



**Kilkenny
Local Community
Development Committee**

Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

Report on Public Consultation Phase and submissions received on the proposed Local Economic and Community Plan (June 10 to June 30, 2015)

July 10, 2015

Report on submissions received and Municipal District consultations, following period of public consultation on the Draft Economic and Community statements.

Introduction

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) is an integrated plan comprising economic and community elements. The LECP sets out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Kilkenny, in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

The first phase in the preparation of the LECP involved:

1. the SPC for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism (SPC1) of Kilkenny County Council drafting an Economic statement and high level goals to address the issues arising; and
2. The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) drafting a Community statement and high level goals to address the key issues arising. In particular the community elements of the LECP must have regard to:
 - Promoting and mainstreaming equality
 - Developing and implementing sustainable objectives
 - Maximizing returns from available resources and reduce duplication
 - Ensure meaningful participation by communities in the planning process, and consultation and engagement with communities generally
 - Utilising community development principles in the LECP development process specifically and the work of the LCDC's generally
 - Set the local context for mainstream funding programmes such as local development and social inclusion programmes, community services programmes etc

A joint workshop was held between the LCDC and SPC1, on May 27th, 2015 to consider the respective statements and corresponding goals. Both committees signed off on the draft economic and community statements, along with the 13 High level goals.

Public Consultation

The Public Consultation ran from 10th June to 30th June 2014 inclusive. An editorial on the process and public notice in relation to the public consultation was placed in the Kilkenny People newspaper on 10th June. Hard copies of the draft statements were made available in all of the library branches throughout the County. An information leaflet explaining the process was produced with the assistance of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA). The information leaflet was widely distributed including to all 184 groups registered with the

Public Participation Network (PPN). Submissions were invited by email, in writing and online at consult.kilkenny.ie. A series of 3 Municipal District public meetings were held as follows:

- Castlecomer on 23rd of June,
- Piltown on the 25th June and
- Kilkenny City on the 29th of June.

The public consultation aimed to focus the submissions on the priority high level goals set out by the SPC and the LCDC in their respective statements. The 13 high level goals identified are listed below:

The SPC has developed 9 main economic goals as follows:

- Goal 1: Support for Enterprise Economy
- Goal 2: Facilitate Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Goal 3: Enhance the Visitor Experience
- Goal 4: Provide for Enhanced Education Attainment and Skills Development
- Goal 5: Develop the Rural Economy
- Goal 6: Improve Access and Communication Infrastructure
- Goal 7: Foster Leadership and Local Capacity
- Goal 8: Protect and Utilise the Natural, Built and Cultural Environment
- Goal 9: Contribute to Regional Growth and International Potential

The LCDC has developed 4 main local and community goals as follows:

- Goal 10: Address Area based Poverty and Disadvantage
- Goal 11: Address Poverty and Social Exclusion (targeted app
- Goal 12: Community Development (Facilities, Infrastructure, Area Co-ordination, Community Development Activities and Programmes and Participation)
- Goal 13: Improve Health and Well-being

The following questions were posed to help provide a comprehensive and structured response:

1. What is the current situation in relation to this high level goal?
2. How do you or groups in your area experience this issue?
3. What recommendation will you make in relation to this high level goal?

Summary of submissions received:

Economic Elements

A total of 3 submissions were received in relation to the Economic elements of the Statement and corresponding high level goals: 2 written submissions hand delivered to County Hall, and 1 online submission at consult.kilkenny.ie.

Summary of Main Observations made in the online submissions:

1. The Central Access Scheme will have a negative impact on tourism

Summary of Main Observations made by post and hand delivered submissions:

1. Small wind energy projects should be supported and grant aided by the LCDC.
2. Sports and recreation are not included in the plan.
3. Sports tourism, infrastructure, amenities, sports community should be included in the plan.

Local and Community Elements

A total of 14 submissions were received in relation to the Local and Community Statement and corresponding high level goals: 5 written submissions hand delivered to Johns Green House, 4 emailed submissions sent to Community@kilkennycoco.ie and 5 online submissions at consult.kilkenny.ie.

