



**Rural Development  
Programme**

2014 - 2020

**Longford Local  
Development  
Strategy**



**LONGFORD LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
LONGFORD COMMUNITY RESOURCES LTD.  
LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

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Longford Local Community Development Committee wishes to thank Longford County Council Planning Department and photographers, Michael Croghan and John Riddle for the use of photographers on the cover of this document.

## Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation /Term	Definition
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LAG	Local Action Group
LEADER	L'iaison Entre Actions de Development de l'Economie Rurale
CEDRA	Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas
LCRL	Longford Community Resources Ltd
EDI	Employment Development Information Centre
LWL	Longford Women's Link
SVDP	St. Vincent De Paul
FRC	Family Resource Centre
GP'S	General Practitioners
LWH	Longford Warmer Homes
SEL	Social Enterprise Longford
TUS	TUS Community Workplace Initiative
RSS	Rural Social Scheme
BTWEA	Back To Work Enterprise Allowance
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
RDP.	Rural Development Programme
L/A	Local Authority
L.C.C.	Longford County Council
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zones
SME's	Small Medium Enterprises
I.D.A	Irish Development Association
EU	European Union
ED	Electoral Division
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CRO	Company Registration Office
Tusla	Child & Family Agency
FAS	An Foras Áiseanna Saothair (Training & Employment Authority)
HSE	Health Service Executive
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
LEA	Longford Environmental Alliance
ICA	Irish Countrywomen's Association
DSP	Department of Social Protection
IFA	Irish Farming Association
ICMSA	Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association
LWETB	Longford Westmeath Education Training Board
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
SUSI	Student Universal Support Ireland
CAO	Central Administration Office
CE	Community Employment
NEETS	Young People who are Not in Employment or Training
OPW	Office of Public Works
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools
AAU	Agricultural Area Utilised
PPN	Public Participation Network

## Foreword

We are delighted to present to you the Local Development Strategy for the new LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme which will be delivered in County Longford from now until 2020.

The strategy has been formulated from an analysis of relevant socio-economic data, a county wide consultation process, and a review of current service provision in the county.

The analysis highlights the continuing levels of deprivation being experienced within County Longford. It shows how intrinsic unemployment is becoming to everyday life in the county with levels reaching almost 50% in certain small areas. County Longford consistently exceeds national averages in terms of deprivation, unemployment, age dependency and levels of local authority housing and conversely, it consistently fails to meet national averages in terms of school retention, school completion and educational attainment.

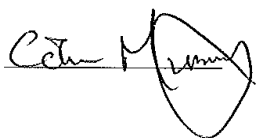
Without co-ordinated action, County Longford is in danger of slipping further into greater levels of deprivation and young people will grow up surrounded by the perception that it is normal to experience disadvantage and to be welfare dependent. It is imperative that we reverse the trends that the county is currently experiencing and ensure that young people grow up with a sense of opportunity and positivism.

This LDS has focused on the areas of action where it feels LEADER can achieve the most impact with the available resources. It has aimed to implement the programme as LEADER was intended, to remove “bottlenecks” and to deliver creative solutions to alleviate local issues using the distinct LEADER methodology.

The compilation of this strategy has involved input from a wide variety of sources and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to our consultation process. Your contributions have shaped this plan and the course of our work for the next five years. We would also like to thank our partners in local development which includes all the community groups, non-government organisations and statutory organisations who have also assisted us in the compilation of this Local Development Strategy.

Finally, the members of Longford Local Community Development Committee, the Board of Longford Community Resources and Longford County Council look forward to this new phase in their joint history as we implement the changes prescribed under the Local Government Reform Act, 2014.

We are committed to ensuring that this new process of alignment between local government and local development will enhance the implementation of the Rural Development Programme for the greater good of all those living in County Longford, but in particular for those who are experiencing social exclusion. We look forward to working with all those who will be involved in the implementation of the Rural Development Programme from now until 2020.



Colm Murray  
Chairperson  
Longford Local Community  
Development Committee



Charles Harrison  
Chairperson  
Longford Community Resources Ltd



Paddy Mahon  
Chief Executive  
Longford County Council



## Chapter 1 - The Local Action Group

- 1.1 Organisation Details:** Longford Local Community Development Committee (Longford LCDC)
- C/o Ciaran Murphy Longford County Council,  
Great Water Street, Longford, Co. Longford
- Primary Contact:** Ciaran Murphy
- Chief Officer, Longford County Council, Great Water Street,  
Longford, Co. Longford
- Email: [cmurphy@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:cmurphy@longfordcoco.ie)
- Telephone: 043 334 3506

### 1.2 Legal Description of the Local Action Group

<b>Established</b>	June 2014
<b>Legal Structure</b>	Statute established committee, under Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.
<b>Operational Ethos</b>	<p>The aim of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is to coordinate local and community development activity within the operational area of the Longford Local Community Development Committee for the purposes of reducing overlap, avoiding duplication and improving the targeting of resources.</p> <p>This includes co-ordination of local development spend while ensuring that local needs are met, generating greater citizen and community engagement in, as well as the oversight of Local and Community Development Programmes.</p>

### 1.3 LAG composition and Decision Making

The composition of the LAG is in accordance with the legislation<sup>1</sup> and guidelines in that ten of the Longford LCDC members are drawn from a wide ranging non-statutory sector. This membership and LCDC Standing Orders will ensure that more than 50% of the votes in selection decisions are cast by members which do not represent statutory agencies. The

<sup>1</sup>Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

general operation and procedures of the Longford LCDC are outlined in the standing orders document which was approved by the LCDC and is attached in Appendix 1 of this strategy.

The membership of the Longford LCDC is outlined as follows:

*Statutory Members of Longford Local Community Development Committee.*

<b>Seamus Butler</b>	Elected Representative
<b>Colm Murray</b>	Elected Representative (Chair)
<b>Gerry Warnock</b>	Elected Representative
<b>Martin Mulleady</b>	Elected Representative
<b>Barbara Heslin</b>	Director of Services, Longford County Council.
<b>Michael Nevin</b>	Head of Local Enterprise, Longford Local Enterprise Office.
<b>Joe Whelan</b>	Community Services Manager, HSE
<b>Maria Fox</b>	Youth Officer, Longford Westmeath Education Training Board.
<b>Des Henry</b>	Regional Manager, Department of Social Protection.

*Non- Statutory Members of Longford Local Community Development Committee.*

<b>Fintan Mc Gill</b>	Longford Chamber of Commerce
<b>Seamus Orr</b>	PPN – Social Inclusion
<b>Louise Lovett</b>	PPN – Social Inclusion
<b>Ray Hogan</b>	PPN – Environmental
<b>Tess Murphy</b>	PPN – Community & Voluntary
<b>Joe Murphy</b>	PPN – Community & Voluntary
<b>Sean Hannon</b>	Irish Farmers Association
<b>Joe Flaherty</b>	Longford Business Forum
<b>Seadna Ryan</b>	County Longford Tourism
<b>Adrian Greene</b>	CEO, Longford Community Resources Ltd.

The Chief Officer shall carry out a regular review of the membership to account for changing LCDC objectives with the option of recommending to the LCDC to the “standing-down” of member organisations, where this is appropriate e.g. where the strategic need for member organisations has been satisfied or new member organisations are required to meet a specific strategic need or member organisations are not attending on a regular basis. When retirement or other vacancy arises, the member shall be replaced from within the sector she/he represented on the LCDC. If a member retires and is not eligible for reappointment, the Chief Officer of the LCDC shall make the necessary arrangements that member to be replaced, as may be appropriate for the sector represented.

## Gender Balance

As outlined in the Standing Order the LCDC should aim for a minimum membership of 40% men and 40% women respectively. While it is acknowledged that the current gender balance of Local Action Group is not optimal at 21% female and 79% male, the Longford Local Community Development Committee will aim to secure a balanced gender representation during the term of the programme. The female representation on the LCDC will be increased in the near future with a female representative being nominated to replace a current male representative on the committee. Also when nominations to the LCDC are required, the LCDC will be encouraging representative bodies to nominate female representatives to the LCDC and where a body nominate a number of representatives to the LCDC they will be requested that this representation is gender balanced. Included in Appendix 1 is a sample letter which, when required, will be issued by the LCDC to the nominating body. This letter references the requirement for the nominating body to be cognisant of gender balance and to nominate a female representative where possible. As stated the above the LCDC will strive to achieve the required gender balance during the term of the programme however this can prove difficult at times due to the requirement that representatives nominated to the LCDC have decision making powers within their own organisation or group and these representatives at local level are quite often male.

## Decision making procedures/structures

The Chairperson of the LCDC will endeavour to ensure meaningful, focused and inclusive participation by all LCDC Members in the decision-making process. Matters for discussion at Board Meetings will be related to the functions of the LCDC as set out in the Standing Order document. Where there are specific requirements and/or rules in relation to decision making in relation to the Rural Development Programme these requirements will supersede those in the Standing Orders.

The LCDC should arrive at decisions, as far as possible, by agreement, and votes should be avoided. Where this is not possible, Committee members shall agree to vote using roll call. Each member present at a meeting of the LCDC shall have a vote unless prohibited by any conflict of Interest. A member may abstain from voting, and such abstention shall be recorded in the minutes. For the purposes of securing an inclusive and representative decision-making process, any decisions taken by the LCDC will be voted on by at least 60% of LCDC members, this applies to decisions taken by the LCDC after all relevant conflict of interest issues have been addressed. At least 51% of those voting on a decision will be representative of non-public sector partners and decisions are be carried by majority vote. Due to the largely voluntary status of LCDC members, the decision-making arrangements may facilitate voting by written procedure, thus ensuring participation in the decision-making by LAG members who are unable to attend the relevant LCDC meeting. It is acknowledged that as per the Operating Rules of the Rural Development Programme that individual LAG members can only vote by written procedure in a maximum of one out of every four consecutive LAG meetings. Where the Chairperson has not formally declared the result of a vote, or is in doubt as to whether their declaration is right or wrong, they are entitled if they think fit to take a second vote on the matter, especially if they considers that through some misunderstanding the first vote did not properly represent the sense of the meeting at that time. The Chairperson does not have a casting vote and where there is a tied vote, a motion is deemed not to be carried.

Longford Local Community Development Committee as the Local Action Group will have ultimate responsibility for the delivery, implementation and decision making in relation to the LEADER Programme. In order to support the successful delivery and implementation of the



programme Longford Community Resources Ltd and Longford County Council are engaged as the implementation partner and financial partner respectively, the roles and responsibilities of the LAG and each partner are set out in point 1.4 below. In addition the LCDC have, and will be, establishing a number of substructures to support the in the delivery of the programme, namely; Advisory Group for Preparation of Rural Development 2014/2020 Programme Strategy, LEADER Policy Group, Evaluation Committee and LEADER Monitoring Committee. The membership and purpose of these committees are detailed below and each of these substructures report to the LCDC directly.

### **Advisory Group for Preparation of Rural Development 2014/2020 Programme Strategy**

**Membership** – The membership of the Strategic Policy Committee will consist of six representatives. Three nominated by the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), one being the Chairperson, two nominated by the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), one being the Chairperson, and also the Head of Local Enterprise representing the Local Enterprise Office who is also a member of the LCDC

**Purpose** – The primary purpose of the Advisory Group is to support the Local Community Development Committee in the preparation, drafting and adoption of the LEADER Local Development Strategy. This includes supporting the consultation, ensure that the processes used in developing the Local Development Strategy are participative and inclusive of stakeholders (members of the target groups, agencies and organisations), supporting the identification of gaps or areas of concern and supporting the formulation of appropriate strategic policies to address these gaps or concerns.

### **LEADER Policy Group**

**Membership** – Initial membership to be four members of the LCDC and to ensure public and private representation two members from the public sector and two members from the private sector, the two members from the private sector to be represented by the PPN members, the public sector to be represented by the Local Enterprise Office and one other member from the public sector of the LCDC. It is also proposed that once established the Evaluation Committee would also nominate two people to the policy group with one being the Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee.

**Purpose** – To devise, review and recommend policies to the LCDC which will be required to rollout the actions identified in the Local Development Strategy for RDP 2014-2020 programme in County Longford, this will include making recommendations to the Longford LCDC on the formulation of all policies required for the implementation of the RDP Programme 2014-2020 and its Themes, Objectives and LDS Actions, advising on policies for budget levels for project types/criteria and making recommendations on priority areas/time limited calls.

### **Evaluation Committee**

**Membership** – It is recommended that the committee should comprise of ten members from the following representative sectors; Environment, Heritage, Business/Enterprise, Youth, Disability, Tourism, Finance, Local Enterprise Office, Social Inclusion Pillar and Community Pillar. It is also acknowledged that from time to time additional expertise may be required on the Evaluation Committee in terms of specific calls for applications or themes being appraised. Members of the Evaluation Committee must not be members of the LCDC and in the case of in-house projects must not be members of the Implementing Partner.

The LCDC should select these members by two methods, direct invitation to specific groups or agencies to nominate a representative to the Evaluation Committee; Local Enterprise

Office, Tourism – Fáilte Ireland, Finance – Director of Finance Longford County Council or local Accounting and Auditors firm, Social Inclusion Pillar – PPN Social Inclusion College and Community Pillar - PPN Community and Voluntary College.

The remaining sectors will be invited through an open selection process to the public where an advertisement requesting a submission of interest to become a member of the LEADER Evaluation Committee. The open selection process will include robust selection criteria in relation to each sector in order to manage this public selection process for membership of the Evaluation Committee.

It will be important to ensure that anyone selected for the Evaluation Committee has a level of expertise in the area they are representing and they are capable of engaging and making decisions as part of the Evaluation Committee role in making recommendations to the LCDC for ultimate decision. This will make the programme application process in relation to the evaluation of applications more transparent, fair and non-discriminatory and also give meaning to the community led ethos of the programme.

Purpose – The overall purpose of the Evaluation Committee will be to appraise and have oversight of the project assessments and project files on completed project applications made to the Implementing Partner seeking funding under the Rural Development Programme and to make recommendations to the LCDC on project applications in line with the Longford Local Development Strategy for the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, themes/sub-theme budgets, actions and targets set for consideration by the LCDC as LAG.

### **LEADER Monitoring Committee**

Membership – The membership of this committee will be taken from and decided by the LCDC members when the group is established. It is also acknowledged that this committee may require additional expertise in relation to the ongoing monitoring of trends, outputs, outcomes and impact of the LEADER programme.

Purpose – The overall purpose of the LEADER Monitoring Committee will be to review annual progress in the implementation of the Longford Local Development Strategy and to make recommendations to the LCDC in relation to these reviews. These reviews will include measurement, monitoring and evaluation of the spend and impact against the LDS priorities, monitoring local trends and issues that may impact the aims and objectives of the LDS and ensure that the processes used in reviewing and monitoring the LDS are participative and inclusive of relevant stakeholders (members of the target groups of the RDP; relevant members/staff of the LAG, Implementing Partner and Financial Partner; and other agencies and organisations relevant to RDP in Co. Longford).

### **Frequency of LAG and Sub-committee meetings**

Longford Local Community Development Committee currently meets on a bi-monthly basis. However, it may be necessary to extend meeting frequency to monthly meetings in order to appraise all project applications. A schedule of monthly meetings for the following year will be organised on an annual basis every December to ensure that there is no delay in appraising projects.

The LCDC has established a LEADER Policy Group which will meet as required during the course of the programme, however initially this group will meet on a regular basis to devise, review and recommend policies to the LCDC for decision.

Once established it is recommended that the Evaluation Committee will meet every 8 weeks or on a more frequent basis as required. A minimum of six meetings will be held each year during the course of the programme.

As detailed above a LEADER Monitoring Committee will be established at the commencement of the Strategy and it is envisaged that this committee will meet bi-annually.

**1.4 LAG Roles and Responsibilities:**

Key agreements will be put in place to ensure clear separation of duties and the various roles and responsibilities within the LAG:-

<p><b>Local Action Group</b></p>	<p>Approval of the LAG partners role in the implementation of the LDS.</p> <p>Drawing up a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations, which avoid conflict of interest, ensure that at least 51% of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public authorities, and allow selection by written procedure.</p> <p>Approve, generally, calls for proposals in accordance with the priorities and objectives set out in the Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>*Selecting operations and fixing the amount of support, and, where relevant, presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval.</p> <p>Decision making body for all LEADER funded applications.</p> <p>*Monitoring the implementation of the community-led local development strategy and the operations supported and carrying out specific evaluation activities linked to that strategy.</p> <p>Monitoring and review performance of LCRL as sole implementation partner as per service level agreement with the LCDC.</p> <p>Monitor the performance of Longford County Council as lead financial partner.</p>
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\*Joint Actions with Implementing Partner.

<p><b>Lead Financial Partner</b></p>	<p><b>Sole Implementing Partner</b></p>
<p>An agreement will be written between Longford L.C.D.C. and Longford County</p>	<p>An agreement will be written between Longford L.C.D.C. and Longford Community</p>

<p>Council to set out the County Council's role as the Lead Financial Partner for the LEADER Programme.</p> <p>The Lead Financial Partner will be responsible for the draw-down of programme funds from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.</p> <p>It will provide advance administration and animation funding to the Implementation Partner and it will make payments to promoters on behalf of the LAG.</p>	<p>Resources Ltd (LCRL) in relation to LCRL's role as the sole Implementing Partner in the LEADER Programme. As the Implementation Body, LCRL will be responsible for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Programme of Work Plan</li> <li>- Managing all Animation Activity</li> <li>- Developing and Issuing Calls for Proposals, including time limited calls</li> <li>- Developing proposals with promoters</li> <li>- Receiving and processing applications in line with LDS</li> <li>- Project development, management and monitoring</li> <li>- Developing and implementing LAG led projects</li> <li>- Resourcing of Evaluation Committee and following evaluation, the submission of projects to the board of LCRL and the LCDC.</li> <li>- Prepare and issue contracts and letters of offer</li> <li>- File management, audit compliance and collating of documentation for Article 28 checks</li> <li>- Submission of files for Article 28 checks</li> </ul>
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## 1.5 LAG Financial Management

### LAG Lead Financial Partner Financial Control

Longford County Council will be the Lead Financial Partner for the LEADER programme in Longford. In terms of local government finance, the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government oversees the financial well-being and effective financial management and accountability of local authorities and the promotion of value for money principles in the sector. The Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) sets out the legislative basis for local authority financial control. Expenditure by Local Government falls into two main categories, Capital and Current.

#### **Capital Expenditure**

Capital expenditure is expenditure that results in the creation of an asset beyond the year in which that asset is provided e.g. houses, swimming pool, library etc. It is financed largely by grants with the balance being funded from development levies and borrowings and own internal resources and property sales. In the case of some projects (e.g. local authority offices) they may be funded entirely by local authority own resources and borrowing. In recent years capital expenditure by Longford County Council has been of the order of €12m per annum.

#### **Current Expenditure**

A local authority's annual budget represents current expenditure (sometimes referred to as revenue expenditure) which covers the day-to-day running of the local authority (including staff salaries, housing maintenance, pensions, operational costs of treatment plants etc.). The annual budget is adopted by the elected council at its budget meeting. Current expenditure is funded from a variety of sources. At the end of each year the local authority prepares an Annual Financial Statement. Current expenditure by Longford County Council is of the order of €42m per annum.

### **Expenditure Control Policies**

Longford County Council has in place financial management systems, policies and procedures which cover authorisation, internal controls, procurement and statutory compliance.

### **Audit and Oversight of Local Authorities**

The accounts of local authorities, both current and capital, are audited by local government auditors who are independent in the performance of their functions and are under the general control of a Director of Audit. Local authority staff and elected members have a statutory duty to co-operate with them. Following receipt by the local authority of the audited Annual Financial Statement, and any auditor's report, the Chief Executive must submit both for consideration by the Elected Council. The audit of Local Government financial statements is undertaken in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, published by the Local Government Audit. Longford County Council also has an Internal Audit system whose work is overseen by an external Audit Committee.

Value for Money (V.F.M) reports covering a broad area of local authority activities have been issued promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness in local authorities. Where appropriate, the implementation of recommendations contained in the reports is monitored at the annual audit of the individual local authority annual financial statements. Longford LCDC, as a committee of the Council, operates under the same financial control system.

Longford County Council will also underwrite/indemnify the LAG and its members for actions taken in implementing the LDS. The financial partner will have a robust verification role in respect of processes around decision-making to allow it underwrite LAG activities with confidence. This will be largely facilitated through the Article 48 verification process.

### **LEADER Programme Financial Control**

Longford County Council (Financial Partner) and Longford Community Resources Ltd. (Implementation Partner) will operate the IRIS IT System. The proven Information and Communications Technology systems and the skill base of both partners are seen as critical to the daily operations of the programme. The accounting administration for programmes will be based on:

- Recognised accounting principles, which have been translated into clear practical procedures.
- Public Accountability.
- E.U. and State funding conditions including EU Commission Regulations.

To ensure robust, transparent and efficient financial management, the following tools will be adopted:-

- **Procedures Manuals**

Each partner will contribute to the development of a Procedures Manual, guided by the previous LEADER programme, and the Operating Rules for LEADER 2014-2020. The purpose of the Procedures Manual is to comply with accreditation requirements as referenced in E.U. and Government Regulations and to guide employees and the employer on the procedures laid down by the LAG in relation to the overall operation of programme. The procedures outlined in the manual may be updated from time to time to reflect changing circumstances.

- **Procurement**

From time to time, the Implementation Partner, Longford Community Resources Ltd. may seek the services of external providers to aid in delivering the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. In all instances of tendering, it will adhere to the guidelines for Public Procurement. When appointing consultants, fees will be paid for a fixed amount for a specified period and task as set out in a signed contract. It will be a policy of the LAG to ensure that all contracts are fully adhered to.

## 1.6 LEADER Staffing

Longford County Council as Financial Partner will appoint competent administration staff to provide administration of the programme.

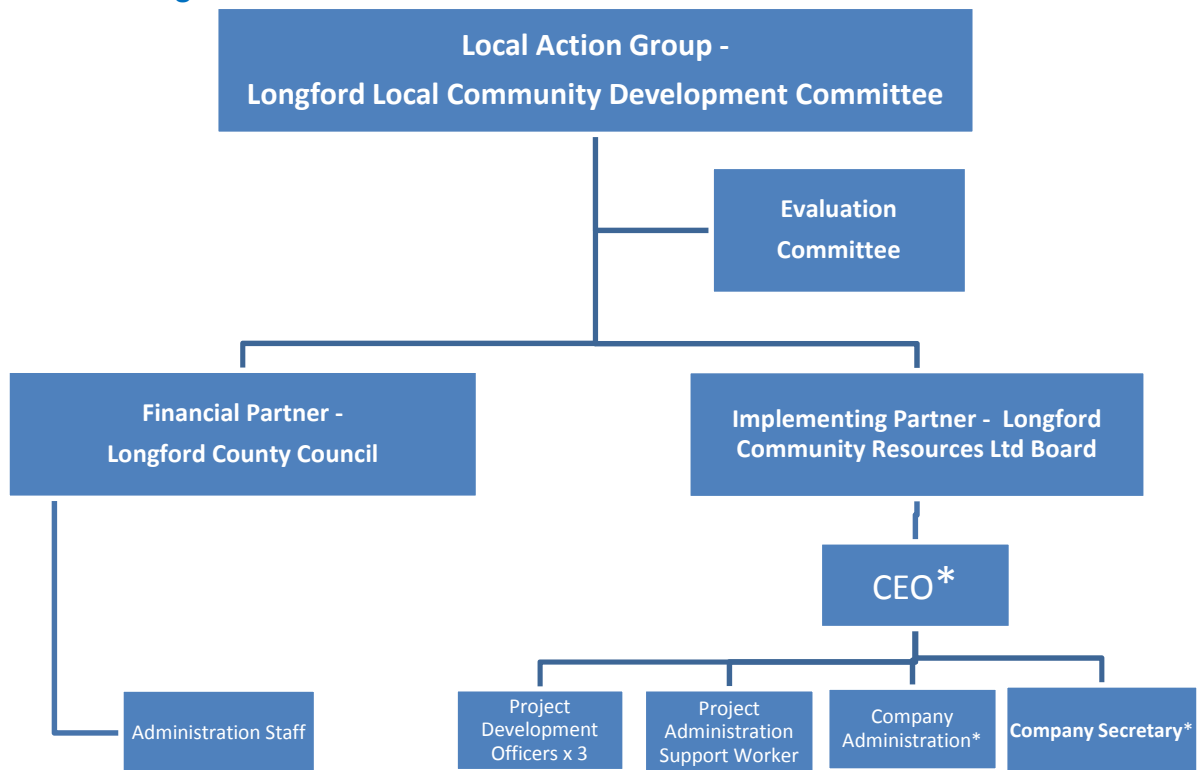
Longford Community Resources Ltd as Implementation Partner will be responsible for the day to day management and co-ordination of the Rural Development Programme under the direction of their CEO. The CEO is responsible for the management of the company and all of its functions including the delivery of all programmes being implemented. He will be assisted by key staff members in implementing the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

The CEO has 19 years' experience in administration and management with Longford Community Resources Ltd, this involved the implementation and delivery of many social, economic and rural development programmes including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme and its predecessors, Rural Transport Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Tús Community Work placement Initiative and the LEADER programmes from Leader II up to and including the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

The current two Development Workers have 15 years collective experience in Rural Development and specific experience on the overall delivery of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and have an excellent working knowledge of the issues facing the county. Through their work they have also built valuable contacts with key community organisations and with relevant staff working in local statutory agencies. The RDP Administration Support Worker has been employed for 11 years assisting with all aspects of programme administration. The Company Administrator, who has been employed for 10 years and the Company Secretary have been employed for 6 years have extensive experience in corporate governance and the financial management of the Rural Development Programme. The project staff members will be employed on a full-time basis on the programme, working a 35 hour week. The CEO, company administrator and company secretary will be shared with additional development programmes within the company and they will work on the Rural Development Programme exclusively for 42% of their 35 hour working week.

There will be a recruitment process following programme commencement to secure an additional experienced staff member who will complete the staff complement. It would be expected that any new staff employed would have relevant experience of working within the Rural Development Programme.



**Table 1.2 – Proposed Management and Staffing Structure for the Implementation of the RDP Programme 2014-2020**

Note: \* These positions are shared with additional development programmes within the company. Staff are allocated to the Rural Development Programme for 42% of a 35 hour working week.

### 1.7 Project selection procedures for LEADER

As part of the delivery of the LEADER Programme, Longford LCDC has given responsibility to Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL) in order to build the capacity and co-ordinate an animation campaign to develop local actor's project management capabilities. Longford LCDC in conjunction with LCRL will devise non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedures and objective criteria for calls for proposals and ongoing project submission in line with the objectives and actions set out within this Local Development Strategy. LCRL will have responsibility for preparing; publishing, developing, issuing and managing calls for expressions of interest, proposals and ongoing project submissions, these calls will have been prior approved by Longford LCDC. All expressions of interest for funding will be recorded on the LEADER ICT System and all expressions of interest will be notified to Longford LCDC including those which do not proceed to a formal application for funding.

In relation to targeted calls for proposals, Longford LCDC confirms that a minimum of 40% of the projects approved in monetary terms will be allocated to targeted calls for proposals. These targeted calls will be spread across all themes outlined in our Local Development Strategy and each year from 2017 to 2020.

LCRL will support local actors in developing proposals and will also receive funding applications from potential project promoters. LCRL will subsequently submit project applications and assessments to the Evaluation Committee for scoring, evaluation and recommendation to Longford LCDC.

As outlined above in point 1.3 and as per the operating rules, Longford LCDC will establish an independent Evaluation Committee which will assess and evaluate all applications for LEADER funding. The Evaluation Committee will be solely responsible for making recommendations for funding or otherwise to the LAG. Evaluation Committee members will not be LAG or Implementing Partner members.

As part of the evaluation process each project application will be assessed in terms of being an eligible activity for the receipt of funding which will include adherence to relevant EU Regulations, the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 objectives and the specific theme and sub theme for which funding is sought, the Operating Rules for the programme and the objectives and actions identified in the LDS for Co. Longford. Each Evaluation Committee member will then complete a formal evaluation scoring record with their individual marks and supporting comments on each project application presented for evaluation. These scoring records will then be aggregated and the average score will be recorded for each project evaluated. The criteria for project evaluation and scoring will include the following (a copy of the individual Evaluation Committee scoring record template is included in Appendix 1):

- Compatibility with the Local Development Strategy
- Displacement & Deadweight
- Innovation
- Promoter Experience
- Financial Viability
- Sustainability
- Requirement

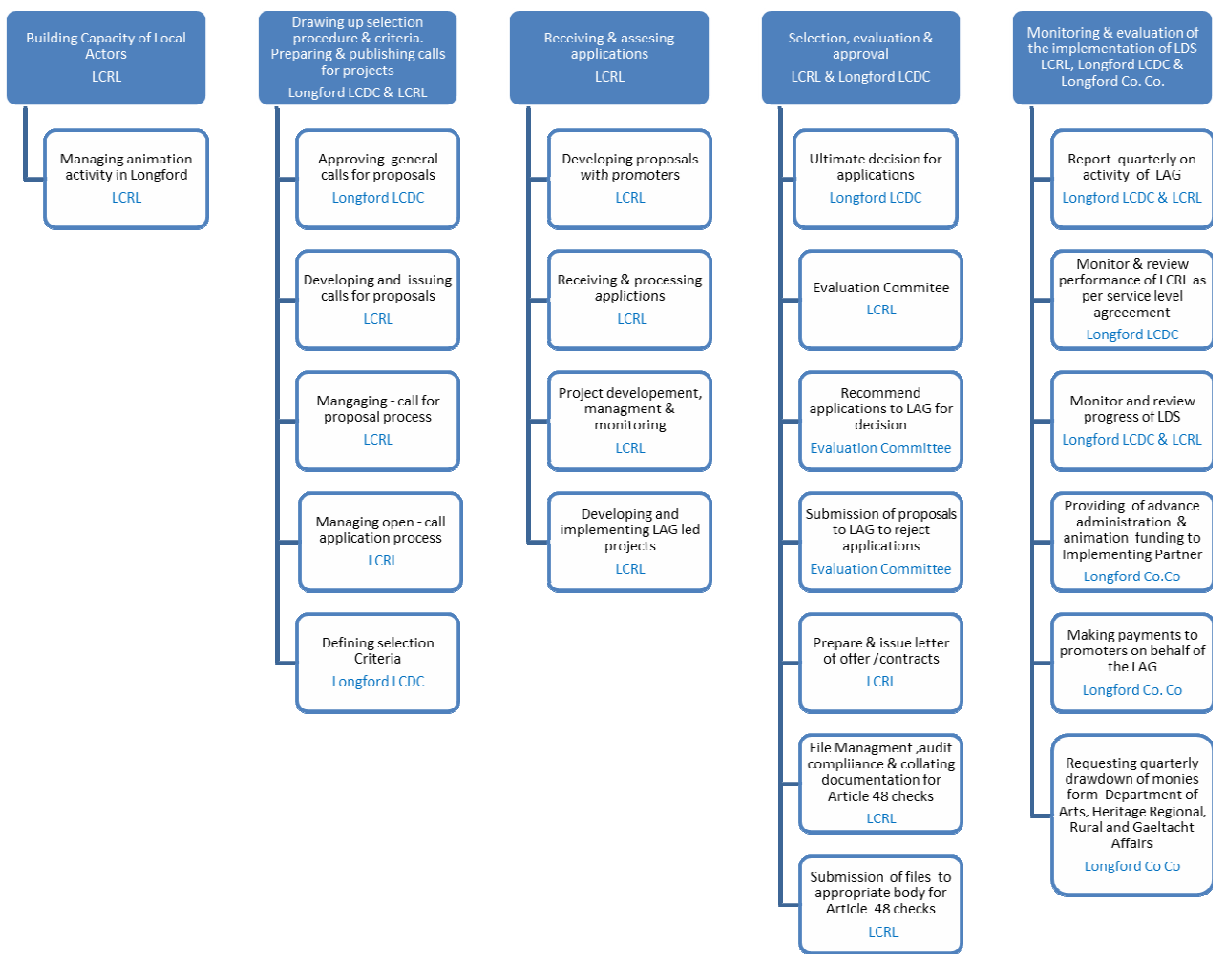
Prior to evaluating a project Evaluation Committee members must declare if they have an interest and the nature of the interest in a proposed project, should a member of the Evaluation Committee declare an interest then that person must absent themselves from any deliberations in relation to the project. All recommendations of the Evaluation Committee must be made following dealing with any declarations of interest. A minimum score of 65% of the total marks must be achieved in order for a project to be recommended by the Evaluation Committee for approval by the LAG. A detailed record of the Evaluation Committee's assessment and recommendation must be maintained on the project file.

LCRL have been delegated responsibility by Longford LCDC to provide secretarial support to the Evaluation Committee and as part of this responsibility LCRL will forward the project scoring records and recommendations of the Evaluation Committee to Longford LCDC through the Chief Officer. These scoring records and recommendations will be forwarded directly to Longford LCDC for decision by the LAG within 10 working days of the Evaluation Committee recommendation. It is noted that the evaluation score records and recommendations provided by the Evaluation Committee for each project application cannot be revised, amended, approved or rejected by any other group/body before they are submitted to Longford LCDC for decision. The decision making procedures of the LAG are detailed in section 1.3 above. In making a decision, should the LAG require, they may ask the Evaluation Committee to reconsider its recommendation or seek further information on the project before reaching a decision. The LAG may also perform a full evaluation of a project submitted by the Evaluation Committee. In such cases, the LAG must adhere to the full selection process prescribed for the Evaluation Committee.

Following the LAG decision, LCRL will inform the project promoter of the outcome of their application for funding, in the case of successful applications, and subject to administrative checks being performed, LCRL will prepare and issue letters of offer and contracts on behalf of Longford LCDC to the successful project promoter. The general file management for

project applications will be the responsibility of LCRL. The LAG (Longford LCDC) and its financial and implementation partners, Longford County Council and Longford Community Resources Ltd will be governed by the RDP. Operating Rules in the operation and the implementation of the Local Development Strategy in respect of their various responsibilities. Further detail on the project selection process and procedures are contained in Appendix 1 of this Local Development Strategy, which includes developing and building the capacity of local actors, issuing and managing calls for proposals, receiving and assessing applications for support, selecting operations and monitoring the operations.

**Table 1.3 –Proposed Implementation for LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 in County Longford**



## 1.8 Relevant Experience

### Local Action Group: Longford Local Community Development Committee

The 19 members of the Longford LAG possess a wealth of experience in the public and private sector along with extensive and community and rural development knowledge, that it makes them eminently suitable for their role in operating the Rural Development Programme.

The membership includes the CEO's of Longford County Council, Longford Local Enterprise Office and Longford Westmeath ETB, along with senior management staff from DSP and the HSE, all bringing their experience of strategic development and programme implementation.

The private and commercial business sector is represented by four members whose business interests include national media, waste management, pharmaceuticals, financial services and real estate management. The farming sector is represented by a former Chair of the IFA.

Along with four experienced elected representatives who possess excellent local knowledge and information about the needs of the county, there are five community representatives whose experience in community led development will be invaluable to the LAG. Individual members are responsible for the development of flag-ship community and tourism projects in the county and they represent the range of interests that are reflected in the programme. They are all active members of the PPN.

One member has a long record of environmental issues and has delivered key projects within the county.

In addition to their individual areas of expertise, the members have had long-standing involvement on all the key working groups in the county, including Chambers, Business Forums, Residents Associations, Tidy Towns Groups, Environmental Groups, County Childcare Committee, County Longford Tourism and the many agency committees that manage resources in the county.

**Table 1.4 –Relevant experience of LAG Members relating to programme implementation and managing of public funds.**

Name of LCDC Member	Relevant experience relating to programme implementation and managing of public funds
Seamus Butler	<p>Seamus is Managing Director of BMS Ltd in Longford, which he established in 1986. It exports worldwide, with product in 40 countries. Seamus brings a wide breadth of experience locally, nationally and internationally to his current roles and he has been active in local community organisations in Longford for over 35 years. His positions have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member of the Small Business Task Force</li> <li>- Chairman of ISME</li> <li>- Member of the Ireland Newfoundland Partnership</li> <li>- President of Longford Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>- Founder member of Longford Community Resources Ltd</li> <li>- Chairman of Longford Community Resources Ltd LEADER Evaluation Committee for 5 years</li> <li>- Chairman of Longford Community Resources Ltd for 7 years</li> <li>- President of the Forum on Public Procurement</li> <li>- Member of Longford Co. Co., 2003 to 2009</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leas Cathaoirleach Longford Co. Co. 2014/2015</li> <li>- Cathaoirleach Longford Municipal District 2015/2016</li> </ul> <p><b>Currently:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leader of Majority on Longford Co. Co.</li> <li>- Chairman of the St Mel's Cathedral Project Committee</li> <li>- Chairman of Longford Town F.C. Supporters' Trust</li> <li>- Chairman of Economic and Enterprise SPC</li> <li>- Member of the LCC Corporate Policy Group</li> <li>- Chairman of LCC Connolly Barracks Committee</li> <li>- Member of LCC Heritage Forum</li> <li>- Member of LCC Joint Policing Committee</li> <li>- Member of LCC Regeneration Committee</li> <li>- Chairman of Templemichael College and Longford College of Further Education BOM</li> <li>- Vice Chairman of Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board</li> </ul>
Colm Murray	Colm is involved locally with Kenagh GAA club and Kenagh Tidy Towns. He is a volunteer with St. Christopher's and with the Irish Cancer Society. Over the past twelve months Colm has been instrumental in raising many motions to the Council's Health Forum which has secured the retention of the Midlands Ambulance Service. He is interested in helping to enhance tourism in the area and to promote the 5000 year old Corlea Trackway Heritage Centre, as well as to use the Royal Canal and the many beautiful walkways to their full potential. Furthermore he is keen to assist in improving rural broadband availability.
Gerry Warnock	Gerry has worked in Local Government since February 2001 and has a vast range of practical experience in every facet of the organization. He has an NUI Qualification in Local Government Studies. Having been co-opted as a member of Longford Town Council in May 2011 and elected to Longford County Council in May 2014. He is the incoming Chair of the Housing Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and Chair of County Longford Joint Policing Committee (JPC). He has a wealth of experience in dealing with communities and community events. Gerry spear-headed the highly successful Love Longford Arts Festival in 2013 and initiated the establishment of the Longford Regeneration Project, which will form the nucleus of the County's Economic and Social progression over the next number of years.
Martin Mulleady	Martin is currently the Chairperson of Drumlish Community Centre Chairperson of Drumlish Tidy Towns Committee, Member of the Housing SPC in Longford County Council Member of the Joint Policing Committee, County Board Delegate for Fr Manning Gaels GFC, Member of Fr Manning Gaels GFC Executive, Longford County Minor Selector, Member of Longford Sports Partnership Board.
Barbara Heslin	Barbara is currently a Director of Services in Longford County Council. Her professional qualification is Chartered Accountancy and she has extensive experience in both public and private sectors. In her current role, she is actively involved in the delivery of the Local Economic and Community Plan, engaging with Government Departments and agencies on specific targets and actions and is a member of the Midlands Region implementation group responsible for the delivery of

	the Action Plan for Jobs. Areas of expertise include strategic management, corporate governance, change management, financial management and procurement.
Michael Nevin	Michael is the Head of Local Enterprise in Longford County Council and has over 20 years' experience in guiding and support economic growth in county Longford, with the County Enterprise Board, County Development Board, and as Board member of LCRL (LAG in previous LEADER Programmes). Michael is currently on the County Longford Tourism Committee, is advisor to the Economic & Enterprise SPC, and is an active supporter of Soccer and GAA in the County.
Joe Whelan	Joe is currently the HSE Community Services Manager for Westmeath. This involves oversight of all Primary Care services in the County. He also has responsibility for the Community Alcohol & Drugs Services and Homelessness in the four counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. He is a former Director of Westmeath Community Development (Who operated former Leader Programmes in Westmeath), Cathaoirleach Westmeath County Council, Governor Athlone Institute of Technology and represents the HSE on a number of committees. Currently Joe also represents HSE on the Westmeath LCDC.
Maria Fox	Maria has over 20 years' experience in a range of community, voluntary and statutory services. She has worked in the areas of addiction, health promotion, advocacy and public administration. In her current role as Youth Officer with LWETB since 2007, Maria has responsibility for the provision, co-ordination, administration and assessment of youth work services on behalf of the ETB. This involves among other duties; the assessment of grant applications, funding oversight and service monitoring on behalf of government departments and funders. She is a member of several interagency groups in Longford and Westmeath and also represents LWETB on the Westmeath LCDC.
Des Henry	Des is the Department of Social Protection Divisional Manager for Midlands-North (Longford, Roscommon, Westmeath & Meath). He represents the DSP on a number of LCDCs and on various other Committees. The DSP have been involved in identifying beneficiaries for Leader Funding in consultation with Local Partnership Companies in previous LEADER programmes, and will take that knowledge & experience to the LAG for the LEADER Element of RDP 2014-2020.
Fintan Mc Gill	Fintan has been involved in the property business in Longford since 2001. He has widespread experience in all sectors of the property business including residential /commercial sales & lettings, commercial management and property valuations. He also works as an expert witness for court and local authority valuations. Having lived in Longford since 1995. Fintan has a wealth of experience in business and the community. He is also president of Longford Chamber of Commerce and secretary to Longford High Achievers Network (a business referral network). Fintan also sits on Economic Development and Enterprise SPC.



Seamus Orr	Seamus has previously sat on the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd- who has acted as the Local Action Group for previous LEADER programmes in Longford. Seamus was involved with LCRL from 1998-2007, and for a time held the position of Secretary of the Board. He was involved in the development of Local Development Strategies, selection criteria and in decision making in relation to project applications. The Board was also responsible for developing the Rural Social Scheme in Longford. Seamus is also a member of the longstanding 'Springlawn Residents Association' and has experience in dealing with unemployed youth in the area. He has an interest in ensuring Social Inclusion is on the agenda of the LCDC. He is also a member of the Longford PPN Secretariat.
Louise Lovett	Louise is the CEO of Longford Women's Link (LWL) a local NGO which employs 110 staff and has an annual turnover of €2.2m, the majority of which is public funding. Louise successfully managed the 2011 Leader funded project to construct a purpose built Women's Community Education Facility to the rear of LWL's existing premises. Prior to joining LWL, Louise gained extensive experience working in the corporate sector for 27 years, with 5 years in executive management. She holds a BA (Honours) in Management. She was responsible for 150 staff in 5 locations, had a team of 7 managers working to her and was responsible for the management and control of an annual €1Billion claims payment budget and an annual €6m operating budget. Louise has a proven track record in People, Process and Change Management as well as Strategic Planning and Programme Management and Implementation. Currently Louise is Chairperson of Longford County Childcare Committee (LCCC), is a Director of the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI), is a member of the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Housing Forum (MRJHCF), is a member of Longford Westmeath Children & Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) and is also a member of Longford County Council's Socio Economic Strategic Policy Committee.
Ray Hogan	Ray is retired after over 40 years working in the Mechanical Engineering division of Bord na Mona where he held a number of managerial posts both at local works and at corporate level at their Head Office until his retirement. He has a long record of involvement in environmental issues at local community level and currently sits as environmental representative on Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and on the Economic Development, Urban Renewal, Rural Re-organisation, Educational, Cultural and Recreational Development Strategic Policy Committee within Longford County Council. He is the Facilitator of Co. Longford Public Participation Network Secretariat (PPN) as its environmental college representative. He is Chairperson and founder member of Longford Environmental Alliance and delegate to the Environmental Pillar. He served over 10 years as Environment Representative on the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd. up to his appointment to Co. Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). In 2008 he set up and managed Longford Warmer Homes Ltd. This is community based project set up to improve the housing conditions of the low-income and elderly and other marginalised groups in Co.

