



Sligo Local Community Development Committee 2025 Annual Report



Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

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Foreword from the Chairperson of Sligo LCDC

The Local Government Reform Act of 2014 bestowed responsibility on local government to provide strategic leadership at local level, with the establishment of Local Community Development Committees. LCDCs working collaboratively with other stakeholders, have responsibility for the planning and oversight of a substantial amount of local development funding on behalf of the State or by other local development agencies and structures.

Fortunately, in Sligo there has always been a strong tradition of mutual co-operation between the local government, local development, and community sectors both at an informal and formal level and the ongoing success of the LCDC structure has helped cement this partnership.

As always, Members of Sligo LCDC carried out their role with professionalism, integrity, and commitment in terms of input into and oversight of the main LCDC programmes, such as the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the 2023 – 2027 LEADER Programme through the Local Action Group, the Community Support Fund allocated under the DRCDG Local Enhancement Programme, and other community funds, alongside the Healthy Ireland Programme fund and the Sligo PEACEPLUS Programme.

As Chairperson of the LCDC, I wish to acknowledge the ongoing commitment and work of all members of the LCDC and Support Staff during 2025. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Brían Flynn on his appointment as Director of Services, Live Invest Visit & Borough District of Sligo and as Chief Officer of Sligo LCDC.

I look forward to the continuation of the good work of the LCDC in partnership with local stakeholders and the local community for the betterment of Sligo, and to our continued work during 2026 in making Sligo a better place in which to Live, Invest, Visit and work.



Cllr Donal Gilroy, Chairperson, Sligo LCDC

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A Statement by the Chief Officer, Sligo LCDC

We are pleased to present the Annual report for the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) for 2025. This report outlines progress in respect of the various LCDC functions over 2025 including a review of progress generally, details of meetings held, and details of the oversight, management and collaboration in relation to public-funded programmes under the LCDC's remit. These include the LEADER Programme, SICAP, Healthy Ireland Fund, a range of Community grants and the PEACEPLUS Programme.

Sligo LCDC and its subgroups have had another busy and productive year during 2025. Under the leadership of Chairperson Cllr Donal Gilroy, the LCDC continued to embark upon an ambitious work programme which included the oversight of many funding programmes.

I wish to acknowledge the co-operation of all members and partners of the Sligo LCDC over the past year, which has seen the benefits of real partnership arising from the existence of the valuable structure and programmes of the LCDC. As Chief Officer, I wish to thank all members for their valuable contribution and commitment to Sligo LCDC.

During 2025 the LCDC continued to work with, and support community activity, and work progressed on a range of Community Grants, the Sligo PEACEPLUS Programme, the 2023-2027 LEADER programme, the Healthy Ireland Programme Round 4 and SICAP 2024 – 2028.

I also want to thank the staff who work on the various programmes for their dedication and commitment to progressing the work of Sligo LCDC.



Brían Flynn, Chief Officer

1. Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Sligo LCDC was formally established by resolution of the local authority on 7th July 2014 for the purposes of developing, coordinating and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The committee is made up of representatives from the local government and local development sectors, public bodies and representatives of social, economic, environmental and community interests.

National policy envisages a central role for local government in the planning and oversight of local and community development programmes while maintaining a key role for local development entities in front line delivery.

Section 128B of the Local Government Act 2001 sets out the **functions** of LCDCs. These functions include—

- in relation to the **Local Economic and Community Plan**, to —
 - prepare and implement the community elements of a 6-year Local Economic and Community Plan (the Plan),
 - review and monitor on an on-going basis the implementation of the community elements of the Plan and, if appropriate, to revise the actions and strategies set to achieve the objectives of the Plan, and
 - consider a draft of the economic elements of the Plan and adopt a statement for consideration of the Council in this regard,
- to coordinate, manage and oversee the implementation of **local and community development programmes** that—
 - may be agreed between Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government and other Government Departments or State bodies,
 - may be sourced through direct application by the LCDC or local authority on the LCDC's behalf (e.g. EU programmes), or
 - may be agreed by the local authority with relevant State agencies or Government Departments.
- to improve the **coordination of public-funded local and community development programmes** and reduce duplication, and to coordinate generally local and community development programmes within the LCDC's operational area, and
- to prepare an **annual report** on the performance of its functions.

The LCDC, like the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC), is a committee of the local authority. Unlike the CPG and SPCs, however, the LCDC is independent from the local authority in the performance of its functions. While these functions will be determined by Government from time to time as provided for under Local

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Government Act, how those functions are carried out and any decisions to be made by the LCDC when carrying out those functions are solely a matter for the LCDC.

This independence is provided for explicitly in sections 49A (2) and 128B (8) of the 2001 Act.

Dates and attendance at LCDC Meetings

LCDC/LAG meetings took place on the following dates in 2025 – meetings were held virtually/hybrid arrangement.

