



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Department of Justice

# Drogheda Report Implementation Plan

4<sup>th</sup> Published Progress Report

July - December 2023



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## INTRODUCTION

The Drogheda Scoping Exercise was commissioned by the Minister for Justice in 2020 in response to rising concerns regarding crime and fear of crime in Drogheda. The report, entitled ‘Drogheda: Creating a Bridge to a Better Future’, was completed by Mr. Vivian Geiran, former director of the Probation Service, and published in January 2021. The recommendations in the report fall under two general headings:

- the need for improved interagency cooperation in the administration and delivery of services in Drogheda, and
- the need to resource services or provide additional services in the area.

Since the publication of the report, the Department of Justice has engaged with relevant Government Departments and Agencies, and Louth County Council to develop the [Drogheda Implementation Plan](#) to progress the recommendations contained in this report.

At a local level, the Drogheda Implementation Board is the core driver and co-ordinator of the activities outlined in the Plan, while the Department of Justice provides national oversight to ensure strategic direction, action planning and the delivery of the Drogheda Implementation Plan. Additionally, the Drogheda Implementation Plan High Level Oversight Group, chaired by the Department of Justice, provides further oversight and support with representatives from all key government departments, the HSE and Tusla.

This review constitutes a status report on those actions from July – December 2023. During this period, strong progress continues to be made in implementing actions identified in the Drogheda Implementation Plan, including:

### **Addressing Crime**

- In September 2023, the “See Something Say Something” initiative, aimed at reducing the impact of antisocial behaviour in Drogheda, was launched by the Drogheda Implementation Board, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána locally.
- There has been great progress made with regard to the realignment of boundaries between the Drogheda District in the North-Western Region and the Laytown District in the Eastern Region, and this will go live on 28 January 2024.

### **Drug use**

- The Red Door Project are one of three S.39 services (Red Door, TURAS and MCDAR project) in the Louth Meath area receiving funding (€23,454) from the HSE to develop 12 week workshops relating to cocaine use. €80,000 has been allocated to this initiative in total.

- The HSE allocated €35,000 in Q4 2023 to support the increased costs associated with the roll out of the Recovery College Dual Diagnosis & Trauma Informed Care programme across the NE area (Louth/Meath/Cavan/Monaghan).

### **Youth and Community Development**

- €20,000 of seed funding was allocated by the Department of Rural and Community Development to facilitate Drogheda participants in the Place Based Leadership Development Programme, in forming a cross sectoral network of residents, community organisations and statutory services to address social inclusion and enhance community wellbeing and efficacy.
- In July 2023, the Louth Local Development (LLD) opened their flagship Haymarket offices on the South of the river in Drogheda.
- In November 2023, a large Community Safety and Wellbeing event was co-delivered by Drogheda Implementation Board (DIB) and Louth Local Development's SICAP programme in Ballsgrove on the southside of Drogheda.
- In November 2023 the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup of DIB secured funding from DIB to roll out a 'Enhancing Youth Mental Health Through Community Resilience' Project which will be focused on the Southside of Drogheda.
- Since June, 41 students in Drogheda receiving funding supports of €15,315 under LLD's Third Level Access grants scheme.
- Drogheda Implementation Board hosted an event in October for sporting clubs and organisations of all codes across Drogheda and East Meath. The event was an opportunity for clubs from different sporting codes to connect with one another, look at the actions in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan and to come up with ideas to respond to those actions. It was attended by almost 50 representatives of 32 clubs across 15 sporting codes.

### **Education and Training**

- In July, Dublin City University and Louth & Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding which will see the university support the LMETB and DIFE to deliver third level education programmes in Drogheda; as well as supporting the development of stronger links between Further Education and Training and Higher Education including Advanced Entry to DCU programmes.
- In August 2023, the Drogheda College, the first Apprentice Training Centre in Drogheda, was officially opened by the then Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris.

## **Employment, Business and Enterprise**

- In September, the Drogheda Nurture Fund was launched. This is a microfinance fund designed specifically for small businesses and entrepreneurs based in the Drogheda/East Meath area. The Fund has been funded jointly by Louth and Meath local authorities through the Local Enterprise Offices. The Drogheda Nurture Fund has a fund of up to €100,000 available for approved entrepreneurs and enterprises.

## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGS	An Garda Síochána
BIDs	Business Improvement District
C&V	Community & Voluntary
CHO8	HSE Community Health Organisation area - Midlands Louth Meath
Connect FRC	Connect Family Resource Centre
CSIF	Community Safety Innovation Fund
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DDIH	Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub
D/FHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Skills
DIB	Drogheda Implementation Board
DOJ	Department of Justice
DRIVE	Drug Related Intimidation and Violence Engagement
DTCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
FASN	Family Addiction Support Network
HLOG	High Level Oversight Group (senior representatives of Government departments)
JARC	Joint Agency Response to Crime
LCC	Louth County Council
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCSP	Local Community Safety Partnership
LECP	Local Economic Community Policy
LLSP	Louth Local Sports Partnership
LLP/LLD	Louth LEADER Partnership/Louth Local Development
LMETB	Louth and Meath Education Training Board
NERDATF	North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force
MLSP	Meath Local Sports Partnership
MQI	Merchants Quay Ireland
SICAP	Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme

## 1. CROSS-AGENCY COLLABORATION

1.1	<p><b>Drogheda Safety &amp; Wellbeing High-Level Oversight Group:</b> Led by (i) Department of Justice and comprising senior representatives of other relevant Departments: (ii) Health; (iii) Housing, Local Government and Heritage; (iv) Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; (v) Education; (vi) Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; (vii) Rural and Community Development; (viii) Social Protection; and (ix) Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Agency representatives to be invited to meetings as required.</p> <p>Quarterly Meetings to ensure strategic direction and action planning and receive reports on progress on action plan. Once the action plan is agreed, the Oversight Group might be reduced in size.</p>
1.2	<p><b>Safety and Wellbeing Implementation Board:</b> The core driver and coordinator of change. With an independent chair, small support team (headed by a fulltime coordinator) and own budget (to resource the coordination itself, as well as to provide 'priming' funds to innovative projects and initiatives) – the team to be hosted, resourced supported by Louth Local Authority or Louth Leader Partnership, but located in Drogheda. Other central Government departments and local bodies to provide proportion of the funding for this as agreed).</p> <p>Board comprised of senior ('decision making') representatives from relevant agencies, including, at least: (i) An Garda Síochána; (ii) Probation Service; (iii) Local Authorities; (iv) HSE; (v) TUSLA; (vi) LMETB (vii) LLP; (viii) IYJS/DoJ.</p>
1.3	<p><b>Four sub-groups/working groups:</b> Policing and Drugs; Family Support, Children, Young People and Education; Employment, Business, Enterprise; Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport.</p> <p>Sub/working groups to have identified chairs (some could be rotated), representatives from relevant agencies and bodies. All sub-groups to include representatives from relevant bodies in the C+V sector; sub-group (d) to include wider definition of 'community' representatives, on a rotating basis, as required. Sub-group work focus to be on agreed/clear action plans. To report in at appropriate intervals, through identified representatives, to the Implementation Board. The sub-groups could also identify new or added resourcing needs, and prepare business cases for consideration by the implementation.</p>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p><b>1.1 Drogheda Safety &amp; Wellbeing High-Level Oversight Group</b></p> <p>The High-Level Oversight Group has met 6 times since the commencement of the Project, including two meetings in Drogheda, one held in Boomerang Youth Café and the other in the Red Door Project. A meeting is planned for January 2024 which will also be held in Drogheda.</p> <p><b>1.2: Drogheda Implementation Board</b></p> <p>The Safety and Wellbeing Implementation Board, generally referred to as the Drogheda</p>	

Implementation Board ('the Board'), was established in late October 2021. The Board now consists of an independent, voluntary Chair, appointed by the Department of Justice, and 16 individuals representing 14 organisations. Membership of the Board includes two community representatives in addition to senior decision-making representatives from statutory and key agencies. Full board membership is available to view on their dedicated website at [www.droghedaimplementationboard.ie/about/boardmembership/](http://www.droghedaimplementationboard.ie/about/boardmembership/)

The Board met 11 times in 2023 (24 times since it was established) including hosting two plenary sessions for members of all five Drogheda Implementation Board structures in January and June 2023. At these meetings members collectively carried out a review of action delivery and identified successes, challenges and priorities. Engagement remains high amongst Board members with an average attendance rate across all representatives of 75% in 2023.

LMETB provide hosting and administration supports to the Board, including employment of a full-time Coordinator and part-time administrator.

### **1.3: Subgroups of the Board**

As noted in previous Progress Reports, four subgroups of the Board have been established which reflect the recommendation contained in the Drogheda Scoping Report:

- Policing and Drugs;
- Family Support, Children, Young People and Education;
- Employment, Business, Enterprise;
- Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport.

