



Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Annual Report 2024

As Adopted by Kilkenny LCDC at its meeting held on 28th March, 2025

Background

Local Community Development Committees (LCDC's) are required, under the provisions of Section 128B of the Local Government Act 2001, to prepare, adopt and submit an annual report to the local authority, no later than the 31st March each year, in respect of the performance of its functions in the previous calendar year. The annual report should be co-ordinated with the preparation of the local authority's annual report and include an outline of Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) activities in the relevant period.

Functions of the LCDC

The LCDC functions set out in the Act are as follows:

- the preparation and adoption of an LECP,
- implementing the community elements of the LECP,
- reviewing the LECP and amending it or amending any element of it,
- monitoring, and reviewing the implementation of the plan on an ongoing basis,
- co-ordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of community development programmes that have been approved by the Council, agreed between the Committee and a public authority and to ensure that any plans or strategies are implemented in accordance with the community elements of the LECP,
- seeking to ensure effectiveness, consistency, co-ordination and avoid duplication between local and community development programmes,
- pursuing the co-ordination of all local community programmes to optimise resources for the benefit of local communities and improve efficiency with which public funded local and community development resources are used,
- to consider and adopt a statement in respect of the economic elements of a draft plan and
- not later than 31st March each year adopt and submit to the Local Authority a report relating to the performance of its functions in the preceding calendar year.

Membership

The membership of the Kilkenny LCDC includes 19 members. In addition, Kilkenny LCDC has 1 associate member i.e. The Health Service Executive. The composition of the LCDC is such that it brings together the expertise and skills of people actively working with local development, community development and economic, cultural and environmental organisations and local authority members, officials and state agencies to implement a joined up, cross sectional approach to local and community development programmes.

Mary Mescal, Ossory Youth, from the Community Pillar of the Public Participation Network was appointed as the Chairperson of Kilkenny LCDC in August 2023 and continues in her role as chair. New members welcomed during the year included, Cllr Michael Doyle. Cllr Stephanie Doheny, Martha Bolger, Mary Harding, Kevin Mahon and Olive Maher.

A full listing of members and their nominating bodies is included in *appendix No 1*.

Role of Chief Officer

The Chief Executive of the Local Authority has a legal obligation to assign staff to assist the LCDC in performing its functions including the assignment of a staff member to the position of Chief Officer.

The Chief Officer has responsibility for carrying out, managing and controlling generally the administration and business of the Committee and for providing ongoing support. In particular, the role envisages the facilitation and promotion of partnership and interagency working, managing membership, being a link and conduit between the LCDC and the Local Enterprise Office and SPC 1 and the Department, providing capacity building interventions, pursuing funding streams and broadening the work of the Committee while also providing advice and guidance and bringing local authority experience to the Committee.

Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer for Community & Culture was assigned the role as Chief Officer in March, 2023.

LCDC Meetings

Meeting are held in-person in the Council Chambers with the added option of hybrid meetings via Microsoft Teams. The LCDC met on six occasions in 2024.

Engagement with Stakeholders.

It is the policy of the LCDC to meet with Local Economic and Community Plan implementing partners in connection with their LECP actions and to consider issues of mutual concern. During 2024 the LCDC heard presentations from:

- Community Development Programme- Kilkenny Traveller Community movement KTCM
- LECP Actions Update – Chief Officer & SEO Local Enterprise Office
- Healthy Ireland – Healthy Kilkenny Coordinator
- Kilkenny One Parent Families – Programme Coordinator
- Health needs Analysis of the Eastern Environs, Kilkenny – Aoife Dowling Health Researcher

Local Economic and Community Plan. (LECP)

The second Local Economic and Community Plan was completed in 2023. The development of the plan was lead by the members of the Local Community Development Committee and the Strategic Policy Committee for Economic Development, Enterprise Support & Tourism, Planning & Development Policy SPC. The Plan covers the period 2023 to 2028 and was accompanied by the initial 2 year implementation plan 2023 -2024 that includes 136 actions.