Attendance of Sectors represented on Sligo LCDC at meetings during 2025							
Sector Represented	26 th Feb	16 th April	29 th May	9 th July	3 rd Sept	29 th Oct	10 th Dec
Elected Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elected Member	N/A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Elected Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Authority Official	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Local Authority Official	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Agency – DSP	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
State Agency – HSE	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
State Agency – MSLETB	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Local Development Company	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trade Union	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Business	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Farming	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PPN – Environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PPN - Community & Voluntary	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PPN - Community & Voluntary	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
PPN - Social Inclusion	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
PPN - Social Inclusion	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

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Sligo LCDC Membership 2025

Name	Sector	Organisation
Cllr Donal Gilroy (Chairperson)	Local Government	Sligo County Council
Cllr Fergal Nealon	Local Government	Sligo County Council
Cllr. Ann Higgins (Vice Chairperson, April 2025 to date)	Local Government	Sligo County Council
Mr. Martin Lydon – (Chief Executive)	Local Government	Sligo County Council
Mr. Liam Kiely	Local Government / Local Enterprise Office	Sligo County Council
Mr. John Kennedy	State Agency	Dept. of Social Protection (DSP)
Ms. Cara O'Neill	State Agency	Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan HSE
Mr. Peter Egan	State Agency	Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim ETB
Mr. John Feerick	Local Development Sector	Sligo LEADER Partnership CLG.
Mr. Pat Fallon	Trade Union Interests	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Mr. Aidan Doyle	Business Interests	Sligo Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Kathleen Henry	Farming / Agriculture Interests	Farming / Agriculture Pillar
Mr Amro Hamid	Environmental Interests	Environment Pillar (PPN)
Ms. Bernadette Maughan	Social Inclusion	PPN
Ms. Noelle O'Gara	Social Inclusion	PPN
Mr. Pat Benson	Community & Voluntary	PPN
Mr. Billy Gallagher	Community & Voluntary	PPN

2. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)



The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government through the Department of Rural and Community Development and co-funded by the European Social Fund under the Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020

SICAP

The SICAP Programme is delivered by Sligo LEADER Partnership CLG, on behalf of Sligo LCDC. SICAP provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion at local level through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.



The overall 2025 budget for delivery of SICAP in Sligo was €968,491.00. The general SICAP budget was €759,192.00 and the allocation for New Arrivals was €209,299.00.

There are 2 goals under the Programme.

Goal 1: Supporting Communities

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

Goal 2: Supporting Individuals

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

Local Priority Target Group

In SICAP 2024-2028 there is a renewed focus on reaching those who are most disadvantaged in Irish society. The Local Priority Target Group (LPTG) for Sligo is People living in Disadvantaged Communities. In delivering SICAP, Sligo LEADER Partnership CLG, are required to prioritise supports to the LPTG in Sligo so that a certain percentage of the overall number of individuals engaged come from this group. During 2025, 126 people from disadvantaged communities were supported under this target group.

Progress under SICAP 2025

Sligo LEADER Partnership CLG played a crucial role in responding to the diverse needs of SICAP beneficiaries in 2025, particularly focusing on individuals, community organisations, children and families and New Arrivals. A broad range of programmes and supports to address employment, integration, health, education and wellbeing were delivered, such as:

- Youth Employment Supports and Training – to those Not in Employment, Education or Training i.e. Barista and Customer Service training, CV design and development, Yoga for Wellbeing and a Spring Walks Series.

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- Clustering of local community garden groups, development of Women's Sheds, Creativity for Wellbeing Programme Tubbercurry and a Gardening/Horticulture programme in the HSE Dochas Clubhouse.
- The Sligo County Social Enterprise Network was established in 2025 with the aim of providing a social network where workers/volunteers meet to discuss and share information from their own perspective.
- Initiatives for Children and Families and Individuals were also developed.

2025 Supports / Initiatives

In accordance with the Programme Requirements for SICAP, continued funding is subject to positive findings from Mid-Year and Annual Performance Review by the LCDC and the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets being achieved. Progress under annual targets, as of 31st December 2025 for SICAP Goal 1 and Goal 2 is outlined in the table below.

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Annual Target	Actuals	% Achieved
KPI 1	Total number of local community groups engaged under SICAP	50	59	118%
KPI 2	Number of Individuals (aged 15 years upwards)	431	607	141%
	Percentage of Individuals supported under KPI 2 living in disadvantaged areas	18%	21.84%	

Social Inclusion & SICAP Monitoring Committee

The Social Inclusion & SICAP Monitoring Committee continues to oversee the delivery of SICAP and to monitor implementation progress.

Members on the Social Inclusion & SICAP Monitoring Committee 2025 were as follows:

1. Cllr. Donal Gilroy (Chair)
2. Mr. John Kennedy (DEASP rep on LCDC)
3. Mr. Peter Egan (MSLETB rep on LCDC)
4. Ms. Bernadette Maughan (PPN Social Inclusion rep on LCDC)
5. Mr. Billy Gallagher (PPN Community & Voluntary rep on LCDC)
6. Mr. Amro Hamid (PPN Environment rep on LCDC)
7. Ms. Patricia Garland (HSE Rep)
8. Mr. Brian Flynn (Chief Officer)

3. Social Inclusion – Other Initiatives

The work of the LCDC and the thrust of the LECP is underpinned by a commitment to promote social inclusion and tackle poverty and disadvantage. This is addressed in a wide number of ways across the LCDC programmes and member agency activities. The LCDC has used its programmes such as SICAP, RDP, LEP and HI to support community initiatives and increase

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collaboration and local capacity building in urban and rural communities across the county prioritizing integration and vulnerable groups for funding assistance.

Some specific projects during 2025 include the following:

Sligo Age Friendly Programme

The Sligo Age Friendly Programme is overseen by the Sligo Age Friendly Alliance which is an Interagency group. It includes the following agencies: Sligo County Council, Local Link, Muintir na Tire, Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership, Citizens Information Centre, ATU Sligo, An Garda Síochána and MSLETB.



Sligo Age Friendly Health & Wellbeing Festival

The event was held at ATU Sligo on 28th March 2025 with over 250 older people from Sligo and Leitrim in attendance. The event was a collaboration between Age Friendly Ireland Healthy Homes Programme and ATU involving Sligo and Leitrim Age Friendly Programmes. Over 40 service providers attended, providing information on services including health, housing, financial entitlements, pensions, and fraud prevention. Vision Ireland attended providing full eye health checks. ATU also celebrated its designation as an Age-Friendly University. In advance of the event a walkability study was carried out to ensure accessibility to the event.