Summary of Main Observations made in the online submissions:

1. Omission of priorities identified through community consultation re substance misuse
2. Scrap Central Access Scheme
3. Horse Welfare and a Traveller Horse Project
4. Policy and Planning for Animal Welfare in Co. Kilkenny
5. Overview of relevant plans & strategies - Section 11 - Kilkenny Age-Friendly

Summary of Main Observations made by post and hand delivered submissions:

1. Involvement of Social Inclusion and PPN reps, appointment of PPN reps to committees, new approach to rates
2. Appointment of PPN reps to SPC 1 & LCDC, availability of minutes of SPC's & LCDC, public notice of meetings online
3. Support of proposed development of games wall, tennis & basketball courts in Thomastown
4. SERDATF integration with LCDC

5. Inclusion of Travellers and participation of Travellers on decision making bodies

Summary of Main Observations made by Email submissions:

1. Omission of priorities identified through community consultation re substance misuse
2. Recognition of community development, community development principles and effective engagement approaches for socially excluded groups in the county as a priority
3. Exclusion of sport in draft goals
4. Gender balance and the under-representation of women at local government level

Summary of Public Consultations at Municipal District Meetings:

Castlecomer Consultation on 23rd of June was attended by 16 people. The following priorities were identified under the 13 high level goals:

Goal 1 Support Enterprise Economy

- Broadband
- Broadband very bad
- No chemist open on Sundays
- More work needed to take advantage of big companies like Glanbia, J.S. Mullins, and Mullins.
- Forestry
- Health centre for every 100 houses

Strong preferences for:

- Attracting Talent and Investment
- Business Development Zones
- Retail Excellence

Goal 2 Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Encourage back some of the talent that we have exported
- No Jobs
- People do not want to live here
- How can you attract talent & investment
- Need a focused group to promote new industry and expand existing industries

Strong preferences for:

- Enterprise Start-Up and Growth
- Funding Access
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Goal 3 Visitor/Tourist Destination Experience

- More protection of built heritage
- Image of town very depressed
- More signs in rural villages

Strong preferences for:

- Consolidated Branding

Goal 4 Education and Skills

- 3rd level for Kilkenny
- Transport links to 3rd level
- More funding required for skill based qualifications
- Tap into local industry to train local people

Strong preferences for:

- Training, Education and Enterprise Links
- Skills Marketing

Goal 5 Rural Economy

- Are there any development roles in Castlecomer
- Find uses for dormant industrial plants

Strong preferences for:

- Agricultural Sector

Goal 6 Access and Communications

- Broadband in Coon
- High-speed broadband needed all over the country
- Broadband needed in rural areas not only towns
- High speed in Ballyfoyle

Strong preferences for:

- Transport Modes
- Broadband Infrastructure

Goal 7 Leadership and Capacity

Goal 8 Natural, Built & Cultural Environment

Goal 9 Regional Growth

Goal 10: Area based poverty and disadvantage

- High level of unemployment in the area- needs action as a matter of priority
- Youth unemployment highlighted

Goal 11: Poverty and Social Inclusion

- Isolation of community members is an issue
- Violence, drugs and criminality are issues in the area

Goal 12: Community Development

- Local leader (s) needed
- Coordination at Municipal District prioritised
- More public lighting in rural villages
- More activity and investment from the business community needed
- Rural transport is a priority area for action

Goal 13: Health & Well being

- Substance misuses and drugs are a problem for the area
- Suicide and mental health were prioritised for action
- local dentist

Piltown Consultation on 25th of June was attended by 8 people. The following priorities were identified under the 13 high level goals:

Goal 1 Support Enterprise Economy

- Renewable energy Opportunities
- Smaller plans for villages
- Approach to village – Glenmore 3 approach roads, only 1 place name sign
- Encourage shop owners to keep the old look – perhaps a grant scheme

Goal 2 Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Promotion of grants- telling people what's available
- Funding supports / Workshops
- Outline types of supports available to small businesses
- Audit of types of supports needed

Goal 3 Visitor/Tourist Destination Experience

- Prioritise rural tourism in the south of the county
- Views in the South untapped
- Organise bus tours around the county
- Broaden the Tourism Board to reflect rural aspect of the county
- Look at local potential and develop & drive local projects – local animators to support local ideas
- Regional clustering & routers that can be developed through inter-county co-operations.
- Eigse Slieverue – going since 1978
- South Kilkenny Historical society
- Place to have guides & photos and encourage locals to help tourists take photos
- Bus tours to visit club matches and GAA fields
- Interesting locations: Tory hill, Clonassey waterfall, Arrigle Valley, St.Molings well, Portnascully, Licketstown

Goal 4 Education and Skills

- 3rd level university for the South East
- Facility for people coming through 3rd level to guide them as to how to set up a business or go with an idea that they have.

