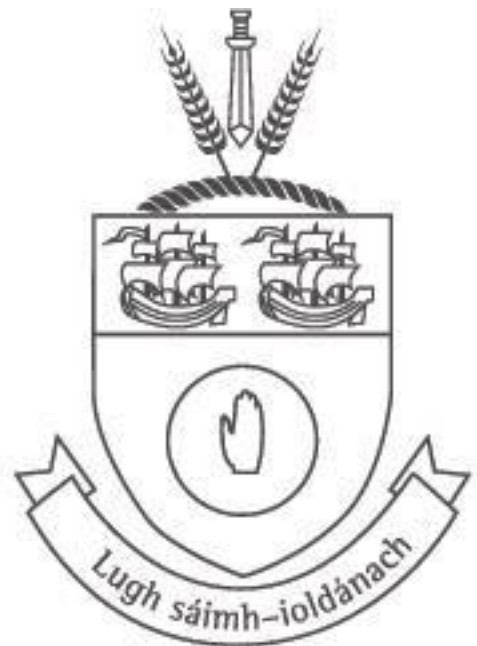




LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY PLAN 2016 -2022

*A Plan for the promotion of economic and
community development in County Louth*



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

March 2016



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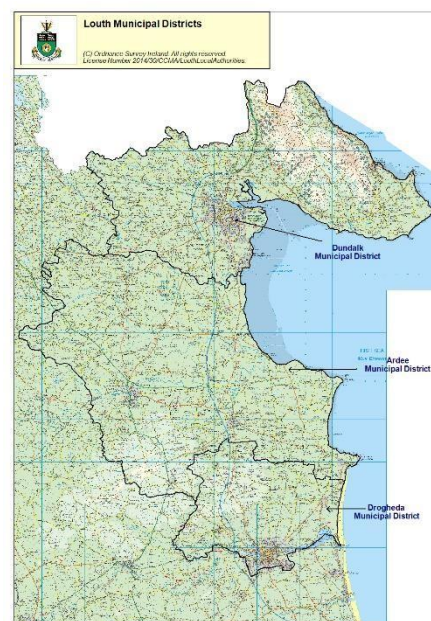
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** While Louth is the smallest county in the State, it is the second most densely populated county in Ireland, with two of the largest towns in the country - Drogheda and Dundalk - coming under the remit of Louth County Council. Apart from these 2 major urban centres, the county also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford. The county is strategically located on the Dublin - Belfast economic corridor and has strong links to Northern Ireland.
- 1.2** By reason of its location, combined with a high quality infrastructure (road and rail), accessibility to ports and airports (north and south), high speed broadband and a skilled and educated workforce, the county is well placed to continue to grow in both population and economic terms. The overall population of Louth and its hinterland is set to grow to almost 140,000 by 2020.¹ The population within a 60 kilometre radius of Drogheda is circa 1.8 million, while within a 60 minute radius of Dundalk it is circa 1.3 million. This large catchment area provides a strong skills set for potential employers to access.
- 1.3** Under the Local Government Act 2014, each LCC is obliged to develop a Local Economic Action Plan (LECP). Ministerial guidance published in 2015 further defines the purpose of this plan: a series of high level goals, objectives and actions to promote and support the economic development and the community development of the relevant LCC area, both by itself directly, and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The process will be overseen by the LCDC, the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC of Louth County Council and an advisory Steering Group comprised of nominees from both bodies. The legislation stipulates that the LECP will include two elements:
- a local economic element prepared and adopted by the LCC via the SPC, and
 - a community development element, prepared and adopted by the Local Community Development Committee. (LCDC).
- 1.3.1** Its integrated high level economic and community goals and objectives, which when adopted, will have a six year lifespan, and will guide policy until 2021. They will be periodically monitored and reviewed by the Economic and Enterprise SPC in the case of the economic actions; the LCDC will oversee the implementation and monitoring of the community actions.
- 1.3.2** What differentiates the LECP from other plans made for the county is that a number of targeted complementary measurable actions, with clearly defined timeframes and indicators, will be delivered in partnership with other economic, statutory and community development stakeholders. Planning in this way will avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication; it will enable stakeholders work more closely together to deliver on their mutual goals to support and promote economic and community development across County Louth.



¹ Updated socio-economic profile



2.0 POLICY LINKS

2.1 High level European targets supporting employment, productivity and social cohesion in Europe have been referenced in the making of the Louth LECP including employment, research and development/innovation, climate change/energy, education and poverty and social exclusion.² The LECP references Europe 2020's key priorities including:

- ☐ increasing labour market participation;
- ☐ improving education and training systems to develop a skilled workforce;
- ☐ combating poverty and social exclusion;
- ☐ addressing the agenda for new skills and jobs;
- ☐ supporting entrepreneurs and the self-employed.

2.2 European targets are further expanded to identify three key priorities for funding, under the related EU Common Strategic Framework (CSF) thematic objectives, country priorities and specific objectives for Ireland, where it focuses on actions to address the social, economic and physical needs of communities:

- ☐ tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion;
- ☐ supporting training and up-skilling, creating and sustaining employment and self-employment opportunities, and investing in local economic development;
- ☐ providing small-scale sustainable infrastructure and community facilities and investment in physical regeneration and environmental improvements.

These European thematic objectives underpin Louth's LECP integrated priorities which in turn parallel the LECP's high level goals and objectives.

2.3 In addition, the LECP also draws from other plans and strategies that have been developed at national, regional and local level including but not limited to:

- The Government's National Reform Programme (NRP) 2014 which identified seven country-specific recommendations to enhance economic performance in the areas of public finances, healthcare, labour market, education and training, social inclusion, access to finance, financial sector and legal services.
- The National Spatial Strategy, National Development Plan, Rural Development Strategy, the Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017; the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020 (MTES), and the Enterprise strategy as set out in *Making it Happen – Growing Enterprise for Ireland*.
- ☐ Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.
- ☐ The County Louth Development Plan 2015-2021 and the Louth Economic Forum then point plan.
- ☐ The Louth Meath Education and Training Strategy.³
- *Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing*.
- ☐ The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA).

² Europe 2020, *The Strategy for Growth*

³ Appendix (bibliography)



3.0 SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATION OF THE LECP

3.1 The making of the Louth LECP has followed the statutory guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government on the making of integrated Local Economic and Community Plans which were formally published in June 2015 for general dissemination.



3.2 Preparing the LECP has been an iterative process. Extensive public consultation was undertaken supported by the publication of a Socio-Economic Statement to which the public was invited to make submissions. Detailed discussions took place with public authorities, publicly funded bodies, the community and voluntary sector and local communities⁴. Workshops were held with key informants as well as a day long conference to discuss the draft goals and objectives and to encourage a partnership approach in their delivery. Findings of an extensive Louth Community Safety Survey carried out in 2014 were also referenced⁵. Following this public consultation process, shared economic and community priorities and themes were agreed with a complementary set of economic and community goals, accompanied by objectives and measurable actions. These were reviewed by the LECP steering group and subsequently adopted by the Economic and Enterprise SPC in the case of the economic elements of the Plan, and by the LCDC for the community elements of the Plan.

3.3 The final adoption of the Plan by the County Council was preceded by a presentation of the draft Economic elements and the draft Community elements to the Municipal Districts and to the Regional Assembly. Each Municipal and Borough District and the Regional Assembly adopted a statement of consistency with:

- a. the Core Strategy and the objectives of the Development Plan;
- b. any Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, or any Regional Guidelines and;
- c. respective community and economic elements of the Plan.

4.0 LOUTH LECP INTEGRATED PRIORITIES: HOW THEY EVOLVED

4.1 The OECD LEED programme (Local Economic and Employment Development) has identified that governments can intervene in many ways at local level, but rarely are these interventions co-ordinated effectively. LEED believes that closer inter-agency working must be encouraged in situations where resources are limited; there has to be a greater focus on combined action between services and different government programmes, and ideally actions should be based on comprehensive local economic intelligence. A 'one size fits all' public policy is no longer effective. It asserts that local solutions to local problems are the key to success, and flexibility is needed so that local agencies can work together to respond to local conditions, seize local opportunities and build on local strengths.

4.2 Analysis of Louth's socio-economic profile and its vision for the county reinforces its strengths and its challenge: to create a prosperous and thriving county, in partnership with the private sector and voluntary groups, where no individual or social group is excluded from the benefits of development that will improve living standards, and where the social and cultural development of its inhabitants can be enabled.

⁴ Appendix Consultation report

⁵ County Louth Community Safety Strategy 2015



Sitting within this framework and within the context of *Better Local Government* (2014) the Louth LECP integrated priorities echo the County Development Plan's principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability; including protection of the County's resources, heritage, and the natural and built environment. Additionally, they have been designed with due regard for all other local, regional and national policies and the broader European policy base.

4.3 During discussions about LECP priorities with its statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, it became apparent that there were many similarities in corporate vision and fundamental objectives between them; they recognised synergies with one another's strategic priorities and proposed actions; they engaged with similar target groups, albeit from different perspectives and while they might be delivering different services, there were interdependencies, which if tapped into, could work to the benefit of their service users. From this set of shared priorities, a complementary set of integrated economic and community goals were designed which were 'tested' throughout the consultation phase for the LECP.

4.4 In addition, key issues that emerged in the making of the LECP have included:

- ☐ growing insight into the complementarity of the economic and community shared priorities and their impacts;
- ☐ the desire for sustainability across each thematic area;
- ☐ acknowledgment that while the new Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation programmes (2015-2017) will underpin the implementation of the LECP, existing budgetary resources must also be aligned with local, economic and community development strategic priorities identified in this plan;
- ☐ an acceptance that the need for increased cross-agency collaboration and open communication will be vital, not only to avoid duplication of services and achieve individual stakeholder operational targets, but to deliver on the ambitious targets set out in the LECP.

4.5 The basis for the LECP's economic goals has been drawn from the Louth Economic Forum's ten point plan. The Louth Economic Forum (LEF) was formed in April 2009 following the publication of the Indecon suite of reports of that year, which set out detailed evidence based and comprehensive economic development strategies for Louth over the period 2009 – 2015. Reviews of these plans are currently underway. They range from foreign direct investment to developing indigenous industry to sustainable development with a specific emphasis on renewable energy and the smart economy. They also included tourism and heritage, age-friendly business, infrastructural development education and training, and agriculture, food and fisheries.

4.5.1 The economic goals set out in the LEF plans, together with a suite of objectives and measurable actions will be the primary tools by which economic growth will be created and measured in Louth over the lifetime of the LECP.

4.5.2 As set out in the legislation, the community elements of the Louth LECP should promote community engagement and participation with particular reference to the government's recent framework policy on community development⁶, and address the specific needs of target groups including:

- measures to address the social, economic and physical needs of communities aimed at tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion;

⁶ A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015)



- support for training and up-skilling; creating and sustaining employment and self-employment opportunities; and
- investment in local economic developments to improve the economic future and quality of life of their inhabitants.

4.5.3 The community element of the Louth LECP will be the primary tool to advance the goals and horizontal themes of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which reflect both rural and urban areas and the priority strategic objectives that the LCDC serves. Projected SICAP outcomes anticipate greater participation by members of disadvantaged groups and communities in a community development context with increased target group representation. They seek more participation of disadvantaged groups in local policy and decision making processes that address social exclusion. They also seek improved employment rates by ensuring that individuals are better prepared to enter the labour market through increased participation in education and training, and improved supports for those who have left school early. The LECP has identified and acknowledged these priorities and focuses on a series of actions to deliver them. This, it is hoped, will result in a more developed social economy and social enterprise sector at local level.

4.6 Since objectives arising from the LECP community elements will run beyond the current SICAP time horizon of 2017 – 2021, they must be credible and measurable not only to aid in SICAP annual planning, but also to judge its effectiveness. Consequently, the Louth LECP will evolve to respond to the needs of current SICAP target populations and the voice of the community in a way that recognises and builds upon the existing identified local services, programmes and groups.

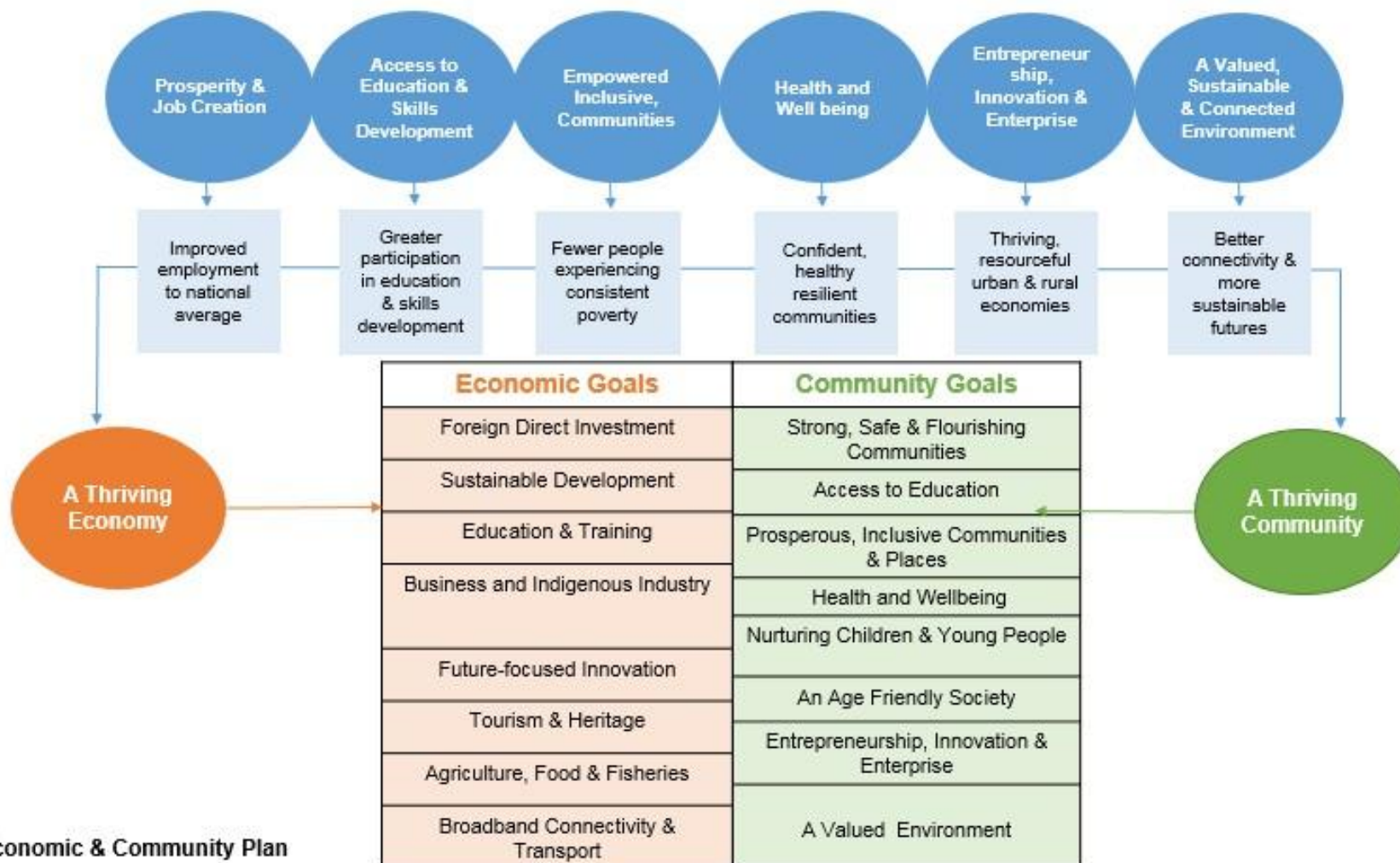
4.7 A critical player in the delivery of the LECP community goals, objectives and specific actions, on behalf of the LCDC, will be the Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) whose LEADER/RDP Programme is closely aligned to the strategic priorities of the LECP, and for whom economic, social, cultural and environmental service provision - in collaboration with other statutory and non-statutory service providers - is a core part of its brief. A key challenge for the partners will be to avoid duplication of services and improve the targeting of resources to those groups most in need.

4.8 As the voice of the Community and Voluntary sector, many of the LECP community objectives and actions reflect the role of the Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) which contributes to the ongoing development of the county and has a major part to play in its role of community engagement. Its network comprises three pillars: social inclusion, the voluntary sector and the environment. It represents the interests of more than 230 organisations on the LCDC. They reflect a wide range of interests such as local community groups, environment and heritage groups, social services and social enterprise groups, older people, sport and youth groups and many others; emphasising the extent of voluntary effort that is ongoing in the county.



**VISION**

Louth will be a prosperous, proud, safe, and inclusive county where people want to live, work, visit and invest, and where there is equal opportunity for all.

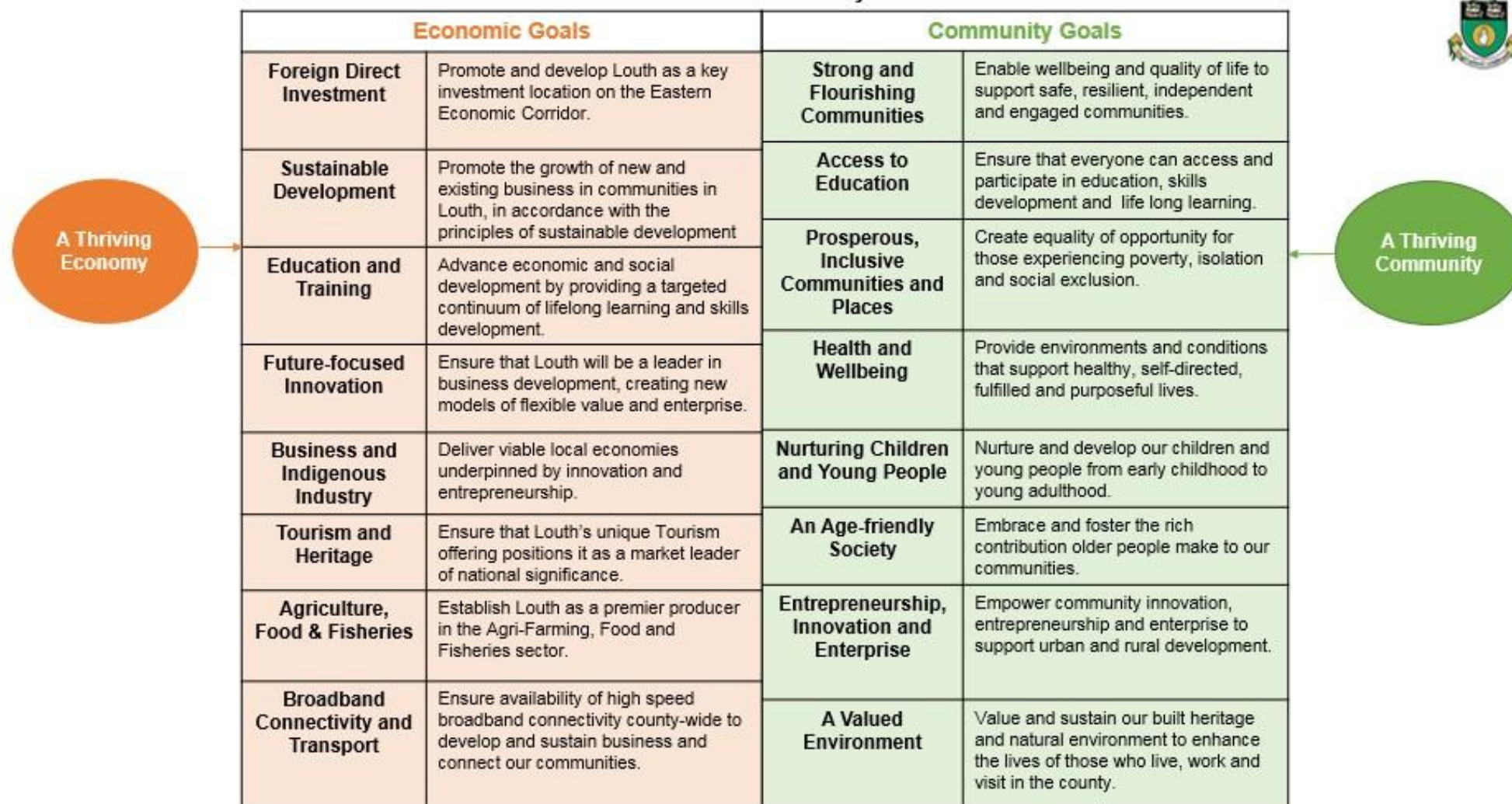
**LECP
Integrated
Priorities****Outcomes****Louth Local Economic & Community Plan**



4.0 LOUTH LECP GOALS



LECP Economic & Community Goals



Louth Local Economic & Community Plan



5.1 LOUTH: SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

- 5.1 This is an update of the initial socio-economic profile prepared by Murtagh & Partners on behalf of Louth County Council in August 2014 to act as the baseline for the LECP. It should be read in conjunction with that profile⁷ and it supports the socio-economic statement of the LECP issued in August 2015⁸. It also encompasses the profiles forming part of Louth County Council's Corporate Plan 2014 – 2019, the County Development Plan 2015 -2021, and the Louth Development Strategy, December 2015.



- 5.2 Census data is the primary source of socio-economic profiling information. The last census of population was in 2011 and as a result, population statistics are generally somewhat outmoded. Socio-economic trends are therefore inferred here; primarily using quarterly statistics and reviews by CSO, ESRI and Eurostat. In turn, Louth's performance is inferred by reference to targets for growth set by government.

- 5.3 This socio - economic profile takes the subject areas of the original Murtagh & Partners profile and uses them as a guide to provide an updated picture of the relative status and trends in Louth under the following headings:

5.4 Summary

5.4.1 population profile;

5.4.2 household formation and families;

5.4.3 accommodation;

5.4.4 employment;

5.4.5 education;

5.4.6 consumer confidence and consumer price index (CPI); and,

5.4.7 movement and visitors.

5.4 Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2014, in addition to inaugurating LECPs, streamlined local and regional authorities. In Louth, both the former Dundalk and Ardee Town and Drogheda Borough Councils were subsumed into 3 Municipal Districts which formed the County Council. At the regional level, three regional assemblies were established in place of the extant eight regional authorities. At this regional level, the county has moved from the Border Region and is now part of the eastern and midland regional assembly which consists of the former Dublin, eastern and midland regions.
- 1.2 Louth's location, recognised in its regional move to partner counties along the eastern economic corridor coupled with its indicative youthful population, high commuter levels and reducing unemployment rates means that trends identified at regional level will be more like those of the former eastern rather than border region. Therefore, using CSO estimates, it is projected that at 2015, the population of the county had increased by 4% to around 127,350 from the last census in 2011. This estimate is verified by primary school attendees for the period 2010/2011, which increased by 6% to the period 2014/2015.

⁷ Appendix 1

⁸ Appendix 2



- 1.3 The 2011 census recorded for Louth (relative to the state) high levels of home ownership living in predominately houses, which is also indicative of households in the county being predominated by families. Owing to the relative value for money of new homes in Louth into 2015, the youthful population of Louth and higher incidence of fertility relative to the state recorded at 2011, it is likely that at the next census the population of Louth will remain relatively youthful.
- 1.4 During the period 2007 to 2009, GNP (constant market prices) fell by some 11%. Recovery since 2009 has been stronger than was generally anticipated with growth recorded in every year except 2011, when a small decrease of 0.8% was recorded. GNP has grown by 13.6% (Q4 2011 to Q4 2014) and has grown by 6.3% in Q4 2014 compared with the same quarter in 2013. Equivalent GDP annual growth in 2014 was 4.8% and it is anticipated that growth for 2015 will be approximately 4%⁹.
- 1.5 The recovery indicated by GNP and GDP improvements since 2009 is reflected in increased consumer sentiment which will be reflected in Louth, where rates of general unemployment have dropped to improve those national figures; from a position in 2011 where the county experienced higher rates of unemployment than the state average. However, on the latest live register of February 2016, Louth is experiencing higher rates of youth unemployment (13.83% under 25) than the state average (12.4%).
- 1.6 Increased consumer sentiment can also be attributed to low annual inflation in 2015 which was -0.3%. But when the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 2015 is reviewed, we see that there was a 0.1% increase in the index from December 2014 to 2015, and consumer sentiment may be tempered by the areas in which the greatest increases were experienced¹⁰. It seems that increases in prices in 2015 have occurred in areas of non-discretionary spending with the likely effect that perceptions of significant increases in disposable income will not be widespread, and expected increases in consumer spending are at 3.4% for 2016, down from the 3.6% for 2015.
- 1.7 House prices are recovering in Louth, although it offers the least expensive homes of the former east and Dublin regions. Levels of home ownership in Louth were higher than the state average at the last census, but like the rest of the country, the largest proportion resides in rental accommodation.
- 1.8 Louth recorded a rise in LCC rents of just over 15% between 2006 and 2011 and a dip of about 8% in private rent levels over the same period. Since that time, increases in annual private rents for Louth are recorded to 2015, although it is the 5th highest ranked county of Leinster in rental terms. Significantly behind Louth in terms of rental differences in 2015 are the remaining counties of Leinster; Louth averages about 52% the equivalent cost of rentals in Dublin; the 6th ranked county of Kilkenny is 44% and the last (12th) is Longford at 31% the Dublin rental rates. This indicates that Louth experiences a notably higher level of competition for rental accommodation emanating from Dublin and the greater Dublin area, and will benefit from employment growth in those areas as a result.
- 1.9 While there is an indicative nationally relatively fast-growing population in Louth, the level of in-migration since the 2011 census to the county is not known. Nationally, rates of net out-migration are estimated to have slowed between 2014 and 2015 and the majority of migrants and immigrants have higher or third level education (around 60%).

⁹ Ireland National Social Report 2015, DSP, April 2015

¹⁰ Greatest increases of between 3.8% and 1.7% in Education, Miscellaneous Goods & Services, Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels and Communications whilst recording an overall drop of between 4.3% and 1% in Transport, Clothing & Footwear, Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance and Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages.



- 1.10 Louth, with 2.68% of the national population in 2011, only holds 2% of recorded visitor attractions in the Fáilte Ireland survey (2009-2013) but may benefit from visitors to nearby and associated attractions in Meath.

5.4.1 Population profile

- 1.1 In 2011, Louth at 122,897¹¹ (49% male, 51% female) accounted for 2.68% of the state population: 77% of those were over 15 years and nearly 10% of them were over 66 years.
- 1.2 Where we take direction from the CSO estimated population growth up to April 2015 on a regional basis, we find that the expected population of Louth has dropped to 117,506 (-4%) using the border region estimate; it has increased to 124,746 (+2%) by the state average, and to 127,350 (+4%) if we take the mid-east region estimate.
- 1.3 It is considered that owing to Louth's location, indicative youthful population, high commuter levels and reducing unemployment rates that it is most likely to reflect the mid-east rather than the border region, and is therefore likely to have experienced 4% population growth to 2015; with the same male to female 49% ratio as 2011.

	LOUTH	BORDER		MIDEAST		STATE	
	Actual population 2011	Population change estimate 2011 - 2015	2015 Louth population using Border Region Estimate	Population change estimate 2011 - 2015	2015 Louth population using Mid East Region Estimate	Population change estimate 2011 - 2015	2015 Louth population using State Estimate
MALE	60,763	0.986	57,391	1.073	62,063	1.043	61,385
FEMALE	62,134	0.995	60,115	1.078	65,287	1.037	63,361
TOTAL	122,897	0.991	117,506	1.076	127,350	1.040	124,746

Table 1 projected population of Louth 2015 using CSO Border and Mid East Regions and State averages.

- 1.4 The Border Regional Authority Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 sets a target population for Louth of 142,000 by 2022 using a Gateway-led model; where Dundalk delivers 47,200 (up from 35,085 in 2011) Drogheda 38,415 (up from 32,331 in 2011)¹² and the remainder of the county 57,185. The County Development Plan takes account of this target; envisaging a population horizon of 141,050 for 2021. In view of the indicative population increase in Louth of most likely in the range of + 4% to 2015, it is expected that the target set for the county will be achieved, even when the economic deprivations of the recent years discouraging significant in-migration are taken into account.

¹¹ The Local Government (Boundaries) (Town Elections) Regulations 1994 (S.I. No. 114/1994) altered the boundaries of Drogheda for the purposes of local elections to include part of the electoral division of St. Mary's (Meath) in county Louth for electoral purposes. Thus for 2011 census results St. Mary's Part is included in Louth.

Local Electoral Areas	Population 2011	Local Electoral Areas	Population 2011
Ardee	27,890	Dundalk Carlingford	24,589
Drogheda	41,925	Dundalk South	28,493
Total		122,897	

¹² The Regional Planning guidelines use the designated urban areas (by ED) of each town to track their size. The CSO when reporting town size define their own boundaries based on the spatial extent of what they consider to be 'urban areas'. Therefore it is common to see the populations for both Dundalk and Drogheda to be reported at higher levels by the CSO than those in the regional planning policy.



- 1.5 The 2011 census showed that Louth has the highest urban population concentration of any county apart from the Dublin authorities, Kildare and Wicklow. Although one of the most densely populated counties in the state in 2011, Louth was also one of the smallest and thus held 2.68% of the state's population and ranked 13th of the 26 counties in terms of population size, or ranked 16th of the 31 LCC areas.
- 1.6 While they were not the fastest growing towns in the country between census years 2006 and 2011, Drogheda followed by Dundalk topped the table of 'most populated towns' in Ireland with over 10,000 population, of which there were 39, in the 2011 census results.
- 1.7 The CSO expanded the local electoral division areas of the towns of Ireland where the "...built-up areas have extended beyond the legally defined town boundary." Using this CSO town definition, Dundalk experienced 7.8% population growth to 37,816, and Drogheda 9.9% growth to 38,578 between 2006 and 2011¹³. The fact that Drogheda and Dundalk were the most populated towns in 2011, although not experiencing the highest growth rates, indicates their robust and historic urban presence.

5.4.2 Household formation and families

- 1.1 50% of households in Louth included children in the 2011 census. 37% were couples with children slightly above the then national average of 35%. The lone parent household stated average of 11% was also exceeded by Louth at just over 12%. The predominance of children in households was reflected in household formation rate at 2.8 rather than the 2.4 national average and only 40% of households in Louth comprised of one person¹⁴ and couples with no children,¹⁵ as opposed to just under 43% nationally.
- 1.2 The 2011 Census shows that Louth's population structure has a younger profile than that of the state at 27.1% aged 17 or under, as opposed to the state figure of 25.1%.
- 1.3 The likelihood of increasing population above border region rates estimated by the CSO is endorsed by increase in families and children in Louth between 2014 and 2015 when using child benefit as an indicator. By April 2015 just over 35,000 children, 18 and under, are estimated for Louth in 2015 using the state CSO mid east region estimates. On 30th November 2015 there were 18,588 families with 35,649 children in receipt of child benefit up by 36 no. families from 18,552 and 268 no. children from 35,381 in 2014.
- 1.4 The likelihood of increasing population above the then border region rates estimated by the CSO is endorsed by the increase in families and children in Louth between 2014 and 2015, when using child benefit as an indicator. By April 2015, just over 35,000 children aged 18 and under, are estimated for Louth in 2015 using the state CSO mid east region estimates. On 30th November 2015 there were 18,588 families with 35,649 children in receipt of child benefit; an increase of 36 families from 18,552 and an increase of 268 children from 35,381 in 2014¹⁶. In this way, it seems that the population of Louth is increasing in line with the highest estimated rates in the state; that of the mid east region, and continues to hold a youthful population characterised by children and persons in family formation stage.

Family Size by no. of children	1	2	3	4	5	6		7	8	9	Total
No. of children	7,416	6,804	3,207	889	210	42		16	2	2	18,588

¹³ Census 2011 records the defined urban areas of Dundalk with a population of 31,149 and Drogheda at 30,393.

¹⁴ One person household 2011: just under 23% in Louth and just over nationally

¹⁵ Couples, no children households 2011: 17% in Louth and 19% nationally

¹⁶ Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2014, DSP, 2015 [NOTE: Child Benefit is payable to the parents or guardians of children under 16 years of age, or under 18 years of age if the child is in full-time education, Youthreach training or has a disability. Child Benefit is not paid on behalf of 18-year olds. For twins, Child Benefit is paid at one and a half times the normal monthly rate for each child. For triplets and other multiple births, Child Benefit is paid at double the normal monthly rate for each child.]

**Table 2 Child benefit by family size, Louth 2015¹⁷**

- 1.5 In line with national and international trends, family size and household formation rates are expected to fall. The Housing Strategy supporting the recently adopted County Development Plan envisages that the average household size or formation rate in County Louth is expected to fall from 2.80 in 2011 to 2.70 by 2016, and further to 2.58 by 2022.

5.4.3 Accommodation

- 1.1 Louth with 51,344 housing units in 2011 accounted for 2.57% of housing stock in the country as compared to holding 2.68% of the country's population; again evidencing the youthful population of Louth.
- 1.2 Census analysis by the CSO from 2011 indicates that Louth, relative to other counties, experienced higher than state average home ownership by mortgage uptakes, notwithstanding the majority of people in Louth, like the state were, renting homes¹⁸. In addition, in 2011 85% of the housing types recorded in Louth were houses or bungalows, which was slightly lower than the national average of just over 87% where remaining housing types recorded were apartments and bedsits.

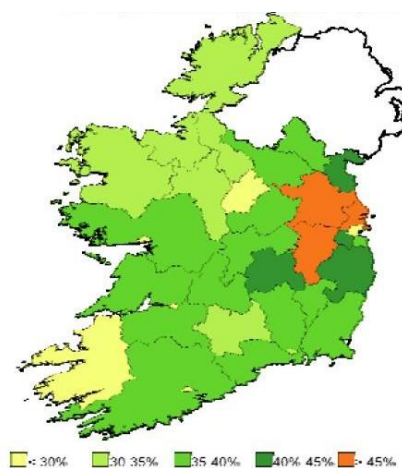


Figure 1 Percentage households with existing loan or mortgage by county, census 2011

- 1.3 By 2011 there were 1,994,845 permanent housing units in the state; an increase of 12.7% (225,232 units) since the 2006 census that had itself seen an increase of 21% (309,560) since the preceding census in 2001. Unprecedented levels of building were seen between 2001 and 2011 with 55% of all apartments and 25% of all houses built during that time. 83% of those units were occupied on census night and 85% generally permanently occupied. The rates of building have slowed having seen rates of residential building at 72% outpacing population growth 30% between 1991 to 2011, or 784 new housing units for each 1,000 unit growth of population¹⁹.

¹⁷ There is no information available regarding the age breakdown of the children in receipt of child benefit in 2015 in County Louth.

¹⁸ Nature of occupancy of households where the reference person moved in the previous year (census 2011 from 2010).

¹⁹ Census 2011, Profile 4, The Roof over our Heads, CSO, 2012 Figure 12

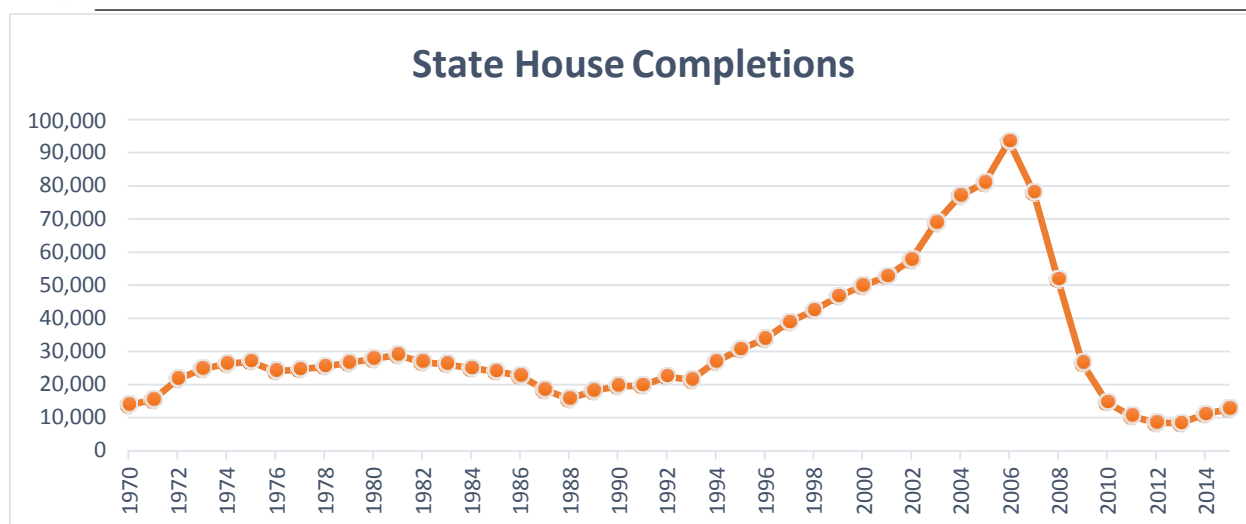


Figure 2 State House Completions, DoCHLG Construction Activity – Completions by Area (based on ESB connections by month)

- 1.4 In Louth, house completions mirrored those of the state and experienced a significant slow down in building rates to 2015, when compared to the zenith of 2007 to levels in 2013 to 2015 similar to the early 1990s.

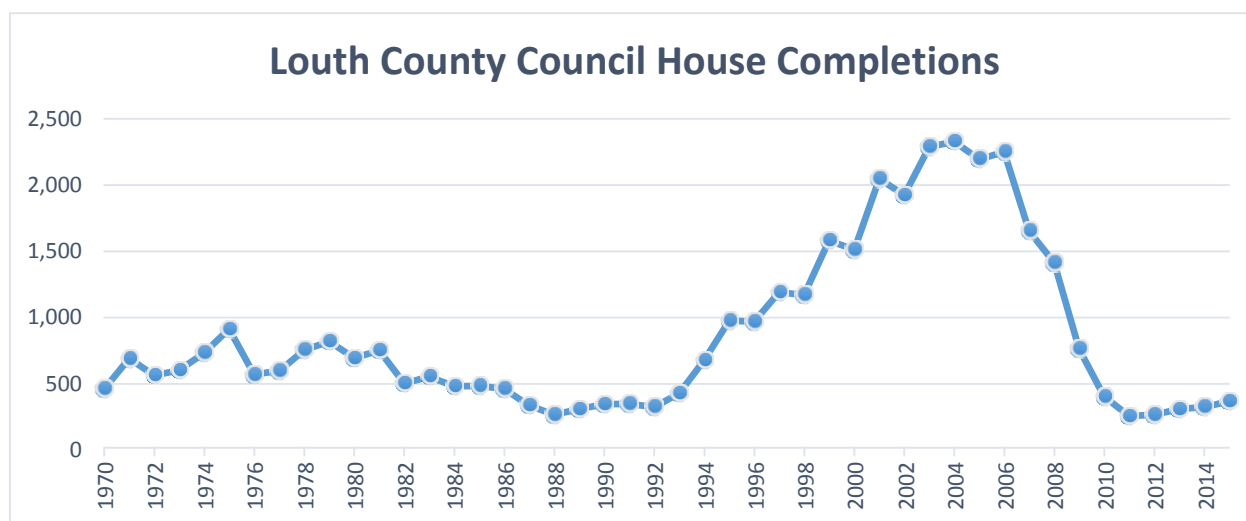


Figure 3 Louth County Council House Completions, DoCHLG Construction Activity – Completions by Area (based on ESB connections by month)

- 1.5 The County Development Plan 2015 -2021 restates that the occupation rates of dwellings in Louth in 2011 was lower than the national average at 12.4% as opposed to 14.7%. This belies the indicative significant holiday home existence and demand, as almost 10% of the unoccupied units were accounted for by holiday homes.
- 1.6 The County Development Plan further identifies a requirement for an average of 667 new residential units per annum between 2015 and 2021 or a total of 4,001. In the same projections, a new unit total of 7,422 (or 675 per annum) units were required between 2012 and 2022. At this time the housing completion rates fall well below required annualised averages being around 300 for the years 2012 – 2015, although recovering from 268 in 2012 to 368 in 2015.
- 1.7 Louth County Council, in conjunction with Future Analytics Consulting Ltd (FAC), prepared a Housing Strategy for County Louth to support the County Development Plan 2015 – 2021. The strategy found that the per annum shortfall in affordability of housing will fluctuate between 11.5% and 13.5% over the Plan period and translates



to a requirement of an additional 475 social housing units between 2015-2021. These units were to be primarily delivered by new development at a rate of 12%. As part of local government reform, social housing targets from new development have been revised to be 10% nationally.