During 2023, 75 individuals representing 31 stakeholder organisations attended Board and subgroup meetings. Subgroup membership is available to view here [www.droghedaimplementationboard.ie/about/subgroups/](http://www.droghedaimplementationboard.ie/about/subgroups/). 34 subgroup meetings were held in 2023 (74 since the Board was established), with an additional 15 specific topic working group meetings over the course of the year.

Drogheda Implementation Board plays a strategic oversight role in relation to the delivery of the Plan, whilst subgroups work on specific actions. To that end the Board has mapped actions from the Implementation Plan to subgroups which they are progressing.

Funds of €150,000 in 2021, €250,000 in 2022 and €350,000 for 2023 were secured by the Department of Justice through Dormant Accounts Funding (DAF) to fund elements of specific actions (such as action 3.1) in addition to the establishment and running of the Drogheda Implementation Board.

In response to the general heading in both the Drogheda Report and Implementation Plan "the need to resource services or provided additional services in the area" the Drogheda Implementation Board allocated a significant proportion of their 2023 budget (€125,000) to a small grants scheme for community sector led projects addressing issues/actions identified in the Report and Plan, in addition to a number of projects relating to the work of subgroups and/or actions in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan were resourced by the Drogheda



Implementation Board. In all 25 projects were supported over the course of 2023 with some activity continuing into the early months of 2024. A full list of the successful grantees can be found [here](#).

## 2. ADDRESSING CRIME

2.1	<b>For those involved at a very serious or “senior” level in the drugs trade and related organised crime in the area, the current approach by AGS of targeting and disrupting their activities to be continued and resourced accordingly.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>‘Operation Stratus’ is a Garda operation deployed in Drogheda to identify and disband Organised Crime Gangs through the targeting and arresting of persons involved in very serious distribution and sale of controlled substances in the Drogheda area. This targeted approach has resulted in significant drugs and firearm seizures by Investigating Gardaí in the Drogheda area.</p> <p>A number of incidents have been detected, some of which include Murder, Attempted Murder, Possession of Firearms, Possession of Drugs, Manufacture of Drugs, Importation of Drugs, Possession of Explosives, Petrol Bomb incidents, Criminal Damage offences and Arson.</p> <p>In addition, a Divisional Drugs Unit with dedicated resources under a Senior Investigating Officer is based in Drogheda Garda Station. This Drugs Unit continues to make a significant number of detections and arrests for a range of Drug Related Offences. In 2022 Gardaí in Drogheda took €4 million off the streets, seized assets, charged people with Organised Crime offences and have charged 83 people with possession of drugs for sale &amp; supply. Operation Stratus continues in the Louth South Community Engagement Area to deal with any group or individual engaged with activities related to Serious Organised Crimes. A number of significant drugs seizures and arrests were made in the second half of 2023 and a number of ongoing serious investigations will be finalised and files forwarded to the DPP in early 2024.</p> <p>An Garda Síochána continues to proactively target the finances and other assets of all persons involved in the sale and supply of drugs. Gardaí in Drogheda will continue to work closely with other agencies and Garda Units, on a local, national and international level in order to target those involved in the sale and supply of controlled substances.</p> <p>This operational and strategic approach has proven to be very successful. Resources allocated to Drogheda in response to an escalation in organised crime and the Drogheda Report &amp; Implementation Plan continue to be essential in the continuation of An Garda Síochána’s disruption of activity by those at a senior level in the drugs and organised crime trade.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> to view Chief Superintendent Alan McGovern of Louth Cavan Monaghan Division give an insight into the real impact of these resources.</p>	
<i>Next Steps</i>	
The strategy outlined above will continue in relation to the seizure of illegal drugs and assets. This strategy is directly linked with Operation Stratus which continues to deal with serious organised criminality in Drogheda.	<div><i>Timeline</i></div> <div>Ongoing over the lifetime of the Plan</div> <div><i>Responsible Body</i></div> <div>An Garda Síochána</div>

2.2	<b>Implement as a matter of urgency an intensive wraparound service for vulnerable children and young people exposed to and involved in organised crime group, as well as their families, with a view to facilitating their disengagement from such criminal networks.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The Greentown Project trial sites are progressing in two locations in the State to develop approaches to wrap around support for vulnerable children. The learnings from these trials will inform the deployment of services in areas where children and young people are exposed to, and involved in organised crime groups, as well as their families, with a view to facilitating their disengagement from such criminal networks. The very effective cross-agency collaborative work that is taking place has assisted a number of young people to date to receive the necessary training to enable them to gain employment which will help them to break the link with, and dependency on, criminal networks.</p> <p>Extern is an all-island social justice charity supporting children, young people, individuals and families to overcome their challenges, empower positive change and support the family unit. Representatives of Extern were invited to the May 2022 meeting of the Policing and Drugs Subgroup of the Drogheda Implementation Board and presented on an intensive family support pilot which they are delivering in the Drogheda area. This pilot is funded by the Department of Justice. Extern has also been engaging in the Youth Service Network Meetings initially facilitated by the Drogheda Implementation Board Coordinator and being sustained by the Louth Local Development Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Team.</p>	

2.3	<b>Continue – and increase, where appropriate – resourcing (e.g., staff, training, minibus/es) to the two Youth Diversion Projects (CABLE and BOYNE GYDPs), to facilitate their work.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The CABLE and Boyne Youth Diversion Projects are funded directly by the Department of Justice. CABLE and Boyne Youth Workers work with local Juvenile Liaison Officers to deliver services to young people who have been cautioned, and young people deemed at risk of offending. This work is now captured as part of the partnership approach to service delivery in the new Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027. Transport may be made available based on business need, the required funding for same is provided via YDP through the Department of Justice. The Chief Superintendent, Garda Youth Diversion Bureau is the lead in An Garda Síochána. Both projects are on two-year funding agreements that are renewable.</p> <p>In 2021 the Department of Justice met all appropriate funding needs for and provided €530,000 in funding to the two projects including additional funding of €25,000 to Boyne and €66,000 to CABLE for the purchase of mini-buses.</p> <p>In June 2022 Boyne Youth Diversion Project was allocated almost €75,000 under the Youth Justice Strategy to deliver Early Intervention Supports and Family Supports primarily to Youth Diversion referrals on the Southside of Drogheda. The CABLE Project had received funding in a previous round to deliver these supports on the Northside of the town.</p>	

Youth Work Ireland Louth (the BOYNE Project) found it challenging to procure a minibus for the funds initially allocated to them due to the increase in costs nationwide for the purchase of all vehicles, but in particular minibuses. In October 2022 they issued a public appeal to try to secure a suitable vehicle to no avail. In response to this the Department of Justice allocated additional funds to the BOYNE Project to bring the total allocation for the minibus to €60,000. In 2023, CABLE YDP received additional funding of €66,000 from the Department of Justice for a full time Early Intervention Worker who will work with children aged 8-11 in North Drogheda. Recruitment was completed in December 2023.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Engagement with CABLE and Boyne projects regarding any additional needs.  This objective is complete. The Implementation Board and the Department of Justice will continue to engage with the project.	Complete	Department of Justice

2.4	Ensure continuing/strengthening of community policing – particularly in the town centre and suburban areas.		
Current Status			
<p>The Drogheda Community Policing Team has had, and will continue to have, a significant role in addressing and delivering the goals of the Drogheda Implementation Plan. While numbers are down in comparison to 2022 - when the unit was awarded the ‘Best Not for Profit’ organisation in 2022 by the Drogheda and District Chamber, a significant achievement for An Garda Síochána and Community Policing in Drogheda - the unit size is still comparable to other large towns in Ireland. The unit continues to be highly successful and engaged in a vast array of community initiatives in accordance with National Community Engagement Policy. Community Policing is a matter for all members of An Garda Síochána, however, with a dedicated team comes a clear vision in terms of responsibility for dedicated sectors, delivery of schools programmes, high visibility foot and pedal cycle patrols, targeting of hot-spots, engaging with older persons, vulnerable persons, neighbourhood groups, text alert groups, engagement with NGOs, engagement with other agencies and dealing with a range of issues that impact on the communities within the town of Drogheda.</p> <p>Each member of the Community Policing Team has been assigned to dedicated sectors within communities and interest groups in both urban and rural locations within the Drogheda area. Gardaí continue to use technology to assist the community gain an understanding of sector areas through the <a href="#">Garda Website</a>, on the dedicated <a href="#">Louth Garda Facebook Page</a> in addition to sharing with public representatives and interest groups. Any queries/requests to this Unit can be addressed to <a href="mailto:Drogheda.Community@garda.ie">Drogheda.Community@garda.ie</a>.</p>			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Roll-out of the Community Policing Framework to the Louth Division		Complete	AGS