	<p>Longford. The project funded through a Community Services Project by Pobal and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland energy poverty strategy, currently employs six people full-time and have completed the insulated over 1,200 homes in Co. Longford. Ray is currently Chairman of the Board of Longford Homes Ltd. Ray is currently Club Registrar and Junior Convenor at Strokestown Golf Club and sits on both the Parent and Finance Committees of the club.</p>
Tess Murphy	<p>Tess spent many years on the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd., which has implemented the LEADER programme in Longford since its inception. Tess also held the position chairperson of the LEADER evaluation committee. She has been involved in the development of Local Development Strategies, selection criteria for LEADER projects, and decision making in relation to project applications. Tess is also a key member of the Ballinamuck Enterprise Group, which went through the LEADER application process to secure funding to develop the Visitor Centre in Ballinamuck as well as a habitat survey of Edenmore Bog and publicity materials. She was also CEO of Longford Women's Link when the organisation applied for grant aid for improvement of their premises. Tess holds a BSc in Rural Development. As well as being a member of Longford LCDC, she is also on the PPN Secretariat and sits on the Housing SPC</p>
Joe Murphy	<p>Joe was a Board member of Longford Community Resources for many years, and was LAG member for previous LEADER Programmes. He is also a member of Dromard Rural Development Group and has a keen interest in rural affairs. An active member of community life in his local area, Joe is also a member of Dromard Tidy Towns Committee , and GAA club, as well as a member of Longford PPN Secretariat</p>
Sean Hannon	<p>Sean spent many years on the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd., which has implemented the LEADER programme in Longford since its inception. During his time on the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd Sean held many positions including Chairperson. He has been involved in the development of Local Development Strategies, selection criteria for LEADER projects, and decision making in relation to project applications. Sean is also a Director of Longford Enterprise Development Company who successful operate a community enterprise centre and have accessed funding through previous LEADER programmes, he is also a member of Longford Sports Partnership and an active member of the his local GAA Club. Sean is a full time farmer and a member of the Irish Farmers Association where he held a number of positions at local level.</p>
Joe Flaherty	<p>Joe is managing director for Iconic Newspapers, who with 12 leading titles is the country's largest regional group and taps into the development community on a daily basis. He is a former national president of the regional newspapers of Ireland organisation, now known as Local Ireland. Along with Local Ireland, and in association with SEI he launched the get involved awards three years ago which sought to promote and reward community endeavour across the country. Joe is a member of Longford Chamber of Commerce and is</p>

	<p>president Longford Business Forum. He was a key figure in organising the return Longford Summer Festival after ten year absence and launched inaugural Longford Christmas festival and markets in 2015 and was also involved in the revival of the Roscommon Hunt after almost forty years. Joe is also PRO for Longford tidy towns and Chairman of his local residents association.</p>
Seadna Ryan	<p>Seadna has been involved with Lanesborough Tourism Co-operative Society for 20 years. This is a voluntary organisation which has delivered a number of community projects, funded under LEADER programmes including development of woodland walks and various village enhancement projects. He is a member of the County Longford Tourism committee, which assists the development of tourism in the county.</p>
Adrian Greene	<p>Adrian is employed by Longford Community Resources Ltd since 1997, firstly in the position of Financial Controller and from 2009 as the Chief Executive. He has been actively involved in the many rural, social and economic development programme delivered by Longford Community Resources Ltd, including the previous LEADER and Social Inclusion Programmes in Co. Longford. In his current role, he is responsible for determining and formulating strategies and policies and provides the overall direction for Longford Community Resources Limited within the guidelines set up by and agreed with the Board of Directors. He is also responsible for planning, directing, and coordinating operational activities for the organisation with the help of the senior management team to deliver on the organisation's mission and vision.</p>

### **Implementation Partner: Longford Community Resources Ltd.**

Longford Community Resources Ltd was established in 1995 and is a company limited by guarantee and without share capital. The company was formed for the purpose of implementing the LEADER programme and has the main objective of promoting rural development and tackling social exclusion. The work of the company is managed by a voluntary board, comprising of directors who are representing sectoral interests including, the Local Authority, Community and Voluntary Sector, Statutory Agencies and Social Partners. It has successfully managed the planning and implementation of multiple rural, social and economic development programmes over the last twenty years.

Since inception, Longford Community Resources Ltd has gained extremely valuable experience and knowledge of good practice and innovative approaches – approaches that work. It has worked with almost every community across County Longford and has instigated area-based economic, social, cultural and enhancement projects that have generated employment, social benefit, improved living conditions and economic activity.

Importantly, the company has, both individually and through working in partnership with key statutory and community organisations, gained particular expertise and respect in working with hard to reach communities and is currently working in the most disadvantaged areas of the county implementing initiatives that assist in reducing poverty and ensuring that people have better access to services and supports. In order to resource this work effectively, the company has leveraged additional funding from the HSE, Department of Children & Youth

Affairs, Department of Social Protection, Department of Education and Science, Katherine Howard Foundation and The Wheel.

Through the implementation of three LEADER programmes, the company has successfully designed and implemented development strategies for the benefit of the county over the last twenty years. It has initiated LAG led projects and it has administered calls for projects from private and community promoters that were in line with LEADER strategies.

Historically, the company was involved in the delivery of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, LEADER II, LEADER +/- National Rural Development Programme, Rural Transport Initiative, the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Millennium Fund, Eircode and Digital Switchover.

Currently, the company is managing the following development programmes:

- **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)** - The SICAP programme is a national programme with the aim to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. Its' vision is to improve life chances and opportunities for those who are marginalised. This is achieved through the application of Community Development approaches, targeted supports and inter-agency collaboration. The three goals of the programme are Community Development, Education & Training and Employment.
- **Tús Community Work Placement Initiative**– An activation initiative for those who are unemployed. Tús provides quality work opportunities for those who are unemployed while at the same time providing beneficial services to communities. There are currently 100 people approved to participate on LCRL managed Tús schemes operating across County Longford.
- **Rural Social Scheme**–The RSS supports community based projects by harnessing the skills and talents of small farmers and their spouses who undertake projects of relevance to their local communities. The RSS currently has 55 participants working across County Longford.
- **Primary Health Care Project**– This project provides basic primary healthcare information and training to members of the Travelling community. There are seven Healthcare workers, all from the Traveller community employed on the health promotion project. They work alongside a Project Co-ordinator, Traveller Men's Worker, Project Worker and a Community Development Worker all aiming to improve the participation and inclusion of members of the Travelling community in Co. Longford.
- **Longford Volunteer Centre** –exists to provide positive, inclusive and well managed volunteering in County Longford. It acts as a broker between individuals who wish to volunteer and those groups that involve volunteers.
- **County Longford Youth Service**- Offers valuable services to young people living in County Longford and has a specific focus on disadvantaged and marginalised youth. This is undertaken by providing Youth Worker led initiatives aimed at promoting equality and social inclusion.

Due to their expertise and working knowledge of key socio-economic development issues in County Longford, LCRL is represented on the following county-based committees:

- Citizens Information Centre
- County Longford Tourism
- County Childcare Committee
- Heritage Forum
- Children's and Youth Services Committee

- Midland Regional Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce.
- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Traveller Inter-Agency Committee
- Longford Westmeath Community Transport Ltd.

Appendix 1 contains the following documents:

- Longford Local Community Development Committee Standing Orders and Conflict of Interest Policy
- Sample letter from Longford Local Community Development Committee in relation to request for nominations referencing female representation
- Heads of Agreement – Roles and Responsibilities of partners
- Evaluation Committee Scoring Record
- Job Descriptions for LEADER staff members of the LAG and Implementation Partner.

## Chapter Two: Local Development Strategy Area Profile- County Longford

### 2.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this Local Development Strategy, all 54 Electoral Districts of County Longford are included in our proposed action plan for the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and the analysis that underpins that plan.

As Ireland's fourth smallest county, Longford covers a land mass of 1,091kms of which 71% is described as farmland. A naturally scenic county, it is dotted with un-spoilt waterways including the Royal Canal, Lough Ree and a ribbon lake pattern in the north of the county.

Attractive forestry in both private and state ownership has enhanced the physical environment and has played a part in County Longford attracting the tourist focused Centerparcs<sup>2</sup> project to plan a new development in Newcastle Woods close to Ballymahon town in the south east of the county. An abundance of unique Heritage sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas also contribute to a unique and naturally attractive landscape.

County Longford has three Municipal Districts and 55 Electoral Districts. The Municipal Districts are:

Longford Town which contains 6 Electoral Districts, as follows: Caldragh, Cloondara, Longford No. 1 Urban, Longford No. 2 Urban, Longford Rural, Newtown Forbes.

Granard Area which contains 31 Electoral Districts, as follows : Abbeylara, Aghaboy, Ballinalee, Ballinamuck East, Ballinamuck West, Breanrisk, Bunlahy, Cloonee, Columbkille, Coolamber, Corboy, Creevy, Crosagstown, Currygrane, Dalystown, Drumgort, Drumlish, Drummeel, Firry, Gelshagh, Granard Rural, Granard Urban, Killoe, Knockanbaun, Lislea, Milltown, Moatfarrell, Moyne, Mullanalaghta, Newgrove, Sonnagh.

Ballymahon Area which contains 18 Electoral Districts, as follows: Agharra, Ardagh East, Ardagh West, Ballymahon, Ballymuigh, Cashel East, Cashel West, Doory, Forgney, Foxhall, Kilcommock, Kilglass, Killashee, Ledwithstown, Meathas Truim, Mountdavis, Moydow, Rathcline.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for a map of the LDS boundary area, i.e. County Longford and a map showing Electoral Districts in County Longford, highlighting the most disadvantaged areas.

### 2.2 Our Growing and Diverse Population

#### 2.2.1 Population

The county has a population of **39,000** and a population density of 27.9 persons per sq.km. Gender wise, the county is more or less evenly divided with 19,649 males and 19,351 females. (Census 2011)

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<sup>2</sup> CenterParcs is a European Network of holiday villages. County Longford has been selected as the location for the first CenterParcs Holiday Village in Ireland.



Notably, the population of the county has increased by +13.4% (+4,609) since 2006. This is faster than the national growth of +8.2% and makes up for a decline of population experienced between 1986 and 1996. An analysis of our population profile shows us that net in-migration played a significant role in the population growth along with a natural increase.

The Midland Regional Authority have projected the population of County Longford will rise by an additional 4,000 people to 43,080 by 2016.

### 2.2.2 Where we Live

The Census of 2011 showed us that within the county, our populations in urban areas are growing. In 2011, 33% of Longford's population lived in an urban setting as opposed to 26% in 2006. This was the fastest rate of growth towards urban living of any county in Ireland between 2006 and 2011.

The largest population centre in the county is Longford Town with a population in 2011 of **9,601** (25% of total population). Eight Electoral Districts experienced a decline in population between 2006-2011, the most significant drop in population was in Creevy, near Granard which had the largest percentage decline in population in the County with a fall of -9%.

**Table 2.1: Population of the main settlements in County Longford.**

Town	Total Population (2011)
Longford Town	9,601
Edgeworthstown	1,744
Ballymahon	1,563
Lanesborough (incl. Ballyleague, Roscommon) Co	1,377
Granard	1,021

See Appendix 3- Map of changes in population in Electoral Districts in County Longford: Source: Pobal Maps.

### 2.2.3 How Old are We?

County Longford has both a young and an older population that are both higher than national averages. There were 11,025 people under the age of 18 years living in County Longford in 2011. This represented 28.2% of the total population, higher than the national average of 26.2%

The population in 2011 over 65 years of age was 4,883 which at 12.5% of the total county population was also higher than the national average which stands at 11.6%.

Our age dependency rate of 35.7% was nearly three percentage points above the national average. Our middle population, those aged between 18 years and 65 years is lower than the national average. However, in three ED's, namely Moyne (43.2%), Clondara (40.4%) and Forgney (40.2%) the age dependency rates exceed 40%.

## 2.2.4 Our Families and Our Children

In 2011, there were 14,453 households in County Longford. Of these, 26% (3,786 households) were one person households. Families headed by a lone parent accounted for 1,723 of all households.

County Longford has a young vibrant population with nearly 5,000 children aged between 5 years and 12 years living in the county in 2011. The county has the highest proportion of non-Irish national children in the country, at a rate of 118.3 per 1,000 children, higher than Dublin County at 97.0 and the national average of 82.5.

In addition, County Longford had the highest proportion of Traveller children in the country with 3.5% of all children in the county being Traveller children, which is almost three times higher than the national average of 1.2%.

Many of the children in the county are living in a one parent family as the Census recorded 22.3% of all households with dependent children are one parent households, this is higher than the national average of 21.6%. However in some of our urban areas within Longford, this can rise significantly, as the rate of lone parent households in Longford No.1 Urban E.D. is 44.8%; Killashee E.D. is 43.6% and Ballinalee E.D. is 35.8%. This is of significance to the Rural Development Programme as it highlights the numbers of families that may need additional supports to access education, training and or employment.

There are 35 childcare services in total in the County, 13 of these are provided by community providers and 22 are provided by private providers. As of November 2014, there were 553 children in Longford availing of the Free Preschool Year.

A total of 2,025 children in County Longford are attending a DEIS Primary School and 1,156 are attending a DEIS Secondary School. With regard to school attendance rates, in 09/10, 26.3% of post-primary school children are absent for more than 20 days per year. This is the second highest rate for post-primary absence in the country and nearly 7% higher than the national rate of 19.4%. (Post Primary Absence Report 09/10).

In 2011, there were 1,950 Child Welfare and Protection reports to the HSE from Longford/Westmeath. This represents a rate of 58 children per 1,000 and is very high in comparison with all neighbouring areas and is more than twice the national average of 27.5 children per 1,000. (Source: State of the Nations' Children – Ireland 2012).

Youth unemployment in County Longford is high with 580 young people under 25 years of age in receipt of an unemployment payment (July 2015). Therefore we must be careful to ensure that adequate supports are provided to our young people to ensure that their future includes access to education, training and employment opportunities.

## 2.2.5 Levels of Deprivation in County Longford

According to Trutz Haase, Longford continues to be the fourth most disadvantaged local authority area in Ireland and the most disadvantaged in the midlands region.

***“Longford has massively been affected by the economic downturn after 2007, reflected in a drop in the absolute deprivation score from -4.9 in 2006 to -12.1 in 2011. This represents a drop of 7.2, compared to a nationwide drop of 6.5.”*** Trutz Haase, 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index.

The Relative Index Score for County Longford was -5.12. This compares with neighbouring counties as follows:

County	2011 HP Relative Index Score
<b>Longford</b>	<b>-5.12</b>
Cavan	-3.87
Leitrim	-2.57
Roscommon	-2.15
Westmeath	-1.84
National Average	0.24

The most disadvantaged Electoral Districts in the county are as follows:

Electoral District	2011 Deprivation Score	Classification
Longford Urban	-14.71	Disadvantaged
Foxhall	-13.37	Disadvantaged
Lislea	-12.63	Disadvantaged
Sonnagh	-11.84	Disadvantaged

#### ***Profile of Longford No 1 Urban Electoral District, Longford's' most disadvantaged area.***

The most disadvantaged Electoral District in the County is Longford No. 1 Urban. It has a population of 3,163 and an overall deprivation rate of -14.71. A total of 8% of total population of Longford County live in this electoral district. It contains the small areas of Bannon Terrace and Annaly Park which are considered very disadvantaged. Of note:-

- Of people living within this Electoral District, 27% of the population have Primary Level Education only while 14.5% of the population have third level education, the third lowest level of any Electoral District in the county.
- The unemployment rate in 2011 was 49% amongst males living in the district and 39% amongst females.
- Lone parent families account for 44.8% of all families living in the area.
- 48% of households in Longford No 1 Urban Electoral District have no car.

Pobal HP Deprivation Bands show that, based on data from 2011, **seven small areas** in County Longford were considered 'Very Disadvantaged' (-20-30). All areas are within urban settings and four of them are in Longford Town.

Thirty additional small areas were considered 'Disadvantaged' with a deprivation score between -10 and-20.

<b><i>'Very Disadvantaged' Small Area</i></b>	<b><i>Electoral Division</i></b>
Bannon Terrace	Longford No.1 Urban
Annaly Park	Longford No.1 Urban
McEoin Park	Longford Rural
Cluain Ard/Pallace Crescent.	Longford Rural
St. Patrick's Terrace/Marian Ave	Meathas Truim
Church Street/Moxham Street	Granard Urban

Tromra Road/Barrack Lane

Granard Urban

Appendix 6 contains a map of all areas in County Longford and shows their level of deprivation.

### 2.2.6 Anti-Social Behaviour in Longford

In the period 2012-2013, while all other counties in the region experienced a decrease in crime rates, County Longford experienced a growth in crime rates. Crime rates grew by +4.75% within the county while crime rates nationally fell by -6.5%. (Source: County Longford Socio-Economic Baseline)

In 2014, 58 referrals were made from Longford Courts to the Probation Service. This represents the seventh highest proportion of new referrals per 100,000 residents, of all counties in Ireland. (Source: 2014 Annual Report, Probation Services).

### 2.2.7 Our Changing Ethnicity and Cultures in County Longford

A large increase of new communities into County Longford, from both E.U. countries and non E.U. regions, has rapidly changed the profile of the county. In 2011, non-Irish nationals accounted for 14.1% of the population of Longford, a rise from 11.4% in 2006 and above the national average of 12.0%. The largest non-Irish national group were Polish persons (1,628) followed by UK nationals (1,155).

The town of Edgeworthstown has the highest proportion of non-Irish nationals of all the main settlements in County Longford, with 35% of its population being of non-Irish nationality.

A total of 79 persons are living in direct provision in County Longford.

It is important that our Local Development Strategy is also responsive to the needs to our:-

- **Migrant Community**

The 2011 Census reported that the number of people from migrant communities (including the UK) on the Live Register in County Longford was 1,163 out of a total register of 4,539 at that time, a representation of 25.6%, higher than the national average of 19.6% at that time. This shows that targeted supports are needed to ensure that those from migrant communities access all the services that can support them to gain employment.

- **Irish Traveller Community**

According to the CSO Census of Population in 2011, County Longford had the second highest number of Travellers (19.1 per 1,000 of population) after Galway City, and this has risen from 15.3 in 2006. This is almost three times above the national average of 6.4. The vast majority of Travellers in County Longford live in Longford Town. In addition, there are a small number of Travellers living in Ballymahon, Granard and Edgeworthstown.

Unemployment rates among the Traveller community are extremely high as is a prevalent low educational attainment and low levels of participation in mainstream employment support services. Specific supports will be required under the RDP to

develop initiatives that will encourage participation and reduce levels of social exclusion experienced by members of the Travelling community.

### 2.2.8 Our Homes & Houses

At the time of the 2011 Census, Longford had

- The third highest level of local authority housing provision in any local authority area, at 13.8% of housing stock compared to 7.9% nationally.
- The lower percentage of housing stock that was owner occupied (66%) compared to the national average of 69.8%.
- At 32.6%, Longford had a higher than average percentage of households in rented accommodation, the national average was 28.8% and the Midlands average was 25.9%. County Longford was the only county in the Midlands region that was higher than this average. (CSO Regional Quality of Life in Ireland, 2013).

The identification of those at risk of poverty in Ireland included people living in accommodation that is rented at a rate below the market average. That along with other risk factors, places people at a higher risk of living in poverty and we are mindful of the number of people in County Longford who are living in rented accommodation.

Voluntary Housing bodies play an important and active role in County Longford with 184 households in voluntary housing occupation. This is twice the amount that is available in neighbouring counties of Leitrim or Roscommon.

**Those without a Home** - In 2015, a total of 88 persons presented to Longford County Council as homeless. The Local Authorities of Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly in conjunction with the HSE Midlands have prepared a Regional Homelessness Action Plan for the Midlands Region.

There are two hostels in County Longford providing accommodation for homeless people. Bethany House provides emergency accommodation for women and children and St. Martha's Hostel provides accommodation for homeless men. Both facilities are operated by the St. Vincent de Paul. Midland Simon Community Regional Support Service also supports families to access accommodation and maintain their tenancy.

### 2.2.9 Our People with Disabilities

According to the Census 2011, there were 5,404 people with a disability in Longford, a rise from 3,285 in 2006. The proportion of the population with a disability in County Longford, 13.9% in 2011, rose from 9.5% in 2006, and is above the national (13.0%) and regional averages.

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Co. Longford</b>		<b>Eastern &amp; Midlands Region</b>		<b>Ireland</b>	
0-14	460	9%	25,466	9%	53,058	9%
15-24	348	6%	21,921	8%	44,513	7%
25-44	1,029	19%	60,881	22%	120,426	20%
45-64	1,709	32%	80,879	29%	173,269	29%
65+	1,858	34%	89,955	32%	204,069	35%
<i>Total Persons</i>	<i>5,404</i>		<i>279,102</i>		<i>595,335</i>	

<i>with a Disability</i>						
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**Table 2.2 Census 2011- Persons with a Disability by Age Group**

### 2.2.10 Our Levels of Education

The 2011 Census and the 2014 statistics of the Department of Education and Skills provide an interesting overview of our levels of education in Longford and of specific relevance to this plan:

- 20.4% of Longford's overall population had primary education only compared to a national average of 16%. There are 39 primary schools (9 of which have DEIS<sup>3</sup> designation) with a total pupil population of 5,003 in County Longford (Dept. of Education and Skills, 2014).
- A total of 57.7% of people's education had ceased at secondary level, higher than the national average of 51%. There are 9 secondary schools (4 of which have DEIS designation) with a total population of 3,646 in County Longford (Dept. of Education and Skills, 2014). The retention rate to Junior Certificate was 95.14% and the retention rate to Leaving Certificate for children in 2008 school entry cohort was 88.87%. This places us in the lowest levels of retention rates in both levels in the country. (Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools, 2008 Entry Cohort, Dept. of Education, February 2015)
- Only 22.2% of Longford's population had third level education compared to a national average of 30.6%.
- The proportion of Longford's population with third level education actually decreased between 2006 and 2011 from 22.3% to 22.2%, thus ranking it as the second lowest level of all counties in Ireland. See Appendix Four showing levels of 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Education per ED in the county.
- As educational attainment is an influencing factor in securing good quality employment, increasing opportunities to gain an education and complete further training is a necessity in County Longford.
- It is important to highlight in 2013/14, 71.5% of CAO applicants in Longford<sup>4</sup> were awarded a student grant from SUSI. This compares with 45.6% of CAO applicants in Dublin. For the academic year 2014/15 there was 738 new applicants in Longford to SUSI and 505 received a grant, an award rate of 68.4%. This highlights to us that receiving financial support to attend third level colleges is a pre-requisite for so many students in County Longford and shows the demands placed on families and students.

<sup>3</sup>Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS).

<sup>4</sup> Source: Irish Times, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015.



**Table 2.3: Third Level Attainment in County Longford Secondary Schools 2009-2015**

<b>School</b>	<b>% of students placed in 3<sup>rd</sup> level in 2015.</b>	<b>% of students placed in 3<sup>rd</sup> level 2009-2015.</b>	<b>% of placed students in a university 2009-2015.</b>
Cnoc Mhuire Secondary, Clochar na Trocaire (Granard)	98%	77%	37%
Scoil Mhuire, Longford	93%	89%	47%
Lanesboro Community College, Lanesboro	81%	61%	34%
St. Mels College, Longford	79%	83%	43%
Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon	73%	81%	47%
Moyne Community School, Moyne	67%	76%	40%
Ballymahon Vocational School	44%	60%	26%
Templemichael College, Longford	32%	38%	16%
Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard	21%	35%	21%

*Source: Sunday Independent, January 24<sup>th</sup> 2016*

The lack of a third level institution in County Longford is reflected in the figures shown above. The issue is raised continuously as a contributor to unemployment within the County. The nearest third level colleges are Athlone Institute of Technology and Cavan Institute. There is no Solas Training Centre in County Longford but Solas funded courses are delivered locally.

Third level education provision is delivered by Longford/Westmeath Education & Training Board through post-Leaving Certificate courses and modular accredited training. Two independent community based organisations also deliver accredited training, the Employment Development and Information Centre (EDI) and Longford Women's Link and both are based in Longford town. There are two Family Resource Centres operating in County Longford in Granard and Ballymahon and they also deliver accredited training in these areas. Where a particular need has been identified, locally based accredited training is occasionally provided by Longford Community Resources Ltd.

In rural areas, there are very limited opportunities for employment focused training as community education tends to focus on more introductory courses such as art, photography and sewing etc.

### 2.2.11 Our Working Population

According to the 2011 Census, the total population working in County Longford is 10,724 persons. A further 2,974 persons work outside the county, indicating the strong need to commute outside the county to find employment.

Workers by Industry	Daytime Working Population	% of workforce
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	850	8%
Construction	252	2%
Manufacturing, Mining & Quarrying, Electricity, Gas, Water Supply and Waste Management	2030	19%
Commerce and Trade	2628	25%
Transport and Communications	440	4%
Public Administration	1093	10%
Professional Services	2405	22%
Other	1026	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,724</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 2.4: Number and Percentage of Persons Working in County Longford by Industry, Census 2011*

### 2.2.12 Our Unemployed People

According to September 2015 CSO data for County Longford, there were 4,171 people on the Live Register. There are tentative indications that unemployment numbers have been decreasing - there has been a reduction of 1,471 in those recorded on the Live Register since August 2010. However, numbers are still well in excess of the 1,941 unemployed people recorded in 2006.

The 2011 Census clearly highlighted that unemployment affects every part of County Longford.

Age	Area	Male & Female	% Male & Female	Male	%Male	Female	% Female
Under 25 years	Longford County	580	13.9%	324	56%	256	44%
25 years and over	Longford County	3,591	86.1%	2,171	60%	1,420	40%
<b>All ages</b>	<b>Longford County</b>	<b>4,171</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,495</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>1,676</b>	<b>40%</b>

*Table 2.5: Live Register Figures: September 2015, County Longford. Source: CSO*

The critical situation in County Longford is highlighted when a comparison is made with neighbouring counties. Despite a population of over 25,000 less than County Roscommon, County Longford has over 900 more people on the Live Register.

County	Total Population	Number on Live Register
Westmeath	86,164	8,454
Cavan	73,183	4,636
Roscommon	64,065	3,242

<b>Longford</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>4,171</b>
Leitrim	31,798	2,734

*Table 2.6: Inter-County Comparison of Live Register Figures, September 2015, Source: CSO.*

The current Live Register figures refer only to the county as a whole. We need to refer back to the Census 2011 to provide information on unemployment levels in each Electoral District. Those with the highest rates of unemployment at that time were as follows:

<b>Electoral District</b>	<b>Male Rate of Unemployment 2011 (%)</b>	<b>Female Rate of Unemployment 2011 (%)</b>	<b>Total Population</b>
Longford No. 1 Urban	49.07	39.38	3,163
Longford Rural	36.36	27.44	5,492
Foxhall	34.69	30.56	525
Edgeworthstown	31.16	30.23	2,008
Abbeylara	31.73	18.03	340

*Table 2.7: Unemployment rates in individual Electoral Divisions, in 2011*

Interestingly, an analysis of the last job held by people on the Live Register shows the very significant impact that the slow-down in the construction sector has had on unemployment in County Longford, with over 1,860 persons previously working in construction related jobs prior to joining the Live Register. Appendix Five provides a detailed analysis of the last job held by people prior to becoming unemployed.

In addition to those on the Live Register in County Longford, significant numbers of people are in receipt of an employment support payment or are participating in programmes such as Tús Community Work Placement Initiative, Rural Social Scheme or other such incentive. It is interesting to note also that 666 people are in receipt of Family Income Supplement, a payment to those working in low paid employment.

<b>Type of Payment</b>	<b>Total receipt in Co Longford in July 2015</b>
Jobseeker's Allowance	3,127
State Pension Contributory State	2,651
State Pension Non- Contributory	1,349
Disability Allowance	1,330
Widow's Contributory Pension	1,041
Carer's Allowance	822
Family Income Support	666
Invalidity Pension	577
Illness Benefit	529
One- Parent Family	418
Farm Assist	178
TUS Scheme	74
Rural Social Scheme	52
Back to Education	49
Carer's Benefit	19

*Table 2.8: Social Welfare Payments and Recipient Numbers, Source: County Longford Socio-Economic Baseline Study, July 2015*

### ***Back to Work Enterprise Allowance***

The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance is a financial support offered to suitably qualified participants in receipt of a social welfare payment who wish to establish their own business. It is administered by the Department of Social Protection and Local Development Companies including Longford Community Resources Ltd. Participation in the BTWEA is increasing in County Longford and the number that commenced business from January-October 2015 (102) is higher than the previous three years. In addition to a weekly payment, participants can also avail of training supports and a small grant scheme.

#### **2.2.13 Infrastructure**

Longford Town is the administration centre of the county and contains the Local Authority Administrative offices as well as main offices of all state agencies in the county. The other main towns in the county are Edgeworthstown (pop.1, 744) Ballymahon (pop. 1,563) and Granard (pop 1,021). The county has good quality sporting facilities, recreational facilities and a vibrant theatre and arts sector. Longford Town enjoys a wide range of retail outlets along with good quality restaurants and pubs. In 2016, Longford Town was voted the cleanest town in Ireland in the IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter) Awards.

#### ***Transport & Accessibility***

Centrally located, County Longford has good transport links including the N4 (Dublin-Sligo) and the N5 (Dublin-Mayo) routes. The N55 is the north to south artery linking Athlone to Cavan via Ballymahon and Edgeworthstown.

A total of 2,524 households in the county, over 17% of the total number of households in the county, did not own a car at the time of the 2011 Census. Five<sup>5</sup> Electoral Districts within the county have over 20% of households with no car.

Rail services are available from Longford and Edgeworthstown which both operate on the Dublin-Sligo rail line. Bus services are operated by Bus Eireann and a range of private operators. In addition to this, Longford Westmeath Community Transport Ltd operates twenty routes weekly and three fortnightly. In 2014, the 23 routes carried 22,283 passenger trips.

A community bus is available for hire but this service is currently under-utilised due to the lack of availability of suitably qualified bus drivers.

#### ***Broadband Connectivity***

The availability for high speed broadband is an essential pre-requisite for a successful working environment. Figures produced by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources show that of the 22,528 premises in County Longford, 48% of them will have access to high speed broadband (NGA) by the end of 2016. These premises will have their service provided by a commercial operator.

The remaining 52% of premises, all situated outside main urban areas, will require the assistance of services to be contracted under the proposed National Broadband Plan. The current lack of NGA broadband facilities in rural areas is a critical situation for County Longford and has major consequences for the location of small businesses, industry and tourism operators in addition to inhibiting communications for all householders. Planning an economic development strategy for County Longford's rural areas is difficult in the absence of a clear delivery plan for high speed broadband.

<sup>5</sup> Longford No 1 Urban; Meathas Truim; Granard Urban; Longford Rural and Foxhall.

## 2.2.14 Sectoral Profiles

### Enterprise

Typical of many similar size counties in Ireland, County Longford has a mix of small, medium and large enterprises. The small business sector is of vital importance and provides essential employment across the county. Medium and large enterprises are typically clustered in Longford Town, Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon and Granard.

Support to locally based businesses is provided by Longford Community Resources Ltd, the Longford Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA. There are six IDA supported client companies in the county. Their areas of operation include Engineering, Bio Pharma & Medical Devices and Internet and Computer Technology. Additional strong sectors in the county include Food & Pet Food Manufacturing and Construction Products/Systems.

It is estimated that the largest twenty-four employers in County Longford employ approximately 2,500 persons. Health services in the county are estimated to employ approximately 1,000 people and a further 1,140 are employed in state and semi-state organisations.

County Longford is incorporated into the Action Plan for Jobs for the Midlands which also include counties Laois, Offaly and Westmeath. The core objective of the plan is to “support the creation of extra jobs in the region through the delivery of over 100 collaborative actions focusing on increasing the number of start-ups, developing the capacity of existing enterprises, and capitalising on the strengths and opportunities of the region”.

Supporting the development of Centerparcs within County Longford is a named action within the Action Plan. Up to 1,000 permanent jobs are anticipated should the project proceed as planned.

Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) were outlined by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA). Two areas are contained within County Longford. They are Longford Town and Granard and their surrounding areas.

### Tourism

Tourism forms an essential part of a County’s economy, however tourism figures for County Longford are significantly low compared to other Counties. County Longford is located in the Midlands East region within Fáilte Ireland along with counties Kildare, Laois, Louth, Meath, Wicklow, Offaly (East) and Westmeath. In 2013, the Midlands East region attracted 772,000 overseas visitors however only 3%, (22,000) visited County Longford.

2013	Longford	Cavan	Leitrim	Westmeath	Roscommon
<b>Total Visitor Numbers</b>	22,000	111,000	39,000	95,000	35,000
<b>Britain (Nos/%)</b>	12,000 (55%)	78,000 (70%)	29,000 (74%)	45,000 (47%)	18,000 (51%)
<b>Mainland Europe (Nos/%)</b>	4,000 (18%)	11,000 (10%)	5,000 (13%)	28,000 (29%)	7,000 (20%)
<b>North America (Nos/%)</b>	4,000 (14%)	17,000 (15%)	5,000 (13%)	19,000 (20%)	8,000 (23%)
<b>Other Areas (Nos/%)</b>	3,000 (14%)	5,000 (5%)	-	4,000 (4%)	2,000 (6%)

Source: Fáilte Ireland

**Table 2.9: Overseas Visitors to Counties in 2013**

Overseas visitor numbers in County Longford have declined by 21% between 2010 and 2013, according to data derived from Fáilte Ireland, with revenue down approximately 33% over the same period. 2013 data determines that 55% of all overseas visitors are from Britain, with 18% and 14% from mainland Europe and North America respectively. Since 2010 there has been a decline in both British and mainland European visitors to the County; however 2013 shows a marginal increase in British visitors compared to 2012, while there was a decrease in mainland European visitors over the same period, as illustrated in the figure below. The 25% fall in British visitor numbers between 2010 and 2013 equates to a 33% fall in revenue over the same period. However, while there was a 50% decline in Mainland Europe visitors, there was no marked change in revenue, with revenue intake remaining at €2m in both 2010 and 2013.

Year	Total Visitors		Britain	Mainland Europe	North America	Other
2013	22,000	Visitors	12,000	4,000	4,000	3,000
		Revenue	€4m	€2m	€1m	<€1m
2012	20,000	Visitors	11,000	6,000	3,000	1,000
		Revenue	€4m	€1m	€1m	<€1m
2010	28,000	Visitors	16,000	8,000	3,000	1,000
		Revenue	€6m	€2m	€1m	<€1m

**Table 2.10: Overseas Tourism Figures and Revenue Source: Fáilte Ireland**

Fáilte Ireland (2010) states that 45% of all overseas visitors to the County were visiting friends or family, with 33% holidaying. 60% of all visitors from Britain cited visiting friends/family as their reason for visiting, compared to 31% of European origin visitors. Data from the East to Midlands's Tourism Report 2010 states that 65% of British visitors stay with their family and friends. 62% of North American visitors were holidaying. From this data it can be derived that substantially more tourists from Britain visit friends and family in the region, while the other overseas markets are more likely to be on holiday and these other overseas markets are therefore generally likely to generate more revenue in the locale than the British market. In terms of domestic visitor numbers, Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon are grouped as a destination Tourism. Figures show a decline in domestic visitor numbers to 226,000 visitors in 2013, representing a fall of just 3%. A fall of 5% in total domestic expenditure was recorded over this same period.

Fáilte Ireland released a list of the top visitor attractions, based on a survey conducted since 2009. Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre, Kenagh, Co. Longford was the most visited tourist attraction in Longford, in terms of visitor numbers according to data from Fáilte Ireland during the period 2009 to 2013. In 2013, it attracted 4,209 visitors; however data shows that visitor figures have consistently fallen year-on-year since 2010, when it recorded 5,691 visitors.

The re-furbished St. Mel's Cathedral in Longford Town is now also a major tourist attraction and anecdotally it has attracted in excess of 50,000 visitors since it re-opened in 2014.

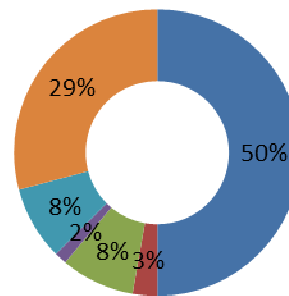
The county has very limited availability of tourist accommodation with just six Fáilte Ireland approved providers with a total capacity of 185 beds in two hotels (1 no. three-star and 1 no. two-star), one guesthouse and three Bed & Breakfasts establishments. There are no four-



star hotels within the county and this has a major impact on the capacity of the county to draw tourists to the area.

#### Tourist Accommodation in Longford

■ BnBs                      ■ Carvan Parks                      ■ Hotels  
 ■ Hostel                      ■ Pub Accomidation                      ■ Self Catering



**Table 2.11: Visitor Accommodation in County Longford**

County Longford is now featured within the new Fáilte Ireland region of Ireland's Ancient East and a significant opportunity exists to maximise involvement in the Ireland's Ancient East marketing initiative, as the county has a number of key attractions that naturally fit within the newly development brand. The Programme for Government also directs Fáilte Ireland to develop the 'Ireland's Lakelands' brand as a separate proposition to sit alongside the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East. This will provide additional opportunities for the tourism sector in County Longford.

Activity based tourism is now an important part of the overall tourism strategy for County Longford. The overall vision is to link this with the development of compelling visitor experiences across the County.

#### Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park

The Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park initiative will link existing natural amenity areas in the region, including Lough Ree, the Rivers Shannon, Inny and Camlin, the Royal Canal, Newcastle Wood and other forests, in addition to the future rehabilitated Bord na Móna bogs. These amenities, all of which are located within close proximity to each other will be combined to create the Wilderness Park. It is projected that this initiative will provide Longford, the Midlands and the country with a major and unique tourism attraction of international importance.

#### Dublin to Galway Cycleway

The NRA, in collaboration with local authorities, is developing the Galway to Dublin Cycleway'. The proposed National Galway to Dublin Cycleway will be Ireland's first dedicated inter-city route for cyclists and walkers, stretching 276km connecting the east and the west of the country. While the route will not traverse through County Longford, it will pass by the south of the County as it links Westmeath and Roscommon and it possesses an opportunity for tourism in County Longford.

#### Royal Canal Greenway and the Shannon Blueway

The Longford to Clondra Canal Trackway, which opened in June 2014, provides a 16km off-road cycling and walking route along the Royal Canal and forms part of the greenway

corridor which will form part of the Clondra to Dublin route along the Royal Canal. In April 2015, Waterways Ireland launched The Shannon Blueway which using the waterway assets, developed and built a canoe trail looping from Clondra through Tarmonbarry back to Clondra. Combined, these multi-activity trails offer a substantial potential to boost tourism in the County, in addition to offering the new potential tourism enterprise initiatives, with further potential in the future of developing the Shannon Blueway further into counties Longford, Roscommon and Westmeath.

#### Literary trail

Longford's creative literary assets have also recently been given a boost with the launch of the Longford Literary trail. This creates potential for a different type of tourism to the county and allows for new potential enterprises to be developed.

#### Angling Festival

The establishment of the Lough Ree Angling Hub in March 2015 is aimed to increase fishing as a recreational activity in Lanesborough and Ballyleague. It is planned to incorporate fishing competitions and the hub also has the potential to increase the attractiveness of the area for visiting anglers. The Lough Ree Angling Hub and wider Lanesborough and Ballyleague community have been successful in attracting a World Fishing Championships event to Lough Ree in October 2016 which will provide an opportunity to showcase another tourism asset for Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon.

#### CenterParcs

In April 2015, it was announced that British firm CenterParcs intend to establish a luxury holiday village on a 375 acre forest costing an estimated €230m in Newcastle Woods, approximately 5km east of Ballymahon. It is understood to be the biggest single private investment in tourism in the history of the State. In addition, CenterParcs estimates that, when operational, the new holiday village will add approximately €32 million to Irish GDP per annum. The new village will be called CenterParcs Longford Forest and could create up to 1,000 permanent jobs once it is completed. The development is reported to include a large water dome, 500 lodges and villas, restaurants, swimming pools and spas. The development is centrally positioned to attract visitors from throughout Ireland and overseas. The development is expected to have a capacity for up to 2,500 guests and many of these roles are expected to be filled by employees between the ages of 18 and 24. It is anticipated that the project will be operational by 2019. The announcement of this proposed development has stimulated interest in the county in the development of complementary amenities and visitor attractions in anticipation of the visitor numbers that will come to the county as a result of CenterParcs Longford Forest.

#### County Longford Tourism

The main driver of tourism development in the county is County Longford Tourism which is a voluntary organisation comprising of tourist providers, state agencies representatives<sup>6</sup> and interested parties. It manages a Tourist Information Office, located on the Market Square in Longford town and employs a full-time Tourist Information Officer. The organisation is very active in the promotion of County Longford and in developing initiatives that will attract tourists to visit the county but with limited resources, their work is curtailed.

Tourism has been identified as a sector with the potential to be a significant economic contributor and employment generator in County Longford. During the consultation process a number of barriers to tourism development were identified, they included a deficit in quality tourist accommodation and visitor attractions, a lack of clear identity regarding what County Longford has to offer to visitors and a lack of resources to market the county effectively.

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<sup>6</sup> Longford County Council Planning Dept., LEO, Sports Partnership & Local Development Company representative.

### ***Agriculture and Our Farming Community***

The latest available statistics for Agriculture in Longford refer to the Agriculture Census of 2010. This shows that there are 2,601 farms in County Longford farming an area of 72,733 hectares. However, only 41 of the 2,601 farms are over 100 hectares. The average farm size is 28 hectares. There has been a continuous reduction in the numbers of farms since 1991 when there were over 3,100 farms in the county.

The age profile of farm families shows that 27% are over 65 years of age while just 23% are aged less than 44 years. The type of farming practised in the county is predominantly dry stock farming. There are 5,837 hectares (8%) in the county in forestry use.

There are currently 178 farm families in receipt of the Social Welfare payment of Farm Assist. Numbers in receipt of this payment have reduced since 2011 when 257 farm households were in receipt of a payment.

<b>Farm size (Hectares)</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
Farms less than 10	756	573	474
Farms between 10 and less than 20	1,059	759	712
Farms between 20 and less than 30	605	533	516
Farms between 30 less than 50	480	569	563
Farms between 50 less than 100	182	261	295
Farms greater than 100	25	51	41
<b>Total Farms</b>	<b>3,107</b>	<b>2,746</b>	<b>2,601</b>

***Table 2.12: Number of Farms classified by Farm Size in County Longford***

### **2.3 Review of Key Services & Programmes in County Longford.**

There are over twenty statutory agencies operating within County Longford in areas of work that have relevance to the Rural Development Programme and the Local Development Strategy. Our extensive research and consultation process sought to identify the core areas of concentration for each agency in the coming years, so that no duplication of resources occurs and the Rural Development Programme is delivered to maximum effect and benefit within the county.

This review is particularly important given the significant changes to the delivery mechanisms of statutory support for the unemployed since the last Rural Development Programme commenced in 2008. The elimination of FAS and the subsequent development of Solas, Education and Training Boards and Intreo have introduced new services and supports for unemployed people which the new Local Development Strategy has taken careful cognisance of the employment support programmes of Job Bridge, Gateway and Tús have also been developed since 2009. In recent months, the Job Path employment activation programme has commenced in County Longford through Seetec Ltd.

This Local Development Strategy has been designed not as core deliverer of programmes but aims for focus on the identification of gaps and bottlenecks within County Longford, that when resolved, will enhance core programmes and will maximise output from existing activities within the county. The analysis of the gaps and bottlenecks is included in Section 2.5 – Overarching Analysis of County Longford.

It is not possible within the confines of this document to outline all areas of work of all agencies, community groups and non-government agencies and how they will impact on the design of the Local Development Strategy. Rather, we profile the key agencies that we will engage and work with under each theme to co-ordinate and ensure an integrated and effective strategy for maximum impact.

Longford County Council is a key partner in the implementation of the Rural Development Programme. It is envisaged that the delivery of the LDS will require working in a complementary way with all Departments within Longford County Council but in particular with the Local Enterprise Office, Planning Office, Department of Community Directorate, Environment, Sports Partnership, Heritage Officer, Arts Officer, Regeneration Office and the Public Participation Network.

Appendix 7 (Pg 184) contains a table with a description of key services, infrastructure and programmes in County Longford. The identification of same is crucial in determining the gaps in the services which this LDS aims to fill and also links with the gaps and bottlenecks identified in section 2.5 of this strategy.

In addition to the information provided in Appendix 7 on the services in the area, it is anticipated we will work closely with the following agencies in respect of objectives and actions outlined under each sub-theme as follows:

### 2.3.1 Theme 1: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation.

#### Sub Theme: Enterprise Development

Enterprise and Economic Development actions form a crucial element of the Local Development Strategy and are the main mechanism through which jobs will be created under the Rural Development Programme. Our actions will align with the national protocol agreement between the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on how enterprises can be supported by the LEO. / RDP.