- 1.8 The expected 10% social housing from certain new developments is to be augmented by social housing building and purchase programmes and housing assistance (HAP) to achieve a national reduction of 25% on social housing waiting lists. Social housing targets were set for the period 2015-2017 where the provisional budget sets Louth 22nd of 31 authorities at a total of € 57,224,354; Leitrim assigned the least at €4,384,968 and Dublin City Council the greatest at €292,194,455. For this budget, Louth is ranked 23rd of 31 authorities in terms of expected new unit provision at 778 units; Leitrim to deliver the least at 119 and Dublin City Council greatest at 3,347²⁰. The 778 units over 2015 – 2017 figure for Louth equates to a 21% increase on current social housing stock of 3,646²¹ and is nearly double the estimated number of social housing units to be delivered by new development alone over 2015 – 2021.
- 1.9 In July 2015, a recorded 4,764 persons were on the Louth social housing list²². This increased to a reported 4,772 by the end of 2015 which was 2.67% of the estimated 130,008 on the social housing lists nationally²³. Louth is not subject to pressures as significant as those experienced nationally, where between 2013 and 2015 social housing lists increased by an average of 44.9%, while Louth experienced an increase of 25.28% over that time from 3,809. This increase in social housing need nationally was not confined to urban areas but, in percentage terms was very evident in rural authorities like Mayo whose list increased by 100% from 1,479 to 2,965 and Roscommon by 157% from 252 to 648. Due to the relative needs increasing elsewhere Louth's percentage of the social housing list national percentage dropped from 4.24% of 89,662 in 2013 to the figure of 2.67% in 2015 mentioned above, which is equivalent to the overall population percentage of Louth at 2.68% in 2011.
- 1.10 In the initial socio-economic profile for the LECP prepared in 2014, it was found that Louth did not generally suffer the higher than average levels of deprivation by the Pobal deprivation index than the rest of the then border region. The 2014 socio-economic profile found that by 2011 census year, Louth's deprivation score position had improved from the last census of 2006 by marginally outperforming the national average to move Louth from the 8th to the 9th most disadvantaged LCC area in Ireland.

²⁰ The 25% reduction in the housing waiting list is to be accompanied by a targeted assistance of 28,000 people through the HAP scheme to give them supported accommodation in the private rented sector. This was after Social Housing Strategy 2020: Support, Supply and Reform, November 2014. Nationally Phase 1, building on Budget 2015, sets a target of 18,000 additional housing units and 32,000 HAP/RAS units by end 2017. Phase 2 sets a target of 17,000 additional housing units and 43,000 HAP/RAS units by end 2020.

²¹ Louth County Council Social Housing Stock at July 2015

	Total
Social Housing Stock	3646
Unsold Affordable in Voluntary Social Leasing Tenancies	54
Social Leasing Units (incl Mortgage to Rent)	352
Council owned dwellings managed by Voluntary Housing Associations	41
Voluntary Units	768
Properties in Rental Accommodation Scheme	165

²² Louth Social Housing Stats July 2015

Number of applicants approved for 1 bed units	1804
Number of applicants approved for 2 bed units	1672
Number applicants approved for 3 bed units	1154
Number applicants approved for 4 bed units	129
Number applicants approved for 5 bed units	5
Total number of applicants on social housing waiting list	4764

²³ FOI from local authorities by Fianna Fail 2013 to 2015 social housing lists, reported September 2015.



5.4.4 Employment

- 1.1 In 2014 the state employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 was 67.0% in 2014, was up by more than 3% since 2012; showing a continuing improvement in the labour market after a fall from 74% in 2007 to 71% in 2008 and less than 64% in 2012. The employment rate for young people aged 20-24 had risen from 46.1% in 2012 to 49.4% in 2014. The government predicts that the 0.5% annual increase required to meet EU targets will be feasible, so long as recent recovery rates are maintained²⁴.
- 1.2 The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is estimated at 10% at Q1 2015, reduced from a peak of 15% in early 2012, but is expressed by government to remain unacceptably high. The male seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 11.5% compares with a female unemployment rate of 8.2%²⁵. The initial socio-economic prolife prepared for the Louth LECP found that in 2014, Louth performed slightly better than the state in terms of gender bias unemployment rates.
- 1.3 There are no detailed sectoral breakdowns of employment categories for Louth since the 2011 census. In 2011 the national unemployment rate was 19% and 24% in Louth. However, Louth from June 2011 to 2014 had incrementally better (lower) unemployment rates than the state, with a reduction to 12.6% (to 16,054) for Louth as opposed to 11.7% (to 404,515) for the state.
- 1.4 By May 2015 Louth's performance had again improved with the total number on the live register further dropping to 14,148 (or 88% of the 2014 level). The state had experienced a similar, although lesser reduction to 345,633 (or 85% of the 2014 level). Despite the now slightly better performing unemployment rate of Louth, it was slower to experience reduction in live register numbers than the state. Recently, both the county and state have aligned with month on month reductions to 12,902 for Louth and 321,802 for the state in January 2016; each 80% of the 2014 unemployment figures²⁶.
- 1.5 Latest unemployment figures for January 2016 tell us that the total number on the live register has dropped to 321,802 and that Louth accounts for 4% of that number²⁷ which is proportionally higher than its total population relative to the state at 2.68%. Therefore, whilst Louth has recently experienced better than state unemployment level reductions and has a youthful population, its unemployment rate remains unacceptably high - even where it exceeds EU targets.
- 1.6 Given Ireland's recent economic performance, it is unsurprising that the number employed decreased on an annual basis each year from Q1 2009 to Q1 2012, before showing an increase of 20,500 (+1.1%) in the year to Q1 2013 and then +2.3% in Q1 2014. The national number of persons in employment was increased 2.2% in Q1 2015 over the year (to 1,929,500, an increase of 41,300). These results appear favourable but do not indicate a significant recovery, as between Q1 2009 and Q1 2015, the number in employment fell by 3.4% (66,900)²⁸.
- 1.7 The total number of persons classified as self-employed decreased by 4.4% from 333,500 in Q1 2009 to 318,800 in Q1 2015. The number of employees fell from 1,648,000 to 1,598,600 (-49,400 or -3.0%) during this

²⁴ Ireland National Social Report 2015, April 2015

²⁵ Ireland National Social Report 2015, April 2015

²⁶ Persons on Live Register (Number) by Sex, Age Group, Social Welfare Office and Month, generated February 2016.

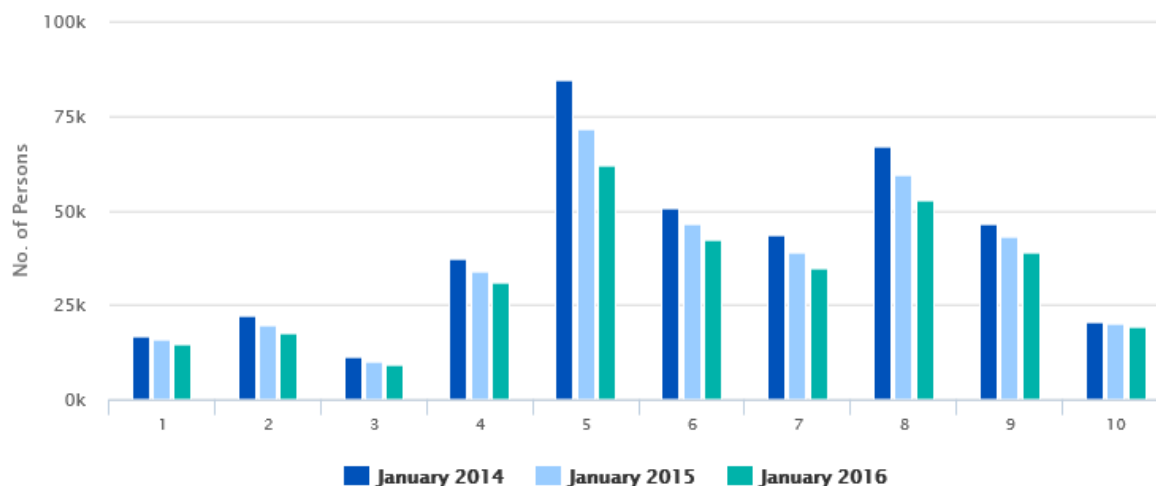
²⁷ CSO Stat bank, Live Register LRM07, accessed February 2016

²⁸ Quarterly National Household Survey QNHS Detailed Employment Series Quarter 1 2009 - Quarter 1 2015, CSO, 25th June 2015



time²⁹. On average employment in Ireland is in the SME Sector in companies of 11 to 50 people (from 50% in Q1 2009 to 43% in the same quarter in 2015), the next largest employer category is less than 11 people at 27% in Q1 2009 to 23% in the same quarter in 2015. An average of 15% of people work in companies of 100 to 500 people and 10% in companies of over 500 employees averaged over Q1 of 2009 to 2015³⁰.

Figure 4 Live Register classified by last held occupation



Source: CSO Ireland

KEY: 1- Managers and administrators, 2- Professional, 3- Associate professional and technical, 4- Clerical and secretarial, 5- Craft and related, 6- Personal and Protective service, 7- Sales, 8- Plant and machine operatives, 9- Other occupation, 10- No occupation

Figure 4 National live register classification by last held occupation, January 2016³¹

- 1.8 Both the reduction in unemployed versus employed rates since 2013 is positive despite a real reduction in numbers of people employed at 2009.
- 1.9 As stated, the EU has set a target of 69-71% of 20-64 year olds to be employed by 2020 in Ireland. Nationally, under 25s had an unemployment rate of 23.9% in 2014 (32.5% for 15-19 year-olds and 21.6% for 20-24 year-olds down from 30.4% in 2012). In 2014 about 38% of these were out of work for more than 1 year. This is higher than then unemployment rate of 10.4% for ages 25–54. Despite the high rate of youth unemployment, the absolute number of young unemployed people has fallen from close to 80,000 on average in 2009 to 47,000 on average in 2014.
- 1.10 Latest live register information from January 2016 tells us that the live register holds 87.6% aged 25 and over with 12.4% accounting for under 25s. Louth is experiencing relatively higher youth unemployment with 13.83% being under 25s and 86.17% 25 and over³².

²⁹ Quarterly National Household Survey QNHS Detailed Employment Series Quarter 1 2009 - Quarter 1 2015, CSO, 25th June 2015

³⁰ Quarterly National Household Survey QNHS Detailed Employment Series Quarter 1 2009 - Quarter 1 2015, Table 13 Persons aged 15 years and over in employment (ILO) classified by detailed size of firm, CSO, 25th June 2015

³¹ Live Register January 2016, CSO, 4th February 2016

³² CSO Statbank, Live Register LRM07, accessed February 2016



5.4.5 Education

- 1.1 The initial socio-economic profile provides an analysis of 2011 census figures in respect of educational attainment for Louth. It was noted that in 2011, 35.6% of students in Louth left school before age 17, compared to 29.9% in the State. At that time rates of lower educational attainment in Louth, relative to the state, were noted with 1.8% as opposed to 1.4% having no formal education, and 35.6% as opposed to 30.4% attesting to only primary lower secondary levels of education. The LMETB has noted these trends, which are repeated to a lesser extent in Meath.
- 1.2 Total pupils recorded in mainstream primary schools (including special schools) was 16,911 in Louth for the school year 2014-2015; this is a 6% increase on the recorded 15,943 figure for 2010/2011. There were 12,232 recorded in second level education (mainstream secondary, vocational and community) over the school year 2014 - 2015³³.
- 1.3 Taken together, this is 29,143 children attending mainstream schools in County Louth for the school year 2014-2015. It is likely to be an underestimate of total school pupils from Louth, in view of children attending mainstream schools in neighbouring counties and the exclusion of private schools from this figure. It is noted that all estimates of population growth for the age category of 4-16 for Louth estimate this age group to be around 35,000 at 2015. It reinforces the view that this is an underestimation of the total children in Louth but remains an reinforcing indicator of the growing youth population of Louth.

5.4.6 Consumer Confidence and Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- 1.1 As part of the Louth Housing and Retail Strategy, calculations were made supporting the County Development Plan 2015 -2021 projections of disposable income. These projections were based on the CSO Household Budget Survey and estimates of disposable income in County Louth for 2011 at 0.981% of the national annual average (€119,659.74 for the state, and €117,380.20 for Louth).
- 1.2 For 2011, this translates as approximately one third of the households in Louth with an average annual disposable income of €16,314 (about €313.73 per week). Using a 3.6% annual growth rate, the projections proceed to apply the average disposable income into 2024, to find that in 2022 the real disposable average annual income for the lowest decile will be €14,754 and for the highest; €173,220; which retains the assumption that average disposable income in Louth will be just below the national average.
- 1.3 Prices on average, as measured by the CSO Consumer Price Index (CPI), were 0.1% higher in December 2015 compared with December 2014 but decreased by the same amount in the month from November 2015³⁴. The annual average rate of inflation in 2015 was -0.3%. This compares to a rise of 0.2% for 2014 and 0.5% for 2013.
- 1.4 Whilst inflation for the consumer seems favourable, increases over the year³⁵ decreases in the year were in transport, clothing and footwear, furnishing and routine household maintenance; all potentially part of

³³ Department of Education Database, latest releases, access Feb. 2016

³⁴ The most significant monthly price changes were decreases in Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco (-1.6%) and Transport (-0.3%). There were increases in Miscellaneous Goods & Services (+0.5%) and Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance

³⁵ The most notable changes in the year were increases in Education (+3.8%), Miscellaneous Goods & Services (+2.6%), Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels (+2.1%) and Communications (+1.7%). There were decreases in Transport (-4.3%), Clothing & Footwear (-4.1%), Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine



disposable income whilst house prices, miscellaneous goods and services, power, fuels and education all increased³⁶.

- 1.5 House prices increased at a lower rate than predicted in 2014 -2015 the calculations supporting the development plan where annual price increases were expected to be over 3%, and were actually 2.6% averaged across the country.
- 1.6 Louth recorded a rise in LCC rents of just over 15% between 2006 and 2011, and an opposing reduction of about 8% in other rents over the same period. These trends were repeated countrywide with the exception of all Dublin authorities, and Wicklow and Kildare, who recorded reductions in both LCC and private weekly rents over the same period³⁷.
- 1.7 Private rents have increased by 13.8% on average in Louth between Q4 2014 and the same period 2015. Q4 reports from 2015 show that of the 12 counties in Leinster, Louth is the 5th most expensive ranked in terms of weekly rents; each of which is influenced by proximity to Dublin, where Dublin ranks 1st followed by Wicklow, Kildare, Meath and then Louth. Significantly behind Louth in terms of rental differences are the remaining counties of Leinster; Louth averages about 52% the equivalent cost of rentals in Dublin; the next ranked county of Kilkenny is 44% and the last (12th) is Longford at 31% the Dublin rental rates. Louth contains the Gateway of Dundalk and ranks behind Cork and Galway, but is ahead of Limerick and Waterford in terms of rental costs per unit. These rental figures are indicative of Louth's proximity to Dublin³⁸.
- 1.8 Residential asking prices have increased by 12.9% on average in Louth between Q4 2014 and the same period 2015. This is commensurate with counties like Kildare and Meath over the same year. In line with rental trends, house asking prices in Louth rank just behind Wicklow (€202,000), Kildare (€158,000) and Meath (€145,000) in Leinster with an average asking price for a 3 bed semi-detached unit of €126,000. This is just over €10,000 ahead of the next ranked county, Kilkenny at €117,000 and well ahead of the last ranked county in Leinster; Longford at €65,000. The percentage rise in average cost of houses versus rental demand indicates the higher rental demand generally³⁹.
- 1.9 The indicative increase in prices in items which can be considered to be discretionary spend are reflected in depressed retail sales over the same period 2014 -2015. The volume of retail sales (i.e. excluding price effects and motor trade which accounted for 0.4% increase alone) decreased by 0.7% between November and December 2015, but there was an increase of 5.9% in the annual figure⁴⁰.
- 1.10 Alongside the 0.1% decrease in CPI prices between November and December 2015 but increase of the same amount over the year; there was a commensurate decrease of 0.8% in the value of retail sales between November and December 2015 with an annual increase of 3.5%, when compared with December 2014. If

Household Maintenance (-1.5%) and Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages (-1.0%). The largest year-on-year price decrease was recorded in April 2015 when prices fell by 0.7%. There were ten months where the year-on-year price changes were negative with prices remaining unchanged in August and increasing by 0.1% in December.

³⁶ CSO statistical release, 14 January 2016, 11am Consumer Price Index December 2015

³⁷ Census 2011, Profile 4, The roof over our Heads, CSO, 2012 Figure 12

³⁸ The Daft.ie Rental Report, An analysis of recent trends in the Irish rental market, 2015 in Review

³⁹ The Daft.ie House Price Report, An analysis of recent trends in the Irish residential sales market, 2015 Year in Review

⁴⁰ The sectors with the largest month on month volume increases were Food beverages & Tobacco (+1.0%), Hardware, Paints & Glass (+1.0%) and Pharmaceuticals Medical & Cosmetic Articles (+0.7%). The sectors with the largest monthly decreases were Electrical Goods (-12.6%), Department Stores (-5.0%) and Motor Trades (-2.2%).



motor trades are excluded, there was a decrease of 0.9% in the value of retail sales and an annual increase of 3.0%⁴¹.

- 1.11 The levels of retail turnover in Ireland generally are correcting from the 2008 rates and therefore the general indicative decrease in retail volume and value between November and December 2015, set against the general increases over the same period, are indicative of tentative recovery in spending and thus consumer confidence, which is reflected throughout most of Europe (see figure 6 from EuroStat records of retail turnover from 2006 to 2014⁴²).

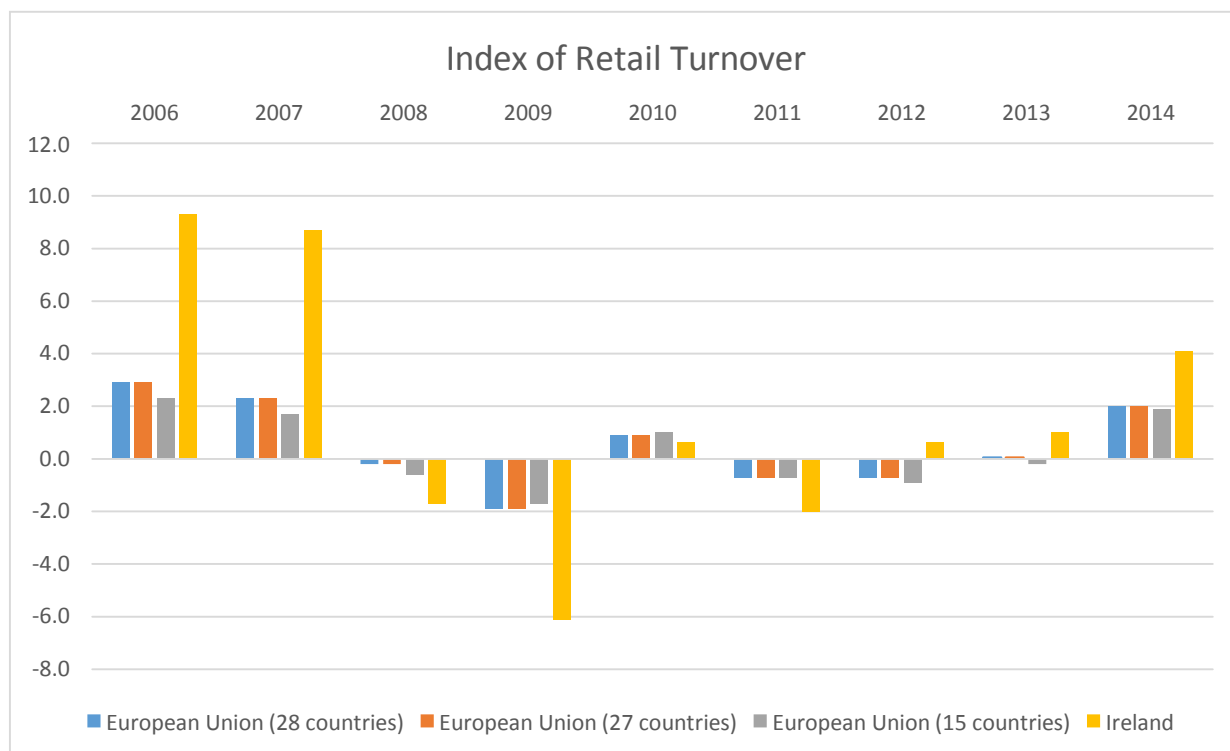


Figure 5 EuroStat Index of deflated Retail turnover (except of motor vehicles, motorcycles and fuel)

- 1.12 Prices on average, as measured by the EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), increased by 0.2% compared with December 2014 but showed the same decrease of -0.01% between November and December 2015 as the CPI⁴³.
- 1.13 Irish consumer confidence, expressed as sentiment, is increasing in January 2016 from 103.9 in December 2015 to 108.6⁴⁴ and endorsed by ESRI economic commentary which is showing expected marginal increases in consumer expenditure for 2016 of 3.4% , which is down from 3.6% in 2015 but improved from -0.08% in 2012, -0.3% in 2013 and 2% in 2014⁴⁵. See figure 6.

⁴¹ CSO statistical release, 28 January 2016, 11am, Retail Sales Index, December 2015 (Provisional) November 2015 (Final)

⁴² EuroStat, accessed, January 2016, Calendar adjusted data, not seasonally adjusted data Percentage change compared to same period in previous year

⁴³ Consumer Price Index, CSO statistical release, 14 January 2016, 11am December 2015

⁴⁴ KBC Ireland/ESRI Consumer Sentiment Index, ESRI, 2016

⁴⁵ ESRI, Quarterly Economic Commentary Winter 2015, December 2015

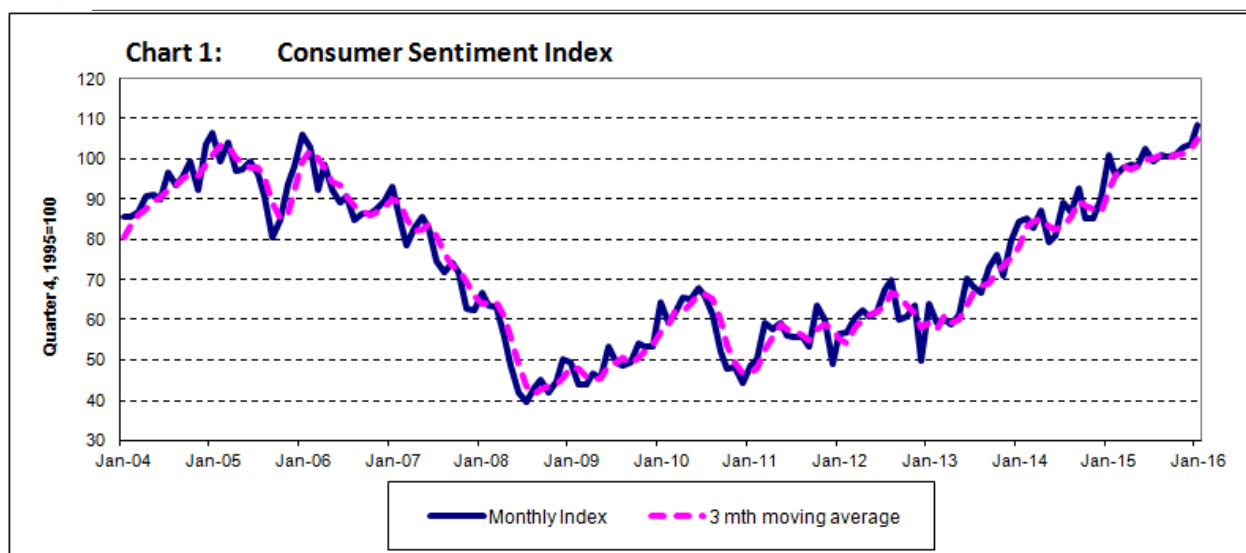


Figure 6 KBC Ireland/ESRI Consumer Sentiment Index, ESRI, 2016

5.4.7 Movement and visitors

- 1.1 No detailed information of county or country origins exist for Louth since the last 2011 census. The CSO does track national levels of in-migration and out-migration. The CSO estimated that rates of national net out-migration have slowed to April 2015 to 11,600; nearly half of the 21,400 estimated out-migration for 2014.
- 1.2 Emigration figures are estimated to be 80,900 for the year to April 2015 compared to 81,900 for the year to April 2014. Immigrants have been estimated to have increased by nearly 9,000 from April 2014 to 69,300 from to April 2015. Emigrants and immigrants have comparable estimated educational attainment levels with an indication that emigrants with post leaving certificate and third level education accounted for 58% as opposed to 60% immigrants⁴⁶.
- 1.3 Fáilte Ireland compiles Visitors to Tourist attractions numbers for the country on an annual basis. The figures for 2009 – 2013 are the most recent complete dataset. These consistently show an over representation of attractions in Dublin City and adjacent counties. However of the 258 attractions recorded only 5 (2%) occur in County Louth. The county may however benefit indirectly by visitors recorded in Meath in relation to Brú na Bóinne attractions (7 no.) and from those visiting Sonairte in Laytown, adjacent to Drogheda.

National Position	Rank	Name of Attraction*	2009*	2010*	2011*	2012*	2013*
Top 50% [ending at no. 129]		n/a					
Bottom 50%	140	Stephenstown Pond, Enterprise, Conference Centre & Nature Way	31,884	30,000	28,000	25,000	18,000
	184	Mellifont Abbey	12,581	14,315	14,224	12,182	8,253
	188	Millmount Museum					6,321
	206	Beaulieu House & Gardens	1,800	1,600	1,700	1,800	4,000
Bottom 10% [beginning at no. 232]	233	Carlingford Heritage Centre	560	450	1,000	900	1,100

Table 3 County Louth attractions.

National Position	Rank	Name of Attraction*	2009*	2010*	2011*	2012*	2013*
Top 25% [ending at no. 65]	36	Brú na Boinne Newgrange	130,083	122,785	132,760	132,649	133,616
Top 50% [ending at no. 129]	71	Battle of the Boyne	41,799	40,334	38,846	62,004	60,796

⁴⁶ Population and Migration Estimates April 2015, CSO, 26 August 2015



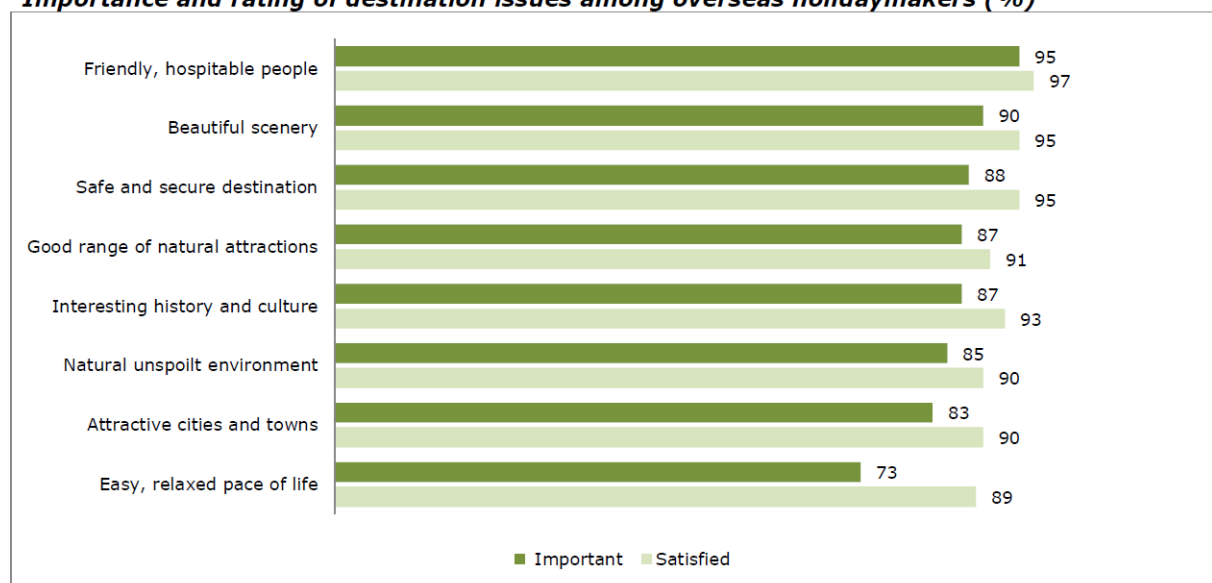
Bottom 50%	80	Brú na Boinne Knowth	51,941	49,414	51,962	54,350	51,138
	92	Brú Na Boinne Visitor Centre	40,406	37,071	43,828	42,481	44,990
	191	Sonairte: The National Ecology Centre	9,500	7,000	5,000	5,000	6,000
	223	Slane Castle	1,800	1,800	2,000	2,050	2,548

Table 4 County Meath attractions from which Louth may benefit.

[NOTE] Rankings shown compiled from Fáilte Ireland, Visitors to Tourist Attractions 2009-2013 dataset information transposed and denoted thus* It seems that the order of display of data indicates that ranking is based on most recent performance.

- 1.4 As identified in the County Development Plan 2015 – 2021, census 2011 returns indicate that Louth contains a relatively high level of holiday homes in its scenic areas. Visitor numbers in the tables above do not reflect visitors to all attractions nor to open countryside and landscapes, and thus visitor types and numbers to the county are higher than indicated in the above survey. Recent surveys of overseas visitors by Fáilte Ireland finds that people, landscape and natural scenery are the strongest attractors for visitors. This profile is expected to be repeated for local visitors with the historic towns of Louth featuring as attractors.(See figure 7).

Importance and rating of destination issues among overseas holidaymakers (%)



Source: Fáilte Ireland's Port Survey of Overseas Holidaymakers 2014

Figure 7 Importance and rating of destination issues among overseas holidaymakers (%) from Failte Ireland, Tourism Facts 2014



6.0 THE LECP CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 1.1 Sections 66C(2) and 66C(3) of the Local Government Act 2014 Act set out the statutory consultation to be undertaken by the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC and the LCDC in developing the economic and community elements of the LECP. In particular, Sections 66C(2) (a)(i) and (3)(a)(i) require that the LCDC consults with members of the public, and publicly funded bodies who may make a contribution to the furthering of the LECP, by publishing a notice inviting submissions to the economic and community elements of the LECP.
- 1.2 Circular LG1/2015 recommended meaningful consultation with the public in general, local communities, organisations and stakeholders in the formulation of the LECP and identifies 2 distinct considerations.
1. Issues identified in the community
 2. The ability of the LECP and the key stakeholders to respond to those issues
- 1.3 It also recommended 3 levels of engagement:
1. Consultation with the actual partners/stakeholders of the LCDC who will have considerable responsibility to deliver the plan.
 2. Consultation with stakeholders in groups/organisations outside the LCDC who also will have considerable responsibility in delivering the plan
 - 3 Consultation with community groups and the general public who will identify specific issues both thematic and on a geographic basis through the PPN, the Older People's Forum and Comhairle na nÓg.
- 1.4 As a consequence, the Louth LECP has been developed with a strong focus on citizen engagement, briefing of elected members, the LCDC and the Economic and Enterprise SPC, consultation with key agency stakeholder informants and continuous liaising with the relevant departments within Louth County Council. Agreed goals, objectives and actions emerged from the initial call for submissions via the socio-economic analysis and have been refined and amended on an ongoing basis.⁴⁷
- 1.5 The consultation process has been underpinned by a number of key objectives to:
- Develop a consultation framework that met the requirements of multiple stakeholders,
 - Maximise the tools available for meaningful consultation in order to stimulate equally meaningful responses;
 - Leverage existing stakeholders and networks to maximise time and resources available;
 - Inspire trust and confidence in a partnership approach that will deliver tangible outcomes and meet the requirements of the LECP;
 - Build on the extensive work undertaken by the statutory and non-statutory stakeholders;
 - 'Listen' locally to harness the best of what already works so that individuals and organisations are empowered to be a vehicle for the future to ensure effective implementation of the LECP;
 - Recognise that our differences are our most valuable assets, and that the process created needs to find a shared and common understanding of what is possible in the future; with the reassurance that it will be monitored, evaluated, reviewed and developed as needs evolve.



⁴⁷ Appendix 3 for list of consultees



6.1 Submissions

- 1.1 Written submissions were invited to the LECP from August 2015 until September 2015. A dedicated email account was made to receive submissions electronically. Invitation was extended to this process via press release, media activity and a dedicated webpage on the Louth County Council website. Individual letters inviting submissions were also sent to the LCDC, Louth Economic Forum, Louth Co Council Strategic Policy Committees and a range of statutory service providers, business interests and other service providers throughout the county. They were accompanied by a reader friendly guide to the LECP. Specific stakeholders in the areas of older people, young people and community development circulated information on the consultation process and promoted it through their own networks and databases.
- 1.2 Persons wishing to make submissions were invited to refer to a Socio-Economic Statement prepared by Louth Co Council Economic SPC as part of the LECP to support the public consultation phase. This statement set out a series of identified draft Economic and Community indicative objectives.
- 1.3 The content of all submissions received was summarised in order to contribute to an 'up to date' profile of Louth; and existing and emergent socio-economic trends. The submissions also enabled the formal identification of some of the stakeholders and actors who are fundamental to drive the objectives of the LECP over this 'design of the Plan' period, and into the next in order "to promote the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities. A total of 12 written submissions were received⁴⁸.
- 1.4 More than 30 meetings were held between September and December 2015 with a variety of agency stakeholder, community representatives and elected members of Louth Co Council to elicit their views on the broad themes of the LECP: employment and economic activity; education, training and skills; and poverty and social exclusion. From these meetings and the analysis of the written submissions consensus began to emerge on high level goals.⁴⁹
- 1.5 A cross-section of Louth Community & Enterprise stakeholders were invited to participate in a consultation 'Partnership in Progress' conference on 14th October 2015 at Bellingham Castle⁵⁰ in Castlebellingham, where motivational guest speaker Mary Davies CEO of Special Olympics Ireland, spoke about the benefits of effective leadership and the partnership approach. The objective of the workshop was to:
- Build understanding about the LECP and its implications for service delivery;
 - Share the draft Community & Economic goals developed with stakeholders and identify how relevant they were for organisations.
 - Identify what actions needed to be taken to help organisations work better together in order to achieve the LECP themes of:
 1. Employment and economic activity
 2. Education, skills development and training
 3. Poverty and social exclusion

⁴⁸ Appendix list of written submissions

⁴⁹ Summary of submissions received

⁵⁰ Appendix xxxxx list of attendees at conference



- 1.6 The consultation comprised of three stages: visioning, comparing draft goals and objectives with individual organisation's corporate objectives, and discussing an approach to more collaborative working.
- 1.7 Organisations were asked to 'vision' their situations in 2020 and what they would have hoped to achieve by then. Inputs were wide ranging and included seeking improvements in physical and mental health, wellbeing and quality of life, infrastructure, good quality housing and sustainability, employment and employers; entrepreneurship and tourism development; education, literacy and work ready skills development; social inclusion, rural isolation, substance misuse and safety and the need to focus on individual needs of citizens in Co Louth throughout the life course.
- 1.8 Participants reviewed the relevance of the proposed goals and objectives to their individual corporate visions, goals, objectives and programmes of work. The overall consensus was that the draft goals were sufficiently broad and rigorous to encompass organisations' remits. Participants believed that two issues in particular should be highlighted.
 - The importance of early child development and education, and,
 - Sustainability as an overriding principle underpinning each of the goals; environmental sustainability and sustainability as legacy.
- 1.9 It was agreed that integrated agency collaboration would be essential to deliver on the proposed LECP goals and objectives.
- 1.10 The final session focused on identifying and prioritising actions and how participants might take a more collaborative approach to service delivery in the context of the LECP.

6.2 Key messages

A number of key messages emerged under a series of overlapping headings: Employment activity, education and skills development, enterprise, access and social inclusion.

6.2.1 Employment activity and skills development

- The key driver here is DkIT and its role in the regional development centre. It is essential that DkIT continues to review and adapt its curriculum to ensure that it provides an enterprise ready workforce that employers can access. It must continue to engage with industry on their future requirements. DkIT must also consider how its programmes reach out and attract marginal groups. It takes 5-6 years for universities to revise their certified programme but there is greater scope to revise short skills courses.
- The third level curriculum needs to be adapted for people with special needs as they have difficulty accessing it currently (DKIT & DCU). There is a need for access to supports for special needs through to main stream at a similar level to second level education. Libraries can play a bigger voice/role for DEIS, children and young peoples' organisations.
- The skills development gap is for people with low skills, there is a lack of support and education for low skill workers. There is a perceived lack of skills development specifically for young people under 18 who have dropped out of education and/or employment.
- Ardee lacks affordable education and training rooms. School room facilities are not accessible outside school term. There is a requirement for affordable development of existing space.
- The recently formed Regional Skills Forum has potential for great impact as stakeholders gain a shared understanding of issues, develops its remit and rolls out.



- ❑ Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB) is a vital framework (including apprenticeship and SOLAS programmes). It is essential that the programmes are enterprise-ready and employers are aware, engage with and input into programme development.
- ❑ A good example of social buy-in is the DSP programmes where there are social contracts with 2% of employees in an apprentice capacity. This encourages employers to think about who they are employing and build in apprentice skills. There is a need to work with PLCs in a similar way.