Continue to increase the profile and effectiveness of the Community Policing Team and achieve strategic and community orientated policing objectives	Complete	AGS
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2.5	Consider the implementation of a Joint Agency Response to Crime (JARC) project in the Drogheda area.		
2.10	Explore ways in which the timeliness of criminal justice responses to offending and offenders can be improved where possible.		
Current Status			
<p>In 2020, an oversight and governance structure was established to coordinate and align multi-agency offender management programmes, including SORAM, JARC, Domestic Violence, Complex High-Risk Prisoners and Life Sentenced Prisoners. In 2022, ACER 3 programme in JARC was evaluated. Whilst the recommendations resulting from evaluations were being reviewed by the relevant governance structures, work has been ongoing to discuss the aims and needs of the JARC programme, with a particular focus on how the programme can be adapted for future use. The aim is for learnings from the evaluations and workshops to be utilised in future JARC programmes, including the proposed Drogheda project.</p> <p>The Red Door Project will work with relevant partners to provide the JARC programme in the area. The JARC National Coordination Team (NCT), which co-ordinates, supports and oversee operational responses in JARC, reviewed recommendations from evaluations and has developed a work plan for 2024. The NCT reviewed draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in Q3 and Q4 2023. Operationally, the JARC Drogheda response commenced delivery in Q4 2023.</p>			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Any decision to rollout JARC to additional locations will be made by the Offender Management Governance and Strategy Group in the context of reviewing JARC and making it a more dynamic response to emerging crime trends.		Ongoing	Offender Management Governance and Strategy Group (Chaired by DoJ, Membership includes IPS, AGS and Probation Service)
Offender Management Governance and Strategy Group members agreed to a workshop proposal provided by Sagaciti Consulting in June 2023. Two workshops took place in July and November 2023 with the proposed structure for JARC tier 2 under consideration at these workshops, in particular		Complete	Offender Management Governance and Strategy Group (Chaired by DoJ, Membership includes IPS, AGS and Probation Service)

how non-probation order clients can be accommodated in JARC.		
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2.6	Allocate additional Probation Service resources (1-2 probation officers, as well as community service and community-based organisations, where and as needed) immediately to the Louth team, to allow adequate focus on and resourcing of responses to drug-related offending, young people involved in crime and related projects, as well as in the event of any expansion of the JARC programme, youth justice, community service and restorative justice programmes.	
Current Status		
<p>The Probation Service resources on the Louth Team, which include the Drogheda catchment area, were increased in 2021 and remained static across 2022 and 2023.</p> <p>The Probation Service continues to review resource levels for this team. There are likely to be resource implications to facilitate the delivery of specific actions within the Drogheda Implementation Plan, such as the continuation and sustainability of the Drug Court and the JARC type initiative as outlined in action 2.5 above. The delivery of community sanctions is a key aspect of the work carried out and continued throughout 2023, in partnership with other relevant community-based services.</p> <p>The Probation Service team from Co Louth is represented on both the Policing and Drugs Subgroup and the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education Subgroup of the Implementation Board.</p>		
Next Steps		Responsible Body
Probation Service resources to be kept under review		Probation Service

2.7	<b>In spite of the constraints of Proceeds of Crime legislation, explore how to demonstrate to local communities in a visible and practical way that money and other resources seized from organised criminals is, in effect, used to provide funding for community and other services.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
The Community Safety Innovation Fund (CSIF) was established by the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Public Expenditure in April 2021 to allow proceeds of crime to be directed into community projects to support community safety. The Community Safety Innovation Fund reflects the successes of An Garda Síochána and the Criminal Assets Bureau in disrupting criminal activity and seizing proceeds of crime by providing additional funding for investment in community safety projects. The fund was allocated €2 million under Budget 2022. Foróige the ‘New Choices’ project) and the Red Door Project (Prison Links Worker) were successful in their applications for funding.	

The funding was increased to €3 million for 2023, and the call for applications to the 2023 fund was open for 8 weeks, closing in May. A total of 61 applications were received, 30 of which were successful. It is anticipated that another round of funding will open for applicants in 2024. A number of projects based in Drogheda received funding under the 2023 funding cycle.

**Connect Family Resource Centre:** This programme consists of five interconnected key projects with opportunity for cross collaborative and multi-engagement over the 16 month span. The themes of the projects focus primarily on parents and families, and include programmes, and initiatives to:

- build resilience, confidence and feelings of safety in the community;
- promote positive mental wellbeing;
- build social capital by improving social connections through targeted interventions;
- build relationships with hard to reach groups and people with similar life experiences for peer support.

**Drogheda Women & Children's Refuge:** The project aims to provide an outreach and education support service to women and children experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. The project is intended as a pilot and is focussed specifically on refugee women in Mosney Accommodation Centre, to increase their understanding of domestic and family violence, its drivers and provide referral pathways to access further supports.

**Family Addiction Support Network CLG:** This project provides a shared learning and awareness raising event to services and families locally, regionally, nationally and cross-border aiming to:

- Provide the opportunity for family members/communities to identify how they have been affected by drug related intimidation.
- Explore and develop an understanding of trauma informed practice.
- Shared learning will help identify key safety measures for family members and their communities.
- Identification of and collation of shared learning and resources from family members, family support groups, community groups
- Create awareness of trauma experienced by communities.

**Foróige Cable Project:** The Thrive Together project aims to identify gaps within the community and implement three targeted objectives.

1. Reduce reoffending behaviour and divert vulnerable young people away from anti-social/criminal behaviour by engaging them in vocational accredited courses and training.
2. Improve community safety and feelings of safety by creating prosocial Halloween events/trips which will also have a Community Garda presence.

3. Provide prosocial opportunities for participants who come from disadvantaged/discriminated and lower socio-economic backgrounds as well as our participants in rural settings.		
<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Launch CSIF 2024	2024	DoJ

2.8	Explore the provision of appropriate multi-disciplinary responses (including out-of-hours) to incidents (e.g., with mental health components or factors, such as suicidal or self-harming behaviour) currently managed by ‘frontline’ AGS members	
Current Status		
<p>An Interagency Networking and Information Session took place on 21 November 2023 in response to Action 2.8 and was attended by Superintendent Drogheda. This involved 40 attendees with 25 services represented with 45% Statutory Services and 55% Community and Voluntary Sector. There were three main activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Networking</li><li>2. Mapping of Activities and Services Available</li><li>3. Ideas Generating Activity</li></ol> <p>As part of the plan to progress this action, a number of very positive interventions were triaged.</p>		
Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body
Await evaluation of CAST pre-pilot initiative in Limerick Division.  Plans to develop a pilot in Drogheda are ongoing, while developments in Limerick are awaited.	Ongoing	An Garda Síochána
The positive interventions that were identified at the Interagency Networking and Information Session on 21 November 2023 will be further explored in early 2024.	Q1 2024	HSE & An Garda Síochána

2.9	Explore how to address the previously raised and discussed issue of the impact of the county boundaries of Louth and Meath, and the corresponding delineation between Garda Districts/Divisions, specifically in relation to the policing of the Laytown-Bettystown area of East Meath.
Current Status	
The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (D/HLGH) is keeping the operation of urban area committees under consideration, together with the operation of the realignment of Garda boundaries in Louth and Meath. Urban Area Committees aim to improve co-operation and municipal governance for sizeable urban areas that significantly extend	



beyond county boundaries. Several models are available for consideration, ranging from cooperative arrangements to more formal structures. In the longer term, the review will also consider whether there is a requirement to legislate in order to support such structures. A public consultation for a Pre-Draft Issues Paper for a Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan is due to take place in Q1 2024. A further update on this work is provided under Action 8.2.

The Boundary Realignment between the Drogheda District in the North-Western Region and the Laytown District in the Eastern Region will go live on 28 January 2024 at 7pm. Housing estates and businesses in County Meath but close to Drogheda, that were previously included in the Ashbourne District (Meath) are now under the remit of Superintendent Drogheda (Louth).

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	
A review will examine whether a formal mechanism is required to improve cooperation in administrative areas in large urban settings that cross over administrative boundaries. DHLGH will also follow progress of the operation of the realignment of Garda boundaries in Louth and Meath.	Ongoing	DHLGH
This action is to be officially closed at the meeting of the Drogheda Implementation Board on 19 January 2024	January 2024	An Garda Síochána

<b>2.10</b>	<b>Explore ways in which the timeliness of criminal justice responses to offending and offenders can be improved where possible</b>
This Recommendation has been grouped with recommendation 2.5 above.	