<b>Longford County Council</b>	<p><b>Local Enterprise Office (LEO.)</b> The Longford Enterprise Office, which supports businesses with ten or less employees, has financially supported an average of 32 businesses per annum over the last four years. They also offer a range of support and advisory services to entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing businesses. Services include, a First Stop Shop for all business information, Financial Support including Micro-Finance, Soft Support Training, Mentoring and Business Networking.</p> <p>The LEO is also facilitating the occupation of vacant commercial premises incentive scheme to encourage the use of vacant commercial premises within the County.</p>
<b>I.D.A. Ireland</b>	<p>As Ireland's inward promotion agency, the I.D.A. assist companies to achieve a successful set up of their operations in Ireland. There are currently six I.D.A. supported companies in County Longford. The companies are involved in Engineering, Biopharma, Medical Devices and Internet and Computer Technology. The total number of people employed in IDA supported companies in County Longford is 650.</p>
<b>Enterprise Ireland</b>	<p>Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. Their priority is the achievement of export sales growth from Irish owned companies. The</p>

	regional office base for Enterprise Ireland is in Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
<b>Teagasc</b>	Teagasc, the national farm advisory body, is an important medium for us to engage with the farming community and we have previously participated in the Teagasc Options Training Programme delivered to farmers. We hope to extend this contact with farmers so that they will consider alternative farm enterprises to a greater extent across the county.
<b>LCRL &amp; DSP</b>	Through the delivery of the BTWEA, LCRL and DSP support long term unemployed people to establish their own enterprise, this is an important element of the overall Enterprise strategy within the county as it supports over 100 people each year and the subsequent establishment of over 100 businesses in the county.

### Sub Theme: Rural Tourism

Longford Community Resources Ltd through the Rural Development Programme has a very close working relationship with the key players in tourism and has under the previous LEADER programme (2009-2013) funded many of the current flagship tourism projects in the county.

<b>Fáilte Ireland</b>	<p>Fáilte Ireland provides support to tourism businesses through training on e-commerce, market segmentation and accreditation and through participation in the Ancient East brand and associated marketing. Limited festival funding for large scale events is also available but up until 2015, this has not been applicable to County Longford.</p> <p>An annual grant of €6,000 is provided to County Longford Tourism towards the operation of the full-time Tourist Information Office.</p>
<b>Waterways Ireland</b>	Waterways Ireland is playing an increasingly important role in tourism development and they are a vital driver of the development of key tourist attractions in County Longford. In 2014, they launched their second national Blueway along the River Camlin in County Longford. This looped canoe trail also encourages people to avail of nearby walking and cycling trails and has the potential to attract significant numbers of tourist to this part of County Longford. Waterways Ireland are also a key partner in the development of the Royal Canal Cycleway and ancillary services, all aimed at attracting tourists.
<b>Office of Public Works</b>	The Office of Public Works owns a number of important sites in County Longford, including Corlea Trackway Centre which attracts annual visitor numbers in excess of 4,000. It is hoped to increase visitor numbers to this visitor attraction by supporting initiatives that would give the site a higher profile nationally and meet the demands of today's discerning tourist.
<b>County Longford Tourism</b>	County Longford Tourism is a voluntary organisation comprising of tourist providers, state agencies representatives <sup>7</sup> and interested parties. It manages a Tourist Information Office in Longford town and employs a full-time Tourist Information Officer who manages a year round service providing information to tourists and tourist providers. In addition to a promotional grant received from Fáilte Ireland, County Longford Tourism receives an annual grant from

<sup>7</sup>Longford County Council Planning Dept., LEO, Sports Partnership & Local Development Company Representative.

	<p>Longford County Council towards operational costs.</p> <p>In recent years, the organisation has produced new promotional material for the County and developed a website and social media presence. In 2014, it organised a number of events to help promote the county including Walking Festivals, a Blue-way Festival and members of the committee have been instrumental in the development of the Royal Canal Cycleway and its approval as a National Trail. They also work closely with the National Trails Office, Waterways Ireland, Longford Community Resources Ltd and Longford County Council on the development of walking and cycling trails within the county. Given the importance of trail development within the county, the National Trails Office and in particular the relevant Rural Recreation Officer have worked closely with County Longford Tourism to ensure that newly developed and existing trails within the county are built to the highest specification and achieve National Trails status.</p> <p>Similarly, the importance of Heritage projects within the county is reflected in the close co-operation between County Longford Tourism and the County Heritage Officer.</p>
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It is important that there is a clear strategy for development of the broader tourism sector in County Longford so that it capitalises on the publicity that the new Centerparcs development will bring.

There are currently two active REDZ applications relevant to tourism in the county and they refer to the marketing and promotion of Blueways<sup>8</sup> in the region which received a grant allocation of almost €210,000.00.

The second REDZ application refers to the further development of the Connolly Barracks, a former army barracks located in the Longford town which has development potential and this project has received a grant allocation of €150,000.00.

#### **Sub-Theme: Rural Towns & Broadband**

In respect of the integrated development of rural towns in County Longford, it is anticipated that we will work closely with a range of agencies and local organisations in an effort to maximise economic and social development. As projects will vary in nature from town to town, so too will the range of agencies that we will interact with. The agencies currently delivering supports and services to rural towns include:

<p><b>Longford County Council &amp; Municipal Districts</b></p>	<p>The LECP plan has identified actions that will benefit rural towns and LDS objectives are in line with those. It is anticipated that our work in rural towns will also involve the offices of Heritage and Environment within Longford County Council.</p>
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<sup>8</sup>The Upper Shannon Erne Future Economy Project is a joint initiative between Bord Na Mona, the ESB and Cavan, Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon Local Authorities. The purpose of this initiative is to show how business led regional development can lead to economic growth and job creation across counties Cavan, Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon. This is viewed as an important mechanism to pursue funding on a regional collaborative basis and should be acknowledged as same, particularly in relation to the co-operation measure of the LEADER Strategy’.



<b>Department of Social Protection</b>	Community Employment Schemes
<b>Community Organisations</b>	Family Resource Centres, Chambers and Traders Associations, Community Development Associations, Youth Groups, Tidy Towns, TUS, Rural Social Scheme, EDI Centre, Longford Women's Link
<b>Waterways Ireland</b>	Where relevant development work is undertaken by Waterways Ireland we will ensure that any action undertaken through the LDS will be in full co-ordination with Waterways Ireland.
<b>National Broadband Plan</b>	As all rural areas anxiously await the implementation of the NBP, we will remain informed as to the current status of the programme to ensure that we can maximise the benefit of next generation access to rural towns and areas.

### 2.3.2 Theme 2 – Social Inclusion

#### Sub Theme: Basic Services targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

All statutory service providers active in County Longford will, in some way, have an impact on those who are socially excluded but there are key agencies that the Rural Development Programme will interact with and plan supports with on a continuous basis, given the mutual target groups we will be working with.

<b>Department of Social Protection</b>	<p>Any measures supporting long term unemployed people and those who are social welfare dependent will complement existing services provided by the Department of Social Protection, such as provision of transport to centrally located services, childcare support, community development supports and personal development initiatives.</p> <p>The role played by the Department of Social Protection has changed significantly in the last twenty years and new dimensions to their work are being developed all the time. Our research process has taken account of their work in County Longford and the particular focus of the measures they are currently implementing and plan to do so in the future.</p>
<b>Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board</b>	<p>Third level education services were formally the remit of Longford VEC until 2014 and are now under the auspices of Longford Westmeath Education &amp; Training Board (LWETB). Due to the lack of a third level institution in the county, the services delivered by the LWETB are the only available third level options in the county for school leavers. LWETB Post Leaving Certificate accredited training courses are on offer across the county in three venues, Longford Town, Granard and Lanesboro.</p> <p>Additional services delivered by Longford Westmeath Education &amp; Training Board include, an Adult Educational Guidance Service operating from Longford Town, Adult Learning, Back to Education Initiatives, VTOS, Community Education and YouthReach.</p> <p>Given the critical influence that educational attainment has on securing employment, it will be critical to work closely with LWETB in the full</p>

	implementation of the Local Development Strategy.
<b>Solas</b>	<p>Solas is the Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland. It is responsible for the funding, planning and co-ordinating of training and further education programmes. To achieve this, SOLAS work closely with a wide range of stakeholders including learners, employers, Education &amp; Training Boards, Government departments, state bodies, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Institutes of Technology (IOTs), AONTAS and representative organisations.</p> <p>The objectives and actions outlined in this Local Development Strategy seek to enhance the work of Solas and the E.T.B. so that their training initiatives reach a wider audience. Development work needed to prepare people to access entry level training will be a key component of the Local Development Strategy alongside transport and childcare initiatives.</p>
<b>Key Services supporting People with Disabilities</b>	<p>In respect of the key target group, people with disabilities, the work undertaken by the following organisations will be of relevance.</p> <p><b>National Learning Network</b> - provides training services for clients aged between 18years and 60years with particular learning needs or who may be recovering from an illness or addiction. On a daily basis in Longford, sixty people are attending services which include six training courses.</p> <p><b>Employ Ability Service Midlands</b> - this agency exists to support people with disabilities source paid employment, work experience or job sampling.</p> <p><b>St. Christopher's Services</b> - provide residential, day, training, respite and pre-school services to people with intellectual disabilities. It is a voluntary run organisation funded by the HSE and voluntary donations.</p> <p><b>The Phoenix Centre</b> - provides day services for children and adults with a physical or sensory disability, living in County Longford. Services include rehabilitative therapies, wheelchair sports training, I.T. training and other life and employability skills.</p> <p><b>Longford Centre for Independent Living</b> – this community based organisation promotes the philosophy of independent living for people with disabilities and gives people with disabilities the opportunity to access greater independence and life choices through the assistance of a Personal Assistant.</p> <p>Our work with the agencies listed above will be largely in respect of removing barriers for people with disabilities who wish to gain employment and improving quality of life for those who are unable to work.</p>

As highlighted in the socio-economic profile, there are individuals, geographical areas and communities of disadvantage within County Longford experiencing a high degree of social exclusion and are at risk of poverty. We will engage with the following agencies and services as follows:

<b>TUSLA- The Child and Family</b>	In particular, their work with Children and Young Peoples Service Committees, Family Resource Centres in Granard and Ballymahon and the School Completion Programme. TUSLA also provide significant resources
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<b>Agency</b>	to Longford Women's Link towards the provision of its Domestic Violence Support Service.
<b>SICAP</b>	Of specific relevance, their work with people who are socially excluded which includes community development activities, education and employment mediation and pre-employment programmes, in addition to the administration of the Back To Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme. SICAP also supports County Longford Youth Service.
<b>County Childcare Committee</b>	In their capacity as service developers in areas of disadvantage and their contact with key target groups.
<b>Longford County Council Re-generation Office</b>	This newly established department has plans to re-generate Longford's most disadvantaged areas.
<b>The Public Participation Network</b>	The new framework for public engagement and participation within local government which includes representation from all areas of County Longford.
<b>Health Service Executive</b>	Through their close contact with our mutual target groups across a wide range of programmes delivered or funded within County Longford including in this instance, members of the Travelling Community, young and older persons and their implementation of Healthy Ireland.
<b>Longford Westmeath Rural Transport Ltd</b>	Formed in 2015, the amalgamated rural transport services of counties Longford and Westmeath operate rural bus routes and a community car scheme.
<b>Teagasc</b>	In their capacity of working with low income farm families who may require additional support to access services or who may need encouragement to avail of enterprise opportunities.
<b>Longford Women's Link</b>	Through their role of linking women with resources to help improve and change their own and their families' lives which provides a knock on transformative effect on the local community.
<b>Employment Development and Information Centre</b>	As part of their overall aim to help meet the needs of people who are unemployed and provide a range of education and support services to unemployed people living in County Longford and surrounding areas.
<b>Community Organisations</b>	<p>Community organisations play a very important role supporting people who are unemployed and socially excluded in County Longford. Their work, which is on a localised basis, is of specific relevance to our Local Development Strategy and will allow us the maximum opportunity to engage with hard to reach communities.</p> <p>Other key organisations in the county include the Family Resource Centres in Granard and Ballymahon and Longford Community Resources Ltd</p>

	<p>Primary Health Care Programme supporting the Traveller Community.</p> <p>Over fifty community groups locally participate in Community Employment, TUS and the Rural Social Scheme across County Longford and they will play an important role in the implementation of our strategy.</p>
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### 2.3.4 Sub Theme: Rural Youth

Key services for young people in County Longford are delivered by a number of agencies and are in certain respects fragmented. No one agency has overall responsibility for this sector and it is hoped, as per government strategy, that the new Children and Young People Service Committees may bring co-ordination and structure to the sector at a local level.

Agencies active in County Longford that will impact on our Local Development Strategy include the School Completion Programme, Longford Enterprise Office, Youth Reach, Foroige, Longford Community Resources Ltd.'s, County Longford Youth Service, Sports Partnership, TUSLA, HSE, Department of Justice, Family Resource Centres and the Midland Drugs Taskforce.

All of these agencies are active in the service delivery of supports for young people and while services are delivered in rural and urban areas, the potential exists to extend services into areas that are currently not receiving a service. The focus of the Local Development Strategy in supporting existing youth services in County Longford will be on breaking cycles of disadvantage.

The objective of our Youth Strategy is again not to be a core deliverer of services but to enhance existing ones and work with them to improve access to opportunity for young people by improving the communities they live within, provide greater access to services for rural youth, and also to innovatively attract young people to engage in activities that will improve their confidence and outlook on life. Many other actions that will be implemented across the themes of the LDS will benefit the families of young people at risk and we hope that this will have a positive impact on the lives of young people living within disadvantaged families.

### 2.3.5 Theme Three: Key Services that support our Rural Environment

We will work with the following key agencies to deliver the required impact under Rural Environment:-

<p><b>Longford County Council</b></p>	<p>As outlined, Longford County Council will be a key partner across all actions of the Local Development Strategy including protection and enhancement of the local environment. Longford County Council currently deliver a number of relevant environmental initiatives including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Pollution &amp; Control</li> <li>• Waste Management</li> <li>• Pollution Incident Response</li> <li>• Environmental Awareness &amp; Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inland Fisheries Ireland</b></p>	<p>Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) the state agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources. Current projects of relevance in County Longford include the removal of invasive species and the development of angling hubs in</p>

	Lanesboro.
<b>Rural Recreation Office</b>	A number of projects within County Longford are identified in the National Countryside Recreational Strategy Operational Plan and Longford Community Resources have worked closely with the Rural Recreation Office in the region on the delivery of key projects such as trail development and enhancement in the county. A co-operative approach to our work will continue on the further development of trails and key sites within the county, and also training for communities in managing trails in a manner that protect local biodiversity.
<b>Additional Agencies involved in protecting the Rural Environment</b>	Individual actions within the Local Development Strategy will involve co-operation with Teagasc, National Parks and Wildlife Services along with local community organisations including Longford Warmer Homes and Longford Environmental Alliance who are active in the care and protection of the environment.

#### 2.4 CenterParcs – A transformative project for County Longford

In 2015 CenterParcs announced that it was to establish its first and only resort in the Republic of Ireland in Ballymahon County Longford ( to be known as CenterParcs Longford Forest); a welcome development for the County and indeed for the whole Midlands region. A planned investment in the region of €230 million will deliver one of the most significant tourism attractions ever seen in Ireland. The company has projected that there will 750 construction jobs created over a two year build phase from Spring 2017 and a further 1,000 permanent jobs within the centre once it opens in Spring 2019.

CenterParcs operates five existing resorts in the UK, and intends to build a high quality short-break holiday resort providing a visitor experience that is currently not available in the Irish market. The new site, a forest just outside Ballymahon was chosen because of its central location in Ireland making it easily accessible to tourists from all parts of the Island and also from the UK.

A project of this scale will be transformational for the region and it will place Longford firmly on the tourism map, enabling it to become a destination county in its own right, potentially hosting over 2,500 new visitors every week of the year. To put this into context, tourism figures released by Fáilte Ireland for each of the last five years placed Longford bottom of the overnight visitors table with an average of less than 30,000 bed nights each year. This highlights the potential for the development of tourism as a key economic driver in Longford going forward. This Local Development Strategy was developed to complement the CenterParcs project by supporting the development of ancillary services and tourism products. Tourism Development (Including supporting CenterParcs) has been identified as one of 6 key priorities for this LDS (See section 3.5, pg 62). Local Objectives 9, 10 and 11 (Pages 89-98) focus on supporting and building capacity within the sector and also ensuring that the output from investment in tourism in County Longford is maximised through the development of a co-ordinated approach While some of the strategic actions developed for this LDS dovetail with supporting the needs CenterParcs projects, they are also standalone and encourage the development of the tourism industry in Longford, which has huge potential for growth in its own right.

The challenge for the different stakeholders in Longford now is to grasp the opportunity that the CenterParcs resort will present. The implications it has for local employment, for the local tourism sector and for local businesses involved in sub-supply are positively significant. Concerns were raised at the planning application stage around traffic, water and environmental impact. These issues were reviewed and satisfied before planning permission was granted. There remain some concerns from locals around traffic volume and roads infrastructure, however the local authority will closely monitor and enforce the planning conditions attached to the application. There is also a concern that Longford may not maximise the jobs return locally because of the county's low skills base.

It is important that all support agencies and groups are adequately prepared to lead and manage this project as required to maximize benefit to the local community. The consultation process (see Appendix 10) for this LDS highlighted, among other issues, the need for ongoing specialist training & support for businesses (particularly smaller enterprises who lack resources to develop a comprehensive training package for employees), and the need to provide training programmes for individuals to ensure there is a sufficient number of qualified and trained people to work various roles in the hospitality industry in Longford. Although CenterParcs are devising a comprehensive training plan to fulfil their recruitment needs, this strategy will support individuals, businesses and other tourism enterprises in accessing employment and enterprise opportunities and developing as a direct or indirect result of the CenterParcs project. Furthermore concerns were raised that there was no co-ordinated approach to the development and marketing of Longford as a 'destination'.

Actions developed for this LDS (under the Rural Tourism Subtheme specifically) aim to bridge some of the gaps highlighted by providing funding for accommodation and amenity development (Strategic Action 10.1, 10.2 & 10.3), developing a comprehensive training package for those in the tourism sector- focusing on management, marketing and product development (Strategic Action 11.1). It is vital to ensure that any tourism development within the county is co-ordinated and delivered to a high standard in order to maximise the opportunity that will arise as a result of increased visitor numbers to the county. Strategic Actions 9.1 & 9.2 aim to devise a strategic approach to developing and marketing the tourism offering in County Longford, and this will be done with the input from all relevant and potential stakeholders. With proper planning and execution of key developments, Tourism has the potential to make a much greater contribution to the local economy and become an important employment generator.

While there is a specific focus on supporting 'tourism' enterprises and projects in this LDS, many of the other Objectives and Strategic Actions complement and encourage the development of such local enterprises and projects- this can be seen in Priority One of this LDS for example, (see section 3.5, pg 62). Strategic Actions 2.1 (Financial Support Programme) anticipates 7 hospitality enterprises and 10 Food & Beverage Enterprises will be supported. Strategic Actions 2.3 and 3.1 could also support Tourism based enterprises, and Strategic Action 5.1 is concerned with identifying and providing appropriate skills based training which is delivered locally in order for unemployed people to maximise their chances of accessing employment.

The sheer magnitude of the CenterParcs project means that this Local Development Strategy needs to be cognisant of its potential impact on target sectors and groups. It must



ensure that its different communities are supported and enabled to avail of opportunities presented either directly or indirectly. This support in the areas of pre-employment, in training, in complimentary tourism products, in business opportunities is referenced throughout the plan and will be reviewed throughout the duration of the plan as the CenterParcs project evolves.

## 2.5 Overarching Analysis of County Longford

In a county of 39,000 people, Longford currently has 12,882 people currently in receipt of a payment from the Department of Social Protection. Endemic **long term unemployment** is now a feature of life in County Longford with unemployment levels remaining consistently high since 2010. For those who are experiencing unemployment in recent years, the issues appear to include, lack of available entry level and construction jobs, poor transport provision, low educational attainment and high numbers of people with a disability who are welfare dependent. There are also a high number of non-Irish nationals experiencing unemployment in County Longford. A combination of issues can combine and lead to a complex cycle of welfare dependency that exacerbates peoples' distances from employment and leads to an on-going cycle of social exclusion. The absolute deprivation score for the county stands at -12.1.

County Longford has a **young population**, comprising of a high number of unemployed, non-Irish nationals and members of the Travelling community. In order to ensure that children at risk of social exclusion do not enter a cycle of disadvantage it is important that the right supports at critical times are in place to prevent this happening.

It is recognised that support must also be provided to **families, in particular lone parents** so that they have the skills to educate and prepare their children to work and play an active part in society.

The growth in the number of **people with disabilities** from 3,285 in 2006 to 5,404 in 2011, a rise from 9.5% to nearly 14% of the population is a very significant change in a population of 39,000 people.

Culturally, County Longford is experiencing change as the percentage of the county population living in an urban setting grows, and an increase has been experienced in the **non-Irish national population** which is now over 14% of the total county population.

As the county is experiencing the second lowest level of third level educational attainment in the country, the availability of **client centred training and education for all target groups** is vital. Access to good quality education will improve people's chances of finding employment and remaining in the workforce throughout a working life.

Our rural areas and **farming community are under pressure** - in 1991 Longford had 3,107 farms, a number which reduced continuously over the last twenty years and in 2010, just 2,601 farms were recorded in the county. Providing alternative forms of employment in rural areas where farming is diminishing is an important area of work for the Rural Development Programme. This will also help to keep rural areas viable and ensure that essential services remain accessible to people living outside the main towns in the county.

Geographically, the **areas of greatest disadvantage** in the county require specialist attention. With over 8% of the population located in the electoral district with the greatest level of disadvantage, that is Longford No.1 Urban, it is obvious that intensive supports are required in this area. It has been identified that while people living in this area have geographical access to services, a persistent level of disadvantage still remains. An analysis of this situation has concluded that people may be accessing services, but they are not progressing and remain unemployed or socially excluded following an intervention. There are also those for whom the available service provision does not meet their needs and will

require support prior to being in a position to access available services. Gaps in current service provision include ; Community Development Worker Supports to help animate those living in disadvantaged areas to engage with services ; Pre-development training ; Lifeskills Training ; Mental Health Support Programmes ; Counselling Services ; Youth Support Programmes targeting disadvantaged families ; Social Economy programmes that can provide employment and investment in community infrastructure.

The following Electoral Divisions and Small Areas have been identified as disadvantaged and they will benefit from targeted Local Development Strategy resources:

<b>Electoral District</b>	<b>2011 Deprivation Score</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Longford Urban	-14.71	Disadvantaged
Foxhall (Legan)	-13.37	Disadvantaged
Lislea	-12.63	Disadvantaged
Sonnagh	-11.84	Disadvantaged

<b><i>'Very Disadvantaged' Small Area</i></b>	<b><i>Electoral Division</i></b>
Bannon Terrace	Longford No.1 Urban
Annaly Park	Longford No.1 Urban
McEoin Park	Longford Rural
Cluain Ard/Pallace Crescent.	Longford Rural
St. Patrick's Terrace/Marian Ave	Meathas Truim
Church Street/Moxham Street	Granard Urban
Tromra Road/Barrack Lane	Granard Urban

The identified gaps in service provision vary from area to area but common to all is the need to engage directly with people who are socially excluded and to provide responsive pre-development supports in community based settings to ensure that they are accessible to all. Existing supports for young people are not in a position to meet all demands and the current economic climate means that there are limited job opportunities in all of these areas. Overcoming a dependence on social welfare will involve working with communities to explore options such as self-employment, social economy, and how to access employment but this will involve providing additional supports for people in order to make those options a viable reality.

In outlying rural areas such as Foxhall, Lislea and Sonnagh, access to service provision can be limited due to transport provision and where appropriate, the Local Development Strategy will target resources.

While centrally located and bordering Westmeath, Roscommon, Cavan and Leitrim, County Longford has failed to generate a level of economic and social development that it is capable of. Longford has the potential to be a much more economically active county than it is at present, it has so much to offer its residents and those interested in establishing businesses in the county. A very comprehensive and insightful strategy from all agencies is required to ensure a lasting change to the seemingly intrinsic level of unemployment that Longford continues to experience.

Innovation and Diversification must be a cornerstone to a Job Creation strategy that examines opportunities that are unique to Longford including Social Economy Projects, Renewable Energy, Food Production and Tourism opportunities. There is no doubt that there

is a need to create more employment locally by stimulating more economic activity amongst existing businesses so that they will be in a position to employ more people. We also need to ensure that is a superbly positive place for enterprises to locate as this represents an excellent chance to secure larger numbers of jobs.

The county needs to maximise every available opportunity in order to compete on a regional basis in attracting investment and stimulating innate growth. The development of the proposed Centerparcs initiative is undoubtedly the biggest job creation opportunity County Longford will see during the lifetime of the Rural Development Programme and ensuring that available employment is secured by people living in County Longford will be a key priority for the Rural Development Programme.

In addition to this, strengthening vibrant rural communities so that they can respond to the social and economic needs of the area and improve the quality of life for all will be a focus for the Local Development Strategy. The protection of our un-spoilt natural environment represents an opportunity for County Longford but it is also a long-term investment to ensure the health and welfare of people living in the county.

Aesthetically Longford is a very attractive county with enormous tourism potential that could create much needed employment and generate important economic activity in the county but it needs to put itself into a position where it can compete with other product offerings in the region.

The foundations for many important aspects for improving life in Longford have been built and the county enjoys good co-operation and working relationships across its statutory, community and non-government sectors. It remains a challenge from now until 2020 to lift Longford out of a cycle of disadvantage and capitalise on all it has to offer. This is an important time in the economic and social development of County Longford, and the changes that Longford is experiencing need to be recognised and appraised to ensure that access to opportunity is available to all.

## Chapter Three - Participative Planning

### 3.1 Overview of Consultation Process

As County Longford looked forward to the opportunity that is present in a new Rural Development Programme, the challenge of identifying the real and threatening issues present in the county emerged. A successful Rural Development Programme hinges on the identification of the impediments to economic and social development so that the programme can seek to successfully alleviate such issues and leave the path free for economic and social opportunity and prosperity. The 2015 consultation process gave excellent insight into these impediments but also sought to identify opportunities present in the county that could be developed to their full potential.

#### 3.1.1 Planning the Consultation

The consultation process was co-ordinated by the Rural Development Team within Longford Community Resources Ltd and their overarching approach sought to ensure that their consultations were:

- Accessible to all by using different consultative methods
- Inclusive of as wide an audience as possible
- Geographically dispersed
- Thought provoking
- A positive experience for those taking part
- Imparted the true essence of what the LEADER programmes is about

Detailed planning meetings identified and named all individuals, groups, agencies and forums that we felt were essential components of our consultation. In order to achieve the objective of an inclusive consultative process, an interesting mix of consultation methods were employed, along a variety of different facilitators with differing styles and methodologies. Importantly, the consultation methods reflected the most appropriate means of engaging with communities and target groups depending on their learning needs, confidence levels and awareness of rural development and its aims and objectives. It was decided that initially the most accessible way of encouraging people to participate was to prepare a consultation form (Appendix 8) which would allow people to document what they felt were the greatest needs within the county.

As we were keen to ensure that our consultation captured a strategy led process and a focus on the greatest needs within our county, respondents were deliberately steered towards identifying needs within their communities. The opportunity was also given to present ideas, projects and proposals that would maximise the strengths of the area.

A series of consultative forums followed which included public meetings, focus groups, small group meetings, one to one meetings, social media interactions and members of the public made phone calls directly to the team co-ordinating the process to express their views.

While the team had planned to individually conduct as many of the consultative forums as time would allow, they made the decision to engage external facilitators for certain forums. This decision was made to help with objectivity given facilitators were chosen who had particular expertise in working with certain target groups and we felt that their experience would be valuable in the overall process. This approach allowed us to re-enforce the principles of LEADER and how it can work with communities to meet their needs. We were keen for people to move away from seeing LEADER as a grant programme and to see it as an innovative development programme that responds to local needs.

A detailed awareness of the socio-economic profile of the county, together with our development work over the last number of years, has informed the LCRL Rural Development Team of the important issues that are present in the county and geographical small areas that are most disadvantaged.

Obvious needs are well documented within county strategic plans and are clear for everyone to see but the objective in our consultation process was to listen to communities and to try and identify issues that are not immediately apparent and also what resources, both human and otherwise are available within communities and how we might all move forward over the next five years and beyond.

In times of change, when we have a growing non-Irish national population, an un-stable economic environment, along with significant social challenges, our objective was to hear the real views of the issues facing local people. Significant collective resources are invested in every county in Ireland and despite this, there seems to be entrenched pockets of disadvantage.

An outline of all the consultation methodology and all consultative interactions are set out below.

### **3.1.2 Consultation Forms**

A powerful consultation mechanism, this action can be summarised as:-

- In August 2015, 450 consultation forms with an explanatory cover letter were circulated across County Longford. The distribution list for these forms included community and voluntary groups, some of which were County Longford Tourism, Longford Heritage Forum, Longford Chamber, Traders Associations, Farming Organisations, Longford Women's Link, Employment, Development and Information Centre, Family Resource Centres, CE Schemes, Disability Support Groups, Craft Sector, Youth Organisations, Traveller Support Groups, Employment Support Groups, Older Persons Network, Environmental groups, sporting organisations and general community based Development Associations.
- The consultation form was also circulated through the PPN (Public Participation Network) and Longford Sports Partnership.
- The form was available to download on the websites of Longford Community Resources Ltd and Longford County Council.
- Press releases were also published outlining the process being undertaken and its impact on future Rural Development planning in the county. These press releases outlined that members of the public were welcome to express their views regarding the new programme at any stage by contacting staff within Longford Community Resources Ltd.
- Members of County Longford Local Community Development Committee and Longford County Council also received an individual form to facilitate the expressing of their individual view on the needs of the county. Similarly, all elected representatives were invited to express their views through our consultative process.
- The form was circulated to all those who have had previous involvement with the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

- The form was circulated to all former board members of Longford Community Resources Ltd, members of previous LEADER Advisory & Evaluation Teams, all current staff and Board members of Longford Community Resources Ltd.

A total of 65 forms were returned to Longford Community Resources Ltd as part of the consultation process. A further 103 project ideas have been received to date.

### 3.1.3 Public Consultations

In order to ensure an open, inclusive, as well as geographically accessible process, six public meetings were held in community based venues across County Longford including Granard, Ballymahon and Longford town followed by, Edgeworthstown, Lanesboro and Drumlish. These public meetings which took place in September 2015 were advertised through social media, advertisements in local press, radio, and through localised publicity in each area. Community leaders were contacted prior to each meeting and asked to assist us with facilitating as wide an audience as possible. The wide geographical spread of meetings ensured that people living in remote areas did not have to travel long distances.

At each public meeting RDP Idea Consultation forms were made available to all those attending. Those present at the meetings were encouraged to complete one and to also take them away for friends, neighbours or family members whom were unable to attend the public meeting, in order to have an opportunity to participate in the consultation process. A significant number of these forms were returned.

All public meetings were facilitated by members of the Rural Development Team of Longford Community Resources Ltd. As an introduction to LEADER as a rural development process, a video was produced outlining what LEADER is about, how it is a community-led process and how important it is that everyone has their say. The video also highlighted projects funded under the previous Rural Development Programme (2007-2013) which have made a difference to the county. This use of visual media to promote rural development proved very effective and encouraged people to engage in the process as they can see clear identifiable outcomes.

The video can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qyEvF7N4y8>

A total of 87 people attended the public consultation forums.

### 3.1.4 Focus Group Meetings

We were conscious given our previous experience of consultative processes that while public forms and consultative forms are inclusive and accessible, different methodologies are needed to examine issues in detail and identify real root causes and impediments within a community and indeed a county. Based on the sub-themes of the programme, five focus groups were held on the following issues:

- Supporting the Unemployed and Socially Excluded
- Tourism
- Enterprise Development (incl. Social Economy)
- Environment
- Rural Youth

The focus groups were facilitated by external facilitators and comprised of representatives of groups and agencies that work in relevant areas or are known to have expertise in a particular sector. See Appendix Eight for details of those invited to attend Focus Groups.



Each focus group meeting was approximately three hours in duration which allowed time to examine issues raised in a comprehensive way. It also allowed for a full and frank exchange of information about what is currently being undertaken by those working in relevant sectors to address needs within the county.

Facilitators also sought to identify within the focus groups the priorities amongst all the issues raised. The involvement of focus groups in the prioritisation of issues has re-enforced to us the critical issues in the county and in an objective way.

The structure of the focus groups also allowed for people to be innovative in the proposed responses to issues identified as there was awareness that this strategy is about finding local solutions to local needs.

A total of 82 people attended the Focus Group Meetings.

### 3.1.5 'Hard to Reach' Communities

A crucial component of the consultation process was the reaching out to minority groups or those who may not always be aware of the process of community led local development but may need additional supports to engage fully. The pathway of accessing minority groups in a way that does not label them or re-enforce their minority status is always a challenge. Therefore, we used a series of appropriate research methods to ensure we had a clear and effective representation of needs amongst hard to reach communities through our consultation process.

<b>Unemployed</b>	<p>By hosting small group facilitated meetings with unemployed people (reached through our community contacts) allowed us direct contact to hear their views and to identify barriers present locally. We also spent considerable time with those who work closely with unemployed people including Community Employment Supervisors, Family Resource Centre Co-ordinators, Tús and RSS Supervisors, Instructors and Employment Mediators.</p> <p>The local multi-agency Services to the Unemployed Working Group were also used as a consultation method. This Group brings together those working with the unemployed and was established by Longford Community Resources Ltd as a social inclusion action.</p> <p>Staff members engaged in SICAP were very effective in this consultation phase.</p>
<b>Non-Irish Nationals</b>	<p>It was clear from the consultation forms received and through our public consultations, that there was an under-representation by the non-Irish national community that now make up over 14% of our overall county population in the process. Therefore, group meetings were facilitated through our community contacts with members of non-Irish national communities. These included participants on local employment schemes and training schemes who were previously unemployed.</p> <p>A small group workshop was facilitated with participants who are currently unemployed and are considering self-employment under the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme. A number of these participants are non-Irish nationals.</p>
<b>Travellers</b>	<p>In a county with one of the highest representation of members of the travelling community in the country, the identification of impediments to</p>

	<p>their development is of critical importance to our Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>There are many agency representatives working with or on behalf of Travellers in County Longford and Longford Community Resources Ltd operate a Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers which includes training initiatives for Traveller Women and Men. The views of Travellers were well represented in Focus Group meetings in particular and with our meetings with state agency personnel. However, direct contact was important and the RDP. Team met with representatives of the travelling community in a small group setting.</p>
<b>Lone Parents</b>	<p>The proportion of lone parents in the county is above the national average and identifying their needs and measures to address their needs are crucial to prevent further compounding of social exclusion, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation.</p> <p>We worked through community contacts to access as wide a group as we could, as we did not want to further exclude people by identifying them by their parental status. We know that lone parents are one of the groups at greatest risk of poverty and we are aware of the added barrier to accessing services due to the extra demands on those parenting alone.</p>
<b>Local Authority Housing Estates</b>	<p>In tandem with the SICAP Development Workers, we conducted research with key target groups in local authority housing estates. The exercise also helped to develop a wider understanding of the LEADER programme, its principles and objectives.</p>

### 3.1.6 Agency Consultations

Crucial to our development of an integrated Local Development Strategy is our work with statutory agencies that operate in County Longford and within our respective region. A full review of all state agency development plans for the county and region was undertaken along with meetings with key personnel to plan and review relevant strategies. The following agencies were consulted with:

Longford County Council including LEO, Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board, Department of Social Protection, Teagasc, Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Coillte, Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Health Service Executive, National Trails Office, National Learning Network, Tusla, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Longford County Childcare Committee, Eastern & Regional Assembly, Longford Sports Partnership & Longford Westmeath Community Transport Ltd.

Upon approval of the Local Development Strategy, further consultations are planned with key agencies to outline the proposed actions and to plan a co-ordinated delivery of the strategy to the maximum benefit of the county.

### 3.1.7 Use of Social Media

Social Media was used to communicate that a LEADER consultation process was being undertaken. Regular updates were provided via social media networks and to promote public consultation meetings. With hindsight, greater use could have been made of this form of communication and to greater effect. The focus on traditional means of communication was considered to be more inclusive but as we came to know our communities better we gained

an understanding of how widespread the use of social media is and for certain groups, it could have assisted us with gaining greater contact with hard to reach communities. However, this process would need to have been commenced much earlier in the year to build up traffic and interest in our site and subsequent messaging.

### 3.2 Outcomes and Conclusions of Consultation Process

The outcomes and conclusions of our Consultation Process are outlined below. An analysis of the consultation process along with a review of the socio-economic profile has led to the identification of critical issues in the county that form the basis for our developmental strategies.

Unsurprisingly the issue of **unemployment** was to the fore at all our consultations with many varying views on causes, contributing factors and also potential solutions. With such high unemployment figures in the county, people focused on job creation issues such as **enterprise development**, **social economy development** as well as the critical need to **attract more industry** to locate here. Creating better links between **the unemployed and employers** was an issue and an opportunity that was raised across many forums and consultation feedback.

The need to provide **support to young people** living in the county was also a prevalent issue. It was recognised that the lack of a local third level college, high levels of welfare dependency amongst families and lack of adequate transport options were all barriers to young people progressing. The need to create more access to opportunities and also to motivate young people to see a future that includes employment was important.

**Families need support** to manage their households and provide stable environments for their children to grow up in. These supports included basic household management and life skills. Additional supports may be needed by those who are parenting alone and nearly 20% of children in County Longford are living in a lone parent household.

Services in rural areas need to be maintained and the **community and local development sector needs support** to manage all the demands placed upon it.

There were also many suggestions on how Longford could become a Centre of Excellence and the need to identify unique selling points about the county. The need to ensure that people living in **rural areas have access** to employment support services or training was identified.

The development of the **tourism sector** was seen as an opportunity for County Longford and was raised at the majority of consultation forums.

**Environment issues** were not raised widely during the consultation process but their importance was reflected in the focus group on the environment when issues particular to County Longford were highlighted and necessary strategies were outlined.

A detailed listing of all issues raised during all elements of the consultation process is contained in Appendix 10.

### 3.3 Local Development Strategy S.W.O.T.

The consultation process including the individual submissions and focus groups provided a robust identification of issues that form the basis for our S.W.O.T. analysis. The members of the LEADER Advisory Group also participated in a process to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats with respect to the Local Development Strategy.

Therefore, the S.W.O.T. analysis can be presented as:-

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p>Natural Attractiveness of the County – county has excellent tourism potential.</p> <p>The County has already attracted key industries, could attract more. Good employers located here.</p> <p>Availability of affordable large scale industrial space in central location.</p> <p>Plenty of space to develop new amenities in naturally attractive areas.</p> <p>Strong community and local development sector driving lots of activity in the county.</p> <p>Good provision of community based infrastructure.</p> <p>Availability of funding from national programmes.</p> <p>Small county – central location.</p> <p>Opening up of Royal Canal Cycleway from Longford to Clondra.</p> <p>Tourism Development on the increase, the re-opening of St. Mels Cathedral has brought lots of visitors to the county.</p> <p>Excellent un-spoilt biodiversity.</p> <p>Strong cultural identity.</p> <p>Unique aspects to heritage infrastructure.</p> <p>Good quality sports and leisure amenities.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>Unemployment Levels – lack of jobs; high youth unemployment.</p> <p>No Third Level College in the county – young people leave the county.</p> <p>Lack of high speed Broadband in rural areas.</p> <p>County has not received the potential resources available to it, or maximised what it has received.</p> <p>No one agency responsible for tourism.</p> <p>No Flagship Hotel – lots of business leaving the county.</p> <p>Vacant, derelict sites and buildings. Poor quality business parks.</p> <p>Approach roads un-attractive.</p> <p>Lack of pride in the county.</p> <p>Poor transport provision for unemployed people.</p> <p>Lack of alternative training options for people. Formal mainstream training doesn't suit everyone.</p> <p>Lack of availability of match funding in sourcing national funds.</p> <p>Lack of Community Development and Youth Workers in the county.</p>
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<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Development of Centerparcs.	Level of unemployment, lack of jobs is leading to high levels of economic disadvantage and subsequent problems.
Potential of tourism, lack of awareness of what Longford has to offer. Development of Royal Canal Cycleway. New Tourism Accommodation standard.	Local resources are stretched as more people come to live in County Longford as they cannot afford city rent prices.
Young population.	Move to urban living will make services un-sustainable in rural areas. Threat to rural areas.
Provision of community infrastructure creates opportunities for development activities in rural areas.	Lack of broadband plan for rural areas will hinder economic development planning.
New Regeneration Office in Longford County Council.	Media reports on crime and anti-social behaviour in Longford, rival families bringing negative attention to the county.
Acquisition of Connolly Barracks by Longford County Council.	Other counties focusing on areas of expertise will leave Longford behind.
High speed broadband available to 48% of premises by 2016.	Cycle of disadvantage becoming entrenched.
Steady development of small business sector. Lots of interest in new RDP. from small business sector.	Confusion over services, people not getting clear information.
Good foundation for Social Economy sector – growth can come from this sector.	Young people leaving the county to avail of third level opportunities – they may not return.
Can offer good quality of living (sports, amenities etc.)	Environmental threats, such as invasive species, and lack of awareness of protecting our biodiversity.
County wide interest in energy development and environmental issues.	
Opportunities for farm diversification.	
Potential to develop niche training opportunities at third level.	
Opportunity to grow FDI sector in the county.	

### 3.4 Local Development Strategy Vision

*The vision for this Local Development Strategy is to improve the quality of economic and social activity in County Longford. By 2020, we want to see the creation of a better environment for all forms of Enterprise to flourish; we want to ensure that there are targeted supports for disadvantaged communities that improve access to education, employment and family support; we want to protect the un-spoilt natural environment that the county enjoys while at the same time develop the latent tourism potential that the county has.*

It is clear from our analysis of all the issues and opportunities present in County Longford that a development strategy should be two dimensional in the form both of a support and stimulus package :

1. Supporting geographical and issue based disadvantaged communities to engage fully with services that support and encourage social inclusion and improve the quality of life for all.
2. Stimulate the local economy by investing in key sectors that have economic and job-creating potential and by the removal of local “bottle necks” that are hindering development.

The targeting of i) geographic and ii) issue based disadvantaged communities and the need to engage directly with people who are socially excluded was strongly indicated by the data analysis as well as being recognised by all groups in the consultative process. Further analysis and a detailing of the rationale for targeting these areas in addition to stimulating the local economy is detailed in Section 2.5 Overarching Analysis of County Longford (Pg 51), Section 3.3 SWOT Analysis (Pg 59), Section 3.5 Local Development Priorities (Pg 62) and the issues identified in the local consultation process as detailed in Appendix 10 (Pg 208-215). The Local Development Strategy has been designed to respond to the identified needs of the county using the bottom up approach which supports the LEADER methodology.

To provide an example of the targeting of resources to a geographic area and those socially excluded, Longford Urban has a deprivation score (as per the 2011 census) of -14.71, classing it as disadvantaged. The data relating to Unemployment in the County (as indicated in Table 2.7 - Pg 35), there is a high level of both male and female unemployment. In order to address these issues and provide a support and stimulus as per Objective 12 (Pg 99) we plan to provide community development expertise which will be engaged to work directly with hard to reach communities. We will work with the communities to identify key initiatives that will reduce barriers that are causing social exclusion and also provide for the resourcing of infrastructural and employment initiatives that specifically address the factors that are causing social exclusion. These initiatives are likely to include specific key skills training, small refurbishment works to community centres, I.T. provision, signage, disability access.

Other supports provided may include those delivered through Objective 3 - Action 3.1, which aims to reduce the level of unemployment locally by providing a comprehensive suite of supports for hard to reach communities that will assist in making self-employment a viable option for those with a business idea. It is envisaged that specialist enterprise support programmes for individuals from hard to reach communities will be delivered.

### 3.5 Local Development Priorities

To ensure that the vision for the LDS comes to fruition, Local Development Strategy priorities were identified. This followed a review of the data from the socio-economic profile,



analysing the feedback from the consultation process and the SWOT analysis of the county, along with the evaluation and consideration of what other agencies are delivering or planning to deliver in the county.

The rationale for selecting priorities was based on the analysis of the socio-economic data which highlighted the issues where there were variances between national averages and the results within the county, thus identifying issues that were of particular concern. Issues that were consistently raised within the consultation process by individuals, community groups and organisations were confirmed as being priorities for the LDS by those working within agencies in the county.

The greatest priority of the LDS as identified in the consultation process and re-enforced through the analysis of socio-economic data is the high rate of unemployment that the county consistently experiences. Various contributing factors sustain this high level of unemployment in the county and while some of these factors are being addressed by state agencies, there are issues present locally that the LDS could address through targeted interventions. The consultation process identified that those from hard to reach communities are experiencing a higher than average level of unemployment and this information is confirmed in the socio-economic data. This has led to these hard to reach communities being prioritised in specific actions in the LDS. These hard to reach communities include, members of the Travelling community, people with disabilities, lone parents, rural dwellers, young people and non-Irish nationals.

