

**Minutes of Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee Meeting
held on Friday 27th March, 2026, held in the Council Chamber, County Hall
at 10.30a.m.**

- In attendance:** Mary Mescal, PPN (Chair)
Angela Hayes, Teac Tom
Paul O' Rahilly, PPN Social Inclusion
Cllr. Mick McCarthy, KCC
Kevin Mahon, KLP
Mary Harding, PPN Social Inclusion
- Present:** Anne Marie Shortall, Chief Officer LCDC, Teresa Mahon, Kelley
Murphy and Cora Nolan Kilkenny County Council.
- Online:** Aileen McGrath, Local Enterprise Office
Derval Howley, HSE
Cllr. Ger Frisby, KCC
Cllr. Michael Doyle, KCC
John Hurley, Chamber of Commerce

1. Administrative

- Apologies:** Lar Power, Chief Executive
Michael A Fitzgerald, Teagasc
Martha Bolger, KCETB
Martin Rochford, PPN – Environment
Olive Maher, FRC

Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of LCDC meeting held on Friday 30th January, 2026.

Proposed by Derval Howley, Seconded by Aileen McGrath.

Matters Arising

None.

Any Conflicts of Interest

Mary Mescal and Angela Hayes will leave during the discussion of the Local Enhancement Grant recommendations.

2. Oversight and implementation of the Local and Economic Community Plan

Martin Rafter, Kilkenny Leader Partnership, delivered a presentation on the SICAP Annual Plan 2026.

Martin Rafter presented the SICAP Programme 2024-2028 with the overarching goal of reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion and equality by supporting communities and individuals.

Martin outlined the target groups, key performance indicators, local priority target groups, and defined thematic focus areas. He also clarified the objectives and actions for SICAP Goals 1 and 2 for 2026. Additionally, SICAP has significantly contributed to supporting IPAs in county Kilkenny.

Martin concluded his presentation by outlining the total budget for the 2026 programme is €1,015,336, with New Arrivals budget allocation of €140,152, and SICAP allocation of €875,184.

Mary Mescal and Anne Marie Shortall expressed their appreciation to Martin for his comprehensive presentation. Derval Howley also acknowledged and praised Martin for the exemplary work and adaptability within the SICAP programme.

Update on Review and Monitoring of LECP Implementation Plan 2025-2026

Anne Marie informed the members that a new online platform will be available to carry out the monitoring and review of the Implementation Plan for the LECP. There will be engagement with all stakeholders and agencies about the new platform. When all stakeholders and lead agencies have provided feedback, a report will be presented to the LCDC members.

3. Items for Discussion and Decision LCDC Annual Report 2025

The statutory Annual Report had been circulated with the Agenda. The approval of the Annual Report was proposed by Angela Hayes and seconded by Aileen McGrath.

Recommendation from SICAP subgroup re End of Year 2025

Teresa Mahon gave an update on SICAP End of Year report for 2025. Teresa outlined that all required documentation was successfully uploaded to carry out the review. The report provides substantial evidence that KLP are delivering the programme under the 3 target groups and exceeding expectations. The case study for 2025 was on Kilkenny's One Parent community which is referenced throughout the report. The subgroup met with KLP in February, 2026 to carry out a review which was satisfactory to all members of the sub-group. Pobal and the SICAP subgroup recommended approval of the End of Year Report 2025.

The approval of the SICAP End of Year Report for 2025 was proposed by Derval Howley and seconded by Mary Harding.

Review and sign off SICAP Annual Plan 2026

Teresa gave a summary report of the Annual Plan for 2026 which was also covered under Martin Rafter's presentation. Teresa informed the members that Pobal and the SICAP subgroup have carried out a review and recommend that the plan be approved.

The SICAP Annual Plan for 2026 was proposed by Angela Hayes, and seconded by Aileen McGrath.