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Sligo Age Friendly Nursing Home

On 3rd of September 2025 the Sligo Age Friendly Programme Manager and residents of St Johns Nursing home Sligo completed a walkability audit of St Johns Nursing home. This is one of the requirements needed to achieve WHO Age Friendly Nursing Home Status.



Healthy Ireland Age Friendly Homes Fires Safety Referral Service

Sligo Age Friendly is supporting the Sligo County Council Fire Service and Age Friendly Ireland Healthy Homes Fire Safety Referral service. The new partnership will see fire-fighters from the 4 fire stations in County Sligo conducting free home fire safety checks for older people, referred to them by the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme. The service has proved to be a huge success and will help Older People stay safe and eliminate fire and carbon monoxide risks in their home, especially those that are living rurally and alone.



Launch of the SCC and Sligo Age Friendly Healthy Homes Fire Safety referrals service 05/08/25

Mind your health Well being

The *Minding Your Wellbeing* programme (MYWB) is an evidence-informed initiative that aims to promote people's positive mental health and wellbeing through positive psychology, self-care and resilience building. The general programme is currently delivered by Health Promotion and Improvement (HP&I) Officers to HSE staff.

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A pilot of the programme was run for older people and the feedback showed that Minding Your Wellbeing for Older People is effective in raising awareness among this age group of the benefit to caring for their mental health and wellbeing. The HSE then decided to work with local Age friendly programme managers with the aim to make the programme available nationally to older people. They requested that the Programme Manager work with a suitable organisation with the resources available to participate in the training for the trainer and whom has the reach in community to deliver series of six individual sessions (duration 1.5 hours per session) delivered in-person, to a wider group of Older People.

Based on this criteria Sligo Leader Partnership Company who are members of the Sligo Age Friendly Alliance were approached and accepted to run the program on behalf of Sligo Age Friendly. The SLPC co-ordinator Gery Bruce attended training earlier this week and work will begin on the delivery of the program in the coming weeks.

Tubbercurry Dementia Inclusive Community

Sligo Age Friendly Alliance is supporting Dementia Ireland in their quest to make Tubbercurry Town a dementia inclusive community. On 4th September 2025 the official launch was held in St Brigid's Hall Tubbercurry. The Sligo Age Friendly Programme manager was in attendance and hosted a stand there. The evening included speeches from Helen Rochford Brennan who has been diagnosed with dementia and is a national advocate for people living with dementia. There were also speeches from Sharon Richardson Alzheimer's Ireland and other health professionals and service providers. The event was full booked and the support from the community for the implementation of the different actions was very evident in the turn out and enthusiasm by the public.

Sligo Age Friendly Alliance

The Age Friendly Alliance met on 20th May 2025 and 3rd October 2025. This high-level cross-sector group is a strategic partnership to develop and oversee the realisation of the Sligo Age Friendly Strategy.

Presentations were given on various topics including services provided by Sligo Leader Partnership for Older People, Age Friendly Ireland – National Programme Office; Free Home Xray Services funded by the HSE; Fire Safety Home Visit Programme; Age Friendly Ireland Healthy Homes. Items discussed included right size housing and footpath obstruction.

Sligo Older Peoples Council

Training for Chairs of OPC's was held in Carrick on Shannon on 19th March with Sligo OPC in attendance.

The National OPC Convention, hosted by South Dublin County Council on 8th & 9th May 2025 was attended by the Sligo OPC Chair, Mr Amro Hamid. The theme was "The Wisdom of Years – A Lifetime of Perspective".

The Sligo Older Peoples Council Executive Committee met on the 20th of August and welcomed two new members – Philip Maree and Robert Rowlette.

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Sligo Older Peoples Council AGM

This event was held in the Sligo Southern Hotel on 22nd October 2025.

The day included guest speakers from An Garda Síochána, HSE, Sligo Alone and an estate planning and wills solicitor. Entertainment was provided by Music Generation.

Sligo Age Friendly Stadium

Sligo Age Friendly and Sligo GAA have been awarded €25,000 to improve Markievicz Park as an Age Friendly Stadium. This initiative will be delivered in stages, beginning with a walkability audit of the stadium in 2026, led by the Sligo Older People's Council. In December 2025 the Acting Age Friendly Programme manager, met with representatives from the GAA and Age Friendly Ireland during a familiarisation visit to Markievicz Park.



Disability Consultative Committee

The inaugural meeting and reconvening of the Disability Consultative Committee (DCC) took place on Thursday, 11th December 2025, at County Hall. This followed extensive engagement with the Disability Persons Organisation (DPO) and Public Participation Network (PPN) regarding membership. Key business included the election of Cllr



Declan Bree as Chairperson and the adoption of Standing Orders and Terms of Reference. Margaret McConnell delivered a presentation outlining the role and operation of the DCC, as well as the Disability, Inclusion and Access Strategy 2024–2027. Both are designed to work in tandem to promote inclusion and accessibility across Council services and ensure alignment between Council policies and disability-related issues. The DCC term will run concurrently with the Council term, from June 2024 to May 2029.

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Africa Day

Africa Day in Sligo was celebrated on Sunday 25th May 2025 in The Model with free festivities for the community to participate in. The celebration was entitled: Voices of Home, A Celebration of African Culture and Community. Through a series of films incorporating performance, personal narratives, and contextual research, the



exhibition documented the lived testimonies of African diasporic voices across Europe.