The second priority identified is the support needed for young people living in the county. Socio-economic data shows that County Longford has a higher proportion of young people than the national average and it also has a lower educational attainment than national averages. This was reflected in the consultation process when a high number of needs pertaining to young people were identified, both in public consultation meetings and in focus group meetings. It was also an issue that ranked very highly in the consultation forms that people returned. In order to support young people adequately, it was clearly identified in the consultation process that we must also work with young peoples' families to ensure that they are enabled to provide support to their own children.

Issues pertaining to the environment and the need to support local community groups and organisations were raised in the consultation process and this has been reflected in the emphasis given to actions within the LDS. Benefits from these actions will affect whole communities and will strengthen the capacity of community groups to look at delivering locally based solutions to local issues.

The consultation process also raised opportunities that people feel are present in the county and these have also been included in the LDS. These opportunities include development of the tourism sector locally, potential job opportunities through the Social Economy and the support for innovative enterprises that cannot be funded elsewhere.

Cutting across all of these issues is the need to ensure that rural areas benefit from the programme and every effort is made to sustain rural towns and villages. As the socio-economic data shows that County Longford is moving towards a more urban economy, the consultation process identified that it is vital that rural areas remain viable.

The priorities of the Local Development Strategy were identified through an analysis of the socio-economic data, the issues identified through the community consultation process, the agency consultations and the existing service provision and this was conducted by:

- Rural Development Team of Longford Community Resources Ltd.
- Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd.

- Rural Development Programme Advisory Team, with representatives of LCDC and LCRL.
- Longford Local Community Development Committee

A decision was also made to include all of the Rural Development Programmes themes and sub-themes. This was based on the premise that there are relevant needs and opportunities within each of the sub-themes within County Longford. Under the RDP. 2007-2013, development work was also undertaken in relation to a number of the themes and this work can now be enhanced by actions planned under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

The following table further expands on the selected priorities and the local strategies, local objective and actions which have been identified to address same resulting from the analysis carried out during the completion of this LDS, including Area Profiling, SWOT Analysis, Consultation Processes, etc.:

Priority Number	Priority Description	Strategy	Objectives & Actions in LDS
1	<p><b>Unemployment:</b> All entities involved in the selection of the priorities were unanimous in their opinion that unemployment was the greatest issue affecting County Longford and measures to alleviate it must be a <b>core priority</b> of the Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>It is recognised that there are many agencies operating in County Longford who have a remit to alleviate unemployment so the priority for the Local Development Strategy is to think innovatively about local solutions that will support unemployed people to access existing services and to <b>maximise opportunities for job creation through enterprise development.</b></p> <p>That enterprise development includes the development of the <b>Social Economy</b> which has the objective of creating supported employment for hard to reach communities while at the same time provides essential community services, both of which will therefore contribute to economic output in the county.</p>	<p>The objective of our Enterprise strategy is to create employment and in order to maximise opportunities to do this, we have identified initiatives that relate to micro, small, medium and large enterprises. The strategy is also intended to support hard to reach communities to provide opportunities for enterprise that would otherwise not be possible.</p> <p>The elements of the strategy are as follows :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making Longford an excellent place to locate a business.</li> <li>• Providing support to new and existing micro, small and medium enterprises in line with the protocol agreement between LEO's and LAG's.</li> <li>• Further enhancing the supportive and stimulating enterprise environment for hard to reach communities.</li> <li>• Researching new ways to attract further industry to Longford.</li> <li>• Develop Social Economy enterprises in the county.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Objective 1</b> Strategic Actions 1.1 ;</p> <p><b>Local Objective 2</b> Strategic Actions 2.1 ; 2.2 ; 2.3;</p> <p><b>Local Objective 3</b> Strategic Actions 3.1 ;</p> <p><b>Local Objective 4</b> Strategic Actions 4.1 ;</p> <p><b>Local Objective 5</b> Strategic Action 5.1</p> <p><b>Local Objective 6</b> Strategic Action 6.1 ; 6.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 8</b> Strategic Action 8.1</p>

<p>2</p>	<p><b>Hard to Reach Communities</b> : The development of locally based supports for hard to reach communities is the second priority of the Local Development Strategy, and this is based on the reality that there are some very disadvantaged geographical areas within County Longford that are not progressing despite the range of support services that are currently in place. In addition to geographical communities that are hard to reach, there are also issue-based communities that are hard to reach.</p> <p>Our priority is to provide targeted supports to these communities that are easily accessible to them and responsive to their needs. It will mean that they will live within supportive communities and will have more access to supports and services that will ensure their social inclusion.</p> <p>The essence of this priority is to deliver community development supports that encourage participation, empower people and ensure that they are involved in collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way.</p>	<p>Our Hard to Reach Communities encompass a wide range of target groups and geographical areas with diverse needs. Our strategy for hard to reach communities is that we will deliver tailored responses delivered by trained Community Development Workers in geographical areas of disadvantage and with issue based groups. These responses may include small scale infrastructure projects, entry level training, mental health supports, childcare provision, transport provision, provision of basic services. As the needs of each area or issue will be different, the responses to the needs will also be different.</p> <p>It is planned that providing community level interventions will support families at risk in a complementary way to services delivered by agencies working directly with families on an individual level.</p>	<p><b>Local Objective 5</b> Strategic Objective 5.1</p> <p><b>Local Objective 6</b> Strategic Action 6.1 ; 6.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 12</b> Strategic Action 12.1 ; 12.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 13</b> Strategic Action 13.1 ; 13.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 14</b> Strategic Action 14.1 ;</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><b>Young People.</b> Breaking the cycle of disadvantage present in the lives of many young people in County Longford is the third priority for the Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>The most startling result of the consultation process came from our research on the needs of young people where it was noted by those working with young people that <i>“the unbearable reality of their lives often draws them more strongly to escape into other worlds”</i></p> <p>Resources available within the Rural Development Programme must change the landscape for young people</p>	<p>Our strategy for supporting rural youth focuses on the key issues that are causing disadvantage amongst young people.</p> <p>Namely, unemployment, poor educational attainment, lack of family support, and low levels of motivation with a narrow perspective of future opportunities.</p> <p>The actions outlined in the LDS all seek to identify potential solutions to these</p>	<p><b>Local Objective 15</b> Strategic Action 15.1</p> <p><b>Local Objective 16</b> Strategic Action 16.1;</p> <p><b>Local Objective 17</b> Strategic Action 17.1 ; 17.2</p>

	<p>living in the county so they do not become the statistics of the future. Our vision for young people living in County Longford is that they receive opportunities to progress and live their lives to their full potential.</p>	<p>local issues through the implementation of pilot projects, supporting existing groups that are delivering excellent services and the development of new models of practise that show tangible results.</p>	
4	<p><b>Community Groups.</b> County Longford is fortunate to have vibrant community and local development groups who make an enormous contribution to all aspects of economic, social and cultural life within the county. In these times of stretched human and financial resources, it will be the fourth priority of the Local Development Strategy to support these vital groups in their role as community and local developers, employers, service delivery agents, tourism ambassadors, environmental improvers and infrastructure developers. They are essential components of keeping rural areas alive and ensuring the services in rural areas are sustained.</p>	<p>Our strategy to strengthen and support the community and local development sector in County Longford involves actions on training, information sharing, financial support to deliver essential infrastructure and resource support to undertake projects that will benefit their community. The strategy will also seek to encourage more people to become involved in their local community to ensure that the vital work and services delivered by the community and local development sector can continue in the long-term.</p>	<p><b>Local Objective 7</b> Strategic Action 7.1</p> <p><b>Local Objective 8</b> Strategic Action 8.1</p> <p><b>Local Objective 13</b> Strategic Action 13.1 ; 13.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 14</b> Strategic Action 14.1 ;</p>
5	<p><b>Environment.</b> Protecting the un-spoilt, diverse natural environment that exists in County Longford and ensuring that residents gain a true understanding of how they can contribute to its sustainability is a priority of this Local Development Strategy.</p>	<p>Our strategy for protecting the natural environment in County Longford is to work with local communities to deliver an awareness and education campaign to inform people and to identify critical projects that need attention. If eligible, these projects will be resourced through the RDP.</p> <p>We also hope to maximise the opportunity that renewable energy use can bring individually and collectively by supporting innovative renewable energy projects in the county.</p>	<p><b>Local Objective 18</b> Strategic Action 18.1 ; 18.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 19</b> Strategic Action 19.1 ; 19.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 20</b> Strategic Action 20.1 ; 20.2 ; 20.3</p>

<p>6</p>	<p><b>Tourism.</b> The opportunities that are present in the county to develop <b>tourism to be a significant economic contributor</b> and job creator were clearly recognised and developing the tourism sector will be the sixth priority for the Local Development Strategy.</p> <p>While opportunity exists, the tourism sector in County Longford has been poorly resourced and developed in a fragmented way. In recent years, developments have occurred that have improved the outlook for tourism and expectations are high that the new Centerparcs tourism project planned for Ballymahon will not only benefit the developer but also bring significant benefits to the tourism sector locally.</p>	<p>The strategy to develop tourism within County Longford is as follows :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to tourism development amongst all agencies with a tourism remit and industry providers in the county.</li> <li>- Continue to build a quality tourist product including the provision of good quality accommodation and food options that are capable of attracting tourists to the county.</li> <li>- Development of professional marketing strategy and programme aligned with Fáilte Irelands strategy.</li> <li>- Increase the capacity of tourism providers by delivering relevant training to ensure industry standards are maintained and promoters have the capacity to deliver quality projects.</li> <li>-To capitalise in the most appropriate way on the opportunity that the development of Centerparcs will bring to the county.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Local Objective 9</b> Strategic Action 9.1 ; 9.2</p> <p><b>Local Objective 10</b> Strategic Action 10.1 ; 10.2 10.3</p> <p><b>Local Objective 11</b> Strategic Action 11.1 ;</p>
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### **3.6 Time Limited Calls**

The LAG will ensure that a minimum of 40% of the budget for projects is allocated to ‘time-limited’ calls for applications. As per the guidelines of the Rural Development Programme, at least 60% of community type activities and 40% of revenue generating projects will also be subject to time limited calls.

## Chapter Four: Local Development Strategy Action Plan

All the actions to be carried out under the Local Development Strategy will have due regard to, and be underpinned by, equality and human rights in their implementation, in accordance with the Public Sector Duty: Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014) Section 42.

### 4.1 THEME ONE- Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.

#### Sub-Theme: Enterprise Development

<b>Local Objective 1</b>	
<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	Improve the quality of available Enterprise Space in County Longford in order to attract further enterprises to locate in County Longford.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>Deciding where to locate a business is a key decision for any entrepreneur and certain pre-requisites are required by every business owner. There is currently a surplus of enterprise space in certain areas in County Longford and a deficit in other areas. It is necessary to identify why excess space is not being utilised and to adapt it or market it effectively to a relevant audience. It is also necessary to examine potential enterprise space options in areas where there is currently a deficit.</p> <p>This objective seeks to ensure that all the essential requisites required by a business will be in place and that County Longford will be in a position to offer entrepreneurs a range of attractive and competitive options to suit their needs.</p> <p>By providing and marketing appropriate enterprise space, there will be an increase in the number of businesses locating in the county. An increase in the level of occupancy in business parks in County Longford may also stimulate new businesses to develop in light of a more positive business market locally.</p> <p>This objective will also ensure that available enterprise space for large enterprises is suitably presented and marketed to the required audience in order to maximise the opportunity of attracting industry to County Longford. The development of enterprise space to cater for the specific needs of certain sectors of industry will be considered under this objective, for example, the Food sector or Renewable Energy sector.</p>

<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	100,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

### **Strategic Action 1.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 1.1:</b>	Provide a range of attractive Enterprise Space options in County Longford in urban and rural areas.
<b><u>Brief Description of Strategic Action 1.1:</u></b>	<p>It will be necessary to examine the current database of all available enterprise space in County Longford and assess how well it meets current needs and demands of the market.</p> <p>Works that are needed to improve the usability and attractiveness of business parks and community enterprise hubs, such as appropriate signage, landscaping works will be considered. The development of marketing materials including brochures and websites will assist in selling this space in what is a competitive market regionally.</p> <p>In tandem with this, the demand for space from relevant business sectors in County Longford will be assessed to determine if current available space needs to be adapted to meet particular sectoral needs, such as the Renewable Energy Sector or the Artisan Food / Craft Sector. The need for innovative I.T. hubs will be also examined.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Local Entrepreneurs and Potential Entrepreneurs, Social Economy Projects, Community Enterprises, Artisan Food and Craft Sectors.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Local Enterprise Office, Longford County Council, Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Private Sector Trade Associations, Chambers & Sectoral Networks.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 to Q4 2018

<p><b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b></p>	<p>Number of enterprise funded – start-ups - 10</p> <p>Number of enterprise funded – existing – 5</p> <p>Number of jobs created – new - 15 Full Time and 8 Part time</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded with Capital, Training, Marketing &amp; Animation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food &amp; Beverage - 4</li> <li>○ Creative businesses - 3</li> <li>○ Agricultural Diversification - 1</li> <li>○ Hospitality - 3</li> <li>○ Marine Diversification – 1</li> <li>○ ICT – 2</li> </ul> <p>To see a reduction in the amount of vacant enterprise space in County Longford by attracting new and existing businesses to locate in the county.</p> <p>To stimulate certain business sectors by providing optimum location options and encouraging people to consider self-employment as a viable option.</p>
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**Local Objective 2**

<p><b>Title of Local Objective</b></p>	<p>To create employment and increase the level of economic activity in County Longford by supporting the development of new &amp; expanding enterprises in the micro, small and medium business sector that have job creation and growth potential.</p> <p>The focus of this objective will be on innovation, enterprises in new growth areas such as I.T, renewable energy, food and creative industries.</p>
<p><b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b></p>	<p>Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.</p>
<p><b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b></p>	<p>With a decline in traditional industries and the numbers entering agriculture, there is a need to develop alternative enterprise options that will be sustainable and create employment, particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>Micro, small and medium enterprises provide essential economic activity in rural areas and also provide one of the best opportunities for job growth. With access to loan facilities still an issue for the small business sector, the RDP programme will provide a programme of support of capital investment for businesses that show job creation and growth potential. This support package will be available to new and existing businesses in</p>

	<p>both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>Alongside this financial support, there will be the opportunity for business development and marketing supports to ensure that funding received is maximised to its full potential.</p> <p>This objective will create indigenous job growth, encourage entrepreneurship and retain people living in rural areas.</p> <p>It was identified during the consultation process that the potential exists within County Longford to develop niche areas of enterprise that with support will progress into key economic contributors and job creators. The development of Centres of Excellence was a key issue raised during the consultation process and was identified as an opportunity for County Longford to develop.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	780,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	3

### Strategic Action 2.1

<b>Title of Strategic Action 2.1:</b>	Financial Support Programme to Micro, Small and Medium Businesses in rural and urban settings in innovative sectors of business.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 2.1:</b>	<p>New and existing businesses will be invited to apply for funding towards the set up or development of their business.</p> <p>The action will focus on innovative sectors of enterprise that exploit market opportunities and have job creation potential but do not displace existing enterprises.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be a demand for those seeking to supply services to the new Centerparcs development and these will be considered providing they are in line with all necessary RDP. criteria.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Potential Entrepreneurs and Existing Entrepreneurs.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford but will be dependent on where business owners are located.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.

<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Local Enterprise Office.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 – 2016 – Q4 -2020
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of enterprises funded – start-ups - 20</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded – existing - 20</p> <p>Number of Jobs Created - 20 Full Time &amp; 20 Part Time</p> <p>Number of Jobs Sustained : 15 Full Time</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded with Capital, Training, Marketing &amp; Animation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food &amp; Beverage - 10</li> <li>○ Creative businesses – 7</li> <li>○ Social Enterprise - 4</li> <li>○ Agricultural Diversification - 3</li> <li>○ Hospitality - 7</li> <li>○ Marine Diversification – 3</li> <li>○ ICT – 6</li> </ul>

### **Strategic Action 2.2**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 2.2:</b>	Maximise the development of key enterprise sectors within County Longford that are shown to have potential to make significant contributions to the local economy.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 2.2:</b>	<p>Initial research has indicated that the areas with the most potential could be the Food Sector; Craft and Creative Industries; Outdoor Leisure Businesses; Environmental Management; Specialist Construction Trades.</p> <p>This action will involve the undertaking of research which will identify which of these sector/sectors has the most potential and what actions need to be supported on a group basis in order to develop it to its full potential.</p> <p>It is envisaged that as a result of collective marketing or product development opportunities identified, it will be necessary to fund marketing materials, new product development, group packaging, website development and training.</p>



<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Businesses operating within sectors that are interested in increasing their development.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland, Private Sector business associations and sectoral groups.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 – 2016 – Q4 2020
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of Jobs Created - 6 Full Time &amp; 4 Part Time</p> <p>Number of Jobs Sustained - 40 Full Time</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded with Capital, Training, Marketing &amp; Animation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food &amp; Beverage - 10</li> <li>○ Creative businesses – 5</li> <li>○ Social Enterprise - 5</li> <li>○ Agricultural Diversification - 4</li> <li>○ Hospitality - 3</li> <li>○ Marine Diversification – 3</li> <li>○ ICT – 10</li> </ul> <p>1 x Research Programme identifying sectors most likely to benefit from sectoral support.</p> <p>2x Training Programmes supporting 20 people per programme, total of 40 businesses supported.</p> <p>2x Marketing Programmes supporting 20 people per programme, total of 40 businesses supported. (30 New &amp; 10 Existing)</p>

### **Strategic Action 2.3**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 2.3:</b>	Initiatives that support the promotion of local enterprises.
<b><u>Brief</u> Description of</b>	County Longford needs a vibrant small business sector.

<p><b>Strategic Action 2.3:</b></p>	<p>It was identified during the consultation process that we need to promote examples of business success in Longford, in order to encourage more growth and interest in enterprise particularly among young people and the wider community.</p> <p>Promoting local successful enterprises will assist them in reaching wider audiences with their products and will encourage local support for local businesses. If they increase their viability, it will assist in the development of a stronger small business sector locally.</p> <p>Innovative marketing and promotional initiatives will be supported under this action, in particular group initiatives that promote local businesses and encourage economic activity within the county. Those currently on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance will be encouraged to participate in promotional campaigns of their businesses to increase their market share and ensure their sustainability.</p>
<p><b>Primary Target Group(s):</b></p>	<p>Local Businesses, Local Business Networks, New Business Start Ups, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Participants,</p>
<p><b>Geographic Area:</b></p>	<p>This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.</p>
<p><b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b></p>	<p>Longford Community Resources Ltd.</p>
<p><b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b></p>	<p>Local Enterprise Office, Longford Chamber, Traders Associations, Retail and Traders Associations, Food &amp; Craft Sector development organisations.</p>
<p><b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b></p>	<p>Q2 – 2016 – Q4 2020.</p>
<p><b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b></p>	<p>Number of Jobs Sustained : 100 Full Time</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded with Capital, Training, Marketing &amp; Animation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food &amp; Beverage - 10</li> <li>○ Creative businesses – 15</li> <li>○ Social Enterprise - 15</li> <li>○ Agricultural Diversification - 20</li> <li>○ Hospitality - 20</li> <li>○ Marine Diversification – 5</li> <li>○ ICT – 15</li> </ul> <p>4 x Marketing Programmes approx. 25 business included in each, supporting total of 100 businesses.</p>

**Local Objective 3**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To reduce the level of unemployment locally by providing a comprehensive suite of supports for hard to reach communities that will assist in making self-employment a viable option for those with a business idea.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>Self-employment is a difficult option for those coming from a background of disadvantage. In addition to the level of un-certainty faced by any new entrepreneur, those without access to finance and a lack of support structures face extra challenges.</p> <p>This objective seeks to alleviate some of the key challenges facing entrepreneurs from hard to reach communities by providing pre-enterprise supports and a high level of support in the start-up phase of their business.</p> <p>By having access to additional supports, they will be in a position to overcome initial challenges and this will help to ensure sustainability of their business. It is hoped that more people will consider self-employment as a viable option if the right level of support is provided to them.</p> <p>For example, there are currently 1,860 people receiving an unemployment payment in County Longford whose last job was in the construction sector. Self-employment may be an option for many of them but they will need support to make an informed and positive decision about setting up their own business and this objective will seek to provide the right level of support required.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	175,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

**Strategic Action 3.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 3.1:</b>	Initiatives that support hard to reach communities to consider self-employment as an option.
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<p><b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 3.1:</b></p>	<p>This action will involve animation with hard to reach communities to identify those with the potential to develop their own business. As a result of this, specialist enterprise support programmes for individuals from hard to reach communities will be delivered.</p> <p>Programmes will include pre-enterprise training, mentoring support, start up finance, financial management and taxation support, and post start up monitoring.</p> <p>The tailored programmes will respond to the needs of particular target groups and may be delivered in native languages of non-Irish nationals, delivered in rural locations to stimulate rural enterprise and will provide childcare facilities if required. They are seen as a complementary measure to the programmes delivered by Local Enterprise Offices but offer a higher level of support in recognition of the greater challenges faced by those coming from disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Specific enterprise opportunities for people with disabilities will be identified and supported under this action.</p>
<p><b>Primary Target Group(s):</b></p>	<p>Unemployed, Women, Members of Minority Groups, Rural Dwellers, Low income farmers, Travellers, Non-Irish Nationals, People with Disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Geographic Area:</b></p>	<p>This action will be targeted at areas which are experiencing high levels of unemployment; however, efforts will also be made to focus on target groups who are geographically dispersed.</p>
<p><b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b></p>	<p>Longford Community Resources Ltd.</p>
<p><b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b></p>	<p>All Disability Support Groups, Traveller Support Groups, EDI Centre, Longford Women's Link, IFA, ICMSA, Macra na Feirme, DSP,</p>
<p><b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b></p>	<p>Q2 2016 – Q4 2019.</p>
<p><b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b></p>	<p>Number of Jobs Created - 40 Full Time</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded with Capital, Training, Marketing &amp; Animation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food &amp; Beverage - 6</li> <li>○ Creative businesses – 6</li> <li>○ Agricultural Diversification - 7</li> <li>○ Hospitality - 9</li> <li>○ Marine Diversification – 3</li> <li>○ ICT – 9</li> </ul>

Training of 160 people in Enterprise Creation and Development.

8 x Training Programmes 20 participants per course

#### **Local Objective 4**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	<p>To increase the economic activity in County Longford by identifying innovative enterprise sectors that County Longford can position itself to attract.</p> <p>To gain an industry perspective on the future development and attraction of enterprise initiatives.</p>
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>During consultation process, communities expressed the need for County Longford to identify the county's strongest selling points and identify which sectors of economic activity we are most suited to attracting.</p> <p>It was noted that as a county if we don't identify our strongest points and market them to target audiences, we will lose out on a competitive basis to other counties.</p> <p>New industries and sectors of development are emerging all the time and County Longford has to identify which of these it has the best chance of attracting, and also what changes need to happen locally to make this a more conducive environment to new emerging sectors.</p> <p>With a central location and already attracting important industries, the foundations are there to attract industry but a planning process needs to happen to ensure that in the medium-long term, the county is positioning itself in a strategic way to bring industry here to replace our traditional sectors of employment that are declining.</p> <p>As most of the decisions regarding enterprise development are agency led, it was considered innovative to look at enterprise development from an industry perspective.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	25,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

<b><u>Strategic Action 4.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 4.1:</b>	Establish a high-level working group of industry and environmental leaders to examine the sectors of industry that County Longford should target to locate here.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 4.1:</b>	<p>Identify key business leaders within the area that are working in successful industries. We will provide a forum to unite their expertise to examine possibilities for County Longford to attract new or emerging industries and to improve the environment for existing businesses located here.</p> <p>They will be provided with resources to undertake research or actions that they consider necessary to improve the business environment locally.</p> <p>Ideas or actions identified through this forum may also form the basis for applications to government initiatives regarding enterprise (Midland Action Plan for Jobs, REDZ,) so that applications submitted from County Longford are innovative and strategic.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Industry leaders located within County Longford.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Business Leaders, LEO, LCC, Enterprise Ireland,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of Animation Programmes - 1</p> <p>Clear identification of new areas of opportunity that will lead to job creation with Enterprises supported across the various sectors.</p>



<b><u>Local Objective 5</u></b>	
<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To identify current employment trends and areas of opportunity in the region and ensure that there are clear pathways between unemployed people and available employment.
<b>LEADER Theme/Sub Theme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>A key concern expressed in the consultation process from those working closely with unemployed people is that the apparent lack of available employment locally is a de-motivating factor to engaging with support services.</p> <p>A contrasting view of the availability of employment locally came from employers who identified employment sectors that are experiencing a shortage of skilled workers. There is no doubt that employment options within County Longford are limited but they are not non-existent and this objective will seek to motivate unemployed people by promoting a more positive outlook of employment within the region and provide pathways on how to access it.</p> <p>This objective is centred on identifying where employment is currently available (within a 30mile radius of County Longford) and what opportunities are likely to arise in the short-medium term. It will also examine how to possibly create employment by identifying needs of local businesses and the training needs of local people to meet those business needs.</p> <p>Preliminary research has indicated that businesses in the region may have needs that could generate employment locally. Once these needs have been identified, it is vital to ensure that relevant accessible training is available.</p> <p>It is envisaged that should the planned Centerparcs project proceed as planned and 1,500 jobs are generated locally, then those living within hard to reach communities may need training supports in addition to what is provided by state agency training providers in order to access available employment.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	180,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

<b><u>Strategic Action 5.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 5.1:</b>	To identify employment opportunities in the midlands region and provide training that may be required by unemployed people locally so that they increase their chances of accessing available employment.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 5.1:</b>	<p>A research project is required to identify employment opportunities and employment growth areas in the midlands region that would be accessible to people living in County Longford.</p> <p>Based on the findings, appropriate skill based training, <b>if not currently available</b>, will be delivered locally so that unemployed people can increase their chances of accessing employment.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Unemployed, in particular unemployed young people.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	The research element of this project will cover the entire midlands area but the support to find employment will be targeted at hard to reach target groups and geographical areas that have high deprivation scores, including Longford No 1 Urban, Foxhall, Sonnagh, Edgeworthstown and Granard.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Employment Development Information Centre, Longford Women's Link, CE Schemes, Tús, ETB, Solas,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of Jobs Created - 40 Full Time &amp; 20 Part Time</p> <p>Number of Animation Programmes – 1</p> <p>Number of Training Programmes – 4</p> <p>4 x Pre-Development Training programmes with 25 participants per programme totalling 100 unemployed people.</p> <p>20 employers will have been supported to find suitable employees that are trained in specific areas to meet their employment needs, incorporating all sectors.</p>

**Local Objective 6**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To create employment opportunities in County Longford by identifying, stimulating and supporting projects operating within the Social Economy that have job creation potential.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Enterprise Development.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>There is a great need to create employment opportunities locally, particularly in isolated rural areas and for the benefit of key target groups. Job creation options that match this brief are limited in County Longford. However, work undertaken on the development of the Social Economy sector in Co. Longford during the RDP. 2009-2013 has resulted in the establishment of social economy projects are generating employment opportunities.</p> <p>Communities also benefitted through increase service provision and the projects supported by the RDP. helped to alleviate disadvantage through their engagement with hard to reach communities.</p> <p>A number of potential Social Economy projects were identified by communities during the course of the consultation process and further research is required to ascertain if these projects are indeed likely to be viable. Similarly there were needs identified within the county that are unlikely to be met by commercial providers or indeed statutory provision and may present opportunities for Social Economy models of economic development.</p> <p>Research has shown that Social Enterprise projects need a particular suite of supports in order to reach their full potential. These supports differ from the type of supports required by a private enterprise and must be tailored to meet the specific needs of projects.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	300,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	2

**Strategic Action 6.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 6.1:</b>	To identify three new Social Economy Projects that have the potential to create jobs and provide essential community services.
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<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 6.1:</b>	<p>The engagement of dedicated Social Economy expertise is required to conduct detailed research to ascertain the most viable projects in the county and to plan for their implementation. Research for these projects, where possible, will be conducted by members of the target groups, led by experienced personnel.</p> <p>It will also include an analysis to see if a Social Farming project is a viable option for County Longford.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Hard to reach communities including long term unemployed, rural dwellers, people with disabilities, NEETs,
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford; projects will be located in areas that best suit their needs however a focus will be ensured on areas of greatest disadvantage.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Local Enterprise Office, Department of Social Protection.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of Animation Programmes – 1</p> <p>Identification of three new Social Economy Projects that will have the potential to provide employment for target group members.</p>

### Strategic Action 6.2

<b>Title of Strategic Action 6.2:</b>	To financially support the establishment and growth of Social Enterprises that have job creation potential.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 6.2:</b>	<p>The delivery of a suite of supports to new and existing Social Economy projects that increase their viability, management expertise and market growth.</p> <p>These supports will include financial supports, training and mentoring. In addition to this, research has shown that network support is of immense value to Social Economy Projects and a local Social</p>

	Enterprise Longford Network will be established as a resource to projects.
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	New and Existing Social Economy Projects.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford; projects will be located in areas that best suit their needs however a focus will be ensured on areas of greatest disadvantage.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Local Enterprise Office, Department of Social Protection, Community Sector, Clann Credo, Fáilte Ireland, IFA,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of Jobs Created - 9 Full Time &amp; 14 Part Time</p> <p>Number of Jobs Sustained - 10 Full Time &amp; 10 Part Time</p> <p>Number of enterprises funded with Capital, Training, Marketing &amp; Animation -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Social Enterprise - 9</li> </ul> <p>The Research and animation programme will determine the sectors which the new Social Enterprises will be developed and the six existing include, White Goods Recycling, Catering, House Keeping, Community Heritage Project, Second Hand Clothes Store, with support provided in marketing, training and capital equipment</p>

### Sub Theme: Rural Towns

#### Local Objective 7

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	Revitalisation through integrated planning of Rural Towns and Villages in County Longford.
<b>LEADER Theme/Sub Theme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Rural Towns

<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>Rural towns and villages are a very important part of social, economic and cultural life in County Longford and many are still struggling to emerge from the national economic crisis.</p> <p>Each town and village in County Longford has its own set of unique challenges and also opportunities. Enhancement Plans were completed in 19 towns and villages across County Longford during the RDP. 2009-2013. These enhancement plans identified pathways for integrated development in each area and it is planned to build on the work that has already commenced.</p> <p>It is important for each town to maximise the economic and social output of its own area by using limited resources strategically. Rural towns and villages may need support to achieve this goal, and resources to undertake investments that will reap rewards.</p> <p>Under RDP. 2009-2013, considerable investment was made in community infrastructure and communities may need to be resourced and supported to maximise activities that could occur within existing community centres.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	800,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

**Strategic Action 7.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 7.1:</b>	Identify and develop initiatives that improve economic, social and cultural performance in rural towns and villages.
<b><u>Brief Description of Strategic Action 7.1</u></b>	<p>Provide expertise and development support to ensure that there is integrated development within a town / village and that it operates to its maximum capacity. Encourage towns to highlight key features in that may give them a competitive enterprise edge or help to retain essential services.</p> <p>This action will increase economic activity within towns by improving their physical appearance and reduce the number of vacant and derelict buildings. For towns and villages that wish to participate in this action, we will ensure that they are maximising the input of all agency resources by having clear goals and outcomes.</p> <p>Actions may include village enhancement works including heritage projects / small scale works to community centres.</p>



<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Traders Associations, Community Development Action Groups, Tidy Towns Groups,
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action focused on towns and villages within County Longford will also support those living in hinterlands.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Local Enterprise Office, Longford County Council, Traders Associations, Tidy Towns, Longford Chamber, Longford Business Forum, Public Participation Network
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 – 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded – 40</p> <p>Population in towns receiving funding – 30,000</p> <p>Number of projects funded by type:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streetscape enhancement - 10</li> <li>• Tidy Towns - 8</li> <li>• Upgrading of built environment in town - 6</li> <li>• Development of recreation spaces - 10</li> <li>• Development of markets - 2</li> <li>• Development of festivals - 4</li> </ul> <p>Number of Animation Programmes – 3</p> <p>3 x Training Programmes Development Support delivered to 24 villages / towns. With a minimum of 20 people participating per course</p>

### Sub-Theme: Broadband

<b><u>Local Objective 8</u></b>	
<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	Development of initiatives that maximise the effectiveness of high speed internet access in rural areas.
<b>LEADER Theme/Sub Theme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Broadband

<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>The availability of high speed internet access in rural areas is a key requisite for any business and indeed for people to now access essential services.</p> <p>In an effort to address this critical need, community owned broadband infrastructure has been considered by the local development company.</p> <p>While it is recognised that the National Broadband Plan has set a target of providing high speed access to all areas by 2018, it is considered prudent to consider contingency measures should the delivery of this plan be delayed for any reasons. Due to the critical nature of this need in rural areas and the effect that the lack of service is having on economic development, the opportunity to examine alternative options of broadband provision would be helpful to communities should the N.B.P be delayed. Similarly, any short-term measure that becomes available, and makes commercial sense should be considered provided it is in line with RDP. guidelines.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	30,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

**Strategic Action 8.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 8.1:</b>	To identify methods of improving access to high speed internet access in rural areas that do not duplicate the planned programme of works under the National Broadband Plan.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 8.1:</b>	<p>No clear method of improving access to high speed internet access within County Longford has been identified but a number of possibilities are being examined. While it is unlikely that any large scale infrastructure works will be proposed by communities, smaller scale projects may be considered and these will be examined on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Supporting communities through training and pilot projects to maximise the opportunities that are presented by high speed internet access will also be developed, depending on the outcomes of the NBP.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Wider community, businesses in rural areas, tourism operators and all target groups.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will focus on areas within County Longford that do not currently have access to high speed broadband provision and where

	the lack of broadband is having a negative impact on business development.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	LCC, National Broadband Plan,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 – 2016 – Q4 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of small scale equipment projects funded – 1</p> <p>Population benefiting from enhanced broadband as a result of equipment funding – 7,500</p> <p>Number of capacity building/training/information projects funded - 1</p> <p>Number of individuals participating in capacity building/training/information activities in relation to broadband - 40</p>

### Sub-Theme: Rural Tourism

#### Local Objective 9

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To ensure that the output from investment in tourism in County Longford is maximised through the development of a co-ordinated approach to this sector and that decisions are made as to who is responsible for the delivery of key actions that are required to drive tourism forward within the county.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Rural Tourism.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>Tourism has been identified as a key growth sector within this Local Development Strategy. Nationally, tourism contributes €6.14bn to the Irish economy and regrettably County Longford does not benefit to the economic extent that it should from this important sector.</p> <p>Important investments have been made in recent years to improve the quality of offering to the tourist market but the county still lacks a</p>

	<p>marketable range of accommodation to meet the needs of tourists.</p> <p>Many of the visitor attractions, while interesting and worthy of a visit do not offer a level of visitor experience that is available in other counties. Investment is needed within a number of attractions to bring them to the level that is expected by today's' tourists.</p> <p>In addition to this, the county has lacked a clear marketing strategy that focuses on themes or brands of tourism that are clearly identifiable. The marketing of the county that happens at present is limited, haphazard and reactive. This is largely due to a lack of available funding that would allow for a strategic approach to marketing the county.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the planned development of the Centerparcs project near Ballymahon which is projected to receive 150,000 visitors per annum will assist greatly in the development of a national and international profile of County Longford.</p> <p>It is vital that a tourism strategy for the county ensures that any tourism development within the county is co-ordinated and delivered to a high standard in order to maximise the opportunity that will arise as a result of increased visitor numbers to the county. With proper planning and execution of key developments, it has the potential to make a much greater contribution to the local economy and become an important employment generator.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation (€)</b>	300,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	2

### **Strategic Action 9.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 9.1:</b>	Ensure a co-ordinated and strategically planned approach to tourism development is undertaken within County Longford.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 9.1:</b>	To co-ordinate a planning workshop of all relevant agencies and tourism businesses in the county on a quarterly basis to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to tourism development in County Longford. This workshop can also be the forum to deliver information on national developments on tourism, funding opportunities, training sessions and information dissemination.

<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Organisations with an interest in tourism development in County Longford including County Longford Tourism, community sector, new and existing tourism businesses.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford as all areas have the potential to benefit from tourism development.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd & Longford County Council.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Fáilte Ireland, County Longford Tourism, Longford County Council, Waterways Ireland, National Trails Office, OPW, Coillte, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Community sector and Tourism businesses.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded – 10</p> <p>Number of Jobs Created – 10 Full Time</p> <p>Number of existing jobs sustained – 30 Full Time</p> <p>Number of each type of initiative funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity/Adventure Tourism (angling, walking, cycling) - 1</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Heritage Tourism - 1</li> <li>• Rural Recreation - 1</li> <li>• Eco-Tourism - 1</li> <li>• Marine &amp; Water-based Tourism - 1</li> <li>• Agri-Tourism - 1</li> <li>• Cluster/network of Tourism Businesses - 2</li> <li>• Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.) - 2</li> </ul> <p>Delivery of 10 training workshops with each training programme delivered to thirty tourism businesses. This will result in a co-ordinated approach to tourism development in the County which will benefit tourism businesses and also increase their involvement in the development of the sector locally and optimising opportunities in the sector.</p>

### Strategic Action 9.2

<b>Title of Strategic Action</b>	Ensure a co-ordinated and strategically planned approach with regard
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<b>9.2:</b>	to the marketing of County Longford as a tourism destination.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 9.2:</b>	<p>In order to achieve an increase in visitor numbers, an innovative marketing programme of County Longford is required. It is recognised that County Longford has some exceptional attractions but failure to market them effectively has resulted in a lower than anticipated level of visitor numbers.</p> <p>An effective marketing programme will ensure that the right image of the county is presented in a professional way. This work will include the employment of a Marketing Officer and the development of promotional materials, website, signage, national promotion and will also include the direct selling of County Longford.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Organisations with an interest in tourism development in County Longford including County Longford Tourism, the community sector, new and existing tourism businesses.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Fáilte Ireland, Longford County Council, Waterways Ireland, Longford Community Resources, National Trails Office, OPW, Coillte, National Parks and Wildlife Service, County Longford Tourism, community sector and tourism businesses.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded - 2</p> <p>Number of jobs created new - 1 full time</p> <p>Number existing jobs sustained - 1 part time</p> <p>Number of each type of initiative funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of area as “destination” (website development, etc.) – 1</li> </ul> <p>Number of Visitors – 5000</p>



<b><u>Local Objective 10</u></b>	
<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To increase the visitor numbers coming to County Longford by offering a high level range of visitor attractions that are appealing to our target market and also by offering an excellent standard of accommodation across the county.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Rural Tourism.
<b><u>Brief Rationale for the Objective</u></b>	<p>Longford has the lowest visitors numbers of any county in the midlands region and needs to improve its product offering and accommodation choices in order to increase the level of tourists visiting the county, and the number of days/nights that they stay here.</p> <p>Tourists are drawn to visiting an area based on a number of key influencing factors including physical environment, suitable accommodation to meet their needs, interesting amenities or attractions and the hope of receiving an overall positive visitor experience.</p> <p>It is recognised that County Longford needs to increase and improve the range of tourist amenities and accommodation within the County to attract more visitors. County Longford has limited availability of tourism accommodation at present.</p> <p>While the proposed development of Centerparcs will greatly increase the number of bed nights available within the county, it will not meet the needs of all tourists visiting the county and further development of accommodation is required. Catering for groups such as youth groups, sports teams is a deficit at present and will be a focus of this objective.</p> <p>A number of amenities within the county, while offering a visitor experience, do not generate any economic activity locally and it is planned to develop these further so they do become economically generating.</p> <p>Annual festivals also play an important role in the tourist calendar within County Longford and it is planned to provide support to this sector in order to increase their visitor numbers and improve economic output from these events.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	1,100,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	3

<b><u>Strategic Action 10.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 10.1:</b>	To increase the amount of tourism accommodation in the county by providing financial support for capital works to business owners developing or improving tourist accommodation in the county.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 10.1:</b>	To offer financial support for new and expanding business operations which are providing a high level of accommodation for tourists on a year round basis.
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Existing accommodation providers and new entrants to the market.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Fáilte Ireland, County Longford Tourism, Waterways Ireland, Longford County Council.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2016
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new – 4</p> <p>Number of projects funded existing – 6</p> <p>Number of jobs created new - 10 full time &amp; 15 Seasonal</p> <p>Number existing jobs sustained - 6</p> <p>Number of each type Initiatives funded :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture &amp; Heritage - 1</li> <li>• Rural Recreation - 4</li> <li>• Eco Tourism - 3</li> <li>• Agri Tourism - 2</li> </ul>

<b><u>Strategic Action 10.2</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 10.2:</b>	To financially support capital works to develop/ improve visitor attractions and amenities within County Longford that will result in an increase of visitor numbers to the county.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 10.2:</b>	<p>A capital funding programme will be developed to support the improvement of existing visitor attractions to bring them to a higher level and thereby improve visitor numbers.</p> <p>The development of a number of new visitor amenities is also anticipated, further improving the product offering to key markets visiting the county.</p> <p>The development of amenities within the county will be in line with the strategic development of tourism and will focus on the key themes of Heritage Development and Outdoor Pursuits.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Those who currently operate a tourist amenity in County Longford and those who plan to develop a new tourist amenity in the county.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	Locations with suitable tourist amenities or areas that have the potential to provide tourism amenities.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Fáilte Ireland, Longford County Council, Waterways Ireland, Longford Community Resources, National Trails Office, OPW, Coillte, National Parks and Wildlife Service, County Longford Tourism, community sector and tourism businesses.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2019
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new – 6 Capital</p> <p>Number of projects funded existing – 6 Capital</p> <p>Number of jobs created new - 6 full time &amp; 12 Part-time</p> <p>Number existing jobs sustained 6 Full time</p>

	<p>Number of each type Initiatives funded :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity Adventure - 3</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Heritage - 2</li> <li>• Rural Recreation - 3</li> <li>• Marine Water-based Tourism -2</li> </ul> <p>Number of visitors - 10,000 over 4 year period</p>
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### **Strategic Action 10.3**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 10.3:</b>	Festival Support Programme
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 10.3:</b>	<p>To provide a comprehensive suite of supports to festival organisers that will result in an enhanced economic output of all festivals that operate within County Longford.</p> <p>The supports offered to festival organisers will include, training, networking, equipment grants and marketing supports along with the provision of expertise necessary to ensure festivals are organised in a professional way and reach as wide an audience as possible.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Festival organisers and volunteers.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford. Specifically targeting areas to be inclusive and not preclude the more disadvantaged areas, therefore ensuring that the overall population of 39,000 people resident within the County may benefit
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford County Council, County Longford Tourism.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new – 3 Training</p> <p>Number of each type initiatives funded :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity Adventure - 4</li> <li>• Culture &amp; Heritage - 10</li> </ul>

- Rural Recreation - 10
- Marine Water-based Tourism - 6

Number of visitors - 5,000

3 x Training Programmes each benefitting 30 festival organisers. Total of 90 participants.