6.2.2 Enterprise

- ❑ There is a need to provide a one stop integrated service for those seeking employment/job creation via LEO to minimise people being bounced from agency to agency.
- ❑ Organisations require help to develop skills to apply for tenders and to access micro/soft loans to finance new business not available via banks. There is a micro-finance service available.
- ❑ Promote the message that businesses need mentoring regardless of business stage and especially for people applying for start-up grants. It is essential that people with business ideas are mentored on pre-business steps as finance alone will not guarantee success. Ideas workshops need to be provided to help people translate ideas into business reality. Other support structures that exist in Louth include 4 Community Enterprise Centres, IDA & Enterprise Ireland.
- ❑ There is a need for Louth County Council to consider the rates it charges for businesses setting up in derelict areas or areas that require renewal. There is also a need to evaluate the types of businesses and incentives offered to attract the right kind of businesses under the Development Contribution Scheme.
- ❑ The Louth Economic Forum (LEF) is a good structure for public and private interests and detailed plans exist. Businesses have become more specialised than the traditional ICT/Food/Engineering. The county needs to understand what it needs to do to attract specialised industry growth areas e.g. artisan food, sports technology, data analytics, payment and transaction services. There is a need to pick areas to lead in the area of smart hubs and to do a visioning exercise in order to understand what kind of economy we want Louth to be in the future. Then we can align incentives in an integrated way to achieve that vision.
- ❑ There is a need for an integrated vision/brand across the Louth offering including tourism, investment, economy, Louth Leader, green renewable centre and wider economic corridor into that brand. Louth needs to identify a platform upon which to create a message about tourism, enterprise investment and wider economic corridor and match it with incentives to create a vibrant economy.



6.2.3 Access and social exclusion

- There are strategies, policies and resources available nationally that need to be localised. It is important that people know how to access services.
- Two programmes that have potential and could be rolled out mainstream as the models exist include Cúltaca and the Incredible Years Genesis Programme. The Cúltaca model could be adopted for other groups e.g. Travellers, rural isolation etc. In the case of more isolated people, Cúltaca provides a link person between the isolated person and the resources available and helps build capacity, access and connection to relevant



services. The Incredible Years Programme focuses on early childhood and helps those in disadvantaged areas. There is a need for more crèche facilities, playgrounds and recreational facilities for young people.

- Building resilience and managing mental health especially in times of crisis is vital for young people. There is a need to promote the availability of youth specific mental health courses to those who need them and ensure practitioners are available to relevant groups. Youth organisations like Foróige and others run specific courses (PX2 programme).
- Building pride and engagement in communities through role models, existing festivals & sporting events is critical to create more cohesive communities.
- A Volunteer strategy is required for Louth to help volunteer organisations to develop their skills to enable them to engage people and leverage existing networks for greater engagement. We should be developing catalytic volunteers to enable people - especially those who self-exclude - to engage and participate in activities. People who self-exclude often don't have the skills to be part of society. There is a need to approach them in a creative way to build their capacity.

6.2.4 Cross-cutting issues

A number of cross-cutting principles and commonalities began to materialise throughout the discussion.

- ❑ A partnership approach with improved governance, more shared resources and recognition and support of good practice
- ❑ More effective and integrated management of information to support evidence-based planning and reduce duplication of effort.
- ❑ Co-responsibility where communities are empowered and involved in decision making that affects their futures.

Feedback and subsequent ideas and views from stakeholders have formed the basis of the high level goals, objectives and actions for the LECP.



7.0 THE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Economic and community objectives and ensuing actions deliver multiples of their individual goals with the result that no single objective is more important than the rest. As each objective has the potential to drive a net improvement in multiple goals, each objective illustrates interconnectivity. This interconnectivity mirrors the integrated nature of the LECP priorities and assists the required integration of Economic and Community goals, objectives and actions in the plan.
- 1.2 In order to apply logic to the organisation of the draft objectives, each is presented illustrating its impact on its individual goal and has been assigned a running order dictated by the goal; where the greatest impact is expected to occur over the course of the LECP. Where actions appear to be replicated in individual goals, this is to ensure that the full potential of each goal has been interrogated, and shows the mutual interdependency of actions and the requirement for collaborative work practices in their delivery. These interdependencies have been cross-referenced as much as possible.
- 1.3 Actions as stated in the LECP guidance are to be “...specific, time-bound and measurable...” and have been identified in order to achieve the objectives of the LECP. Each action to be achieved over the lifetime of the Plan has been strictly vetted to be measurable, either directly or indirectly by indicator and to be assignable. Where either measurability or assignability is not currently possible then the action identified remains, but waits to be delivered, as appropriate, following each annual statutory review of the performance of the LECP overall objectives and actions.
- 1.4 Actions are allocated under the objectives most likely to be delivered. As a result, any position or numbering of draft objectives is a result of the requirement for organisation and clarity and does not indicate relative importance. Timelines have been agreed with stakeholders but equally will be responsive to individual stakeholder operational plans. Each action is presented in a logic model format:

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
Statement	Lead identified to deliver action Support identified to assist delivery	Time to completion of action	Listed in order to track progress over LECP lifetime

7.1 The implementation process

Implementing the actions in LECP will require further strengthening of working relationships and improving communications processes between the partners in County Louth. The plan sets out lead partners and support partners to deliver on individual actions and proposes timeframes and measures to deliver them. The implementation of the economic elements of the plan will be overseen by the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC on behalf of the Council. The implementation of the community elements of the plan will be overseen by Louth LCDC. Appropriate interagency structures will be established at LCDC level to ensure an integrated approach to delivery and Louth County Council will be the lead agency in monitoring their delivery.

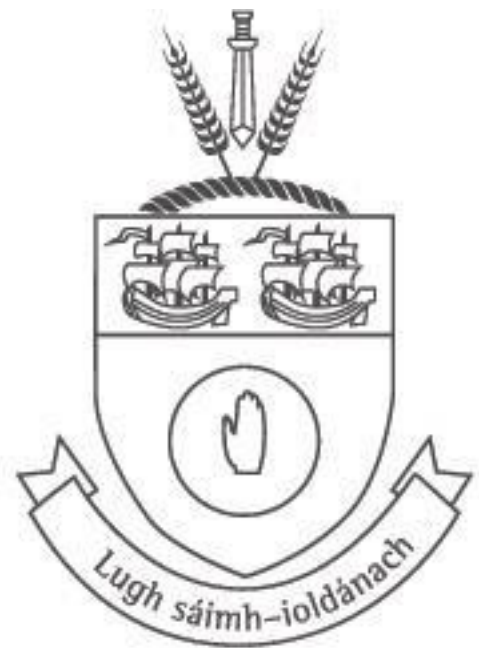
The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and amendments made where required. Additional DECLG guidelines will be observed in relation to monitoring and implementation. The plan will also be subject to potential adjustments on the publication of the proposed National Planning Framework. Louth County Council will report on the implementation of the plan on an annual basis and the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) will also scrutinise the performance of Louth County Council in this regard.



LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

8.0 INTEGRATED PRIORITIES: AN OVERVIEW

A Plan for the promotion of economic and community development in County Louth



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council



8.1 Prosperity Job Creation

8.1.1 Job creation: The pathway to prosperity



Economic, social and moral arguments acknowledge that work is the most effective way to improve the well-being of individuals, their families and their communities. The ability to work is an integral part of individual identity, social roles and social status and is essential for material well-being and full participation in today's society. There is also growing awareness that (long-term) worklessness is harmful to physical and mental health.

Increasing employment and supporting people into work are key elements of *The Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017* (Northeast/North West). The urgency around creating more jobs to enable prosperity was raised consistently throughout the LECP consultation and is a priority for the LECP.

Creating employment opportunities and competitive advantage has been one of the key drivers for Louth LCC, which is in a unique position, as it has the benefit of advice and expertise of a group of highly skilled stakeholders, the Louth Economic Forum (LEF). This group meets on a regular basis to identify and promote the conditions in which jobs can be created, as well as recognising and acting upon activities with economic development potential.

Analysis of live register unemployment figures for Louth shows that there were 439,422 people on the Live Register in the State in February 2012. The figure for Louth was 17,809, the second highest figure among the Border Regions, after Donegal (21,267).

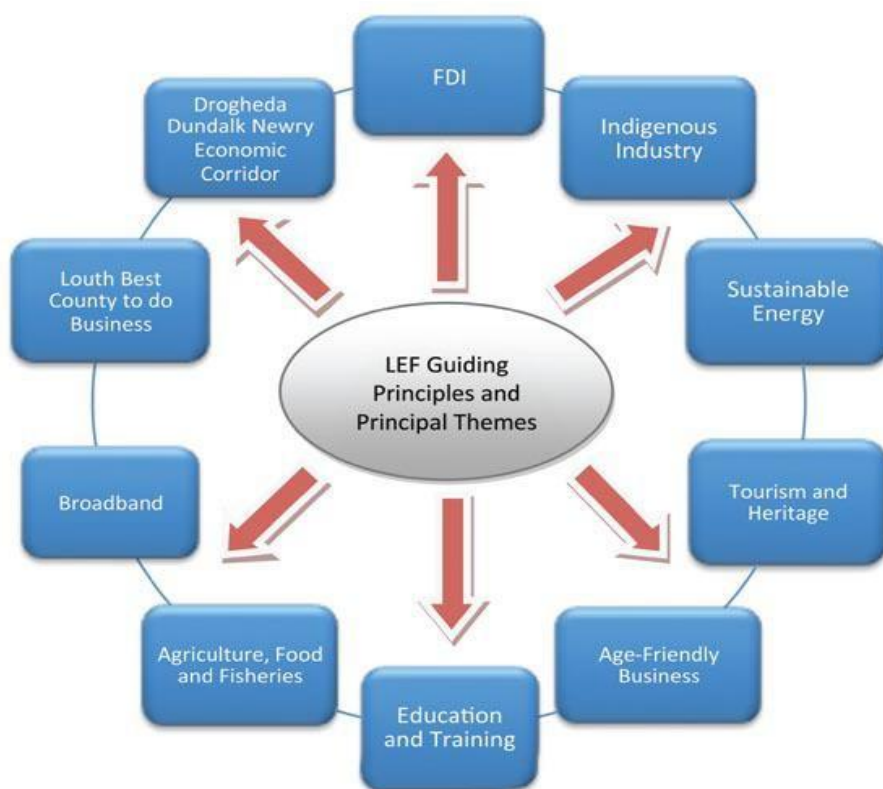
8.1.2 Breaking the cycle of youth unemployment

Unemployment in towns like Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk is most pronounced among young males (under 25 years of age) with low levels of educational attainment living in the more socially disadvantaged areas. Catering for their needs - through up-skilling and preparing them to enter or re-enter the labour market - remains a significant challenge and is currently being addressed by initiatives to achieve more streamlined training and labour activation from the Department of Social Protection (DSP), CTEC, the Louth Meath Education Training Board (LMETB) and SOLAS as well as proactive facilitation of job creation by the private sector (indigenous and foreign direct investment) which in Co Louth has been encouraged and promoted by the Louth Economic Forum (LEF).

One of DSP's priority groups continues to be young people (18 - 25). Intensive engagement with this group will continue throughout the period of the LECP which will also include working with young people with disabilities. People with disabilities in general have been clearly identified as a cohort for DSP engagement and activation under *Pathways to Work 2016 – 2020* and plans are currently being developed at local level to put appropriate supports in place. Intensive engagement with long term unemployed people in Louth has been contracted to Louth Leader Partnership (LLP), Local Employment Services and JobPath, who will be providing a lead role with DSP in this area.

8.1.3 The Louth Economic Forum: Collaboration in action

A key focus of the LEF, since its establishment in April 2009, has been to implement its economic strategies and actions in a coordinated manner. It was decided to get the collaboration of the State development agencies and the business community in Louth to take an active part in the ownership of the strategies through the LEF; recognising the comparative economic strengths and opportunities of Louth's urban centres – Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee - and the county's rural parts, including mid-Louth and the Cooley Peninsula, evidenced in the 2012 Indecon reports.



Louth is characterised by a number of comparative economic advantages and opportunities including its favourable location close to major national and international markets and its world class fibre optic infrastructure in its three main towns. From a total of approx. 60,000 premises, over 50,700 of these will have high speed broadband connectivity by the end of 2016. These figures place County Louth as one of the most connected counties for high speed broadband in Ireland and a major incentive for companies to invest in the county. Louth has developed a position as a leading centre in the country in respect of sustainable energy technologies. Dundalk is Ireland's first designated Sustainable Energy Zone under the European Commission's Concerto Programme (Holistic) (Dundalk 2020). The town's sustainable energy community has achieved a reduction of 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per annum through the promotion of energy efficiency products. These areas have also been highlighted by Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017 as opportunities for the future. The LEF works via its ten point action plan to leverage these strengths to proactively facilitate economic development and job creation.



8.1.4 Louth: Capitalising on Foreign Direct Investment

One of the most striking developments for Louth since the formation of the LEF is the dramatic improvement in the county's FDI's performance; among others, companies as diverse as PayPal, E Bay, Yapstone, Actavis, International Fund Services (IFS), Prometric and Cargotec are now well established in the county.

The LEF's role in facilitating these jobs has been its marketing and selling of Louth as a host location through the packaging of the county's comparative economic strengths; including suitable sites for development, and ensuring the availability of a panel of experts to deal with queries from investors through IDA Ireland. Actively promoting Louth for FDI also includes promoting ConnectIreland.com to the people of Louth, who in turn can target the diaspora and other players overseas to consider Ireland as a place to connect with the EU market.

Looking to the future in its recently published FDI plan, the LEF envisages that the best growth and employment opportunities for Louth will be FDI including bio-pharmaceuticals; global business services including financial services, high-value manufacturing and key indigenous sectors; agri-food, renewable energy technologies and tourism. Planning permission has been obtained for two major BioPharma facilities and related high quality office developments at the IDA Dundalk Science & Technology Park at Mullagharlin, Dundalk and if investment is secured, a further benefit will come in subsequent jobs as the impact is felt in the greater economy.

The IDA is the primary agency engaged with securing internationally funded business development in Ireland. The Council and the LEF recognise the locational and quality of life advantages that Louth has to offer. In this regard, it has undertaken a review of Drogheda in order to identify two locations suitable for accommodating larger scale employment - generating uses suitable to be marketed to outside investors. In this way, Louth aims to attract and retain potential outside investment sources in the county.

An essential element in winning investment in global business services is to have a good supply of quality office accommodation. It is also particularly dependent on availability of skilled staff with third level qualifications at a minimum. Louth has had success in the Global Business Services with companies like PayPal, eBay, IFS, Vesta, and SMT Fund Services locating here. Dedicated response to their needs is essential. DkIT's willingness to work in partnership in response to the graduate needs in IFS and SMT Fund Services was perhaps the single most important intervention in securing their presence. This spirit of partnership was cited many times during the LECP consultation phase and was seen as an essential component in the future delivery of the Plan.

8.1.5 Louth LEO: Stimulating entrepreneurship

The Louth Local Enterprise Office (LEO) performs a central role in the economic well-being and growth of County Louth and works closely with all economic actors and stakeholders in the region. Louth LEO promotes entrepreneurship, fosters business start-ups and develops existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high quality supports that will enhance businesses in County Louth. Its key priority is to promote job creation and job retention in the county. While the recent sustained drops in the live register figures nationally and locally are very welcome, Louth still has higher than average unemployment rates. The LEO will continue to focus on developing programmes and directing funding to projects that have potential employee growth.



The overall population of Louth and its hinterland is set to grow to almost 190,000 by 2015; with a population within a 60-kilometre radius of Drogheda at 1.7m while the equivalent figure for Dundalk is over 764,000. Drogheda and Dundalk are ranked as the 1st and the 3rd largest population catchment areas in the country and provide a wealth of opportunities for indigenous employment and a strong skills set to employers. In capitalising on the skills and talent available to them, employers will be supported by Louth LEO's strategic objectives, underpinned by targeted actions to:

- provide high quality business and advisory services;
- provide high quality enterprise supports to grow new and existing businesses;
- foster entrepreneurship, and
- contribute to Local Enterprise development services.

Apart from the wide range of supports offered by Louth LEO, a range of enterprise initiatives for local entrepreneurs, including information about the range of supports are available at DkIT to promote and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in the county. Researchers at DkIT are also targeting a number of sectors including IT and software development, renewable energy technologies, active ageing and creative arts.

8.1.6 Louth: A premier food producer

Louth has a long tradition in food and beverage production dating back to the 18th century; testament to the local availability of raw materials. The government's food strategy *Harvest 2020* asserts that desired growth in the food sector will depend on improved productivity, increased scale, targeted research, and enhanced skills and organisational capabilities. The Louth County Development Plan supports low-impact rural and marine resource-based industrial, commercial, business and service uses that contribute to diversification and growth of the rural economy, and which are intrinsically linked to the rural area. Louth LEADER programme's priorities reiterate the benefits of agricultural diversification, documented in the LEF's agriculture strategy and in the LECP, and states that among its key priorities will be:

- provision of tourism facilities: including the renovation of farm buildings for tourism purposes, walking, cycling, angling, pony trekking, and bird watching;
- development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, specialty food provision, and open farms;
- development of farm shops selling home/locally grown and manufactured products; organic food production and marine based enterprises including mariculture; and low-impact rural and marine resource based industry/commercial/business.

The LEF strategy for agriculture envisages Louth as a premier producer of fresh, natural, safe, and quality food products for domestic and export markets. It will be delivered by entrepreneurial and skilled personnel using sustainable methods, processes and resources. Louth already has a proven track record of successful foreign owned food companies such as H.J Heinz Company in Dundalk, which produces Weight Watchers ready meals, and Hilton Food Group, a specialist meat packing company. Louth has also recently enjoyed significant success in the attraction of new non-food foreign direct investment, confirming its attractiveness as a location for new inward investment.

From a skills and 'work ready' perspective, DkIT has an established track record in the delivery of programmes in the agriculture and food area. Through its links with Ballyhaise Agricultural College in Cavan, it provides a number of agriculture programmes including a programme in sustainable agriculture. It is hoped to develop an agri-food



undergraduate programme there and other part-time programmes to support the Agriculture and Food sector. DkIT also carries out research and development in the food sector and can provide enterprise support through the work of the Regional Development Centre.

8.1.7 Louth's Marine industry: Realising its potential

With its long and accessible seaboard, Louth is an ideal location for production of marine based products and fresh fish, including shellfish and seafood in places like Dundalk, Greenore, Carlingford and Clogherhead, where these activities are being successfully combined with tourism and leisure events. The latest Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) *Strategy for Small and Fishing Dependent Communities in Louth, Meath and Dublin* addresses the coastal fishing dependent communities from Omeath in Louth to Howth in Dublin. The strategy prioritises seafood products for new markets, the north east Coastal Trail, training and diversification for fishing communities, and enhancing harbour, pier and coastal infrastructure.

One of the LEF's aims is to establish a smart Agri/Food/Fish cluster of innovation companies in the north east region for the development of new products, added value products and new markets, where technology can foster increased productivity and quality.

The LEF agriculture, food and fisheries action plan notes that part of Louth's marketing strategy is to highlight the region's green credentials. It will focus on employing Bord Bia's *Origin Green* initiative in partnership with industry, where companies will be encouraged to participate in a unique accredited quality assurance scheme and sustainability programme. Such a strategy indicates the commitment of farmers, fishermen and food producers to sustainable development; meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the capacity of future generations.

8.1.8 Louth's retail development: Seizing the opportunity

Retail development in Louth is to be led for the period 2015 – 2021 by the recently adopted County Development Plan and its Retail strategy. In line with the settlement hierarchy for the county and retail planning guidelines, new retail development is to be sequentially driven to core retail areas on a hierarchical basis to the Gateway of Dundalk with Drogheda (Level 2) followed by Ardee and district centres around Drogheda and Dundalk (Level 3); then local and neighbourhood centres, smaller towns and villages (Level 4) and finally; the lowest level (5) corner shops and small villages. The Retail strategy was supported by household, shopper and retail floor space surveys, which were set against projected population growth which identifies additional comparison and convenience retail floorspace requirements for both Dundalk and Drogheda, with lower levels required for Ardee and other centres providing new retail floor space on a case by case basis. In view of the existing supply of bulky goods, retailing space and lands, no additional provision for this retail land use category has been made for the current Development Plan period.

These surveys identified vacancy rates for the core shopping areas of Dundalk, Drogheda and Ardee; finding levels of 17% for Dundalk (of 241 buildings), 21% for Drogheda (41 buildings) and 13% for Ardee (129 buildings) which are favoured for reuse as retail stores. We find that vacancy rates for the towns surveyed in 2013 were comparable to national rates at around the same time (see figure 1) below, with only Drogheda exceeding average vacancy rates. The Retail strategy identified the undesirability of the higher rate of vacancy in the core retail area of Drogheda and in an effort to reverse retail vacancy rates, goes on to identify Retail Opportunity Sites in all 3 core shopping areas suitable for modern retailing formats.

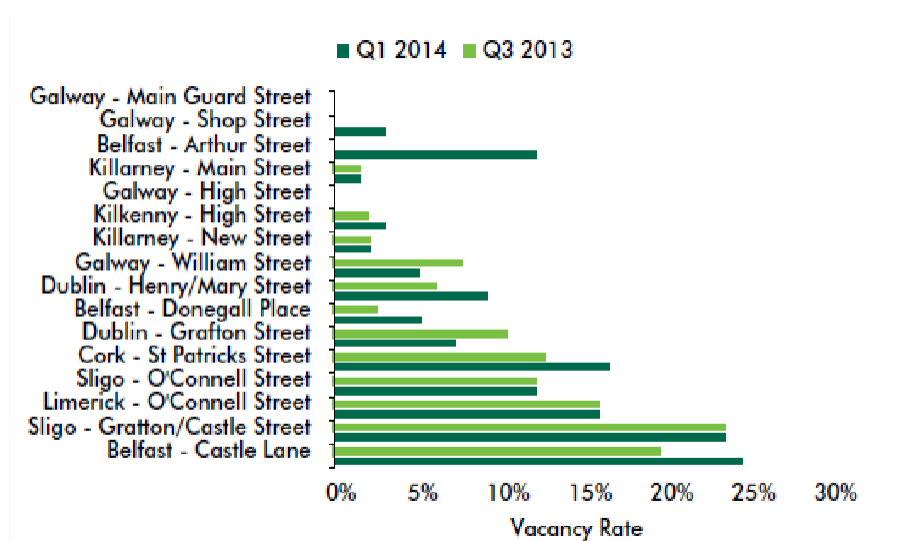


Figure 8 High Street Vacancy Rates Q1 2014 v Q3 2013 Source: CBRE Research, Ireland Retail MarketView Q1 2014

8.1.9 Louth's older people: Our asset

The active ageing sector is becoming more important as people live longer and the age-dependency ratio is expected to increase in the coming years. Louth is the first county in Ireland to earn the World Health Organisation (WHO) designation as an 'Age-Friendly City'. The economic significance of initiatives like The Great Northern Haven which is a collaboration between LLA and DkIT; resulting in a purpose-built development of 16 smart-technology apartments for older people, fifteen of which are occupied by older people participating in the project and the sixteenth unit acting as a demonstration and transitional unit is that they act as another positive differentiator for Louth.

Louth is also playing a pioneering part in the development of age-friendly technologies; for which markets are likely to expand in the medium term. Its age-friendly status puts it in a comparably strong position to attract firms active in new technologies designed to meet the needs of older people; along with with DkIT's research and innovation strengths in age-related technologies through its Netwell (Nestling Technology for Wellness) Centre and CASALA (Centre for Affective Solutions for Ambient Living Awareness). The LEF has also contributed to greater awareness of the economic opportunities concerning older people through a number of initiatives with local Chambers of Commerce; thereby helping to further raise the profile of Louth nationwide and internationally. LEO, Louth LEADER and LMETB in different ways facilitate the engagement and reactivation of older people with the labour market.

8.1.10 Louth's young people: Giving them the skills

A demographic profile of the Louth's youth population undertaken by Louth Youth and Children's Services in 2012 indicated that the county's youth population is likely to increase to over 28,000 by 2026. Drogheda has experienced the largest growth in youth population in the county: the number of young people in the town increased by 12 per cent between 2006 and 2011. Dundalk, however, has the largest youth population with over 4,500 10 to 18 year olds. The proportion of young people is highest in the rural areas of the county.



Statistics relating to poverty levels, disability, ethnic minorities, young people as carers, and young people at risk generally present many challenges to the partners who will be delivering the LECF, and places a major onus on them to deliver on governmental outcomes set out in its strategy for children and young people: *Better Outcomes, Better Futures* where 5 priorities are placed to the forefront: health and wellbeing, education and skills development, safety at every stage of stage of their development, economic prosperity and engagement with and connectivity to society. The LECF addresses this focus via a partnership approach in a number of different ways; including pathways to employment, education and creating access for those who may be socially excluded through physical disability, class, gender or creed.

The Department for Social Protection (DSP) is working with the 'harder to reach' cohort of young people and facilitating entry to the work force through its various schemes. It has also introduced a number of special initiatives in the north east under the Youth Guarantee which are aimed at getting young people back into employment. DSP has also worked with local companies and organisations to provide opportunities for local unemployed youth through the Louth LEADER Partnership and a variety of local employers. LMETB is partnering in providing appropriate programmes to assist school retention, transition; ensuring that young people are work ready, providing re-skilling opportunities for the 18-24 age group who are out of work for long periods, as well as anticipating the future needs of employers across a broad spectrum of needs from technology to tourism.

8.1.11 Traveller employment: A fresh focus

Research has demonstrated that Travellers and Roma are the most marginalised groups in the labour market, experiencing barriers including:

- Literacy confidence (to a greater extent than literacy problems)
- Educational qualifications – particularly where the Leaving Certificate is an entry level requirement for jobs
- Ageism – particularly for those older workers who have not had the opportunity to complete the Leaving Certificate
- Prejudice and racism
- Confidence.

The government-appointed *Task Force on the Travelling Community* (1995)⁵¹ provided an important insight into the unique nature of the Traveller economy, explaining that what distinguishes the Traveller economy is not so much the particular economic activities that Travellers engage in but the distinct manner in which these activities are organised'. Research from Pavee Point and elsewhere⁵² identifies a number of key features of the Traveller economy:

- Nomadism – where mobility makes marginal activity viable
- A focus on income-generation rather than job-creation
- An emphasis on self-employment
- The extended family as the basic economic unit
- Home-base and work-base are one and the same

⁵¹ Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995): *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*. Dublin: Government Publications.

⁵² Pavee Point (1993): *Recycling and the Travelling Community: Income, Jobs and Wealth Creation*. Dublin: DTEDG, and McCarthy, D., and McCarthy, P. (1998): *Market Economy: Trading in the Traveller Economy*. Dublin: Pavee Point Publications.



- Flexibility – often in response to market demands

According to the Task Force report these core features are key to enabling Travellers to make a profit in what may be considered by others to be non-viable areas. In its submission to the LECP, Pavée Point asserts that as part of this, *Recognition of Prior Learning* (RPL) needs strengthening, and that ‘any unnecessary barriers or entry requirements for employment should be removed, as there is a risk that such provisions may lead to undermined access to employment for Travellers’.

8.1.12 Cross border collaboration: Towards better economies

The Action Plan for Jobs Northeast/North West highlights the benefits of cross border collaboration to further economic development. Cooperation between LLA and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has been enhanced by an MoU setting out the basis of the Strategic Alliance between the two Local Authorities, where it seeks to support and promote the economic development and competitiveness of the cross-border region in which they are located. The Low Carbon Business Network, which aims to become a leader in the development and application of low carbon technologies, and which is a key driver of regional sustainable economic development has been strengthened in its location, midway between the two sustainable energy communities in Dundalk and Newry.

8.1.13 Tourism: A route to employment

The Action Plan for Jobs Northeast/North West also notes that tourism will be one of the key indigenous development opportunities to encourage employment at local level. Louth’s position on the east coast, its transport infrastructure and its proximity to Dublin is a further catalyst serving to develop tourism and enhance local employment in the county. Its Tourism and Heritage strategy focuses on three pillars: heritage and culture, recreation and leisure, and the arts, food and festivals. Each of these elements resonates with national tourism policy, and the opportunities offered by *Ireland’s Ancient East Strategy* further strengthen its value proposition.

Creating more physical cross-border links together with the development of the Cooley, Mourne Gullion region for tourists and visitors continues to be explored. With the help of funding from Louth County Council and Newry and Mourne District Council and through the East Border Region Committee, the ambitious Cooley, Mournes and Ring of Gullion Geo-Tourism Project is being developed. In addition, Louth’s vibrant arts scene further enhances its value proposition through attracting niche audiences to various arts events. These audiences then have an opportunity to sample the county’s other attractions. The LEADER programme has also identified growth opportunities in this area and these initiatives should drive new employment opportunities for arts practitioners and communities at local level.



8.2 Access to education and skills development

8.2.1 Creating opportunities



Education has an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities and encouraging families to participate fully in social, civic and working life. The economic impact of education and training has been a key selling point for Ireland and central to Ireland's economic prosperity generally, and this has encouraged and continues to deliver an increased output of high quality graduates into the labour force.

However, the need for equality of opportunity, active inclusion and access to education throughout the life course were among the core principles underpinning round table discussions throughout the consultation phase of the LECF. Delegates noted that the benefits from investment in skills at all levels are numerous, and have positive economic social and cultural consequences. Evidence shows that a focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills has a significant impact on employment potential; while community education empowers people to grow in confidence in their own employability and engage effectively with the labour market. Not only that, the sense of self worth and self-esteem arising from gainful employment are a platform upon which positive community participation and engagement can flourish.

The HAASE Deprivation Index lists Louth as being the ninth most disadvantaged LCC area nationally, with significant disadvantage and low educational attainment to be found in the urban areas of Dundalk and Drogheda, paralleling former RAPID designated areas. In relation to rural deprivation, the areas of Castletown and Westgate have significantly high levels of unemployment and low educational completion rates for adult populations. The fastest growing areas of population in Louth include Carlingford, Collon and Termonfeckin.⁵³

Table 1 *Principal Economic Status - Population Aged 15 Years and over
Co. Louth (CSO 2011)*

Principal Economic Status – Population Aged 15 years and over	Louth
Population	122,897
Unemployed having lost or given up job	12,725
Student	10,143
At work	44,232
Unable to work due to sickness /disability	4,929
Looking after home or family	9,108

Table 2

Highest Level Education Completed – Population over 15 years	Louth
No formal education	1,396
Primary education	12,761
Lower secondary	15,312
Upper secondary	15,348
Technical or Vocational Qualification	6,956
Advanced Certificate	4,508
Higher Certificate	3,677

⁵³ LMETB 2015



Pathways to Work (2012) notes that Ireland performs very well on a range of key international education indicators, stating that most of our young people are strongly positioned to move into employment and contribute to economic growth. Ireland is already exceeding European targets for 2020 on early school leaving, tertiary education attainment, early childhood education and post primary achievement in reading and science. What is of concern is that the performance of the broader adult population and engagement with lifelong learning in Ireland is low by European standards.

8.2.2 Meeting future need

SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, is tasked with ensuring the provision of 21st century high-quality Further Education and Training (FET) programmes which are responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy. Its strategy 2014-2019 notes that employers lie at the heart of skill needs, while the learner lies at the heart of the FET service. The strategy recognises that *'skills are a resource for economic growth and for job creation; they drive increased productivity; they can affect the 'smartening' of economies where jobs are becoming knowledge intensive. They are an enabler to a better society. Having the requisite skills acts as an insulator from unemployment: as job security gives way to labour market flexibility and the focus moves from a 'job for life' to 'work for life'*. SOLAS overall aim is to increase the supply of 'job ready' individuals through the further development and roll-out of effective FET work-based learning models, including new employer-led apprenticeships and traineeships, particularly in the early phase of the FET strategy roll-out.

The SOLAS strategy is being implemented at a local level through a number of providers including Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) which aims to achieve a world class integrated FET system, highly valued by learners and employers, where a higher proportion of those who engage in FET - including those with barriers to participation - stay engaged with FET, complete qualifications, transition successfully into employment or, where appropriate, move into higher level qualifications in FET or HET.

Both the *Pathways to Work*, and the *Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2020* advocate a multi-agency approach to targeting persons who are long term unemployed /or actively seeking work. The aim is to encourage and enable participation of those who are unemployed in courses and programmes, thereby facilitating improved educational attainment levels, up skilling in key competencies and skills acquisition. This ultimately results in improved self-esteem and personal confidence levels for participants.

8.2.3 Facilitating access

The Department for Social Protection (DSP) ensures further training and upskilling via its contracted service provider CTEC which provides training programmes for those who are educationally disadvantaged and ensures equality of access to its training programmes. The LMETB, SOLAS and Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) are already working closely together to engage with the target groups⁵⁴ in Louth; collaborating with the DSP and providing incentives to further education and training; with the intention of getting as many people back into the workplace or newly employed. Employment and education programmes are playing an important role in enhancing individual employability.

⁵⁴ Appendix Target groups



A key objective of *Pathways to Work 2016-2020* is to ensure that employment programmes are work-focused while also ensuring an appropriate supply of labour market relevant, locally/regionally adaptive training and education. The region's economic profile indicates a broad mix of agricultural businesses, local indigenous and multi-national industries e.g. Paypal, Rank Xerox, Ebay, Glen Dimplex and Horsewear. What is emerging from discussion with employers is that they need graduates or workers who, on joining the work force, require minimum training and are as 'work ready' as they can possibly be for fast-moving sectors.

8.2.4 Leveraging third level networks

At third level, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) has earned a reputation as the leading higher education provider in the north east. It provides quality educational opportunities in a broad range of disciplines from undergraduate degree to PhD level. As a major resource in the region, it is a key stakeholder in ensuring that industry and business skills requirements are met through its capability to provide high level research and innovation. DkIT has shown its willingness to respond quickly to the ever changing educational and training needs of both business and industry sectors; a point also raised in discussion preceding the writing of the LECP. Employer networks have been established to liaise with educational institutions to enable development of targeted education programmes to meet existing and future skills needs.

PLC colleges, Ó Fiaich Institute of Further Education and Drogheda Institute of Further Education, working in partnership with DkIT, are founding members of NEFHEA (*North East Further and Higher Education Alliance*) which aims to provide improved progression opportunities for learners in the region; while ensuring complementarity of service provision, best use of resources and ease of transfer across institutions. Employers facilitate work placement for 1,500 PLC students annually as well as supported employment placements, and pre-apprenticeship in company courses. The importance of these networks was stressed in the consultation process for the LECP. Provision of in-company training courses as part of the *Skills for Work Programme* and part-time flexible, blended learning opportunities afforded in PLCs, enables the up-skilling of existing employees. This was a point also raised during the LECP consultation. Managers believed that better educated staff were more motivated to achieve better results.

8.2.5 Creating pathways to third level

Throughout the LECP consultation, numerous references were made to DkIT's potential to address issues of access to education and inclusion by providing an entry to further education and lifelong learning for those who are either returning to education, or for those who have not had the opportunity to pursue third level education due to disadvantage or marginalisation. DkIT has an excellent access record; their statistics show that 80% of students attending the college are first in their families to undertake a degree programme⁵⁵.

As part of its commitment to the wider community, DkIT has been running the *Certificate in Skills for Independent Living* for 5 years and to date has had more than 40 graduates. This programme enables learners with an intellectual disability to develop relevant knowledge and competence, and to be able to use a range of skills under supervision so that they will develop a lifelong learning ethos together with the opportunity of inclusion in third-level education.

⁵⁵ DkIT internal survey of new students 2012/2013



With many students attending from outside the county, DkIT's undergraduate and post-graduate student population has mushroomed; masters and doctoral students are engaged in traditional PhDs, enterprise oriented PhDs and professional doctorates aimed at lifelong learning. Its strong research portfolio focusing on four research and development themes is responsive to the forward looking innovation agenda discussed in the LECP, and each demonstrates the potential to collaborate in future partnerships to advance Louth's economic ambition. They include:

- Ageing and Health (with Centres in Smooth Muscle Research and Assistive Living/Technologies (Netwell Centre);
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation (with Centres in Entrepreneurship Research and the Regional Development Centre which co-ordinates the Institute's Industrial Innovation programmes);
- Informatics and Creative Media (with a Centre in Software Technology and emerging research in Humanities, Music/Music Technology & Creative Media);
- Sustainable Energy and Environment (with Centres in Renewable Energy and Freshwater Research).

8.2.6 Communiversity: A new model

Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP) provides a variety of skills development, training courses and 'back to work' programmes for those hardest to reach in collaboration with DSP. It also offers a range of community development and social inclusion training programmes; promoting social stability and prosperity by empowering participants with the skills needed to contribute toward building a better future for their communities in areas ranging from pre-development training, specific skills training, interpersonal training; organisational training and Community health awareness training. A recent and very successful pilot initiative was the Communiversity programme; an innovative adult education programme delivered by Louth Leader Partnership in conjunction with Maynooth University, under The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2015 – 2017. It entailed a collaboration with Louth County Libraries, one morning per week, and offered participants the opportunity to experience facilitated discussions and debates of higher education in the familiar surroundings of their local community. One of the aims of this programme is to de-mystify the idea of higher education in the minds of people who may feel alienated from universities and academics; the fact that it took place in the more informal library setting reinforced the important facilitative role held by local libraries. As part of the Communiversity Programme, students explored subject areas such as Local History, Psychology, Community Development and Youth Work, without the added pressure of exams or assignments.

LLP currently implements the *Back to Work Enterprise Allowance* scheme and the *Short Term Enterprise Allowance* scheme in Co. Louth. The schemes are provided by the Department of Social Protection as nationwide schemes to encourage and support unemployed persons who can return to the work force as self-employed persons. Supports provided also include assistance with paperwork, small financial assistance for start-ups and support for relevant training. The LLP *Start Your Own Business skills* development programme has been designed to address the needs of those wishing to start their own business, or those who have recently started trading. It is aimed at providing practical support, advice and guidance in a broad range of business areas.

TÚS is another partnership initiative between the LLP and DSP. Prospective participants are selected at random from the unemployment register, and contacted by their social welfare office. It offers a wide range of meaningful and quality work placements ranging from social care of all age groups and people with disabilities, coaching of sporting activities, community development, administration, caretaking, renovation and event management and work in support of cultural, heritage and environmental activities. Participants work 19.5 hours a week and the placement lasts 12 months.



Current job sponsor organisations throughout Co. Louth include the Irish Wheelchair Association, Action Against Addiction (N.E), Men's Sheds, Ardee Celtic, Women's Aid, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and a multitude of District Development Groups, local Tidy Town Committees, Family Resource Centres and Charities. The scheme has an enormous community impact; it not only enhances the skills and employability of those who participate, it provides social engagement, connectivity, and in many cases, care for its recipients.

One of DSP's priority groups continues to be young people (18 - 25). Intensive engagement is proposed for this group continuing 2016 – 2020. It will also include an emphasis on working with young people with disabilities. People with disabilities in general have been clearly identified as a cohort for DSP engagement and activation under *Pathways to Work 2016 - 2020*. Plans are currently being developed in Louth to put appropriate supports in place.

8.2.7 Libraries: Supporting skills development

Libraries across the county have hosted numerous visits by school classes, adult students and other groups. There has been much work carried out in the expansion of IT facilities for the public with obvious developmental and educational benefits. These include courses for public use on terminals, public cards for use on public internet terminals and the provision of a wide selection of CD ROMs and talking books. Libraries also facilitate literacy and other skills development training programmes in partnership with service providers, as well as providing platforms for arts-based events.

8.2.8 Traveller education: Targeting the need

Census 2011 highlighted the following statistics with regard to Travellers in Ireland and their educational attainment:

- 55% (of Travellers whose education had ceased) had completed their education before the age of 15, compared with 11% for the total population.
- Only 3.1% continued their education past the age of 18, compared with 41.2% for the total population, and only 1% of Travellers progressing to third level education (compared with 31% of the settled population).
- The percentage of Travellers with no formal education in 2011 was 17.7% compared with 1.4% in the general population.

