lyons** and **SECONDED** by **Steve Dolan** the SICAP APR2025 for Galway West was approved.

Galway Islands – Programme Implementer: Comhar na nOileán

- Within required financial splits; minor underspend allowable and carried forward.
- Strong performance with targets exceeded, particularly at community organisation level.
- Evidence of positive progression outcomes, collaborative working, and innovative approaches.

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Steve Dolan** and **SECONDED** by **Karen Mannion** the SICAP APR2025 for Galway Islands was approved.

3. Tuarascáil Plean Bliantúil SICAP 2026 (3 Bheart) SICAP Annual Plan 2026 for Lots: East/West/Islands

Theresa Donohue noted that each Local Development Company are required to submit a SICAP Annual Plan for the coming year. The DRCDG have confirmed an increased allocation for 2026 (approx. 3% per lot). New Arrivals allocation remains unchanged. Annual Plans have been circulated which outlines the proposed actions and targets and outcomes. The SICAP Subcommittee met on 29th January 2026 with all Programme Implementers to discuss each plan.

2026 Budgets for SICAP and New Arrivals are as follows:

<p>Lot Name & Number: Galway East Lot 27-01 Galway Rural Development Lot SICAP Budget: €1,438,336.00 Lot New Arrivals Budget: €147,991.00</p>	<p>Lot Name & Number: Galway West Lot 27-02 Forum Connemara Lot SICAP Budget: €513,504.00 Lot New Arrivals Budget: €125,025.00</p>	<p>Lot Name & Number: Oileáin na Gaillimhe, Lot 27-03 Comhar na nOileán Lot SICAP Budget: €72,746 Lot New Arrivals Budget: €0</p>
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Galway East – Presentation by Anne Cassidy (GRD)

Key updates and new angles for 2026 included:

- **Volunteering supports:** stronger collaboration with Galway Volunteer Centre; events planned to inform groups of supports.
- **Drop-in clinics** across the Lot expanded for individuals and community groups; digital literacy training introduced.
- **Environmental training** via LEADER funded programme (GAP), expecting up to 100 participants.
- **Interagency “speed dating” model** to reduce duplication and improve referral pathways.
- **Textile recycling** project in Ballinasloe and **paint reuse** initiative progressing toward launch.
- **Interpreting supports** for New Arrivals in Gort/Loughrea through FRCs.
- **Community education initiatives** including coffee/meditation, financial literacy, adult literacy, HFME, Make the Link, and more.
- **Traveller engagement pilot for those not in education work or training** in Tuam with Tús partners, supporting literacy and apprenticeships.
- **Work Skills** programme with DSP, aiming to support long term unemployed.
- **Start Your Own Business** programme with Workability GRET.B.
- **Employment coordination** via IPA coordinator.

Laurence Gaughan raised questions on how GRD measures for marginalised groups are being reached and whether quality evaluation mechanisms exist. Anne responded that referrals and engagement from family resource centres, Department of Social Protection, mental health services, homelessness supports, and other partners are strong indicators of reaching marginalised people. Much of the qualitative impact is visible through output reports and observed changes in service users.

Cllr. M Connolly highlighted the extensive work being done by GRD in Ballinasloe, noting strong interagency connections.

Galway West – Presentation by Forum Connemara (Karen Mannion)

Karen Mannion outlined a structured plan, with four actions under each SICAP Goal, supported by a combination of community based outreach offices and strong interagency collaboration.

Goal 1 – Community Groups

- **Older persons' supports:** Continuation of social inclusion initiatives and volunteer led engagement.
- **Biodiversity & environmental projects:** Grants of approx. **€2,500** for community led biodiversity actions; training programmes to continue.
- **Work with underrepresented groups:** Including disability supports, LGBT inclusion work, and positive ageing events.
- **Volunteerism Development:** Active promotion of volunteering pathways with the Galway Volunteer Centre.
- **Social enterprise development:**
 - A new textile based social enterprise under discussion.
 - A proposed community café supported by Forum, building on experience from Letterfrack.
- **Collaborative Projects:** Working with the Legacy Project (producing a community booklet with Creative Ireland), Healthy Galway, Clifden Arts Festival, Connemara Care, and local emergency services including CFR, GSP, and fire service.

Goal 2 – Individuals

- Focus on the hardest to reach, with full oversight through personal progression plans and person centred casework.
- Close cooperation with DSP, LAES, GRETB, CIC, Workability, OPTs, enabling streamlined referrals.
- Provision of soft skills training and accredited courses such as Safe Pass and manual handling.
- Work with older residents in care settings, focusing on reducing social isolation and supporting residents with language barriers or limited mobility.

Galway Islands – Presentation by Daithí Ó Briain (Comhar na nOileán)

Daithí outlined a focused and community embedded programme for 2026, adapted to the unique context of the islands.