There was an interactive cultural showcase which offered visitors an engaging narrative told through traditional and contemporary African objects and artefacts displayed by Aremoja Women's Group, and members of the local African community, the marketplace highlighted the richness and diversity of African heritage. The event concluded with Sligo Global Kitchen featuring flavours from across Africa.

Sligo Comhairle na nÓg

Work continues on the development of Sligo Comhairle na nÓg as the forum for structured input into decision-making by children and young people in the development of local services and policies in the county.

Sligo Comhairle na nÓg focused its 2025 work on the theme of school-related stress and anxiety, with particular emphasis on the pressures experienced by young people during exam periods. To address this, members organised the "Mind Over Marks" festival, which took place at The CRIB on 24 October 2025. The event aimed to raise awareness, share coping strategies, and highlight supports available to students. In preparation for the festival, members met with Senior CAMHS psychologists to deepen their understanding of mental health challenges faced by young people. They also carried out their own research and shared personal experiences to shape the event's content. A number of areas of focus in 2025 were:

- Attendance at Seanad na nÓg in Leinster House on 14 November 2025 for the national youth senate,
- Contribution to the Road Safety Youth Forum,
- Participation in the national campaign advocating for the incorporation of children's rights into Irish law.
- Comhairle members also contributed to several consultation and research initiatives such as development of a mental health survey for young people.

4. Rural Development Programme/LEADER

Sligo has secured funding of €6,054,309 million to support and facilitate the continued development of rural communities all over Sligo County to include programme funding and administration and animation costs. During 2025 Sligo LCDC/LAG continued to deliver the 2327 LEADER Programme in Co. Sligo. As of 31st December 2025, 47 projects had been approved by the LCDC/LAG to the value of €1,909,743.90. These projects covered a wide range of themes from the Local Development Strategy (LDS) including Rural Tourism, Enterprise Development and Basic Services for hard-to-reach communities. LEADER claims in respect of 9 projects were approved, in the amount of €510,748.88.

The LEADER fund can offer grant aid and support to projects aiming to promote the quality of life and economic opportunities for Sligo County within the structure of the approved Local Development Strategy (LDS), with indicative LEADER Themes as follows:

1. Economic Development and Job Creation

The need to support the development of the rural economy has been identified as a critical challenge in both the needs analysis and Ireland's five-year rural development policy - Our Rural Future (2021-2025). Areas of focus within this theme include:

- The Green Economy
- Agricultural Diversification
- Rural Tourism & Recreation
- Enterprise Development
- Rural Food Production
- Social, Community & Cooperative Enterprises

2. Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion

A central focus will be the need to not just support economic development but also to ensure that social inclusion is supported. Ireland is becoming increasingly diverse and it is important to embrace this diversity and ensure that future community development recognises the needs of all members of society. Areas of focus under this theme include:

- Rural Infrastructure
- Accessible Services
- Optimising Digital Connectivity
- Rural Youth

3. Sustainable Development of Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

While recognising that climate change mitigation and adaptation is a cross-cutting issue and in this context will be considered for all LEADER interventions. Areas of focus under this theme include:

- Sustainable Development of Rural Environment
- Climate Change Capacity Building
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

5. Public Participation Network (PPN)



ELECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

2025 was a busy year for representative engagement with the following nomination processes successfully completed:

- Sligo Local Community Safety Partnership: 10 new nominees were selected through the PPN to take up community representative roles on the SLCSP. A PPN representative, Pippa Black, was also nominated to the role of Vice Chair on the committee.
- Sligo Disability Consultative Committee: 5 new nominees were selected through the unique partnership between Sligo PPN and Sligo Disabled Persons Organisation.
- Sligo PPN Secretariat: 2 new nominees joined the Secretariat in 2025 - Wendy Lyons and Amro Hamid.

There were also a number of changes to representation with:

- Sally Siggins replacing Dr Robert Hensey on the County Sligo Heritage Forum
- Hannah Gilroy replacing Jennifer Vans Aswegen on the Sligo Independent Evaluation Committee

With these new additions, Sligo PPN had 46 active representatives in place across 13 committees in 2025.



- PPN National Conference

6 Sligo PPN representatives attended the national PPN conference in Meath, sharing their experience of policy making in Sligo and learning from others.

Joan Swift is the Sligo PPN representative on the National PPN Secretariat Network.

PLENARIES

2 key plenary events took place in 2025, offering all PPN members the opportunity to shape the development and operation of the network. The first took place in February in partnership with Sligo Global Kitchen to mark the 10 Year anniversary of both organisations being active in Sligo. Over 500 people attended the event which began with an overview of the work of the PPN and key achievements and culminated in a culinary feast with music and dance. The second plenary was in November and focussed on strategic and participatory planning, giving members the opportunity to inform the workplan for 2026 and to raise key community issues and concerns.

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TRAINING

- Sligo PPN held a regional training event in February for all PPN representatives in the Northwest Region. The event was facilitated by Brian Harvey and focussed on the operation of SPCs and how to shape policy development at local level. The event was attended by around 80 representatives from the region.
- Sligo PPN continued their partnership with the Carmichael Centre, offering 80 community training places to PPN members to support capacity building and to help individuals strengthen local community group operation.
- Sligo PPN hosted Political Advocacy training for PPNs across the country. This was done in collaboration with Rochtain and the St Stephens Green Trust.
- Sligo PPN partnered with the CSO to deliver a training session for community groups on the use of CSO data to support strategic planning and funding applications. The training was open to PPN members across the entire network.

PROJECTS

• Community Spaces

Our Community spaces Initiative went live in 2025 with local community and public meeting spaces in Sligo mapped with a searchable criteria function to allow groups and individuals to find appropriate local community spaces to meet their need.