Goal 5 Rural Economy

- People are getting out of farming; Big farmers are taking over; not competitive for small & medium farmers
- Designate South of the county as disadvantaged
- Preserve farming as much as possible

Goal 6 Access and Communications

- Communication through parish bulletins / newsletters
- Rent a bike, locally or city based.

Goal 7 Leadership and Capacity

Goal 8 Natural, Built & Cultural Environment

- Opportunity of Knockroe – potential to be developed as a passage tomb

Goal 9 Regional Growth

Goal 10: Area based poverty and disadvantage

- Link low education attainment, unemployment to both 2nd level and 3rd level providers
- School retention programmes are a priority
- High levels of young people leaving the county
- Pre-school supports should be enhanced in areas of high deprivation
- Communities need to be supported to respond to the poverty, social exclusion issues in the areas

- Increase supports for young people who leave school early
- Training skills development programmes should be driven at local level with an interagency approach and SICAP supports

Goal 11: Poverty and Social Inclusion

- A range of agencies need to come together to respond to the range of complex issues that lone parents experience
- More explicit goals are needed for public consultation
- Use social media to engage socially excluded groups and socially excluded areas
- Isolation of ethnic minorities -Bring a sense of home to people by creating more events like The Gathering

Goal 12: Community Development

- A consultation process that looks at more longitudinal constant engagement is needed
- Include Community Empowerment, social enterprise enhancing opportunities as agents of change rather than clients
- Developing a local community identity – communal identity – schools can often create this
- Mooncoin is an example of a disconnected community
- Dormant villages- everything happens outside the village for people living there – little connections
- Cooperative types of facilities and services should be developed
- Lack of a sense of community, fragmented- drug misuse is an outcome of lack of community well-being
- Leadership at community level – crucial
- Community development/capacity building to identify and support community leaders
- The sheer scale of size is a challenge for Municipal Districts

Goal 13: Health & Well being

- Obesity approaches are needed for the general population – and enhanced positive strategies/positive approaches that inspire healthy lifestyles
- Health & well-being of everyone – through schools and communities

Kilkenny City East and West Consultation on 29th of June was attended by 9 people. The following priorities were identified under the 13 high level goals:

Goal 1 Support Enterprise Economy

- Start up incubators – have the Council the resources?
- Establish enterprise ambassador programme
- Brain drain – emigration, both local & international
- Lack of 3rd/4th level education
- Job creation to match skills base in Kilkenny
- 3rd level students emigrating to other countries, income spend, Transport, accommodation, etc.
- Replicate Bridge Street (Callan) project
- Lack of accommodation for jobs & study
- Focus on traditional skills – Shoe making, stone, carpentry
- Focus on empty shop fronts/ live over shops – Free space for creative people.
- Incentivise shop front signage
- Reskill painters, craft & workers,
- Penalise inappropriate signage

Strong preferences for:

- Start up incubators
- Match jobs to skill set in Kilkenny
- Traditional skills

Goal 2 Innovation & Entrepreneurship

- Incubation units for Kilkenny towns
- Work with what's already there – shops, links, small producers

Goal 3 Visitor/Tourist Destination Experience

- For festivals / events - council to invest in a moveable stage / PA system
- Rural festivals – European networking & co-ordination
- More tours to not just focus on buildings also lanes around them, linking medieval, is it already done?
- Promote Butler trail linking KK castle with Butler sites across Kilkenny.

Strong preferences for:

- Festivals

Goal 4 Education and Skills

- Agency needs to network more with communities
- Communications with agency
- University of south east
- Rather than linking with universities outside Kilkenny, invest in one for Kilkenny which will be a pull factor & keep people in Kilkenny
- Waterford / Wexford ETB & Local training initiative- structures should be clarified

Strong preferences for:

- Agencies working with communities
- University for the South East
- ETB & training schemes

Goal 5 Rural Economy

- Rural post offices - future role, expansion of services, hubs for LA services
- Crop production – short rotation coppice, wood fuel
- Interact with semi-states
- LA relationship with semi-states,
- Supporting rural economy
- Local produce markets established
- Small producers must be supported

Strong preferences for:

- Supporting the rural economy
- Local produce markets

Goal 6 Access and Communications

- Bus service for the city linking outskirts to city centre
- A bus service connected to rural park and ride
- Develop a linked county & city bus service
- Bike share scheme linking towns around Kilkenny, organised centrally
- Ring a link took from rural areas leading to isolation with elderly etc
- Lack of transport for families
- City needs to go greener – more pedestrian areas and streets.