<b>2.11</b>	<b>Explore the practicality of implementing the Community Crime Impact Assessment (CCIA) process in Drogheda</b>
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Build on previous initiatives to increase community capacity for responding to violent critical incidents at local level.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>CCIA is an instrument intended to give due weight to the experience of a community living with drug-related criminality and anti-social behaviour. CCIA's are part of the National Drug Strategy Reducing Harm Supporting Recovery 2017-2025. Strategic Action 4.1.40 aims to "measure the impact of drug related crime and wider public nuisance issues on communities".</p> <p>CCIA processes were undertaken in two areas of Drogheda across 2023. A final meeting of the local problem-solving groups was held on the 29 November. Participants indicated that they would like the process to continue with significant adaptations. A report is being produced and will be presented to Drogheda Implementation Board in the first quarter of 2024.</p>	

	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Drogheda Implementation Board to engage with City Wide, An Garda Síochána and the Department of Health (DoH) in relation to exploring the practicality of implementing the Community Crime Impact Assessment in Drogheda	Complete	Drogheda Implementation Board/ DoH/AGS
Commence delivery of CCIA in Drogheda	Complete	Drogheda Implementation Board
Implement actions identified during first phase of CCIA Process	Q1 2024	Drogheda Implementation Board

2.12	Explore the implementation of a ‘See It. Say It’ scheme in Drogheda, in relation to anti-social behaviour.		
Current Status			
“See Something Say Something” was launched on 29 September 2023 by the Drogheda Implementation Board, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána locally. The official Go Live date for the system was 1 October 2023. The system is operating well and is monitored by an Inspector in Drogheda.			
	Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body
	A meeting to determine roll out will-take place imminently and will be led by Roads Policing & Community Engagement as policy owner for the initiative.	Complete	An Garda Síochána
	Roll out the “See Something, Say Something” initiative in Drogheda by the beginning of Q4 2023.	Complete	An Garda Síochána

2.13	Continue to provide training and awareness raising in relation to the impact and implications of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) for all relevant bodies in Drogheda.
Current Status	
The Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027 provides a developmental framework for further ongoing enhancement of youth justice services. The strategy outlines approaches to the effects of trauma and disadvantage, including through interagency work, through strengthening Garda policies on engagement with young people, and through pursuing specialised training support for front line personnel who engage with young people. Implementation of the Strategy is	

being supported by cross-agency governance and oversight structures, a dedicated research partnership with the University of Limerick (REPPP project), and a Youth Justice Advisory Group. This Advisory Group comprises community, professional and academic experts with a broad range of relevant experience including in relation to the impact of trauma and adverse childhood events.

A series of training and other events to raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences have taken place or been attended by practitioners in Drogheda since 2022. The Tusla and Louth Local Development ABC Programme teams are working collaboratively with Drogheda Implementation Board structures to build on these initial activities and develop a plan for building a community resilience network with a trauma informed approach in the area. This activity is also closely aligned to Action 6.5.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
DoJ to work with partners to deliver on the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027 objectives which relate to the effects of trauma and disadvantage on young people.	Ongoing in line with the objectives of the Youth Justice Strategy 2021-2027	DoJ working with DCEDIY and other GSG bodies, local authority, community and local development and other expert and community partners
Increase Louth Community Resilience Network membership and formalise plan for building community resilience	Ongoing	Louth Local Development ABC Programme, Louth CYPSC, TUSLA

### 3. DRUG USE

3.1	<b>The Red Door project should receive urgent additional funding for the provision of drugs outreach work (as a particular priority), counselling, family support, client progression pathways, Court-related and prisoner support and additional harm reduction services in the Drogheda area. Specifically, €150,000 additional for a full year, should be allocated to the Red Door, for provision of these additional services</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>A number of additional posts in the Red Door Project have been resourced through Dormant Accounts Funding and the HSE since October 2021. They include the new positions of Social Worker and Drug Court Liaison Worker, discussed further under action 3.5, and an additional Project Worker post. Funding for the Social Worker and Project Worker posts has been confirmed by the HSE until end of 2023. The Department of Justice has secured Dormant Accounts Funding to continue funding the Drugs Court Case Worker post until Q3 2024. In addition, the Red Door Project team were successful in securing funding through the Community Safety Innovation Fund (see action 2.7) for two years to employ a Prison Links Worker. All of these interventions enhance the Red Door's capacity to support a broader base of clients and deliver harm reduction services in Drogheda.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> to view the Red Door team speak about the impact of these resources on their service.</p> <p>The North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF) review was completed with the resulting new NERDATF Strategy plan finalised in Q1 2023.</p> <p>The conclusions and recommendations arising from the above two reports and the HSE review of Addiction Services in Louth and Meath, CHO 8 will inform the development of a roadmap for drug and alcohol service provision across the Louth/Meath area. Ongoing engagement takes place between members of the HSE and the NERDATF.</p> <p>The HSE Addiction Services have committed to continue to fund the Red Door to support the two posts i.e. Social Worker and Project Worker for 2024.</p> <p>The HSE have allocated the Red Door €23,454 towards a number of new Cocaine initiatives to be rolled out in 2024.</p>	
<i>Next Steps</i>	
Additional funding agreed and allocated to the Red Door Project from earmarked dormant accounts and HSE funding	<div>Timeline</div> <div>Complete</div> <div>Responsible Body</div> <div>Department of Justice/Department of Health/HSE</div>
Further engagement on additional resourcing needs following completion of HSE regional resourcing review	<div>Timeline</div> <div>Complete</div> <div>Responsible Body</div> <div>DoJ/DoH/HSE</div>

DoJ, DoH and HSE to consider the issue of sustainability of funding to ensure a medium to long-term plan is in place for service delivery	Ongoing	DoJ/HSE/DoH
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3.2	Explore the possibility of utilising the Red Door facility as more of a ‘one-stop-shop’ for drug treatment and related services.	
<p>The HSE, North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF) and the Red Door Project continue to engage in a collaborative approach to support the establishment of a needle and syringe exchange programme to operate from the Red Door Project (see action 3.7).</p> <p>The additional resources allocated under 3.1 above, have facilitated the Red Door Project team in expanding the services provided within the Centre and reaching a significantly higher number of clients.</p> <p>The Red Door Project have also made their premises available to Merchants Quay Ireland Family Support Service (funded by the HSE) to hold meetings with their service users.</p> <p>The HSE teams including our Outreach Worker, Addiction Homeless Social Care Lead and the Social Care Worker use rooms in the Red Door project to support their service users and to see other service users who live locally in an interagency approach.</p>		
Next Steps		Timeline
HSE, North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force (NE-RDTF), the Red Door Project and the Probation Service to engage on how services can be developed and to eliminate overlapping or duplication of services; examine potential to step up the engagement with Social Work and Probation with the aim of considering the use of the Red Door facility as a “one-stop-shop”		Ongoing
		HSE, NE-RDTF, Probation Service, DoJ

3.3	<b>Review the State funding (approximately €7,500 p.a.) provided to the Family Addiction Network (FASN) – providing family support, especially in the context of drug-related intimidation work and wider family support for addiction-related issues.</b>
Current Status	
Additional once off funding was allocated by the HSE Midlands Louth Meath to the Family Addiction Network (FASN) in May 2022, amounting to €9,635. In December 2022, an additional once off funding was again allocated to FASN by the HSE Midlands Louth Meath/NE Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force, amounting to €20,000.	
The FASN was included in an independent evaluation of community and voluntary drug and alcohol services, commissioned by the North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF). The Draft NERDATF external evaluation report and draft NERDATF Strategic Plan	

2022-2025 have been circulated to the NERDATF Committee and finalised. Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI) arranged a meeting with FASN in February where both services provided updates on service provision, development and potential for interagency working to include cross referrals, workshops, training and group work.

The conclusions and recommendations arising from the above two reports and the HSE review of Addiction Services in Louth & Meath, CHO 8 will inform the development of a roadmap for drug and alcohol service provision across the Louth/Meath area. Ongoing engagement takes place between members of the HSE and the NERDATF.

MQI, following a tendering process, have been funded by the HSE to provide a new Northeast Family Support Service in the Louth Meath area, including Drogheda. The Northeast Family Support Service offers a confidential non-judgemental and supportive service in Counties Louth and Meath to any family member, partner or friend impacted by a loved one's problematic use of alcohol and/or drugs. The posts of Family Support Co-ordinator and Family Support Worker were both in place by Q3 2022.

The HSE commissioned Family Support Services are now operational across the Louth/Meath area. Progress has been made in relation to interagency referrals both into the service and onward referrals. The Family Support Coordinator and Family Support Worker continue to engage in an interagency approach and are receiving referrals from community-based addiction services.

MQI now have 2 groups set up, one in Drogheda and the other in Trim.

MQI have assigned a volunteer to support these groups from their volunteer programme starting in May 2024.

Following discussions in October with the Family Addiction Support Network (FASN) regarding a projected deficit for 2023, the HSE agreed in December to provide some additional once-off funding of €26,078 to cover the anticipated shortfall.