Currently the plan contains ten High Level Goals which form the framework for the plan and are structured around the twin pillars of economic and community but are cross cutting and also include the overarching commitment towards climate action. They give us the tools to co-ordinate existing public funds to maximise their impact and to attract complementary funding from the public and private sectors.

The Implementation Plan for the LECP was reviewed and monitored mid-term and end of term with findings presented to the LCDC. A new implementation plan for the period 2025 – 2026 is currently at draft stage and due to be finalise.

High Level Goals – LECP Kilkenny 2023 to 2028

High Level Goal 1: To ensure that climate action is embraced, and that our actions and interventions are embedded across all areas of the LECP to contribute positively to the global climate and biodiversity crisis affecting our citizens and support Ireland to achieve its climate and biodiversity goals and obligations.

High Level Goal 2: To build a resilient, sustainable business base and support new and existing businesses to grow, be enterprising and take advantage of new opportunities.

High Level Goal 3: To realise the economic and social value of Kilkenny's built and natural heritage, its cultural reputation and offer, and its growing tourism, creative and cultural sectors.

High Level Goal 4: To ensure our rural economy and communities are supported to develop sustainably.

High Level Goal 5: To increase the number of economically active people in the County by ensuring access to further and higher education infrastructure and to lifelong learning for every working age resident who wants to work to enhance their educational qualifications and achieve the skills required.

High Level Goal 6: To grow the number of third level graduates working in County Kilkenny.

High Level Goal 7: To reduce inequalities and promote and enhance the importance of health and wellbeing.

High Level Goal 8: To reduce the number of people living in deprivation and promote community development, climate justice, diversity and social inclusion.

High Level Goal 9: To develop increased local capacity and improve targeting of social investment through increased engagement and participation with local community groups that will deliver improved community facilities, supports and services.

High Level Goal 10: To maintain the provision of appropriate community supports and services for new and existing housing developments.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. (SICAP)



Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDCs) is the Contracting Authority for SICAP in County Kilkenny. Kilkenny LCDC is the key decision-maker in terms of annual planning, monitoring and oversight of SICAP services in County Kilkenny.

SICAP Sub-Group

Kilkenny LCDC has appointed a SICAP sub-group to undertake the role of annual planning, monitoring and oversight of SICAP services in County Kilkenny. This group makes recommendations with regards SICAP to the LCDC.

The SICAP subgroup is made up of the Chief Officer of the LCDC, a Representative from the Family Resource Centre Programme locally, the Department of Employment and Social Protection and the Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board. Kilkenny County Council Community section staff support the subgroup.

The Subgroup met three times during 2024

- January 2024, to undertake and agree the SICAP annual Plan
- April 2024, to set the Local Priority Target Groups
- June 2024, to undertake the Mid-Year Review and for the Setting of the Key performance indicators for 2025.

The End of year programme evaluation of the 2024 SICAP plan has taken place, notable findings include:

- Over achievement of KPI 1 (working with groups) by 55%
- Over achievement of KPI 2 (working with Individuals) by 7%

Targets and Actuals

KPI 1 (COs) Target	🔒 29	KPI 2 (Individuals) Target	🔒 538
KPI 1 (COs) Actuals	🔒 45	KPI 2 (Individuals) Actuals	🔒 574

Kilkenny County Council

Kilkenny County Council supports the LCDC in managing the programme and provides administrative supports. It also has a role in relation to reviewing and enforcing the obligations of the Programme Implementer.

County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership

Programme Implementer (PIs) deliver SICAP at a local level as per their annual plan. The PI report to the LCDC on the progress in carrying out the actions contained in the plan. Kilkenny LEADER Partnership tendered for and were awarded the implementation of the new SICAP programme 2024-2028 for county. Kilkenny on the 13th of December 2023.

Target Groups

SICAP supports a range of groups in society which are disadvantaged and marginalised and unable or unlikely to access mainstream supports. Pre-defined target groups have been set for SICAP and these have been selected based on the current socioeconomic context, the level of need in society and government priorities.