Studies undertaken refer to education attainment and negative experiences of Travellers in school:

- The *Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS (2011)* found that the educational attainment of Travellers remains significantly lower than that of their settled peers in both reading and mathematics. The magnitude of the difference between the scores of the two groups is large in every case.⁵⁶
- The *2012 State of the Nation's Children* report found that Traveller children, immigrant children and children with a disability are more likely to report being bullied at school.

A government-appointed Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995)⁵⁷ provided an important insight into the unique nature of the Traveller economy, explaining that what distinguishes the Traveller economy is not so much the

⁵⁶ Department of Education (2011) *Report on the First Phase of the Evaluation of DEIS*. Dublin: Department of Education

⁵⁷ Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995): *Report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community*. Dublin: Government Publications.



particular economic activities that Travellers engage in but the distinct manner in which these activities are organised. Research undertaken by the *Equal at Work* initiative in 2003 identified the range of barriers experienced by Travellers with regard to progression in the labour market. These include literacy confidence (more so than literacy problems); educational qualifications – particularly where the Leaving Certificate is an entry level requirement for jobs; and ageism – particularly for older workers who have not had the opportunity to complete the Leaving Certificate, prejudice in relation to where people live, and confidence.⁵⁸

Pavee Point's submission to the LECP stressed the importance of equality of access for travellers to education that is traveller specific i.e. specific training in self-employment and entrepreneurial skills development. Until 2010, traveller education and training needs in Louth were delivered by a number of traveller education centres dotted around the county. However, with the encouragement of the traveller community, they have been mainstreamed into direct provision delivered under the aegis of LMETB and LLP and other providers as appropriate. There is targeted provision for travellers in second level DEIS schools in Co Louth. Travellers participate on VTOS programmes and on adult literacy programmes run by LMETB. LLP works in the community to address traveller literacy issues with a particular focus on adult education while LMETB includes them in their targeted cohort on the *Back to Education Initiative* (BTEI). In addition, Louth County Libraries facilitates many literacy initiatives for traveller groups.

8.2.9 Adult education: The key to success

LMETB believes that the learner is at the heart of adult continuing and further education provision, and in the design of its courses/programmes LEMTB has consulted with employers and DSP to ensure flexibility, inclusivity and responsiveness to the needs of both learners and the market. The LEMTB has also continued to build on its partnership approach with DSP, LAA and LLP through targeted educational initiatives such as Adult Literacy, VTOS, BTEI Training programmes and Community Education. These programmes have surpassed key government targets for engagement of long term unemployed persons on its courses and programmes. Additionally, LMETB offers significant opportunities for second chance education to young people and adults who may not have completed post primary school. Supports such as literacy and guidance are a critical support available to learners at every stage of development.

Total Number of Beneficiaries in Louth FET Service 2015:

Programme	Beneficiaries 2015
PLC Programme	2,713
VTOS Programme	220
Regional Skills and Training Programme	2,848
BTEI (Back to Education) Programme	1,157
Adult Literacy Service	3,193
Community Education	1,011
Youthreach Programme	245
Evening Class Programme	2,024
Total No. Beneficiaries Louth FET Service:	13,411

A range of measures are in place to facilitate access by target groups - an issue raised throughout the consultation for the LECP - and access to LMETB programmes is supported through appropriate entry arrangements, effective information provision including advertising and recruitment campaigns and availability of programmes and courses

⁵⁸ Murphy, P. (2003): *Report on Community Employment Skills and Progression*. Report carried out by Equal at Work on behalf of South Dublin Public Sector Site



at a number of locations/venues across the LMETB region. Early identification of learner needs to provide appropriate supports such as counselling, guidance and psychological services is also facilitated with the LLP.

8.2.10 Working Together

North East Further and Higher Education Alliance: Improving progression

It has been recognised that progression of learners into further education courses to equip them to take up employment is essential. Clear transfer and progression routes from all courses/programmes have been established across the region as well as continuums of courses, thus enabling progression in qualifications level and ease of progression from one college and centre to another. PLC colleges OFI and DIFE, working in partnership with DkIT are founding members of NEFHEA (*North East Further and Higher Education Alliance*) which aims to promote higher take up of further and higher educational opportunities to all learners in the region and particularly to those groups of learners who are currently under represented. They also seek to provide improved progression opportunities for learners in the region, while ensuring complementarity of service provision, best use of resources and ease of transfer across institutions. Another aim of the alliance is to increase the transition rates of students from the further education colleges in the north east region to DkIT. Innovative courses and programmes are being introduced there to meet the changing needs of the economy. Key areas include ICT, engineering, renewable energies, food science, culinary arts, animal care, sales and marketing, childcare, healthcare, laboratory science, and sports and recreation. For instance, Louth LCC energy office is currently engaging with LMETB and SEAI to develop a Pilot Small Business Energy Assessors training course, where trainees as part of the course, will carry out energy assessments for up to 60 partners from the business community across Louth- Meath, as part of the practical element of the training course.

The ACE initiative: Nurturing entrepreneurs

*The Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship (ACE) initiative: Creating the Entrepreneurial Graduate*⁵⁹ is a joint collaboration of Cork Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, Institute of Technology Sligo and National University of Ireland Galway, which is being led by DkIT. It recognises that to encourage and sustain a vibrant, successful knowledge economy, Ireland must increase its number and quality of indigenous companies and create graduates, irrespective of discipline, who are entrepreneurial thinkers and doers. The ACE Initiative, therefore, seeks to explore how the Higher Education Institutions in Ireland can develop and deliver a framework for embedding entrepreneurship education across all disciplines to fulfil the aim of 'Creating the Entrepreneurial Graduate.'

The LEO Student Enterprise Award schemes lays a foundation for this initiative in second level schools in Louth. It aims to give second level students the chance to think about entrepreneurship and self-employment as a viable career choice, and enhances the teaching of business and entrepreneurship in schools by combining class room learning with business reality.

The LEF Age Friendly Business plan also stresses the fact that upskilling and maintaining older people in the work force or giving them the opportunity to re-enter the work force, whether as employees or entrepreneurs/self-employed is a valuable asset which should be utilised throughout the county at different levels. Louth LEO already uses the skills and experience of older people to act in a mentoring capacity across a number of its programmes.

⁵⁹Louth Economic Forum education and training strategy



8.3 Empowered Inclusive Communities



8.3.1 Louth: Empowering Communities

Louth County Council aims to encourage and support the development of inclusive communities; facilitating equal physical, social and cultural access and integration for everybody in the county. This is supported by one of the Local Economic and Community Plan's key deliverables: a statement of strategies and actions that will guide future development in a sustainable way, deliver more employment and prosperity; encourage increased participation and engagement in local communities, and ensure that everyone, regardless of their means, has access to services and education to enable a better quality of life, health and well-being.

In this instance, quality of life should not be confused with standard of living, which is based primarily on income. Instead, common indicators of quality of life include wealth and employment, the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging; each of these indicators is supported by actions in the LECP. Well-being refers to a person's physical, social and mental state. It requires that basic needs are met, that people have a sense of purpose, and that they feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live the lives they value and have reason to value⁶⁰.

Over its 6 year duration, critical indicators for the LECP will be the extent to which everybody in Louth has equal access to accommodation and employment; equal opportunity to avail of education and skills development throughout the life course, and confidence that they live in an inclusive society where poverty and social exclusion are shunned. This means having a place that can be called 'home' in a well-serviced environment free of anti-social behaviour. It means being able to access available skills development; no matter what age or stage of the course life and having an acceptable standard of living and quality of life, free from poverty.

8.3.2 Louth housing provision: Providing sustainable accommodation

Louth County Council aims to facilitate sustainable communities through the provision of accommodation that responds to the differing needs of local residents through a process of community planning. Its housing provision is managed through the government's *Action Plan for Social and Affordable Housing* which, since the onset of the recession, has focused on providing social housing through lease arrangements with existing property owners, and developers carrying unsold housing stock.

In addition, to normal direct provision by the Housing Authority, accommodation is supported through the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS); an initiative administered by local authorities in support of their social housing programmes. This involves good quality privately owned accommodation being leased on behalf of eligible tenants (people with permanent residency rights in the State who have a long-term housing need, and are in receipt of rent supplement for more than 18 months). The Rental Accommodation Scheme is now additionally, supplemented by a government leasing scheme for unsold affordable houses and a long-term leasing initiative (of 10-20 year lease duration), whereby properties will be leased from the private sector (with rents guaranteed for the whole lease period, but subject to review depending on market conditions) and used to accommodate households from LCC waiting lists. Louth County Council is one of the pilot sites for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) model of Social Housing

⁶⁰ Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015)



Support and continues to promote it. The Housing Authority is therefore quite reliant on provision of suitable dwellings from the private rented sector.

Louth County Council also meets all Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) operating in the county on a periodic basis and is currently working with them to address supply for those with disability issues: mental health disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities or behavioural issues and those experiencing homelessness. Louth County Council has a strong record of working with these voluntary bodies for the provision of general housing needs and now has more than 700 units in use.

Over the period 2015 to 2017, approval in principal has been received from the Department of Environment for the provision of 778 dwelling units of all types. These will be delivered through Construction, Part V provision, Acquisition, Capital Assistance Scheme and Leasing. A similar commitment has been given for securing over 1600 tenancies through the HAP process for the same period.

8.3.3 Louth: Supporting sustainable communities

Sustainable empowered communities desire a sense of pride of place, a sense of belonging and positive self-image within a strong active community framework which involves them in participative community planning and decision-making and supports them through the many life cycle stages. This is reiterated in the most recent government policy document *Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015)*, where it states that local economic regeneration and social cohesion can only be achieved through:

- a strong local government system securing individual and community engagement and participation in policy development, planning and delivery, and decision making processes;
- meaningful engagement with local communities, local development organisations and State bodies;
- robust local collaboration structures that encourage transparency, democratic legitimacy, accountability, participation and evidence-based decision making; and
- support for voluntary activity and active citizenship, underpinned by supporting the capacity of communities to pro-actively engage, as vital elements of flourishing communities.

The Framework for Community development also noted that active citizens:

- support and become involved in different types of voluntary and community activities;
- respect and listen to those with different views from their own;
- play their part in making decisions on issues that affect themselves and others, in particular by participating in the democratic process;
- respect ethnic and cultural diversity and are open to change; and
- welcome new people who come to live in Ireland.

8.3.4 Louth: Enabling wellbeing

County Louth has a long history of involvement in community initiatives and service provision at local level, including libraries, leisure, recreation, arts and amenity facilities and services, as well as estate management, urban and village renewal, tidy towns, 'pride of place' and the operation of community employment schemes. Numerous organisations in Co Louth provide social, health and educational services to enhance social, cultural and economic development in



the county. Apart from the statutory service delivery providers: Louth LCC, the Department for Social Protection, the HSE, An Garda Síochána, The Louth Children and Young People's Services Committee, Louth LEADER Partnership and Louth Meath Education Training Board, there have been many projects funded by the Peace and Reconciliation Partnership through the Peace Programme and delivered in partnership with local communities. Family Resource Centres play an active part in building community capacity in LCC estates. Citizen's Information Services, youth services and other disadvantaged youth projects have high levels of engagement; the Northeastern Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce, the Age-friendly Alliance, traveller support groups, migrant support groups and Volunteer Louth, a support group for volunteers, are active across the county. This was apparent at the consultation conference in Castlebellingham where the spirit of volunteerism and partnership underway in many sectors were palpable.

8.3.5 Louth libraries: A community asset

A network of library services serves individual communities and the county as a whole, and is a valuable social and education resource for local communities providing opportunities for people to engage and connect in with one another. There are five libraries in the county; Dundalk Drogheda, Carlingford, Ardee and Dunleer. Dundalk and Drogheda provide a regional service. Additional services that have been introduced include RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) self service points/kiosks and free Wi-Fi access. The library service continues to expand its collection of eBooks and eAudio downloads. This service allows library members to browse the collection from home and download items to their computer or mobile device. The smaller libraries and mobile library service continue to improve library participation by reaching communities in the more local centres. The mobile library service has continued to extend its range of stops to suit the needs of the community, incorporating as many stops as possible both urban and rural.

Looking at the census 2011 figures which showed that the numbers of people in the 65+ age group increasing by 14.4% in the previous five years, older people are now featuring as an increasingly significant demographic in the communities to be served by public libraries. Public libraries value their older customer base; support for older people is recognised as a natural progression along the route toward a more inclusive service for the entire community. The library service recognises that older users wish to avail of the entire range of library services including access to leisure reading collections, business support and information on health. Over the lifetime of the LECP, the library service will be improving access by older people to information in the library's collection and elsewhere, including information available in other local community agencies and on the Internet, by various means such as the provision of:

- Visual and auditory access: clear signage, appropriate formats; large print books, audio books etc.;
- Physical access: buildings, floor levels, rooms, shelves, toilets etc.;
- Electronic access: information both in the library (PCs, CDs, DVDs) and on the Internet including social media;
- Assistive technologies: low tech magnification devices, MAGIC and/or AFFINITY screen magnification, JAWS screen reading software and Kurzweil text to speech.

They will also continue to provide targeted events, activities and educational programmes that are inclusive of older people.

8.3.6 Louth, a volunteering county

The benefits of volunteering cannot be underestimated in forging more inclusive communities at a local level. This is reflected in the dynamic spirit of volunteerism in local communities in Louth, who are supported by the LCC and in



many cases enabled by Volunteer Louth. British research⁶¹ undertaken in more marginalised communities noted that 'those at risk of social exclusion', including those out of work, with a disability, and ethnic minorities, showed lower levels and less inclination to volunteer. Assessments of the barriers to volunteering for these groups indicated that volunteering should be open to, and inclusive of all social groups. The LECP will provide an opportunity for more volunteerism at local level through the LCDC and PPN structures.

Many organisations work on a voluntary basis in Co Louth, and give their time in the sports and recreation sector. Individuals and community groups participate through the award-winning vibrant Tidy Towns infrastructure, and a lively arts scene is exemplified by local theatre groups, art galleries, individual artists and craft workers, and classical and contemporary music with an international reach and reputation. For many years, the Irish Country Women's association based at An Grianán has made significant impact in creating a social and personal development framework for rural women all over the country. Macra na Feirme and the Irish Farmer's Association also played a capacity building role in the more rural areas and in more remote areas assist in combatting rural isolation. All of these are important and rich interventions that help build social capital, and have been a fundamental part of local and community development to date.

8.3.7 Louth, regenerating our communities

Louth County Council continues to revitalise areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development via social inclusion measures. Louth Leader Partnership supports both urban and rural communities in the county, promoting social inclusion, enterprise development and employment creation; facilitating access to education, training and lifelong learning and assisting community groups to deal with the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage or poverty.

The Pobal-funded RAPID programme, administered by the LCC and focusing on Peace 3 target groups and other local residents in the three JPC LCC areas in Co Louth: Ardee, Drogheda and Dundalk, has made many positive interventions and fostered a collaborative approach to managing issues of concern to local communities. Some general programmes include *The Incredible Years* programme, an area based childhood initiative; a schools based programme for the 4-10 years age group; The *Futsal League* in collaboration with the FAI, and *Midnight Soccer* Leagues for the o18 age group, incentivising positive relationship-building with An Garda Síochána, have been very successful.

Programmes and projects have been delivered in two designated areas of disadvantage in Dundalk over the past number of years: Cox's Demesne and Muirhevnamor, both RAPID and PEACE III target areas, under the guidance of a steering committee consisting of representatives of the local community, the voluntary sector, the LCC, LMETB, SOLAS and An Garda Síochána. These include the redevelopment of Ashling Park, enterprise creation within the Muirhevnamor Community Gardens project; development of community based CCTV system and a range of educational and training related programmes.

The RAPID programme also enabled an interagency response to the identified needs of seven estates there in Drogheda: Moneymore, Yellowbatter, Pearse Park, St Finian's Park, Rathmullen Park, Ballsgrove and Marian Park; targeting anti-social behaviour and installing CCTV; delivering new and improved services, developing health initiatives

⁶¹ Understanding the drivers of volunteering in culture and sport: analysis of the Taking Part Survey 2011



and public education programmes, providing new community facilities and implementing environmental improvements; all of which have encouraged positive engagement with their communities.

8.3.8 Louth, celebrating our older people

Louth leads the way in innovatively forging new directions for older people and ensuring that they are valued. In April 2011, Louth had 13,477 people aged 65 years and over. 51.7% of retired people are male, the rest female. A third of people with disabilities in Louth are age 65+ and there are 4,944 widowed people in Louth, 76.6% of which are female. By 2036, it is anticipated that that older people in Ireland will be 20% of the total population and will include many people over 80.

The National Positive Ageing strategy stresses that Ireland will be 'a society in which the equality, independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people are pursued at all times'. Independence, fulfilment, care, participation and dignity are principles underpinning the Louth Age-Friendly Alliance which endeavours to work in partnership with older people to create an age friendly environment in Louth. Among other elements such as empowering older people, engaging with them across all strands of community life and valuing their contribution, it seeks to enable people to grow older with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. The HSE has acknowledged this need in providing Step Down facilities in Louth County Hospital and the Cottage Hospital, the stroke Rehabilitation unit in Louth County Hospital, the Medical Assessment Unit and GENIO.

Since its inception, the strategy has pioneered a number of direct and indirect initiatives which have enhanced older peoples' safety and quality of life in the county; ranging from establishing a safe age-friendly parks programme, 'walkability' programmes where improvements have been put in place to make rural and urban areas easier, safer and more pleasant places to walk; as well as providing easier access to public buildings, public pavements programmes, and adapting traffic light timings and road and street signage to suit older peoples' needs. Members of Louth Garda Síochána link into the Louth Age Friendly strategy where they undertake to work in partnership with Louth Age Friendly Alliance and the LCC, encourage older persons' participation in Neighbourhood Watch and Community text alert initiatives and other crime prevention initiatives; use local media outlets to promote safety and security and to communicate with older people across the county and visit older persons' groups on a regular basis to promote different Garda initiatives.

Louth is the first county in Ireland to earn the World Health Organisation (WHO) designation as an 'Age-Friendly County' and numerous initiatives are underway under the aegis of the Louth Economic Forum using smart technologies to enhance quality of life for people as they grow older.

8.3.9 Older people: Adding value

International research has pointed to the effectiveness of intergenerational programmes which by their nature emphasise a culture of respect to enhance understanding between older people and younger people. It fulfils older peoples' need to mentor, share and pass on their experience to the younger generation and leads to greater mutual respect ultimately⁶². It has also become apparent that apart from diluting the sense of isolation experienced by many

⁶² *Towards More Confident Communities*, Beth Johnson Foundation



older people and restoring a feeling of self-worth that intergenerational practice and interaction has an important role to play in neighbourhood renewal, and in building stronger community relationships. The value of the intergenerational approach was stressed during the LECP consultation; noting that it gave mutual access and enjoyment to both older and younger people. Delegates declared that it also brings people together in ‘purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations’. In addition, it contributes to building more cohesive communities. *‘Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them’*⁶³.

A number of intergenerational projects⁶⁴ have already taken place in Co Louth under the aegis of Louth County Council’s Age Friendly County and have proven very successful: *DVD Generations*, where Louth County Council and Louth Comhairle na nÓg comprising 3 older people and 3 younger people jointly produced a DVD capturing attitudes of both groups towards one another and *Growing through the Ages*, which involved a collaboration between Louth County Council and groups of younger and older people in creating biodiversity gardens in Ardee and Blackrock. In all, 150 people from 2 years upwards participated. At a consultation focus group meeting of Ardee community safety ‘text alert’ groups, members of the Ardee intergenerational group stressed the value of this kind of activity to the participants.

8.3.10 Louth, encouraging our younger people

National policy for young people *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* highlights 5 keys transformative goals and outcomes for young people from:

- focusing on early interventions and quality services to promoting best outcomes for children, particularly in the vitally-important early years;
- working better together to protect young people who are marginalised, at-risk or who demonstrate challenging or high-risk behaviour;
- setting a target of lifting 70,000 children out of poverty by 2020;
- improving childhood health & wellbeing in line with goals of ‘Healthy Ireland’;
- enhancing job opportunities for young people – building on the ‘Action Plan for Jobs’ and Youth Guarantee; and,
- delivering better supports for families and parenting.

Census 2011 indicates that Louth has the second largest population of young people (35.4%) in the country after Kildare, (35.3%). Louth Children’s Services Committees is responsible for improving the lives of children and families at local and community level through integrated planning, working and service delivery. Louth Comhairle na nÓg encourages young people to be heard and supports them to input meaningfully to decision-making in issues that affect them; they are considered a key stakeholder for the purposes of highlighting young people’s needs and priorities for delivery by the LECP.

Peer leadership programmes and creatively connecting with young people across all social strata through the arts, and sport have sown very positive seeds for future engagement with them. Findings from the 2014 Community Safety Survey of young people pointed to the lack of youth facilities and job opportunities available to them in the county.

⁶³ Beth Johnson Foundation 2001

⁶⁴ Intergenerational Projects: An Overview. Caroline Finn and Thomas Scharf. Irish Centre for Social Gerontology. NUIG



These were issues highlighted during the consultation process for the LECP. Matters relating to young people at risk or those 'harder to reach' are further discussed in the integrated priority on health and wellbeing.

8.3.11 Louth, marking our difference

Where Louth markedly differentiates itself is its border county status, its long standing involvement with the Northern conflict and the repercussions of the conflict north and south of the border. While much progress has been made to alleviate the tensions, the legacy of those times is still very alive in local memory and there are many people who were imprisoned during the troubles, who were 'displaced' during the troubles, who lost family members during the troubles, who were young people growing up during those times or who were associated in one way or another with the fallout of the conflict. Among factors highlighted in the 2014 Community Safety survey by those 'displaced' by the conflict were a belief that they are marginalised through disadvantage, unemployment and poor educational opportunity and their frustration with what they deemed to be the impact of institutional discrimination on, and marginalisation of, a uniquely disadvantaged community with a diverse demographic profile.

Apart from the considerable investment in regeneration of areas where displaced people have settled in Dundalk and Drogheda, programmes such as the *Diverse Leaders' Programme* (LMETB)⁶⁵ which sought to build the leadership skills of minority and excluded groups in the hope of creating more cohesive communities, and the *Aftermath Programme* (Diversity Challenges)⁶⁶ whose aim was to identify and engage a broad range of people impacted by the conflict, (both funded by the PEACE III project) have accomplished an enormous amount. The *Peace of Art Project*⁶⁷ which used the arts as a tool to create links across cultures, languages and religions and aimed to increase understanding of diversity, identity and conflict resolution within the wider community, has also been particularly effective in integrating new communities and dispelling fear and misunderstanding.

8.3.12 Louth, acknowledging diversity

With the rapid social and economic changes in Ireland, the transformation in Louth's population profile since the 2006 census, and the ongoing activity of the PEACE III programme to address this legacy of conflict in the border counties, Louth has also become one of the most diverse communities in the country. There are increased numbers of non-Irish nationals - many of them highly educated and ambitious - who have settled permanently in the county. Figures from the 2011 census reveal in some detail the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the new communities in the county, which serve to highlight the challenges for service providers in building harmonious interaction within communities. Non-Irish nationals accounted for 10.4 percent of the population of Louth. Polish was the most common language spoken at home, while 12,826 persons spoke a language other than Irish or English at home. UK nationals were the largest group (2,018) followed by Polish nationals (1,880). There were 106,845 Roman Catholics in the area at census time. A further 8,882 were adherents of other stated religions (e.g. Church of Ireland, Islam, Presbyterian, Orthodox), while 5,414 persons indicated that they had no religion.

It is worth noting that while different minority ethnic communities and Irish travellers can experience similar problems with regard to racism and discrimination and have similar needs, the reality is more complex. It is also interesting to note that there is a clear link between poverty and racism. Minority groups have expressed concerns

⁶⁵ Muslim community Intercultural day, Men's Shed Dundalk; Culture Connect Drogheda; Louth Traveller Movement; Wellington Hall project; Muirthevnemor Displaced People's Project; Islamic foundation of Drogheda Intercultural Day ;Simul Polonia; Muslim Interfaith Project; Drogheda Civic Trust

⁶⁶ Victims Programme and Displaced Persons' Programme

⁶⁷ 15 multi-disciplinary projects were supported via PEACE III funding.



about the 'one solution fits all' approach to their issues. The Traveller community has expressed particular concerns in this regard. This is borne out by the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 which identifies Travellers, migrants and members of ethnic minority groups as groups vulnerable to poverty and disadvantage.

This factor presents the added challenge of racist behaviour and in many instances acts as an inhibitor to cohesive community building in already marginalised, disadvantaged communities where there is low educational attainment. The critical role of community development work has been highlighted to prevent social polarisation and alienation of these communities. It has also been stressed that involving communities in their own development as well as in shaping the integration process will be critical to ensure community cohesion. In a number of submissions to the LECP, Pavee Point, on behalf of travellers and Roma communities, among other issues, sought more representation and participation in decision-making at local level for their groups and more policies and programmes to support Travellers in enterprise, the mainstream labour market and the Traveller economy.

8.3.13 Louth, affecting peace and reconciliation

The Louth Peace and Reconciliation Partnership's four objectives touched on capacity-building of its target groups to engage meaningfully in anti-sectarian and anti-racist work. It also aimed to build and share learning in a 'safe' space to address sectarianism and racism while appreciating and valuing other cultures and supporting peace-building leadership across the county; encouraging a more inclusive society through relationship building, and facilitating community dialogue. It invested significantly in initiatives to address racism and sectarianism in Co Louth. These have been delivered through focusing on children and young people; supporting the PEACE III target groups including minority communities, local victims and survivors, and displaced persons, and those who experience, and are affected by sectarianism and racism. LMETB, Louth County Libraries, LLP, Creative Spark and other community and voluntary organisations have been instrumental in working with these communities. One particularly effective initiative has been the establishment in 2010 of the Louth Minority Ethnic Consortium, whose members link in different ways with An Garda Síochána and Louth County Council. Its membership focuses on issues of difference, ethnicity, culture and religion; explores issues of racism and sectarianism, and supports conflict resolution and mediation, at a local level in Co Louth and on a north/south basis. Irish travellers, Dundalk Muslim Community, Simul and Louth African Women's Group are members of the group.

8.3.14 Louth, where communities feel safer

One of the most critical indicators for local communities to reflect quality of life and wellbeing is community safety or the perception of feeling safe in a locality. More often than not, their most significant concerns are those relating to safety and security and County Louth is no different. However, where Louth markedly differentiates itself is its border county status, its long standing involvement with the Northern conflict and the repercussions of the conflict north and south of the border.

Results from the 2014 county-wide Community Safety Survey demonstrated that approximately 8 in 10 residents and businesses in Louth responded that they were proud of the area where they live and work; describing it as open and welcoming, and accepting of new people. Through the partnership approach taken to date by Louth Co Co and Louth LEADER Partnership, this sense of place appears to be very strong e.g. exemplified in Louth's innovative approach to addressing the needs of its older people, its very strong local community networks and its Tidy Towns initiative, to name but a few. Looking to the future it is clear that residents are keen for their areas to shift towards greater



employment, to foster a greater sense of being open and welcoming, accepting of new people, respectful, positive and safe.

Building successful safer communities is about creating a trust in people that agencies are prepared to listen, are willing to engage and are ready to act with them, and on their behalf to combat anti-social behaviour and low level disorder. The Community Safety Strategy for Louth will act as a supporting framework for the Louth LECP and will attempt to assuage and address concerns expressed during the extensive community safety strategy consultation process, and additionally, raised by stakeholders throughout the consultation for the LECP. It will provide a six year cross - agency plan for the Joint Policing Committee which acting on an area basis will adopt area-focused priorities and measurable actions to address the impact of crime, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour in the county.

8.3.15 Louth, looking to the future

Developing sustainable solutions to the needs of local communities will be one of the key challenges facing the combined resources of the LCDC. It will entail supporting social enterprise, social capital, encouraging volunteering and promoting active citizenship. No single agency or group has the single solution to achieving the desired cultural and attitudinal change. Agencies and other service-providers working at a systemic level across sectors, with mutual interlinking of strategic priorities and actions in an environment of tolerance and respect, will be essential to ensure peaceful community co-existence, where new and existing residents adapt to one another and to their local areas within a shared set of values and purpose.

Empowering community involvement in decision-making processes regarding their futures will be enhanced by the ongoing development of the Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) which is central to local community consultation and engagement. Louth LCDC also has parallel mechanisms of engagement and consultation through its membership and how it communicates with individual groups and communities; particularly those suffering geographic isolation, lack of basic services and those who are marginalised and hard to reach. PPN representation on the Louth LCDC will facilitate productive two-way information sharing.



8.4 Health & Wellbeing

8.4.1 Health: Ensuring equal opportunities

Good health is a key factor in employment, earnings, productivity, economic development and growth. According to *Healthy Ireland*, the latest HSE strategy on addressing public health issues in Ireland today, health is an essential resource for everyday life and healthy people contribute to the health and quality of the society in which they live, work and play. Wellbeing is an integral part of this definition of health. It reflects the quality of life that a person experiences and the various factors which can influence it throughout the life course. Wellbeing also reflects the concept of positive mental health, in which a person can realise his or her own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a contribution to his or her community. The strategy emphasises that consideration of health and wellbeing requires a shift in focus from what can go wrong in people's lives, to focusing on what makes their lives go well⁶⁸.



The Healthy Ireland definition of health and wellbeing underpinned discussion at the LECP consultation process and, in tandem with current HSE priorities in Louth, is the basis upon which the LECP health goals, objectives and actions were agreed. In the 2011 census, 87.8 per cent of the total population in Louth stated that they were in very good or good health, marginally down on the national figure which stood at 88.3 per cent of total persons. 1.7 per cent of total persons in Louth said they were in bad or very bad health. Again, this compares with 1.5 per cent of total persons nationally, and is not surprising when Louth's deprivation levels and its pockets of disadvantaged communities are considered.

It is widely acknowledged that people in lower socio-economic groups experience higher levels of chronic ill health and die younger. A report issued by the WHO on the social determinants of health notes that inequalities in health do not arise by chance⁶⁹. It asserts that they are shaped by the unequal distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. The factors that influence our lives most and that shape health inequalities are the social, economic and environmental conditions in which we live and how they interact.

8.4.2 Health care in the community: A new model

Community health care services already play a critical role in promoting health and wellbeing by making every healthcare contact count and by working across sectors to create the conditions which support good health, on equal terms, for the entire population. Community Healthcare services place a strong emphasis on working with communities and individuals to maintain and improve health and social well being. A HSE report commissioned in 2013 on integrated health care models stressed the importance of developing an integrated model of care which would be responsive to the needs of local communities. Desired outcomes from this approach included better access; services that are close to where people live without reducing quality; better local decision making; and services in which

⁶⁸ Healthy Ireland: *A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025*

²⁵ WHO. Health 2020. Policy Framework and Strategy. 2012



communities have confidence. The HSE 's corporate plan 2015-2017 guarantees quality community and primary care services, which are easily accessible and close to where people live with 95% of all care in the community, outside of acute hospitals. A wide range of health and personal social services are provided to the communities of Co. Louth through the Local Health Office in Louth Community Care Services and through other local Health Centres based in the county.

8.4.3 The first responder scheme: Improving outcomes

A key outcome from the 2014 HIQA review of pre-hospital emergency care services (and an issue raised at the LECP consultation process) was to establish community first responder (CFR) schemes on a system wide basis to work alongside the national ambulance service particularly and in provincial urban and rural communities. The survival rates for out of hospital cardiac arrest in Ireland are not as good as many other countries and the establishment of these schemes is one way of improving outcomes, particularly as Ireland is significantly more rural than many comparable countries. With 130 schemes currently integrated into the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and taking all emergency ambulance calls; the National Ambulance Service in conjunction with a voluntary body, CFR Ireland, will be both supporting and targeting communities to develop these schemes as part of the LECP implementation process at local level.

8.4.4 Encouraging physical activity: *Get Ireland Active*

Get Ireland Active: The National Physical Activity Programme for Ireland⁷⁰ points out people experiencing social or economic disadvantage are often the least active or the most sedentary and may experience other health risks due to their diets, social connectedness or other behaviours.

- Inactive children are at risk of poorer self-esteem, higher anxiety and higher stress levels. They are more likely to smoke and use alcohol and illegal drugs than active children.
- Students with parents in higher socio-economic occupations are more likely to be active participants in physical activity and sports. The research also showed that this socio-economic difference is not specific to the type of activity, but applies to both team and individual sports⁷¹.
- Research from 2006 on '*Physical activity, Health and Quality of Life among People with Disabilities*' shows that people with disabilities who met the recommended level of physical activity were more likely to report a good quality of life, compared to their less active peers.
- Among working adults, inactive employees have double the number of days absenteeism from work compared with employees who are physically active.
- In later life, inactive people lose basic strength and flexibility for daily activities and many can lose independence and suffer from poorer mental health. A similar picture has been recorded by *TILDA, The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing*, which found that only 34% of older Irish adults report high levels of physical activity. In general across all age groups in the TILDA study, men are more active than women.

⁷⁰ National Guidelines on Physical Activity for Ireland – 'Get Ireland Active'

⁷¹ The Irish Sports Monitor 2013 Annual Report. 2014



8.4.5 Addressing inequalities

Healthy Ireland asserts that health is a collective responsibility and a decision which belongs to every citizen. It signals that achieving a changed approach to health and wellbeing requires an all embracing effort from across all sectors of society. While creating healthy sustainable communities will differ from area to area, researchers point out that critical factors to be addressed when seeking to reduce inequalities consistently include⁷²:

- Healthy childhood and early child development and education
- Positive and healthy ageing
- Employment and working conditions
- The built environment
- Healthy eating and active living
- A tobacco free Ireland
- Prevent and reduce substance misuse and alcohol-related Harm
- Mental health and wellbeing/ suicide prevention
- Sustainability
- Social Inclusion and equality of access
- Disability
- Safety

While the Health Service executive is the lead actor in health service delivery in Louth, local government has a significant supporting role to play in each of these areas through the newly appointed LCDs and the PPN structures.

8.4.6 Creating a healthy county

Louth Co Council's Development Plan 2015-2021 acknowledges the importance of the built environment as an important determinant of physical activity and behaviour. Supportive environments for walking, cycling and recreational and outdoor physical activity have many benefits beyond the immediate physical activity gains; fulfilling air quality standards and reducing CO2 emissions, traffic congestion and noise pollution. Good quality and safe cycling and walking facilities and their use, particularly in urban areas, can make a valuable contribution to the reduction in traffic congestion and the encouragement of significant modal shift away from dependency on the car as a mode of transport. The Development Plan also highlights the benefits of the walking and cycling routes being developed in the county not only for tourists but promotes their use as a quality of life indicator for local communities too.

8.4.7 Improving young people's health outcomes

Unfortunately, there are no recent, statistically validated population projections by age group available for County Louth. For this reason, it is impossible to predict with some accuracy the growth of the county's youth population in the coming years. However, projections are available from 2004. These projections have shown very little divergence for 2011 when comparing predicted with actual numbers and may therefore be considered indicative for the coming years. Based on these projections, Louth's population of 10 to 24 year olds is likely to increase by a further 16 per cent to over 28,000 in 2021 (for a breakdown⁷³. This is validated by population projections published by the Central Statistics Office in 2006, which presume that with immigration at moderate levels and a decreased fertility rate,

⁷² Marmot 2010

⁷³ Demographic profile of young people in Co Louth



County Louth's youth population would be estimated to increase to 26,600 in 2021. These figures impose an onus on all relevant agencies to address young people's issues. It is estimated that:

- more than 2,850 children in Louth (aged 0 to 18 years) are living in consistent poverty. An additional 2,500 in the 10 to 18 year age cohort are at risk of poverty;
- the number of young people with a disability has increased drastically in the last five years. Approximately 6 per cent of young people aged 15 to 24 years live with a disability. Less than a quarter of these are registered with the national disability databases;
- there are 324 children and young people in Louth who act as carers. The likelihood of becoming a carer increases with age;
- there may be up to 1,150 young LGBT people in Louth. However, it is likely that this number is lower as many LGBT people relocate to urban centres and Dublin and Belfast are within easy reach;
- Nine out of ten young people in Louth are white, Irish, and Roman Catholic. Over six per cent have a non-white (including mixed) background;
- the 2011 Census recorded 285 young Irish Travellers (between 10 and 24 years of age) in County Louth which constitute almost a third of the Traveller population in the county.

8.4.8 Intervening early: Better outcomes

Early childhood intervention was one of the key issues to arise at the LECP conference in Bellingham Castle. Figures from the 2011 census shows that 19.2% of Louth population were in the 0-4 and 5-11 age groups compared to 17.5% in the state. Participants stressed the importance of engaging with parents and children alike to ensure socially adapted children who receive full access to educational opportunity to enable them fulfil their potential. Louth Children's Services Committee (CYPSC) has chartered an agreed path for the delivery of services to children and young people in Louth in line with local needs and the five national outcomes for children. It has brought together all the statutory and voluntary agencies involved in providing services and supports to children, young people and their families in Louth in order to ensure better interagency working, planning, sharing of resources and ultimately better outcomes for children and young people in County Louth. CYPSC priorities are addressed by sub-groups:

- Education;
- Tackling alcohol and drugs misuse;
- Youth homelessness;
- Prevention, partnership and family support;
- Young people at risk;
- Youth participation;
- Children First implementation;
- Research and information.

The Genesis programme which involves a consortium of some 50 Partner Organisations is currently implementing the *Incredible Years* suite of programmes to children between 0-6 years, their families and their communities in a number of deeply entrenched areas of disadvantage where equality of opportunity is lacking, and social exclusion is prolonged in Dundalk and Drogheda. It covers 7 Electoral Divisions and 74 Small Areas with a total population of 18,645. The programme's goal is to prevent and treat young children's behavioural problems and promote their social, emotional and academic competence to improve life choices and outcomes for themselves and their families. CYPSC notes that



to date this programme has proven very successful but that it is important that its future is ensured and that it extends to other parts of the county.

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, the national policy framework for children and young people for 2014 to 2020, aims to ensure that children and young people are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing. Children growing up in active families will also be physically active and family and community are the natural environments for the growth and wellbeing of children. It noted that all children should experience opportunities to be physically active as part of their normal living, and it is important that children develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours likely to enhance lifelong engagement in physical activity and good health.

Programmes such as the Active School Flag (ASF) and the Health Promoting Schools initiatives, already being delivered in schools in Louth, are designed to recognise schools and communities that aim to achieve a physically educated and physically active school community. Schools that are involved in these initiatives are recognised for their efforts in providing a quality programme for all students and for promoting physical activity across the whole school community.

Young people at risk: Intervening positively

At 14.4 per 100,000, suicide among young people is a particular concern in Ireland, where the mortality rate from suicide in the 15-24 age group is the fourth highest in the EU, and the third highest among young men aged 15-19. Census 2011 puts the youth suicide rate in Ireland at 21.9 per cent in the 10-17 year age cohort.¹³ There is no data available at county level. In a submission to the LECP, CYPSC stated that there is concern about information deficits with regard to mental health services and how to access them for young people, their parents and professionals working with them. Existing health services struggle to meet the demand. There is no defined youth mental health initiative in the county e.g. Headstrong where young people are targeted in a youth friendly environment. While there are national gaps in service provision for 16-17 year olds, who fall between child and adult services, CYPSC notes that introducing an intervention like the Headstrong model could be an early intervention service which might prevent more costly intervention at a later stage.