FASN were also successful in securing €44,084 funding under the Community Safety Innovation Fund 2023.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Family Support Coordinator and Family Support Worker roles to commence	Complete	HSE
HSE to engage with FASN on funding proposal submission	Complete	HSE

3.4	Commission/carry out an urgent review of the organisation of drugs (statutory and community and voluntary) services in the Drogheda area, similar in focus – but perhaps on a smaller scale – to the Service Review of the Dundalk Addiction Services (2015) carried out by the HSE, with a view to ensuring improved effectiveness and efficiency as a matter of urgency.	
Current Status		
<p>The HSE review of Addiction Services in Louth and Meath, CHO 8 was completed in June 2021. The HSE Senior Management Team continue to work through the recommendations and continue to progress work with all related disciplines across the Louth/Meath area.</p> <p>The North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF) commissioned an external review of S39 funded services across the Louth Meath area which was completed in Q4 2022.</p> <p>The NERDATF review was completed with the resulting new NERDATF Strategy plan finalised in Q1 2023 which will form the basis for the collective work of its members.</p>		
Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body
Consultants appointed and review commenced	Complete	HSE
Consultants to meet with service providers in HSE, Taskforce and community and voluntary groups in Meath and Louth (staff and service users)	Complete	HSE
Evaluation of S.39 Organisations completed	Complete	HSE
NERDATF to work through recommendations	Complete	NERDATF

3.5	Reinstate/continue the local Drug Court, with appropriate funding and other resourcing and formally evaluate its operation over a period of say one to two years, before deciding on its longer-term future.
Current Status	
<p>The Drug Treatment Court (DTC) in Louth, operating as a pilot, encompasses principles of the National Drug Rehabilitation framework, i.e. assessment, care planning, client consent, a shared care model and exit planning. It is a cross agency response to drug users before the Court, with a focus on rehabilitation, as opposed to punishment. Successful outcomes continue to be noted from graduation rates from the process.</p> <p>The designated DTC Liaison Case Worker, based in the Red Door Project in Drogheda and resourced through Dormant Accounts Funding, and the allocated Probation Officer, engage with each participant and co-ordinate client case management plans, assessing client progress and agreeing progress reports for Court. The focus of the DTC is the process of recovery, encompassing a motivational approach, emphasizing harm reduction and supporting progress towards a goal of abstinence.</p>	

The Department of Justice has secured Dormant Accounts Funding to continue funding the DTC liaison Case Worker post until Q3 2024. Funding for the DTC Liaison Case Worker post beyond Q3 2024 awaits finalisation. Evaluation for long-term directions also awaited.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Develop business case for specific Drugs Treatment Court Liaison Case Worker role situated within Red Door Project Complete DoJ/Probation Service	Complete	DoJ/Probation Service
Provision of second year of funding for DTC Liaison Case Worker	Complete	DoJ
Funding for year 3 to be disbursed	Complete	DoJ
DoJ to formally evaluate the operation of the Drugs Court over one year with a decision reached regarding its longer-term future	2023	DoJ/Probation Service

<b>3.6</b>	<b>Agencies working in the substance use field in Drogheda should look at practical ways of improving interagency cooperation, including the identification and implementation of appropriate gateways to treatment and progression routes for service users, as well as reducing or eliminating overlaps and duplication, providing joint (cross-agency) training, developing shared language and even greater cooperation on assessment and intervention methods.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>Three meetings of the HSE Clinical Quality and Safety Committee (CQSC) for Addiction Services, which is chaired by the HSE Clinical Lead, Addiction Services CHO8, have taken place. These meetings discussed the establishment of a subcommittee structure which will comprise membership from the MRDATF, NERDATF and Funded Services (Section 39s).</p> <p>The third meeting took place in November 2022 and subgroups were agreed for S39 and North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF) / Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (MRDATF), as well as Tier 4 Residential and Waiting List sub-groups. Some subgroups meetings have already taken place - these subgroup structures will further enhance interagency collaboration &amp; networking and offer further operational &amp; clinical supports in 2023.</p> <p>To further enhance the interagency collaboration and networking, the Clinical Lead has developed an ACE programme (addiction conversation and education programme).</p> <p>The Clinical Lead has also developed a CCD (complex case discussion) forum for those staff who are working in both the HSE and S39 funding services. Again, the CCD's are bi-monthly and are scheduled a year in advance. This allows staff to prepare and submit complex cases for discussion.</p>	



CHO 8 and NERDATF continue to engage with service providers to further strengthen interagency collaboration and co-operation. The conclusions and recommendations arising from both the NERDATF evaluation and strategic plan development will further inform and support this collaboration.

The NERDATF is directing local shared care partners to the HSE and National Drug Rehabilitation Framework online training resource, and links agencies in 2023 to see what additional training and supports they need before planning an in-person workshop.

It is anticipated that the final Combined Assessment and Care Plan will be released at end of April 2024. Staff will be advised to complete NDRF training in the interim.

HSE Clinical Quality and Safety Committee (CQSC) for Addiction Services Subgroups has begun to meet. There have been some queries regarding representation and this is being worked through with the intention that there will be representation for the 3 constituent parties namely S39 representation, Task Force and HSE.

It was noted at the last HSE Clinical Quality and Safety Committee that the S39 services are commissioned through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) issued via the relevant Task Forces. Within the SLA's all CQ&S issues pertaining to services being provided are included in the SLA process and are monitored/overseen via the CMSU and the SLA quarterly meetings. Therefore it was agreed not to develop another sub-group for the Task Force services as this was considered a duplication of work.

To further support 3.6 the HSE Clinical Lead, Dr Garrett McGovern, is providing information sessions in relation to drug/alcohol use with a different subject discussed with a Q&A slot at the end of each information session. All community, voluntary and statutory service are invited to attend these information sessions.

To support action 3.6, the HSE Addiction Services secured additional funding to develop an Addiction Homeless services to include two new posts i.e. Addiction Homeless - Social Care Lead and Social Care Worker. Both posts are in place since mid-August 2023 and work collaboratively with both Addiction Service and Homeless services across the NE region via interagency cooperation including identifying and implementing appropriate gateways to treatment, and progression routes for those who are not currently engaged in the treatment services. This service will also support those who are in addiction and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless due to their addiction. The priority target group are those with an addiction who have a history of sleeping rough and long-term users of emergency homeless services due to their addiction.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
The National Drug Rehabilitation Framework (NDRF) eLearning module has been completed and is available on HSELand for HSE, HSE-funded services, TUSLA, Probation, Homeless services, volunteers and students.	Complete	The HSE National Social Inclusion Office

The Pilot assessment and care plan project is led by the HSE National Social Inclusion office. The evaluation of the pilot has now been completed. The National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO) are now progressing the amendment of the NDRF Combined Assessment and Care Planning Document, based on the recommendations of the evaluation. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in Q1 2024. The form will then be made available to all areas as a resource to support the implementation of the NDRF.	Q1 2024	The HSE National Social Inclusion Office
HSE Clinical Quality and Safety Committee (CQSC) for Addiction Services Subgroups consisting of s39 representation, Task Force and HSE to be established and meeting	Complete	HSE/MRDATAF/NERDATAF

<b>3.7</b>	<b>Ensure full implementation of all appropriate harm reduction measures, as mandated by the National Drugs Strategy, including Needle and Syringe Programmes (NSP) and Naloxone, in Drogheda.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The HSE have secured funding to support the employment of two posts (1.6 Whole Time Equivalent) – Drug &amp; Alcohol Workers, with an additional Outreach Worker post secured. The posts will operate across the Louth/Meath area. These workers will support the provision of a mobile needle and syringe exchange programme, harm reduction, key working and interagency care planning. These workers liaised with the HSE NSIO Naloxone Programme and have completed naloxone training to facilitate provision of naloxone as part of the Outreach and Fixed needle and syringe exchange programmes. Both HSE Outreach worker posts are in place since May 2023 and are working collaboratively with all other community, voluntary and statutory agencies, including the Red Door Project.</p> <p>Mobile vehicles (vans) have been made available to both Outreach staff members by the HSE to support the provision of the needle and syringe exchange programme.</p> <p>The HSE, North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATAF) and the Red Door Project continue to engage in a collaborative approach to support the establishment of a fixed needle and syringe exchange programme to operate from the Red Door Project. Meetings, training and engagement around governance arrangements took place over Q3 and Q4 2022 to facilitate the establishment of the service. The service went live in May 2023.</p> <p>The HSE Addiction Service continue to fund the cost of Needle Exchange paraphernalia and the costs associated with the insurance for this service. The HSE Outreach workers are also working collaboratively with the team in the Red Door. An information video on the service, funded by Drogheda Implementation Board, has been produced and can be viewed <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	

The NERDATF Coordinator has established an interagency collaborative initiative around safe disposal of drug related waste and litter across the Louth/Meath area. Interagency meetings commenced in October 2022. The Group's work includes training of staff across the groups as well as developing a draft protocol for the safe clean up and disposal of discarded drug paraphernalia. The group is currently looking at equipment needs, Contracts/Standard Operating Procedures, reporting templates and a communication plan similar to the existing HSE/MRDATF plan across the Midlands area. Issues pertaining to drug-related litter, drugs-related intimidation and other public concerns regarding alcohol and drug use are to be addressed as part of the new Task Force Community Safety sub – committee which will be established in the new year.