### **Local Objective 11**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To maximise the planned investment in tourism in County Longford by ensuring that those operating a tourism business in County Longford have the capacity to develop their business to its full potential.
<b>LEADER Theme/Sub Theme</b>	Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation – Rural Tourism.
<b><u>Brief Rationale for the Objective</u></b>	<p>It is anticipated that the tourism sector will grow greatly in County Longford in the coming years. It is important therefore that individual business owners, agency personnel and communities involved in tourism development have the skills required to capitalise on the anticipated growth. Tourism development requires specialist skills and with limited resources available to develop the sector, it is critical that careful investment is planned and maximised.</p> <p>A number of community organisations are involved in operating large scale tourism facilities and support will be required in order for them to reach their full potential. For example, in 2016 Lanesboro Angling Club will host the World Angling Championships.</p> <p>Building the capacity of those involved in the sector will result in better decision making and also better management of tourism projects.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	50,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

<b><u>Strategic Action 11.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 11.1:</b>	To increase the capacity of those involved in tourism development in County Longford
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 11.1:</b>	<p>The provision of a comprehensive training package for those involved in the tourism sector in County Longford which will provide key skills in management, marketing and product development to all providers and planners.</p> <p>Individual business advice and mentoring will be provided to promoters who are developing tourism projects in excess of €100,000.00</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Those operating a tourism business, communities involved in tourism development, members of County Longford Tourism and agency personnel involved in tourism development within County Longford.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Fáilte Ireland; Longford County Council; County Longford Tourism.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Training Programmes – 2 (Delivered to 40 Businesses)</p> <p>Number of projects funded– 6</p> <p>Number of jobs created new - 6 full time &amp; 6 Part-time</p> <p>Number existing jobs sustained 40 Full time</p> <p>Number of each type Initiatives funded :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cluster / Network of Tourism Businesses - 1</li> <li>• Promotion of area as a destination - 1</li> </ul>

## 4.2 THEME TWO: Social Inclusion

### Sub theme: Basic Services Targeted at Hard to Reach Communities

<b><u>Local Objective 12</u></b>	
<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	<p>Through the application of a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) model of engagement, hard to reach communities in specific geographical areas will receive interventions that will seek to remove the barriers to engagement that communities are currently facing.</p> <p>Communities will be resourced with skilled personnel to assist them to deliver locally based employment and development initiatives that will reduce levels of social exclusion and poverty.</p>
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Social Inclusion: Basic Services for Hard to Reach Communities.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>A number of areas in County Longford continue to experience high levels of disadvantage and intensive community based supports are needed to support those living within disadvantaged communities to engage with services and reduce their level of social exclusion.</p> <p>In order to encourage participation by those in hard to reach communities, it is recognised that innovative community based models of engagement need to be adopted. It was expressed to us during the consultation process that for those most distanced from the labour force, the possibility of accessing available employment supports can be difficult and they may require support above and beyond what is currently available.</p> <p>This is evidenced in the fact that despite the development of new agency services in recent years, a number of hard to reach communities have emerged that do not access services and do not progress beyond welfare dependency.</p> <p>By working directly with hard to reach communities, we will be in a position to identify and develop initiatives that will ensure that communities have access to basic services and will be in a position to participate fully. It is anticipated that small scale initiatives that improve service provision and/or provide entry level training will be undertaken.</p> <p>To ensure that those most at risk of social exclusion benefit from this objective, initiatives will take place in areas of greatest disadvantage and directly with target groups.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	650,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for the</b>	2



Objective	
<b><u>Strategic Action 12.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 12.1:</b>	Identification of community based initiatives that specifically address the factors that are causing social exclusion in areas of geographical disadvantage and within communities of disadvantage.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 12.1:</b>	<p>Community Development expertise will be engaged to work directly with hard to reach communities and will identify key initiatives that will reduce the barriers that are causing social exclusion. We will work directly with communities in planning and implementing projects that will benefit each respective area or community of interest.</p> <p>This programme will commence in areas of greatest disadvantage and with target groups.</p> <p>These initiatives will respond directly to needs identified.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Unemployed, Rural Dwellers, lone parents, members of the Travelling community, People with Disabilities, Members of new communities, NEETS, People living in rented accommodation with low incomes, Low income employees.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	Specifically Targeting Longford No.1 Urban; Longford Rural, Edgeworthstown Area; Granard Area, Foxhall, Sonnagh and Legan or areas where there is a concentration of hard to reach communities.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	HSE, Tusla, Public Health Nurses, GP's., Addiction Services, Community Organisations, Regeneration Office, L.C.C., Longford Women's Link
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of service funded new – 4 animation &amp; research</p> <p>Number of projects funded per type of service</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education - 4</li> <li>• Health - 4</li> <li>• Social Amenities -4</li> <li>• Personal support Services - 4</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a service that isn't there - 4</li> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups ) i.e. mentors for isolated men to support them to participate in an existing education action ) – 4</li> </ul> <p>Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people- 4</li> <li>• People with a disability- 4</li> <li>• Children – 4</li> <li>• Young People – 4</li> <li>• Travellers- 4</li> <li>• Migrants /New Communities – 4</li> <li>• Unemployed people – 4</li> <li>• People living alone – 4</li> </ul>
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<b><u>Strategic Action 12.2</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 12.2:</b>	Resourcing of infrastructural and employment initiatives that specifically address the factors that are causing social exclusion in areas of geographical disadvantage and within communities of disadvantage.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 12.2:</b>	<p>The delivery of initiatives that will respond directly to needs identified. These initiatives are likely to include training, small refurbishment works to community centres, I.T. provision, signage, disability access, promotional materials, websites and community development initiatives.</p> <p>All initiatives will be aimed at increasing participation by those in hard to reach communities and improving service provision and quality of life in disadvantaged areas.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Unemployed, Rural Dwellers, lone parents, members of the Travelling

	community, People with Disabilities, Members of new communities, NEETS, People living in rented accommodation with low incomes, Low income employees.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	Specifically Targeting Longford No.1 Urban; Longford Rural, Edgeworthstown Area; Granard Area, Foxhall, Sonnagh and Legan or areas where there is a concentration of hard to reach communities.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	HSE, Tusla, Public Health Nurses, GP's, Addiction Services, Community Organisations, Regeneration Office, L.C.C., Longford Women's Link
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of services funded new –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 Training programmes (20 participants per course)</li> <li>• 4 Marketing programmes</li> <li>• 20 small scale capital</li> </ul> <p>Number of projects funded per type of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education - 8</li> <li>• Health - 8</li> <li>• Social Amenities - 10</li> <li>• Recreational /Physical amenities - 10</li> <li>• Personal support Services - 8</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a service that isn't there - 12</li> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups ) i.e. mentors for isolated men to support them to participate in an existing education action ) -8</li> </ul> <p>Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people- 44</li> <li>• People with a disability- 44</li> <li>• Young People - 44</li> </ul>

- Travellers - 44
- Migrants /New Communities- 44
- Unemployed people - 44
- People living alone - 44
  
- Number of people availing of the service ( type) - 160 Training

### **Local Objective 13**

#### **Title of Local Objective**

To increase the skill level within the wider community to address issues causing social exclusion and to provide communities with the management skills to undertake community based projects.

To maximise the level of support being offered to unemployed people in County Longford by ensuring that those engaging with and developing services for the unemployed are highly skilled and engage in best practise.

#### **LEADER Theme/SubTheme**

Social Inclusion: Basic Services for Hard to Reach Communities.

#### **Brief Rationale for the Objective**

The role played by the community and voluntary sector has increasingly become more onerous and bureaucratic and greater responsibility is now placed on voluntary committees to deliver complex projects with limited resources.

The community sector needs to be resourced to ensure that they have the skills and ability to plan and deliver projects, from an operational and financial perspective.

Similarly those working with unemployed people, assisting them to find employment need support and training to adapt to the current market demands. Employment support has, like every other sector, moved to incorporate the use of social media, online recruitment and multi-media C.V's.

It is important that clients of employment support services are receiving the most up to date information and are informed fully on what employers are looking for and how they should present themselves to maximise their chances of securing employment.

Providing training, information days and networking opportunities will encourage fresh thinking, innovation and also group learning on how best to engage with hard to reach communities.

	This objective will also ensure that there are closer links developed between all those working locally on employment support programmes.
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	120,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for the Objective</b>	2

### **Strategic Action 13.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 13.1:</b>	To deliver training to key personnel and communities within County Longford on the subjects of Community Development, Equality & Human Rights & Project Management, to increase the skill level of those involved with and managing community organisations.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 13.1:</b>	<p>To deliver training programmes in Community Development that will increase the skill level amongst practitioners which will benefit wider communities.</p> <p>These locally based training courses will be targeted at those currently working in the sector and those who show an interest in working in this area.</p> <p>As part of their training, participants on longer courses will undertake a project that will be of relevance and benefit to the community sector within County Longford.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Those working in the sector without formal training who wish to continue working within the sector.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Public Participation Network ; Longford County Council; Longford Women's Link,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016.Q42020

<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of services funded new –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Training programmes (20 participants per course )</li> </ul> <p>Number of services funded existing – 30 community services</p> <p>Number of projects funded per type of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education - 6</li> <li>• Social Amenities - 6</li> <li>• Personal support services - -6</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups ) i.e. mentors for isolated men to support them to participate in an existing education action ) -6</li> </ul> <p>Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people- 6</li> <li>• People with a disability- 6</li> <li>• Children - 6</li> <li>• Young People - 6</li> <li>• Travellers- 6</li> <li>• Migrants /New Communities - 6</li> <li>• Unemployed people -6</li> <li>• People living alone – 6</li> </ul> <p>Number of people availing of the service - 120</p>
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<b><u>Strategic Action 13.2</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 13.2:</b>	Innovation training for those working directly with the unemployed in a community setting.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 13.2:</b>	This action will involve the delivery of a series of short training programmes, workshops and networking events with guest speakers. It will also include the opportunity to visit projects in other counties that have developed models of good practise.

<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Those working with the unemployed - CE Supervisors, TUS Supervisors, EDI, National Learning Network, Longford Women's Link, Family Resource Centres, SICAP, Youth Groups and Youth Support Services, Community Information Services, Disability Support Groups,
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	Targeted at those working with hard to reach communities.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Employment, Development and Information Centre; Longford Women's Link; Community Groups.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of services funded new –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Training Programme</li> </ul> <p>Number of projects funded per type of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education – 6</li> <li>• Health - 6</li> <li>• Social Amenities - 6</li> <li>• Personal support services - 6</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups ) i.e. mentors for isolated men to support them to participate in an existing education action ) - 6</li> </ul> <p>Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people- 6</li> <li>• People with a disability- 6</li> <li>• Children - 6</li> <li>• Young People - 6</li> <li>• Travellers- 6</li> <li>• Migrants /New Communities- 6</li> <li>• Unemployed people - 6</li> </ul> <p>Number of people availing of the service - 120</p>



**Local Objective 14**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To ensure that transport provision is not a barrier for unemployed people to access training or employment.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Social Inclusion: Basic Services for Hard to Reach Communities.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>Transport provision was clearly identified in the consultation process as a major inhibitor for people living in rural areas. The concentration of education, training and employment support services in the county are located in Longford town. For those living in rural areas, current available transport provision does not always facilitate access to Longford town at suitable times.</p> <p>This need for specified transport provision was identified by all those working closely with unemployed people; they also noted that they have the capacity to train more people if they could facilitate transport to their services.</p> <p>A range of transport services currently operate within County Longford but research for the compilation of this Local Development Strategy identified that none of the available services facilitate the unemployed people living in rural areas to access available training in Longford town. The need to facilitate access to training and employment support programmes was identified as a very important action in decreasing the level of isolation and social exclusion felt by people living in rural areas.</p> <p>It is also envisaged that this employment related service, if feasible, would also motivate the wider community to also avail of social and cultural opportunities.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	40,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

**Strategic Action 14.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 14.1:</b>	To identify sustainable transport provision within County Longford that facilitates unemployed people to access training and employment opportunities.
<b>Brief Description of</b>	Research is required to ascertain the most feasible and sustainable

<b>Strategic Action 14.1:</b>	<p>way of creating an effective, sustainable transport service. It may be possible to extend existing transport service provision to meet the needs of certain communities or an entirely independent service may be the only option.</p> <p>A pilot programme is envisaged as being a necessary requirement to ensure that the project is sustainable. In addition to supporting people to avail of training, it will also facilitate people to avail of employment supports services and programmes such as Tús, Gateway or meeting with a Jobs Mediator.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Unemployed and young people living in rural areas.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford with a potential pilot programme working in a specific area, as yet un-identified.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association ; St. Christopher's Disability Support Services, Acorn, Longford Westmeath E.T.B., EDI Centre, Longford Women's Link, National Learning Network.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of services funded new –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Research</li> <li>• 2 small pilot transport projects</li> </ul> <p>Number of service funded new – 2</p> <p>Number of Jobs Created new – 2 Part Time</p> <p>Number of projects funded per type of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport - 3</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a service that isn't there - 2</li> <li>• To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport) - 3</li> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports for marginalised groups ) i.e. mentors for</li> </ul>

	<p>isolated men to support them to participate in an existing education action ) - 2</p> <p>Number of projects funded that have the following as primary or secondary target groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people - 3</li> <li>• People with a disability- 3</li> <li>• Young People - 3</li> <li>• Travellers- 3</li> <li>• Migrants /New Communities - 3</li> <li>• Unemployed people -3</li> <li>• People living alone - 3</li> </ul>
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### Sub Theme: Rural Youth

<b><u>Local Objective 15</u></b>	
<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	By providing targeted supports to vulnerable young people to increase their chances of gaining employment and breaking a cycle of disadvantage.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Social Inclusion – Rural Youth
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>County Longford has a young population, and has the highest proportion of non-Irish national children in the country along with a high proportion of children from the Travelling Community.</p> <p>There is a lack of jobs for young people locally, particularly those with a low level of education; this along with other factors is leading to a persistent cycle of disadvantage.</p> <p>In order to break a cycle of disadvantage before it has time to deepen even further, it is necessary to provide supports at a critical intervention time in the lives of young people. One of those times is when they receive their first unemployment payment. Currently, there are 580 young people under the age of 25 in receipt of a social welfare payment. Intensive supports are needed when young people are at risk of signing on and in the immediate time after they receive their first payment.</p> <p>For those coming from a background of long term unemployment, they need to be supported to look at their options with regard to employment, training or further education. The supports that they can currently avail of within County Longford are not enough to steer them away from social</p>

	welfare dependency.
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	100,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	1

### **Strategic Action 15.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 15.1:</b>	Delivery of Pilot Youth Employment Initiative.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 15.1:</b>	<p>To provide an intensive support programme for young people living in disadvantaged areas within County Longford.</p> <p>This pilot programme will work with individuals to identify their particular needs but will also have the resources to address identified needs to ensure that there are no barriers towards young people accessing education, training or employment opportunities.</p> <p>It is envisaged that costs could include delivery of introductory training, counselling supports, co-ordination costs and resourcing of individual supports that may be required by individual students.</p> <p>It is hoped that as a result of this pilot programme, successful pathways will be identified to support young people locally and these can be adopted locally.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Those at risk of signing on for the first time.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	It is envisaged that this action will be focused on areas specifically identified as disadvantaged i.e. Longford No.1 Urban; Longford Rural Edgeworthstown Area; Granard Area, Foxhall, Sonnagh and Legan and /or rural areas with poor transport provision areas in County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd & Department of Social Protection.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Youth organisations, Family Resource Centres, HSE, Tusla, ETB, Mental Health Support Groups, Addiction Support Groups, Community Organisations.

<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded – 1</p> <p>Number of projects funded by type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Development - 1</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide a service that isn't there - 1</li> <li>To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities /enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example)- 1</li> </ul> <p>Number of young people directly participating: 40</p>

### Local Objective 16

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To encourage greater youth participation by ensuring that those providing positive youth services have access to good quality facilities and can offer young people a positive environment to spend time in.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Social Inclusion – Rural Youth.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>In a county with a young population, we are fortunate that there are many community based organisations providing important youth based activities and development programmes.</p> <p>Many of these activities take place in local community facilities that may not provide an optimum setting for young people to gather. Improvement works are needed in order to make community settings more attractive, similar to youth café style facilities.</p> <p>This will encourage greater participation and organisations will be in a position to offer a greater range of activities. This will assist in increasing the confidence and motivation of young people and will also help to introduce them to options involving further education and training.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	250,000

**No. of Strategic Actions for Objective**

1

### **Strategic Action 16.1**

**Title of Strategic Action 16.1:**

Improvement in Youth Facilities in County Longford.

**Brief Description of Strategic Action 16.1:**

This action will provide financial assistance towards capital improvement and equipment costs for youth organisations active within County Longford who are improving youth facilities within the county and increasing the number of young people who will engage in their services.

This action will prioritise disadvantaged areas and it is anticipated that ten separate projects will be developed.

**Primary Target Group(s):**

Youth and Community Organisations active within the county.

**Geographic Area:**

This action will cover the whole of County Longford specifically targeting areas with high numbers of disadvantaged young.

**Organisation who will deliver the Action:**

Longford Community Resources Ltd.

**Any collaborating Organisations:**

Youth organisations, Family Resource Centres, Tusla, ETB, St. Vincent de Paul,

**Timeframe for Delivery of Action:**

Q2 2016 – Q4 2018

**Anticipated Outputs/Indicators & Targets:**

Number of projects funded – 10 Capital

Number of projects funded by type -

- Youth Club /Café - 5
- Sport/ Recreation - 2
- Arts - 1

- Youth Development - 2

Nature of Service to be provided

- To provide a service that isn't there – 4
- To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities /enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example) - 6

### Local Objective 17

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To create a sense of opportunity within young people living in County Longford so that they can see a positive future that involves employment and personal fulfilment.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Social Inclusion – Rural Youth
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>To prevent a cycle of disadvantage repeating itself within County Longford, it is necessary to intervene before habit forming behaviours develop within young people.</p> <p>With limited job and training opportunities, it is necessary to show young people a positive image of employment and what is possible in their lives and to help them plan towards achieving employment.</p> <p>It is also important that there are community activities that they can engage in on a regular basis to develop their own confidence levels and plan positive outcomes for their lives.</p> <p>Longford has vibrant arts and theatre sector as well as a very active sports and leisure and outdoor pursuits sector. These are areas that young people would benefit greatly from being involved and in turn these sectors would benefit greatly from the energy that young people bring to the sectors.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	150,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	2



<b><u>Strategic Action 17.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 17.1:</b>	Delivery of a series of measures that encourage young people to engage in career planning.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 17.1:</b>	<p>In order to motivate young people and broaden their horizons as to what is possible in their lives, it is planned to deliver a series of actions that will inform and inspire them.</p> <p>These actions will take place annually in various locations. Examples of possible programme include Opportunity Fairs; Pre-Employment Training for 15-20 year olds; Motivation Workshops with Sports Leaders and Introductions to Innovative Careers.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Young people living in disadvantaged and rural areas in County Longford.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford focusing on hard to reach communities and rural areas including Longford No.1 Urban; Longford Rural, Edgeworthstown Area; Granard Area, Foxhall, Sonnagh and Legan and /or rural areas with poor transport provision areas in County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Youth Organisations, Schools, Family Resource Centres, HSE, Tusla, Longford Westmeath Education & Training Board, St. Vincent de Paul, Longford Sports Partnership
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded – 24</p> <p>Number of projects funded by type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Entrepreneurship - 5</li> <li>• Youth Development – 19</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a service that isn't there - 24</li> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports to young people in disadvantaged areas to</li> </ul>

encourage their participation in particular activities/enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example) - 24

Number of young people directly participating:

- 2,500 - Opportunity fairs
- 225 participants - Youth development training programmes
- 50 participants Youth Enterprise Programmes

### **Strategic Action 17.2**

**Title of Strategic Action 17.2:**

Support the development of positive programmes for young people within County Longford.

**Brief Description of Strategic Action 17.2:**

A number of organisations in County Longford deliver youth development programmes and have expressed their desire to develop these programmes to include more participants and to reach new geographical areas.

The action will focus on innovative ways to encourage young people to participate in their local community and may include youth arts and theatre, outdoor pursuits, environmental projects and those that assist in developing a positive outlook towards employment and a move away from welfare dependency.

**Primary Target Group(s):**

Young people

**Geographic Area:**

This action will cover the entire sub-regional area of County Longford but a focus will remain on key disadvantaged areas, including Longford No.1 Urban; Longford Rural, Edgeworthstown Area; Granard Area, Foxhall, Sonnagh and Legan and /or rural areas with poor transport provision areas in County Longford.

**Organisation who will deliver the Action:**

Longford Community Resources Ltd.

**Any collaborating Organisations:**

Youth organisations, Schools, Family Resource Centres, HSE, Tusla, ETB,

<p><b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b></p>	<p>Q2 2016. Q4 2020</p>
<p><b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b></p>	<p>Number of projects funded – 20</p> <p>Number of projects funded by type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Entrepreneurship - 5</li> <li>• Arts - 7</li> <li>• Youth Development - 8</li> </ul> <p>Nature of Service to be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a service that isn't there - 6</li> <li>• To enhance access to a service that is not in the locality (through transport) -7</li> <li>• To enhance participation /outcomes of a service (through tailored supports to young people in disadvantaged areas to encourage their participation in particular activities/enhance outcomes in key areas (employment training for example) - 7</li> </ul> <p>Number of young people directly participating: 300</p>

### 4.3 THEME THREE- Rural Environment.

#### Sub Theme: Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources

#### **Local Objective 18**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To resource an annual awareness and education programmes to local communities and individuals on the importance of protecting and sustaining our water resources.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Rural Environment – Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>There is a vital need to protect our precious water resources. Everyone is more conscious of how important the environment is to us but communities and individuals may be un-aware of how they can contribute to the protection and sustaining of our water resources.</p> <p>An education and awareness programme is needed county wide to encourage people to learn more about how they make a difference to environmental standards within the county. This learning programme may require an incentive to encourage groups to come forward and put the time in to learning about their environment and undertake a project that protects or improves our natural environment.</p> <p>In addition to local community groups, key sectors that have an impact on our environment will be actively encouraged to participate such as Farming Organisations, Angling Groups, those using the Waterways, Tidy Towns Groups, Schools and Construction Firms.</p> <p>As a result of this measure, we will have visible projects across the county that will highlight to people how to protect and sustain our water resources.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	100,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	2

#### **Strategic Action 18.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 18.1:</b>	Delivery of Training Courses and Awareness Programmes on Relevant Topics of Protection and Sustainable Use of Water Resources.
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<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 18.1:</b>	<p>An annual programme of training courses will be delivered to raise awareness and inform people of practical measures they can take individually or within their communities to conserve, improve and protect their water resources.</p> <p>These programmes will be aimed at those who have an interest in the environment but may not have the information required to take active steps to make a difference.</p> <p>In addition to the delivery of training programmes, practical measures will be undertaken to ensure that participants do not just have the theory but also have a practical understanding of the subject matter.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	<p>Community groups and key sectors that have an impact on our environment will be actively encouraged such as Farming Organisations, Scout Groups, Angling Groups, those using the waterways, Tidy Towns Groups and Construction Firms.</p>
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	<p>This action will cover the whole of County Longford.</p>
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	<p>Longford Community Resources Ltd.</p>
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	<p>Longford Environment Alliance, Longford County Council (Environment and Planning Depts.) IFI, Local Communities, FAS CE Schemes, Tús &amp; RSS, Waterways Ireland, Public Participation Network</p>
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	<p>Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.</p>
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new – 5 Training Programmes</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and awareness programmes – 5</li> </ul> <p>10 participants per training programmes, totalling 50 participants</p>

<b><u>Strategic Action 18.2</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 18.2:</b>	Identification and funding of small scale projects that are an example of good practice regarding protection and sustainable use of water resources.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 18.2:</b>	<p>To incentivise community groups to undertake projects that will conserve water and ensure its sustainable use, financial support will be given to environmental projects that meet specified criteria.</p> <p>In addition to financial support for the capital costs of delivering a project, community groups will also be able to apply for consultancy costs to ensure that projects are delivered in line with best practice.</p> <p>A county wide competitive element may be introduced to incentivise community groups to participate and also to raise awareness of the projects that have been undertaken.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Community Groups, Farming Community, Tidy Towns Groups, Community Employment, TUS, ICA, School-going children, Women's Groups, Environmental Groups in County Longford, Public Participation Network
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the whole of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford County Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland.
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q3 2016 – Q4 -2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded – new 25</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy other - 7</li> <li>• Local co-ordination initiatives - 10</li> <li>• Recycling – 8</li> </ul> <p>Capital Support to 25 projects providing high quality key environment projects that are examples of best practise in water conservation,</p>

protection and sustainable use will be undertaken

### Sub-Theme: Protection and Improvement of Local Bio-Diversity.

#### **Local Objective 19**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To provide annual awareness and education programmes to local communities and individuals on the importance of our local biodiversity and what measures we can take to protect our environment.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Rural Environment – Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity.
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>County Longford enjoys an un-spoilt and attractive natural environment. There is a vital need to protect our innate biodiversity and also to try and reduce the threat to our local environment from invasive species.</p> <p>Everyone is more aware of how important the environment is to us but communities and individuals may be un-aware of how they can contribute to the protection of our resources.</p> <p>An education and awareness programme is needed county wide to encourage people to learn more about how they make a difference to environmental standards within the county. This learning programme may require an incentive to encourage groups to come forward and put the time in to learning about their environment and undertake a project that protects or improves our natural environment. There is a greater onus on local communities to protect and enhance local biodiversity areas if there is information regarding the quality of that area.</p> <p>In addition to local community groups, key sectors that have an impact on our environment will be actively encouraged to participate such as Farming Organisations, Angling Groups, those using the Waterways, Tidy Towns Groups, Schools and Construction Firms.</p> <p>As a result of this measure, we will have visible projects across the county that will highlight to people how to protect our environment.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	149,500
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	2



<b><u>Strategic Action 19.1</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 19.1:</b>	Delivery of Training Courses and Awareness Programmes on the protection and improvement of local biodiversity including Invasive Species.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 19.1:</b>	<p>An annual programme of training courses will be delivered to raise awareness and inform people of practical measures they can take individually or within their communities to conserve, improve and protect their local environment.</p> <p>These programmes will be aimed at those who have an interest in the environment but may not have the information required to take active steps to make a difference.</p> <p>In addition to the delivery of training programmes, practical measures will be undertaken to ensure that participants do not just have the theory but also have a practical understanding of the subject matter.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Community groups and key sectors that have an impact on our environment will be actively encouraged such as Farming Organisations, Scout Groups, Angling Groups, those using the waterways, Tidy Towns Groups and Construction Firms.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the whole of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford Environment Alliance, Longford County Council (Environment and Planning Depts.) Local Communities, FAS CE Schemes, Tús & RSS, Public Participation Network
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new – 10 Training programmes</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and awareness programmes - 10</li> <li>• Local co-ordination initiatives - 10</li> <li>• Nature Conservation - 10</li> </ul>

<b><u>Strategic Action 19.2</u></b>	
<b>Title of Strategic Action 19.2:</b>	Identification and funding of small scale projects that are an example of good practice regarding protection of our local biodiversity.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 19.2:</b>	<p>To incentivise community groups to undertake projects that will protect our local bio-diversity, financial support will be given to environmental projects that meet specified criteria.</p> <p>In addition to financial support for the capital costs of delivering a project, community groups will also be able to apply for consultancy costs to ensure that projects are delivered in line with best practice.</p> <p>A county wide competitive element may be introduced to incentivise community groups to participate and also to raise awareness of the projects that have been undertaken.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Community Groups, Farming Community, Tidy Towns Groups, Community Employment, TUS, ICA, School-going children, Women's Groups, Environmental Groups in County Longford, Public Participation Network
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	All of County Longford
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford County Council, Inland Fisheries Ireland
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q3 2016 – Q4 -2020.
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new - 25</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact Assessments – 15</li> <li>• Nature Conservation - 10</li> </ul> <p>Capital support to 25 high quality key environment projects that are examples of best practise will be undertaken.</p>

**Sub Theme: Development of Renewable Energy****Local Objective 20**

<b>Title of Local Objective</b>	To create a greater awareness of the benefits and advantages of using renewable energy and to encourage the identification of suitable projects within County Longford that will reduce conventional energy inputs and increase renewable energy production.
<b>LEADER Theme/SubTheme</b>	Environment – Renewable Energy
<b>Brief Rationale for the Objective</b>	<p>Throughout the consultation process for this Local Development Strategy, a number of individuals and organisations raised the concept of delivering innovative renewable energy projects within County Longford.</p> <p>However, further research may be required to ascertain the feasibility of such projects. It was also noted that new technologies are being developed and improved and it is important that communities keep themselves informed of new possibilities that would reduce their energy costs or would create job opportunities within the county. The rising demand for renewable energy solutions within homes and businesses has the potential to create employment within the County.</p> <p>Actions arising from this objective will increase the awareness and capability of those living within County Longford to adopt renewable sources of energy.</p>
<b>Financial Allocation €</b>	299,000
<b>No. of Strategic Actions for Objective</b>	3

**Strategic Action 20.1**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 20.1:</b>	Identification of renewable energy projects within County Longford that will reduce conventional energy inputs and increase the development of renewable energy initiatives.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 20.1:</b>	The funding of feasibility studies that research new opportunities with regard to renewable energy in County Longford.

<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Private Promoters, Longford Environmental Alliance, Community organisations with the capacity to undertake this work, Community Enterprise Initiatives.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the whole of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford Environment Alliance, Longford County Council (Environment and Planning Depts.) Local Communities, FAS CE Schemes, TUS & RSS, Public Participation Network
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q2 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new - 4 Animation research projects</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind energy - 4</li> <li>• Solar Power - 4</li> <li>• Energy other - 4</li> <li>• Impact Assessment - 4</li> <li>• Nature Conservation – 4</li> <li>• Recycling – 4</li> </ul>

### **Strategic Action 20.2**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 20.2:</b>	To provide financial assistance to the community sector to improve the energy efficiency in their communities through the installation of renewable energy technologies.
<b>Brief Description of Strategic Action 20.2:</b>	<p>This action will provide financial assistance to the community sector to undertake initiatives that will increase the use of renewable energy technologies within Co. Longford. This action will cover the costs associated with the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems, in line with RDP. criteria.</p> <p>Promotion of such initiatives will be undertaken by Longford Community Resources in an effort to further stimulate the sector.</p>

<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Community Groups, Charitable Organisations, Farming Community, Tidy Towns Groups, Youth Groups and Longford Environment Alliance, Public Participation Network
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	This action will cover the whole of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford Environment Alliance, Longford County Council (Environment and Planning Depts.) Local Communities, FAS CE Schemes, TUS & RSS,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q2 2016 – Q4 2018
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new - 10</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind energy - 2</li> <li>• Solar Power- 5</li> <li>• Energy other - 3</li> </ul> <p>Capital support to 10 high quality key environment projects that are examples of best practise will be undertaken.</p>

### **Strategic Action 20.3**

<b>Title of Strategic Action 20.3:</b>	Exploitation of the employment potential of the Renewable Energy Sector within County Longford.
<b><u>Brief Description of Strategic Action 20.3:</u></b>	<p>This action will involve the financial support of businesses that are developing renewable energy technologies and have the potential to create employment.</p> <p>While no identifiable projects exist at present, it is anticipated that as a result of research undertaken, projects will emerge that have the potential to create employment in the county.</p> <p>In this case, provision will need to be made to support training, capital investment and potentially management support for such a project.</p>
<b>Primary Target Group(s):</b>	Community groups with the capacity to undertake a project that will create employment or private individuals who have expertise in this

	area.
<b>Geographic Area:</b>	All areas of County Longford.
<b>Organisation who will deliver the Action:</b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd.
<b>Any collaborating Organisations:</b>	Longford Environmental Alliance, Longford County Council (Environment and Planning Depts.) Local Communities, FAS CE Schemes, TUS & RSS,
<b>Timeframe for Delivery of Action:</b>	Q1 2017 – Q3 2019
<b>Anticipated Outputs/Indicators &amp; Targets:</b>	<p>Number of projects funded new- 2</p> <p>Number of Jobs Created – 4 Full time - 2 Part time</p> <p>Type of Project funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy other -1</li> <li>• Technical /scientific cooperation -1</li> </ul>

## Chapter 5 – Strategic Integration

### 5.1 Cross-Cutting Objectives

The County Longford Local Development Strategy embraces the three Rural Development Programme cross-cutting objectives of Innovation, Environment and Climate Change but recognises the challenges that they pose also, particularly in relation to Climate Change. As part of the planning process to prepare the Local Development Strategy various stakeholders were consulted in order to identify and determine clear direction in relation to ensuring the cross cutting objectives were addressed through the six priorities, as per section 3.5, identified in this strategy.

#### 5.1.1 Innovation

**Innovation** is one of the key aspects of the Rural Development Programme and is probably what has set it apart from all other sources of funding. The community led approach that allows it's implementers to respond to local needs and opportunities blends very naturally with innovative approaches to tackling issues of rural disadvantage, unemployment, enterprise development and management of the environment.

When designing strategic actions within this Local Development Strategy, provision has been made to accommodate new innovative solutions that may arise in response to local challenges throughout the lifetime of the programme. Where possible, actions have been written in such a way that they will stimulate and act as a catalyst for innovation and encourage applicants and promoters to think creatively about how to maximise existing resources within a community while also alleviating the causes of disadvantage.

A cornerstone of this strategy, during the consultation process, efforts were made at every stage to re-position the LEADER programme in people's imagery as a programme of innovation and examples were given of where LEADER has developed innovative successful solutions to local problems.

Examples given included the establishment of an innovative training programme to engage unemployed individuals; from an employment prospective Longford was heavily reliant on the construction industry and with the downturn in this sector significant numbers of individuals found themselves unemployed, however an opportunity was identified to retrain and up skill these individuals in traditional construction skills. The training course provided the learners with additional skills in the areas of lime plastering, decorative plasterwork, ecclesiastical plasterwork, traditional roofing skills, metal and stone work. No other course of this nature was being undertaken in Ireland and the project promoters therefore sought accreditation for the training programme from the Scottish Qualification Authority. This training programme gave the learners the opportunity to gain the additional skills required to work in the niche area of restoration and conservation of protected structures, monuments, etc. and therefore had the added benefit of maintaining our built heritage. Other enterprise examples included the establishment of a gluten free bakery as there was no such enterprise in the midlands region, the establishment of a craft brewery which was innovative for our area. Examples of how we could use our natural resources such as the bog lands, rivers and lakes to provide local community amenities while also encouraging visitors to explore our natural habitat in County Longford.

People responded to this information and began to see the possibilities of what LEADER can achieve rather than seeing it as simply a grant awarding programme.

With regard to specific actions, we anticipate that we will see innovation in action through our Social Economy programme, our Youth Development programme as well as the views of



industry leaders on how Longford should attract new industry. We will need to act innovatively to solve the issue of rural transport provision and also in how the county is marketed to a national and international audience.

### 5.1.2 Environment

One of County Longford's' greatest assets is its natural, un-spoilt **environment** and its protection and conservation has historically been a strong theme in successive LEADER programmes in the county. The consistent objective has been to enhance but protect the local environment and this is reflected in how un-spoilt the county remains. Awareness is growing in relation to managing our local environments but training and up-skilling is constantly required to ensure that communities are adopting best practice at all stages.

The application process for funding will ensure that all promoters are aware of their obligations to protect our environment and comply with relevant legislation when designing and implementing their respective projects. The challenge for LEADER, as it has always been, will be to encourage development while at the same time protecting our environment.

Recognition must go to the community sector within County Longford, who makes particular effort to protect the local heritage while also ensuring that it can be enjoyed by visitors to the county. The importance of the protection of our environment is reflected in specific actions in this Local Development Strategy and in the funding that has been allocated to this theme.

Recent developments within County Longford including the attraction of CenterParcs and the development of the Royal Canal Walk and Cycle way has really highlighted and giving tangible cognisance to people of the opportunities that can be presented as a result of preserving our natural environment.

In the case of CenterParcs, as a sustainable business they seek to benefit and improve the communities in which they operate. The development of CenterParcs Longford Forest will aim to minimise the impact on the environment and encourage biodiversity when caring for CenterParcs' forests and the wider surroundings. The CenterParcs experience is built around enabling guests to enjoy the natural environment and the responsibility to protect it. In this development, CenterParcs will identify where they have biggest environmental impact and to focus on making their footprint in these areas as small as possible. As part of the CenterParcs environmental strategy, they have identified three areas in which they needed to reduce their footprint: energy use, waste production and water use. CenterParcs villages are built deep within the forest, enabling families to enjoy acres of un-spoilt woodland where they can interact with nature. This close link with the natural environment means they have always been committed to the protection of their surroundings and the woodlands in which they operate. CenterParcs have a strong record of effective ecological protection and enhancement. They have specific plans designed to improve biodiversity, including creating openings in the forest canopy to encourage more ecological diversity, use of broadleaf trees for landscaping , provision of bat friendly lighting and ongoing forest management

The development of trails such as the Royal Canal Walk and Cycle Way provide a broad range of environmental, cultural and social benefits, which result in a higher quality of life, a healthier environment and more attractive communities for people. The addition of high quality recreational trails provides a more sustainable option of travel and transportation for people; urban trails can offer specially located infrastructure for commuting to work while recreation facilities enhance our living environment. They also provide a resource for people to experience and enjoy the heritage and culture of the local community and landscapes in which they are located; they also serve as an important means of protecting and conserving heritage. Many trails operate as a meeting place for the community and encourage community involvement and related pride. In relatively deprived areas, trails provide a

positive facility for their local community; trails also provide a place for people of different backgrounds to socialise and interact. Trails such as this one can be hands-on environmental classrooms, where people can be physically active and learn about our heritage, wildlife and environment. The development of trails can support many other educational initiatives such as awareness raising of the environment and the sustainable use of our natural resources. As tools for conservation, trails can preserve important natural landscapes, and also provide needed links between fragmented habitats and offer opportunities for protecting plant and animal species.

During the consultation process, the opportunity to develop County Longford as a Centre of Environmental Excellence was raised and this will be examined in detail once the programme becomes operational.

### 5.1.3 Climate Change

Climate change is a global challenge and addressing its impact has proven difficult for successive governments and international organisations. For us all, government policies and international agreements can sometimes seem abstract so we are looking forward to bringing the issue of climate change to a community level action.

Our strategy for climate change as a cross cutting objective is to make climate change measures accessible to people and to provide them with real and tangible actions that they can take to make a difference. If presented in the right way, we feel that people will embrace these actions and build them into their lives. It is important that we remain solution focused and provide people with the information and resources to take action. Our young people are a particularly important target audience as they will be the guardians of the planet in the future and instilling good practice now will yield benefit in years to come.

In addition to monitoring the environmental impact of all actions, there are specific measures that are aimed at reducing carbon emissions and aside from benefitting individual communities; they will be used as promotional tools for best practice.

The specific measures aimed at reducing carbon emissions within the programme will include facilitating awareness and creating an understanding and importance of water conservation, bio-diversity, recycling and renewable energy within our community. Also, the identification and development of renewable energy projects in County Longford that will reduce conventional energy inputs, promote conservation and increase the usage of renewable energy sources will be a specific measure utilised to reduce carbon emissions. This will be specifically dealt with through Objective 20 of the Local Development Strategy but will also link to objectives 18 and 19. The actions to be undertaken relating to these objectives are detailed in section four of the strategy and the actions specifically relating to renewable energy sector are as follows:

- Action 20.1 - Identification of renewable energy projects within County Longford that will reduce conventional energy inputs and increase the development of renewable energy initiatives.
- Action 20.2 - To provide financial assistance to the community sector to improve the energy efficiency in their communities through the installation of renewable energy technologies.
- Action 20.3 - Exploitation of the employment potential of the Renewable Energy Sector within County Longford.

## 5.2 Policy Context

The Rural Development Programme holds a unique place within the landscape of economic, social and cultural development in Ireland. Issues identified as 'bottle-necks' within local communities together with opportunities for development contribute to an extremely wide ranging programme of potential actions. The work of the Local Development Strategy encompasses energy and environmental measures, youth development work, employment generation, social enterprise, transport, town development, tourism generation and broadband provision.

Such a wide programme of work, with limited resources means that programme implementers must work smart; efficiently and creatively to ensure that Rural Development Programme funding creates the maximum effect on its target audience.

The development of this strategy has incorporated both analysis of relevant local, regional and national strategies and meetings with statutory agencies to discuss respective programmes of work. While there are many strategies that are relevant to our work, the following documents emerge as the most relevant at this stage. We recognise also that on-going contact and negotiation with our partners in local development is the most important aspect of strategic integration as in our experience, actions move faster than plans and the local situation in which we work moves quickly and we must be cognisant at all times of initiatives that may impact on our planned actions and outcomes.

### 5.2.1 Local Economic and Community Plan: Longford Local Community Development Committee.

The L.E.C.P. for County Longford is currently being compiled. However, the Socio-Economic Statement, Vision and High Level Integrated Goals have been adopted by the L.C.D.C. All objectives and actions of the Local Development Strategy support the goals identified in the L.E.C.P. There are nine high level goals including, Increasing the level and quality of employment; Reducing poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion; Protection and Enhancement of the Environment; Maximising economic growth and Maximising the attractiveness of County Longford.

As the L.E.C.P. moves to its next phase, the high level integrated goals will be supplemented by objectives, time bound and measurable actions. We will ensure that the implementation of objectives and actions of the Local Development Strategy are integrated with those of the L.E.C.P.

### 5.2.2 County Development Plan

The Longford County Development Plan (2015-2021) is, according to Longford County Council, the single most important document for the county as it represents an agreed economic, social, cultural and environmental blueprint for future planning, growth and development of County Longford. The plan came into effect in March 15<sup>th</sup> 2015.

There are ten overarching aims within the plan and many of these bear relevance to the objectives contained in the Local Development Strategy. In particular, the strategic developments outlined in the County Development Plan in relation to Tourism, Rural Enterprise, Environment, Heritage and Social and Community Activities are closely aligned to the work outlined in the Local Development Strategy and the RDP. will provide a mechanism for the county to reach many of its goals.

The Longford County Development Plan is written in strategic alignment with the National Spatial Strategy, the National Development Plan and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region (2010-2022).

### **5.2.3 CEDRA – Commission for Economic Development in Rural Areas**

It is noted in the CEDRA report that its entire aspirations and challenges centre on the need for a more integrated and territorial approach to rural economic development. Within County Longford, we are fortunate that we have always worked well with our local partners in planning and implementing rural development initiatives. This has resulted in maximising the output of financial allocations to the county and has avoided duplication.

With regard to the specific 34 recommendations outlined in the CEDRA report, our local consultation and research process has echoed many of the issues raised during the CEDRA consultations and therefore our objectives dovetail with the recommendations of CEDRA. Specifically, the CEDRA recommendations regarding mobilising community capacity, building of community capacity, integrated rural town planning, development of the social economy and supporting the growth of indigenous renewable energy businesses relate to specific actions within the Local Development Strategy.

### **5.2.4 Midland Action Plan for Jobs (2015-2017)**

The Midland Action Plan for Jobs was the first of the governments regional Action Plans for Jobs, highlighting the critical situation of unemployment in the region. Proportionately, County Longford has a higher rate of unemployment than any other county in the region and therefore job creation is a critical component of the LDS.

Actions and projects identified in the Midland Action Plan for Jobs that specifically relate to the LDS include, developing activity based tourism, aligning relevant tourism amenities to the Ancient East brand, increasing the number of new start-ups and positioning the midlands to become an energy hub.

The planned Centerparcs development in south County Longford is referred to within the Midland Action Plan for Jobs as a principal job creation project and again, specific actions are contained within our LDS which will support hard to reach communities to access potential available employment generated by Centerparcs.

### **5.2.5 Tourism**

Under the previous RDP. (2009-2013), the development of tourism within County Longford was closely aligned with Fáilte Ireland, County Longford Tourism, Rural Recreation Office and Longford County Council. Currently, RDP. staff are participating in Fáilte Ireland training regarding the development of Ireland's Ancient East, one of the concepts of Brand Ireland. This has been identified as the most promising market segment for those that are likely to visit County Longford. Current tourism planning is also following the Fáilte Ireland recommendation that our work is plan led rather than project led, which will result in a cohesive tourism product for the county.

Our strategy also aligns with that of Fáilte Ireland in that capital investment support will be aligned with human capital support such as training and capacity building to ensure that the full intended impact of any capital funding is achieved.

Recognising their over-arching goal of increasing levels of overseas revenue, we must first ensure however that the Longford tourism experience delivers on its promise for tourists and

satisfies consumer segment needs. The tourism product is still being built in Longford and there is still growth to be achieved in the domestic market.

Aside from our alignment with Fáilte Ireland recommendations, we have also taken cognisance of the important objectives and actions outlined in; A National Tourism Policy for Ireland; National Countryside Recreational Strategy; Lakelands and Inland Waterways Strategic Plan (Mid-Term Review 2013-2016) and Longford Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (2010-2015).

### **5.2.6 National Broadband Plan: Connecting Communities**

The lack of access to high speed internet access was also raised extensively during our local consultations in County Longford and is identified as a critical issue in the CEDRA report. Hence, the implementation of the National Broadband Plan is being closely monitored as its successful development will meet one of our key objectives, which is the delivery of high speed internet access to all of County Longford. Key milestones have been outlined by DCENR to ensure that the government meet their targets for delivery, which could be 2020.

Should any unforeseen issue delay this target, it may be prudent to consider how the RDP could assist communities to access broadband services through an alternative method. For now, we will continue to align with government actions regarding the provision of NGA broadband to rural areas however, should their implementation plan change, we will review how best we can support rural communities with this critical need.

### **5.2.7 HSE –Healthy Ireland**

The publication of Healthy Ireland is the HSE's framework for improving public health and wellbeing from 2013-2025. The plan outlines four main goals and a number of themes. One of the themes refers to Empowering People and Communities and there are twelve actions therein aimed at empowering people and communities to improve and take responsibility for their own health and well-being. It notes that "The impact of positive social interaction cannot be underestimated. Social interaction and supporting social connectedness and involvement in community life are keystones to empowering people at the individual level and building strong communities for health and wellbeing." Vulnerable groups highlighted under this theme include people with disabilities, people with health and mental health problems, the unemployed, disadvantaged communities and minority groups. All of these groups are also target groups of the Local Development Strategy and our actions will have an impact on their social inclusion and access to opportunity.

Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL) and Longford County Council are both represented on the HSE 'Children and Young People Service Committee' (CYPSC) and participation on this committee will ensure that all LDS objectives and actions are aligned to their programme of work also.

### **5.2.8 National Youth Strategy 2015-2020.**

There are four objectives of the National Youth Strategy that are of particular relevance to the LDS in County Longford. They include:

- Young people benefit from involvement in recreational and cultural opportunities including youth work, arts and sports.
- Young People's core skills, competencies and attributes are enhanced and promoted through accessible, responsive, formal and non-formal education and learning opportunities.

- Young people are better able to participate in the labour market through enhanced employability skills that complement formal learning and training qualifications and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Young people are included in society, are environmentally aware, their equality and rights are upheld, their diversity celebrated, and they are empowered to be active global citizens.

The measures outlined to support young people in the LDS are in line with the above mentioned objectives of the National Youth Strategy.

### **5.2.9 SICAP (Longford Community Resources Ltd).**

The SICAP goals (1&3) listed below and the associated actions contained within their programme of work are very relevant to the work of the Rural Development Programme. Unfortunately, within County Longford, there are more needs than resources and it is our intention to use the unique aspects of each programme to maximise the outcomes for communities experiencing high levels of disadvantage. The county-wide focus of the RDP will also allow support to be provided to disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups in areas where there are currently limited or no resources being allocated.

Goal 1: To support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues.

Goal 3 : To engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision or who are referred to SICAP to move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness, and support them in accessing employment and self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities.

### **5.2.10 Environment**

A number of plans relating the protection of Ireland's environment have been appraised to ensure that objectives and actions included in the L.D.S. are in line with national policy. These plans include, the National Biodiversity Plan which states that "biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland should be conserved and restored, to deliver benefits that are essential to all sectors of society" which is line with objectives and actions in the L.D.S..

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) established a framework for community action in the field of water policy and has relevance to the objectives and actions written in relation to our protection of our biodiversity.

Planning policy at local level is provided by Longford County Development Plan 2015-2020 and this contains a number of objectives and policies relevant to ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation including a Green Infrastructure vision for the county.



### 5.3 Summary

The LDS developed for Longford has been designed in such a way so as to ensure integration and that it compliments and adds value to other interventions and policies that affect Co Longford. The LDS has 6 priorities identified, as per section 3.5, namely; unemployment, hard to reach communities, young people, community groups, environment and tourism. All of these priorities were fundamental in identifying and determining the 20 local objectives and 33 linked strategic actions outlined in section 4 above. The LDS objectives and actions are designed in a manner to ensure they are aligned with the cross cutting objectives, local and national policies. The following principles in relation to the delivery of the RDP 2014-2020 have stemmed from the analysis of the three cross cutting objectives and policies relevant to Co Longford and the related actions to these principles with in this LDS are identified.

- Support and encourage new and existing enterprise development and expansion including the investigation of sectors of industry which could be targeted to locate to County Longford (LDS Actions 1.1, 1.2& 4.1)
- Supporting and promoting business opportunities, entrepreneurship and innovation at a micro, small and medium scale (LDS Actions 1.1,1.2& 2.3)
- Support employment and self-employment options for hard to reach communities (LDS Actions 1.1, 3.1, 5.1& 12.2)
- Facilitating links between prospects for employment and skills required for training opportunities supported (LDS Actions 5.1, 12.2, 13.2, 15.1&17.1)
- Support opportunity where entrepreneurship can be developed to alleviate social, rural, and economic disadvantage through social enterprise (LDS Actions 5.1,6.1,6.2,12.1&12.2)
- Optimise opportunities for enhancement of rural towns and villages in County Longford from an aesthetical, economic, social and cultural perspective (LDS Actions 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 9.1 & 12.2)
- Supporting the improvement of access to ICT (LDS Actions 1.1,2.2,2.3,3.1,8.1, 12.1&12.2)
- Expanding the volume of tourism accommodation and amenities in the County (LDS Actions 2.2,9.1,10.1, 10.2&11.1)
- Facilitate strategically planned approach to tourism with regard to marketing County Longford as a tourism destination (LDS Actions 9.1, 9.2& 10.3)
- Support festival organisers to develop their festivals in tandem with increasing economic output for the local and wider communities in the County. (LDS Actions 9.2&10.3)
- Facilitating of community based initiatives that specifically address the factors that are causing social exclusion in areas of geographical disadvantage and within communities of disadvantage (LDS Actions 3.1, 5.1,7.1,12.1, 12.2, 13.1, 13.2, 14.1,15.1, 16.1, 17.1& 17.2)
- Delivery of youth based initiatives to encourage young people's engagement in employment and education through targeted programmes for young people. (LDS Actions 12.1, 12.2, 13.2,15.1,16.1,17.1&17.2)
- Apply sustainable development and environmental principles to all projects supported throughout the programme (LDS Actions 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1,



8.1, 9.1, 9.2, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 11.1, 12.1, 12.2, 13.1, 13.2, 14.1, 15.1, 16.1, 17.1, 17.2, 18.1,18.2,19.1,19.2,20.1,20.2&20.3)

- Identification of renewable energy projects within County Longford that will reduce conventional energy inputs and increase the development of renewable energy (LDS Actions 18.2,19.2,20.1,20.2&20.3)
- Facilitate awareness and create an understanding and importance of water conservation, bio-diversity and recycling within our community. ( LDS Actions 18.1,19.1&20.1)

## Chapter 6 – Networking and Co-operation

### 6.1 Networking

Networking and information sharing is considered to be a very important component of the Rural Development Programme. The LAG (Longford LCDC) recognises the value and benefits that can result from the dissemination of learning and information sharing and how it can enhance the delivery of the Leader programme.

Across Europe there is a wealth of innovation, problem-solving and synergy that is all leading to the improvement of rural areas and the sharing of this information can act as both an inspiration and at times a blue-print for communities here in County Longford.

The LAG through its representatives from local government, various state agencies and community and voluntary organisations will contribute to the implementation of local, national and international policies by engaging in rural development policy creation through policy submissions and interdepartmental working groups. The linkages between the objectives and actions contained within this strategy to the most relevant policies from a local, regional, national and EU perspective are included in section 5.2 – Policy Context.

### 6.2 Local Level

As LAG members are drawn from both statutory and a wide ranging non-statutory sector this has enabled Longford LCDC to create and develop strong linkages across multiple community and economic stakeholders both public and private. This will greatly benefit a joined up approach to policy development and implementation of community led local development.

The implementing partner (LCRL) has strongly demonstrated its commitment to engaging in networking from previous Leader Programmes and is aware how this activity leads to best practice being developed and adopted. At a local level, highlighting and communicating local successes and outcomes can act as a motivator to groups across the county and can show pathways to how “bottlenecks” can be alleviated. We intend to highlight work undertaken under the Rural Development Programme to the public through press releases, case studies, and our website and through a strong and active social media presence.

The production and publication of an Annual Report will also highlight what has been achieved locally by the Rural Development Programme on an annual basis. A video highlighting the outcomes of the Rural Development Programme 2009-2013 has been produced and has been widely shown across the county. It proved to be a very effective communication tool and this production will be updated at a relevant time during the lifetime of the new LEADER programme.

The Members of Longford LCDC and LCRL will share and exchange information with communities and organizations in relation to the outcomes of the programme through their involvement and membership of other organisations. Staff members of the implementing partner are represented on various committees and working groups throughout the county and further afield again which will facilitate sharing of information and dissemination of learning.

A number of the actions outlined in the Local Development Strategy have a built-in networking element which will ensure that groups involved in the actions come together and share information and good practice. This has been planned in actions concerning Tourism, Business Development, Community Development Training, Information Training and Social

Enterprise. (Chapter 4 – LDS Action Plan) and is detailed in the collaborating partners. The following is a sample of the local organisations and group that the LAG will network with in order to disseminate learning, innovation and good practice:

### **PPN – Public Participation Network**

The PPN was developed in Co Longford to enable the public to take an active formal role in local policy and decision making. It provides a structured forum to network and engage with Community Groups and organisations. This network (PPN) will facilitate an opportunity to locally disseminate information and learning throughout the lifetime of the programme while also encouraging and developing good practice amongst communities in the county. The PPN contributed to the consultation process in the development of the LDS and will continue to do so in the implementation of the programme. The PPN has five representatives on Longford LCDC and it will use this network to enhance the delivery of the LEADER programme through engaging with local community groups.

### **Longford County Council**

As outlined, Longford county Council is a key partner in the implementation of the programme and across all actions of the Local Development Strategy. This will require working in a complementary way with all departments within Longford County Council and in particular with the Local Enterprise Office, Planning Office, Department of Community Directorate, Environment, Sports Partnership, Heritage Officer, Arts Officer, Regeneration Office and the PPN.

### **Co Longford Tourism**

County Longford Tourism is a voluntary organisation comprising of tourist providers, state agency representatives and interested parties. This committee lends itself to providing very beneficial linkages both locally and nationally and both the Financial Partner and Implementation Partner are represented on this group.

### **Longford Women's Link**

Longford Women's Link (LWL) was established in 1996 as a welcoming and dynamic women's centre which provides many services to women and their families through linking them with resources to help improve their quality of life. LWL provides the following services Women's Action Group, Childcare, Education and Training, Domestic Violence Support Services, Support for Migrant Women and Counselling.

### **EDI Centre**

Employment Development and Information centre's overall aim is to help meet the needs of people who are unemployed and provide a range of education and support services to unemployed people living in Co Longford.

## **6.3 Regional and National Networking**

Longford LCDC and implementing Partner LCRL will continue to maintain and participate in networking activities and events on a regional and national level based on the general principals of the LEADER Programme 2014-2020 and the objectives of the Local Development Strategy.

Study trips will form part of actions relating to our work and have been specifically incorporated into the Rural Youth, Community Development and Employment Support Initiatives. These visits to other parts of Ireland and to other Leader projects will act as inspiration as to what can be achieved. This will be very beneficial for projects to assist or support disadvantaged groups and hard to reach communities. While continuing to build on

the linkages already created with different organisations we will also endeavour to form new network groups where appropriate.

Staff working on the programme will be encouraged to engage with their colleagues in Local Action Groups around the country and to visit projects that are examples of good practice.

LCRL will ensure that information is shared between the other programmes it delivers and the LEADER Programme 2014-2020 in order to avoid any duplication of services and enable an improved targeting of development efforts.

The following is a list of a number of the Regional and National organisations and group that the LAG will network with in order to disseminate learning, innovation and good practice, further Regional and National groups are detailed in the table below.

### **Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)**

The Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) is the representative body of Local Development Companies and has played an essential role in the sharing of information. They will continue to facilitate national information sharing and networking. The implementing partner is a member of ILDN and will play an active role in the network activities, sharing of information and the development of policy papers.

### **City and County Management Association**

The County and City Management Association (CCMA) is the representative voice of the local government management network. It is a non-statutory body that works to ensure that the influence of local authority Chief Executives is brought to bear on the development and implementation of relevant policy. It operates through a number of established committees (e.g.: Economic, Enterprise and Tourism Development EETD, Environment, Climate change and Emergency Planning ECCEP). Each Committee is made up of County and City Council Chief Executives, Directors of Service and Heads of Finance. The Chief Executive of Longford County Council, the Lead Financial Partner is a member of the City and County Management Association.

### **The National Rural Network**

The National Rural Network (NRN) is a component of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP) led by Irish Rural Link in partnership with the Wheel, NUI Galway and Philip Farrelly & Co. The overall aim of the NRN is to build and sustain a membership-based network that maximizes the beneficial outcomes of the Rural Development Programme.

**The table below is a non-exhaustive list of local, regional and national agencies and organisation which the LAG intends to network with.**

<b>Local</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>National</b>
PPN	Fáilte Ireland	IDA Ireland
Longford County Council	Longford Westmeath Community Transport Ltd	Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
Co Longford Tourism	Athlone IT	Department of Social Protection
Longford Women's Link	Maynooth University of Ireland	Irish Water
Longford Westmeath Education and Training	Employ Ability Service Midlands	Enterprise Ireland

Board		
St Christopher's Services	MABS	Teagasc
TUSLA – The Child and Family Agency	Other Leader and Development Companies	Waterways Ireland
Co Longford Childcare Committee	ICA	OPW
Citizens Information Centre	IFA	Arts Council of Ireland
Longford Warmer Homes		Coillte
Longford Environmental Alliance		Bord Na Mona
Longford Local Enterprise Office		National Learning Network
Heritage Office Longford County Council		Inland Fisheries
Employment, Development and Information Centre for the unemployed		Solas
Family Resource Centres		National Broadband Plan
Irish Wheelchair Association		HSE
Intreo Longford		Rural Recreation Office
Irish Farmers Association		National Parks and Wildlife Services
Longford Chamber of Commerce		ILDN
ICA		National Rural Network
Sporting Organisations		Pobal
		Heritage Council

#### 6.4 International Networking

It is encouraged that members of Longford LCDC, the Implementation Partner and Financial Partner to register with the European Network for Rural Development which acts as a hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout Europe and provides information on LEADER projects across Europe.

LCRL are represented on the ILDN Broadband Working Group which has joined forces with Finnish Regional Networks, North Karelia Data Network Co-operative and Central Karelia LAG in Finland on a Connected Communities application to Europe regarding rural broadband initiatives.

The LCDC and LCRL are also represented on County Longford Tourism (A Committee hosted by Longford County Council) who are part of a European network of seven “romantic” tourist locations that are submitting a joint application for Interreg funding.

International organisations with which the LAG will network:

### **European Rural Development Network (ENRD)**

As with the National Rural Network at national level, there is also a European Rural Development Network (ENRD) established to facilitate networking for the duration of the programme. Networking activities at this level will present when required opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and trends at European and International level.

### **European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD)**

ELARD consists of national, regional and local associations active in LEADER method in 23 countries. Presently ELARD represents 1075 LAGs. Members of ELARD are usually the voluntary National or Regional Networks of LAGs, however individual LAGs are also admitted where national networks haven't been established. The organisation works with representative networks of LAGs and LEADER type organisations as well as any other entity that works for the development of their area and shares the objectives of ELARD. ELARD pursues rural development as a vitally important policy area and sees the strengthening of rural development policy as a significant platform for economic diversification in rural communities.

## **6.5 Co-operation (Inter-Territorial and International)**

The LCDC and LCRL and. are keen to engage in the co-operation element of LEADER and can see opportunities for maximising resources available under the programme and to acquire new learning from working in partnership with other LEADER implementing bodies and LAG's.

### ***Theme 1 – Enterprise Creation and Development including Tourism.***

The on-going development of the tow-path of the Royal Canal as a national cycle route provides an obvious opportunity for inter-territorial projects with LAGs located along the canal (Westmeath, Meath, Kildare, Dublin) which would maximise publicity about the new project, ensure co-ordination of marketing of this asset, and also co-ordination of new services that will all seek to increase visitor numbers along the Royal Canal.

Under the RDP2009-2013, an Inter-Territorial research project was conducted with Local Action Groups in Roscommon and Westmeath regarding the development of the Islands of Lough Ree which stretches between the three respective counties. Initiatives identified within the Lough Ree study lend themselves naturally to an inter-territorial project and it is hoped to develop identified projects that would enhance the attractiveness of the islands of Lough Ree and increase their access to tourists.

A fledgling craft sector in County Longford could benefit from the experience and best practice gained by linking in with craft development work in Westmeath and Offaly. There could be significant economies of scale with regard to training, marketing initiatives and group promotion.

### ***Theme 2 – Social Inclusion***

As part of our L.D.S., we are seeking to show young people all the opportunity that exists for them, particularly as they come to make important choices regarding their education. To enhance this work, co-operation with LEADER youth initiatives would assist us with our objective in highlighting what is available to young people and how to access opportunity.

### ***Theme 3 – Rural Environment***

Identifying appropriate rural environment co-operation projects would be of enormous benefit to local communities in County Longford, in particular, where environmental issues are having a negative impact on peoples' lives locally. Anecdotally, we are aware of excellent models of practise in other European countries regarding the effective management of flood controls. Learning that could be acquired through the Rural Development Programme has the potential to be of enormous benefit to communities in vulnerable areas of County Longford.

The LCDC and LCRL are keen to develop international co-operation projects and will be seeking willing partners to work with in areas of mutual relevance.



## Chapter 7 – Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of LEADER interventions is not simply viewed as a mandatory task but an important tool to guide those implementing the programme as to whether the proposed actions of the L.D.S. are meeting their objectives. On-going monitoring and evaluation will also allow for changes or adaptations of the L.D.S. to be made if necessary and will highlight what elements of the programme are working particularly well and what might need extra attention.

### Monitoring & Review

When designing actions and awarding a financial allocation to them, indicators, expected outcomes and targets have also been considered. This will set the preliminary benchmark of expected results to be achieved for each action outlined in the L.D.S.

In order to monitor the programme various data sources will be utilised which will include:

- At project level information will be collated, including the programme indicator data and linkages to the LDS objectives relevant and associated with the theme and sub-theme from which the project's is funded, at the following stages:
  - application stage;
  - LAG assessment of application;
  - final payment stage where outcomes / outputs which will be gathered both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective
- At each year end, a full End of Year Report of the RDP will be produced and will capture a range of information as per the Operating Rules; this report will highlight the previous year's achievements including the progress made and issues or challenges encountered. The report will also include a minimum of three individual case studies covering three sub-themes on projects funded during the previous twelve months. This report will also provide information on the LAG's organisational structure, operations and decision-making.

The data collection from local projects in relation to the programme indicators set will be collected systematically across all stages of interaction with project promoters. The designing of the application forms, evaluation documents, final claim and payment documents, etc. will ensure the information is captured in relation to the programme indicators. This data will be also be inputted in the LEADER ICT system as required. In addition, the Implementing Partner will establish and maintain an internal database which will record programme indicators across all themes and sub-themes.

The CEO of Longford Community Resources Ltd, as the Implementing Partner, will be responsible for the review and collation of data and its maintenance and will be supported by the LEADER staff team within Longford Community Resources Ltd. In order to ensure the quality and accuracy of the data provided sufficient evidence will be required at each stage of interaction with project promoters as mentioned above. The evidence required may include:

- business plans
- memorandums/articles of association or constitutions
- audited financial statements
- bank statements
- cash flow projections

- community plans
- Company Registration Office checks and verifications
- photographs
- attendance sheets for training events
- training plans
- marketing and promotional materials
- asset register
- relevant compliance confirmation with agencies/bodies

This information will be gathered by Longford Community Resources Ltd through the following methods:

- liaising with project promoters when developing, receiving, assessing and managing project applications
- project site visits
- spot checks
- annual in operation letters
- attendance at training courses, workshops, events and festivals to monitor the outcomes of the actions

In terms of monitoring programme implementation and ensuring actions are prioritised based on needs, a monthly review of the programme will take place with all the implementing partner staff to ensure that a programme of work is planned and delivered, this will be co-ordinated by the CEO.

As stated above, an End of Year Report of the RDP will be produced which will form the basis of the annual review on progress in relation to the LDS. A LEADER Monitoring Committee (as referenced in point 1.3) will be established, which will report directly to the LAG, and the annual review of the LDS will be conducted by this committee in tandem with preparation of an annual implementation plan. Based on ongoing work and consultation with project promoters, communities, enterprises etc. Longford LCDC will, where appropriate, identify new priorities and amend the LDS as required.

The review of the Annual Implementation plan will be conducted by assessing to what extent the LAG has/is delivering on local objectives and strategic actions identified in the LDS. This will be conducted on a quarterly basis through gathering information on programme indicators as outlined above.

While annual reviews of the strategy will take place, an independent mid-term view will be undertaken. This will be a useful reference for all those involved in implementing the programme to ensure that the LDS continues to be of relevance and that proposed actions remain the most effective way of gaining the maximum benefits for our communities. At this stage, we will also review the implementation of the programme from a service-user perspective as this is a community led process; we want to ensure that our beneficiaries are satisfied with their level of participation in the programme and also with their interaction with the programme implementers.

The framework the Longford LAG will utilize to monitor and review the Longford LDS is as set out in Chapter 4, figures 3 and 4, of the Dept. RDP Guidance Document “Overview of stage 2 Invitation to Submit a Local Development Strategy”

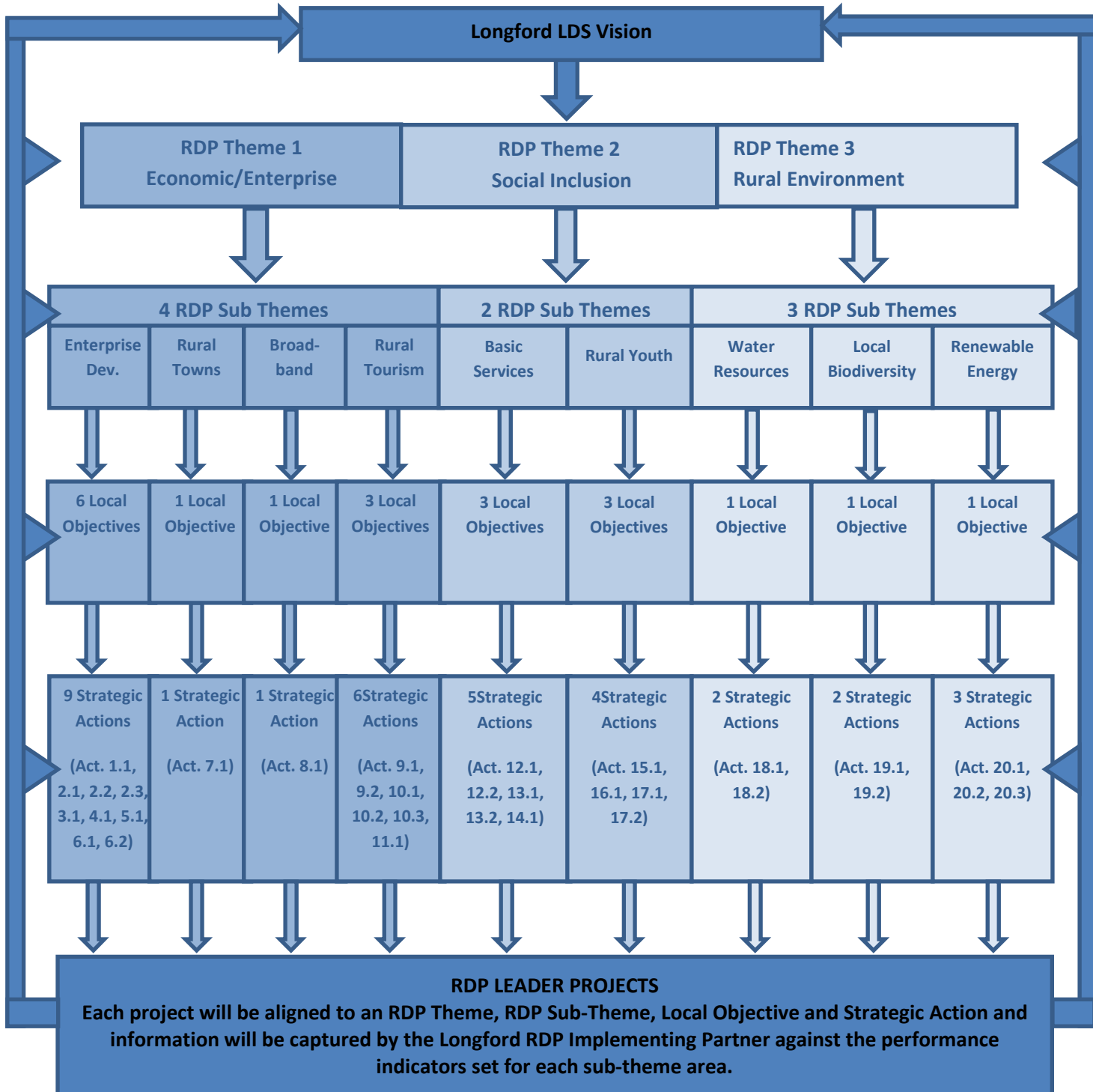


Table 7.1 – Summary of Data Collection for RDP Projects

DATA SOURCE	FREQUENCY OF COLLECTION	INFORMATION COLLECTED
<b>Project Promoters EOI</b> – RDP Expressions of interest Form and any supplementary documentation will include basic information in relation to the project promoter and the proposed project.	<b>Expression of Interest Stage</b> - Basic information necessary at the outset to identify basic eligibility of project & promoter -	All Expressions of Interest are captured on the LEADER ICT System including basic promoter details and project idea
<b>Project Promoters Application</b> – Applications received will include all the necessary information on the Project and Project Promoter will be captured	<b>Application Stage</b> – This will be both on Rolling Basis and Time-Limited Calls.	All relevant application information supplied by promoter will be captured on the LEADER ICT System at the point of application
<b>Implementing Partner project Assessment &amp; Verifications</b> – Information in relation to Project Promoter and proposed Project from other sources e.g. other funding agencies, revenue, CRO, etc. as part of various consultations	<b>Application and Assessment Stages &amp; periodic stages post project approval</b> – coinciding with key project development milestones including assessment, approval, contract, project implementation, project completion & payment stages.	All relevant project information necessary to assess, approve and monitor the Project/Promoter eligibility will be captured on the LEADER ICT System at the various points required.
<b>LAG, Implementing Partner &amp; Financial Partner</b> – LAG and Programme Partners Records (from financial systems & internally generated documentation, e.g. Project Officers Project Assessment Reports, Evaluation Committee Minutes Extracts, LAG Minutes Extracts, Project Payment EFT's, Programme Reports etc.	<b>Project approval &amp; Periodic Stages throughout project</b> - coinciding with key project development milestones including assessment, approval, contract, project implementation, project completion & payment stages.	Including details of Amount of funding approved, type of funding approved, amount of funding drawdown, type of activity/project funded tec. Additional information collected will depend on the individual project or thematic area to which the project is assigned
<b>Project Promoter Reports &amp; Supporting Documentation</b> – Interim,	<b>Project Implementation, Completion and Post Completion Stages</b> –	All relevant project information necessary to verify and monitor the

Final and Post Completion Reports and supporting documentation such as invoices, receipts, bank statements and financial accounts etc.	During project implementation, at project completion stage and at periodic intervals post completion as required (dependent on the size, complexity and nature of the project funded).	Project/Promoter eligibility and deem expenditure eligible for drawdown will be captured on the LEADER ICT System grant claim stages. Other information necessary will be collected as required dependent on the project/promoter/thematic area.  Inputs, outputs and outcomes are collected for each LEADER funded intervention.
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### Data Protection

Information that will be collected from project promoters and other potential clients over the duration of the Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020 will include personal data and sensitive personal data, as defined in the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Requirements regarding data protection will be met and Longford LCDC will comply with all registration requirements as an authorised data controller, and abide by the provision of the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003. Longford LCDC will maintain a robust system for ensuring the security of data received. Compliance with the Data Protection Acts and the processing of personal data on a day to day basis will be overseen by the Rural Development Programme Administrator and, as part of Longford LCDC's role to monitor and review the performance of the implementing partner, the LCDC will ensure that all data protection requirements are met.

The LAG's procedures manual will outline the procedures and controls for maintaining the security of personal data and sensitive personal data received and processed in relation to LEADER.

At the time of providing personal information a transparency and informed consent will be the basis of the approach used in engaging with project promoters as they provide their information or their organisation's information. Project promoters as part of the application process will be made fully aware that the data supplied will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and signed consent forms will be required from each project promoter, this will ensure that project promoters are made fully aware of:

- The identity of the persons who are collecting the information
- To what use the information will be put
- The persons or category of persons to whom the information will be disclosed.

Other secondary or future uses of project promoter's personal data, which may not have been obvious, to the promoters will be brought to their attention at the time of obtaining personal data. Promoters will be given the option of saying whether or not they wish their information to be used in these other ways.

In regard to the procedures for handling personal data, Longford LCDC, Longford County Council and Longford Community Resources Ltd will follow and abide by the guidance from the Department of Finance and the Data Protection Commissioners office.

## Evaluation

In terms of evaluation the LAG's objectives are to measure the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts and sustainability of the LDS. The specific objectives are to:

- analyse the process of implementing the annual implementation plan,
- analyse the impact or changes that have occurred as a result of the programme,
- identify problems and challenges that have been encountered,
- identify any important lessons to be learnt and make recommendations for the implementation of future programmes

As detailed in the Heads of Agreement and the proposed Service Level Agreement for the implementation of the LDS, Longford LCDC will review the performance of Longford Community Resources Ltd as the implementing partner and in conjunction with the review process outlined above and with the support of the LEADER Monitoring Committee, (as referenced in point 1.3), Longford LCDC have responsibility to evaluate the performance of the LDS. In order to undertake this evaluation Longford LCDC will coordinate annual, midterm and final programme evaluations as well as contributing to Department's reviews and evaluation as required. The final programme evaluation will take place at the end of the programme and will document learning, challenges and what actions had the most benefit. It may also identify outcomes that were not anticipated that are having a positive effect on people's lives. It is envisaged that all aspects of the LDS and LEADER themes and sub themes will be evaluated as part of this process.

The data requirements for evaluating the LDS will be consistent with the programme indicators and anticipated outputs, indicators and targets as outlined in the LDS action plan. The data collated as part of the ongoing monitoring of projects and LDS implementation will be utilised to prepare the programme evaluations.

The tools and methods employed to support the evaluation of the programme will be both self-evaluation and the engagement an external evaluation expertise and will include qualitative and quantitative analysis.

### Quantitative

- Utilising data collected from projects (e.g. jobs created and/or sustained; numbers trained; numbers of visitors, etc.)
- Data relating to local indicators

### Qualitative

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Case studies
- Consultation with other local agencies assessing impact of programme
- Participation in local research

It is anticipated that these evaluations will take place in parallel with the annual review and at both midterm and end of the programme.

We anticipate that in addition to written reports which will be made widely available to all relevant stakeholders, we will produce a visual report upon completion of the RDP. 2014-2020. It is also our intention to make greater use of social media to communicate our findings as this is an effective tool used widely by the community sector in County Longford.

In order to ensure a robust evaluation of the programme the evaluator will be required to have the relevant skills and expertise to fulfil the role, in the case of procuring external evaluators a clear and concise role description and specification will be devised. Funding, which has been included in the financial plan, will be required to undertake the evaluation process and a willingness of all relevant stakeholders to participate in the evaluation process is essential.



## Chapter 8 -Financial Plan

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
<b>Preparatory Support for the Development of the LDS</b>	<b>€21,000</b>	<b>€9,000</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€30,000</b>
<b>Theme 1: Economic /Enterprise Development &amp; Job Creation</b>							
Enterprise Development – Local Objective 1	€0	€25,000	€50,000	€25,000	€0	€0	€100,000
Enterprise Development – Local Objective 2	€0	€80,000	€200,000	€190,000	€185,000	€125,000	€780,000
Enterprise Development – Local Objective 3	€0	€20,000	€40,000	€40,000	€40,000	€35,000	€175,000
Enterprise Development – Local Objective 4	€0	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000	€25,000
Enterprise Development – Local Objective 5	€0	€30,000	€50,000	€50,000	€50,000	€50,000	€180,000
Enterprise Development – Local Objective 6	€0	€40,000	€100,000	€100,000	€30,000	€30,000	€300,000
Rural Towns- Local Objective 7	€0	€100,000	€175,000	€175,000	€175,000	€175,000	€800,000
Broad Band- Local Objective 8	€0	€0	€15,000	€15,000	€0	€0	€30,000
Rural Tourism - Local Objective 9	€0	€10,000	€70,000	€120,000	€70,000	€30,000	€300,000
Rural Tourism - Local Objective 10	€0	€470,000	€220,000	€220,000	€170,000	€20,000	€1,100,000
Rural Tourism - Local Objective 11	€0	€0	€25,000	€25,000	€0	€0	€50,000
<b>Sub – Total:</b>		<b>€780,000</b>	<b>€950,000</b>	<b>€965,000</b>	<b>€725,000</b>	<b>€420,000</b>	<b>€3,840,000</b>
<b>Theme 2: Social Inclusion</b>							
Basic Services for Hard to reach Communities –Local Objective 12	€0	€50,000	€150,000	€150,000	€150,000	€150,000	€650,000
Basic Services for Hard to reach Communities –Local Objective 13	€0	€15,000	€20,000	€40,000	€30,000	€15,000	€120,000
Basic Services for Hard to reach Communities –Local Objective 14	€0	€0	€20,000	€20,000	€0	€0	€40,000
Rural Youth – Local Objective 15	€0	€0	€50,000	€50,000	€0	€0	€100,000
Rural Youth – Local Objective 16	€0	€0	€100,000	€100,000	€25,000	€25,000	€250,000
Rural Youth – Local Objective 17	€0	€0	€37,500	€37,500	€37,500	€37,500	€150,000
<b>Sub – Total:</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€65,000</b>	<b>€427,500</b>	<b>€397,500</b>	<b>€217,500</b>	<b>€202,500</b>	<b>€1,310,000</b>
<b>Theme 3: Rural Environment</b>							
Protection & Sustainable use of Water Resources – Local Objective 18	€0	€2,200	€44,500	€44,500	€4,400	€4,400	€100,000
Protection & Improvement of Local Bio- Diversity – Local Objective 19	€0	€3,100	€66,600	€66,600	€6,600	€6,600	€149,500
Renewable Energy – Local Objective 20	€0	€0	€149,500	€149,500	€0	€0	€299,000
<b>Sub – Total:</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€5,500</b>	<b>€260,500</b>	<b>€260,500</b>	<b>€11,000</b>	<b>€11,000</b>	<b>€548,500</b>
<b>LAG Administration &amp; Animation Costs</b>	<b>€0</b>	<b>€353,917</b>	<b>€368,907</b>	<b>€378,432</b>	<b>€378,026</b>	<b>€389,841</b>	<b>€1,869,123</b>
<b>Total Budget Costs</b>	<b>€21,000</b>	<b>€1,213,417</b>	<b>€2,006,907</b>	<b>€2,001,432</b>	<b>€1,331,526</b>	<b>€1,023,341</b>	<b>€7,597,623</b>

## Chapter 9 -Additional Information

## Chapter 10 - Form of Declaration

By submitting the Local Development Strategy (LDS), the Local Action Group (LAG) authorises the submission and declares that the information provided in relation to the organisation described in this LDS is true and complete to the best of its knowledge and belief.

The LAG acknowledges that any funds awarded must be used for the purpose stated and not used to replace existing funding. The LAG also understands that information supplied in, or accompanying this application may be made available on request under the Freedom of Information Acts 2014.

The LAG accepts, as a condition of the award of a grant, that it involves no commitment to any other grants from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government or Pobal. The LAG is agreeable to ongoing programme monitoring by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and/or its agents and to allowing access to premises and records, as necessary, for that purpose.

The LAG also accepts that Pobal may contact other public funding organisations or Government Departments to discuss this application and previous funding awarded, as part of the appraisal process.

### **Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act**

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Pobal wish to remind LAGs that the information contained in the LDS and supporting documentation may be released, on request, to third parties, in accordance with all obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

You are asked to consider if any of the information supplied by you in applying for funding under the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020, should not be disclosed because of sensitivity. If this is the case, you should, when providing the information, identify same and specify the reasons for its sensitivity.

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government/ Pobal will consult with you about sensitive information before making a decision on the release of such information. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government/Pobal will release, on request, information to third parties, without further consultation with you, unless you identify the information as sensitive with supporting reasons.

If you consider that some of the information is sensitive, you are required to clearly identify such information when submitting your LDS.

If you do not identify any of the information supplied in the LDS and supporting documentation as being sensitive you are acknowledging that any, or all of the information supplied, will be released in response to a Freedom of Information request.

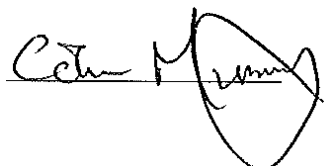
It will be a condition of any application for funding under the terms and conditions of the LEADER element of the RDP (2014-2020) that the Local Action Group (LAG) has read, understood and accepted the following:

- The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government/Pobal shall not be liable to the LAG or any other party in respect of any loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from:
- The Local Development Strategy or the subject matter of the Local Development Strategy;
- The rejection, for any reason, of any application.
- The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, its servants or agents shall not at any time in any circumstances be held responsible or liable in relation to any matter whatsoever arising in connection with the development, planning, construction, operation, management and/or administration of individual projects.

By submitting this Local Development Strategy application the LAG acknowledges that it has read, understood and accepted the above points. The Declaration and Disclaimer should be signed by the Chairperson of the LAG.

Name: Colm Murray

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colm Murray', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large, circular flourish at the end.

Position: Chairperson, Longford Local Community Development Committee

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016

## Appendix 1

Appendix 1 contains the following documents:

- Longford Local Community Development Committee Standing Orders and Conflict of Interest Policy (Page 154)
- Sample letter to LCDC Bodies seeking female representation (Page 170)
- Heads of Agreement – Roles and Responsibilities of LAG Partners (Page 171)
- Evaluation Committee Scoring Record (Page 178)
- Job Descriptions for LEADER staff members of the LAG and Implementation Partner. (Page 179)



# Longford Local Community Development Committee Standing Orders & Conflict of Interest Policy

## STANDING ORDERS

### Regulating the proceedings of the frontrunner

#### Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)



## **1. Method of doing business and function of the LCDC**

**1.1** The work of the LCDC must be done on the basis of constructive co-operation between all Board Members, and active participation based on a partnership approach.

**1.2** The LCDC is an official Committee of Longford County Council

**1.3** All members have equal standing.

**1.4** The functions of the LCDC are:

- (a) To prepare and adopt the community elements of every 6 year local economic and community plan concerned in accordance with section 66C and any regulations made, or general policy guidelines issued, by the Minister for the purposes of that section,
- (b) To implement, or to arrange for the implementation of, the community elements of the Plan (as the case may be) as made by the local authority in accordance with section 66C (4),
- (c) To undertake a review of the community elements of the Plan at least once within the period of 6 calendar years after the Plan was adopted or last amended for the purposes of this paragraph and, if the Committee considers it necessary after any such review—
  - (i) To amend the community elements of the Plan, or
  - (ii) To prepare and adopt new community elements of the Plan to be made by the local authority under section 66C, and any such amendment or adoption shall be in accordance with any regulations made, or general policy guidelines issued, by the Minister for that purpose,
- (d) To monitor and review on an ongoing basis the implementation of the community elements of the Plan, including performance against any benchmarks or indicators of performance set out in the community elements of the Plan or other relevant indicators and, if the Committee considers appropriate, to revise the actions and strategies set to achieve the objectives of those elements of the Plan,
- (e) In furtherance of paragraph (b), to co-ordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of local and community development programmes that have been either:



- (i) Approved by resolution from time to time for that purpose by the local authority concerned in respect of all or part of its administrative area, or
  - (ii) Agreed for that purpose between the Committee and a public authority, and to ensure that any plans and strategies related to those programmes are implemented in accordance with the community elements of the Plan.
- (f) To seek to ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and avoidance of duplication between the local and community development programmes to which paragraph (e) applies and the functions of the local authority in relation to promoting the interests of local communities or in other related functions under Section 66 (as provided for by subsection (2)) or otherwise,
- (g) In addition to those programmes to which paragraphs (e) and (f) apply, to pursue the co-ordination generally of all local and community development programmes within the functional area of the Committee, so as to optimise resources for the benefit of local communities in that area and improve the efficiency with which publicly-funded local and community development resources are used,
- (h) To consider and adopt a statement in respect of the economic elements of a draft of the Plan prepared by the local authority in accordance with section 66C, and
  - (i) not later than 31 March in each year, to prepare, adopt and submit to the local authority a report in relation to the performance of its functions during the year immediately preceding the year in which the report is submitted.
- (i) The functions of a local authority under Section 66 shall be deemed to be delegated to a Committee, in so far as those functions are necessary for the performance by the Committee of its functions otherwise provided for by this section.
- (j) The Committee may enter into an agreement in writing with a public authority, local development or community development body, or other person for the carrying out of those functions by such an authority, body or person, as the case may be, which the LCDC considers appropriate to be carried out by such an authority, body or person, subject to such terms, conditions, restrictions and other requirements as the LCDC considers necessary and specifies in the agreement.
- (k) In this subsection a 'local development or community development body' includes a not-for-profit organisation that provides programmes, offers services or engages in other activities that promote and support the interests of a local community or any part of a community or group within a local community.

- (l) The Minister may, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, by order confer on a Committee or Committees such additional functions connected with the functions for the time being of a Committee, class of Committees or Committees generally (as the case may be) as the Minister determines, subject to such conditions (if any) as may be specified in the order.
  
- (m) The Minister may make such provision as he or she considers necessary or expedient in respect of matters ancillary to or arising out of any of the functions referred to in paragraph (l).

**1.5** Substitutes for Board Members will not be allowed for.

**1.6** Members of the Board are encouraged to place items on the agenda. This can be done by contacting the nominated the Chief Officer in writing at least 10 working days before the Meeting.

**1.6.1** All communications will be routed through the Chief Officer in the first instance, including the circulation of documents and/or other items relating to Agenda items

**1.7** If considered appropriate by the LCDC, a non-member may be invited to attend a meeting and speak to a specific agenda item.

## **2. Operation issues regarding meetings**

**2.1** Bi-monthly meetings should prove adequate in most circumstances. But in any event the LCDC should meet no less than six times in one calendar year. The Chairperson may decide that for urgent reasons an additional meeting would have value, such a meeting may exceptionally be held.

**2.2** In so far as is practicable the place for holding meetings of the Committee shall be the principal offices of the County Council and meetings shall normally be held there, provided that the Committee may from time to time by agreement appoint an alternative location for a particular meeting.

- 2.3** The address of the principal offices for the purposes of these Standing Orders is Arás an Chontae, Longford.
- 2.4** A schedule of meetings shall as far as possible be agreed on a regular basis. Meetings shall, so far as possible end 2 hours after commencement.
- 2.5** A date for the following meeting shall be confirmed at each meeting, save in exceptional circumstances. Members of the LCDC must be notified via email of the date, time and place of a meeting no less than 10 days of the meeting. The agenda listing the business of the LCDC will be circulated at least 3 working days before the meeting.
- 2.6** A meeting, when arranged, shall not be cancelled, save in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the chairperson. When the meeting is cancelled, the date, time and place of the next meeting shall be fixed, with the agreement of the chairperson.
- 2.7** The quorum for a meeting of the LCDC is 50% of the membership, rounded up to the nearest whole number. If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned to a date to be fixed by the Chairperson. Where there is requirement for specific quorum in relation to decision making, such as under the Operating Rules for Leader- wherein the LCDC operates as the Local Action Group (LAG) - those Operating Rules will supersede these Standing Orders
- 2.8** The Chairperson and vice chairperson of the LCDC will be selected by majority decision from among the members of the LCDC if there is more than one candidate proposed. The Chairperson and vice chairperson will be appointed for a maximum period of three years, whereupon s/he shall retire as Chairperson. A member may not serve two consecutive terms as Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson and vice chairperson the members shall select a member to act as Chairperson for that meeting.
- 2.9** Members of the public and the media shall not be permitted to attend meetings of the LCDC except and until by invitation of the Chair, majority of the LCDC or the Chief Officer with the prior approval of the Chair.
- 2.10** In the event of a Board Member failing to attend three consecutive meetings without adequate reason, the appropriate nominating body will be formally requested to review the situation.

**2.11.1** The LCDC may establish appropriate sub-committees/task groups or other sub-structures to effectively carry out their functions. The members may delegate their powers to these committees or task-groups in accordance with 2.11.2. However, in considering the need for such committees and structures, regard should be had to the following:

- sub-structures should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid excessive administration and meeting fatigue;
- sub-structures should have clear remits and tasks in order to avoid duplication of effort – the establishment of ad hoc groups that are task-specific and wound-up once the task is completed is encouraged; and
- input or representation from community and voluntary groups or sector specific organisations should be facilitated.

**2.11.2** In delegating responsibility to a sub-committee, the LCDC will ensure that terms of reference are clearly set down. The Chair of sub-committee will be a board member of LCDC. A sub-committee should not incur any liability, financial or otherwise without the prior, express approval of the LCDC. The LCDC at its discretion will contract external technical expertise, including training, research, and facilitation, in accordance with proper public procurement procedures. Final decisions on matters referred to sub-committees/task groups is a matter for the LCDC on the recommendation of the Committee/Group with interim reports as required.

### **3. Participation and Decision-making.**

**3.1** The Chairperson will endeavour to ensure meaningful, focused and inclusive participation by all LCDC Members in the decision-making process. Matters for discussion at Board Meetings will be related to the functions of the LCDC as set out in 1.3.

**3.2** The standing order and operational issues may be amended by the LCDC from time to time.

**3.3** The LCDC should arrive at decisions, as far as possible, by agreement, and votes should be avoided. Where this is not possible, Committee members shall agree to vote using roll call.