TUSLA services have been restructured so that there are clear and separate pathways for child protection and welfare in Co Louth. Priority is given by some of TUSLA's services to children who are deemed to be at ongoing risk or harm and will lead out on Family Support Projects to work with the most vulnerable projects. There are a number of Family Support services already in the county attending to the needs of vulnerable and 'at risk' children, families and local communities with a view to stabilising them to a greater level of functioning and integration into their own families and communities. These include projects such as Muirhevnamor Springboard, Connect Family Resource Centre, Drogheda and North Dundalk Family Support Hub. TUSLA in collaboration with other agencies has also established four Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN) hubs across the county which will be an important way to identify, work and coordinate supports for vulnerable children their families and their communities. The lack of addiction services for children under 18 in Co Louth has also been identified by TUSLA as a matter of concern, and responding appropriately to drug misuse among young people is therefore very challenging.

8.4.9 Young people with disabilities: Being inclusive

The 2011 Census sought to establish the type and degree of disabilities among young people in Co Louth for the first time. It shows that difficulty in learning, remembering, or concentrating are the most commonly experienced disability in the 15 to 24 year age group with 2.8 per cent. Just over 300 young people have a difficulty in working or attending



school/college. 286 young people are affected by chronic illness or disabilities outside the physical and intellectual disability categories.

Teenagers with a disability should be able to participate in mainstream youth education/training and social activities and CYPSC recommends that inclusive social groups be formed to provide children and young people with a disability the opportunity to develop their skills and ultimately their self-esteem through their participation in sport, cultural and other social activities according to their abilities. The value of youth work and youth development must be recognised if young people are to experience quality of life and wellbeing. Comhairle na nÓg consultations with young people at a general level acknowledge the importance of involving them and supporting their democratic participation and social engagement necessary for them to meet life's challenges.

8.4.10 Improving health outcomes for travellers

The 2010 research, *Our Geels*, the *All Ireland Traveller Health Survey* (AITHS) reports that the general healthcare experience of Travellers is not as good as the general population, with communication cited as a major issue by both Travellers and service providers. Moreover, trust in services is a theme, and the AITHS found that the level of complete trust by Travellers in health professionals was only 41%. This compares with a trust level of 83% by the general population in health professionals. Travellers have a greater burden of chronic diseases than the general population, with conditions such as back conditions, diabetes, and heart attack increased by a factor of 2, and respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic bronchitis increased by a factor of 2-4, in comparison with the general SLAN⁷⁴ population.

Findings also indicate that Travellers are a 'high-risk' group for suicide as suicide is 6 times higher for Travellers than the general population. This figure is reflective of confirmed suicide cases by the General Register Office (GRO) and does not take into account external causes of death such as alcohol or drug overdose, which accounted for almost 50% of all Traveller male external causes of death. Suicide rates are nearly 7 times higher in Traveller men compared with the general male population. Suicide accounts for 11% of all Traveller deaths.⁷⁵

Access to health services is good, according to the research, with Travellers stating that their access is at least as good as that of the rest of the population. Access to primary care services is an important element of health services delivery. Over 94% of Travellers have a medical card with this figure rising to 99% in the older age group and nearly 97% of all Travellers are registered with a GP. The AITHS findings also reported that both Travellers and health service providers interviewed acknowledged that 'social determinants' were the main cause of the poor health status of Travellers, this includes accommodation, education, employment, poverty, discrimination, lifestyle and access and utilisation of services.

8.4.11 Improving health and wellbeing for older people

Louth's position as the first *Age-Friendly County* in the WHO global age-friendly cities network has paved the way for many initiatives for older people to improve their health and wellbeing. Following consultation with a sub-group of older people living there, Ardee became the county's first age-friendly town. Pedestrian crossings, railings, seats, traffic lights and exercise equipment have been provided and located at places agreed by the subgroup. Safety and security was addressed by improving the public lighting, cutting hedges and opening up areas to cut down on anti-social behaviour while local businesses also agreed protocols for older people.

⁷⁴ Survey of Lifestyle Attitudes and Nutrition

⁷⁵ Evidence & Recommendations on Mental Health, Suicide and Travellers. Pavée Point



A number of ground breaking projects have been launched from the CASALA research centre based in DkIT: Great Northern Haven works to enhance the quality of life of older people through ambient assisted living (AAL) technologies via sensor and healthcare technologies; each of them aiming to enhance older people's ability to live within their own communities for as long as possible. The Cave Automatic Virtual Environment (CAVE) is a cube shaped room which offers a multi-person, multiscreen, high-res 3D video and audio interactive environment. As the user moves and interacts within the display boundaries, the correct 3D perspective is displayed in real time to achieve a fully immersive experience.

The GENIO (Dementia Friendly Environments) programme has made considerable progress with the development of a pilot "*Passport*" for patients with dementia. This will allow the patient to have all information with them should they need to attend hospital appointments or be admitted to acute hospitals. It is not always evident that a patient has dementia when entering an acute hospital setting and this often has a very traumatic effect on both the patient and other patients. Additionally, two psychiatrists have been appointed by the HSE with a geriatrician, based in Louth County Hospital, which is a 'step down' facility for older people prior to returning to their own homes or taking up a nursing home place, to address older people's specific issues.

The concept of *The Parlour* was also developed by Louth Older People's Forum where older people's frontline services such as Drogheda and District *Support 4 Older People*, *Drogheda Senior Citizen's Interest Group* and *Cuidigh Linn* provide drop in centres where older people can call in to find out information on services, access care and repair, safety and security pendants and care to drive services. *The Parlours* use the website to access information in a one-stop-shop format. The Great Northern Haven is also deemed a *Parlour* where older people residing in the GNH use the communal space to meet other older people in the community for classes, information sessions and social gatherings. Equally a website *No wrong door* was pioneered by Louth Age Friendly Alliance communications group was designed to be used by older people, families of older people, frontline services for older people and public services for older people. Louth Age Friendly County also developed a resource/toolkit to share Louth's learning with other counties contemplating implementing an Age Friendly Programme.

Through consultation with older people, men were highlighted as a target group that were vulnerable and isolated particularly men that did not/had not engaged socially. The *Louth Men's Sheds* project was initiated under the *Age Friendly Initiative* and targets men at risk of isolation or experiencing major life changes. The 'shed' environment encourages men to share skills and learn new ones for example, skills in wood turning, mechanical work and horticulture, to name but a few. Socialising is a large part of the project too, providing opportunities for the development of new friendships as well as the renewal of old ones. Three sheds - Dundalk, Drogheda and Cooley - have been developed to date and recommendations from the consultation point to the need to establish further Men's Sheds across the county. All of these initiatives improve quality of life and enhance older people's connectedness.

The Library Service: Staying connected

The County Library service also contributes to older people's mental health and social engagement by adopting the age-friendly library concept and improving access by older people to information in the library's collection and elsewhere, including information available in other local community agencies and on the Internet. Plans to further enhance the older person's library experience within the lifetime of the LECP include the provision of:

- Visual and auditory access: clear signage, appropriate formats – large print books, audio books etc.
- Better physical access to buildings, floor levels, rooms, shelves, toilet etc.
- Electronic access: to information both in the library (PCs, CDs, DVDs) and on the Internet including social media.



- Assistive technologies: such low tech magnification devices, MAGIC and/or AFFINITY screen magnification, JAWS screen reading software and Kurzweil text to speech software.

8.4.12 Rural transport: Connecting rural communities

Transport is a critical factor in enabling independent living while connectivity to services and social events is crucial to longevity. The Age Friendly programme has had meaningful consultation with older people and people with disabilities, so that they can provide solutions to ensure that transport services are responsive, realistic and participative and influenced by those who need them most. Increased opportunities to accessible transport contributes to social inclusion, reduced expenditure on health, option to remain at home for longer as people age, reduction in expenditure on social care, and a greater sense of wellbeing and happiness. The Rural Transport Programme (RTP) service creates a sense of independence for people. This is key in fostering self-esteem and confidence. It also serves to reduce the sense of obligation and loss of control associated with reliance on family members for transport. Equally, as older people bemoan busier family lives, and decreasing inter-generational contact (especially during the daytime) they are becoming ever more dependent on services such as the RTP for basic access to services and healthcare. Access to health services and to shopping services have been identified as services of greatest need in Louth and in 2015, funding was granted to restore services to the Men's Shed in Omeath area, secure the return of the Monasterboice to Dundalk service and resume the weekly service to Ardee or Carrickmacross. Additionally, a community car service is shortly to be rolled out in Co Louth.

8.4.13 Opening up spaces for active communities

Louth's County Development Plan 2015-2021 states that community buildings and sports and recreation facilities play a very important role in fostering a sense of community identity and well being. With the substantial increase in population in the county and projected further growth, it is important that the necessary facilities are provided throughout the county and in new residential developments. It recommends that public open space should be provided in a variety of forms to cater for the active and passive recreational needs of the community: informal flat kick-about areas, circuit training facilities, formal playing fields, together with playgrounds for a specific age group; local equipped areas for play (**LEAP**) as specified by the National Playing Fields Association for 4-8 year olds or a neighbourhood equipped areas for play (**NEAP**) for 8-12 year olds and village greens in larger developments depending upon community requirements. In addition, it notes that community facilities, as far as is practical, should be readily accessible from residential areas by safe, convenient and direct walking routes. In this regard, the layouts of new residential developments need to facilitate pedestrian and cycle movements thus encouraging communities to be active and to take regular exercise.

8.4.14 Louth Sports Partnership: Reaching out to communities

Louth Sports Partnership together with its partners is currently devising a strategy based on *Active Ireland's* recommendations. The strategy reinforces the multiple benefits of physical activity to health and wellbeing, and aims to promote healthy growth and development in children and young people. It will include actions to target priority groups with a particular emphasis on engaging with those young people who might have less access to team sports or involvement in physical activity. Apart from creating greater awareness about how to overcome barriers to participation and recognise opportunities to be active as part of normal daily lives, it will also address ways at promoting the benefits of physical activity among the growing numbers of older people in the county.



The community sport and physical activity hubs in disadvantaged areas was initiated in Louth through the LSP and the 'Sports Leadership programme' funded by Sports Ireland saw 20 TY students from 5 secondary schools over 6 weeks becoming Community Sports Leaders. Currently 3 exercise programmes are running throughout the county for older adults. Zumba and Chairobics classes are being conducted for adults with disabilities through the Darro Centre, Drogheda and REHAB Care in Dundalk. The Rising Stars golf programme is being rolled out to students in Louth and more than 1000 children participated in LSP Primary Schools Cross country events run simultaneously in both Drogheda and Dundalk.

Many different organisations, agencies, groups and individuals in Co Louth ranging from the GAA through to local rugby clubs, boxing clubs, athletic clubs and cycling clubs are involved in promoting, delivering or supporting programmes which encourage people to be active. A 'Parkrun' weekly event is held in the DKIT grounds and Muirhevnamor District Park while initiatives like *Operation Transformation* have attracted community participation in physical activity and encourage new models of engagement. A number of initiatives to encourage healthy workplaces and to implement a 'healthy workplace' policy have created a supportive environment that protects and promotes the physical, mental and social wellbeing of employees.

With LCC support, Dundalk Sports Centre will be opening in 2016. Funding was received through the Sports Capital programme for the *Pitches 4 Drogheda* programme; almost 300 primary and secondary school children are receiving coaching through the basketball outreach programme while sports clubs throughout the county received support through the sport clubs grant scheme. This kind of physical activity provides opportunities for social interaction that helps to build community networks, reduce isolation and exclusion and build social cohesion

8.4.15 Tackling substance and alcohol misuse in Louth

Alcohol consumption and substance misuse have a significant impact on wellbeing and quality of life in local communities. The impact of anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and family disruption as well as a community's perception of a safe environment have been consistently acknowledged by agencies and service providers in the north east region since 1998⁷⁶. Between 2001- 2006, County Louth was reported to have the highest average incidence of new cases presenting for drug treatment⁷⁷.

The national Drug Prevalence Survey (2007) noted that alcohol and tobacco, followed by benzodiazepines, anti-depressants and tranquillisers, are the most commonly used legal drugs in the north east region, while cannabis is still the most commonly used illicit drug. Statistics on the use of cocaine, whose use has increased by 63% since 2003⁷⁸, further indicate that cocaine use is rarely stand alone, and the trend indicates a wider poly drug use culture which includes ecstasy use, cannabis and alcohol.

The North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force (NERDTF) was established in 2003 and covers the geographic counties of Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan. It works in partnership with statutory agencies, community, voluntary and statutory representatives to tackle the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs and alcohol through a concerted focus on the National Substance Misuse Strategy's five pillars of supply reduction, education, treatment, rehabilitation and research.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Tackling Drugs Together, North Eastern Health Board. 1998.

⁷⁷ Reynolds et al., 2007.

⁷⁸ NERDTF 2008.

⁷⁹ National Substance Misuse Strategy, 2009-2016.



In parallel, Louth County Council, has recognised the extent to which alcohol and substance misuse are affecting peoples' quality of life in certain areas in the county. With the publication of the six year strategy for the county-wide joint policing committees: *A Community Safety Strategy for Louth*, together with its focus on substance and alcohol misuse, a NERDATF strategy implementation group has been established; comprising of key stakeholders working together to consider how the National Substance Misuse Strategy actions could continue to be implemented on a cross-agency basis. A number of priority actions have been agreed for the region with distinct responsibilities allocated to the NERDATF pillar-themed subcommittees which will be supported by the Community Safety Strategy substance misuse theme.

8.5 Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Enterprise

8.5.1 Louth: Supporting entrepreneurs

Successful entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise rely on the environment created by people and place. The LECP has identified objectives and actions to promote this integrated priority, largely informed by the action plans of the Louth Economic Forum (LEF) which is dedicated to enhancing the business environment of Louth. **Entrepreneurship** entails an inner drive, imagination, resilience, ambition and a willingness to take a risk. It is primarily fostered through education and training in a supportive environment. A supportive environment requires hard and soft supports; this was recognised in the *National Entrepreneurship Policy* statement launched by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in October 2014.



The 6 mutually reinforcing elements identified by Government to lead and direct policy are:

Culture, human capital and education	Positive societal attitude to entrepreneurship reflected in its education provision and culture.
Business environment and supports	Similar to societal culture, the business environment, including taxation and regulation, can encourage entrepreneurship.
Innovation system	Seen to be the financial and experiential supports provided by public bodies to entrepreneurs.
Access to finance	Provision of a broad spectrum of finance options, matching the different stages of an enterprise's development, is essential.
Networks and mentoring	Practical experience and advice, contacts and interaction, helping entrepreneurs to avoid or overcome difficulties and to realise their potential.
Access to markets	Support access to markets

Table 1 Summary of 6 Key elements of the ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Ireland from the National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement

Enterprise is the expression of successful entrepreneurship and is concerned with sustaining and growing existing business either home grown or attracted into the County. The objectives of the National Entrepreneurship Policy are to:

- increase the number of startups by 25% (3,000 more startups per annum);
- Increase the survival rate in the first five years by 25% (1,800 more survivors per annum); and,
- Improve the capacity of startups to grow to scale by 25%.

In February 2015 the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation announced the Framework for Regional Enterprise Strategies in order that government supports could be more efficiently deployed on a regional basis where

each region was co-ordinated with the other to contribute to national employment creation. In November 2015, the Department, having regard to *A Strategy for Growth Medium-Term Economic Strategy 2014 – 2020*, published its first strategy document *Enterprise 2025* which, alongside the *National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement*, sets policy direction for job creation into 2025. A number of strategic actions were identified in Enterprise 2025 and included:

- Building resilience in our sectoral mix;
- Enhancing overall enterprise performance;
- Developing and attracting talent for the 21st century;
- Optimising regional potential – place-making;
- Embedding innovativeness in our enterprises and systems;
- Connectedness – internationally, nationally and regionally;
- Excelling in getting the basics right;
- Effective execution.

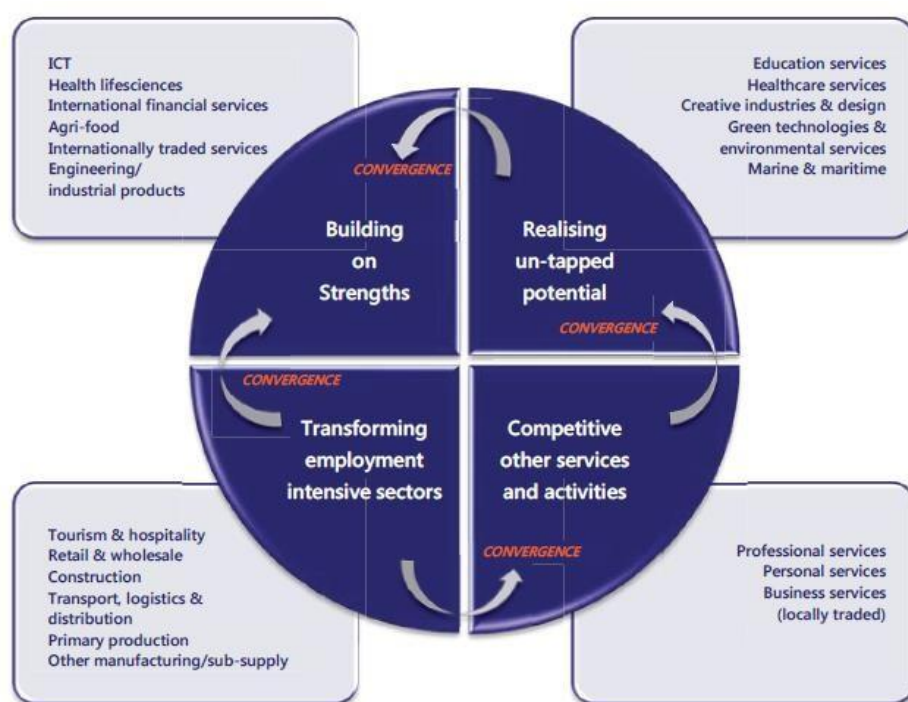


Figure 9 Sectoral Ecosystem priorities from Enterprise 2025

8.5.2 Louth: Leveraging regional advantages

The Action Plan for Jobs launched in January 2016 emphasises regional focus and sets a target of 2.1 million people in employment in Ireland by 2018; 50,000 of those jobs are to be added in 2016. Louth is in the North East / North West Action Plan for Jobs 2015 – 2017 and the actions from this document have been integrated into those of the LECP. Louth recognises its NUTS categorisation alongside its border neighbours, but also acknowledges the opportunities in its realignment to the east and midlands regional assembly area from the North East Region for the purposes of regional planning. In order to manage and derive the opportunities for advancement in policy making and inward investment, the LECP will monitor the northern and eastern regions. *Enterprise 2025*, takes a ‘whole enterprise’ approach and groups existing and desired commercial sectors together whether they are entrepreneurs, start-ups, home grown business or FDI and recognises the mutually reinforcing ethos that all policy and assistances will benefit all sectors.



Louth is ahead of other local authorities and government policy in having the voluntary Louth Economic Forum (LEF) which is indicative of the county's ambition, positive attitude to, and promotion of business in the county. Louth has the unprecedented advantage of being now able to extend the work of the LEF; a resource which has performed analysis and action setting at local level, promoted by current emergent government entrepreneurship and enterprise policy.

8.5.3 Stimulating innovation

Innovation is a key driver of start-ups, business expansion and efficiency thus enhancing job creation and improved economic performance. Louth recognised the importance of innovation in its LEF ten point economic action plans and in the LECP integrated priorities, which in setting out community and economic actions to support people and business, aims to create an environment in which business will thrive. The Louth LECP further recognises that entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise are the fundamental ingredients to achieve sustainable job creation, and improvements in quality of life to benefit Louth residents and as an attractor for investment and new population. Louth LEO offers structural, behavioural and finance-sourcing aids to all home grown businesses and entrepreneurs operating or intending to operate in Louth. The economic elements of the LECP, particularly in relation to this integrated priority; entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise, have been led by the work of LEO and the economic development department of Louth County Council.

The LEF's ten point plan (2012) describes the role of the LEF; notable for its prediction of government policy on entrepreneurship, and indeed reflecting the importance of the now formalised PPN. *"The LEF is not in the business of directly creating jobs. Rather, its role is to identify and promote the conditions in which jobs can be created by recognising and acting upon activities with economic development potential in a manner that would not be possible without the stakeholder partnership enabled by the LEF. The functions of the LEF also include tackling identified barriers to economic development as well as nurturing the environment in which businesses can start, grow and create jobs – all in a proactive manner."*

A feature continuously highlighted during the consultation phase for the LECP was Louth's vibrant entrepreneurial culture and its ability to produce successful entrepreneurs. It can claim firms like the agri-food company Nature's Best, technology firm Mcor Technologies, which has pioneered the development of three-dimensional printing technology, Horseware Ireland, which is active in the equestrian sector and Alltech; a global animal health and nutrition company centred on innovation, research and development, to name but a few.

In addition, Louth continues to have a strong base of indigenous firms, for example, AIBP, Glen Dimplex, Fyffes and Boyne Valley Foods. Each of these companies, provide considerable employment opportunities in the county and also have an international profile. The LDS set out actions focussed on the betterment of the rural area of the county to be implemented by the Louth LEADER Partnership Ltd. These actions will complement the integrated nature of the economic and community priorities of the LECP and will promote entrepreneurship and start-ups in the county.

Apart from the wide range of supports offered by Louth LEO, a range of enterprise initiatives for local entrepreneurs, including information about the range of supports are available at DkIT to promote and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in the county. Researchers at DkIT are also targeting a number of sectors including IT and software development, renewable energy technologies, active ageing and creative arts.

Another initiative, the Innovation Alliance project aims to break down barriers to the effective transfer and implementation of innovation between Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). It builds synergistic relationships between key stakeholders in the field of higher education and small enterprise to



create a new culture of collaboration in innovation support. This culture is consolidated by training SMEs in the skills needed to effectively engage with HEI research, and supplying HEIs with case study guides to illuminate new methodologies for innovation transfer.

8.5.4 Creative industries: Building innovation capacity

One particular strategy adopted by Louth LEO in recent years has been to encourage those small companies who wish to grow to focus on their innovation capacity to inform and guide their growth strategy. The 'Wheel of Business Innovation' approach was developed and refined as part of an EU funded programme called IIME, *Introducing Innovation to Micro Enterprises*, which was developed by Louth LEO in 2008. This programme brought together academics and business development agencies from across Europe, together with the Fraunhofer Institute in Germany to develop an innovation training programme tailored to micro businesses.

Following on from the success of the IIME project, Louth LEO has managed, authored or has been a lead contributor to a number of interlinked international projects which have developed an integrated suite of tools designed to support innovation within the micro-enterprise sector including SUPORT, Innovative Trainer; SMEmpower iOTA and SCI-NET. The REAL (Regional Education and Employment Alliances) Project seeks to build the skills and capabilities of the great number of under-employed humanities graduates in the region to empower them to become innovators, entrepreneurs and high value employees.

A number of these projects have received recognition from the EU Commission for their excellence of delivery – SCI-NET is classified as a 'Star' project, SUPORT has been featured in a number of EU conferences and SME-mPower has been recommended by EU Head of Unit for SMEs and is used by the Swiss Federal Government. In 2015 LEO Louth will continue to offer these programmes as part of the overall drive to build innovation capability within the county.

A key action in the Action Plan for Jobs centres around exploring the potential to establish creative hubs to enable the creative sector by bringing individuals together in "creative hubs" to promote design skills, help tourism, attract creative people into the region & improve quality of life. Louth is already to the fore in promoting and facilitating the creative sector.

Creative Spark, established in 2012 to promote creative and cultural industries,(including new and emerging businesses and freelance practitioners), provides a dedicated creative training and workspace facility in Dundalk. It identifies and applies best practice in supporting all creative endeavour whether for community goals, career advancement for creative practitioners or skills acquisition within the creative sector. **Louth Craftmark**, a web-based support platform which showcases the work of talented Louth makers and designers. Louth Craftmark Designers Network is a group of makers and visual artists who promote and support its members through accessing funding, networking and collaborative projects. Its membership's creative disciplines include ceramics, print, jewellery, textiles, woodwork, furniture, sculpture and painting. In addition to the above, hubs for creative communities in Louth also include:

- The Mill in Drogheda.
- Drogheda Development Centre at Millmount;
- Dundalk Science Services Centre;
- Ardee Community Development Company;
- The Food Hub @ Ardee Business Park.



The LECP, in formalising mentoring and networking opportunities identified by the LEF, Economic Development and Enterprise SPC, LEO and the Action Plan for Jobs similarly recognises the contribution of Dundalk and Drogheda Chambers of Commerce in the county, and their ability to join and facilitate skills development, social and business entrepreneurial and enterprise networks and enhance the business friendly aspect of Louth. Not to be overlooked is the role of DkIT which operates in the 'living laboratory' space referred to within other themes in the LECP. It provides innovative approach to research and development and is currently adapting its modules and courses to be more responsive to learner and employer needs.

Third level collaboration within the region is also provided by the involvement of the three Institutes of Technology within the region in the Campus Entrepreneurship Enterprise Network. CEEN is the HEI led Irish national network for promoting and developing entrepreneurship and enterprise at third level. It aims to create a sustainable national platform for raising the profile, extending engagement and further developing entrepreneurship across the Irish HEI sector.

Enterprise Ireland supports and works in partnership with Dundalk Institute's Regional Development Centre; the commercially oriented interface between DKIT and the industrial, commercial and business life of the region, which makes available the expertise, facilities and resources of the Institute for the wider benefit of the regional economy.

Through the INTERREG VA Programme, SEUPB will support cross-border business investment in Research & Innovation in the implementation of its next programme. The key outputs will focus on SMEs receiving a range of support including collaboration with research institutions; innovation advice; and collaborative research projects. SEUPB will also increase business industry-relevant Research and Innovation capacity across the region within two sectors; 'Health & Life Sciences' and 'Renewable Energy' each of which has distinct relevance for Louth. The combination of these players working in an integrated way within the LECP framework will enhance Louth's opportunity to achieve its ambitious targets.

8.6 A valued, sustainable and connected environment

Louth is better placed than many other counties to benefit from overall competitiveness and improvements in the Irish economy due to its location and infrastructure qualities. Its strong transport infrastructure (motorway, rail and port) and proximity to international airports reinforces Louth's access to markets nationally and internationally in addition to providing tourism and other opportunities. Much has already been achieved in Louth with regard to environmental sustainability in recent years, both from an economic and community perspective. Broad



band connectivity is progressing quickly, despite problems in some rural areas. The county is innovative in the area of sustainable energy creating a very productive partnership with Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI) at a practical level and with DkIT from a research and innovation perspective.

Louth County Council's strategic objectives (Corporate plan 2014-2019) stressed the critical provision of hard infrastructural elements (e.g. transportation, broadband, marine, water and sustainable energy) and softer elements (e.g. arts, culture, heritage and leisure) to create a viable thriving globally connected economy that attracts and provides a good quality of life for its citizens. The Louth Economic Forum (LEF) ten point economic action plans demonstrate the progress that has been achieved and what needs to be improved if Louth is to build on its strengths and capitalise upon the momentum it has gained as the leading green location in Ireland.

Louth's heritage brand and cultural legacy offering, including Ireland's Ancient East, The Boyne Valley and the Cooley Mourne's Gullion regions, combined with its fast-expanding eco-tourism offering, the Green Way, waterways, and sandy coastline, create a unique experience for local communities and tourists. The county's rich landscape from mountains to sea, undisturbed wildlife habitats and outdoor amenities is a rich resource for those seeking access to eco and agri -tourism. However the challenges, especially in the area of Climate Change, together with the complexity of managing the needs and demands of disparate stakeholders, reinforces the fact that there must be continued joined up thinking, integrated planning and systemic sustainability for Louth to achieve its goals.

8.6.1 Sustainable Development: Guiding economic progress

The principles of sustainable development permeate every aspect of the Louth County Development Plan (2015-2021). These include the conservation of natural resources; protection of the natural environment; reducing dependence on fossil fuels and promoting renewable energy; facilitating environmentally friendly patterns of development, energy efficiency and high quality design. Its core strategy sets out in an evidence-based approach for the sustainable spatial development of the county based on high quality sustainable residential communities, developed in conjunction with social and recreational infrastructure.



Sustainable development is characterised as a continuous, guided process of economic, environmental and social change aimed at promoting wellbeing of citizens now and into the future'.⁸⁰ The principles of sustainable development as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' underpin the Louth LECP. Biodiversity, which encompasses natural wildlife, flora and fauna, is also an important foundation to the healthy functioning of ecosystems. In addition, the 3 pillars of the Aarhus Convention: access to information; public participation in decision-making; and access to justice in environmental matters were some of the elements that informed the LECP process.

If Louth maintains its projected economic trajectory, environmental challenges will emerge. Maintaining the focus on sustainability, sustainable consumption and production, in parallel with economic recovery and growth will be important. The 2012 Government report on sustainable development identified that challenges are likely to arise in areas such as greenhouse gas emissions, expansion of key agriculture sectors and private transport growth, but significant opportunities also exist in greening the economy and the green economy. The concept of sustainable competitiveness is a crucial touchstone, with clear international evidence that being green is not only good for business but it's beneficial for the environment too. Ireland has significant targets to meet if it is to reach its 2020 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and pressure is on all of us to do this in an integrated way. Louth has already taken major strides in its Dundalk Smart town initiative and its focus on sustainable energy in its ten point economic action plan.

The county has its fair share of environmental challenges. Unauthorised dumping and toxic sludge from diesel laundering are especially problematic. Low levels of soil fertility on new dairy farms combined with phosphorus fertilisation restrictions on the most intensive holdings will present a serious challenge, as will slurry storage capacities on dairy/beef farms⁸¹. Raising public awareness of the importance of understanding biodiversity and water quality issues is vital; particularly among rural communities where greater protection of local water resources is essential for their survival. Environmental schemes have the potential to play a pivotal role in addressing pressures on water reserves, and in supporting the local community to conserve this valuable resource.

8.6.2 Louth's coastline: A precious asset

Louths' coastline is of high intrinsic and special amenity value and is home to a variety of natural habitats. *Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)* and *Special Protection Areas (SPA)* designations cover much of the coastline. Termonfeckin Strand, Clogherhead, and Templetown are superb beaches which have considerable tourism potential. The latter three beaches were awarded Blue Flag status in 2015. The coastline also contains economically significant sites which include the ports at Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead. The coastal waters off County Louth provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities. But this coastline is susceptible to pressure for development, which has the potential to encroach on sensitive sites and cause pollution. Coastal erosion measures were identified in the County Development Plan to mitigate against these pressures.

⁸⁰ Our Sustainable Future: National strategy on sustainable development (DECLG, 2012).

⁸¹ Teagasc: Laois/Kildare/Meath/Louth/Dublin Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020.

⁸¹ Prof John Sweeney, NUI Maynooth



8.6.3 Flood risk: Managing the threat

As Ireland's climate continues to change it is acknowledged that 20% of Ireland's coast is at risk of erosion, and that County Louth is at particular risk⁸². *The Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study* (ICPSS) which examined the northeast coast from Dublin to Greenore illustrated that coastal flood hazard exists predominantly in or near coastal settlements, and four of the seven coastal settlements lie in County Louth:

- Drogheda to Laytown;
- Annagassan to Cruisetown;
- Dundalk; and,
- Carlingford to Greenore.

Much work has also been done by the OPW through its Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management Studies (CFRAMS). The county area and its settlements, as designated in the County Development Plan 2009 – 2015, have been analysed using GIS for the presence of three flood risk factors: recorded flood events, benefiting lands and mineral alluvial deposits. Recorded flood events are most concentrated in the south of the county in the urban area of Drogheda and to the south of Dundalk.

Major Flood Defence Schemes are run by the OPW and Louth County Council where such works are technically feasible, cost beneficial and environmentally compatible. The Minor Flood Defence Scheme has enabled Louth County Council to address coastal repair works at Blackrock Sea Wall, Whitestown, Carlingford Sea Wall, Ballagan, Greenore and Annagassan; where the build-up of silt in the harbour area has limited the berthing capacity of the pier. The breaching of the embankment at Bellurgan has been especially difficult due to funding pressures

8.6.4 Sustainable rural development: Protecting our green infrastructure

The Louth County Development Plan notes that Louth needs to protect and support rural settlements and the countryside by accommodating limited growth in accordance with the needs of rural dwellers, whilst providing careful management of physical and environmental resources. The LECP focuses on the positive benefits that a well-designed public realm, green spaces and recreational areas and protected wilder habitats have for local economies and well-being while the Louth LEADER strategy emphasises the role that local communities have in maintaining their local environments: *Human health benefits of contact with nature and green spaces are well proven and are key to encouraging the active lifestyles needed to prevent issues such as obesity, cardio-vascular disease and type-2 diabetes that are affecting much of our population. For this reason, sustainable communities will require recreational spaces and also areas of wildness. This 'green infrastructure' would be provided via informed planning at LA level, and then actively maintained by local groups and public bodies.* It suggests that schemes such as LEADER could be used to support this by developing projects to deliver, for example: infrastructure that enables physical activity; mapping our natural heritage; safe walking in rural roads. LEADER funding has supported many environmental projects in Louth with positive impacts for local communities.

In its submission to the LECP, the Inver Colpa Rowing club stated that the River Boyne presents an opportunity to reconnect people and place, connecting communities with their social and cultural heritage. The quality and merit of



the River Boyne and its relationship with the people of Drogheda should be reflected in the LECP. Stressing the huge health and sport benefit potential to people using the river, their submission emphasized the strong maritime, fishing and rowing heritage in Drogheda; improving access and use of the river would improve the quality of life of the community and improve traditional skills. It would also give local people of all ages and backgrounds the opportunity to engage with the river in a safe, affordable, educational, healthy and enjoyable way, adding to the quality of life of local communities.

8.6.5 Third level sustainability: Acting local, thinking global

In its role as third level institute for the northeast region, DkIT supports the social, economic and cultural development of the region via its mission statement *'Working sustainably and with a practical focus, we will help lead the regeneration of the North East region and Ireland by acting locally and thinking global'*. DkIT achieved Green Campus status in 2012 and has played a lead role in encouraging sustainable development, both on campus and in the networks, partnerships and linkages it has created with stakeholders, including local schools and the LCC, to promote a more sustainable society. In addition, it has a range of initiatives in place to support technology transfer and social innovation. This includes the work of the Regional Development Centre (RDC) where there is a Centre for Fresh Water Studies, a Centre for Renewable Energy, Netwell and Water is Life. Sustainable development features in a range of research activities, academic programmes and modules; including Renewable Energy Systems, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Design, Applied Bio-Science, Introduction to Large Scale Wind Turbines, Solar Domestic Hot Water Systems.

In 2005 through the Centre for Renewable Energy (CREDIT) a wind turbine was constructed on the DkIT campus. The turbine is essentially a research project; a living laboratory and has become a visitor attraction. In practical terms, the turbine has become a symbol for the College and for the town of Dundalk. It currently generates more than 30% of the total electricity requirements of the College. The Louth Energy office will be collaborating with the development of a second wind turbine in Conjunction with IDA, SEAI, and DkIT. DkIT also became involved in a number of initiatives with local interest groups, including local schools and the LCC. Some of these are:

- Dundalk 2020;
- Concerto Project;
- Age Friendly County;
- DkIT and Sustainable Energy Zone;
- Go Dundalk Initiative.

It is also hoped during the life of the LECP that through research and the living lab principle that these partnerships will be sustained and develop further for the economic and social benefit of the county.

8.6.6 Louth Leading the way: Sustainable Energy

Energy is fundamental to Ireland's economic and social well-being. Renewable energy constitutes a core element of the Government's overarching energy policy built on the 3 pillars of security of supply, environmental sustainability and economic competitiveness⁸³. Ireland's third National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP 3)⁸⁴ reaffirmed Ireland's commitment to delivering a 20% reduction in energy demand across the whole of the economy by 2020, along with a

⁸³ *Towards a sustainable energy future for Ireland*. Green paper, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

⁸⁴ *Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future* Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources



33% reduction in public sector energy use. Ireland's commitment to 2020 energy efficiency, renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction targeting its long term goal of decarbonisation by 2050 will have a positive impact in the market for sustainable energy technologies, services and also its tourism offer. Citizens, referred to as 'energy citizens' are now at the centre of Ireland's energy transition underpinned by policy and regulatory stability. The recent White Paper revealed a wide citizen and community desire to be consulted on, and participate in, Ireland's energy transition and the development of energy related projects. The Government has recognized the need to develop mechanisms and instruments to make this happen.

Over the past number of years, Louth has developed a position as a leading centre in the country in respect of sustainable energy technologies. Dundalk was Ireland's first designated Sustainable Energy Zone under the European Commission's *Concerto Programme* (Holistic) (Dundalk 2020) and the town's sustainable energy community has achieved a reduction of 4,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per annum through the promotion of energy efficiency products.

Louth has been very effective in securing funding and working in collaboration with other agencies to innovate change: Funding was secured in 2015 via SSEI to support energy projects through partnership between Louth County Council, CASALA (Centre for Affective Solutions for Ambient Living Awareness), Dundalk Institute of Technology, Louth Meath Education Training Board, (LMETB) HSE, OPW, Climote (smart heating controls), Kingspan, Bord Gais and REIL to deliver a range of energy upgrade projects for public buildings, community centres, homes, sports clubs and businesses. Previously, the LCC secured funding through INTERREG to act as the lead partner in the development of the *Low Carbon Business Network* aimed at promoting cross-border cooperation in respect of the use of carbon abatement technologies in the East Border Region.

The Louth Energy Pilot Project is the largest social housing *Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme* of its type to take place in Europe in 2015. It delivered the energy efficiency upgrade to 2,100 of the 4,000 LCC homes throughout the county. It is evidence of how technology is changing lives of people, reducing energy costs for homeowners as well as improving the Building Energy Ratings (BER) of the Council's housing stock. *Climote*, a local company from Dundalk, has played an important role in helping Louth County Council achieve its goals. An added and unintentional benefit has been the impact on job creation in the Louth area arising from this project. From a Government perspective the project is a tangible connection between energy policy and real improvements in citizen's quality of life. It provides a prototype for other local authorities, when it comes to achieving Ireland's national energy policy objectives and it will inform the public sector *Energy Efficiency Action Plan* which is due for publication in 2016.

Sustainable Energy Action Ireland (SEAI) has played a catalytic role in the development of *Sustainable Energy Community* (SEC) and there are over 100 SECs nationwide. Pioneered in 2005 with Dundalk 2020, an EU Concerto project, SEAI is committed to promoting the continued growth of SEC activity in Louth through supporting the *Sustainable Energy Community* network which has focused on developing tailored supports for SECs engaging in their 3 year partnership programme; developing new funding streams, and raising the visibility of the benefits of SECs amongst citizens and stakeholders; in particular their capacity to promote integrated sustainable development goals.