The information session for local partners engaged in responding to drug related litter has been finalised and will be available online or in –person, depending on the needs of the agency.

With the establishment of the HSE Outreach services, it is envisaged that there will be a reduction of drug related litter across the Louth/Meath area.

Both Outreach workers support the Needle & Syringe Exchange & Safer injecting practices programme across the North East as well as providing Harm reduction information. Demand has increased (since the development of this programme) for drug paraphernalia including crack cocaine pipes and gauze as well as straight shooter cocaine pipes.

The HSE has developed a Naloxone programme in CHO8 supported by the NSIO. As part of this programme, a number of Nurses in the Midlands are now trained up on the train the trainer programme allowing them to train community/voluntary and statutory staff in administering Naloxone across the CHO8 area. Another staff member in the Midlands is in the process of becoming a BLS (CPR) trainer and will provide BLS training in the Midlands Louth Meath area once approved to do so.

The HSE, in partnership with the MRDATF (Midlands Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force) & the NERDATF (North East Regional Drug & Alcohol Task Force) submitted an application to the NSIO for funding under the Cocaine initiative. Having secured €80,000 it was agreed to divide the funding amongst both areas which allowed three S.39 services in the Louth Meath area develop Cocaine workshops (12 week programme) for 2023/2024. The Section 39 services who received funding were Red Door, TURAS and the MCDAR project.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Outreach drug/alcohol project worker assigned, manager in place, funding allocated by the HSE. The NSP project began on 11 May operating 3 days per week	Complete	HSE
€50,000 allocated for needle exchange provided and delivered by the HSE recurrently	Complete	HSE

Vacant Outreach Worker post to be clarified pending outcome of review	Complete	HSE
Establishment of a Safe Disposal Drug Related Waste and Litter Group	Complete	NERDATF/HSE
Three outreach worker posts to be filled. 2 posts have been filled. HSE in the process of filling the remaining post	Ongoing – 1 post to be filled once recruitment freeze lifted	HSE

<b>3.8</b>	<b>Explore and implement the most appropriate way of ensuring a best-practice response to drug using clients with identified dual (drugs and mental health issues) diagnosis. This could include interagency co-location of staff and joint training</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The HSE will organise another webinar (previous webinar held in April 2022) which will provide an update on the National Clinical Programme for Co-morbid Mental Illness and Substance Misuse (Dual Diagnosis). Staff from HSE CHO8, the North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF) and funded services will be invited to attend.</p> <p>The HSE and NERDATF planned to commence an initiative in early 2023, focused on Dual Diagnosis Awareness and Train the Trainer Workshops. The purpose of the initiative is to build community capacity around dual diagnosis. Similar initiatives previously took place in both Dublin North East Inner City and Finglas/Cabra, facilitated by the Dublin North/Northeast Recovery College. Funding for this is being discussed with the Drugs Policy Unit in the Department of Health. A further update will be provided in the next progress report.</p> <p>The HSE National Social Inclusion Office, through the HSE Service Plan are providing €10,000 to support the development of Dual Diagnosis training for the NE area. To support this the HSE Addiction Services Manager CHO8 and the Addiction Service Lead in CHO1 have approached the NATP (National Addiction Training Programme) to look at developing a Dual Diagnosis workshop/training programme to support the community, voluntary and statutory services for this area in 2023.</p> <p>The HSE allocated €35,000 in Q4 2023 to support the increased costs associated with the roll out of the Recovery College Dual Diagnosis &amp; Trauma Informed Care programme across the NE area (Louth/Meath/Cavan/Monaghan).</p> <p>The HSE Addiction Services Manager met with members of the NATP (National Addiction Training Programme) in relation to a proposal to roll out of EMDR (Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) therapy with a number of places being secured for Drogheda service providers. Following this discussion, the NATP approved €20,000 for EMDR training. The NATP have approved 2 training places for addiction counsellors (1 HSE &amp; 1 S.39 staff) for the Louth Meath area with training planned to start in Q2 2024.</p> <p>Through additional resources allocated under 3.1 above the Red Door Project staff are in a position to support a number of clients with acute and complex mental health needs along with</p>	

ongoing addiction issues who require intensive case management. This involves providing daily check-ins, weekly one to one sessions and interventions to ensure their safety.

The Red Door Project is also a member of a consortium of seven organisations who have secured funding to deliver a 'Seeking Safety' pilot project. Seeking Safety is an evidence based integrated treatment for PTSD/Trauma and Substance Abuse and is focused on women who have experienced domestic and gender based sexual violence and are presenting with addiction issues. Project worker and Peer Support Worker posts are in place to support the delivery of this project.

Click [here](#) to view the Red Door team speak about the impact of these resources on their service.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Clinical programme being developed and rolled out	Ongoing	HSE
Inter-agency work to be carried out through Slaintecare on dual diagnosis to ensure a uniform and sustainable response nation-wide	Ongoing	HSE
Review of roll-out of dual diagnosis to be carried out	Ongoing	HSE
Webinar to take place on Co-morbid Mental Illness and Substance Misuse	Another webinar will be arranged following completion of Recovery College programme	HSE

<b>3.9</b>	<b>Provide further interagency training workshops on responding to drug-related intimidation for relevant staff in statutory agencies as well as those in the community and voluntary sector.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The Drug Related Intimidation and Violence Engagement (DRIVE) Model is an interagency response and data driven intervention model to respond effectively to drug-related intimidation and violence in communities in Ireland. The National Drug Related Intimidation and Violence Engagement (DRIVE) lead has been in post since June 2022 with a workplan for delivery of the DRIVE model being developed nationally by the Drive Oversight Committee (DOC), to include the adaptation and development of a training programme to complement the DRIVE Model. As a result, local Drug Related Intimidation training has been postponed until national training programme and materials are developed and the local DRIVE lead (see below) is in position. Post is advertised and should be in place in Q3 2024.</p>	

The North East Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (NERDATF) have contacted Louth County Council to discuss the DRIVE project with the Joint Policing Committee, with a view to including this in their workplan.

The NERDATF hosted an information session on the DRIVE initiative as part of a National DRIVE Roadshow on 7 September in Monaghan. The event was very well attended with a wide range of community, voluntary & statutory sectors represented. A DRIVE Roadshow was held in the Louth/Meath area in November 2022 with a large number of community, voluntary and statutory agencies in attendance.

In response to the Drogheda Report and Implementation Plan the Department of Health have allocated resources for a local DRIVE Lead, based in Drogheda and covering the North East Region. This post is one of two local DRIVE lead pilots in Ireland. NERDATF, in consultation with HSE Addiction Service Manager CHO8, has prepared a funding application for this resource. This was submitted to the DOC (DRIVE Oversight Committee) for discussion at their December 2022 meeting and was approved in Q1 2023.

The HSE National Social Inclusion Office, through the HSE Service Plan have provided €50,000 to support the development of a DRIVE Lead for the NE area. To support this development the HSE Addiction Services Manager CHO8 & the Addiction Service Lead in CHO1 worked with HSE Procurement Services and developed a tender for a DRIVE Lead with a closing date of 7 September 2023. All HSE, Task Force and S39 services were notified of same.

Unfortunately, there were no applications submitted on the initial tender. In the absence of any formal tenders and following further discussions, MQI indicated that they would be able to host the DRIVE lead worker for the North East. The HSE in CHO8 & CHO1, MQI and NERDATF have agreed terms for MQI hosting this post with NERDATF working in collaboration with MQI. The post should be in place in Q3 2024.

The HSE Addiction Services Manager for CHO8 is the HSE national representative on the DOC (Drive Oversight Committee) and will keep them updated on developments for the DRIVE lead.

NERDATF has established an interagency DRIVE implementation group that will lead on the roll out of DRIVE across the NERDATF region. Partners nominated representatives to join this group from the local authorities /Joint Policing Committees, family support services, alcohol & drug treatment services and others.

DRIVE training and information sessions will continue to be rolled out across the NE region in 2024 with statutory, community and voluntary services in attendance.

SAOR training will continue to be rolled out across the Louth Meath area with a schedule in place for 2024. All community/statutory and voluntary staff can attend this training once they complete the HSEland module 1 and receive the SAOR certificate.