<https://www.sligoppn.com/community-spaces/>

• Street Feast 2025

Sligo PPN continued its partnership with Street Feast in 2025 with 16 feasts registered in Sligo. Sligo PPN has also contributed to the development of this initiative by providing an environmental checklist to ensure that feasts are delivered in ways that do not have negative environmental consequences, as well as creating a Healthy Street Feast menu to encourage healthy feasting.

• PPN outreach Initiative

In an attempt to reach groups not currently engaging with the PPN, and to discuss with community organisations the benefits of PPN membership and civic participation, the PPN began an outreach initiative which sees the PPN go out to community meetings and events. In



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2025 some of the places visited include: Sligo FRC, Sligo Chess, Tubbercurry & Sligo Men's Sheds and Rosses Day Services.

- **New Communities Ambassador Programme**

There have never been more migrant and culturally diverse groups active in county Sligo. It is therefore essential that the PPN adapts and ensures that our membership and representation reflects the changing face of the local community. Sligo PPN has been working with leaders among migrant community organisations to raise



awareness of the PPN, the benefits it brings and how groups can become members. We are working to ensure that groups recognise the importance of local civic engagement, taking part in key policy and strategy development and going forward for representative positions.

Regional and National Operation

- Sligo PPN attended a series of regional and national meetings to ensure that PPN staff and representatives continue to learn from other networks and share learnings and resources at local level for effective operation.
- The Sligo PPN Network Coordinator sits on the Cross Sectoral Group for Community Development and is currently working with the committee on the new national 'Strategy for the Community and Voluntary Sector'. The coordinator also sits on the 'Altogether for Population Health' strategic group, representing the community sector and advocating for the importance of civic engagement and community engagement in health and wellbeing.

Power to Change

<https://www.sligoppn.com/the-power-to-change/>

- **Climate Education Clubs**

On February 27th, the 'Power to Change: Celebrating Climate Education Clubs,' event which highlighted the important work of these clubs in fostering connections between schools and communities, and codesigning projects focused on climate action and sustainability. A key feature of the day was the formal launch of the Power to Change SDG Workbooks. These amazing nature-based guides were co-created on the Sustainable Development Goals with school children and school teachers in Co. Sligo. The event was officially opened by Minister Marian Harkin.



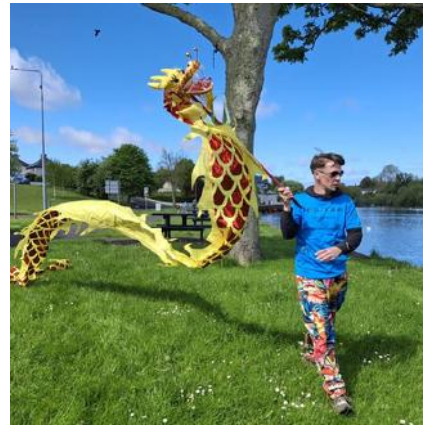
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- Uisce Alainn May 2025

A Celebration of our Waters was inspired by Medb's Dragon Warriors at the 2024 PPN Plenary and aimed to highlight the beauty and significance of our waterways. The themes of the event included (i) Blue Health for Mental Health: Exploring the benefits of waterways for mental well-being (ii) Good Water Habits: Promoting responsible practices around water usage and (iii) The Code of Conduct on Our Waterways: Guidelines for respectful and sustainable use of waterways.

Information displays and leaflets were kindly provided by Clean Coasts, Birdwatch, Water Safety Ireland, the Marine Institute, Maritime Safety, Sligo Bay Catchment Rivers Trust, LAWPRO.

The event very importantly featured a beautiful flower festival to commemorate all those who have been impacted by cancer.



- Community Celebration Day

In September 2025 an event was held to bring together all the community organisations who had engaged with the PTC initiative to share and celebrate their achievements and to explore how learnings can be expanded across the broader community. The event was launched by Cllr Donal Gilroy.



- Power to Change Newsletter

A project newsletter has now been developed which brings together all learning resources from the initiative. The newsletter offers a series of QR codes which allow people to directly visit those resources most of use to their organisation. Resources include handy guides, tips and easy to understand information that can support anyone to undertake positive climate action.

6. PEACEPLUS Programme



This project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

The PEACEPLUS Programme aims to contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to the cross-border economic and territorial development of the programme area.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has awarded funding of €3,603,788 to Sligo County Council to deliver its Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plan.

Introduction

The year 2025 marked a full year of activity for the Sligo PEACEPLUS Programme, following the award of €3,603,788 in funding from the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

During 2025 the programme established its foundations and began delivering on its objectives to support peacebuilding, community cohesion, and cross-community engagement across Sligo.

Programme Mobilisation

The initial months of 2025 focused on establishing governance, financial management systems, staffing, and partnership structures required under the PEACEPLUS framework.

Programme Launch – 15 May 2025

A major milestone of the year was the official launch of the Sligo PEACEPLUS Programme, held on 15 May 2025 in City Hall. The event brought together community representatives, elected members, partner organisations, and members of the public to mark the beginning of this significant investment in peace and reconciliation initiatives for the region.

The launch served not only as a formal introduction to the programme's aims and planned activities but also as a celebration of the shared commitment to fostering positive community relations in Sligo.

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The Red Dress Exhibition

As part of the launch celebrations, the internationally recognised *Red Dress* project was exhibited in City Hall for one week. The installation attracted strong public interest and engagement, offering a powerful artistic platform for reflection, dialogue, and awareness-raising around themes of conflict, identity, and shared experience.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the emotional impact and relevance of the exhibition to the broader aims of the PEACEPLUS Programme. The success of the Red Dress exhibition demonstrated the value of integrating arts-based approaches into peacebuilding and community engagement activities.