**3.4** Where there are specific requirements and/or rules in relation to decision making under any funded programme overseen by the LCDC, those requirements will supersede these Standing Orders

**3.5** Where the Chairperson has not formally declared the result of a vote, or is in doubt as to whether his/her declaration is right or wrong, s/he is entitled if s/he thinks fit to take a second vote on the matter, especially if s/he considers that through some misunderstanding the first vote did not properly represent the sense of the meeting at that time.

**3.6** Each member present at a meeting of the LCDC shall have a vote unless prohibited by any enactment. A member may abstain from voting, and such abstention shall be recorded in the minutes. Where there is an equality of votes, a matter before a meeting shall be determined by a second or casting vote of the person chairing the meeting.

- 3.7** A proposal to revoke or amend a resolution of the LCDC can only be made if submitted in advance for inclusion in the Agenda. The Agenda item shall state the resolution to be revoked or amended and detail the terms of the new proposal to be made. No such proposal may appear on the Agenda to revoke or amend any resolution of the LCDC within six months of the date of the adoption of such resolution except with the written assent of not less than 13 members of the LCDC. A resolution may not be revoked at the meeting at which it has been adopted.
- 3.8** In order to adopt a proposal to revoke or amend a resolution of the LCDC at least nine or more of the total number of members of the LCDC must vote in favour and subject to any statutory requirements.
- 3.9** Each member must complete and return each year a form setting out his or her interests. A member who has actual knowledge that s/he or a connected person<sup>2</sup> has a pecuniary or other beneficial interest in a matter arising at a LCDC meeting or a sub-committee meeting must disclose that interest, withdraw from the meeting for so long as the matter is discussed and take no part in the discussion or consideration of the matter and cannot vote.

<sup>2</sup>\*Brother, sister, parent, spouse, partner or child of the person or of the spouse/partner.

## **4. Membership of the LCDC**

- 4.1** As far as possible, the LCDC should aim for a minimum membership of 40% men and 40% women respectively with a total membership of no more than 19 members. The membership of the LCDC shall consist of:

### **Local Government – 6 places total**

4 Local Authority elected members

The CEO or his/her nominee

The head of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

### **State Agencies – 3 places total**

Longford Westmeath Education Training Board (LWETB)

Department of Social Protection

Health Service Executive

### **Community & Voluntary Interests-10**

Local Development Company – 1 place

Social Inclusion –2 places

Community & Voluntary –2 places

Environmental Interests – 1place

Agricultural and farming Interests – 1 place

Business Sector – 2 places

Tourism – 1 place

- 4.2** The Chief Officer of the LCDC shall seek and select nominees to the Committee, from time to time, in accordance with 128C Subsection 1 of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 and any regulations made, or general policy guidelines issued, by the Minister and shall submit a list of the recommended nominees to the members of the local authority for their consideration.
- 4.3** The nominees shall be appointed to the LCDC, without omission or addition, by resolution of the local authority.
- 4.4** If the recommended nominees have not been appointed in accordance with section 4.3 either because:
- 4.4.1** The local authority did not pass the resolutions concerned on the 2 days upon which it has met after submission of the list of recommended nominees under section 4.2, or
- 4.4.2** 60 days have elapsed since submission under section 4.2 of the list of nominees, Then the recommended nominees shall be deemed to have been appointed on the day following the last day to which sub-section 4.4.1 or 4.4.2 relates, whichever occurs first.
- 4.5** The term of membership of the LCDC will be contiguous with the terms of office of the Local Authority.
- 4.6** The membership of LCDC will be reconstituted following each Local Election of the Local Authority.
- 4.7** When retirement or other vacancy arises, the member shall be replaced from within the sector s/he represented on the LCDC. If a member retires and is not eligible for reappointment, the Chief Officer of the LCDC shall make the necessary arrangements that member to be replaced, as may be appropriate for the sector represented. The various roles of retiring members will automatically become vacant and will be a matter for the LCDC to determine the filling of these roles subsequently.
- 4.8** Nominating bodies are free to deselect their representatives if circumstances require this.
- 4.9** The Chief Officer shall carry out a regular review of the membership to account for changing LCDC objectives with the option of recommending to the LCDC to the “standing-down” of member organisations, where this is appropriate e.g. where the strategic need for member

organisations has been satisfied or new member organisations are required to meet a specific strategic need or member organisations are not attending on a regular basis.

- 4.10** The balance of organisational representation should be retained throughout the replacement/rotation process.

## **5. Partnerships with other Bodies**

- 5.1** The LCDC will recognize and respect the important role that other organizations and agencies play in economic and social development. The LCDC will seek to ensure that strong partnerships are maintained with these organisations to ensure collaboration and reduce duplication of effort and resources.
- 5.2** If the LCDC considers it appropriate to co-operate and agree joint action with another LCDC, it may by do so by resolution of each of the LCDCs involved.

## **6. Confirmation of Minutes and Record of Attendance**

- 6.1** Minutes of all LCDC meetings will be drawn up by the nominated County Council official.
- 6.2** Draft Minutes of a meeting shall be circulated to all LCDC Members 3 working days in advance of the next meeting.
- 6.3** When the Chairperson asks for confirmation of the minutes a member may object to any part of the minutes as not being an accurate record. The minutes may then be altered by the LCDC by majority vote of those members who were present at the appropriate meeting, provided that no entry shall be made in the minutes of any protest other than a record of dissent, save in the form of a motion or an amendment.
- 6.4** When confirmed with or without amendment, the minutes of a meeting shall be signed by the chairperson to whom they shall be submitted for confirmation and minutes claiming to be so signed shall be received in evidence without proof.
- 6.5** A copy of the minutes shall be provided to any person applying for them on payment of such reasonable sum, being a sum not exceeding the reasonable cost of supplying the copy.
- 6.6** Appropriate arrangements will be made for safe keeping of the minutes by the nominated County Council official.
- 6.7** A record of attendance at meetings shall be maintained by the nominated County Council official. The attendance of each member at a meeting shall be entered by that member in a record kept for that purpose by the nominated County Council official on behalf of the LCDC.

## **7. Disorderly Conduct**

- 7.1** If in the opinion of the chairperson, any member of the LCDC has been or is disorderly by persistently disregarding the ruling of the chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or



offensively, or by otherwise obstructing the business of the meeting, and the Chairperson has conveyed his/her opinion to the members present by naming the member concerned, then the Chairperson, or any member may move “that the member named leave the meeting” and the motion, if seconded, shall be determined without discussion.

Where the LCDC decides in accordance with the above that a member leave a meeting, that member shall immediately leave the meeting and shall not be entitled to speak or to take any further part in that meeting on that day.

Where in the opinion of the Chairperson –

- (a) there is general disorder which impedes the orderly transaction of the business, or
- (b) where a member against whom it was resolved that he/she leave the meeting by virtue of this paragraph refuses to do so

The Chairperson may adjourn the meeting for such period as she /he considers necessary in the interests of order.

### ***Standing Orders-APPENDIX 1***

#### ***Longford Local Community Development Committee***

#### ***Conflict of Interest Policy***

##### **To: Each member of Longford LCDC and associated sub-committee(s)**

Given that the Local Community Development Committee\*<sup>9</sup> (LCDC) will be responsible for managing and dispersing public monies, there is a need for transparency in all discussions and decisions by the Committee. From time to time, members may find that personal, family or professional/business interests may touch upon LCDC functions.

Accordingly, the potential for a conflict of interest situation (or perceived conflict of interest) arising is very real in the context of the LCDC. The matter needs to be carefully managed and monitored in order to ensure the effective and transparent operation of the Committee.

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<sup>9</sup> \* Note: Reference to Committee shall be read to include LCDC and any sub-committee/appraisal oversight groups established under the auspices of an LCDC

To this end, this documents sets out the policy to be applied in the Longford LCDC in order to ensure that potential conflict of interest scenarios are identified as early as possible, and that they are managed appropriately so as to ensure that the potential conflict is avoided and that the workings of the Committee stand up to the greatest possible standards of probity, integrity and transparency.

### **1. Definition of “Conflict of Interest”**

A conflict of interest can be defined as “a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest”.

In the case of the LCDC, a conflict of interest could arise where a member’s role to further the work of the LCDC is, or could potentially be, unduly influenced by a secondary employment/business interest which could benefit the secondary interest and be in conflict-or in potential conflict- with the business of the LCDC.

Any corporate body with which the LCDC member is associated, and which could materially influence the member in the performance of her/her functions on the LCDC, should be disclosed at the relevant time.

This Conflict of Interest Policy is intended to establish procedures under which individuals who have a conflict of interest will be excused from being involved in, discussing and/or voting on such matters.

### **2. Background Legislative/Regulatory References**

***The Local Community Development Committee (Section 128E) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No 234 of 2014)***

**Regulation 20** specifies that:

- (1) Procedures should be set out in the standing orders of the Committee to deal with matters of conflict of interest in the carrying out of Committees functions.
- (2) The standing orders of the Committee may also set out procedures in relation to members of any sub-committees or task groups established by the Committee, and advisors to

theCommittee, to govern matters of conflict of interest in the carrying out of the Committees functions.

### **DECLG Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of LCDCs (190<sup>th</sup> July 2014)**

**Section 6.5 (Membership and Conflicts of Interest)** specifies that:

*The potential for conflicts of interest among members is an important consideration for the Chief Officer and the CPG when seeking nominees to the LCDC. While a potential conflict of interest is not an automatic ground for disqualifying a person from being an LCDC member, it is an important consideration in deciding whether or not to accept a nomination.*

*A conflict may arise, for example, in the case of dual membership of the LCDC and a community or voluntary organisation, community development body or local development body that delivers programmes on behalf of the LCDC (or is likely to deliver or apply to deliver programmes in the future). Such a conflict is inevitable given the nature of the membership of the LCDC; however, it is essential to the effective operation of the LCDC that such risks are reduced as much as possible.*

*Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that no more than one board member and/or employee of any single community or voluntary organisation, community development body or local development body represented on the LCDC may be a member of the LCDC. The Chief Officer should address this matter with nominating bodies when requesting nominees in the first instance.*

*Local authority members and officials, who are board members of any community or voluntary organisation, community development body or local development body represented on the LCDC, cannot be members of the LCDC.*

Furthermore, **Section 10.2 (Decision Making Process)** specifies that:

*Procedures should be put in place to deal with conflict of interest situations involving LCDC members. It is important to ensure that these procedures deal with situations where LCDC members must absent themselves from the consideration of, or decision-making in respect of, matters before the LCDC because of a conflict of interest. In any event, members with a*

*conflict of interest should be prohibited from participating in deliberations and other decisions related to the conflict of interest.*

*The balance of members attending and eligible to vote on issues must be weighted in favour of the private sector members at all times. If a private sector member has to absent themselves from deliberations and decision making processes in respect of a particular issue, the balance of members remaining eligible to vote is must still weighted in favour of the private sector members.*

*Arrangements should be put in place to provide for such scenarios and may require, in some circumstances, some of the public sector members absenting themselves from a vote on issues to ensure that the appropriate balance is maintained. The exact process or arrangements in this regard should be set out in the standing orders.*

### **3. Policy Approach to dealing with Conflict of Interest**

#### ***(i) Membership Selection***

- Over-representation by any one body/interest group on an LCDC. The Chief Officer should monitor this.
- Dual representation raises the potential for conflict of interest and would hinder the effective discharge of members' responsibilities on the LCDC. Accordingly, no more than one board members and/or employee of any single community or voluntary organisation, community development body or local development body represented on the LCDC may be a member of the LCDC.
- LCDC members should be conscious of any changes to their personal circumstances in this regard, and notify the Chief Officer if in any doubt.

#### ***(ii) Local Development Company (LDC) Boards***

There is real risk of a conflict of interest for local authority Elected Members and officials who are both members of LCDCs and the boards of LDCs tendering for delivery programmes.

The following policy approach is to be implemented to address this:

- Elected Members and officials who are on a company board must not also be a members of the LCDC
- Similarly Longford County Council Elected members and officials who are members of the LCDC must not be board members of the LDC.

- The Chief Officer must not be a board member of the LDC.

**(iii) Upon appointment to the LCDC**

Upon appointment and where any change occurs, each LCDC member shall furnish full particulars of his/her interests. These interests shall include his or her employment, all business interests and community involvement, including voluntary work for charities hereinafter referred to as “Interests”), which might involve a conflict of interest or might materially influence the LCDC member in relation to the performance of his or her functions, or his or her partiality. This duty to disclose interests is without prejudice to the on-going obligation to make specific disclosure of interests relating to any decision or project which comes before the LCDC.

**(iv) Conflict of Interest Declaration**

LCDC members, LCDC subcommittees and/or working groups members, and in relation to DECLG funded programmes overseen by the LCDC- the staff of LAGs//implementing partners must complete both an annual conflict of interest declaration and a register of interests declaration, and this must be reviewed annually. The Chief Officer will be responsible for ensuring compliance with this.

**(v) Meetings**

Personal Responsibility

- Each LCDC member has personal responsibility in avoiding conflict of interest by disclosing or notifying any potential conflict of interest situations prior to them arising. Such notifications should be made, insofar as is practicable, in advance to the Chief Officer and/or Chairperson.

General Procedure

- Each LCDC member should declare (before the meeting and/or at the relevant point during the meeting) any interest they have in:
  - An application for funding or other support for decision by the LCDC;
  - Any initiative taken by the LCDC
  - Any contract (Service Level Agreement) or proposed contract that the member, or a person connected with the member, may be directly or indirectly involved; or

- Any matter from which the member and/or any person or organisation connected with the member might benefit directly or indirectly from as a member of the LCDC.
- Where a conflict of interest is declared by an LCDC member, that member will leave the meeting prior to the commencement of the discussions on the relevant agenda item. The member must not be present for any discussion and/or vote on the matter in which they have an interest. Upon returning to the meeting, the LCDC member will be notified by the Chairperson of any decision by the Committee. No further discussion will take place.
- The minutes of the meeting will record the name(s) of any members absenting themselves from the meeting for conflict of interest reasons. The time of departure and time of return of the member will be noted.
- In all cases, members with a potential conflict of interest will be prohibited from participating in deliberations and other decisions related to the conflict of interest.

***(vi) Opinion of Chief Officer***

- If, in the opinion of the Chief Officer and/or Chairperson, a conflict of interest situation may arise during a meeting, the LCDC member may be asked to comment on the matter, and may be invited to absent themselves from the consideration of, or decision-making in respect of the specific matter before the LCDC.
- If the Chief Officer is satisfied that a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest will arise, the Chief Officer will discuss the matter with the LCDC member and outline the potential implications. The LCDC member will be requested to consider their involvement in that aspect of the meeting.

***(vii) Disagreement re: potential Conflict of Interest***

- Where there is disagreement between the LCDC member and the Chief Officer in relation to a potential/perceived conflict of interest arising, the Chief Officer will raise the matter with the Chairperson.
- The potential/perceived conflict of interest will be recorded in the minutes, as well as the member's response. This will form a public record of the conflict of interest having being identified
- Where an LCDC member is requested to absent themselves from that part of the meeting due to potential conflict of interest, the member will be obliged to so do. Where an LCDC member refuses to absent themselves from that part of the meeting, the 'Disorderly Conduct' procedure set out in the Standing Orders will be initiated.

***(viii) Balance of representation***

- The Chief Officer will ensure that he balance of members attending and eligible to vote on issues will be weighted in favour of the private sector (non-public) at all times.

- Where a private sector member has to absent themselves from deliberations and decision making processes in respect of a particular issue, the Chief Officer will check to ensure that the balance of members remaining eligible to vote continues to be weighted in favour of the private sector.
- In some circumstances, a public sector member(s) may be required to absent themselves from a vote on issues in order to ensure that the appropriate public/private balance is maintained.
- The minutes of the meeting will include a record of absentees from the meeting (or part thereof) due to conflict of interest reasons.

#### **4. Ethics in Public Office**

Longford LCDC will comply with the requirements of the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 & 2001.





Coiste um Fhorbairt Pobail Áitiúil  
an Longfoirt  
Longford Local Community Development  
Committee

Chairperson

XXX

XX

Co. Longford

**Re: Membership of Longford Local Community Development Committee**

Dear *Chairperson/Chief Executive*,

As you are aware, there is a representative from your organisation on the Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). The membership of this Committee is subject to review at this time, and I would be grateful if you can nominate a representative by xx xxx.

In accordance with Government '*Guidelines for the Establishment & Operation of LCDC's*' and the LEADER Operating Rules, we strive to achieve balanced gender representation across the committee and we aim for a minimum membership of 40% men and 40% women respectively. The current committee consists of xx% female members and in the interest of balance, I would be grateful if you would give strong consideration to nominating a female representative where possible.

Should you require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

---

Ciaran Murphy  
Chief Officer  
Longford Local Community Development Committee

## **Appendix 1.3 Heads of Agreement**

*Between Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) as LAG, and Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL) as Lead Implementing Partner on the proposed implementation arrangement for LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in County Longford.*

The LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme will provide €7,597,623.07 to address poverty reduction, social inclusion and economic development of rural area in Co. Longford. Between 18% and 25% of the allocation will be required to cover administration, project development and monitoring costs. The programme is a community led approach to the delivery of rural development interventions that will be supported by a Local Development Strategy.

### **Longford LCDC - Role will be to:**

The LCDC as LAG will have ultimate responsibility for the delivery of the LEADER programme. It will have responsibility for overseeing the development of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for County Longford and have ultimate responsibility for approving the LDS prior to its submission to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Where an LCDC as LAG has had its LDS submission approved, its role will be to –

- Set the overall strategic direction and the main Local Development Strategy priorities,
- Delegation of the sole implementation role to Longford Community Resources Ltd,
- Delegation of the financial partner role to Longford County Council including responsibility for Article 28 and Article 48 checks, payment of funds and indemnification of the LAG and the designated implementing partner,
- Monitor and review the performance of Longford Community Resources Ltd as the implementation partner as per service level agreement between the LCDC and Longford Community Resources Ltd,
- Monitor and review the performance of Longford County Council as lead financial partner,

- Monitor and review on an ongoing basis the progress under the Local Development Strategy and agree corrective action, where required.

### **Principles of the Partnership Approach**

The proposed arrangements will operate on the following basis –

- The LCDC will ensure coherence with the community-led local development strategy when selecting operations, by prioritising those operations according to their contribution to meeting that strategy's objectives and targets,
- Longford Community Resources Ltd.'s role will be as the implementing partners of the LCDC for the duration of the LEADER programming period, subject to continued compliance with the requirements of the Managing Authority (Department) and as per the service level agreement with the LCDC,
- The implementing role will be assigned to Longford Community Resources Ltd for all project implementation elements of the programme i.e. there will be no fragmentation of the programme delivery role and funding among other local action group partners. The LCDC will be responsible for the delivery of the Programme as a whole and will be accountable for same,
- The operating methodology will be based on the CLLD (Community Led Local Development) / LEADER specificities and will be pro-active, flexible and responsive to local needs and opportunities.
- The total required for the administration, project development and monitoring costs of the Programme will be 25%

<b>Role / Task</b>	<b>Implemented by</b>
<b><i>Local Development Strategy Development</i></b>	
Preparation of Local Development Strategy including strategic priorities	Lead role by Longford Community Resources Ltd in collaboration with LCDC Partners
Agreeing the Local Development Strategy and strategic priorities and objectives and overseeing the development of the strategy.	LCDC
Approval of the final strategy prior to submission to the DECLG	LCDC
Approval of the Local Action Group partners role in the implementation of the Local Development Strategy.	LCDC to approve Longford Community Resources Ltd as sole implementing partner and Longford County Council as the lead financial partner.
<b>Regulatory Framework 2014-2020 Tasks</b>	
<b><i>(a) building the capacity of local actors to develop and implement operations including fostering their project management capabilities</i></b>	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Implementing, managing and co-ordinating animation activity in the Local Action Group's area	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Drawing up a non-discriminatory and transparent selection procedure and objective criteria for the selection of operations, which avoid conflicts of interest, ensure that at least 50 % of the votes in selection decisions are cast by partners which are not public authorities, and allow selection by written procedure	LCDC in consultation with the Longford Community Resources Ltd

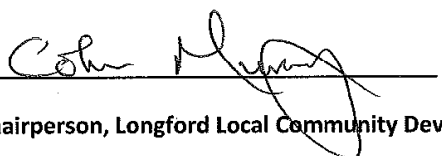
Preparing and publishing calls for proposals or an ongoing project submission procedure, including defining selection criteria.	Longford Community Resources Ltd in consultation with the LCDC.
<b><i>(b) Issuing &amp; Managing Calls for Proposals</i></b>	
Approve, generally, calls for proposals in accordance with the priorities and objectives set out in the Local Development Strategy	LCDC
Developing and issuing calls for proposals	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Managing call for proposals processes	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Managing open-call project application processes	Longford Community Resources Ltd
<b><i>(c) Receiving and assessing applications for support</i></b>	
Developing funding proposals with project promoters	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Receiving and processing funding applications	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Project development, management and monitoring work with project promoters	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Developing and implementing local development company-led projects	Longford Community Resources Ltd

<b><i>(d) selecting operations and fixing the amount of support and, where relevant, presenting the proposals to the body responsible for final verification of eligibility before approval</i></b>	LCDC and Longford Community Resources Ltd
Preparing and collating documentation for Article 28 and Article 48 checks	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Submission of files to appropriate body for Article 28 and Article 48 checks	Longford Community Resources Ltd
Formal evaluation of projects (Evaluation Committee)  <i>Refer to Appendix 1 for Evaluation Process</i>	Leader Evaluation Committee which will include a representative from the Local Enterprise Office.
Decision making body for all Leader funded applications	LCDC
Preparing and issuing Letters of Offer and contracts with project promoters on behalf of the Local Action Group (LCDC)	Longford Community Resources Ltd
General file management, audit compliance and administration related to above actions	Longford Community Resources Ltd
<b><i>(e) Monitoring the implementation of the community-led local development strategy and the operations supported and carrying out specific evaluation activities linked to that strategy.</i></b>	LCDC and Longford Community Resources Ltd

Report quarterly on activity to Local Action Group	Longford Community Resources Ltd and Longford County Council
Monitor and review performance of LCRL as sole implementation partner as per service level agreement	LCDC

with the LCDC	
Monitor and review on an ongoing basis progress and outcomes under the local development strategy, and agree corrective action, where required	LCDC and Longford Community Resources Ltd
Providing advance administration and animation funding to LCRL ( lead implementing partner)	Longford County Council as lead Financial Partner
Making payments to promoters on behalf of the local action group	Longford County Council as lead Financial Partner
Submitting Claims to the appropriate body for Article 28/Article 48 administrative Checks	Longford Community Resources Ltd and Longford County Council
Requesting quarterly drawdown of monies from DECLG	Longford County Council as lead Financial Partner

Approved at the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Meeting on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 2016.

Signed:   
Chairperson, Longford Local Community Development Committee

Signed:  25/2/16  
Chairperson, Longford Community Resources Ltd

## ***Appendix One-Heads of Agreement***

### **Proposed process in relation to the delivery and implementation of the LEADER element of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 in County Longford**

#### **Process**

- That following the Article 28/48 checks which confirm a projects eligibility to be presented to the Evaluation Committee, the projects must be presented to the Evaluation Committee for assessment and be assessed within one month of this date. *Note 1*
- Following consideration by the Evaluation Committee, project recommendations are circulated to LCDC and LCRL (LDC) simultaneously (LCDC through CO and LCRL through CEO). *Note 2*
- LCDC will consider Evaluation Committee recommendations within 10 working days of the date of the Evaluation Committee meeting. *Note 3*

*Note 1:* The LCDC will agree a schedule of meetings for the next 12 months which will be provided to the Evaluation Committee.

*Note 2:* The evaluation score and recommendations provided by the Evaluation Committee for each project application cannot be revised, amended, approved or rejected by any other group/body before they are submitted to the LCDC for decision. All recommendations by the Evaluation Committee are to be marked Highly Confidential.

*Note 3:* LCDC members may circulate correspondence on project recommendations prior to the meeting of the LCDC. This correspondence must be channelled through the Chief Officer and all such correspondence must be treated as highly confidential.

#### **Composition of Evaluation Committee**

- LCDC will establish and approve an independent Evaluation Committee.

#### **Secretarial Support to Evaluation Committee**

- LCRL will provide Secretarial Support to the Evaluation Committee

#### **Review HoA / SLA**

- Review of the operation of the HoA or SLA will be carried out annually and be conducted jointly by the LCDC as LAG, LCRL as Implementing Partner and Longford County Council as Financial Partner.



**Appendix 1.4: Longford Local Community Development Committee  
Evaluation Committee - Scoring Record**

Date:

Time:

Project Reference no:

Project Promoter:

Project Title:

<b><u>Assessment Criteria</u></b>	<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Issues raised</u></b>	<b><u>Weight</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
Compatibility with Local Development Strategy	Do the project proposals meet the criteria set out in the LCRL business plan for the relevant measure?		15	
Displacement / Deadweight	Does the project displace existing enterprises/services/facilities?		15	
Innovation	Are the product/ project innovative in its nature?		10	
Promoter experience	Does the promoter have the Training/skills, track record or experience to deliver?		15	
Financial Viability	Are the project costs justifiable and is adequate funding available to co-fund the project?		15	
Sustainability	Is the project viable and will the service continued to be delivered from both an economic and environmental perspective?		15	
Requirement	Does the proposal target a specific need or address a specific gap in the market?		15	
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	

N.B. Projects must receive a minimum score of 65% prior to being recommended for approval.

**Recommendations of the Evaluation Committee:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evaluation Committee Member

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1.4 Job Descriptions**

### **Job Description: Chief Executive Officer**

1 **Organisation Name:** Longford Community Resources Limited

2 **Job Title:** Chief Executive Officer

3 **Reporting to:** Chairman and Board of Directors

4 **Job Purpose**

Longford Community Resources Limited is engaged in the planning and delivery of programmes across a range of rural development and community development initiatives. The CEO of Longford Community Resources Limited will be responsible for:

- Determining and formulating strategies and policies and provide the overall direction for Longford Community Resources Limited within the guidelines set up by and agreed with the board of directors;
- Planning, directing, and coordinating operational activities for the Organisation with the help of the senior management team to deliver on the Organisation's mission and vision.

5 **Major Areas of Responsibility**

- Develops, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, the strategic plan and direction of the Organisation to ensure the Organisation delivers on its overall purpose of 'effecting change in the county';
- Secures funding for existing programme and new programmes and initiatives from traditional and non-traditional funding sources;
- Represents and markets the Organisation at local and national levels to various bodies with a view to promoting services, exchanging ideas and accomplishing objectives;
- Works with local stakeholders to identify and develop new opportunities for the partnership to support wellbeing of communities in the county;
- Develops strategic alliances with relevant bodies and networks to jointly explore and generate new economic and social opportunities for the county.
- Draws on lessons from local experience, work with external bodies to influence public policy relevant to the county. Provides research and position papers in support of same;
- Develops the overall culture of the Organisation to create a climate / environment that reflects the vision and values laid out in the organisation's mission / values document.
- Establishes and manages the strategic direction of the Organisation;

- Establishes departmental responsibilities, and coordinate functions among departments and sites;
- Confers with board members, organisation officials, and staff members to discuss issues, coordinate activities, and resolve problems;
- Reviews operations on an ongoing basis to evaluate performance of the organisation and its staff in meeting objectives, and determines areas of potential opportunity and areas of potential risk;
- Ensures the necessary structure and resources are in place to meet the Organisation's strategic and governance agendas;
- Any other responsibilities as set by the Board.

**Job Description: Company Financial Administrator, Rural Development Programme.**

**Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL)**

Longford Community Resources Ltd. is a Local Development Company involved in managing a range of development programmes e.g. Rural Development Programme, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), Rural Social Scheme, Tús, Community Work Placement Initiative, Co Longford Youth Service.

**Job Title:** Company Financial Administrator

**Reporting to:** CEO & Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd.

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Report to the CEO of Longford Community Resources Ltd., with functional relationships with the staff on the Rural Development and Local Development Social Inclusion Programmes and the other programmes which may be secured.
- To assist the CEO of Longford Community Resources Limited in the overall management of the affairs and the operations of the Longford Community Resources Ltd.'s Board in the fulfilment of its objectives and those of its intermediary bodies.
- To assist the CEO in the financial management and reporting on the numerous development programmes as is required by the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd. and the Lead Agencies.
- To ensure the efficient and professional processing of Programmes administered by the Company.
- To support and provide up to date accounts, financial statements and reports for the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors as required.
- Implement the Board's procedure for all payments, receivables and petty cash.
- Prepare end of year documentation for the External Auditor, Pobal, Longford Local Community Development Committee, Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs and any other agency which may require same.
- To administer Programme files. This includes:
  - Ensuring that they are compliant with the Lead Agency rules.
  - Processing the projects in a systematic and efficient manner according to the agreed procedures of Longford Community Resources Ltd.
  - Check that updating of all project documentation for all Programmes has occurred on a regular basis.
  - Liaise with development staff to ensure that project documentation is received by the due dates.
- To draw up project payment documentation in accordance with the requirements, as laid down by the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd. and the Lead Agency.
- To ensure the systematic recording and reporting of all key indicators as required by funders and for the Company's internal purposes.
- To attend relevant training organised by the Company or Lead Agency.
- To carry out such other duties as may be assigned by the CEO from time to time.

**Job Description: RDP Project Admin Support Worker**

**Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL).**

**Job Title:** Rural Development Programme Project Admin. Support Worker

**Reporting to:** The C.E.O. with reference to the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

- To assist with the administration of the Rural Development Programme administered by Longford Community Resources Ltd.;
- To assist the C.E.O. in the financial management and reporting on the Rural Development Programme as is required by the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd., Longford Local Community Development Committee and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government;
- To assist in the production and monitoring of internal and external reports and implementation of continuous improvements in the reporting processes to achieve a high standard of quality, accuracy, consistency and timeliness;
- To assist in ensuring that Longford Community Resources Ltd. meets its financial reporting responsibilities to its funders, e.g. Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, and other agencies as required;
- To provide management with accurate financial and non-financial information to carry out their assigned responsibilities in an efficient manner;
- To prepare documentation for the External Auditor, Longford Local Community Development Committee, Department of Environment, Community & Local Government and any other agency which may require same;
- To assist in the process of generating budgets and operating plans for the Rural Development Programme;
- To ensure Rural Development Programme project files are compliant with the Department rules;
- To assist in ensuring that all Rural Development Programme staff are aware of the documentation required in relation to the awarding and payment of grant aid as per the regulations set out by the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd. and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government;

- To assist in complying with all reporting guidelines on the Rural Development Programme as set down by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government;
- To ensure that all budgets and costing are monitored and adhered to as per the Operating Rules of the Rural Development Programme;
- To undertake to train and use the IT system that is in place for the Rural Development Programme by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government;
- To be prepared to undertake any training as deemed essential by the C.E.O.;
- To deal with applicants, visitors and other interested parties in the Rural Development Programme, either on the telephone or face to face with courtesy and efficiency at all times;
- To work closely with potential and existing project promoters, be it individuals, community groups, or specific interest groups who wish to apply for eligible, sustainable, innovative projects;
- To provide reports as required by the Administrator, C.E.O. and Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd, Longford Local Community Development Committee and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government;
- To ensure that all documentation and files are maintained for the use and inspection of the Administrator, C.E.O., the Company's Auditor, Longford Local Community Development Committee and the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government;
- To be informed on the various Rural Development Programme projects;
- To fully observe the principles of confidentiality;
- To carry out such other duties as may be assigned by the C.E.O. from time to time.

**Job Description: Project Development Officer on the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme**

**Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL)**

**Job Title:** Rural Development Programme Project Development Officer

**Reporting to:** C.E.O. of Longford Community Resources Ltd.

**Main purpose:** To assist the CEO and the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme staff team of Longford Community Resources Limited in the development of community projects, rural development projects, and support of private enterprises projects in County Longford and to process applications for the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme 2014-2020.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

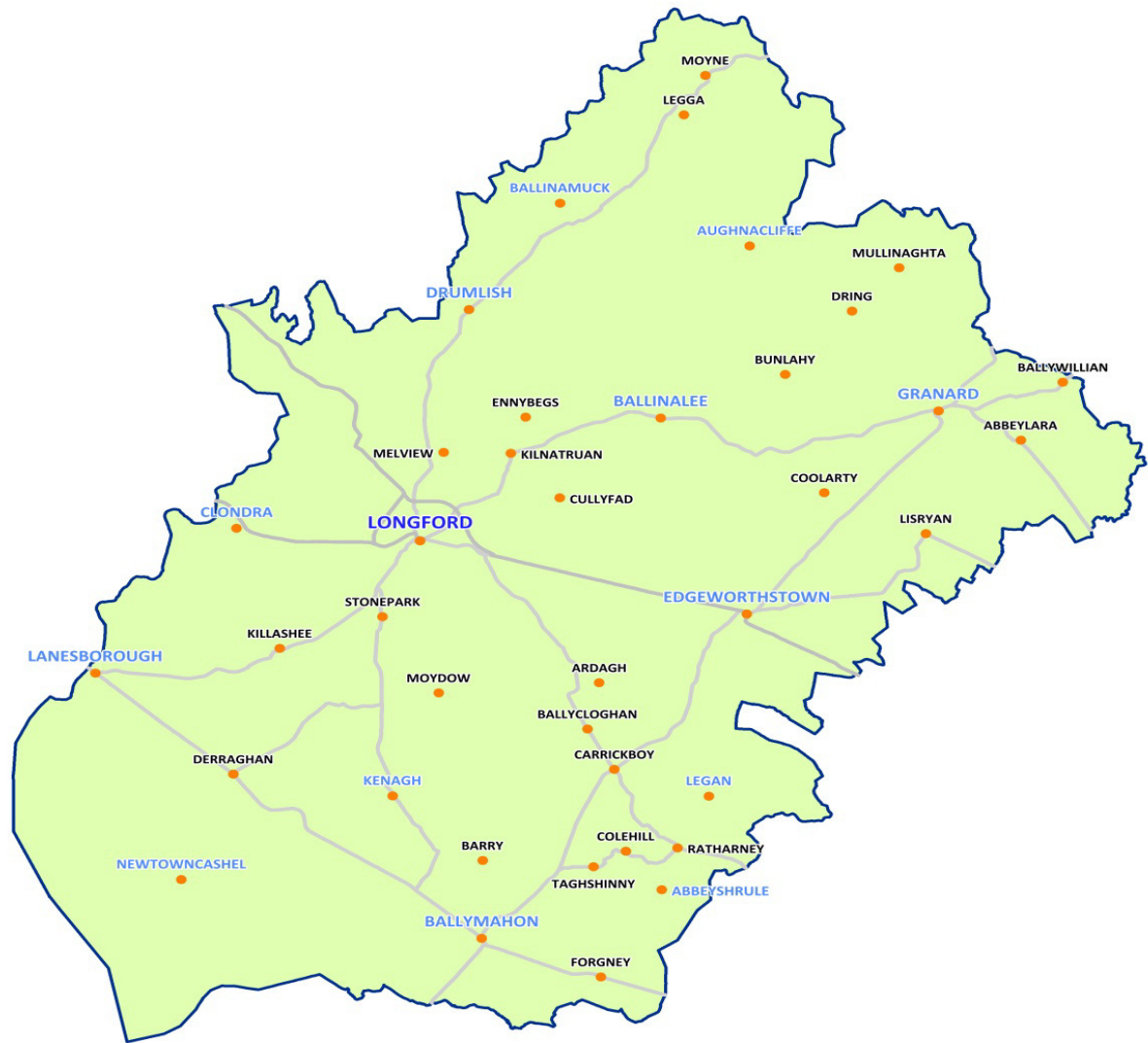
- To have a strong awareness and understanding of, and provide up to date information relating to the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme throughout Co. Longford.
- To support the animation and capacity building of private individuals, rural dwellers and Community/voluntary and special interest groups who may have an interest in the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme.
- To work closely with potential and existing project promoters, be it individuals, community groups, or specific interest groups who wish to apply for eligible, sustainable, Rural Development (LEADER) Projects.
- To work as part of a team on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme and in compliance with EU regulations and the Operating Rules for the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme.
- To work with the other LCRL staff members on the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme and keep informed on the various project proposals and prepare project assessments for the attention of the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme, the Board of LCRL and Longford Local Community Development Committee.
- To research, prepare, support and co-ordinate the implementation of the initiatives and projects to be brought to the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme Evaluation Council, the Board of Longford Community Resources Ltd and Longford Local Community Development Committee.
- To provide follow up support enabling the successful implementation of the many Rural Development (LEADER) projects.
- To provide appropriate supports and build the capacity of community and special issue groups in Co. Longford, through the provision of business advice, training initiatives, referrals to key agencies, etc.
- To provide training and education initiatives for the development of the sectors such as Community /Rural/ Environment/ Information Technology/ Tourism/ Food and Business Development/Local Services/ Heritage/Culture etc. to local communities and groups, private individuals etc.
- To link closely with and ensure the integration and co-ordination of programmes, initiatives and other staff within LCRL, i.e. under the Rural Development (LEADER)

Programme, Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Youth Service, Volunteer Centre, Traveller Primary Health Care Project and any other initiatives secured by LCRL, and other local agencies and community organisations to ensure value for money and dissemination of information and no duplication of activities.

- To ensure a focus on social inclusion, equality and economic sustainability is to the forefront of the work of LCRL.
  - To support the review and evaluation in order to monitor progress and challenges in relation to the work programme for the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme.
  - To work closely with statutory agencies and community and special issue groups to ensure integration of activities and to actively network with individuals and agencies at a local, regional and national level relevant to the work at hand.
  - To undertake to train and use the IT system that is in place for the Rural Development (LEADER) Programme by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government
  - To be prepared to undertake any training as deemed essential by the C.E.O.
  - To participate in working groups of the Irish Local Development Network, as deemed essential by the C.E.O. and Board of LCRL.
  - To assist in the preparation of annual implementation plan and Strategic plans of LCRL.
  - To provide reports as required by the C.E.O. and Board of LCRL, the Longford Local Community Development Committee, the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government and the EU.
  - To ensure that all documentation and files are maintained for the use of the Company Administrator and for inspection by the C.E.O. and the Company's Auditor, Department Inspectors and EU.
  - To carry out such duties as may be assigned from time to time by the C.E.O. and/or Board of LCRL
-



## Appendix 2 - Map of County Longford LDS Boundary Area & Map of County Longford Electoral Districts.



Co. Longford Towns and Villages

# Map of County Longford Electoral Districts



Co. Longford Electoral Districts

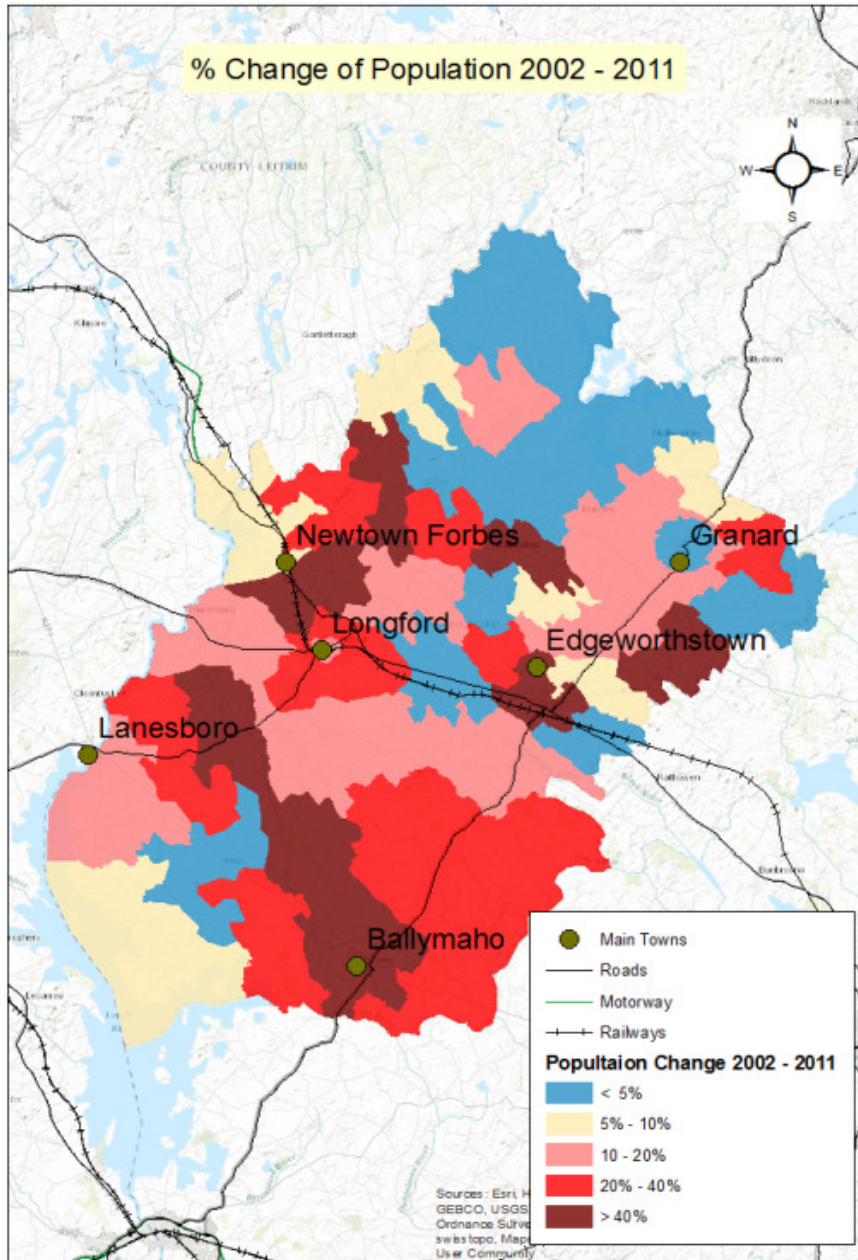
There are four **disadvantaged** Electoral Districts in County Longford. They are Longford No.1 Urban, Foxhall, Lislea and Sonnagh. Seven small areas are considered **very disadvantaged** and thirty small areas are considered **disadvantaged**.