As noted in the Drogheda Implementation Plan Progress Report to end June 2022, the Policing and Drugs Subgroup identified a need to extend the term 'interagency' to include staff in the education sector so that they can have access to relevant information and feel empowered to deal with issues relating to drug and alcohol use in children and families, including drug debt related information.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Interagency training workshops to recommence. In the meantime, Family Addiction Support Network and AGS are providing support.	Ongoing	NERDATF/AGS/FASN
Funding for regional DRIVE lead in North East to be approved.	Complete	HSE CHO8 & CHO1

#### 4. YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES

4.1	The Northside/Moneymore community hub facility should continue to be progressed, as it currently is, by LLP on behalf of all stakeholders. This facility should accommodate the provision of services currently provided by bodies forming the Moneymore Consortium, as well as providing a hub for a wider array of community services, provided by statutory as well as community and voluntary agencies.
4.2	It would greatly boost morale in the area if, at an appropriate point, clarification could be provided by LCC and LLP to relevant stakeholders in Moneymore/North Drogheda on the likely direction of travel and timeline for the proposed centre, as soon as practicable.
4.3	The relevant bodies should commence, as a priority, exploratory moves including local consultations, to provide a similar facility on the Southside of the Town, in the general Rathmullan area.
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p><b>4.1</b></p> <p>A group of local community organisations (Moneymore Consortium) developed an initial business plan for this project, supported by Louth Local Development. Through funding of €15,000 provided by the Department of Justice and engagement with Senior Planners in Louth County Council pre-planning was then achieved. Initial professional estimated costings for the delivery of the Moneymore Townland Community Hub (MTCH), including the fitting out of the building and professional fees stand at €5.8 million.</p> <p>Consortium members made a series of presentations to key stakeholders in March 2023, including Drogheda Implementation Board, regarding the need for this community resource and requesting support in securing resources to progress the project. Securing planning permission will be an essential first step to accessing funds for the building development. This requires funding to develop specialist technical and other documentation. In April 2023 Minister Heather Humphreys of the Department of Rural and Community Development notified Drogheda Implementation Board that her Department had allocated funds of €80,000 to progress this preparatory work which is a necessary precursor to the development of any such project.</p> <p>Louth County Council have agreed to be the lead on the delivery of the Moneymore Community Hub with a view to utilising the Department of Rural &amp; Community Development Community Centres Investment Fund. Current work is focused on formalising the process to be utilised for the planning and other consent process.</p> <p>In tandem, a new entity known as the Moneymore Townland Community Hub CLG has been formalised and Louth County Council has supported that group with specialist governance training with a view to the group having the knowledge and competence to manage the development once completed.</p>	



The guidelines for the 2023 iteration of the Community Centres Investment Fund state that the fund will provide 90% of the total project value to a maximum of €6 million with at least 10% to be provided in matching contributions. A minimum of 5% of the matching contributions element must be in cash. A fundraising committee has been established by Moneymore Townland Community Hub CLG and they are organising a series of activities to secure these resources such as a Boyne Camino Walk which was held in October 2023 and a Golf Classic which will be held in June 2024.

A Project Implementation Team of Moneymore Townland Community Hub CLG members, key Louth County Council staff, and Drogheda Implementation Board Coordinator has been established. This group meet on a regular basis to progress project delivery.

#### 4.2

Louth County Council have identified and will be making the site available to the MTCH and will be the lead in the capital project. The Project however is subject to normal procurement rules. It is the intention to prepare all the necessary consents by Q2/3 2024 and to target the Community Centres Investment Fund for 2024. Works would commence after that.

#### 4.3

Louth County Council have passed a motion of council to transfer a dwelling at 80 Rathmullen Park, to be used as a facility on the southside of the town by Louth Local Development in their role as community support organisation. An upgrade/facelift was carried out on the property also before handover.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Engagement with LCC Planning team	Ongoing	MTCH CLG & LCC
Procurement of Design Team for full design, procurement of Contractor & Supervision of all works.	Q2 2024	MTCH CLG
Submission of application to Community Centres Investment Fund	2024	Louth County Council
Identify group(s) suitable to act as anchor tenant for a housing unit on the Southside Work Progressing	Complete	Louth County Council

<b>4.4</b>	<b>Progress, as a priority, the funding and development by LMETB of the sports and community changing/meeting block at DIFE</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
A submission by LMETB to SOLAS Capital Investment, and supported by the Drogheda Implementation Board, for the phased development of a sports and community changing/meeting block at Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE) as per this action was successful.	

In accordance with action 6.4 of the Plan LMETB included a request for capital investment to develop a new multi-purpose tertiary education block as a key response to the Drogheda Report on Community Safety and Wellbeing and would constitute a second phase of development on the site.

Minister Simon Harris announced this multi-million capital investment at an event in DIFE on 5 September 2022 which was also attended by Minister McEntee. Following approval by SOLAS LMETB considered the most economically advantageous method of project delivery on a live densely populated site. It was decided that the safest and most expedient approach was to appoint a new design team, give them the full brief for delivering both phases at the same time – as one phase and proceed to appoint a contractor for one building project. A design team has been procured for this project.

[Click here](#) to view Davy McDonnell, Principal of DIFE speak about the impact of this investment.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Identify and apply for funding to develop sports and community changing/meeting block at DIFE	Complete	LMETB
Commence procurement process for Design Team to Design and Plan the works.	Complete	LMETB
Submit planning application	Q4 2024	LMETB

<b>4.5</b>	<b>Agree an action plan for enhancing youth and community development capacity, particularly on the South side of Drogheda</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>Louth Local Development (LLD) opened their flagship Haymarket offices on the South of the river in Drogheda on the 17 July 2023. This is a significant investment for the Drogheda area, as a centrally positioned space in the town providing additional and bespoke space for community engagement and development. These new offices, a significant investment in Drogheda, are designed to provide a space for a broad range of social inclusion groups to come together and engage in community development activity. Click <a href="#">here</a> to see a short video where Maeve Harkin, Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Manager speaks about this new resource in Drogheda.</p> <p>As referred to in Action 4.3 above, Louth Local Development made a proposal in July 2023 to lease a premises in Rathmullen for the purposes of its use as a Community House which was approved by elected members of Louth County Council at their meeting of September 2023. This will facilitate Louth Local Development in establishing a presence on the Southside of Drogheda and the delivery of a wraparound interagency programme in a community that has experienced significant trauma. It will provide a space within which meaningful, positive</p>	

engagement with community members can occur, facilitating a participative, collective and empowering community development approach in the area.

The LLD Education and Community Development Officer (ECDO), an additional post for Drogheda initially secured through resources allocated from Louth Local Community Development Committee in response to the Drogheda Report and Implementation Plan continues to engage with and develop initiatives with a broad range of stakeholders in line with recommendations of the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan. The ECDO has been building connections with the community on the Southside of Drogheda to build trust and identify potential community leaders. For example, hosting 'Coffee at the Gates' sessions outside two of the primary schools in the heart of the Rathmullen area. The ECDO also provides administrative supports to the Drogheda Place Based Leadership group and SICAP Network of Services for Young People (see action 4.6/4.7 and 5.5). In addition, 7 Drogheda based community groups received funding supports to deliver inclusive activities under the LLD SICAP Community Grants scheme in 2024.

In November 2023 a large Community Safety and Wellbeing event was co-delivered by Drogheda Implementation Board and Louth Local Development's SICAP programme in Ballsgrove on the southside of Drogheda. An advisory group made up of members of all five Drogheda Implementation Board structures planned the event, led by the LLD SICAP Manager and Drogheda Implementation Board Coordinator.

The aim of this event was to build individual and community capacity to respond to community safety and meet their own wellbeing needs. A core focus of the planning group therefore was to ensure that those living locally who may be facing the biggest challenges were facilitated to attend. The event was highly successful with almost 200 community members, service users and staff in attendance, including a significant number of targeted community members including clients of addiction services; members of the Traveller community; people with disabilities; migrants; young people from local second chance education programmes and more.

Attendees had the opportunity to engage with over 20 interactive stands hosted by statutory and community services and to hear keynote speeches from Fr. Peter McVerry regarding community safety that focused on inclusion, collaboration and a united community. In addition, several hundred local children had the opportunity to interact with emergency services including the Fire Brigade; the Red Cross Ambulance Service; and Boyne River Rescue alongside An Garda Síochána mounted unit. A video of the event can be viewed [at this link](#).

The Drogheda Youth Officer, a post secured via an LMETB submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for a dedicated Youth Officer for the Drogheda area in response to the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan has been in post since September 2022 and has continued to work in partnership with key stakeholders to define and research the current youth specific requirements to be addressed generally and in particular for the Drogheda area. Further details on the activity of this Youth Officer are outlined under action 5.3.