Purpose

SICAP's aim is to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration. It has two high level goals:

1. **Goal 1: Supporting Communities**

To support communities and target groups to engage with relevant stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues, developing the capacity of Local Community Groups, and creating more sustainable communities.

2. **Goal 2: Supporting Individuals**

To support disadvantaged individuals to improve the quality of their lives through the provision of lifelong learning and labour market supports.

Target groups of SICAP programme

The Beneficiaries of the SICAP programme must cover the target groups listed below:-

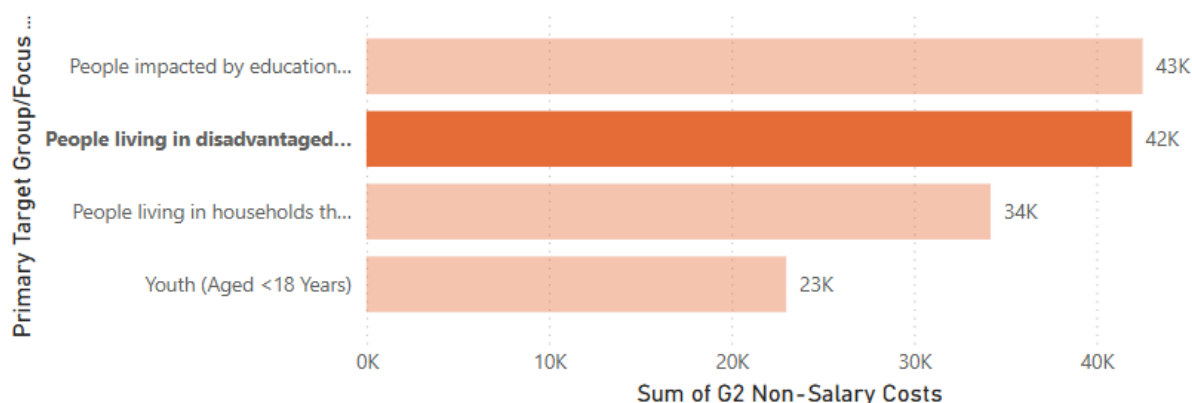
Target Group
People living in communities impacted by disadvantage
People impacted by educational disadvantage
People living in jobless households or households where the primary income source is low-paid and/or precarious
People who are long-term unemployed
People with a criminal history
Refugees
International Protection Applicants
People with Disabilities
Heads of One-parent Families
Travellers
Roma

Local Priority Target Groups

The LCDC set 3 local priority target groups from the list above where the PI should concentrate actions in the local area.

1. People living in disadvantaged communities namely Newpark Close, Hebron Park Butts Green, Urlingford, Johnstown and Ferrybank
2. People living in jobless households or households where the primary income source is low paid and/or precarious
3. International Protection Applicants

Breakdown of total non-salary costs per priority target group



Funding

SICAP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with co-funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning. In 2024 the SICAP programme was awarded €1,012,376.15.

This comprised of

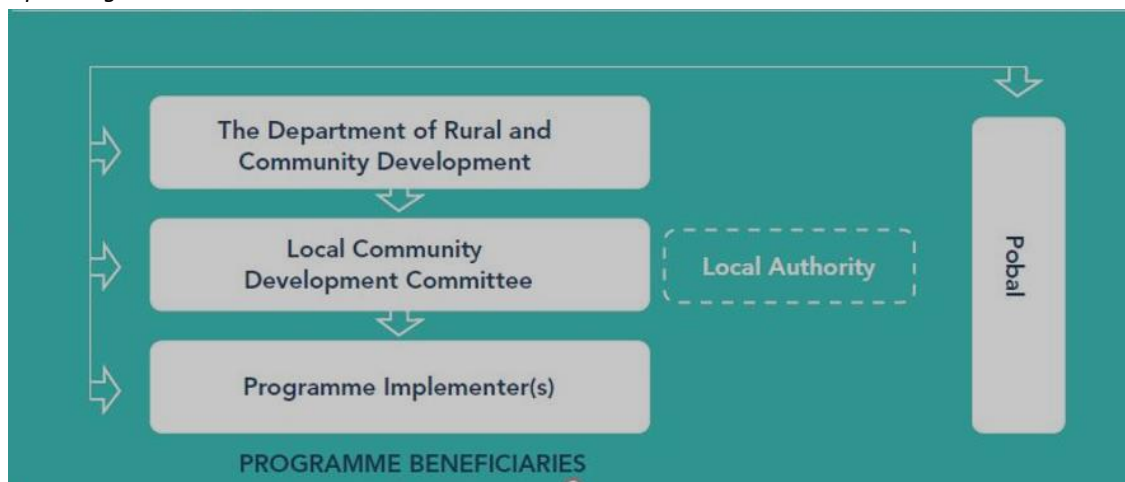
- SICAP Budget - €823,235
- New Arrivals - €140,152
- Additional New Arrivals funding of €35,000 in May and €13,989 in July.