Kerry McFerran Representative from NI Executive, Minister Dara Calleary, Gina McIntyre CE of SEUPB and Cllr Declan Bree Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council with the Red Dress Programme Delivery and Project Progress in 2025

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The Sligo PEACEPLUS Programme comprises a total of 15 projects, representing a diverse mix of capital and non-capital initiatives designed to strengthen peacebuilding, community cohesion, and social inclusion across the region. Of these, 4 are capital projects and 11 are non-capital projects, including 8 capacity-building initiatives and 3 cultural and social inclusion programmes.

Capital Projects

Significant preparatory work was undertaken during 2025 to advance the four capital projects. A key development was the appointment of an Executive Engineer in October 2025 to support the delivery of the capital programme. This dedicated technical resource has strengthened the programme's capacity to progress design, procurement, and compliance requirements, ensuring that capital projects are positioned for active delivery in 2026.

Non-Capital Projects

Progress across the non-capital portfolio was strong throughout 2025. Of the nine non-capital projects requiring procurement, eight successfully advanced through the procurement process during the year and are now at various stages of evaluation, contract award, or mobilisation. This represents a major milestone in programme implementation and reflects the extensive preparatory work undertaken by the project team and partner organisations.

Two additional non-capital projects are being delivered through established project partners:

- **MSLETB – Tuning into Social Inclusion**
- **Hawk's Well Theatre – GFA for GenZ: Project Lighthouse**

Both partner-led initiatives progressed well during 2025, with planning, engagement, and preparatory activities completed in line with agreed timelines. These projects are on track for full delivery in 2026 and are expected to make a significant contribution to the programme's cultural, educational, and social inclusion objectives.

In summary..

2025 was a formative and successful year for the Sligo PEACEPLUS Programme. With funding secured, structures established, and a strong public launch, the programme has laid the groundwork for meaningful cross-community initiatives in the years ahead. The positive reception of the Red Dress exhibition and the high level of engagement at the launch event reflect the community's readiness to participate in and benefit from the programme's objectives.

The programme now moves into 2026 with a clear direction, strong partnerships, and a solid platform for delivering sustained peacebuilding outcomes for Sligo.

The PEACEPLUS Programme aims to contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation and contribute to the cross-border economic and territorial development of the programme area.

7. Healthy Ireland Round 4



In December 2025 the Healthy Sligo Programme Round 4 2023 -2025 concluded its activities for this three-year programme. The Healthy Sligo Programme in 2025 has shown continued growth in programmes supporting and developing activities for young children, young adolescents, older adults, people with disabilities, Sligo Traveller support group, Aremoja Women's Group, disadvantaged communities and connecting people through community activities. These programmes have demonstrated clear and positive outcomes, reflecting the impact of sustained investment in Healthy Sligo from 2022 -2025.

The public consultation that informed the development of the Healthy Sligo Programme continues to guide all the projects work and underpins our internal and external relationships with partners, funders, and key stakeholders. In developing the Healthy Sligo strategy, community engagement was always a priority. It was more than a process; it was a commitment to ensuring that every voice was heard that all perspectives were valued, and that individuals and groups felt a genuine sense of belonging throughout the process.

The development of both new and existing services, alongside strong relationships with key stakeholders such as Sligo Traveller Support Group, Sligo Sports Partnership, Aremoja Women's Group, HSE, Sligo Leitrim Youth Mental Health, Ballymote Family Resource Centre, Sligo Cycling, Foróige, Ted Kelly Selfcare and Siobhan O' Farrell Nutrition stands as a testament to the programme's reach and its commitment to communities across County Sligo.

When assessing the programme, particularly the mental health element, mental health was approached in its fullest sense encompassing emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. At a time when many people face daily challenges, the Healthy Sligo programme supported participants by offering programmes to improve the health and well-being of everyone in the country, focusing on creating supportive environments, reducing inequalities, protecting health, and promoting healthy living across all life stages through cross-sectoral collaboration, concentrating on key actions including increasing physical activity and reducing negative mental health. Staying socially connected played a significant role in helping people to better understand and relieve mental stress.

The establishment of a brief intervention mental health service for young adolescents has been a significant development in the Healthy Sligo programme, based in the Ballymote Family Resource Centre in collaboration with the Sligo/Leitrim Early Intervention Youth Mental Health Service.

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The Stronger for Longer programme in tandem with the Nutrition and Mindfulness elements has had 350 participants throughout the County. In collaboration with the Libraries the activator poles are now available to take out on loan as part of the Healthy Sligo programme, another great success story in reaching and raising the level of physical activity in the County.



Cleveragh Junior Park Run



Cleveragh Park junior parkrun is an innovative inclusive way for engagement in physical activity for young people by providing the opportunity for children between the ages of 4 to 14 years olds to run in County Sligo. It is one of the four junior park runs taking place in Connaught.

The 2km event, is an inclusive, diverse and wellbeing held weekly on Sunday mornings at 9.30am and is entirely organised by volunteers. It provides the young people the opportunity to spend time in the outdoors, connect with people, improve their health and wellbeing and encourages increased physical activity. To date we have had 75 successful events and 159 volunteers. Cleveragh junior parkrun is 1 of only 4 junior park runs in Connaught and the only one located in Co. Sligo. Sligo Junior Park runs was recently nominated for a “Diversity and Inclusion Award” at the Ocean FM sports awards 2025 which has really highlighted to us the importance of junior parkrun in our local community. Sligo Junior Park run plays an integral part in the sporting community in Sligo.

Decider skills training has upskilled 66 people across the Statutory and Voluntary sector provided much needed training supporting Youth workers, Mental health professionals, otherwise not available in the County.

