



# Submission from County Longford Community & Voluntary to Local Economic Community Plan

---

**County Longford Community & Voluntary Forum welcomes the opportunity to make a submission the new Local Economic Community Plan.**

Co. Longford Community & Voluntary Forum (CLCVF) is a representative body for 160 Community and Voluntary Groups in Co. Longford. These groups include Resident's Associations & Community Alert, Health & Family Support, Heritage & Environment, Women's Groups, Youth, Sports & Recreation, Community Development, the elderly & special interest groups. The Forum's Steering Group consists of 38 Volunteers elected who meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues relevant to the local community.

Co. Longford Community & Voluntary Forum (CLCVF) works to ensure that the voice of the Community and Voluntary Sector is heard and taken into account in the development of the County.

In line with the new Government Policy on citizen engagement in local government, the Forum is in the process of reorganising on a municipal district level. In the interim, the Forum has selected four representatives to sit on the Local Community Development Committee.

The Forum would also like to make an initial submission under the call for submissions from Longford County Council.

Government guidelines on the preparation of the new six-year Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) state that:

*The focus of the plan should be on social and economic issues that have relevance and can be addressed at local and community level and which address the specific needs of communities. 'Communities' can be geographic or communities of interest.*

As the representative body for local communities in Longford, CLCVF would like to see this element explicitly included in the plan with clear actions for its implementation.

The Department's guidelines also outline the research and consultation process that must inform the plan:

- Firstly, a public notice must be published inviting people to make submissions or observations in writing.
- The steering committee must prepare a report on these submissions.
- The committee must then develop a socio-economic framework by collating relevant data and carrying out high level consultation. This framework will become the opening chapter of the LECP.
- Public consultation will be carried out at constituency level.
- Some consultation should be independently facilitated to ensure that sessions are focused and unbiased.

The Forum would like to see a specific timetable for the above processes

The government guidelines further state that:

The LECP should be underpinned by a number of guiding principles which reflect how the European Commission wishes to see Europe grow and develop by 2020. These are:

<b>Promotion and main-streaming of equality</b>	combating poverty
<b>Sustainability</b>	promoting a more resource efficient, green and more inclusive economy
<b>Maximising returns</b>	avoiding unnecessary overlap and duplication and by achieving synergies through co-operation
<b>Participative planning</b>	meaningful community participation and consultation into the planning process.
<b>Community consultation and engagement</b>	participation, empowerment and collective decision making to achieve change at local level
<b>Community development principles</b>	Equality, participation, empowerment, collective decision making
<b>Accessibility and ownership</b>	the plan should be written in a style that is open, straightforward and as accessible as possible.

The guidelines further state that:

“The LECP should be developed through a process that is participative, consultative and collaborative. This means that all stakeholder groups should have an opportunity to shape appropriate parts of the plan as it emerges, to respond to the draft final documents, and to see where their interests and opportunities are reflected in the plan. It also means that those who may be involved in the implementation of the plan have the opportunity to influence the nature of the plan and to identify

opportunities for future joint and collaborative activity. Participative community planning takes times to develop and embed and is an iterative process typically involving a series of stages.” (Draft guidelines, page 37)

The CLCVF would urge that these principles are fully adhered to in all stages of the preparation of the plan.

Furthermore, we would urge that the plan includes in its budget sufficient resources to ensure that this level of community participation can continue for the lifetime of the proposed plan so that the local community can have ownership of its decisions, actions, impact and outcome.