Key Actions

- Supporting small community organisations through ongoing workshops addressing governance, planning, and skills development.
- Provision of a range of training and supports, with several social enterprises receiving targeted assistance.
- Strong collaboration with GRETB to deliver one to one face to face training, needed due to rural isolation.
- Continued emphasis on digital literacy and the promotion of digital hubs, helping residents access online services.
- Drop in clinics and mentoring widely used, particularly for individuals needing help with forms, entitlements, and navigating public services.
- Information packs issued to all community groups across the islands, receiving positive feedback.
- Ongoing work to support new residents joining island communities each year, fostering integration and social participation

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Kevin Gavin** and **SECONDED** by **Michael Connolly** the SICAP Annual Plan 2026 for Galway East was approved

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Steve Dolan** and **SECONDED** by **Dónal Walsh** the SICAP Annual Plan 2026 for Galway West was approved

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Steve Dolan** and **SECONDED** by **Kevin Gavin** the SICAP Annual Plan 2026 for Galway Islands was approved

4. LCDC Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2025 LCDC Annual Report 2025

T. Donohue informed members that a draft LCDC Annual Report 2025 had been circulated. It is a requirement for the LCDC to present an Annual Report of activities and programmes to the Plenary Meeting of the Local Authority by the end of March each year.

She provided a brief overview of the material included:

- Membership of the LCDC at end 2025
- Administration of Meetings and Business during 2025
- Update on the Local Economic and Community Plan
- Activities, initiatives, and projects delivered under SICAP 2025
- Grant Awards under the Local Enhancement Programme 2025
- Empowering Communities Pilot Project 2025
- Healthy Galway Initiatives 2025
- Pride of Place Win 2025

On the **PROPOSAL** of **Cllr. M. Connolly**, **SECONDED** by **Steve Dolan**, the LCDC Annual Report 2025 was **APPROVED** for submission to the March Plenary meeting.

5. Cur i Láthair ar Sheachadadh Clár Éire Shláintiúil 2024 agus Plean Bliantúil do 2025

Presentation by Healthy Galway County Co-Ordinator on Delivery of Healthy Ireland Programme 2025 and Annual Plan for 2026

Adele Rankin, Healthy Galway County Co-Ordinator delivered a comprehensive update on the delivery of the Healthy Galway County programme during 2025. She highlighted the successful rollout of the Women's Health Programme, first launched in March 2025, followed by a second delivery later in the year. Broadband enabled sessions were expanded to 14 locations, and the programme was submitted for a LAMA award.

She noted that Morven Brooks supported the programme through communications work, including design and promotional reels, and that a focus group had been formed to guide improvements for the next cycle. A more robust programme structure has been developed for 2026, with additional demonstrations planned, and a Health Screening Day focusing on post-menopausal health will take place later this year.

Adele also provided brief updates on other Healthy Galway initiatives, including the expansion of Memory Cafés, ongoing projects supported through the HSE Lottery, and joint work with the Age Friendly programme. She reported that library staff had been trained to support older adults using ACORN tablets, and that Galway Sports Partnership continues work on activator signage across the county. She acknowledged the work done to improve the Healthy Ireland section of the Galway County Council website, and Michael thanked her and Morven for the effort involved.

L. Gaughan suggested revisiting the programme later in the year due to the volume of work underway. Cllr. M. Connolly noted the value of the Farmers' Health Programme.

T. Donohue concluded by confirming that Healthy Galway activities will continue to be circulated, and that the LCDC members will be added to the newsletter mailing list.

6. Aon ghnó eile

Any other business

- T Donohue referred to the National Office for Community Safety is leading on the development of the first National Strategy for Improving Community Safety, on behalf of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. They are inviting the public to contribute to the development of this new National Strategy by taking part in a **National Community Safety Survey** which is open until 27 February 2026. LCDC members asked to circulate the national Community Safety survey link. <https://bit.ly/3Zx2gTH>
- T Donohue advised that the Local Enhancement Programme 2026 deadline has been extended to Friday 27 February 2026 and that there would be no LCDC meeting on the 19th March, instead this date will be kept to assess the

LEP grants with members of the LCDC subcommittee. An email will be sent out to cancel the meeting of the 19th March and another one to issue to the LEP subcommittee members.

- **Community Support Centres** – Lorna Baek advised that 62 community support centres have been approved and are listed on the website broken down into each municipal district:
 - 9 in Athenry-Oranmore
 - 12 in Loughrea
 - 18 in Connemara
 - 11 in Tuam
 - 12 in Ballinasloe

These community support centres will also be displayed using a map on the website.

L Baek also advised that 'A **Guide to Assisting Volunteer Groups in an Emergency**' has been drafted. It will be presented and discussed by the Humanitarian Subgroup on 25th February and later with Community Support Centres. Facilities in centres are to include a large hall space, device charging, tea/coffee, toilets, and optional services (showers, generators, accessibility supports). Kevin Gavin acknowledged Lorna's work and its local impact.

Mr Vincent Lyons asked all three Local Development Companies to use the services provided by the PPN to publicise what's happening within their organisations as the PPN has almost 1,600 groups registered in every corner of the county.

- Date of next meeting: 21st April at 10.30 a.m. in council chamber

Cllr. M. Connolly thanked all attendees and closed the meeting.

Signed: 
Lorna Baek, Chief Officer, Galway County LCDC

Signed: 
Cllr. Michael Connolly,
Chair of Galway County LCDC