ED Name	ED ID	Population 2006	Population 2011	Deprivation Score 2006	Deprivation Score 2011
ABBEYLARA	9013	314	340	-6.69	-6.21
AGHABOY	9037	596	684	-6.29	-5.85
AGHARRA	9003	357	456	-5.17	-3.67
ARDAGH EAST	9038	568	613	-1.16	1.53
ARDAGH WEST	9039	439	460	-1.05	-2.26

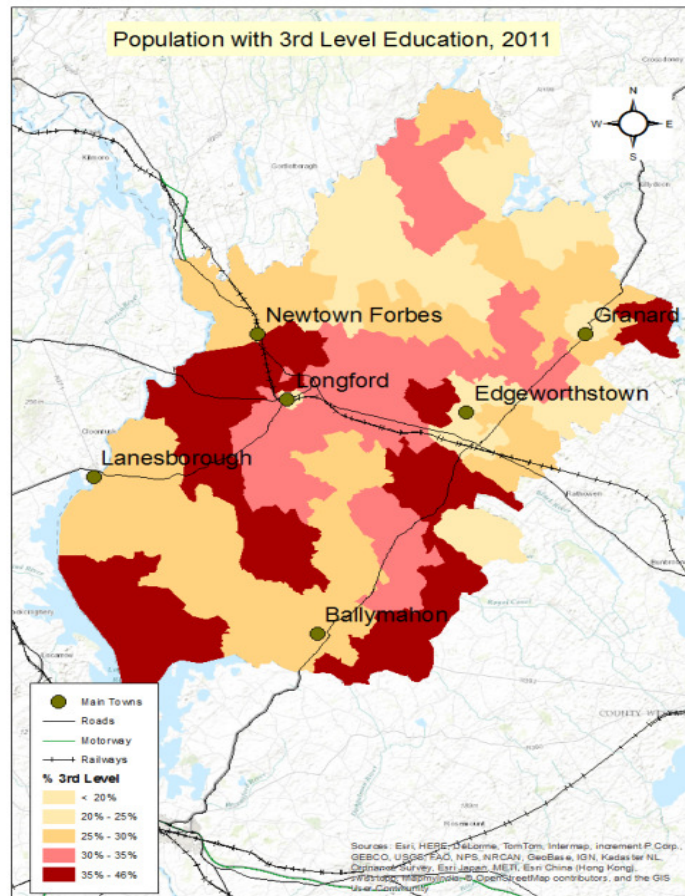
BALLINALEE	9014	453	598	-5.33	-3.19
BALLINAMUCK EAST	9040	474	546	-2.58	-6.17
BALLINAMUCK WEST	9041	441	501	-5.00	-7.64
BALLYMAHON	9004	1802	2327	-4.51	-4.06
BALLYMUIGH	9015	246	252	-7.57	-7.45
BREANRISK	9042	711	816	-2.77	-4.09
BUNLAHY	9016	167	188	0.59	-5.37
CALDRAGH	9043	1598	2061	4.73	3.40
CASHEL EAST	9005	312	323	-6.55	-7.79
CASHEL WEST	9006	547	572	-1.95	-0.48
CLOONDARA	9044	575	616	-0.06	-1.83
CLOONEE	9045	679	727	-0.92	-1.54
COLUMBKILLE	9017	605	597	-5.99	-6.68
COOLAMBER	9018	321	371	-3.44	-0.24
CORBOY	9046	381	399	0.04	-0.36
CREEVY	9019	344	313	-3.98	-8.49
CROSAGSTOWN	9020	217	241	-0.87	3.66
CURRYGRANE	9021	125	128	-4.15	-0.89
DALYSTOWN	9022	175	188	-3.90	-6.78
DOORY	9007	416	457	-4.46	-4.77
DRUMGORT	9047	435	428	-1.72	-6.55
DRUMLISH	9048	935	1387	-3.21	-4.04
DRUMMEEL	9023	127	138	-12.10	-5.45
Firry/Newgrove	9701	221	217	2.33	-8.17
FORGNEY	9008	446	497	1.63	0.19
FOXHALL	9009	510	525	-15.72	-13.37
GELSHAGH	9025	319	338	-4.36	-2.79
GRANARD RURAL	9026	300	296	-3.24	-3.16
GRANARD URBAN	9027	933	1021	-8.45	-8.98
KILCOMMOCK	9010	595	953	-4.60	-2.24
KILGLASS	9011	617	707	-2.64	-3.30
KILLASHEE	9049	284	432	-0.46	-3.69
KILLOE	9050	302	293	-6.57	-5.21
KNOCKANBAUN	9028	146	151	-2.67	-4.77
LEDWITHSTOWN	9012	285	356	-2.12	-3.02
LISLEA	9029	152	139	-6.56	-12.63
LONGFORD NO. 1 URBAN	9001	3133	3163	-16.56	-14.71
LONGFORD NO. 2 URBAN	9002	800	943	4.11	3.01
LONGFORD RURAL	9051	5046	5492	-6.02	-7.33
MEATHAS TRUIM	9030	1544	2008	-10.21	-7.54
MILLTOWN	9031	351	377	-2.67	-7.74
MOATFARRELL	9032	187	218	-1.92	-1.71
MOUNTDAVIS	9052	204	250	1.88	1.82
MOYDOW	9053	589	668	-3.09	-1.54
MOYNE	9033	305	315	-5.81	-9.92
MULLANALAGHTA	9034	295	299	-4.31	-5.19
NEWTOWN FORBES	9054	892	902	-2.98	-4.52
RATHCLINE	9055	1289	1428	-1.69	-3.06
SONNAGH	9036	286	285	-4.76	-11.84
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>34391</b>	<b>39000</b>	<b>-4.93</b>	<b>-5.12</b>

**County Longford Electoral Division(s) (source; Pobal Maps)**

## Appendix 3 - % Change in Population in County Longford ED's from 2002 -2011



## Appendix 4 - Population with 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Education, 2011





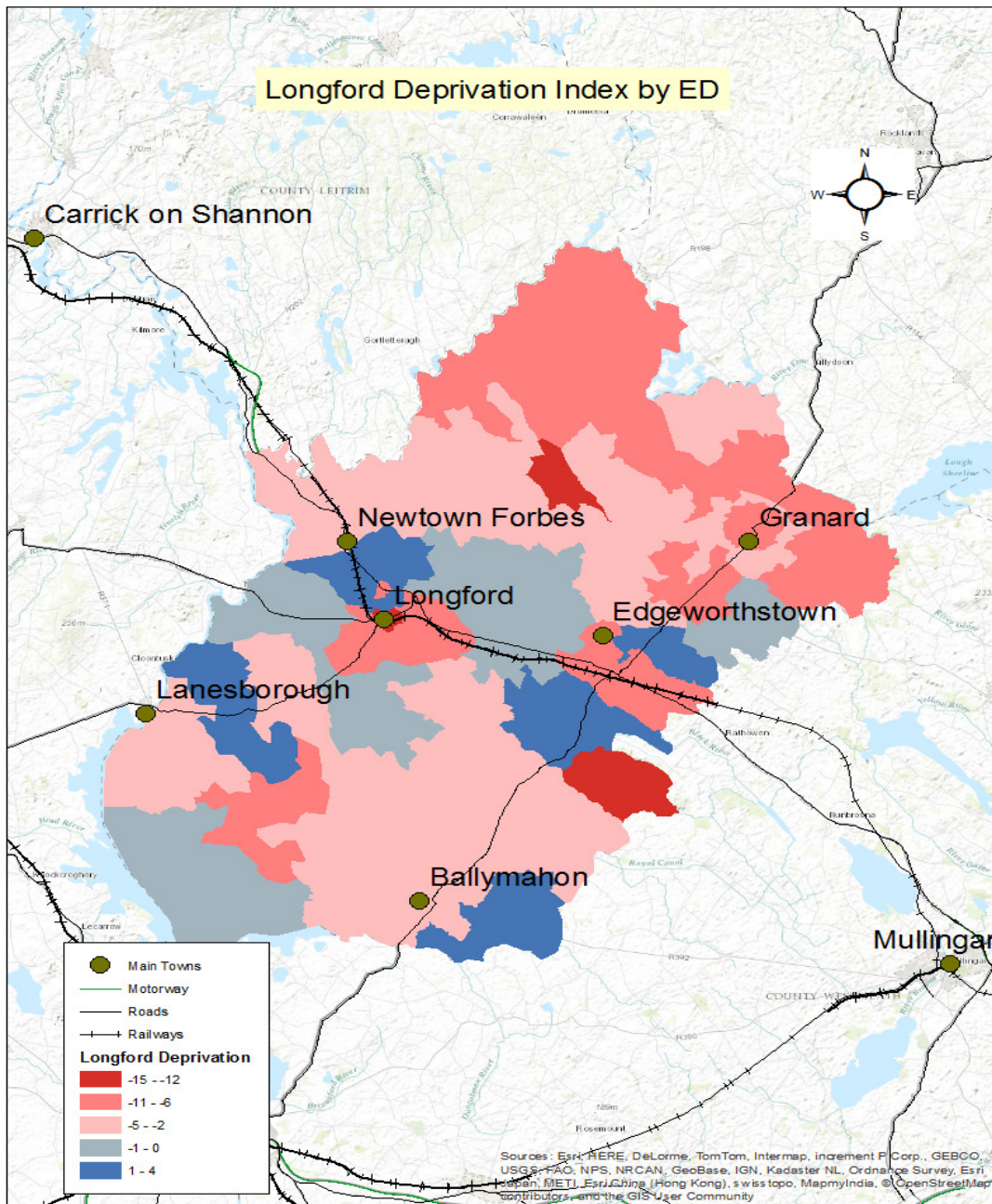
## Appendix 5 - Last Occupations

*Last occupation held by persons on the Live Register in County Longford, Source LECP Socio-Economic Baseline Data/CSO Stat Bank/Live Register/LRM31 (2015M05).*

<b>Last Occupation held</b>	<b>Total Person on Live Register</b>
Construction, woodwork and metal and related industries	770
General Operatives	590
Block layer, bricklayer, builder, building contractor, dry liner, ganger glazier, mason, painter, (construction), plaster, stonemason, tiler	410
Retail Sales	400
Check-out operator, Petrol Pump attendant, sales assistant, salesman/woman/person, shop assistant	320
Factory worker/operative ,labour (not classified),operative, other occupation (not classified)	300
Office admin, clerical, secretarial	280
Domestic and Catering	250
Engineering operative, lubricator, machine driver, plant and machine operators, printer's assistant, process operative, production operative, sewage worker, wood turners, woodcutting machinist	230
Health and related industries	200
Assembler, assembly line worker, folder, harmers, maker, stitcher, textile worker (unskilled)	190
Administrative officer, civil servant, clerical assistant, clerical officer,	160
Vehicle trade	100
Accommodation assistant, caretaker, domestic, hospital domestic, house assistant, housekeeper, laundry,/dry cleaning sorter	100
Packet, sorter, tester, wrapper	100
Education	90
Management	90
Cabinet maker, carpenter, case and box maker, joiner, woodworker	90
Barman, barperson, cellar man, chef, cook lounge boy, waiter/waitress	80
Au pair, child minder, childcare and related occupation, nanny, playground leader	80
Security, military	70

## Appendix 6 - Deprivation Index by ED in County Longford

Source: Pobal Maps.



## Appendix 7 - List of Key Services in Longford

<p><b>Education Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are 39 primary schools, with a total pupil population of 5,003 in County Longford (9 of which have DEIS designation) (Dept. of Education and Skills, 2014).</li> <li>▪ There are 9 post-primary schools in the County (4 of which have DEIS designation)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 in Moyne</li> <li>- 3 in Longford Town</li> <li>- 2 in Ballymahon</li> <li>- 2 in Granard</li> <li>- 1 in Lanesboro</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There is no Third level Institution in County             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The lack of a third level institution is reflected in the figures shown in table (2.3) and the issue is raised continuously as a contributor to unemployment within the County</li> <li>- The nearest third level colleges are in Athlone and Cavan</li> <li>- There is no Solas Training Centre in County Longford but Solas funded courses are delivered locally</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There are 6 Libraries in the County offering varying levels of service and opening hours.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longford Town (Headquarters)</li> <li>- Granard (Branch)</li> <li>- Ballymahon (Branch)</li> <li>- Lanesboro (Branch)</li> <li>- Drumlish (Branch)</li> <li>- Edgeworthstown</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Longford Westmeath Education &amp; Training Board deliver third level education provision through Post-Leaving Certificate courses and modular accredited training at a number of venues around the County. An adult guidance service is also provided</li> <li>▪ Two independent community-based organisations, both of which are based in Longford Town, deliver accredited training:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employment Development and Information Centre (EDI)</li> <li>- Longford Women's Link</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There are 2 Family Resource Centers operating in the County which also deliver accredited training             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lus Na Greine in Granard</li> <li>- Bridgeways in Ballymahon</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Where a particular need has been identified, locally based accredited training is occasionally provided by-</li> </ul>
----------------------------------	---



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longford Community Resources Ltd</li> <li>- Longford Women's Link and</li> <li>- the EDI Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key services for young people in County Longford are delivered by a number of agencies and are in certain respects fragmented. No one agency has overall responsibility for this sector and it is hoped, as per government strategy, that the new Children and Young People Service Committees may bring co-ordination and structure to the sector at a local level.</li> <li>▪ LCRL's Co. Longford Youth Service works with young people from a disadvantaged background. The project employs a Youth Service coordinator and three Youth Workers, who, with the assistance of TUS Workers, occasional students and volunteers deliver developmental youth work actions.</li> <li>▪ The Attic House is the redevelopment of the original Attic Youth Café, a Foroige coordinated Youth Café established in November 2006 located in Longford Town. With the growing demands for provisions, a purpose built youth facility has been developed in Longford Town by the Attic House for the young people of County Longford. The Attic Youth Cafe is run by dedicated volunteers who give their spare time to assist Foróige. The Café also has a full time drug and alcohol education and prevention worker who run various programmes</li> <li>▪ Lus Na Greine the FRC located in Granard also support Youth Groups and initiatives at local level and in particular the work of Foroige .</li> <li>▪ Bridgeways FRC located in Ballymahon run a local youth club and other initiatives periodically to support local youth.</li> <li>▪ YouthReach is a Department of Education and Skills official education, training and work experience programme for early school leavers aged 15 – 20. It offers young people the opportunity to identify options within adult life, and provides them with opportunities to acquire certification. As it operates on a full-time, year-round basis it has a continuous intake policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 YouthReach services in County Longford located in Longford Town and Ballymahon.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Tusla support various initiatives and actions which are taking place at local level but the nearest offices are located in the Health Centre in Mullingar.</li> <li>▪ Schools Completion Programme is an initiative whose main aim is to support young people to remain part of and participating in education to a minimum of Junior Certificate and ideally to Leaving Certificate, the service is a 5 person team including a supervisor, 3 support workers and 1 education counsellor. They work in the 4 DEIS designated post-primary schools within the County and 2 National Schools based in</li> </ul>

	Longford Town
<b>Health Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are a large number of GPs working in the LDS area with a MIDOC out-of-hours doctor service based in St Joseph's Campus Longford Town</li> <li>▪ County Longford does not have a dedicated hospital itself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Main hospital services are based in the Longford/Westmeath Hospital in Mullingar, County Westmeath and in Tullamore, County Offaly.</li> <li>- An Accident and Emergency Service operates from 9am-5pm daily Monday to Friday at St Joseph's Campus.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ HSE Primary Care services refer to health and social care services provided outside of the hospital setting. This includes Public Health Nurses, Therapists, Social Workers and a range of other health professionals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co. Longford has Primary Care Teams and 1 Primary Care Centre on the outskirts of Longford town area</li> <li>- There are 12 HSE Health Centers located across the County (Ballinalee, Ballymahon, Aughnaclyffe, Drumlish, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Killashee, Lanesboro, Longford , Legga, Newtowncashel and Smear)</li> <li>- For mental health services there is a HSE community mental health centre in Longford Town</li> <li>- Child and adolescent psychiatry provided by the HSE in various locations around the county.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Homeless Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are 2 homeless shelters based in Longford Town, both operated by St Vincent de Paul: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- St Marthas Hostel for Homeless Men</li> <li>- Bethany House Hostel for Women &amp; Children</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The Midlands Simon Community's host a Regional Support Service for Homelessness. This service is supported and funded by the Four Local Authorities in the Midlands Region, the HSE and the Department of the Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. It is a significant development for Midlands Simon Community and has been developed under the direction of the Management Committee of the Midlands Regional Joint Consultative Homeless Forum and in particular the four Local Authorities of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath and the HSE.</li> </ul>
<b>Disability Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A number of disability services relating to intellectual disability, autism, physical and sensory disability, and children's disability services are provided by the HSE along with other organisations across the County.</li> <li>▪ St Christopher's Service is based in Longford Town, founded</li> </ul>

	<p>by parents and friends to provide a comprehensive, efficient and innovative service to people with intellectual difficulties including training, respite, work experience, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Centre for Independent Living is based in Longford Town and provides the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To give people with disabilities the opportunity to access greater independence and life choices through the assistance of a Personal Assistant.</li> <li>- To provide Personal Assistants for people with physical or sensory disabilities.</li> <li>- To promote the philosophy of Independent Living.</li> <li>- To provide training for people with disabilities and their Personal Assistants.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Other Services with at least 1 Branch within the County are – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Learning Network</li> <li>- National Councils for the Blind and for the Deaf</li> <li>- Schizophrenia Ireland</li> <li>- Midland Employment Support Agency</li> <li>- Irish Wheelchair Association</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Child and Family Service</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tusla is the statutory Child and Family Agency with responsibility for child protection and welfare services, services for children in care and adoption, family support and “early years” inspection services, educational welfare services, domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tusla have no office in Co. Longford, the closest office is the Mullingar Office. However Tusla do fund the Domestic Violence Service provided Longford Womens Link (LWL)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The County Longford Childcare Committee (LCCC) is the first point of contact for anyone involved in childcare including childcare providers, students and parents. LCCC is funded by the Government to deliver early childhood care and education programmes which support children and families. On its website there is an extensive list of childcare providers in the county.</li> <li>▪ There are 35 childcare services in total in the County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 13 Community Providers</li> <li>- 22 Private Providers</li> <li>- In Nov 2014, there were 553 children in Longford availing of the Free Preschool Year</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There are 2 Family Resource Centre’s (FRC) in the LDS area (Granard &amp; Ballymahon) which provide family support services, education and training opportunities, after-school clubs, and childcare facilities.</li> <li>▪ A number of Playgrounds are located in the LDS area,</li> </ul>

	<p>including-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longford Town</li> <li>- Abbeyshrule</li> <li>- Aughancliffe</li> <li>- Ballinalee</li> <li>- Edgeworthstown</li> <li>- Drumlish</li> <li>- Kenagh</li> <li>- Newtownforbes</li> <li>- Stonepark</li> <li>- Dromard</li> <li>- Ballinamuck</li> <li>- Granard</li> </ul>
<b>Information Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment, Development and Information Centre (EDI Centre) provides information provision and other supports for the unemployed and is located in Longford town.</li> <li>▪ Citizens' Information Centres provide information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services, rights and entitlements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longford Citizen's Information Centre is based in Longford town although they do provide outreach Citizens Information Services in Granard and Ballymahon.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Services for Non-Irish Nationals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is no specific agency or organisation working with or supporting Non – Irish Nationals locally. Longford Community Resources Ltd currently provide ongoing development support (2 staff, 1 hour a week), with the residents who are currently placed in the Direct Provision Centre, based in Richmond Street in Longford Town.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Department of Social Protection provides a wide range of income supports and employment services to job seekers, people on low incomes, lone parents, and people with disabilities, older people, long-term unemployed and people wishing to return to education. The Department of Social Protection/Intreo Primary Office is located in Longford Town. in particular, schemes such as the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, Back to Education Allowance, and the Back to College Initiative for Job Seekers support unemployed people to progress from the live register to education or self-employment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Department of Social Protection also funds a number of employment activation and income support programmes, including the Community Employment Scheme; Jobs bridge; Tús Community Work placement Initiative (Tús) and Rural Social Scheme (RSS) Community Employment Schemes are based throughout the county. Tús and RSS are coordinated at local level by Longford Community Resources Ltd</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>(LCRL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Employment, Development and Information (EDI) Centre is located in Longford town and provides a service to assist jobseekers to enter/re-enter employment through the provision of; individualised supports, a 'drop in' service, and formal workshops. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An Employment Mediator is employed by LCRL and located in the EDI Centre and also provides support to other organisations in the County on an outreach basis through pre-employment and development programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board provide extensive adult educational training services in centres and facilities across the county</li> <li>▪ The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a personal money advice service which aims to support people to address personal debt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a MABS office in Longford Town and they also facilitate an outreach service in Granard and Ballymahon</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Enterprise Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longford Local Enterprise Office (LEO), based in Longford County Council, operates as the first stop shop for persons interested in setting up an enterprise and provides support and services to help start, grow and develop micro businesses. Together with information on State supports, the LEO provides financial supports, management development, mentoring and business skills training.</li> <li>▪ The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme (BTWEA) assists unemployed people to become self-employed. Individuals who are setting up their own business and who qualify for the BTWEA scheme may retain a percentage of their social Welfare payment for up to 2 years in the LDS area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This scheme is administered by Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The Longford Women in Business Network was established a number of years ago and is supported by the Longford LEO. The network is a non-profit organisation and acts as a catalyst to encourage positive growth within female owned, operated or managed businesses based in the County.</li> <li>▪ Teagasc provides integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Longford area office is based in Longford town</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Longford Chamber of Commerce and Industry is the county's primary business representative organisation. It is a company limited by guarantee and owned by its members. The group work towards creating a better environment for business by</li> </ul>

	<p>lobbying on key policy issues affecting businesses and the business community. Longford Chamber of Commerce and Industry promotes enterprise by encouraging trade and by fostering development at local level. They promote Longford as a location for trade, shopping and tourism.</p>
<p><b>Social Enterprise</b></p>	<p>Social enterprises are summarised below. A number of these took part in a training and research programme in the previous round of Leader funding 2007-2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creative Ardagh: provision of art and creativity activities for all age groups. It will also support the establishment of a craft network and shop and it established a separate committee to oversee the running of the heritage centre.</li> <li>▪ Camlin Catering: provision of school meals to local primary schools, cookery classes and demonstrations, particularly for low income families. In the longer term, it plans to provide catering services for functions such as parties and funerals.</li> <li>▪ Keeping House: provision of home services for older people to enable them to remain in their homes for as long as possible, e.g. garden care, repairs and maintenance, shopping, cleaning, etc.</li> <li>▪ REVAMP 3R: provision of training for young people to test and refurbish second hand white goods and sale of these as part of its existing furniture range.</li> <li>▪ Longford Centre for Independent Living: provision of personal assistants to people of all ages with physical and sensory disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Drumlish Community Pavilion: continued exploration of how the local community centre can be refurbished to provide a day centre that will meet the needs of older people.</li> <li>▪ Lus na Gréine: provision of a pop-up retail outlet to sell second hand clothing, bric-a-brac, etc. in order to generate income to support its family services.</li> <li>▪ Granard Motte Community Enterprise: planning to establish a cultural and heritage centre and park including café, craft shop, heritage centre and Anglo-Norman settlement.</li> <li>▪ Catkins Early Years and Afterschools Service”: an established childcare service within Longford Women’s Link (LWL), Longford Town</li> </ul>
<p><b>Access and Transport</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2015 Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association became one of 18 Transport Co-ordination Units nationally following the Restructuring of the Rural Transport Programme. What was Longford Rural Transport and South Westmeath Rural Transport Association has now become a Transport Co-ordination Unit (TCU) for the region based in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, providing community transport bus services throughout Longford and Westmeath areas. Services,</li> </ul>

	<p>which are community led, are set up to link individuals living in rural communities with local services and facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 62 scheduled services operate throughout the region, 22 of which are specific Longford routes covering both the north and south of the county.</li> <li>- They also provide a Community Car service which is accessible to people in rural areas in the county. It is strictly available for non-emergency medical appointments only and for people who have no access to either private or public transport.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longford is serviced by Bus Eireann's Expressway service. Longford forms part of the Ballina to Dublin bus service and the Sligo to Dublin bus service. A bus service also operates between Longford and Athlone.</li> <li>▪ Longford is serviced by the Dublin to Sligo Rail line which arrives/departs to/from Connolly Station Dublin. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are two stations in Longford which are serviced by this rail line, Longford town and Edgeworthstown</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Longford has a comprehensive list of taxi and hackney services available which can be sourced from the Longford.ie community portal.</li> <li>▪ There are a number of privately owned coach/bus hire firms in county Longford. They operate a variety of services from licensed local routes linking the smaller towns and routes linking to main towns outside County Longford. These companies are also available for private hire for any required events. For full list please contact Longford.ie community portal e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Kenagh, Killashee &amp; Ballymahon to the main towns of Athlone, Longford &amp; Granard.</li> <li>- Routes linking main towns outside the county, such as Cavan, Letterkenny and Limerick, to Longford and Granard.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There is a community bus which is available for hire but this service is currently under-utilised due to the lack of availability of suitably qualified bus drivers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Safety and Security and information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Longford/ Roscommon Garda division has 8 stations in the County, however not all stations operate on a full time basis due to cutbacks in recent years. Stations are located in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Longford Town</li> <li>- Granard</li> <li>- Ballymahon</li> <li>- Drumlish</li> <li>- Edgeworthstown</li> <li>- Kenagh</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lanesboro</li> <li>- Smear</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are Post Offices located in the following villages and towns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ardagh</li> <li>- Aghnacliffe</li> <li>- Ballinalee</li> <li>- Ballymahon</li> <li>- Carrickboy</li> <li>- Cloonagh</li> <li>- Drumlish</li> <li>- Edgeworthstown</li> <li>- Granard</li> <li>- Kenagh</li> <li>- Lanesboro</li> <li>- Longford Town</li> <li>- Newtownforbes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Broadband Provision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The County as a whole has an extremely weak broadband connection particularly in rural areas both North &amp; South of the County. Longford Town has a relatively good fibre optic connectivity.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Services</b>	<p>The county area has a well-developed community infrastructure, with a very active body of groups and individuals which participate in voluntary activities at both community, county and regional level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longford Public Participation Network (PPN) with the purpose of enabling the public to take an active formal role in policy making and to allow for the diversity of voices and interests to be facilitated and involved in decision making. The PPN is the main link through which Longford County Council connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors.</li> <li>▪ Longford Volunteer Centre is a collaborative countywide programme to enhance volunteering by providing support to individuals wishing to volunteer and community and voluntary organisations. It supports the sustainment and development of community responses by identifying and making connections with potential volunteers.</li> <li>▪ County Longford Sports Partnership encourages, promotes and supports the people of Longford to participate in sport and physical activity, providing information and training, and implementing, coordinating and supporting a wide variety of programmes, activities and initiatives across the county. They seek to develop a pro- active culture towards active living.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Longford Warmer Homes provides energy efficiency improvements in the homes of the elderly and low income, making their homes more comfortable, healthier and more cost effective to run. Longford Warmer Homes also deliver a number of services under the SEAI programs which include</li> </ul>



theBetter Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWHS), which is provided free of charge to eligible householders. They also will provide assistance to the Retrofit Grant Scheme, Housing Adaption Grant Scheme, Housing Aid for Older People Grant Scheme, Mobility Aid Grant Scheme and also operate the Care and Repair Service within the county.

- Lough Ree Environmental Summer School & Arts Festival has over the past 18 years, attracted local, national and international visitors to share in the events with the remit of raising awareness of environmental issues in a hands on and entertaining way. It is now recognised as one of the most significant environmental, cultural and social events of its kind in the Midlands.
- Longford Environmental Alliance who is active in the care and protection of the environment is a voluntary and independent group of individuals with the aim of raising awareness of environmental issues in County Longford through actions and education.
- Longford County Council Environment Section monitors and controls industries and waste activities that fall beneath the E.P.A.'s remit and an assortment of essential environmental services. These activities are:
  - Water Pollution Monitoring & Control
  - Air Pollution Monitoring & Control
  - Waste Management Plan Implementation
  - Waste Management Permitting & Enforcement
  - Control of Hazardous Waste Movements
  - Pollution Incident Response
  - Environmental Awareness & Education
  - Burial Grounds
  - Animal Control
  - Litter Control & Tidy Towns
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) the state agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources.
  - Current projects of relevance in County Longford include the removal of invasive species and the development of angling hubs in Lanesboro.
- Teagasc Local Advisory Office in Longford also strives to raise awareness and promotion and protection of the Environment in Co. Longford
- Natural Heritage - There is huge diversity of species and habitats within County Longford, which because of their importance at European and National level require the designation of areas for their protection and conservation.
  - Longford has 4 designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) including Forthill and Mount Jessop Bogs. In

	<p>addition there are currently ten proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) in the County that are waiting designation to Natural Heritage Area status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are currently 6 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated in Co. Longford including Fortwilliam Turlough, Lough Forbes Complex and Lough Ree SAC</li> <li>- Longford has 3 Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Ballykenny-Fishertown Bog, Lough Kinale &amp; Derragh Lough and Lough Ree SPA</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tourism Infrastructure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ County Longford Tourism Committee manages a Tourist Information Office in Longford town providing information to tourists and tourist providers for Co. Longford.</li> <li>▪ Tourist Trails which crisscross the county provide memorable days of discovery for drivers, walkers, cyclists and those enjoying the inland waterways of Ireland. Longford's unique biodiversity is of particular interest to those with a love of nature. Excellent forest walks and large stretches of bogland, provide fascinating grounds for exploration, observation and discussion. Co. Longford has 8 walking and cycling trails listed through the County Tourist Information Office (6 of which are listed under the Irish Trails Office approved National Trails): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Edenmore Bog Walk</li> <li>- Longford-Clondra-Royal Canal Trackway</li> <li>- North Longford Tour</li> <li>- South Longford Tour</li> <li>- Oliver Goldsmith Trail</li> <li>- Derrycassin Woods</li> <li>- The Táin Trail</li> <li>- Newcastle Woods</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ County Longford has excellent facilities for a range of Tourist Activities which include, walking, cycling, angling, kayaking, canoeing, pitch and putt, archery, go-karting, paintballing, tennis, equestrian trails, and orienteering, as well as indoor pursuits such as swimming and ten pin bowling. Those who wish to keep their feet firmly on the ground can play on Longford's 18 hole championship golf course which overlooks the county town.</li> <li>▪ South Longford is home to Abbeyshrule Airfield, the only airfield in the midlands of Ireland and the base for several flying clubs and schools, lessons or pleasure flights and the airfield is also the host of the longest running air show in Ireland.</li> <li>▪ The Royal Canal, Lough Ree, Lough Gowna, the River Shannon and the many smaller lakes and rivers of the county offer endless opportunity to take part in water sporting activities. Water polo, canoeing and kayaking, white water rafting and water tubing are all enjoyed by visitors to the area.</li> </ul>

- Angling is also a very popular attraction in Co. Longford as the county is host to some of the best coarse fishing available in Ireland. The county boasts many excellent lakes, rivers and canals, including the longest county shoreline of the River Shannon. The River Inny, the River Camlin, Lough Gowna and Lough Ree are some of the more well-known angling locations.
  - The establishment of the Lough Ree Angling Hub has also increased this recreational activity in the county and is now attracting a World Fishing Championship event to Lough Ree in October 2016.
- Throughout the county of Longford lie historical sites and monuments from the different phases of Longford's history. Prehistoric monuments include:
  - portal tombs at Aughnacliffe and Cleenrath
  - the extraordinary Corlea Bog Trackway, near Kenagh, dating from 148 BC
  - Early church and monastic sites include:
    - Ardagh, founded by St Patrick
    - Old Clonbroney, close to Ballinalee
    - Ballinakill, near Killashee
  - Anglo-Norman Presence:
    - The Motte and Bailey castle site at Granard is one of the finest of its type in Ireland
  - Medieval Monasteries include:
    - Abbeyshrule
    - Abbeylara
    - Abbeyderg
    - Saints Island
  - Longford also has the remains of Gaelic tower-houses, including:
    - such as at Mornin and Castlerea in the Moydow area.
  - Significant Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Estate Houses, including:
    - Newcastle House
    - Ledwithstown House
    - the former Ardagh Convent
    - Castle Forbes, Newtownforbes

Throughout the county there are also many fine churches of the various denominations.

- The re-furbished St. Mel's Cathedral in Longford Town is now

	<p>also a major tourist attraction since it re-opened in 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ In addition to such Heritage sites, the visitor can experience places associated with pivotal episodes in Irish history, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the villages of Granard and Ballinamuck, where there were battles fought during the 1798 Rebellion.</li><li>- One of Longford's major political figures was General Seán MacEoin, 'The Blacksmith of Ballinalee', a leader in the War of Independence (1919-1921). His family's Blacksmith Forge can be visited near the village of Ballinalee together with Rose Cottage- the site of his headquarters during the war.</li><li>- Another interesting place to visit is The Greville Arms Hotel in Granard which was once owned by the family of Kitty Kiernan, fiancée of Michael Collins. Collins was a frequent visitor to the area and had many good friends in Co Longford.</li></ul></li><li>▪ There are 3 Heritage Visitors Centres in the county:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre</li><li>- Ardagh Heritage and Creativity Centre</li><li>- Ballinamuck Visitor Centre</li></ul></li></ul>
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## Appendix 8 - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Consultation Form.

### General Consultation Form (Summary)

### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (2014-2020)**

Longford will shortly be benefitting from the next **Rural Development Programme (2014-2020)**, more commonly known as the **LEADER** programme. This programme, which has been operating in County Longford since 1995, has funded numerous community projects, private businesses and other organisations since its commencement.

In order to receive funding for the next five years, each county must submit a strategy identifying what is needed in their county and what the main opportunities are. The main themes of the new programme are **Enterprise and Job Creation; Rural Tourism, Promoting local development; Rural Youth and Managing our Environment and Energy Resources.**

As part of compiling the strategy, local people are invited to have their say in what they think needs to happen in Longford. We would welcome your views and hope you can take the time to complete the questions below.

You are also welcome to contact us and discuss your views further, or attend one of our public consultation meetings which will take place in September 2015.

1. **What are the biggest issues facing County Longford at this time?**
2. **What groups in our society need the most support?**
3. **What are the biggest issues facing unemployed people in Longford?**
4. **How do you think LEADER could help unemployed people?**
5. **Have you any ideas that you think would create jobs in Longford?**
6. **How do you think LEADER could improve the lives of Young People in Longford?**
7. **How could LEADER improve rural areas in County Longford?**
8. **How can LEADER help to improve our environment?**
9. **What would you like to see LEADER achieve in Longford?**
10. **Do you think Longford could be a Centre of Excellence in any discipline?**
11. **Have you a specific project that you would like LEADER to fund? If so, please provide some brief details?**

## Appendix 9 - Details of Focus Groups Consultations

<b>Tourism</b>	<b>Youth</b>
Tourism Committee	County Longford Youth Service
Local Community Group Representatives	ATTIC Youth group
Tourism Accommodation Providers	LEAP Youth office
Longford Community Resources Ltd	Good To Talk
Backstage Theatre	Schools Completion Officer
Rural Recreation Office	Sports Partnership
County Council – Planning	Regional Youth Officer
Sports Partnership	Backstage Theatre
Recreation Activity	Community Garda
Corlea Trackway	Comhairle na nOg ( Youth Council ) Rep
Regeneration Office Longford Co. Co	Youth Reach
Business Sector	<b>2 separate focus groups held with</b>
Longford County Council	<b>Lanesboro youth group – Co Longford Youth Service</b>
Kayaking , Canoeing Activists	Longford Youth Council ATTIC youth forum
Angling Holiday service provider	
Tourism Information Office	
Local Enterprise Office	<b>Unemployed</b>
	FAS
	EDI
<b>Environment</b>	LCRL – Employment Mediator
Longford Environmental Alliance	LW ETB – Adult Guidance
Bee Keepers Association	RSS
National Parks & Wildlife Ranger	TUS
Environment Officer Longford County Council,	CE Supervisors
Tidy Towns Representatives	PPN
Community Groups	Bridgeways FRC
	St Christopher's
	Employment Midlands
<b>Enterprise</b>	
Chamber of Commerce	
New Business Owner	
Longford Craft Network	
LCRL – Enterprise Officer	
Local Enterprise Office	
Women in Business Network Reps	

## Appendix 10 - Issues raised during the consultation process

The extensive consultation process gave us the opportunity to listen to all stakeholders in life in Longford. While the following issues arose as the key barriers to progress across the key themes, we have been careful to address same in our Strategic Actions so that this programme can make a tangible impact.

### Theme: Economic Development, Enterprise Development and Job Creation

In respect of this theme and in particular the sub-themes of **Enterprise Development, Rural Towns and Broadband**; the issues arising can be clustered as follows:-

ENTERPRISE STIMULUS	SECTORAL POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide specific supports to the unemployed to consider self-employment.</li> <li>• Finance for small / medium businesses to get started and also for existing businesses to develop their projects further.</li> <li>• Creation of enterprise stimulus in rural areas. Improve the image of Longford as a place to do business – entire re-branding needed to promote Longford as attractive place for businesses to locate to.</li> <li>• Ensure Longford participates in all available national support programmes that encourage enterprise. We need to maximise investment into the county to improve the enterprise environment locally, this will help us attract enterprises to locate in Longford.</li> <li>• To support community groups to source match funding for enterprise development projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Supports for Food Sector including development of Food Tourism.</li> <li>• The emerging Craft Sector &amp; Creative Industries need marketing supports to promote their work.</li> <li>• Exploit the potential of the Green Energy Sector within County Longford.</li> <li>• Assess unique business opportunities in County Longford – are there products that could be produced here? Could the I.T. sector be developed further?</li> <li>• Increase enterprise amongst farmers – need to ensure viable farms.</li> <li>• The need to develop unique enterprise dimensions in Longford –could it be a Centre for Excellence?</li> </ul>
INFRASTRUCTURE	SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband Availability, rural areas do not have access to high speed internet access.</li> <li>• Available small enterprise space in urban &amp; rural areas is needed including hubs and hot desks.</li> <li>• The cost of rates is crippling new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going specialist training / support for businesses.</li> <li>• Trained Employees are needed in small businesses. Owners of small enterprises cannot afford the time or cost of training an employee in basic job skills, such as Health &amp; Safety,</li> </ul>

<p>businesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacant &amp; Derelict buildings in towns are giving a poor image of the county.</li> <li>• The viability of rural villages with regard to essential services needs to be examined.</li> </ul>	<p>Manual Handling</p>
<p><b>OVERARCHING ISSUES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency co-operation with communities – is there the will and the drive to make things happen, such as Centre of Excellence.</li> <li>• Need to make RDP grant application processes simpler, this will encourage more people to apply for funding.</li> </ul>	

In respect of **Job Creation**, the following issues were identified:

<p><b>SKILLS</b></p>	<p><b>THE BARRIERS TO JOB CREATION</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills miss-match between available jobs and skills of unemployed.</li> <li>• Provide support to people finishing on Tús, Job Bridge to assist them to find work</li> <li>• Introductory, entry level, un-accredited training required for those who do not have the confidence to avail of FETAC accredited training. Participants need support to keep motivated, not enough to just put on course.</li> <li>• Need to develop training programme as soon as possible to prepare for Centerparcs in all aspects of the type of jobs they will be looking for.</li> <li>• More rural training opportunities required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic environment - lack of available jobs to meet the demand from unemployed people.</li> <li>• Lack of third level university. Athlone Institute of Technology is too far for people to travel to, we need local courses.</li> <li>• Lack of transport in rural areas, people un-able to access opportunities.</li> <li>• Construction slow down, many unemployed construction workers in the county.</li> <li>• Non-Irish nationals moving to Longford have a lack of awareness of job opportunities</li> <li>• Prohibitive costs of childcare &amp; transport leads to social welfare dependency. Need to find job with sufficient income to make working worthwhile.</li> </ul>
<p><b>IDEAS EMERGING</b></p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support community and sporting organisations to look at job creation opportunities.</li> <li>• Each rural area needs a specific development plan to look at job creation/generation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health issues, mental health issues including addictions and dependencies.</li> <li>• Personal development supports needed for people to have the confidence to avail of supports/ training that is available.</li> <li>• Cost of third level education for those not eligible for grant support.</li> <li>• Cultural issues affecting views on employment, role of women in the workforce.</li> <li>• Under employment on farms. Lack of available places on RSS.</li> <li>• Those most distanced from the labour force are 'being over-looked by agencies that are under pressure to show progression of participants'.</li> </ul>
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In respect of [Rural Tourism](#), the following issues were identified:

<b>THE BARRIERS TO RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of flagship Hotel</li> <li>• Lack of approved tourism accommodation across the county</li> <li>• Not enough tourism amenities that are visitor ready</li> <li>• Lack of promotion of County Longford</li> <li>• Low level of tourists</li> <li>• Quality of signage and co-ordinate placement of signs, some areas have two and others have none.</li> <li>• Poor National Profile</li> <li>• Need to keep promotional literature up to date including websites, social media</li> <li>• Approach roads to Longford – landscaping, promotion of the county.</li> <li>• Getting people to take pride in Longford.</li> <li>• Many Heritage sites not safe for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximising the opportunity by Centerparcs coming to the county.</li> <li>• Development of lakes and access to waterways, need more lake side amenities and the development of Angling Hubs</li> <li>• Development of tourism structure – who is responsible for tourism development in the county &amp; who has the resources?</li> <li>• Completion of Royal Canal Cycle Way.</li> <li>• Complete all trails across the county to NTO standards</li> <li>• Connolly Barracks Development</li> <li>• Encourage development of Food Tourism – enough businesses now to develop Food Trail.</li> <li>• Develop our Arts Sector more as a tourist attraction. Attract artists &amp; writers to live here.</li> </ul>

general public to access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to dedicate resources to direct selling of the county in order to show tangible increase in visitor numbers to the county.</li> <li>• Need a clear plan of how to support Festivals across the county</li> <li>• Need a county museum</li> </ul>
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The final sub-theme under Theme 1 was in respect of the development of **social economy** projects locally that could have the potential to create jobs.

THE NEEDS	THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to stimulate interest in the sector, provide necessary support to community organisations to take on the challenge of Social Enterprise.</li> <li>• Need to raise awareness of Social Enterprise and its potential.</li> <li>• Identification of opportunities in County Longford that have potential to create jobs, e.g. care of the elderly, tourism promotion, vegetable production,</li> <li>• Projects need a range of supports including technical support, management training, financial support, enterprise space, on-going training and support.</li> <li>• Network support with other social enterprises outside the county.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate can the repair of our derelict housing be a Social Enterprise and provide much needed accommodation in the county.</li> <li>• How could the Social Economy help our construction sector workers?</li> </ul>

## Theme 2: Social Inclusion

In respect of **Theme 2 - Social Inclusion**, the following issues were identified in respect of barriers for hard to reach communities, and areas of disadvantage.

THE ISSUES	THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social and Family Issues, Family Breakdown along with mental health issues.</li> <li>• Lack of education amongst parents.</li> <li>• Poor parenting skills repeating themselves</li> <li>• Lack of basic life skills to cope with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the value of volunteering more.</li> <li>• More support for the voluntary sector to take on responsibility for everything locally. LEADER needs to help to build the capacity of the voluntary sector.</li> <li>• Information Provision – people still</li> </ul>

<p>everyday life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty due to welfare dependency.</li> <li>• Lack of transport provision in rural areas</li> <li>• Lack of motivation to move beyond social welfare dependency. No experience of positive work environment.</li> <li>• Access difficulties for people with disabilities.</li> <li>• Challenges facing non-national community to settle and find employment and cultural understandings of community development.</li> <li>• Existing Community Development Supports over-burdened and poorly resourced, unable to provide support required for those who are socially excluded.</li> <li>• Time pressure on people who are in employment to give time to community development activities.</li> <li>• Criminality and social issues affecting peoples quality of life – desire to keep to themselves.</li> <li>• Lack of opportunities for older men (45-60years) to attend training or employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Rural Villages closing down.</li> <li>• Elderly need support to live in their own home.</li> <li>• Fragmented services, people don't know who is doing what.</li> <li>• Housing – limited supply, anti-social behaviour in urban housing estates.</li> </ul>	<p>seem un-aware of what is available for them. During the consultation process, people suggested services that are already in operation but better awareness is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make better use of community facilities to improve product offering to people in rural areas.</li> </ul>
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Under the sub-theme of **Rural Youth**, the following issues were identified:-

<b>THE ISSUES</b>	<b>THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL</b>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrying of psychological wounds from past / current experiences in their lives</li> <li>• Lack of positive role models in their lives</li> <li>• Lack of confidence to make positive choices, easier to do what everyone else does</li> <li>• Poverty, low income households leads to struggles</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Underage drinking / drugs</li> <li>• Over-dependence on social media for entertainment, sedentary lifestyle.</li> <li>• Dis-engagement of parents from teenagers, leaving them to make their own choices.</li> <li>• Poor life skills, un-able to manage basic household tasks, money management, cookery etc.</li> <li>• Families can't afford to send young people to third level</li> <li>• Cultural pressure to leave school early</li> <li>• Rural youth suffer from lack of transport to avail of recreational, learning opportunities</li> <li>• Limited availability of youth projects in rural areas</li> <li>• Youth Unemployment high – 580 people under 25 on Live Register</li> <li>• Impression that work is not worthwhile, low motivation. Lack of apparent jobs is not an incentive to take part in training.</li> <li>• Cycles of disadvantage continuing as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to “fix” parents first, so they can help their children.</li> <li>• Expand their view of the world, as their narrow range of experience restricts life choices and opportunities</li> <li>• Withdrawal of Youth Reach from Granard – need for youth café there.</li> <li>• More support for the voluntary sector to take on responsibility for everything locally. LEADER needs to help to build the capacity of the voluntary sector.</li> <li>• Information Provision – people still seem un-aware of what is available for them. During the consultation process, people suggested services that are already in operation but better awareness is required.</li> <li>• Make better use of community facilities to improve product offering to people in rural areas.</li> </ul>
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<p>people don't see any other choices in their lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The general economic environment has an effect on young people, they notice the derelict shops, houses and closed businesses and it has an effect on their overall view of opportunity.</li> </ul>	
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### Theme 3: Rural Environment

In respect of **Theme 3–Rural Environment**, the following issues were identified in respect of barriers for the Rural Environment.

THE ISSUES	THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Awareness.</li> <li>• Information and Training are required.</li> <li>• Pollution from various sources into our water systems.</li> <li>• Illegal Dumping.</li> <li>• Loss of habitats due to poor environmental practices.</li> <li>• Invasive Species.</li> <li>• Conflict with Amenities causing damage to environment.</li> <li>• Loss of pollinators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to show communities how to harvest water for re-use properly.</li> <li>• Need to develop renewable energy sector.</li> <li>• Research is required to identify which types of renewable energy are most suited to County Longford.</li> <li>• Need to generate interest in this sector and target community organisations that are having an impact on the environment.</li> <li>• Opportunity to develop County Longford as a Centre of Environmental Excellence.</li> </ul>



This Local Development Strategy has been compiled by Longford Community Resources Ltd, Longford Local Community Development Committee and Longford County Council. It represents a programme of work to be completed under the Rural Development Programme in County Longford up to 2020. The Rural Development Programme is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union.



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