SEAI is represented on the Louth Economic Forum (LEF) and its ambitions address many of the Louth LECP themes regarding the green economy, working with communities and the principle of collaboration. However in policy terms, there is a desire that the LECP undertakes an Energy Master Plan to identify inefficiencies and to create a Sustainable Energy Action Plan identifying opportunities for energy efficiency initiatives and collaborations, as well as working with stakeholders to develop a LCC Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).



Louth Co Council's energy office is another important stakeholder and continues to deliver bespoke projects, and seek funding opportunities to improve energy performance as they arise. Equally important is its strategic activity which includes developing a S.M.A.R.T. Action Plan to complement the government's recently launched White Paper, *Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future, 2015-2030* and the upcoming public sector *Energy Efficiency Action Plan*. It will be continuing its engagement with the EU *INDICATE* project; the development of an energy planning tool and working towards the development of an "INDICATE II" project. It also seeks to take advantage of Louth's strategic position to develop a Green International Services corridor with Green IFSC, Dublin Airport, East Coast and Northern Irish partners.

8.6.7 Louth's Infrastructure: Planning for the future

Louth County Development Plan (2015-2021) seeks to achieve and support the aims of national transport policy including:

- maximizing the efficient use of the transport network;
- reducing reliance on fossil fuels;
- reducing transport emissions;
- improving accessibility to transport; adopting a hierarchy of transport users with pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the top of the hierarchy and considering land use planning and transport planning together.

The availability of a range of transport options has dramatically improved during the course of the 2009 – 2015 County Development Plan with sustainable transport modes increasingly being promoted in the form of improved public transport services, improved cycling and walking facilities, and infrastructure aimed at supporting the use of electric vehicles. Affecting an increased modal shift away from the dominance of the private car as the main mode of transport in the County is a key objective. However, private road transport is likely to remain dominant for the foreseeable future. Over dependency on the car as the primary means of personal transportation is unsustainable in the long term, having regard to the finite nature of fossil fuel resources and their impact in contributing to global warming. The most recent County Development Plan seeks to promote alternative sustainable modes of transport.

There is an intrinsic link between land use and transportation and therefore the settlement strategy and policies contained in the Plan seek to locate the majority of new development within existing towns and other settlements, where car dependency can be reduced and public transport can more economically and sustainably be provided. The adoption of the core strategies for Dundalk, Drogheda and the remainder of the county, seek to proactively address the links between land use planning and transportation by directing new development into more compact urban forms that reduce the need for travel. These strategies have also been influenced by the availability of public transport.

8.6.8 Roads and cycling networks: Promoting alternatives

Louth has benefited from very significant investment which has taken place in Ireland's national road network. Regional and local roads form the life lines of transportation needs across the County. It is via these roads that the vast majority of smaller towns, villages and dispersed rural communities and services are accessed. During the previous plan period, the most notable road projects completed in the County have been the N51 and N53 regional road improvement schemes and the R178 Red Bog project. The Council's road improvement programme will be



implemented by the Council and the National Transport Authority (NTA) over the period of the plan. The east-west link will link Dundalk to Sligo via Cavan.

The Smarter Travel Programme operated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Sustainable Transport Division (DTTS) has supported the development of an extensive walking and cycling network in Dundalk, together with the construction of a rural cycling and walking Greenway skirting Carlingford Lough and walking and cycling strategies for Drogheda and Ardee.

Public transport accessibility, especially in Dundalk town, has produced a positive result. There is a relatively positive perception of public transport that is encouraging and suggests that opportunities to widen modal choices to include more sustainable options will be well received. In recent years, supported by the national *Smarter Travel Programme*, there has been a substantial investment in cycling lanes and general improvements to facilitate both cyclists and pedestrians in Dundalk. Most recently, a 'Safer Routes' for walking and cycling to school initiative was launched under the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, with Dundalk participating as a pilot town.

Looking to the future, the Council will seek to complete the Greenway and seek further funding towards developing a wider urban and rural network of cycle infrastructure, including the development of the National Cycle Network which is proposed to pass through the county in the form of Corridor 5, Dundalk to Wexford and at local level, the Boyne Trail. Good quality and safe cycling and walking facilities and their use, particularly in urban areas, can make a valuable contribution to the reduction in traffic congestion and the encouragement of significant modal shifts away from dependency on the use of the private motor car.

Existing programmes such as the Smarter Travel Workplaces and Smarter Travel Campus encourage employers and third level institutions to implement voluntary workplace and campus travel plans or actions to encourage and support staff and students to walk, cycle, take public transport or car share on their commute. More than 6,000 people use the DkIT campus on a daily basis, and the College is focusing on creating new ways to transport which embraces environmental, social and economic sustainability.

8.6.9 Rural transport: Achieving more connectivity

There are good quality public transport services between Dundalk and Drogheda. Gaps and inadequacies in public transport services are notable in many parts of the county, especially in dispersed rural areas. This affects primarily older people, the young, people with limited mobility and those on low incomes. The main types of journey for which provision is required include work, shopping, education and health journeys and this was raised at a consultation for the LECP and also noted in the LECP actions. However, rural and commuter services have also seen some enhancement and this trend is moving apace with the input of the National Transport Authority. This has been most notable in services passing through Drogheda where long distance services have seen improved frequencies and have been routed to serve major destinations e.g. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda.

In 2013, the National Transport Authority published '*Strengthening the Connections in Rural Ireland, Plans for Restructuring the Rural Transport Programme*' Under this plan, the existing 33 Rural Transport Groups were rationalised into 18 Transport Co-ordination Units (TCUs) which will be brought under the remit of local authorities. County Louth has been grouped with Meath and north Fingal. Already, there have been some significant improvements in 2015 with the purchase of a community car, and additional routes on the network.



8.6.11 Broadband: Pioneering new technology

Achieving universal access to high speed broadband is a key target under the EU Digital Agenda for Europe which envisages that by 2020 all EU citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps. This LEF Broadband vision is to ensure that all businesses have access to high speed broadband, while working to reduce the cost of accessing these services, regardless of location and that communities are connected as part of the National Broadband Plan and National Digital Strategy. In particular, the plan aims to position Louth as a leader in the provision of world class high speed broadband for foreign direct investment, indigenous enterprises and start up entrepreneurial companies. Of particular importance is the desire to progress broadband connectivity to rural areas of County Louth, and especially to those areas where the market will not deliver, in accordance with the National Broadband Plan Maps.

Significant advancements have been made by eir and SIRO. This means that Louth is expected to have over 85% of premises with broadband speeds in excess of 50Mbps during 2016, while pioneering technology in relation to electricity cables started rolling out 1000Mb FTTP in Dundalk. These advances mean that Louth will be one of Ireland's most connected counties in 2016 and places it in an enviable position to sustain and develop business in the county. A further state intervention is aimed at connecting those communities as part of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) where the commercial operators have not been prepared, on commercial grounds, to make the necessary investment. Approximately 15% of the premises in County Louth would depend on the roll out of the NBP to achieve high speed broadband.

The successful delivery of the Broadband Action plan will require a sustained and coherent approach to its implementation and the formation of a committed and dedicated Team. The intention is to develop an Implementation Steering Group (ISG) to oversee the plan, reporting to Local Enterprise Office (LEO). Given the objective of the LEF to make Louth the best county in which to do business, the ISG will pay special attention to the early implementation ensuring user friendly procedures for companies investing in broadband related infrastructure in the County.

Other critical aspects are the need to work with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, to ensure that those areas of County Louth (15%) where the market will not deliver, will feature prominently in the Government's intervention strategy being developed under the National Broadband Plan. The LEF in particular will seek ways of achieving high speed broadband is made available in the Cooley Peninsula, due to its economic potential in dialogue with the providers, and where appropriate the DCENR.

8.6.12 Tourism: Broadening our horizon

Tourism, an important future-focused indigenous sector will play a critical role in contributing to Louth's economic development. The county is well placed to capitalise on Fáilte Ireland's tourism growth projections estimated at 10 million visitors in 2010. Recent research has shown that cultural tourism constitutes one of the central planks of the Irish tourism industry and is one of the fastest growing areas of tourism internationally. Louth has a rich array of cultural and heritage attractions to offer visitors.

Three of Fáilte Ireland's top tourism destinations are located in Louth: Ireland's Ancient East, the Boyne Valley and the Cooley Mourne Gullion Region. The Táin Trail is a very accessible circular walking route of quiet roads, forestry tracks, and open mountain paths that loops around Carlingford Mountain and its western outliers is fast becoming a destination. It is also an area of growing geo-tourism, and rocks exposed in the Mourne Cooley Gullion region represent over 400 million years of geological history; and ripe for development as an environmental tourism asset. Additionally,



Louth has an ever evolving dynamic arts, food, festivals and cultural events programme with a growing international reach and its *Land of Legends, full of life* brand continues to differentiate it with visitors to the county.

Louth LEADER and Bord Iascaigh Mhara(BIM) strategic reviews highlight that Louth's coastal and rural tourism product underperforms relative to the opportunities that exist. With the economically significant ports of Drogheda, Greenore, Dundalk and Clogherhead its coastline is of high visual and environmental amenity value. Some rural areas are impacted by poor IT penetration and broadband quality; there are limited recreational and visitor infrastructure beyond the established honey pots and there is limited capacity to leverage the Dublin-Belfast Corridor since the majority of journeys pass through the county.

Despite these challenges, Louth has all the critical elements to develop a world class tourism proposition for the domestic and international market. The vision for Louth tourism is to increase the number of visitors to the region by working in partnership to develop a world-class sustainable tourism experience under three strategic pillars of Heritage and Culture, Recreation and Leisure and the Arts, Food and Festivals. At the heart of the LEF Tourism and Heritage Action plan is a growth strategy that will ultimately generate this increased revenue and create additional sustainable local jobs county wide. LEADER is particularly suited to revitalising rural towns through coordinating an integrated approach that builds on the economic strengths and infrastructure of the area whilst addressing the key challenges for business, community and recreation.

The Tourism and Heritage Action Plan acknowledges that some of the major local tourist attractions are shared with other counties, such as The Boyne Valley which straddles Louth and Meath, and some outside the state, such as the Mourne Cooley Gullion Region. These challenges need to be addressed in order for the County to fully realise its development potential.

Capitalising upon the county's assets and telling Louth's story will require an integrated cohesive strategy across disparate stakeholders with varied interests. Working collaboratively will require stakeholders to focus on the common goal that unites them all, one that is underpinned by an integrated branding and digital strategy. Investment in branding, digital marketing, technology and metrics is essential for Louth to achieve its growth strategy.

8.6.13 Celebrating our arts and culture

The arts are an inextricable part of social and cultural change; they are central to civic life, and a badge of our national and local identity. Louth County Council Arts Service recognises that involvement in the arts is beneficial to the individual, to communities, and to society as a whole. In its latest strategy, *Making Great Art Work 2016-2025*, the Arts Council reinforces its commitment to artists and to making the arts accessible to as wide a range of communities as possible. This is particularly apparent in County Louth where the arts are valued and supported. Louth is home to a vibrant dynamic arts life; thanks to the many practising artists across all disciplines who live and work there. Participation in the arts allows each citizen to choose, explore, and pursue different means of self-expression. Conversely, in a society where the arts are undervalued and less well supported, opportunities for personal growth are blocked, access to the creative wealth of the world is inhibited, and means of strengthening self-identity are restricted. Running in parallel with the beneficial impact of the arts on the individual is the potential of the arts to underpin community life.

Louth Arts Service is an exemplar of good practice and functions as a driver to support arts activity in the county. Its wide variety of high calibre arts festivals explore areas of niche excellence and attracts audiences from within and outside the county in theatre; baroque, classical and contemporary music; dance and visual arts and the traditional arts. It has a particularly strong youth theatre movement which provides valuable creative space for young people to stimulate and nurture expression of thought, and enabling them to express themselves in a safe and supportive



environment, across a range of issues. Music Generation and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann are also active in the county and are supporting the music education of many of Louth's young people. Group participation in the arts creates and reinforces bonds across social strata, age groups and gender. The arts can act as a catalyst for encouraging tolerance and understanding between culturally diverse people; and this has been witnessed right across Louth in the past ten years through projects undertaken by the Peace and Reconciliation Partnership.

Within the EU, the Cultural and Creative Industries are estimated to be responsible for over 3% of the EU's gross domestic product, with an expectation that this will grow strongly within the next five years. Louth has already positioned itself to be a leader in this growth with the establishment of Creative Spark in Dundalk. It acts as a hub for artists and creative thinkers/innovators. In its submission to the LECP, Creative Spark notes that they in particular, have a role in developing and sustaining arts, culture and heritage which will underpin the quality of life for individuals and communities.

8.6.14 Sharing our heritage

Heritage is intertwined with a sense of identity, and historic, cultural and natural inheritance. This kind of inheritance has the ability to enhance and enrich the lives of those living in Louth and to attract visitors from farther afield. Successive governments have worked to ensure the protection of our national heritage and to promote its enjoyment by all. Sustainable development underpins every action in the National *Heritage Plan* i.e. that the needs of the present generation must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Louth's built and natural heritage and landscapes are vital assets that make the county an attractive place to live and work, and a place to promote sustainable tourism and attract inward investors. The *National Heritage Plan* asserts that proud, well-grounded people make better citizens than the disengaged, transient and disconnected, and heritage can be mobilised as a source of local pride and as a support for sustainable community development.

The 2003 UN Convention for the *Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* recognises the vital role of language in the expression and transmission of living heritage. It notes that all intangible cultural heritage depends on language for its day-to-day vitality, and for being passed on to the next generation. In relation to oral traditions, whether it be song, poetry or folklore, language is not only the vehicle that contains the cultural heritage; it is its essence. Louth has a rich language and literary tradition. The Oriel Irish dialect continued to be spoken in Omeath until just after the middle of the 20th century. In recognition of this, and the increasing numbers of Irish language speakers setting up home in the area, the Omeath branch of Conradh na Gaeilge was set-up in July 2014 to promote the Irish language in Omeath and its surrounding area. The branch has established a language and cultural centre called Áras na nGael in the heart of Omeath, which is being used as a base to promote the Irish language and culture. The LECP recognizes the importance of language and its relationship to self-esteem and pride of place, and this is reflected in an action in the plan to develop an Irish language policy for Louth.

Louth's built heritage⁸⁵ comes under three areas: its architectural heritage (there are 1,400 Protected Structures in Louth); its archaeological heritage (there are 1,546 Recorded Monuments listed for protection) and its Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Some of these areas are very extensive, for example, Drogheda; Ireland's largest walled town.

Louth is also very rich in terms of natural heritage. Louth has 11 Natura sites, designated under the European Union's Habitats and Birds Directives (six Special Areas of Conservation and five Special Protection Areas). One of these, Dundalk Bay, is the State's top site for overwintering birds. In addition, Louth has 24 Natural Heritage Areas proposed

⁸⁵ Draft Heritage Plan 2015-2020



for nature conservation under the Wildlife Act and 34 sites proposed for designation as geological and geomorphological NHAs by the Geological Survey of Ireland. There are also many other undesignated areas of local, national and even international significance for wildlife.

Louth's Heritage Plan aims '*to coordinate the conservation, management and sympathetic development of the county's heritage and to encourage community pride in, and responsibility for, the implementation of the Plan*'. Its three key objectives include:

- Finding out about and protecting and conserving what we have;
- Interpreting and promoting ('selling') the heritage to our people;
- Managing and safeguarding the county's heritage.

The draft *Louth Heritage Plan 2016-2020* seeks to make people aware of the value of their heritage and getting them to care about it. Many of the issues raised in relation to this objective in the draft plan mirror Louth's tourism needs; i.e. develop strategic planned approaches to interpreting and promoting Louth's heritage, and maximise digital marketing and technology appropriately so that it can be appreciated and enjoyed locally and by visitors to the region.

8.6.15 Louth Tidy Towns Together

Louth is one of only four counties in Ireland to hold four gold medals in the Tidy Towns competition and it has represented Ireland on three occasions in the European Entente Florale competition, on each occasion, winning awards. Next to the GAA, Tidy Towns is the biggest community organisation in the country and Louth's 24 groups comprise of 450 volunteers who give around 450,000 hours on an annual basis. Partnership with local community groups and the voluntary sector with local government are an integral element of improving and enhancing local environments. The strength of the Tidy Towns Together Network and its many constituent parts continues to impact positively in every corner of County Louth; 24 centres in the county increased their performance in the Tidy Towns competition in 2015. The Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund also continues to be availed by local groups with good success.

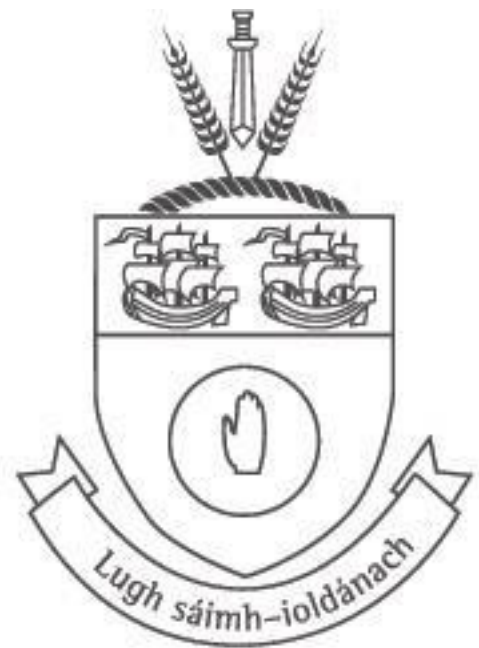
Apart from its involvement in community life, the contribution of initiatives like Tidy Towns cannot be underestimated in its contribution to a perception of safety for citizens and businesses. This was reiterated during the LECP consultation process and also during the Public Participation Network consultation. Tidy Towns Together also noted in a submission to the LECP that it would be important that any rural development programme should prioritise village enhancement works to include funding for development of public parks, heritage parks, biodiversity gardens, sculptures, paving projects decorative lighting standards and playgrounds. The Community Safety Strategy survey conducted in 2014 identified good community spirit, attractive well maintained spaces, programmes like Tidy Towns, facilities for young people and a Garda presence as critical factors to increasing local communities sense of safety. Well-designed and efficiently maintained local environments lead to self-esteem and pride of place in local communities and they encourage volunteerism at local level together with enhanced feelings of personal safety.



LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

9.0 LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

A Plan for the promotion of economic and community development in County Louth



Comhairle Contae **Lú**
Louth County Council

LECP

February 2016



9.1 Louth LECP Economic Goals

ECONOMIC Goal 1: Foreign Direct Investment

Promote and develop Louth as a key investment location on the Eastern Economic Corridor.

ECONOMIC Goal 2: Sustainable Development

Promote the growth of new and existing business and communities in Louth in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

ECONOMIC Goal 3: Education and Training

Advance economic and social development by providing a targeted continuum of lifelong learning and skills development.

ECONOMIC Goal 4: Future focused Innovation

Ensure that Louth will be a leader in business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.

ECONOMIC Goal 5: Indigenous Industry

Deliver viable local economies underpinned by innovation and entrepreneurship.

ECONOMIC Goal 6: Tourism and Heritage

Ensure that Louth's unique Tourism offering positions it as a market leader of national significance.

ECONOMIC Goal 7: Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Establish Louth as a premier producer in the Agri-Farming, Food and Fisheries sector.

ECONOMIC Goal 8: Broadband Connectivity and Transport

Ensure availability of high speed broadband connectivity county-wide to develop and sustain business and connect our communities.



9.2 Economic objectives at a glance

[Lead Goal delivery highlighted]

		ECONOMIC Goal 1: Foreign Direct Investment	ECONOMIC Goal 2: Sustainable Development	ECONOMIC Goal 3: Education & Training	ECONOMIC Goal 4: Future Focused Innovation	ECONOMIC Goal 5: Indigenous Industry	ECONOMIC Goal 6: Tourism & Heritage	ECONOMIC Goal 7: Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	ECONOMIC Goal 8: Broadband Connectivity & Transport
001	Focus inward investment to Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and the Eastern Economic Corridor first.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
002	Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the regional action Plan for Jobs.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
003	Create a Louth Brand to attract and promote business and quality of life.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
004	Work collaboratively with interregional agencies to promote cross border and transboundary business and investment initiatives.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
005	Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
006	Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
007	Replicate the Dundalk 2020 approach in Drogheda and Ardee		✓				✓		
008	Aid in the identification and development of renewable energy projects and technologies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
009	Improve county sustainability indices as part of Brand Louth		✓				✓	✓	
010	Establish an Education, Training and Business task group with an implementation and monitoring working group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
011	Match skills development with Louth Economic Goals	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
012	Advance the formation and promotion of strategic educational alliances in an enhanced environment			✓		✓			
013	Support inclusive and flexible 'work ready' Education and Skills Development programmes	✓		✓	✓	✓			
014	Form and strengthen alliances between Primary and Secondary Schools, DKIT, the LEF and industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
015	Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
016	Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
017	Drive an increase in competitiveness and promote the development of indigenous industry sectors and Irish bred internationally traded services		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
018	Resource, support and promote existence and capabilities of LEO, CECs and expert panel mentoring network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
019	Promote the growth of the Retail sector	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
020	Identify and maintain business, enterprise, R&D and innovation funding streams.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
021	Develop a tourism and visitor marketing programme as part of Brand Louth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
022	Support an increased awareness and knowledge of Louth's heritage and culture		✓	✓			✓		✓
023	Implement priority rural development and LEADER projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
024	Support the delivery of appropriate well planned and managed supporting infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



9.3 Louth LECP Economic Actions

Economic Objective 001 Focus inward investment to Dundalk, Drogheda, Ardee and the Eastern Economic Corridor first.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
001	Louth will facilitate and encourage IDA executives based overseas to visit relevant companies in Louth to enhance IDA employees knowledge of the county and regions to aid in IDA marketing their potential to inward investors.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO, LEF, Louth companies	Ongoing	Annually record and report number of IDA overseas executives visits to Louth.
002	Louth as a county holding the Dundalk Gateway will maintain a presence on the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in regard to securing Gateway ERDF Fund.	Lead LCC Support Northern & Western Regional Assembly	Ongoing	Nominate LCC representative to monitor & report Gateway ERDF Fund opportunities of Louth
003	IDA to plan, develop and construct new Advanced Building Solution in Dundalk.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC	To 2020	New Advanced Building Solution at Dundalk.
004	IDA, EI and industry will explore the potential for a Digital Payments Cluster along M1 Corridor developing areas of expertise, creation of expanded clusters, building on existing strengths and identifying second site solutions. Louth will support and actively participate in promoting the creation of this digital hub.	Lead IDA, Enterprise Ireland Support LCC, DkIT, DCU, in collaboration with enterprise within the region	2016	Monitor and report on IDA and Enterprise Ireland progress on creation of Digital Hub.
005	Louth will promote the identification of 2 no. preferred sites in Drogheda for inward investment.	Lead LEO, LCC Support IDA, Enterprise Ireland, LEF, Chamber of Commerce	To 2022	Monitor and report on occurrence of new companies on 2 no. sites.

Economic Objective 002 Play active supporting and facilitator role alongside government agencies to implement the Regional Action Plan for Jobs.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
006	IDA will target a minimum of 61 new investments for the North East/ North West over the period 2015 – 2019; an increase of 30 to 40% on the strategy for 2010 – 2014. Louth to secure proportional level of investments.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annual new investments by IDA in County Louth.
007	Louth will identify those companies based in Louth and engaged with IDA Ireland Transformation program	Lead LEO Support IDA Ireland	2016	Compile list of companies engaged with IDA Ireland Transformation programme
008	IDA will continue to collaborate with their existing clients under the Transformation program, encouraging them to invest in new activities, innovation and to win new mandates.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annual engagement statics request to IDA Ireland from Louth County Council.
009	Louth will work with the IDA in creating their value proposition for North East and North West Regions aimed at securing potential	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annually report information supplied.



	"second site" investments from companies with large scale existing operations in Dublin.			
010	Nominate a LCC officer with responsibility to aid in the creation of the Regional Connect Ireland Plan	Lead LCC Support Connect Ireland	By 2016	Nominated LCC officer to report to Connect Ireland.
011	Louth will aid in the creation of a Regional Connect Ireland Plan intended to be integrated with the LCC' enterprise development and job-creation activities.	Lead Connect Ireland Support Nominated LCC officer, Northern & Western and East & Midland Regional Assemblies	Regional Connect Ireland Plan period	Increased number of connections recorded for Louth under the Regional Connect Ireland Plan.
012	Connect Ireland is to announce and run a Connectivation competition, inviting third level students to share their ideas for the future development of the Succeed in Ireland initiative. Louth County Council will support entrants from any third level institution to this competition.	Lead Nominated LCC officer Support DkIT, HEIs	2016	Number of entrants from Louth to Competition.
013	Enterprise Ireland and IDA will run an information/networking event across the North East and North West Regions for their clients.	Lead IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland	2016	Networking Event occurrence.

Economic Objective 003

Create a Louth Brand to attract and promote business and quality of life.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
014	Louth will create Brand Louth as a unique and desirable county to live, work and play in supported by sustainable industry, energy and hard and soft infrastructural connectivity.	Lead LCC Support SPC, LCDC, LEO, LEF, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Bord Failte, Teagasc, Bord Bia, Iascaigh Mhara, SEAI, Age Alliance, Louth Sports Partnership, DkIT, SMEs, multinationals, schools, PPN	2017	Creation of Brand Louth.
015	Promotion of Brand Louth.	Lead LCC Support As identified under Brand Louth	From 2017	Continuous update of Brand interface for county residents, visitors, investors.
016	Louth will provide information to IDA Ireland to proactively update its online marketing "Invest in" series for County Louth.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Annually report information supplied.
017	Engage in the development of a Marketing Strategy / Integrated Awareness Campaign (internal & external) to promote the whole of the North East/ North West as a great region to live, work & play as indicated in the North East /North West Action Plan for Jobs 2015 -2017.	Nominated LCC, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Private Businesses, LEOs, IDA, EI, Connect Ireland, LCC	To 2017	
018	LEO will work with representatives of Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to ensure a co-ordinated and effective approach to promotion and marketing of the county with a view to attracting external investment.	Lead LEO Support IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland	2016	Annual number of new jobs attributable to Enterprise Ireland and / or IDA supported businesses in Louth.



Economic Objective 004

Work collaboratively with interregional agencies to promote cross border & transboundary business and investment initiatives.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
019	Louth will carry out a scoping and review exercise of adopted LECs on the North West and north East Regions to identify similar actions and therefore opportunities for collaboration with other counties in the region	Lead LCC. Support SPC	2016	Prepare document identifying similar LEC actions and circulate to the Northern & Western and the Eastern & Midland Regional Assemblies.
020	Louth businesses will attend the <i>Going North</i> workshop hosted by InterTradeIreland to support local business and create awareness of opportunities that exist with this workshop.	Lead InterTrade Ireland, Support LEO, LCC	2017	Number of Louth companies to participate in each InterTradeIreland workshop
021	Through the INTERREG VA Programme SEUPB will support cross-border business investment in Research & Innovation with an allocation of €15.9m. The key outputs will focus on SMEs with 1,408 receiving a range of support including: collaboration with research institutions; innovation advice; collaborative research projects. Louth to secure proportional level of investment.	Lead Special EU Programmes Body Support LCC, LEO	2016 - 2020	Number of INTERREG VA funded cross-border R&D Innovation projects with Louth
022	InterTradeIreland aim to help companies to identify and break down barriers to trade with Northern Ireland through the Trade Accelerator Voucher scheme. Louth will support this scheme	Lead InterTradeIreland Support LEO, LCC	To 2016	Number of Trade Accelerator Voucher Scheme recipients in Louth.

Economic Objective 005

Position Louth as Ireland's foremost Smart Green County promoting a sustainable energy and circular economy future.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
023	Louth will support the maintenance of and proposals to strengthen the electricity transmission grid where feasible and necessary to enable maximum investment by industries that rely on large energy consumption	Lead Eirgrid Support LCC	Ongoing	Annual Number of planning applications / applications to An Bord Pleanála by Electricity providers in Louth
024	Louth will encourage cost savings in businesses through promotion of energy efficiency audits, programmes and training.	Lead SEAI, LCC Support LEO, Louth Energy Officer, SEAI, IWEA	Ongoing	Annual SEAI training and programme participants from Louth. Annual number of energy audits signposted by LEO

Economic Objective 006

Develop leadership and competency in Smart Energy Technologies.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
025	Through the INTERREG VA Programme, the Special EU Programmes Body will increase business industry-relevant Research and Innovation capacity across the North West and North East region within two sectors;	Lead SEUPB Support LCC, LEO, SPC, LCDC, LMETB, SEAI	To 2023	Annual level of funding sought/ secured by Louth companies/ projects.



	'Health & Life Sciences' and 'Renewable Energy', with an ERDF allocation of €45m. Louth to secure proportional level of investment.			
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Economic Objective 007 Replicate the Dundalk 2020 approach in Drogheda and Ardee.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
026	Louth will work with SEAI to identify suitable Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) model location(s) in the County to act as exemplars.	Lead SEAI Support Louth Energy Officer	To 2017	Number of suitable locations identified by 2017 in both Drogheda & Ardee.
027	Louth with the support of SEAI will select a preferred SEC location.	Lead SEAI Support Louth Energy Officer	2017	Identification of preferred SEC locations in both Drogheda & Ardee.

Economic Objective 008 Aid in the identification & development of renewable energy projects & technologies.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
028	Inward investment in wind energy and renewable energies to Louth will be encouraged in accordance with Development Plan policy and objectives.	Lead LCC Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO, private sector representatives, IWEA,	Ongoing	Annual number of planning applications, Section 5 applications for renewable energy.

Economic Objective 009 Improve County Sustainability Indices as part of Brand Louth.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
029	Implement LECP.	Lead LECP Steering Committee Support SPC, LCDC	To 2022	Annual review will measure performance of Louth.

Economic Objective 010 Establish an Education, Training and Business Task Group with an Implementation and Monitoring Working Group.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
030	Public agencies responsible for business start ups and employment in Louth are to meet quarterly.	Lead SPC Support LEF, LCDC, LDS, LEO, LMETB, DSP, Dept. of Jobs Enterprise & Employment, Regional Assembly member, Enterprise Ireland, InterTrade Ireland, SEAI	Ongoing	Quarterly Agendas and Minutes published.
031	Louth Economic Forum will pilot an initiative to evaluate the coherence of the various start-up supports at County level, to create a road map for users and to consider ways through which they can be promoted to ensure a joined-up, comprehensive, yet easily accessible, information and guidance service to potential entrepreneurs.	Lead Louth Economic Forum Support SPC, LEO, LCC	2016	Road map for users of county start up services made.



Economic Objective 011 Match skills development with Louth Economic Goals.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
032	Work with InterTradelreland to ensure that companies in Louth have access to the <i>Funding for Growth</i> workshops and equity awareness events proposed for the North East and North West Region.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to attend InterTradelreland workshops & events.
033	Louth businesses will attend the <i>Get ready to Export</i> seminar that Enterprise Ireland will run for the North East/ North West in 2016.	Lead EI Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to attend seminar.
034	Ensure that businesses in Louth have access to the <i>Export Workshop</i> to be run by Enterprise Ireland in the North East/ North West in 2016.	Lead EI Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to attend workshop.
035	InterTradelreland will promote its <i>Acumen</i> and <i>Elevate</i> programmes in the North West & North East Regions.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of Louth companies to participate in each <i>Acumen</i> and <i>Elevate</i> programmes
036	Louth will work with InterTradelreland to ensure that SMEs in Louth have access to the public tendering workshops proposed for the North East and North West Region.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2017	Number of Louth companies to attend public tendering workshops.
037	LEO will run 1 Public Sector Procurement Workshop.	Lead LEO	2016	Workshop held.
038	Louth will work with InterTradelreland to aid companies in Louth have access to public tender opportunities; including cross border public sector opportunities, consortia building for larger contracts and below threshold contracts.	Lead InterTradelreland, Support LEO, LCC	2016	Number of cross border tenders submitted.
039	LEO will maintain and improve Public Sector Procurement skills development.	Lead LEO	2017 Onward	Public Procurement skills development supports identified and participation rates monitored.
040	LEO will providing training and mentoring for 250 women across its programs.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
041	LEO will increase the number of women participants year on year on their programmes and in mentoring, including directing them to Enterprise Ireland (Start Your Own Business, Accelerate, Hi Start, Export Awareness, Lean, Mentoring).	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland	2017 Onward	Annual number of women participants increased across all LEO Services at least in line with APJ target of 670 for the North East from 2015-2018.
042	LEO will run 5 Female Entrepreneur Networking: Formal Women in Business Network Events with a total of 300 participants.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete.

Economic Objective 012 Advance the formation and promotion of strategic educational alliances in an enhanced environment.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
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043	Engage in North West and North East Regional Skills Fora to foster better engagement between education providers, employers and other regional stakeholders, on an ongoing basis, to collaborate in building the skills of people and businesses in County Louth.	Lead DES Support DkIT, LMETB, IDA, EI, LEOs, Ibec Chambers, industry/SMEs	Ongoing	Number of Louth members of Regional Skills Fora Number of Louth attendees at Regional Skills Fora
044	The Technology Gateway National Network will continue to carry out industry research. Ensure that DkIT and businesses in Louth are aware of, and have access to the findings and research of this network.	Lead DkIT Support LCC, LMETB, EI, LEO, Technology Gateway Network	To 2017	Nominate a Louth official to attend and report on the LyIT - WISAR Technology Gateway annual open day. Attend open days of other Technology Gateways.

Economic Objective 013 Support Inclusive & Flexible 'Work Ready' Education and Skills Development Programmes.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
045	Louth will encourage the meeting of skills shortages in process technician roles in Medtech, Plastics and Engineering sector identified in the North East and North west Regions by providing training conversion programmes at level 6.	Lead LMETB Support IMDA Skillnet, Ibec	Ongoing	Number of Medtech, Plastics and Engineering (at level 6 and above) training places occupied by Louth participants
046	Develop and roll out the new range of national apprenticeship programmes across Louth.	Lead LMETB Support Education & Skills Providers, DkIT, EI, IDA	Ongoing	Annual number of apprenticeship places taken up by Louth residents. Annual number of apprenticeships completed by Louth residents.
047	LEO will run 9 Start Your Own Business programmes with a total of 150 participants.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
048	LEO will increase the number of participants year on year on the Start Your Own Business programmes.	Lead LEO	2017 Onward	Annual number of participants increased.
049	LEO will run 1 Start Your Own Food Business Course with 8 participants.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
050	LEO will run 2 Start Your Own Online Business courses.	Lead LEO	2016	Action complete
051	InterTradelreland will promote the Fusion Programme for the placement of high calibre science, engineering or technology graduates with SMEs in partnership with DkIT. A target of at least 18 placements has been set for the North East and North West region. Louth to secure proportional level of investment.	Lead InterTradelreland, LEF, Support DkIT, LMETB, educational providers, SMEs, LEF	2016	Number of Fusion approvals arising per sector from Louth. Number of diaspora events held.
052	The North West and North East region has actioned one to one support to long term unemployed clients before they approach employment or training.	Lead DSP Support LMETB	Ongoing	Record number of one to one meetings pre-employment or training.



Economic Objective 014 Form and strengthen alliances between Primary and Secondary Schools, DkIT, the LEF and Industry.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
053	Louth will foster connections between companies and young people and heighten awareness of skill set shortages through engagement with second and third level students.	Lead LMETB, LEO Support Education & Skills Providers, Secondary Schools, DkIT,	2017	Present to all second level schools the business profile of Louth and national skillnet shortages. Use Student Enterprise Awards to do this. Identify, maintain & grow LMETB and Louth County Council informal and formal partnerships with DkIT.
054	The North East and North West Regional Action Plan for Jobs has actioned cross border higher education Networks (Letterkenny/Derry and Dundalk /Belfast) to enhance enterprise and economic development in Louth and across the region.	Lead LMETB, DkIT Support relevant bodies in Northern Ireland	2016-2017	Louth participation in cross border Dundalk / Belfast education Network.
055	Louth will work with Enterprise Ireland and promote their Graduate Placement Programme.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC, LMETB	Ongoing	Annual number of Louth graduates on placement programme.
056	LEO will roll out Student Enterprise Awards programme in all second level schools across the county.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	2016	All second level schools be invited to enter Student Enterprise Awards
057	LEO will run the Student Enterprise Programme and Awards with 400 participants.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	2016	Action complete
058	The North East Region aims that 1,700 students and 60 schools are to be engaged in Student Enterprise Programmes from 2015 - 2018. Louth to secure proportional level of participation.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	To 2018	Annual number of participants and schools participating in programmes increases.
059	Louth will support Enterprise Ireland's promotion of outreach activities to industry, through the Technology Transfer Office at Dublin City University and Dundalk Institute of Technology.	Lead Technology Transfer Offices	Ongoing	Number of outreach events per year.
060	Based on the review of the Regional Innovation Fora in Galway and Cork, Enterprise Ireland will facilitate a Regional Innovation Forum to encourage peer to peer interactions and SME higher education institutions linkages to encourage innovation in the North East and North West region.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support DkIT, LMETB, educational providers, SMEs	2017	Number of Louth attendees at forum.
061	Louth will support a Regional Student Enterprise Network to support Student Entrepreneurship who will be welcome to use business resources of the authority.	Lead Higher Education Institutions Support LCC , LEO	To 2017	Regional Student Enterprise Network established.

**Economic Objective 015****Advance sustainable business innovation in products, services, organisational behaviour and ways of working.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
062	Louth will encourage local companies in Louth to take part in the annual Seedcorn Competition which is run by InterTrade Ireland.	Lead InterTrade Ireland Support LCC, LEO	To 2019	Number of Louth companies entering Seedcorn Competition
063	IDA will continue to roll out its Research, Development & Innovation Program to incentivise client companies in County Louth to develop new processes and products.	Lead IDA Ireland Support LCC, LEO	Ongoing	Annual productivity results of IDA client companies.
064	Explore the potential to establish a Business & Innovation Centre (BIC) in County Louth along the lines of WestBIC in Galway.	Lead The Mill (Drogheda Enterprise Hub) with DkIT Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO	2016	Report on potential for BIC at The Mill including resources and timeframes to delivery.
065	LEO will provide €100,000 across 40 clients through On-line trading vouchers approved.	Lead LEO	2016	Level of assistance and number of businesses assisted in setting up e-commerce websites.
066	The North East Region over 2015 -2018 is to provide 60 online trading vouchers. Louth to secure proportional level of investments.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland	To 2018	Annual number of online trading vouchers dispensed.
067	The North East and North West region will build on the global sourcing and collaboration trend and provide opportunities for Irish Companies to engage with IDA companies.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland, IDA, LCC	Ongoing	Monitor and engage in any initiative arising from Action Plan for Jobs, Action 36.
068	LEO will provide a progression pathway for high potential start-ups and high growth companies to Enterprise Ireland's supports and programmes including their Potential Exporters Division, and High Potential Start-up Division.	Lead LEO Support Enterprise Ireland	Ongoing	Number of startup clients progressed to Enterprise Ireland per year.