Local Enhancement Grant 2026

Anne Marie Shortall advised the members of the total grant funding allocated for the LEP grant of €170,519 with a total of 116 applications were received. There were 11 applications deemed ineligible and were redirected to more appropriate sources of funding. The total amount of funding requested was over €338,000 which demonstrates the high level of interest and how the scheme was oversubscribed. The LEP subgroup convened on the 19th of March, 2026 to review all applications and formulate recommendations. Assessments were based on criteria such as levels of deprivation for disadvantaged communities, overall benefits to the community along with alignment to the LECP's key priorities, goals and objectives.

Anne Marie gave a summary and outlined how some of the funding was allocated across the various groups ensuring a consistent approach was maintained. There was a total of 105 groups recommended to be allocated LEP grant funding. Community groups will be informed of the allocations approved when final approval has been received from the Department. The grant will not be paid out in advance and all invoices and receipts must be dated after the approval date.

This is in line with the guidelines circulated from the DRCD.

Mary Mescal, Paul O' Rahilly and Angela Hayes left the meeting.

The list of recommendations were circulated to the remaining committee members.

The LEP grant allocations were proposed in accordance with the recommendation by Cllr. Mick McCarthy and seconded by Mary Harding.

4. PPN Report

Mary Harding presented the PPN Report to the members.

5. Items for Information and Information Sharing CLÁR

Anne Marie informed the members on the CLÁR funding. On 10th March 2026, Minister Calleary announced the expansion of areas eligible for CLÁR funding and officially launched the CLÁR 2026 programme.

CLÁR is a targeted investment initiative aimed at supporting small infrastructural projects in designated rural areas experiencing significant depopulation, social-economic challenges, or geographic remoteness.

As part of the 2025 Programme for Government, a comprehensive review of eligible CLÁR areas was undertaken. The review has now been completed, resulting in the addition of the following areas to the 2026 targeted programme: Goresbridge, Castlecomer, Ballyragget, Johnstown, Urlingford, and Freshford. Kilkenny County Council can now submit 14 applications for CLÁR funding – two applications up to the value of €100,000 and twelve applications ranging from €5,000 to €65,000.

Kilkenny County Council has advertised the scheme for Expressions of Interest from the designated areas.

Anne Marie informed the members of the Commercial Premises Paint Scheme for 2026. A funding allocation has been designated to support the costs associated with painting the front façades of commercial and business premises, as well as hand-painted shop signage within Kilkenny County and City, subject to the scheme's terms and conditions.

Application Forms and further particulars may be downloaded from www.kilkennycoco.ie or alternatively contact the relevant Municipal District Office.

Anne Marie provided information on the Community Centre Investment Fund Grant which is advertised by the Department. The Community team will be available to assist any community group requiring guidance with the application process.

Also, for information purposes Healthy Kilkenny will be launching a grant scheme in the coming weeks to support projects for older adults. The grants will be approved by the Healthy Kilkenny committee members.

Derval Howley advised the members that she will share a link regarding the Department of Health's current public consultation on the new Healthy Ireland Framework where they are encouraging organisations and their networks to provide their input to help shape the future direction of health and wellbeing policy in Ireland.

Kelley Murphy provided an update on the KTCM-CDP Project. The End of Year Report for 2025 has been submitted to the Department and is currently awaiting their feedback. The Annual Plan for 2026 has also been submitted for approval and it is intended that both documents will be presented at the May LCDC meeting.

6. AOB

Anne Marie raised the matter of ensuring that the LCDC adheres the quorum requirements for the LCDC meetings in accordance with the guidelines and standing orders.

There are currently three vacant seats on the LCDC Committee due to be filled representing the PPN, the IFA and the FRC. The LCDC support team will continue to seek nominations for these seats.

Anne Marie requested that members give adequate notice if unavailable to attend the statutory meetings as if attendance is insufficient or does not meet the quorum, it may be necessary to reschedule the meeting.

7. Date for Next Meeting

Friday 29th May, 2026.

Chair

Date