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Through working with the Aremoja Women's group Healthy Sligo has fostered a strong sense of belonging and strengthened community resilience through inclusive and diverse programmes. These initiatives have increased social cohesion, encouraged rich cultural exchange, and created environments where people feel safe and supported, enabling personal growth. When individuals feel valued, respected, and secure, their mental health improves and community bonds are strengthened. Inclusivity helps break down barriers and ensures fairer access to resources, contributing to a stronger, more connected community.

Downs Syndrome Sligo has provided drama classes to adults and children on a weekly basis in collaboration with the Hawks Well Theatre. There were 24 weekly group sessions with Music Generation on March 21st celebrating World down syndrome day with a showcase of music and song. A short video was produced showing the benefits of the music class, this was filmed in the Autum term and can be viewed on Down syndrome Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/DownSyndromeSligo/posts/pfbid036vVTyuJXyaZyePojtTYdh6rFruf9AcibBUdGriLCg5ngvxfkEXhnPJfVyjbeE5iul>



Year in Nature project

One of the programme's most notable successes was the Year in Nature project, which had a profound impact on social wellbeing in a highly disadvantaged and deprived area. The project enabled the creation of a green, adaptable and sustainable space that people could enjoy whether sitting in it, playing in it, or simply observing and appreciating its changes.



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Most importantly, this shared space brought people together and fostered meaningful social connection within the community.

Healthy Sligo is actively represented on the Connecting for Life Committee, the Sligo, Leitrim Children and Young People's Committee, and the National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network Advisory Committee. In addition, Healthy Sligo has worked in partnership with Croi to support the promotion of fighting heart disease and stroke across the Sligo area.

To facilitate the extension of the Round 4 programme a budget of €75,000 has been agreed with Pobal and the LCDC to extend Healthy Sligo Round 4 into 2026. This funding will support the continued delivery of work aligned with the approved outcomes, with a particular focus on sustaining progress to date and embedding an outcomes-based approach using the B-com Model across all actions.

8. Funding Opportunities - Local Enhancement Programme

In late 2024, the Department of Rural and Community Development and Gaeltacht announced the launch of the Local Enhancement Programme for 2025 which was administered by Sligo LCDC. The aim of the Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2025 was to support community groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The Scheme was made up of a Capital Element of Funding to help groups carry out improvements and repairs to facilities, purchase of equipment etc. The scheme also had a current element to support groups with their non-paying running costs such as energy costs/bills, insurance etc.

The allocation to Sligo LCDC under the scheme was **€144,393** broken down as follows:

- a) €123,765 towards Capital Related Grant Aid
- b) €20,628 towards Current (Operational) Related Grant Aid.

Sligo LCDC recommended 136 groups for consideration of funding to the DRCDG.

On 13th June 2025 Minister Jerry Buttimer and Minister Dara Calleary for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, announced details of the successful projects under the LEP 2025 and allocations were made accordingly towards a wide range of diverse projects. The Local Enhancement Programme has a significant impact across the community, empowering community groups to continue the invaluable work they carry out on behalf of others in local communities. The scheme completed in 2025 with drawdown of funding by successful groups.

9. Integration projects

Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT)

The goal of LAIT is to help refugees become independent, settle into their new communities, and participate in Irish life. They do this by connecting people to important services that can help them integrate into the community.

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LAITs provide support for:

- Applicants for International Protection (IP)
- People who have been granted refugee status or other forms of protection, such as subsidiary protection or permission to remain
- Refugees who have been resettled in Ireland through a government programme
- Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs)

The work of LAITs isn't meant to replace existing services. Instead, LAITs help connect people with the existing services that are most suitable for their needs. This includes things like:

- Being a direct contact for new arrivals, helping them with any problems they might have when dealing with public services.
- Connecting new arrivals with services like legal help, childcare and healthcare
- Connecting new arrivals with services that improve their ability to live independently, like job training, English classes, education, and apprenticeships
- Guiding new arrivals through the process of applying for financial support, medical help, child benefits, and other services they might need
- Supporting people if they face racism or other unfair treatment, helping them report it to the right authorities
- Helping vulnerable new arrivals get in touch with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other services if they need extra help

LAIT 2025:

LAIT hosted 148 Clinics supporting 545 individuals.

LAIT supported and collaborated with the following programmes and activities:

- Aremoja Women's Group Coffee Mornings & International Women's Day Event
- Diversity Sligo, Empowering Parents Sessions
- Refugee Week: Family Fun Day Event, Symposium: Community Support in Action, Storytelling in the Sligo Library, and reading together refugee book collection.
- Pilot Swimming Lessons for refugee children
- English classes in the Sligo Family Resource Centre (various levels).
- Art Without Borders in Ballymote Family Resource Centre.
- Understanding Your Pay and Tax Revenue Information Clinic.
- Sligo Rovers Easter Soccer Camp / Football Boot Library
- Sligo Rovers Summer Soccer Camp.
- Wheels in Motion.
- Gym & Swim Vouchers for Sligo Regional Sports Complex.
- Gym & Swim Vouchers for Waterpoint Enniscrone.
- ImagiNation vouchers

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Refugee Week Symposium 'Community Support in Action' –LAIT in collaboration with Diversity Sligo and Aremoja with guest speaker from MASI



LAIT stand at the 'Children and Young People Services Exhibition'



'Understanding Your Pay and Tax' - Lait clinic in collaboration with Revenue



'Summer Swim Weeks' – Pilot swimming lessons with IPAS children – Lait in collaboration with Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership

Community Integration Forum

The role of the Community Integration Forum is to coordinate and provide collaboration across the mainstream services, NGO, community and voluntary organisations for Ukrainian refugees, IP applicants and TwS. This forum acts as a collaborative network and working group for the supports provided. Driven and chaired by the Chief Executive of the Local Authority, the group consists of the representatives of key stakeholders and service providers at management level within the county.