Delivery Structure

The SICAP programme is managed locally by Kilkenny Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) with support from Kilkenny County Council. It is delivered on the ground by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership. Pobal acts as the agent of the Department of Rural and Community Development with respect to national management and oversight of the programme.

Nationally SICAP is delivered through the framework for local development.

Operating Structures



The Department of Rural and Community Development

The Department is the lead and funding department for SICAP, including in respect of ESF co-funding and the YEI special allocation. The Department channels funding directly to LCDCs.

Pobal

Pobal provides a national oversight role in respect of the SICAP programmatic and operational requirements and provides the Department with regular county, regional and national programme progress reports.

Public Participation Network (PPN)

Kilkenny LCDC membership includes 3 Social Inclusion Representatives, 1 environmental and 2 community representatives from the PPN. The PPN have held the chair of the LCDC since its inception. The PPN increased its membership in 2024 to 457 member groups, of which 446 are full members and 11 associate members.

Groups registered within each pillar:

Social Inclusion	86
Community	340
Environment	31

Notable achievements of the PPN in 2024

- Kilkenny PPN held two Plenaries in 2024, one on the 29th of May and one on the 27th of November. The Spring/Summer Plenary/Community Expo in May celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the PPN. Both events were very well attended with great engagement from many groups under each 3 pillars.
- Kilkenny PPN developed its first PPN Strategic Plan. Consultations with members and other stakeholders took place over the summer months. The strategy will guide the priorities, vision and work plans of PPN over the next 5 years and ensure that the voices of all member groups are heard and its influence will be increased in policy decisions at Local Government level.
- Kilkenny PPN facilitated a consultation of the Social Inclusion working group on the new Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy and worked collaboratively with Carlow Kilkenny ETB to provide an information webinar for its members on the Adult for All Literacy programme.
- Kilkenny PPN made a comprehensive submission to the new proposed SPC Scheme and filled all the PPN Social Inclusion, Environmental and Community & Voluntary seats on the Strategic Policy Committees 2024 – 2029.
- Kilkenny PPN together with Kilkenny County Council supported 2024 Street Feast, Ireland's National day of Community Celebrations to promote social inclusion, tackle loneliness and build supportive and resilient neighbourhoods across Kilkenny and Ireland. In total 22 feasts were held in Kilkenny County Council with an estimated number of 2,178 neighbours brought together.
- Kilkenny PPN undertook a series of practical online training webinars to support Social Enterprises in County Kilkenny around Building your own Business Plan, Good governance, Digital Innovation and Financial Planning & Management.



Kilkenny PPN in collaboration with Kilkenny County Council and the Biodiversity Officer supported community groups and individuals in County Kilkenny with training on climate action and biodiversity and encouraged these groups to apply for funding under the Community Climate Action Fund.

Local Enhancement Programme Funding (LEP)

The Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area. It provides funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities targeted towards disadvantaged areas as identified in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

Kilkenny were awarded Capital funding of €151,822.82 total amount comprises of €126,519.02 capital funding for the LEP to use towards carrying out necessary repairs and improvements to facilities, energy efficiency type projects and purchase of equipment. €25,303.80 capital funding ring-fenced for Women's Groups.