Economic Objective 016**Lead age-friendly business development, creating new models of flexible value and enterprise.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
069	Develop an Age-Friendly Business Charter for Louth.	Lead Age Friendly LEF Support LCC, SPC	2016	Making of Charter.
070	Promote the Enterprise Awards Scheme (BTWEAS) for people who return to work on the enterprise allowance scheme.	Lead LCDCs Support LCC, DSP	Ongoing	Number of Louth entrants to the BTWEAS

Economic Objective 017**Drive an increase in competitiveness and promote the development of Indigenous Industry Sectors & Irish bred Internationally traded Services.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
071	Louth will work with Enterprise Ireland to target manufacturing companies in County Louth as a part of its Regions to scale, innovate and develop international markets for those companies.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC	Ongoing	LEO annual report of Enterprise Ireland supported companies.



072	Continue to host Human Resource forums through Ibec's regional offices in Louth for Ibec members.	Lead Ibec	Ongoing	Meetings to be held for Ibec members.
073	Ibec are to hold a Regional Business Roadshow and a Regional Business Summit for Ibec members.	Lead Ibec	2016	Attendance at Roadshow and Ibec member attendance at Summit.
074	Increase the number of entrepreneurs and start ups in Louth via the Enterprise Start workshops, the New Frontiers Entrepreneurial Development Programmes.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC	Ongoing	Number of Louth participants annually.
075	Enterprise Ireland will first evaluate then support and monitor successful applicants under the €5 million Community Enterprise Initiative Scheme launched in 2015.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support Community Enterprise Initiative candidates	To 2016	Number of successful applicants to the Community Enterprise Initiative Scheme from Louth. Monitoring findings of Enterprise Ireland.
076	Enterprise Ireland will evaluate proposals under the National €5 million Competitive LEO fund that supports micro-enterprise locally.	Lead Enterprise Ireland, LEO	To 2016	Number of successful proposals for Competitive LEO fund from Louth.
077	Louth will encourage the uptake of InterTradeIreland's Challenge Programme, an intensive mentoring and support programme for growing businesses, to SMEs in the County Louth.	Lead InterTradeIreland Support LEO, LCC	To 2016	Number of Challenge Programme users from Louth
078	LEO will promote and encourage client participation in the 1. National Enterprise Awards; 2. the Irelands Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) competition 3. the Exporter of the Year Awards and 4. Dundalk and Drogheda Chamber Business & Tourism Awards.	Lead LEO Support LEO clients, connections	2016	Number of Louth entrants into each national competition (1, 2 & 3). Monitor total number of entrants to Chamber of Commerce awards (no. 4) year on year.
079	LEO is part of a National Co-Ordinating Committee for the Local Enterprise Village in September at the National Ploughing Championships. The Village will feature 71 clients selected from all 31 LEOs nationwide and clients from Louth will form part of this village.	Lead LEO Support LEO clients, Local Enterprise Village	2016	Attend ploughing event with at least 2 Louth companies.
080	LEO Louth is one of seven regional LEO hubs promoting and participating in the Enterprise Europe Network Programme.	Lead LEO Support LCC, SPC, Enterprise Europe Network,	2016	LEO to regularly publish regional hub meeting outcomes.
081	LEO Louth is a partner in the development and roll out of a new East Border Region Plato Network.	Lead LEO Support LCC, Eastern Region Plato partners	Ongoing	Number of Louth members in PLATO network.



Economic Objective 018 **Resource, support & promote existence and capabilities of LEO, CECs and expert panel mentoring network.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
082	Enterprise Ireland will agree and implement Service Level Agreements with all Business Innovation Centres (a.k.a. CECs) in County Louth.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, LCC	2016	5 no. Service Level Agreements made.
083	LEO will continue to provide appropriate support to the Community Enterprise Centres (The Mill, Millmount, Creative Spark Ltd., Ardee Community Development Co. Ltd. and Dundalk Enterprise Development Company Ltd.).	Lead LEO, CECs Support Enterprise Ireland, LCC	Ongoing	Number of new enterprises availing of CEC supports.
084	LEO will deliver the Innovation Alliance Programme in Louth for the effective transfer and implementation of innovation between Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through the 8 SHIP partnerships.	Lead LEO Support SHIP partnerships	Ongoing	Number of Horizon 2020 ready SMEs in Louth.
085	LEO will provide 150 one-to-one Mentoring Sessions (approx 50 assignments) to micro/small businesses.	Lead LEO Support Mentoring Network	2016	Action complete.
086	LEO will increase year on year the number of mentoring sessions and assignments.	Lead LEO Support Mentoring Network	2017 Onward	Annual number of mentoring sessions and assignments increased.
087	Louth will support the identification of a set of volunteer business mentors to support Louth businesses and entrepreneurs.	Lead LCC, LEO Support Louth Economic Forum (LEF), Age Alliance, Plato EBR, Chambers of Commerce, Ibec	2016	List of volunteer mentors and skillsets compiled.
088	Louth will use the identified set of volunteer business mentors to support Louth businesses and entrepreneurs on a case by case basis.	Lead LCC, LEO Support LEF, Age Alliance, Plato, EBR, Chambers of Commerce, Ibec	2017	Review existing business clients, course participants to invite expressions of interest for volunteer mentors. Match volunteer mentor skillsets and time resources with businesses & individuals wishing to avail of service.
089	LEO will ensure that the best-fit member of staff is assigned to each client and that 500 one to one client meetings, across 50 companies, occur each year.	Lead LEO	Ongoing	Annual number of client meetings. Annual number of clients.
090	LEO will work to ensure the availability of incubation space and supports in CECs across Louth.	Lead LEO Support CECs	Ongoing	Number of clients referred to each CEC per year by LEO.

Economic Objective 019 **Promote the growth of the Retail Sector.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
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091	Creating incentives for the sequential development of existing and new retail and retail services businesses in accordance with the Louth Retail Hierarchy.	Lead SMEs, national retailers, international retailers Support LCC	Ongoing	Annual number of permissions granted /retail space for retail development.
092	Louth will provide support and assistance to pop up shops and markets in Louth's principal towns enabling artisan food producers, artists and craft makers to showcase and sell their products.	Lead LCC Support Chambers of Commerce, Retail Bodies, Local Businesses	To 2017	Record number, location, type and frequency of markets in Louth including occasional pop up events. Monitor growth /decrease in markets / events to inform improved services.

Economic Objective 020 Identify and maintain business, enterprise, R&D and innovation funding streams.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
093	Maintain list of EU, National, Regional and local grant aids.	Lead LEO Support LCC, government departments, government agencies.	Ongoing	List held and regularly updated
094	Monitor and explore the potential of all potential sources of funding, co-financing and financing particularly regional and interregional lending opportunities.	Lead SPC Support LEO, LCC, LEF, LCDC	Ongoing	Number of new financing sources identified and explored per year.
095	Maintain list of finance for business sources.	Lead LEO Support LCC, government departments, government agencies.	Ongoing	List held and regularly updated
096	Louth will continue to work with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in parallel with their membership of the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly in order to secure EU funding for relevant projects in the County. NOTE: The Northern and Western Regional Assembly also acts as the national contact point for three EU Interreg Programmes for the 2014-2020 period i.e. Northern Periphery and Arctic (€56 m), Atlantic Area (€140m) and Interreg Europe (€359 m – jointly with the Southern Assembly).	Lead Northern and Western Regional Assembly Support LCC, LCDC, SPC, LEO	To 2020	LDS monitoring reports
097	The North East Region is to be provided €1.1 million in grant assistance under the Acton Plan for Jobs and enterprise development supports. Louth to secure proportional level of investments.	Lead Dept. of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation Support LEOs, LCC, Enterprise Ireland	To 2018	Annually review level of funding supports to Louth relative to regional partner counties.
098	The North East Region over 2015 -2018 is to make 20 microfinance applications. Louth to secure at least proportional level of applications.	Lead LEO Support LCC, Enterprise Ireland	To 2018	Number of microfinance Ireland applications annually. Number of successful microfinance Ireland applications annually.
099	LEO will provide €100,000 across 10 clients through Microfinance Applications submitted.	Lead LEO Support LCC, Enterprise Ireland	2016	Number of successful microfinance Ireland applications .



100	LEO will prepare applications for relevant EU Programmes including INTERREG V and PEACE IV.	Lead LEO	2016	Number of applications for EU funding prepared by LEO for clients.
101	LEO will provide Grant Aid Approvals totalling €300,000 across 25 projects in Priming, Business Expansion and Feasibility Study Grants.	Lead LEO	2016	Level of grant aid approval in monetary amount and number of clients.
102	LEO will provide 44 jobs through the grants approved in 2016.	Lead LEO	2016	Number of jobs created through grant approvals.
103	LEO will provide a net increase of 60 jobs in financially supported businesses during 2016.	Lead LEO	2016	Increased employment in Financially supported businesses.

Economic Objective 021 Develop a Tourism & Visitor Marketing Programme as part of Brand Louth.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
104	Louth will support the development of their town centres in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plans.	Lead LCC Support Chambers of Commerce, Retail Bodies, Local Businesses	Ongoing	Interim reports on the Development Plans. Provision and publication of local level guidance for town centre users. Number of Derelict site in Town Centres. Number of Dangerous Buildings in Town Centres.
105	The North East and North West region have stated that Fáilte Ireland will examine, as part of the Wild Atlantic Way strategy for 2015-2019, the development of a series of loops off the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East to encourage greater spread of visitors, alleviate pressure from high traffic areas and present complementary visitor experiences.	Lead Fáilte Ireland Support LCC, SPC, LCDC, LEF	To 2019	Loops off Ireland's Ancient East mapped and published.
106	Faillte Ireland and Tourism Ireland to market the Ireland's Ancient East as a tourism destination and Failte Ireland to identify any gaps in the Tourism Sector in the North West and North East region.	Lead Fáilte Ireland Support LCC, SPC, LCDC, LEF	2016-2019	Regional gap assessment by Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland prepared.
107	Louth will review Failte Ireland and Tourism Ireland assessment of North West and North East region to close gaps identified.	Lead LEF Support Fáilte Ireland, SPC, LCDC, LCC	2016-2019	Prepare gap report for Louth. Close Gaps.
108	The North East and North West region have actioned the development of tourism related maritime projects such as sailing/ cruise ships/ festivals in the region and particularly Drogheda.	Lead LCC Support Drogheda Port Company, SPC, LCDC, LEF, Failte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, clubs/ societies (Inver Colpa Rowing Club)	Ongoing	Number, location, type of maritime / river related events recorded annually
109	Identify and develop greenway / blueway networks in the County.	Lead LCC Support PC, LCDC, LEF, Waterways Ireland, NPWS, leisure clubs:	Ongoing	Publish electronic map of blue and greenways county 2017.



		rowing/sailing/canoeing /walking /cycling .		Signpost routes after 2017. Monitor blue/greenway route map for additions/deletions.
110	Louth will promote and raise awareness of Fáilte Ireland's new international accreditation for alternative accommodation ('Welcome Standard').	Lead Fáilte Ireland Support LCC, LEO, LCDC, SPC, LEF	Ongoing	Annual number of Louth Facilities accredited with the Welcome Standard.
111	The North East and North West region have actioned the development of cross border Activity Tourism.	Lead LCC Support LEO, LCDC, SPC, LEF, Down and Armagh equivalent local authorities, Regional Assembly	Ongoing	Identify and agree a schedule of cross border, county and transboundary Activity Tourism Opportunities.
112	The North East and North West region have actioned the establishment of a cross border historic literary trail building on the North East/ North West region's literary heritage (including Yeats, McGahern, Kavanagh, Heaney, Mc Gill and Friel).	Lead LCC Support LEO, LCDC, SPC, LEF, North West & North East local authorities, Down, Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone equivalent local authorities, Regional Assembly	2017	Identify potential cross border literary trail(s) in Louth.
113	Louth will promote its attractions in an integrated Tourism & Visitor Marketing Strategy to be part of Brand Louth. Key features identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage and Culture Recreation and Leisure Arts, Festivals and Food 	Lead LCC Support LEF, LEO, LCDC, SPC, LDS, Regional Assemblies, Bord Fáilte, The North East Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG)	2016	Update Louth Tourism and Heritage Action Plan 2011
			By 2022	Dedicate human and financial resource to strategy formulation.

Economic Objective 022

Support an increase awareness and knowledge of Louth's Heritage and Culture.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
114	Map creative industries including digital content within County Louth and examine the potential for development of the sector within the County.	Lead LCC Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO, Design Crafts Council of Ireland, Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Higher Educational Institutions	2016	Digital Map of creative industries in Louth inc. names of business, product listings, no. of employees.
115	The North West and North East region has actioned the exploitation of the potential to develop crafts hubs for the County similar to Drumshambo food hub.	Lead LCC Support Enterprise Ireland, LEO, Design Crafts Council of Ireland, Dept. of	2017	Prepare statement on preferred location of craft or creative hubs in the County.



	They also highlight the creative sector by bringing individuals together in "creative hubs" to promote design skills, help tourism, attract creative people into Louth and improve quality of life.	Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Higher Educational Institutions		
116	Louth will monitor the Acorns programme the national pilot competitive entrepreneurial development programme that targeted 48 female entrepreneurs based outside of urban centres in the North West and North East Regions.	Lead Dept. of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Support LCC	2015	Review findings of Acorns project to replicate success indicators in Louth
117	Support designation of Monasterboice as UNESCO site	Lead World Heritage Ireland Support LCC	Ongoing	UNESCO Designation
118	Support the fishing heritage and tourism potential of Clogherhead primarily through its Coastal Heritage Trail.	Lead Clogherhead Development Group (CDG) Support The North East Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), LCC,	Ongoing	2016 LCC to invite CDG to input to Louth Heritage & Tourism Plan update.

Economic Objective 023 Implement priority Rural Development & LEADER projects.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
119	Support the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for Louth under the LEADER programme.	Lead LCDC Support As assigned	To 2020	LDS monitoring reports
120	The North West and North East region have formally committed Bord Bia to work with Retailers to assist food and drink companies to increase shelf space for local produce.	Lead Bord Bia Support LCC, SPC, LEO, LEF	Ongoing	Monitor Bord Bia reporting on increased local produce retail profile for Louth.
121	Support the uptake and increase the numbers of Louth food producers attaining Origin Green status	Lead Bord Bia (Origin Green initiative) Support LCC, SPC, LEO, LEF, Oriel Food Group	Ongoing	Track annually numbers of Origin Green approved producers
122	Secure resources through LEADER/REDZ/ Village and Town Renewal Schemes to invest in towns and villages in the County to enhance their attractiveness as leisure and retail destinations.	Lead LCC Support LCDC, SPC, LEF	To 2020	Implementation of the LDS. Monitor announcements of and apply for the Village Improvement Scheme grants from central government.
123	Teagasc will deliver product development workshops in the North West & North East region targeting the development of 20 new food enterprises. Louth to work with Teagasc to ensure that companies from Louth take advantage of these workshops.	Lead Teagasc, LEO Support LCC, Bord Bia,	2016-2017	Number of Louth participants at Teagasc workshops.
124	Teagasc will support the development of an artisan food hub pilot project in the region based on international best practice of such hubs. In Louth Ardee has been identified as a potential Food hub including existing kitchen facilities at county level.	Lead Teagasc, LCC Support LEO/Enterprise Ireland, LCDC, SPC, CECs, LEF, SMEs	2016-2017	Location of artisan food hub in Louth.
125	Louth will support the growth of membership the Oriel Food Group	Lead Oriel Food Group Support Leo, LCC, LDS, LEF	2016	LCC and Oriel food group to agree



				supports to be provided to Oriel Food Group and mentoring/network opportunities committed to the Council to the end of the LECP 2022
126	Louth will expand the Taste of Louth Festival.	Lead LCC Support Teagasc, BIM, Bord Bia, LEO/Enterprise Ireland, LCDC, SPC, CECs, LEF, SMEs,	Ongoing	Engage with Taste of Cavan organisers and Taste of Festivals Ltd. Prepare roadmap to festival
127	Louth will support and promote The Irish Food Awards Blas na hÉireann through successful participation.	Lead LCC Support Bord Bia, LEO, LCDC, SPC, CECs, LEF, SMEs	Ongoing	Record number of entries to Irish food Awards annually.
128	Louth will take part in the pre Food Works clinics to occur in the North East and North West region in 2017.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO, Bord Bia, Teagasc	2017	Louth SMEs to attend pre Food Works clinics.
129	Louth will increase the number of participants on the Food Academy Programme and Food Academy Advance.	Lead Bord Bia Support LEO	Ongoing	Annually record number of Louth participants in the Food Academy Programme. Annually record number of Louth participants in the Food Academy Advance.
130	Louth will work with Teagasc to continue to support and increase the level of farm diversification in the county through their Option programme and their pilot <i>Opt-In</i> web portal.	Lead Teagasc Support LCDC, LCC, LEO, IFA, Macra Na Feirme	Ongoing	Annually record number of Louth participants in the Option Programme. Annually record number of Louth members registered on the Option <i>Opt-In</i> web portal.
131	Louth will promote Innovation Vouchers specifically targeting small food companies.	Lead Enterprise Ireland Support LEO	Ongoing	Record number and level of Innovation Vouchers issued to Louth food companies.
132	InterTradelreland will use its Fusion initiative (connecting HEIs in the region/nationally with innovative SMEs) to further develop innovation in agri-technology firms.	Lead InterTradelreland Support DkIT, LMETB, educational providers, SMEs	To 2016	Number of fusion approvals for agri-technology sector arising from Louth.
133	Louth will support the exploration of the potential for adding value to forestry raw materials for job creation and the potential for training local harvester and manufacturers of wood related products.	Lead Coillte Support LCC, LMETB, LEO, foresters, wood product manufacturers	To 2017	Monitor and input to Collte and Skillnet initiatives and reports as they arise.
134	Louth will support and encourage Teagasc provision of skills training and upskilling initiatives for the County's farmers in accounting services, health & safety.	Lead Teagasc Support LMETB, has, farmers	Ongoing	Annual number of Louth Farmers participating in Teagasc and Teagasc identified training and upskilling courses.



135	Louth will support the growth of commercial fisheries, fishing and seafood production, including shellfish	Lead LEO Support Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Dept. of Agriculture Food and the Marine, Bord Bia	Ongoing	Track and increase the number of persons attending LEO delivered programmes engaged in the production of river/sea food
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Economic Objective 024 Support the delivery of appropriate well-planned & managed supporting infrastructure.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measure / Indicator
136	Louth will continue to support a reduced contributions and commercial rates incentives in designated areas as Business Incentive Schemes/ to support retail and attract business into town centres.	Lead LCC Support SPC, LEF	Ongoing	Annually review efficacy of contributions and rates incentives.
137	Louth will compile a database with map of vacant office and enterprise lands.	Lead LCC Support SPC, LEF	2017	Database made
138	Louth will support SIRO broadband delivery in Dundalk	Lead SIRO Support LCC	2016	Dundalk 100% high speed coverage
139	Louth will support the EIR plan to supply speed broadband to 57,000 premises by mid 2016	Lead EIR Support LCC, SPC, LEF	2016	Number of premises with high speed broadband coverage
140	Louth will support private providers of high speed broadband to make Louth the most connected county	Lead Broadband providers Support LCC, SPC, LEF, LDS	By 2018	Drogheda 100% high speed coverage
141	Complete Phase 2 of The Mill, Drogheda	Lead The Mill CEC Support LCC, Enterprise Ireland, LEF, REDZ	2016	Phase 2 completed



9.4 Louth LECP Community Goals

COMMUNITY Goal 1: Strong, safe and flourishing communities

Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.

COMMUNITY Goal 2: Access to education

Goal 2: Ensure that everyone can access and participate in education, skills development and life long learning.

COMMUNITY Goal 3: Prosperous, inclusive communities and places

Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.

COMMUNITY Goal 4: Health and wellbeing

Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.

COMMUNITY Goal 5: Nurturing children and young people

Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.

COMMUNITY Goal 6: An age-friendly society

Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.

COMMUNITY Goal 7: Entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise

Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural development.

COMMUNITY Goal 8: A valued environment

Goal 8: Value and protect our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.



9.5 Louth LECP Community Objectives and Actions

Goal 1: Enable wellbeing and quality of life to support safe, resilient, independent and engaged communities.

Objective 1: Build community capital and collaboration in communities across the county.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
142	Carry out a mapping exercise of community services and programmes in Louth to identify gaps/duplication of services and implement mechanisms to address and better co-ordinate funding, planning and delivery of community services.	Lead PPN Support LCDC Louth Volunteer Centre LLP Churches and other Faith Groups	2017	Community services mapping exercise completed. Mechanisms in place to improve coordination of services and delivery.
143	Support programmes that involve knowledge sharing and collaboration amongst community groups and service providers.	Lead LCDC Support PPN Louth Volunteer Centre LLP Louth Age Friendly Alliance Comhairle Na nÓg Louth Library Service	2017	Research undertaken to identify level of co-operation and sharing of information across community groups and service providers. Number of knowledge sharing initiatives delivered. Number of collaboration contracts implemented.
144	Expand the existing community directory to ensure that it is accessible, accurate and widely used by the public.	Lead LCC Support Louth Volunteer Centre LLP PPN	2016/2017	Community directory expanded and updated
145	Develop an arts strategy and programme that supports our artists, improves access to the Arts, enables opportunities for community participation and increases levels of public engagement.	Lead LCC (Arts Service) Support Droichead Arts Centre Highlanes Gallery An Táin Arts Centre Creative Spark Music Generation Louth DkIT Youth theatres in Louth Calipo Picture and Theatre company Upstate Theatre Company, Arts Festivals in Louth, Voluntary arts sector in Louth, Louth Volunteer Centre Louth Library Service	Q4 2016	Nos of artists supported by Louth Co Council. Nos of festivals and arts events funded. No. of return visits to local venues. Nos of artists residencies. No of volunteer opportunities in arts and culture organisations. Nos of volunteers and volunteer hours in arts and culture Organisations. Nos of cross sector partnerships e.g local libraries.
146	Ensure that libraries create opportunities to improve literacy levels, enhance	Lead LCC Library Service Support PPN	2016 and ongoing	Nos of partnerships established to improve



	community life and support employment opportunities.	LMETB Louth Volunteer Centre LLP		literacy levels in the community. Nos of initiatives undertaken by Library network to facilitate participation and support training and employment initiatives. Increased nos of 'Right to Read' initiatives in Libraries.
147	Work with Tidy Towns, Chambers of Commerce and local residents groups to promote clean, safe and accessible open spaces, parks and playgrounds underpinned by pride of place and community ownership.	Lead Louth Tidy Towns Together Support LCDC LLP Local Chambers of Commerce IPB Pride of Place Awards PPN Louth Volunteer Centre	2016 and ongoing	Nos participating in national Tidy Towns and local Pride of Place competitions. Nos of successful projects.
148	Create 'activity friendly' environments - using a participatory planning approach and the principles of universal design.	Lead LCC Sports Partnership Support HSE LLP Age Friendly Alliance	2016 and ongoing	Nos of play grounds, appropriate facilities/equipment and recreational spaces in place.
149	Provide safe, recreational facilities/shared spaces where children and young people can gather in an inclusive confident way. ⁸⁶	Lead LCC Support LLP An Garda Síochána Community and youth groups Comhairle na nÓg Louth Library Service	2016	Youth Cafes developed in Dundalk, Ardee and Dunleer based on Drogheda model. Nos of events in local libraries for young people
150	Promote intergenerational programmes in communities, youth programmes and schools to build more positive inter-community relationships. ⁸⁷	Lead LCC Support LLP Age-Friendly alliance Libraries, Schools Youth Clubs Retirement Homes and Villages Community groups DDS4OP The Netwell Centre	2016	Nos of programmes in place. Nos of intergenerational programmes facilitated by Louth Library Service
151	Facilitate the development of community 'hubs'/centres of shared learning in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee to support community groups and organisations. that involve volunteers in their work.	Lead LCC Support Louth Volunteer Centre LLP Municipal PPN Louth Library Service Citizen Information Centres LCDC	2016 - 2022	Nos of organisations involved in alliances and partnerships. No of participants attending workshops, training and fora. Nos of community organisations compliant with Governance Code

⁸⁶ Goal 5

⁸⁷ Goal 6



				and registered with Charities Regulatory Authority. Research and feasibility study completed on how existing facilities/knowledge/skills can be shared.
152	Review the current sports strategy and ensure participation in sports and physical activities by individuals and communities ⁸⁸	Lead LCC Sports Partnership Support Local sports clubs Youth Clubs Schools	2016	Sports strategy developed Increase in nos of people participating.

Objective 2: Promote and support volunteering and participation within local communities to enable a vibrant, civil and active society.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
153	Facilitate cross-community representation on the LCDC, PPN, Joint Policing Committee structures and other structures	Lead LCC Support LLP HSE NDTRF An Garda Síochána	2016	Representation in place and structures operating effectively.
154	Develop a volunteer strategy for Louth to address the barriers to volunteering, whilst promoting and supporting the value of volunteering to the individual and its positive impact on local communities.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support LCDC LLP DkIT LMETB PPN LCC Local Employment Agencies HSE Schools Comhairle na nÓg Age Friendly Alliance	Q1 2017	Increased numbers of people volunteering especially amongst the unemployed, young, active retired and groups at more risk of social exclusion. Increased awareness of benefits from volunteering and local Volunteer Centre. Research and monitor the motivations, gaps in volunteer causes/activities and volunteering levels and types in Louth. Increased numbers of organisations participating in Volunteer Manager Forums and training.
155	Develop credits and recognition system for DkIT students and students of local schools who volunteer in local communities.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support Educational institutions DkIT Muirhevnamor Community Groups	Q4 2016	No of student volunteer hours. No of Presidents Award recipients. Nos of community organisations.

⁸⁸ Goal 4



		LLP		Nos of opportunities that involve DkIT students. Recognition and reward schemes established.
156	Develop Louth community group volunteer recognition and reward initiatives and encourage more participation in national awards.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support PPN LCC Chambers of Commerce IPB Pride of Place awards LLP	Q4 2017	Recognition and reward schemes developed.
157	Develop Quality Standard for effectively managing volunteers within community organisations in Louth.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support Volunteer Ireland DKIT LLP LCC PPN	Q3 2017	Quality Standard developed. No of organisations participating. No of organisations with Quality Standard.
158	Promote, broker, facilitate and recognise strong corporate social responsibility initiatives among businesses to build and enhance community capacity.	Lead Louth Volunteer Centre Support LCC LEO Chambers of Commerce LCDC LEF	Q1 2018	Nos of productive relationships brokered. System developed to monitor levels of corporate social responsibility activity. No of corporate social responsibility projects. No of employee volunteer hours.
159	Devise a communications plan for Public Participation Network to enable effective decision making, delivery of work plans and engagement among secretariat and PPN members.	Lead PPN Support LCC	2016	Increased number of community organisations registered with PPN. Communications plan in place, monitored and regularly reviewed.

Objective 3: Ensure that everybody in Co Louth can experience safe and peaceful lives free of crime, intimidation, or anti-social behaviour.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
160	Implement the Louth Community Safety Strategy in all JPC areas	Lead Joint Policing Committees Support LCC An Garda Síochána	2016 and ongoing	Nos of local area targets achieved via local policing fora % reduction in levels of crime and antisocial behaviour.
161	Implement the Garda community text alert system county wide	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC PPN LLP	2016 and ongoing	Community text alert scheme operating county wide.
162	Enforce local bye-laws to create safer local areas and shared public spaces, free from the impact of anti-social behaviour, alcohol and substance misuse.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC	2016 and ongoing	Priorities agreed at local level Increased nos of Garda operations



				Bye-laws enforced at local level Reduction in public order offences.
163	Continue to enforce legislation in relation to underage selling, secondary purchasing, serving intoxicated customers and drink/drugs driving.	Lead An Garda Síochána LAA Local publicans and off-licenses	2016 and ongoing	Alcohol test- purchasing scheme in place Responsible server training delivered in Drogheda, Dundalk and Ardee.
164	Establish a multi-agency Drugs and Alcohol Forum in Louth to devise a drugs and alcohol strategy, reduce the incidence of addiction and to plan and deliver effective services for people with addiction issues to enable sustainable recovery. ⁸⁹	Lead LCC Support NERDTF An Garda Síochána TURAS Counselling Services The Red Door Project	2016 2016-2021	Forum established. Strategy devised. Nos of individuals and families who are accessing support. Reduction in numbers on waiting list for addiction support services. Number of people progressing to treatment services. Drug and Alcohol networks established in areas most affected by substance addiction issues.
165	Ensure that crime victims and victims of sexual offences, domestic violence are supported, and safeguard the welfare of individuals and families at risk.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC HSE TUSLA	2016 and ongoing	Recent victim-focused policy and legislation implemented at local level. Nos of interventions supporting victims of crime made Nos of cases before the Courts.
166	Implement the Louth County Council community fire safety strategy.	Lead LCC Support An Garda Síochána HSE PPN Louth County Fire Service	2016 and ongoing	Reduction in number of fire fatalities in the home.
167	Develop major emergency management structures within the county.	Lead LCC, HSE, An Garda Síochána Support Civil Defence Louth County Fire Service	2016	Nos of interagency major emergency exercises conducted inline with national major emergency framework.
168	Support local road and farm safety.	Lead LCC Support HSE(HI) LCDC LCC Fire Service National Road Safety Authority IFA An Garda Síochána	2016 and ongoing	Nos of community initiatives promoting road safety. Nos of initiatives focusing on farm safety. Reduced incidents of road accidents and farm accidents in local areas.

⁸⁹ Goal 4



Objective 1: Facilitate improved educational attainment levels, up skilling in key competencies and skills acquisition

⁹⁰ ICT, Engineering, Renewable Energies, Food Science, Culinary Arts, Animal care, Sales and marketing, Childcare, Healthcare, Laboratory Science, Sports and Recreation.



			2017 2017	Youthreach facility developed in Ardee to address numbers of NEETS ⁹¹ clients. Extension to Scoil Uí Mhuirí Primary School Dunleer and an all-weather track developed as part of a linked project. Planned extension for Bush Post Primary School with a Special Needs Unit to be developed on School Grounds. ⁹²
171	Ensure that appropriate programmes are available at all levels on the National Framework of Qualifications to facilitate improved educational levels, upskilling in key competencies and lifelong learning.	Lead LMETB DkIT Support LLP Drogheda Education & Training Network (DETN)	2016	Increased participation of Citizens participating in programmes from qualifications 1-10. Programmes in place to meet changing economic needs and those of programme target groups.

Objective 2: Facilitate and encourage greater participation in accredited and unaccredited education / training opportunities

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
172	Provide effective information to include advertising and recruitment campaigns.	Lead LMETB Support LCDC DkIT LLP DETN	2016 and ongoing	Nos of campaigns conducted. Increased uptake in further education and training provision.
173	Ensure appropriate and supported entry criterion.	Lead LMETB Support LAEGIS DES DkIT	Q4 2017	Increase in retention and completion rates in FET.
174	Ensure early identification of learner needs to provide appropriate supports	Lead LMETB Support DES DEIS schools	2016 and ongoing	Needs identified, planned courses/skills provision to meet needs and career guidance counsellor services available in various locations. Increase in retention and completion rates.
175	Enable and support the identification and provision of educational and training needs of local communities in Louth through	Lead LMETB Support LAEGIS Chambers of Commerce DETN	Q4 2016 and ongoing	Increased participation in education/training provision in communities in Louth.

⁹¹ NEETS: Not in Education, Employment or Training.

⁹² Subject to Government sanction



	services of community education facilitators			
176	Clearly establish transfer and progression routes from course/programmes with appropriate supports where funding is available. ⁹³	Lead LMETB Support NEFHEA IGC North East DKIT DETN	Q4 2017	Transfers established and progression routes, together with appropriate supports in place, within FET and between FET and H.E. (Higher Education).
177	Support and provide a range of training opportunities for the wind and renewable energy sector at local level.	Lead IWEA Support DkIT LMETB DSP LLP	2018	Wind Skillnets programme delivered Increased possibilities of skills development and local employment in support of local renewable energy projects.

Objective 3: Ensure that educational /training needs of priority programme target groups are addressed in a focused coherent way

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
178	Enable development and delivery of certified and non-certified education programmes to provide access for existing target groups.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LLP DETN	Q4 2016 and ongoing	Nos of accessible certified and non-certified courses developed.
179	Retain students in education until at least upper second level and provide second chance education to young people and adults who may not have completed upper second level.	Lead LMETB Support DSP DKIT CYPSC	Q4 2017	Nos of young people and adults engaged in 'second chance' education.
180	Support progression of learners into further education/training courses and transitioning to employment	Lead LMETB Support DSP DkIT LLP Upper second level service providers	Q4 2017	Increased rates of transition. PLC colleges, OFI and DIFE, working in partnership with DKIT to provide improved progression opportunities for learners in the region. LES and Jobs Club staff working collaboratively with DSP and LMETB management to ensure that numbers returning to the live register are closely monitored.
181	Promote the implementation of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education programme and the	Lead LMETB Support Schools,	Q4 2017	Nos of schools and youth organisations participating in SPHE, Active Schools

⁹³ Goal 5 Obj xxxx



	Active Schools Flag initiative in primary, post-primary schools and in Youthreach settings in Louth.	Youthreach and Community groups Sport Partnership		Flag and Yellow Flag programmes.
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Objective 4: Work collaboratively to support delivery of LMETB objectives, employer requirements and community/learner needs.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
182	Work with statutory partners and communities to improve employability of unemployed persons by encouraging and enabling participation in courses and programmes.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LCC LLP Local Employment Agencies Volunteer Louth	Q4 2016	Nos of unemployed persons in further education/training programmes Engagement with Youth Guarantee initiatives.
183	Engage proactively with multinational and local indigenous business employer-based networks to ensure that courses and programmes provide for areas of skills shortage.	Lead LMETB Support DSP LEO Chambers of Commerce LLP LEO DKIT The Mill	2016 and ongoing	Skills deficits identified. Skills for Work programmes expanded in consultation with employers. Cross agency partnerships further developed. New relationships/networks established.
184	Facilitate and support collaboration and planning between local businesses and training/education providers to ensure skills taught meet employers' needs.	Lead LMETB Support LEO Chambers of Commerce DKIT	2016 and ongoing	Nos of meetings held Skills deficits identified and courses planned. Nos of new courses. Nos of job opportunities.
185	Promote sustainable development training programmes across both the formal and informal education sectors.	Lead LMETB Support DkIT DES LLP	2016 and ongoing	Increase in nos of community led sustainable development initiatives.
186	Increase opportunities to make information available on supports and enterprise skills development available to community groups.	Lead LEO Support LMETB LLP The Mill Creative Spark	2016 and ongoing	Nos of training courses developed. Nos of participants participating transitioning to enterprise and self-employment.
187	Work with education providers to promote STEM initiatives and an additional focus on European language skills development in local schools.	Lead DES LMETB Support Local Schools	Q4 2017	Nos of local schools promoting STEM initiative Increased focus on language skills development.
188	Work in partnership with local libraries to support and promote literacy development, e learning opportunities, independent lifelong learning and preparation for employment.	Lead LMETB Support LCC Library Service LLP The Mill Creative Spark	Q2 2017	Nos of programmes offered by local libraries Nos attending local library training modules. Community –based adult education programme delivered in collaboration with LLP and NUIM.



189	Promote retention in schools and FET programmes through collaborative targeted interventions to increase the proportion of young people who complete full-time education. ⁹⁴	Lead LMETB Support DES DSP	Q4 2018	Nos of young people completing full-time education aligned with national average.
190	Promote further education and training to encourage the development of entrepreneurship skills among young people. ⁹⁵	Lead LMETB Support LEO LLP Schools The Mill WALK	Q4 2017	Nos of young entrepreneurs actively engaging. Nos of initiatives delivered by libraries in partnership with LEO

Goal 3: Create equality of opportunity for those experiencing poverty, isolation and social exclusion.

Objective 1: Employment

Enable more active participation and inclusion in society through the provision of employment, income supports and other services.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
191	Develop and implement an action plan to support youth training, unemployment and entrepreneurship to include a focus on young people with disabilities through a collaborative approach.	Lead DSP Support LCC HSE LLP Youth Work Services Chambers of Commerce WALK Louth Malta Services The Mill	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of young people with disabilities in training or further education programmes Reduction in percentage of young people, particularly those with disabilities, in unemployment.
192	Provide access to work experience, employment, third level education and lifelong learning for those with disabilities and marginalised young people.	Lead DSP (SETEC) Louth Leader LMETB DkIT Support HSE YouthWork Services Contracted providers Specialist Services in fields of disability and/or youth e.g. WALK Louth	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of young people with disabilities, and marginalised young people in employment education and training.
193	Continue to implement joint employment initiatives with local employers and Chambers of Commerce.	Lead DSP Support Chambers of Commerce LEF LEO LLP	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of employment initiatives. Increased nos of collaborative library initiatives.
194	Enable long term unemployed to re-enter the labour market through the provision of training and work experience on a fixed term basis.	Lead LLP Support LMETB DSP	2016 and ongoing	Nos of long term unemployed retrained and available for work. Nos engaging with Job Path
195	Provide appropriate education and training supports to encourage entrepreneurship and social	Lead LMETB LLP Support DJEI LLP	2016 and ongoing	Nos of participants participating and retained training courses

⁹⁴ Goal 5

⁹⁵ Goal 5



	enterprise among marginalised priority target groups.	Social Entrepreneurs Ireland DkIT Regional Development Centre Community Centres / Youth Clubs in Rapid Areas		Nos of social entrepreneurs drawn from priority target groups
196	Increase the employment of people with disabilities to avail of education, employment and self-employment.	Lead DSP Support HSE LMETB LLP LEO Specialist services WALK Louth Malta Services	2016 and ongoing	Increase in percentage of people with disabilities engaging in education, employment and self-employment.
197	Continue to offer the Wage Subsidy Scheme and Reasonable Accommodation Fund, Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant (WEAG).	Lead DSP	2016 and ongoing	Schemes in place and adapted to local needs.
198	Extend availability of rural transport scheme to facilitate people living in isolated rural areas and people with disabilities living in isolated areas access employment.	Lead Local Link Support LCD Bus Éireann National Transport Authority	2016-2018	Increased nos of routes Rural transport scheme extended to all target groups

Objective 2: Housing

Ensure more sustainable communities by providing suitable accommodation that responds to the needs of all, through a process of community planning.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
199	Deliver the Social Housing Strategy 2020	Lead LCC Support Approved Housing Bodies	2016-2018	Local targets (778 units) achieved.
200	Implement the North East Homeless Strategy (2014-2018).	Lead LCC Support HSE Contracted Service providers North East Regional Homeless Forum	Ongoing	% Decrease in numbers of homeless presentations.
201	Implement Choice-Based Letting.	Lead LCC	2016	Current refusal rate of Housing Offers reduced.
202	Provide person- centred community-based housing solutions via multi-agency approach.	Lead LCC Support HSE An Garda Síochána Approved Housing Bodies North East Regional Homeless Forum	Ongoing	Decrease in anti-social behaviour on LA estates. Appropriate accommodation support in place for persons with disabilities and mental health service users, young adults and for older people. Increased stability in housing provision for mental health service users.
203	Support vulnerable households, who may be at risk of losing their tenancy	Lead North East Regional Homeless Forum Support LCC	2016 and ongoing	Nos of tenancies supported.



	through tenancy sustainment services.			
204	Review and implement the current anti-social behaviour strategy to include the existing legislation.	Lead LCC Support An Garda Síochána/Joint Policing Committee	2016	Revised anti-social behaviour strategy adopted.
205	Review and implement the current Estate Management policy.	Lead LCC	2016	Revised Estate Management Policy adopted Reduction in nos of complaints re anti-social behavior.
206	Encourage the use the regulatory functions of the PRTB with regard to anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector.	Lead LCC Support PRTB	2016 and ongoing	Increased number of referrals made to the PRTB for dispute resolution applications.