Sligo County Council facilitated 4 meetings in 2025.

Offer a Home Programme

The Offer a Home programme is an Irish Government initiative, coordinated by local authorities, that invites homeowners with unoccupied houses, apartments, or holiday homes

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to provide accommodation for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Hosts receive a tax-free recognition payment of €600 per month for a minimum six-month commitment. The programme is locally administered—prospective hosts register via the Offer a Home website or directly through their local authority, which oversees the placement process and communication.

Sligo County Council has 47 properties allocated, accommodating 178 individuals.

10. Sligo Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)

Sligo County Council, in partnership with the Department of Justice, has established a new Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) in Sligo.

The LCSP is a government initiative aimed at improving safety and wellbeing in communities across Ireland. The LCSP will replace the existing Joint Policing Committees and serve as a central forum for discussing and deciding on community safety priorities.

Members were selected by Sligo County Council in consultation with the National Office for Community Safety, who considered local demographics and other factors to give the broadest of representation across community safety sectoral interests, demographic and community interests in the Local Community Safety Partnership administrative area, and to achieve the best community safety outcomes for that area. Members are appointed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration for a term of three years.

Members of Sligo LCSP

Sligo Local Community Safety Partnership Membership

Nominee	Representing	Category
Cllr. Marie Casserly, Chairperson	Rural/Farming and Probation Services	Other Sector
Cllr. Arthur Gibbons	Sligo Strandhill MD (SF)	Elected Representative
Cllr. Thomas Walsh	Sligo Drumcliffe MD (FG)	Elected Representative
Cllr. Edel McSharry	Sligo Drumcliffe MD (FF)	Elected Representative
Cllr. Donal Gilroy	Sligo Drumcliffe MD (FF)	Elected Representative
Cllr. Gerard Mullaney	Ballymote Tubbercurry MD (FG)	Elected Representative
Cllr. Dara Mulvey	Ballymote Tubbercurry MD (FG)	Elected Representative
Cllr. Liam Brennan	Ballymote Tubbercurry MD (FF)	Elected Representative
Mr. Martin Lydon, Chief Executive	Sligo County Council	Local Authority
Mr. Tom Colsh	Community Engagement Superintendent	An Garda Síochána
Ms. Marie Richardson	Network Manager	TUSLA - The Child & Family Agency
Ms. Cara O'Neill	HSE West and North West	HSE
Mr. Michael Barrett, Sligo Tidy Towns Partnership Co. Ltd	Resident	Resident
Ms. Caitriona Sinnott, Maugherow Community Alert	Resident	Resident
Ms. Geraldine Brennan, Tubbercurry Tidy Towns	Resident	Resident
Ms. Marie Brennan, Chairperson, Cranmore Community Co-op	Resident	Resident
Ms. Edel Doran, Night Time Economy	Sligo BIDS, NTE	Business
Ms. Deirdre Kelly, IPPN	Irish Primary Principals Network	Education
Ms. Elizabeth Bartlett, Strandhill Development Association	Youth	Youth
Ms. Bernadette Comiskey Maughan - Sligo Traveller Support Group	Traveller/Roma	New/Minority Communities
Ms. Kira Smith, Sligo PRIDE	LGBTQI+	New/Minority Communities
Ms. Mabel Chah - Sligo's Migrant new community	New/Minority Communities	New/Minority Communities
Ms. Caroline Forde - Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (DVAS)	DSGBV	Social Inclusion
Mr. Chris MacManus - Tus Nua	Social Inclusion	Social Inclusion
Ms. Pippa Black - Sligo Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO)	Disabled People	Disabled People
Mr. John Feerick, Sligo LEADER Partnership Company (CLG)	Local Development Company	Other Sector

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The inaugural meeting of the Sligo LCSP took place on 8th December, marking the start of a collaborative approach to community safety. The partnership aims to ensure community interests are represented and to develop a coordinated, interagency strategy for local safety plans.



Members of Sligo Community Safety Partnership pictured at the inaugural meeting.

Chair and Vice Chair

Following the election process at the inaugural meeting of the Sligo LCSP, Cllr Marie Casserly was elected as Chairperson and Ms. Pippa Black as Vice-Chairperson. Their leadership will guide the partnership in delivering community-focused safety initiatives and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

Sligo LCSP Meetings

Sligo LCSP meetings are held at least once per quarter but can meet as often as considered necessary to conduct its work effectively. In addition, the Safety Partnership is required to hold at least one closed meeting per year for elected representatives (Councillors and Oireachtas members), and a second open public meeting.

Sligo Local Community Safety Plan

The Sligo LCSP will develop a Community Safety Plan which meets the needs of the local community. It will set out the actions to be taken to improve community safety and allow communities to hold local services accountable for implementation of the plan. This process will get underway in Q2 2026 once the National Safety Strategy is in place.

11. Conclusion

The LCDC achieved another successful year in 2025 and continued with its busy work programme. While it has many programmes to consider, the fundamental function it carries out in ensuring collaboration and planning of services and funding at local level has resulted in positive contributions to the Sligo community. This is sustained by ongoing effective engagement of elected members, agencies and the community with attendance and constructive debate at its meetings and sub-committees.

The LCDC looks forward to future challenges, and successes for Sligo in the years ahead and in particular in continuing its commitment to the Sligo 2030 vision to take Sligo forward towards 2030 and build on the Sligo Brand promise, to promote Sligo as a world class place to live, invest and visit.