99 applications were received with a total amount requested of €377,603.64

11 applications for Women's Groups

23 applications for small grants up to €1,000

59 medium grants up to €5,000

6 applications for large grants up to €10,000

It was set out in the application process that a maximum of 2 large grants would be considered.

The Subgroup met on 19th March, 2024 to assess the applications. Applications were assessed using a set of criteria including

- Previous Funding received
- Community impact
- Other funding sources available
- Area of deprivation

11 Women's groups that applied received funding

21 small grants were recommended for approval

43 Medium Grants were recommended for approval

2 large grants were recommended for approval.



Under the Local Enhancement Programme Funding the Tullahought Community Development Ltd was awarded the sum of €3,000 to power wash and paint exterior of the parish hall.

Healthy Ireland Funding 2023-2025

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. The Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025. In 2023, The Minister for Public Health, Wellbeing and the National Drugs Strategy, Hildegard Naughton, announced the allocation of Healthy Ireland funding to each of the 31 Local Authorities for a three-year period 2023 – 2025. Following local consultation, Kilkenny LCDC agreed two Health Outcomes for the 3 year period from the National Healthy Ireland Framework; increase in physical activity levels and improved self-reported health status. Through partnership working, the Healthy Ireland funding (€75,000/year) supports initiatives targeted at a diverse range of groups and populations including; Adolescents and Young People, One-Parent Families, People living with a Disability, Travellers and Disadvantage Areas in Kilkenny.

Healthy Kilkenny Health Outcomes

Physical Activity

In 2024, The Healthy Ireland funding and partner agencies supported key target groups and communities to increase their physical activity levels and aiming to achieve the national physical activity guidelines. Some areas of Healthy Ireland initiatives in 2024 included:

- **Kilkenny Recreation & Sports Partnership** implemented programmes for children, young people and adults with additional needs including supported swimming lessons, adapted physical activity programmes, adapted cycling and multi-activities in Easter and Summer camps. **Active Travel** in Kilkenny County Council implemented community cycling programmes with over 50 children and young people in Newpark, Callan, St. Johns Senior School and the Butts. The Kilkenny County Council Active Travel Team also installed a community bike bunker into the grounds of Newpark Family Resource Centre providing the wider community and the resource centre with upcycled bikes and safe bike parking facilities.
- **Foroige** provided physical activity programmes (water-sports, yoga, circuits) and equipment in Castlecomer for adolescents and young people. **Ossory Youth** also piloted a “Summit Sisters” hill walking programme for adolescent girls in collaboration with Mountaineering Ireland and Castlecomer Discovery Park
- **Junior Park Run:** Kilkenny Junior Park Run (4-14-year olds) commenced in April this year in Kilkenny Countryside. The Junior park run was jointly-funded by; Healthy Ireland, Kilkenny County Council and Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership. The junior park run is on every Sunday and is made possible by a team of local Park Run volunteers.



Social Farming Placements were also provided for 14 people with additional needs. Farm Placements were provided in Freshford, Callan, Castlewarren and Thomastown

Self-Perceived Health

Self-perceived health is defined as the perception of an individual's health in general. The Healthy Kilkenny programme aims to improve self-reported health in the following target groups: One-Parent Families, Travellers and Disadvantaged Areas.

Key initiatives implemented in 2024 included:

- In collaboration with Kilkenny Leader Partnership and the Social Inclusion Programme the **Kilkenny One-Parent Community** Development Worker organised and hosted a series of events, programmes and family activities for One-Parent Families. These activities also help to build the capacity of '*Kilkenny-One Parent Community*', a network and advisory group of One-Parent Families in Kilkenny. This Network has also developed communication platforms (Website, Social Media, Newsletter) to promote the work of KOPC, promote supports and signposting to local and national services and to provide advice for One-Parent Families.
- **Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement** engaged Traveller Men in a Health and Fitness gym programme and mental health and wellbeing workshops in collaborations with a local Mental Health Charity, Teac Tom. The Traveller Women engaged in some creativity initiatives alongside the Traveller Health projects where topics on Women's Health were delivered
- **Kilkenny County Council** and Kilkenny Leader Partnership supported a multi-stakeholder group who undertook a health analysis in the Eastern Environs of Kilkenny City. The overall objective of the research is to explore the Health Needs of the areas with the aim of responding to identified needs leading to improved health and wellbeing for the communities in the Eastern Environs
- **Social Health Education Project (SHEP)** delivered Facilitator Groupwork training to 17 voluntary and community workers in Kilkenny.
- **Healthy Kilkenny & Healthy Carlow Smoking and Vaping Campaign:** The Not Around Us Campaign is an invitation from young people to consider your activity in spaces where there are children and young people, in order to provide smoke/vape free environments for our young people and to help de-normalise smoking and vaping for the next generation. Kilkenny and Carlow Comhairle na nÓg collaborated with a local artist to design a logo and graphics for local signage, merchandise materials and a consultation Toolkit. The Healthy County Coordinators, CYPSC Coordinators and Health Promotion and Improvement Officers in the HSE worked together to develop a consultation toolkit for all young people that includes an educational piece on the health impact of smoking and vaping. The campaign will be officially launched in Carlow and Kilkenny in 2025.

Other projects the Healthy Kilkenny Programme supported included:

Urban Action for Physical Activity & Cancer Prevention (EU Erasmus+ Co-Funded by the EU Commission):

The UcanACT pilot project is a collaborative initiative involving local authorities, physiotherapists, non-for-profits, and academic institutions involving five EU countries (Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain) over a period of 3 years. Its main goal is to encourage adults and senior citizens to engage in physical activity within public urban green spaces as a tool for cancer prevention. In 2024, Kilkenny County Council recruited over 50 citizens to participate in the UcanACT programme in three local public urban green spaces in Kilkenny City. The programmes were led by our team of local physiotherapists and student

physios from the University of Limerick and local Community Managers. The UcanACT Physical Activity App which was developed by one of the project Partners was piloted alongside the programme to explore if the App influenced physical activity patterns in between the exercise sessions. Kilkenny County Council in collaboration with the project partners also developed a Citizen Engagement Strategy for the pilot project which provided the tools, methodology and actions required for engaging individuals, encouraging participation and sustaining motivation. In 2025, the evaluation of this project across the three pilot areas will be published. Outcome Measures will include pre and post data on; physical activity levels, quality of life, falls risk, sleep, fatigue and qualitative feedback on overall impact of the programme on health and wellbeing and the association of health benefits and exercising in the outdoors in green spaces



UcanACT programme, Castle park, Kilkenny



UcanACT programme, Newpark Fen, Kilkenny

In 2024, Kilkenny County Council received €14,000 to implement the Local Authority **Period Dignity Initiative**. Under this initiative, the provision of free period products was made available in Kilkenny County Council Public Toilet Facilities, Local Parks and Kilkenny County Council Library Services. A local small grant scheme was also made available to Ossory youth, Foroige and Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement.

LCDC Membership at 31st December 2024.

Name of Member	Nominating Body – Public Representation
1. Aileen McGrath	Local Enterprise Office
2. Michael A. Fitzgerald	Teagasc
3. Martha Bolger	Education Training Board
4. Lar Power	Kilkenny County Council (Vice Chair)
5. Julieanne Power	Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
6. Derval Howley	HSE - Associate member
7. Michael Doyle	Elected Representative
8. Michael McCarthy	Elected Representative
9. Gerard Frisby	Elected Representative
10. Stephanie Doheny	Elected Representative
Name of Member	Nominating Group - Private Representation
11. Michael Walshe	PPN Comm & Voluntary
12. Mary Mescal	PPN-Comm & Voluntary (Chairperson)
13. Angela Hayes	PPN-Social Inclusion
14. Mary Harding	PPN-Social Inclusion
15. Paul O' Rahilly	PPN-Social Inclusion
16. Martin Rochford	PPN-Environment
17. Current Vacancy	IFA
18. John Hurley	Chamber of Commerce
19. Kevin Mahon	County Kilkenny Leader Partnership
20. Olive Maher	Family Resource Centres