- Outer ring road in Kilkenny needs to be prioritised to remove HGV's from city
- Lack of broadband to the rural area

Strong preferences for:

- City & County bus service

Goal 7 Leadership and Capacity

- Follow up with new business, building staff support
- More education on what the council does and how people old and young can have their voice heard
- Needing longer to develop plans
- Ongoing support / links between social protection, enterprise board and client
- Recycle leadership!!! A system to recall people that are deadwood

Strong preferences for:

- Interagency support and co-ordination

Goal 8 Natural, Built & Cultural Environment

- Procurement policies that favour local suppliers, materials and services
- Energy target beyond 2020, EU partnerships, Energy cities,
- Ongoing links with communities rural / city groups
- Brewery site - High potential for universities and education also social pedestrian space
- Set up 'green economy scheme' which focuses on businesses going greener
- Development should compliment rather than distract from existing commercial core

Strong preferences for:

- Local procurement
- Brewery Site

Goal 9 Regional Growth

- Focus on rivers / river tourism

- Should use river Nore for tourism
- 3rd level in Kilkenny on various subjects identified by groups
- Keep people in Kilkenny by investing in universities – people spend their money in Kilkenny rather than elsewhere.
- Greater use and promotion of Waterford airport.

Strong preferences for:

- River tourism
- 3rd level in Kilkenny
- Waterford Airport

Goal 10: Area based poverty and disadvantage

- Small research centres in each area - employment

Goal 11: Poverty and Social Inclusion

- Carers and recognition of carers
- Reference and implementation of the Carers Strategy 2012
- Programmes for ethnic minorities
- Older people and rural isolation
- Lack of transport in city and county to essential services
- Transport for older people – linking city and county
- Increased funding for community based youth groups/programmes
- More access for people with disabilities- accessibility audit
- Cultural centre for intergenerational skills exchange

Goal 12: Community Development

- Greener transport
- Electric train
- Linking smaller towns to city
- Transport between service providers is restrictive
- Sports facility such as sandpit for volley ball handball in the City – particularly for ethnic minorities
- Support networks across communities
- Facilities/Services online- interactive services
- Training must be provided for people to engage effectively
- Communities are busy keeping their own area going- too busy for networking – and don't have time, get ideas from other for novel ways of fundraising

Goal 13: Health & Well being

- School programmes similar to SPHE to tackle issues with young people
- Increase programmes for all age groups – KRSP programmes
- Support community Champions
- Roll out Traveler Culture awareness training and intercultural awareness training to all service providers
- Mental health Drop-in centre
- Not enough promotion of mental health as opposed to illness – promoting resilience, social connections, staying active, seeking help and supporting each other
- Still a huge stigma around mental wellbeing and illness
- Respect issues for carers and patients

Conclusions:

Overall the public consultation process proved successful in that the feedback/submissions received did not indicate that there are any major gaps in or variances to be made to the statements of the high level goals. The general consensus is that the statements and the high level goals capture all of the major issues and priorities for local people, groups and agencies.

Recurring themes that were highlighted will be considered in the development of the more specific priority actions during the next stage of the LECP process.

Themes that featured significantly across the consultation approaches in relation to the economic elements include: -

- Tourism opportunities and expansion of tourism countywide
- Rural economy supports keeping people working in rural areas
- Brewery Site - opportunities for the county
- 3rd level education needed in the city and links with ITC & WIT
- Broadband needed in rural areas outside of towns
- Transport – Bus Services in rural towns, connecting the city and around the city.

Themes that featured significantly across the consultation approaches in relation to the local and community elements include:

- Capacity building and supporting community leaders and coordination mechanisms within the county and with the municipal districts
- Defining and ensuing best practice in relation to community development within the county
- Developing local responses to disengaged youth
- Developing actions to address high level of unemployment and youth unemployment
- Addressing isolation of key groups such as older people, ethnic minorities and those living in rural areas generally

- Integrated programmes to address issues for Lone parents, people with mental health issues, carers, young people, Travellers and ethnic minorities

The issues raised at this initial stage in the LECP process will be considered in more detail and shall inform the development of more specific actions in the next stage of the plan.

July 10, 2015

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