Objective 3: Equality

Facilitate equal physical, social and cultural integration to encourage pride of place, engagement and social connectivity within marginalised communities

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
207	Implement the Louth Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018	Lead LCC Support HSE TUSLA Louth LEADER An Garda Síochána Louth Traveller Movement	2016 and ongoing	Programme implemented.
208	Re-establish the Traveller Inter-Agency Group to plan and deliver services in Louth that respond to the unique needs of the Traveller Community.	Lead LCC Support All relevant service providers including HSE, TUSLA, Local schools and An Garda Síochána	2016	Group reconstituted with strategy devised.
209	Ensure that all new developments including the public buildings, services and LCC housing schemes utilise the principal of universal design.	Lead LCC NDA Support Age Alliance	Ongoing	Planning and all developments meeting legislative requirements.
210	Continue to implement the Housing Grants Scheme subject to available funding	Lead LCC	Ongoing	Housing Grants scheme implemented.
211	Ensure library and arts services provide opportunities for marginalised communities and people with disabilities to have access to and participate in mainstream arts and cultural activities.	Lead LCC (Library services/Arts service) Support LLP	Ongoing	Increased involvement and engagement with arts and library services.
212	Continue to implement the Louth Anti-racism and Diversity Plan and Garda Diversity strategy.	Lead LCC An Garda Síochána Support HSE LLP Citizen's information Louth intercultural group	Ongoing	Decrease of reported anti-racist and sectarian incidents.



213	Provide intercultural programmes and integration initiatives in all educational and youth reach settings. ⁹⁶	Lead LMETB Support NAPD Culture Connect e-Dundalk	Ongoing	Nos of schools participating in programmes such as Yellow Flag programme
214	Increase provision of shared spaces and services and work to decrease physical barriers between communities.	Lead LCC Support Louth LEADER Community Groups PEACE 4	2016-2022	Nos of shared spaces available Increased community cohesion.
215	Devise a 'Welcome to County Louth' pack incorporating an awareness campaign informing new residents of their democratic rights.	Lead LCC Support LLP PPN Citizen's information	Q4 2016	Packs and webpages designed.
216	Develop volunteers' programmes focusing on those who self-exclude to engage and participate in activities	Lead Louth Volunteers Support LCC HSE An Garda Síochána	Q4 2016	Increase in nos participating.
217	Adapt the Incredible Years Genesis Programme and Cúltaca for marginalised groups	Lead HSE Support Age Friendly Alliance CYPSC	2016-2018	Nos of programmes delivered Nos participating
218	Continue to support tenant participation initiatives aimed at both enhancing the physical and social infrastructure on LCC estates.	Lead LCC Support Tenant/Residents Groups	Ongoing	Number of Projects assisted.

Objective 4: Access

Increase and improve co-ordination, joint planning and delivery between service providers and communities

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
219	Provide frameworks and protocols for effective interagency cooperation and responses to the LECP	Lead LCDC Support LCC	Q4 2016	Interagency protocols and framework devised.
220	Provide a service delivery, monitoring and review framework of the LECP.	Lead LCDC Support LCC	Q4 2016	Monitoring and review protocol agreed.
221	Devise an LCDC communications strategy to liaise with all key stakeholders including the Public Participative Network	Lead LCDC Support LCC Louth LEADER	Q4 2016	Regular effective channels of communication leading to a more participative approach and better service delivery.
222	Provide diversity and people first language training to service providers in welfare, LCC, health and education settings.	Lead LMETB Support LCC HSE Special interest groups DSP Citizens' Information Louth Volunteer Centre Louth Library Service	2016 and ongoing	Baseline measure taken regarding satisfaction with and accessibility of service provision in the count. Training developed and delivered Increase in numbers of diverse communities accessing mainstream services

⁹⁶ Goal 5



				Increase in satisfaction with mainstream service delivery.
223	Ensure delivery of disability and mental health awareness training to staff, particularly frontline staff, including through NDA e-learning training module.	Lead NDA Support LCC HSE Special interest groups DSP Citizens' Information Louth Volunteer Centre	2016 and ongoing	Training delivered
224	Ensure customer care charters address the needs of marginalised communities and persons with disabilities.	Lead LCDC Support NDA	2016 and ongoing	Charters developed and inclusive
225	Ensure that Libraries support social and cultural cohesion and inclusion where people can exercise their democratic right to information, ideas and knowledge.	Lead LCC Library Service Support LMETB LLP Age Friendly Alliance Local Schools Community groups	2016 and ongoing	Library facilities upgraded to include large scale multi-functional buildings with interconnecting supports Nos, variety and accessibility of programmes available in libraries.

Goal 4: Provide environments and conditions that support healthy, self-directed, fulfilled and purposeful lives.

Objective 1: Work collaboratively to secure better outcomes for children and their families by prioritising early child development and education, reducing child poverty, and addressing their physical, intellectual and mental health challenges, to enable social and emotional well-being.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
226	Improve well-being and developmental outcomes for children aged pre-birth to 6 years by continuing to implement the Genesis programme and other programmes as appropriate in the targeted areas of Dundalk and Drogheda.	Lead The Genesis Programme Support HSE CYPSC LLP TUSLA ISPCC NEPS Local primary schools Local early years settings Local community groups	2017	Reduction in child poverty levels IY programme embedded in local practice and mainstream delivery Increase in nos of children and families accessing programme. Improvements in children's literacy and numeracy. Increased school readiness Longer participation in the education system. Infant mental health strategy developed in collaboration with North East Mental Health network Overall improvement in children's mental health.



				<p>Parent fora established in Dundalk and Drogheda</p> <p>Nos of library events for toddlers, and children to 6 years.</p> <p>Collaborative working with Louth CYPSC, LLP and other relevant agencies</p>
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Objective 2: Create conditions throughout the life course to ensure that the healthy choice is the easy choice.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
227	Work with partners to implement the Healthy Ireland strategy.	<p>Lead HSE</p> <p>Support LCDC via Louth LEADER LCC Sports Partnership</p>	2016-2022	<p>Local targets set and fulfilled.</p> <p>Nos of local initiatives</p> <p>Nos of local partnership initiatives promoting healthy lifestyles.</p>
228	Develop collaborative plans at local level to promote increased physical activity levels across the life course.	<p>Lead HSE</p> <p>LCC (Sports Partnership)</p> <p>Support LCDC</p> <p>LMETB</p> <p>GAA</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Local employers</p>	2016 an ongoing	<p>Sports strategy developed</p> <p>'Parkrun' implemented where possible.</p> <p>Sport Ireland programmes implemented.</p> <p>Nos of water safety training courses being delivered.</p> <p>Communities mobilised, collaborative initiatives operating and meeting targets.</p> <p>More access to cycle paths, public green spaces, playgrounds with all-weather play infrastructure and age friendly exercise equipment, safe secure footpaths and pedestrian connectivity.</p>
229	Promote public awareness, educate and communicate the benefits of physical activity throughout the county	<p>Lead Louth Sport Partnership (LSP)</p> <p>Support LLP, HSE local media</p> <p>Louth Library Service</p>	2016 and ongoing	<p>Communications strategy developed.</p> <p>Health and wellbeing promoted via Library services e.g. bibliotherapy programme</p>
230	Develop a Recreation policy and a Play policy in line with the National Play policy and National Recreation policy	<p>Lead LSP</p> <p>Support LCC, LCDC</p>	2018	Policies developed and being implemented.



231	Develop and promote walking and cycling strategies for the county	Lead LSP Support LCC, DECLG, GIW	2016	Walking and cycling strategies implemented in local communities
232	Roll out active communities walking programmes in all LSP areas and support new walking groups	Lead LSP, Support LCC SI, Age and Opportunity	2018	Programmes in place Nos of participants taking part.
233	Implement healthy food policies and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in primary, post-primary and Youthreach settings in the county, including the physical education programme and the active schools flag initiative.	Lead HSE DES Support Schools LCC Sport Partnership CYSPC School Principals' Network	2016-2022	Nos of schools adopting SPHE programme Junior Cert-Leaving Cert Nos of Youth Groups participating. 'Food Dudes' programme implemented in all schools. Nos of schools in 'Active Flag' initiative.
234	Develop programmes to address transitions and drop out from physical activity and sport	Lead LSP Support NGB's, SI, HSE	2017	Increased nos of participants returning to some form of physical and/or sport
235	Support, link with and further improve existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the capacity of parents, carers and families to support healthier choices for their children and themselves, particularly targeting lower income groups.	Lead HSE Support LCDC LCC CYPSC Chambers of Commerce	2016 and ongoing	Improved healthy weight levels Use of calorie posting in local bars and restaurants to increase consumer awareness of the calorie content of the food and drinks on offer. Nos of healthy eating promotional campaigns in all public spaces Nos of healthy eating awareness programmes delivered.
236	Work collaboratively to create healthier workplace environments.	Lead HSE Support LCDC Chambers of Commerce Local employers	2016 and ongoing	Nos of employers/workplaces participating. Nos of workplace initiatives in place.
237	Promote cross sectoral role models in communities and schools to encourage healthy lifestyles.	Lead LCDC Support LCC Sports partnership HSE Louth LEADER	2016 and ongoing	Nos of sports ambassadors participating in healthy lifestyles campaigns Nos of local medical professionals acting as advocates at community level Reduction of alcohol consumption in local sports clubs Nos of local media promotional campaigns.



238	Support, link with, and further improve existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that support older people to maintain, improve or manage their physical and mental wellbeing.	Lead HSE Support Age Friendly Alliance LCC Age and Opportunity Louth Library Service	2016 and ongoing	Extent of integrated approach. Nos of collaborative initiatives. Nos of initiatives held in libraries to support older people
239	Initiate community programmes to encourage and support smokers to quit smoking by promoting a tobacco free society.	Lead HSE Support LCC LCDC	2016 and ongoing	Nos of programmes introduced Nos of smokers quitting Reduction in numbers of smoking related diseases Tobacco free campuses for all public facilities, all playground and family recreational facilities Nos of tobacco free public parks and beaches.
240	Support the Community Action on Alcohol Pilot Project (CAAPP) being led by the Alcohol forum.	Lead HSE NEDATF Support Joint Policing Committee Drugs and alcohol forum	2016 and ongoing	Community mobilisation on alcohol initiatives in selected local drug and alcohol task force areas. Community Alcohol Strategy devised.
241	Extend existing and developing programmes for physical activity for people with disabilities and their families to enhance and deliver a comprehensive health and wellbeing programme	Lead LSP, Support LCC, SI, HSE, NGB.	2016 and ongoing	Nos of programmes developed. Nos of participants engaging.

Objective 3 Continue to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing for our population

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
242	Support the local cross-sectoral implementation structures to implement Connecting for Life – Ireland’s National Strategy to reduce suicide (2015-2020).	Lead HSE Support CYPSC Addiction Services TUSLA	Ongoing	% reduction in nos of suicides
243	Support the implementation of community-based suicide prevention programmes and training.	Lead HSE Support LCDC Louth SOSAD CYPSC LLP	Ongoing	Nos of programmes delivered.
244	Provide accessible, user friendly, coordinated mental health services emphasising children at risk and specific to the needs of adolescents 13-18, and other young people.	Lead HSE TUSLA Support CYPSC Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service(CAMHS)	2016	Memorandum of understanding adopting a multi-disciplinary approach addressing children and adolescent Mental Health Services



				developed between HSE and TUSLA. 'Headstrong' early intervention service in operation across the county.
245	Improve the quality and effectiveness of services and supports for children with mental health needs, intellectual and physical disabilities, and their families.	Lead HSE Support CYPSCI DkIT LCDC		Collaboration with partners to enhance access and environmental friendliness of service settings. Nos of collaborative learning, training, action research, and innovation opportunities undertaken with partners.
246	Improve understanding of mental illness and behavioural issues, mental health literacy and information on availability of services to support and respond to individuals, carers and families.	Lead HSE Support LCDC CYPSC LLP	Ongoing	Support mental health and intellectual disability awareness information campaigns.

Goal 5: Nurture and develop our children and young people from early childhood to young adulthood.

Objective 1: Health

Ensure that our children and young people experience healthy lives and wellbeing.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
247	Adopt a cross-agency approach to ensure that universal services and supports are in place for all children and young people, particularly engaging with those who are most excluded or at risk.	Lead CYPSC Support LCC HSE TUSLA LLP An Garda Síochána LMETB PPN DkIT	2016 and ongoing	Targeted engagement with young people with disabilities, seldom heard young people, members of the traveller. Community and those from new communities. Nos accessing services. No of facilities in each MD.
248	Provide parenting programmes to ensure young people have consistent support at home, at school and in free time. ⁹⁷	Lead HSE Support CYPSC LMETB LLP Local schools Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	Nos of parenting programmes delivered. Nos of interactions with parents. Nos of attendee at programmes.
249	Provide counselling and therapeutic supports to young people in non-formal settings.	Lead CYPSC Support Youthreach Local schools TUSLA Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	Decrease in nos of mental health issues No. of counselling sessions.

⁹⁷ Goal 4



250	Provide healthy eating programmes in schools, youth facilities and sports organisations.	Lead DES Support HSE CYSPC LMETB All education institutions Sports clubs Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	Breakfast clubs initiative extended to all schools in county. Extend school meal scheme to all schools in county in particular DEIS schools. Increased nos of children accessing schemes. Increased nos of children and young people with healthy weight.
251	Provide play spaces and programmes to increase children and young people's access and engagement with the physical environment to encourage healthy lifestyles. ⁹⁸	Lead LCC Sports Partnership Support LCC HSE LMETB LLP Local sports clubs Youth Services Scouting organisations Environmental Organisations	2016 and ongoing	Increased access for young people to play spaces physical activity programmes in a community setting No of walking trails and campsites No of environmental projects for young people.

Objective 2: Education

Empower children and young people to achieve their full potential in all aspects of personal development and learning.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
252	Increase young people's access to formal education. ⁹⁹	Lead DES Support DES Louth LEADER DkIT LMETB Stay in School Initiative	2016 and ongoing	Increased numbers of young people accessing formal education More school completion programmes in targeted areas.
253	Increase young people's access to informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources.	Lead LCC Support LMETB Comhairle na nÓg Louth's three youth theatres Dundalk Youth Centre Drogheda Boomerang Café Sports clubs Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann DkIT Schools and community groups Louth Library Service Louth Volunteer service Omeath District Development Foroige Youth Work Ireland Louth	2016 and ongoing	Increased opportunities for young people to engage in the arts, music and a variety of sport including technology associated media. No of services by MD. No of young people accessing services. No of volunteers supporting youth activity. Nos of young people accessing libraries as study/recreational spaces. Nos of visits by library service to primary schools.
254	Ensure that transitions at key stages of the education process are	Lead CYPSC Support TUSLA	2016 and ongoing	Critical transition points at all stages targeted for

⁹⁸ Goal 1

⁹⁹ Goal 2



	managed effectively particularly in relation to vulnerable groups.	Local Schools DSP LLP Youth Services LMETB DKIT		vulnerable children/adolescents. 18-24 age group transitions in education and training opportunities addressed via working with DSP and Louth LEADER.
255	Work to increase young people's civic responsibility through the promotion of voter education programmes and other initiatives.	Lead LCC Support Educational institutions Louth Library Service Comhairle na nÓg Louth Volunteer Centre	2016 and ongoing	Programmes delivered. Increased participation and voluntary effort. No of young people taking up volunteering positions.
256	Work collaboratively with the community and youth sector to support the re-engagement and retention of vulnerable young people under 25 in the Labour market. (See Goal 3)	Lead DSP LMETB Support CYPSC Louth LEADER TUSLA	2016	Increased involvement in education and training Decrease in nos of u25 unemployed.
257	Develop peer education programmes to tackle issues of racism, sectarianism and discrimination. ¹⁰⁰	Lead DES LCC Peace 4 Support Louth Intercultural group Youth organisations CYPSC Comhairle na nÓg	2016-2022	Programmes developed and being implemented. Raised awareness and increased tolerance of diversity. No of cultural diversity events.

Objective 3_Opportunity: Enhance young people's employment potential

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
258	Establish structured links between local employer organisations and local schools to ascertain how aspects of the core curriculum might enhance 'work readiness'.	Lead LMETB Support LCDC Chambers of Commerce Local schools DKIT DSP LLP	2016 and ongoing	More young people 'Work ready'. A youth focused job/skills fair established.
259	Promote social entrepreneurship education and active citizenship opportunities in schools and youth organisations. ¹⁰¹	Lead LEO Support Schools Young Social Innovators Youth Services LLP	2016-2022	Increased nos of social enterprise projects for young people.
260	Develop a local cross- agency initiative to coordinate the Youth Guarantee (Pathways to Work).	Lead DSP Support LMETB CYPSC LCC LLP LEO	2016	Initiative developed and implemented.

¹⁰⁰ Goal 3

¹⁰¹ Goal 7

**Objective 4: Safety****Ensure that all children and young people feel safe at home, in school, in their communities and online.**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
261	Provide safe places for young people where they can socialise and interact in a positive manner.	Lead LCC Support LMETB Community and youth groups Comhairle na nÓg Dundalk Youth Centre Boomerang Omeath DD Youth Work Ireland Louth Foróige	2016-2018	Nos of youth cafes/hangouts for young people across the county Nos of young people attending.
262	Ensure that young people have information and access to appropriate services and supports.	Lead CYPSC Support HSE TUSLA Comhairle na nÓg Youth Services	2016 and ongoing	No of information sites in county per MD. Nos of information campaigns at critical chronological hot spots ie exam time – Halloween etc.
263	Provide online safety programmes for all young people to include cyber bullying, social media safety and identity fraud.	Lead DES Support LLP An Garda Síochána Youth Services	2016	No of online safety programmes delivered. No of young people attending online safety programmes. No of parents' sessions for online safety.
264	Work in partnership to reduce the risk of young people engaging with the justice system. ¹⁰²	Lead Joint Policing Committee Support TUSLA Youth and sports clubs Youth Services	Ongoing	Decrease in numbers of young people presenting
265	Ensure that effective substance misuse education and information programmes are in place in all educational institutions and youth reach settings. ¹⁰³	Lead DES Support LMETB Other education providers NERDTF Youth Services	2016-2018	Nos of programmes delivered. Nos of schools participating.

¹⁰² Goal 1¹⁰³ Goal 4

**Objective 5: Equality: Seek equality, respect and better connectivity for young people**

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
266	Provide young people with opportunities to influence decisions about their own lives and wellbeing, access to quality information, service delivery and policy priorities. ¹⁰⁴	Lead Comhairle na nÓg Support LCC HSE TUSLA Youth Services	Ongoing	Nos of consultations held No Of Comhairle na nÓg advisory meetings. Number of submissions by young people to consultation processes.
267	Promote and support young people's right to self-determination and self-expression in relation to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.	Lead HSE Tusla Support Comhairle na nÓg TUSLA Schools Dundalk Outcomers Youth Services	Ongoing	Decrease in mental health issues among young people. No of LGBT awareness sessions conducted No of young people accessing LGBT services.
268	Develop shared spaces where young people can interact safely and where differences in race, colour gender and religion and ethnic origin are embraced and valued.	Lead LCC Support LLP SEUPB/ Peace 4	2016-2022	Nos of shared spaces developed Nos of young people engaging and interacting No of inter community cultural events.
269	Provide opportunities for young people to engage in cross border and inter-county projects to develop new networks and understanding on common issues.	Lead LCC (SEUPB/ PEACE 4) Support Comhairle na nÓg Youth organisations Schools Louth Library Service	2017-2022	Nos of cross border and intercounty projects Nos of new connections established. Nos of events held in local libraries
270	Develop new intergenerational programmes to increase learning, cultural, historical and technological initiatives across generations. ¹⁰⁵	Lead LCDC Support Age Friendly Alliance Louth Library Service Youth Services Comhairle na nÓg	2016-2022	Nos of intergenerational programmes established. Nos of participants involved. Nos of locations/venues participating. Nos of libraries participating

¹⁰⁴ Goal 3¹⁰⁵ Goal 6

**Goal 6: Embrace and foster the rich contribution our older people make to our communities.**

Objective 1: Create age-friendly social and environmental conditions that support older people to maintain, improve or manage their physical and mental wellbeing.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
271	Continue to implement and up-date the Louth Age Friendly Strategy.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC, HSE An Garda Síochána DkIT Louth Economic Forum Louth Library Service CES	2016 and ongoing	Ongoing process with targets and Indicator(s) fulfilled.
272	Increase the take-up and impact of the number of age friendly towns and further develop initiatives in existing age friendly towns.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC, HSE An Garda Síochána DkIT Louth Economic Forum Louth Library Service CES	2016/17/18	Nos of towns or parts of towns considered. 'age-friendly' Nos of age friendly initiatives undertaken. Nos of initiatives held in local libraries
273	Improve access to resources, services, lifelong learning and healthcare.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support HSE LLP An Garda Síochána Vincent de Paul LMETB Louth Library Services CES	Ongoing	Plan conceived. Nos of programmes run by local libraries supporting age-friendly initiatives e.g computer skills development
274	Increase the impact and effectiveness of informal and formal community care services for older people including home care packages. ¹⁰⁶	Lead HSE Support LCDC DSP	2016 and ongoing	Access to a variety of home care packages appropriate to service users' needs.
275	Encourage participatory design and development of public spaces, housing and transport in our towns and villages that anticipate the needs of older age.	Lead LCC Support DkIT	2016 and ongoing	Increased awareness of requirements through lifecourse facilitated by service delivery. Degrees of inclusiveness and sustainability.

¹⁰⁶ See Goal 4



276	Sustain and extend the Cúltaca model of personalised service brokerage and promote the SLIPWAY service innovation concept to address frailty in the community.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support HSE DkIT LCC	Q4 2017	Both projects underway with increased nos of service users. Project extended to south Louth
277	Strengthen the 'living lab' technology research partnership with DkIT, industry, care givers and older people	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC DkIT	Ongoing	Further innovation achieved via CASALA in particular with a focus on user awareness, smarter environments and smarter technologies.
278	Build on the Genio-supported 'Flourishing with Dementia' collaborative programme to foster a 'dementia friendly' supportive environment.	Lead Age-Friendly Alliance Support HSE, LCC, DkIT	Ongoing	Pilot sustained.
279	Create and manage a central repository, supported by a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that all older people in the county can access user-friendly, up-to-date, and coordinated information and advice in relation to entitlements, services, support and activities.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Citizen's information bureau HSE LEMTB	Ongoing	Age friendly website updated with a communications plan in place. Nos of older people accessing information. Links available from other service providers to this site.

Objective 2: Remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the involvement of older people in all aspects of cultural, economic and social life in their communities.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
280	Ensure that older people 'get out and about' through the provision of safe, accessible, affordable, and flexible transport systems with seamless connectivity between these systems in both rural and urban areas.	Lead Flexibus Support LCDC	2016-2022	Nos of rural transport schemes.
281	Extend 'The Parlours' and 'Men's Sheds' initiatives across the county to enhance social connectedness.	Lead LCDC Support Age Friendly Alliance HSE DkIT	2016-2018	Nos of initiatives in place.
282	Encourage older people to engage in their communities by promoting active citizenship and the value of volunteering.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Vincent de Paul Tidy Towns ICA Volunteer Louth	2016 and ongoing	Nos of older people involved in Tidy Towns, ICA, Arts, sporting activities, intergenerational projects.
283	Facilitate older people's participation in Start Your Own Business 50+ and social enterprise programmes.	Lead LEO Support Age Friendly Alliance DkIT Regional Development Centre	2016 and ongoing	LEO and Regional Development Centre in DkIT.



				Social Enterprise Programmes.
284	Facilitate businesses to become 'Age-Friendly Champions.'	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support Chambers of Commerce	2016 and ongoing	Nos of businesses involved.

Objective 3: Support older people to feel safer in their communities

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
285	Implement the Louth Community Safety Strategy and an Garda Síochána's Older Person's Strategy.	Lead Louth Joint Policing Committee Support LCC An Garda Síochána Other statutory agencies and voluntary organisations as required	Ongoing	Perception re safety and security amongst older people in local areas increased via community text alert system.
286	Extend the community Text Alert system to address older people's safety in rural areas.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC Local Communities	Q4 2017	Text alert system operating across the county.
287	Improve the protection of older people from abuse through increased interagency collaboration, improved reporting rates and developing better support services.	Lead An Garda Síochána Support LCC HSE	Ongoing	Decrease in cases and nos of reported cases.

Objective 4: Utilise the expertise and wealth of experience that is built up by older people to develop a more prosperous and inclusive community

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
288	Work with the DSP to develop and promote employment options (including options for gradual retirement) for people as they age and identify any barriers (legislative, attitudinal, custom and practice) to continued employment and training opportunities.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support DkIT	2016	Increased flexible employment opportunities for older people.



289	Encourage older people to initiate and extend intergenerational initiatives at community level.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Local schools and youth groups DkIT	2016	Nos of intergenerational projects underway
290	Engage with local Chambers of Commerce to develop a panel of suitably experienced older people that are in a position to offer business set up and development advice and support.	Lead Age Friendly Alliance Support LCC Chambers of Commerce LEF	2016 and ongoing	Panels established.

Objective 5: Ensure a culture of continuous improvement underpinned by evidence-based feedback

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
291	Work with Age-Friendly Ireland to develop an up-dated baseline for future actions.	Lead Age Friendly Ireland Support DkIT	2016 and ongoing	Baseline developed
292	Promote an 'evaluative culture' to continually assess and improve the impact of actions.	Lead DkIT Support LCC	Ongoing	Appropriate evaluation and monitoring of all initiatives and programmes
293	Apply the SEE-IT framework and tool to support collaborative decision-making.	Lead DkIT Support LCC Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing	Framework utilised and impacting on decision making
294	Maintain Co Louth's leadership role in the development of the Age-Friendly initiative nationally and internationally by sharing practices, pooling knowledge, and participating actively in national and international networks and consortia.	Lead DkIT Support Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing	Acknowledgement of reputation. Nos of initiatives. Transformative impact on society. Nos of collaborative networks established.

Goal 7: Empower community innovation, entrepreneurship and enterprise to support urban and rural economic development.

Objective 1: Leverage resources at local level to deliver employment and economic impact in a targeted way

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
295	Implement the Louth Leader Strategy to maximise community gain from its focus on agribusiness and artisan foods and craft beverages, tourism, local festivals and the arts and Louth's marine tourism potential.	Lead LLP LCDC (via Louth LEADER) Support LCC LEO LMETB	2016-2022	LDS implemented leveraging benefits of targeted priorities.
296	Support the delivery of the Local Enterprise Strategy to encourage entrepreneurship, start-ups and	Lead LEO Support LLP Louth Co Co	2016 and ongoing	Annual plans setting out measurable targets.



	enterprise in communities in rural areas aligning it with specific local needs.			
297	Develop a memorandum of understanding between Louth LEADER and LEO to ensure co-ordinated interventions for those 'harder to reach' marginalised minority groups to ensure minimum duplication of service	Lead LCDC (via Louth LEADER LEO	2016	Memorandum developed.
298	Develop a social enterprise strategy through a participative planning approach and based on needs of local communities.	Lead LLP Support LCC LEO PPN Louth Volunteer Centre WALK DKIT Louth Age Friendly County Comhairle Na nÓg Secondary Schools LEO	2016	Social Enterprise Strategy completed Nos of Social Enterprise information sessions/training courses participants Number of talks on social enterprise in schools No of grants supplied to community enterprise Mentoring system created.
299	Enhance enterprise support in local areas to ensure that community enterprises are "investment ready" at all stages of their development including start up, early stage development and growth phases.	Lead LEO Support LLP LMETB DSP	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos of community enterprise projects.
300	Encourage youth enterprise and entrepreneurship particularly for the 18-24 age group.	Lead LEO Support LLP LMETB DSP DKIT Louth Volunteer Centre	Ongoing	Nos of young entrepreneurs and youth enterprise projects
301	Create additional opportunity for the over 65s to avail of enterprise training and support	Lead LEO Support LMETB DSP CES Louth LEADER Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing	Nos of participants
302	Undertake a feasibility study to examine the viability of developing the indigenous craft industry in Louth	Lead LEO Support LCC Louth Craftmark Louth LEADER	2016/2017	Feasibility study completed.

Objective 2: Stimulate economic growth in local communities through access to learning, creativity, knowledge and reliable and authoritative information.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
303	Continue to use creative hubs to promote design skills, provide support systems and skills	Lead Creative Spark Support Louth Craftmark Designers Network	2016 and ongoing	Increased nos engaging with and benefiting from creative hubs.



	acquisition, promotional, networking, funding and collaborative opportunities for creative practitioners.	LCC Arts Service LCC libraries service LEO		Nos of skills development programmes on design thinking and creativity. Nos of participants attending. Nos of businesses showing 'added value' from design thinking in business processes.
304	Link local library resources and LMETB programmes with LEO and Louth LEADER enterprise programmes to support business professionals and the provision of information on enterprise, training, skills development and programme opportunities.	Lead LCC (Library Service) Support LEO LLP LMETB	2016 and ongoing	Recognition of Library Service's potential to act as facilitator Nos of events held.
305	Engage with local Chambers of Commerce to encourage participation of suitably experienced older people to provide business advice and support.	Lead LEO Support LCC Chambers of Commerce Age Friendly Alliance DKIT		Panel developed Nos of mentoring sessions delivered.
306	Support entrepreneurship and investment in enterprise at community level to encourage a green economy.	Lead LCDCC (via Louth LEADER) Support LEO SEAI, Chambers of Commerce Community Finance Ireland		Training courses provided and existing training programmes amended Increased number of green economy enterprises.

Goal 8: Value and sustain our built heritage and natural environment to enhance the lives of those who live, work and visit in the county.

Objective 1: Foster a sense of identity, pride, and confidence in our cultural assets and our natural and built heritage.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
307	Implement the Louth Heritage Plan and Biodiversity Plan to safeguard Louth's unique natural and built heritage.	Lead LCC Support LLP Heritage Council An Taisce Fáilte Ireland Boyne Valley Louth Meath Tourism Development	2016-2021	Plans reviewed and implemented Enhanced awareness of cultural and natural heritage legacies.
308	Promote sustainable re-use of the existing building stock, both in our historic town centres and rural communities, and promote the use of traditional building skills.	Lead LCC Support LLP CES Heritage Council An Taisce	Ongoing	Survey completed of re-use potential of existing stock Feasibility study undertaken to explore potential of revival of



				indigenous skills – thatching, boat building etc.
309	Work with partners to raise public awareness of Louth's heritage, support its sustainable exploitation and its Ancient East status to 'earn the heritage dividend' for local communities.	Lead LCC Support LLP Failte Ireland Boyne Valley Louth Meath Tourism Development Louth Archaeological Society	Ongoing	Opportunities presented by Louth's Walled Towns. Affirmation of Monasterboice's UNESCO status. Eco-Tourism and Geo-Tourism potential of Cooley Mournes and Gullion areas developed. Community tourism 'ambassadors' initiative established.
310	Work with partners, north and south of the border to sustain Louth's rich traditional music, song, dance and literary heritage in Irish and English, as well as promoting the living language.	Lead LCC (Arts Service) Support LLP The Arts Council Arts Council of Northern Ireland Louth Library Services Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Irish Traditional Music Archive Foras na Gaeilge Community traditional arts festivals	2016 2017 2017	County policy for Irish language developed. Increase in levels of community traditional arts activity. Increase in nos of young people participating as performers and audiences. Increased nos of schools' initiatives. Recognition of Oriel area's unique Irish language tradition. Nos of events held in local libraries
311	Work with partners to enable and promote diverse cultural traditions in the county, particularly non-Irish nationals, and Traveller and Roma communities.	Lead LCC (Arts Service) Support LLP Louth Library Service Louth intercultural group	2016 and ongoing	Nos of events held. Nos of programmes held in local libraries.
312	Strengthen and expand support for contemporary arts practice and Per cent for Public Art scheme.	Lead LCC (Arts Office) Support The Arts Council Louth Libraries Service Creative Spark LLP	2016 and ongoing	Increase in support for local artists Increased access for local audiences via local galleries, venues and festivals Full utilization and promotion of Per cent for Arts scheme.
313	Work with the library and archive service, historical societies and heritage groups to conserve collections of local studies and family history and promote access to them locally and internationally.	Lead LCC (Library Service) Support LLP		Project to digitalise collections delivered via Library service Nos of collections secured Nos of partnerships with national archives Nos of local history and heritage programmes held in libraries



				Increased access to collections locally and internationally.
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Objective 2: Enhance and protect Louth's outstanding natural environment (coast, mountain, woodland, wetland) for the benefit of Louth's residents and visitors.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
314	Promote recreational benefits and raise awareness about the Eastern Greenway, Louth's cycle ways, walkways, mountain trails and its eco-tourism potential via Louth Tourism Strategy to create community gain.	Lead LCC Support Tourism strategy partners Local Hoteliers Local Chambers of Commerce Tourism Ireland LLP	2016-2022	Tourism strategy implemented Improved public health and wellbeing Increased nos of visitors to rural areas Omeath Carlingford Greenway extended to the Border and beyond.
315	Maximise the use of the River Boyne as an urban and rural waterway; its recreational and tourism potential.	Lead LCC Support LLP CES Tidy Towns Drogheda Port	2016-2022	Coastal and river working group established in the Public Participation Network. Collaborations between the LCC and community groups to undertake specific river related projects. Incorporation of river-based activities to Sports strategy and ensuing improved public wellbeing. Improved linkages between local development companies and river stakeholders. Potential of river to secure European funding under thematic objectives of EU2020 strategy.
316	Promote clean local environments by continuing to invest in Tidy Towns, tree planting and other environmental initiatives throughout the county.	Lead LCC Support Tidy Towns together LLP CES	2016 and ongoing	Increased community mobilisation and social cohesion. Increased participation in Pride of Place and Tidy Towns awards. Improved visitor reviews. Enhanced perception of safety in local areas.



317	Promote bio-diversity programmes on LCC estates.	Lead LCC Support Tidy Towns Together LLP CES	2016 and ongoing	Conservation of natural environment Improved quality of life for local residents.
318	Ensure more sustainable communities through encouraging an active role in litter and waste minimisation, energy management and water conservation.	Lead LCC Support LLP Tidy Towns Together CES SEAI Irish Water IFA Teagasc	2016 and ongoing	Promotion of Brown Bin Waste collection across the county. 'Smart Farming' and resource management initiatives to reduce Co2 production on farms to meet 2016-2021 targets. Nos of new SECs established. Regional Waste Management Plan targets 2016-2021 met.
319	Facilitate community gardens through identifying and releasing suitable publicly-owned land for use as allotments.	Lead LCC Support LLP CES	2016 and ongoing	Initiatives in artisan food production and food education. Nos of country markets operating. Dedicated suitable unused public land for horticultural purposes Nos of new allotments developed.

Objective 3: Promote environmental awareness and the use of sustainable energy sources and systems.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator(s)
320	Promote an environmentally sustainable low-carbon economy with climate change reliance incorporated.	Lead SEAI Support LCC EPA, ESB	Q12016 Q4 2016	Green Infrastructure Strategy developed for Louth to incorporate climate change adaptation measures. Development and delivery of BEC
321	Promote the future proofing of the county particularly in relation to flooding, drought and other exceptional weather events stemming from global warming.	Lead LCC Support OPW EPA IFA TEAGASC	2016 and ongoing	Flood infrastructure plans initiated. EC Funding secured.
322	Continue to harness the opportunity of Sustainable Energy Communities to achieve sustainable, cost-effective energy management across all sectors of the community.	Lead SEAI Support LCC	Q4 2016	Partnership maintained on international CONCERTO sustainable community collaboration. LCC membership of SEC



				Sustainable development funding opportunities optimised.
323	Promote the benefits of renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives for local businesses across sectors (including agriculture, tourism, retail, food etc.) and identify relevant supports for resource efficiency	Lead SEAI Support LCC Chambers of Commerce LCDC	Ongoing Q4 2016	Dundalk SMART town 2020 initiative affirmed. Pilot Small Business Energy Assessors training course developed. SEAI and EPA Green Business programmes established.
324	Scope and map existing sustainable community initiatives (including those focused on food, health, transport, waste etc.) to encourage their continued development of complementary sustainability initiatives including dedicated SECs.	Lead LCC (Energy Office) Support SEAI	 Q2 2016 Q3 2016 Q4 2016 Q1 2017 Q2 2017	Increase in nos of funded Sustainable Energy Communities in county. Data base established of existing sustainability initiatives. GIS Database of Sustainable Energy Partners developed. SEC promotional brochure delivered to partners. Application form to Partners offering SEC. Nos of group applicants into SEC's 1 st collaborative event held
325	Continue to link with the third level sector to encourage their involvement in the development of novel sustainable energy community initiatives.	Lead SEAI Support LCC DKIT	Q1 2016	CASALA energy project completed. Proposal for Cross Border, Joint LCC Housing & NIHE Near Zero Energy Housing (& Energy Management) project developed.
326	Review CSO data on Building Energy Ratings (BER) across the county to raise the visibility of areas with lowest ratings and to target awareness activities in those areas (i.e. promoting retrofit measures and grants and group energy projects). (Data Protection act permitting)	Lead LCC Support SEAI DKIT?	2016	Review of BER ratings across the county identifying hot spots to target activity.
327	Promote energy efficiency and insulation among disadvantaged households drawing attention to grants available and the potential for collaborative initiatives.	Lead LCC Support SEAI LLP	Q1 2016 2016-2018	BEC advertisements completed. Increase in uptake of Warmer Homes programme grants, Energy Home Grants or Better Energy Community Grant. Increase in number of LA houses with improved BER ratings.



				Reduced fuel poverty.
328	Develop a LCC S.M.A.R.T. Action Plan to complement the White Paper Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future, 2015-2030 and the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Action Plan.	Lead LCC (Energy Office) Support SEAI	Q4 2016	Draft SMART action plan developed as part of ISO 50001 and a 'Register of Opportunities' for energy savings, large and small, across the LCC in place.
329	Consider development of pop-up exhibits and stalls in public spaces to provide information and promote sustainable energy use and the benefits of energy efficiency improvements.	Lead LCC(Energy Office) Support SEAI DkIT	Q2 2016	Energy awareness proposal developed for Energy awareness week. % take up of sustainable energy schemes.
330	Explore options to support more sustainable transport options along with promoting public transport.	Lead LCC Support Louth LEADER	Q1 2016 Q1 2016	Finance sought for proposed extension to Green way. Links developed with Bord Gais Networks, and local transport partners with a view to developing CNG Transportation facilities within Louth.



APPENDICES

1. LECP Socio Economic Profile, Murtagh and Partners, September 2014
2. LECP Socio Economic Framework, July 2015
3. Report on Submissions to the LECP preparation
4. The making of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP): Statutory requirements
5. Acronyms
6. Bibliography
7. Screening for SEA and AA