In November 2023 the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup of Drogheda Implementation Board developed a proposal and secured funding from Drogheda Implementation Board to roll out a 'Enhancing Youth Mental Health Through Community Resilience' Project which will be focused on the Southside of Drogheda. Further information on this initiative is available under Action 5.5. The project will commence Q1 2024 and will leverage the new resource of the LLD Community House in Rathmullen as a base for activity delivery and community engagement.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Education and Community Development Officer in post	Complete	Louth Local Development
Recommendations made and actioned	Ongoing over the lifetime of the Board	Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup

<b>4.6</b>	<b>Generate an agreed strategic plan for the development of youth and community work and community leaders in Drogheda.</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Include appropriate actions in relation to the training and development of local youth and community workers in this strategic plan; and specifically, education, training and career progression routes, linked to pre-university and university-level programmes, as well as incorporating 'on-the-job' training elements</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>As noted in Progress Report to end June 2023 the Place Based Leadership Development Programme (PBLDP) completed in May 2023. An independent evaluation of the programme was shared at a meeting held in Citynorth Hotel and attended by Minister Joe O'Brien and participants from both Drogheda and Darndale in September 2023. €20,000 of seed funding has been allocated by the Department of Rural and Community Development to facilitate Drogheda participants in forming a cross sectoral network of residents, community organisations and statutory services to address social inclusion and enhance community wellbeing and efficacy. The aim is to empower the local community and community leaders to be responsive, proactive, informed and solution focused. The network has met 5 times since June with subgroups established to work on projects such as 'No Wrong Door'; the 'Young Leader Podcast' and the Drogheda Equity Book Club.</p> <p>The connection with PBLDP participants from Darndale continues with several members of the Drogheda Place Based Network attending an 'Advantaged Thinking' workshop offered by Northside Partnership. Advantaged thinking focuses on strengths and resources rather than deficits or circumstances to create space for people to flourish. Representatives from the Darndale group are also directly collaborating on the Young Leaders Podcast which will be released in 2024 and will showcase how young people can become leaders in their own community. The LLD SICAP Education and Community Development Officer (ECDO) who provides ongoing administrative support to the network has forged positive collaborative</p>	

links with the Northside Partnership team with site visits and other shared learning opportunities planned for 2024.

The SICAP Network of Services for Young People in Drogheda continued to develop in strength and capacity across 2023, supported by the LLD Youth and Education Coordinator and ECDO. In 2023 members identified a need for consistent, collective messaging regarding Youth Service provision in the town. Communications training was sourced by the LLD team with sessions delivered to representatives of 7 local organisations in September 2023. A number of subgroups were also established to deliver projects such as Youth Connect Fest – a major event being planned by the Network to showcase activities and supports for children and young people in the Drogheda area. This event will take place on the 27 January 2024.

Network members will come together in early 2024 to develop a workplan for the year, including the identification of training needs.

In 2023, 70 Drogheda based students received adult guidance supports from the SICAP LLD Education and Community Development team. Since June, 41 students in Drogheda have received funding supports of €15,315 under LLD's Third Level Access grants scheme. This followed a targeted approach from the LLD SICAP team involving collaboration with local youth services and training & employment programmes to encourage students from the Drogheda area to access these supports.

Footsteps Young Leaders group, an offshoot of the IFI funded Footsteps programme hosted by Connect Family Resource Centre, was established in 2023. The Footsteps Young Leaders group have been undertaking Foróige's Leadership for Life Programme over the past number of months and as part of this programme have been leading out on a number of local initiatives, including organising a Hallowe'en event in the Moneymore area to provide a safe space for children and families and to raise funds for the Moneymore Townland Community Hub. LLD's SICAP programme has also been providing capacity building supports to this group including offering training in establishing a local youth club, in collaboration with the LMETB Youth Officer.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Place Based Leadership Development Programme to commence	Complete	LLD/LCDC/DRCD
Completion of review of youth service provision in Drogheda	Complete	Subgroup B
Place Based Leadership participants to develop initiatives in response to youth and community issues	Ongoing	LLD/LCDC/DRCD

<b>4.8</b>	<b>Build on previous initiatives to increase community capacity for responding to violent critical incidents at local level.</b>
This Recommendation has been grouped with recommendation 2.11 above	

## 5. SPECIFIC SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

5	<p><b>5.1 Ensure that the good work initiated and under way recently, to coordinate child protection and welfare and other children's services, is maintained and further developed, specifically through the overarching strategic and service coordination proposals recommended above.</b></p> <p><b>5.2 An exercise has already been commenced, by LLP/CYPSC, to 'map' the services for children and young people in Drogheda. This valuable service 'audit' initiative, stalled because of Covid-19, should be re-started, prioritised and completed as a matter of urgency.</b></p> <p><b>5.3 Urgent consideration should also be given to how the various youth services could be more coordinated and supported.</b></p> <p><b>5.4 Ensure the completion of the review of Strengthening Families Programmes already provided and follow through as appropriate.</b></p> <p><b>5.5 There does appear to be certain gaps in some specific service provision for young people. These include mental health and suicide prevention, among others. Ensure these are prioritised in future planning and delivery.</b></p> <p><b>5.6 Recognising the importance of early intervention and preventative approaches in 'breaking the cycle', explore the delivery and expansion evidence based early intervention programmes in the Drogheda area</b></p>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p><b>5.1</b> Child protection and welfare services were included in mapping process undertaken through action 5.2 below. A Child and Family Support Network (CFSN) Coordinator is in post for South Drogheda. The CFSN membership consists of all the services in the area that support children and families – including community organisations, social workers, and schools. The CFSN Coordinator supports the network, which meets 5 times per year, and oversees the Meitheal process. Meitheal is a case coordination process for families who need multiagency intervention but do not meet the threshold for referral to the Social Work department. It is an early intervention, multiagency response tailored to the individual needs of the child or young person.</p> <p>Louth Parent Hub, an online interactive hub providing access to information on services and supports for families in Louth was launched on 5 December 2023. This website is managed by Louth Local Development's Louth ABC Programme team, was developed in partnership with Louth Meath Parenting Support Steering Group and funded by Tusla's Prevention Partnership &amp; Family Support Service and Louth Children &amp; Young Persons' Services Committee. The website can be <a href="#">accessed here</a>. Following a presentation by the Louth ABC Programme Manager</p>	

to the Drogheda Implementation Board Family Support subgroup all groups signing up for YouthConnect Fest (see action 5.3 below) were encouraged to register on the site.

**5.2** As noted in previous reports a comprehensive service audit process by the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup of the Drogheda Implementation Board (Subgroup B) was completed in July 2022. This is a 'live' document which continues to be used by the Subgroup to identify priorities and track delivery of interventions.

**5.3** Youth Officers play a crucial role supporting, developing and monitoring their local youth services. An LMETB submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for a dedicated Youth Officer for the Drogheda area in response to the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan, endorsed by the Board, was approved by DCEDIY and the post filled in September 2022. This post has been funded until Y/E 2023 and LMETB has applied to the DCEDIY (with the support of the DIB) to have this funding extended further.

UBU is a Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) funding scheme which provides local services for young people. As per the previous report, there are two LMETB-administered professional UBU Your Space Your Place schemes operating in Drogheda. The presence of a dedicated Youth Officer for Drogheda has led to greater, more detailed oversight of performance evaluation processes for all Drogheda area UBU funded organisations and the management of financial returns and drawdowns for these.

UBUs run on a three-year cycle and DCEDIY require ETBs to complete an Area Profile Needs Assessment and Service Requirement (APNASR) tool to facilitate the identification of service requirements for the new UBU funding Cycle 2. The Youth Officer's greater engagement with the town's UBU organisations fed into the APNASR process in early 2023 and the subsequent funding application process later in the year. As a result, LMETB have been successful in securing renewed funding for both Drogheda area UBU programmes until December 2026. This research process also identified North Drogheda as a clear area for the development of an additional UBU project. This was included in the APNASR submission endorsed by Drogheda Implementation Board. In addition to carrying out research for the APNASR tool, the Drogheda Youth Officer, in collaboration with the Drogheda Implementation Board Coordinator, hosted a number of consultations with young people in the town. This research activity facilitated the Drogheda Youth Officer in playing a major role in the writing of LMETB's Youth Work Plan 2023-2025. This Plan is scheduled to be launched in Drogheda Q1 2024.

The Drogheda Youth Officer is engaged with all major networks of services supporting young people in the area. The resulting networking and cooperative relationships have facilitated continued strategic planning to identify gaps in provision and connect youth organisations with information on any additional opportunities potentially available to enhance existing services.

The lack of local Youth Clubs in Drogheda has been identified both through the Subgroup Service Audit under 5.2 and the SICAP Network of Youth Services (see below). Local Youth

Clubs are universal access and provide a safe space for young people to connect with one another in their own area. The Drogheda Youth Officer has begun planning a new exercise in cooperation with LLD SICAP, Drogheda Youth Development and Drogheda Implementation Board to address gaps in universal provision where they arise in the Drogheda area. This process will initially involve consultation with local communities and engagement with affiliate organisations such as Youth Work Ireland and Foróige before beginning the process of application support for the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, which is administered by ETBs, and other available DCEDIY funding.

The Drogheda Youth Officer continues to explore other resourcing opportunities. For example being involved in research and stakeholder consultation in relation to Planet Youth, along with the rest of the LMETB Youth Services team.

The allocation of staffing resources by LLD to provide administrative supports to the SICAP Network of Services for Young People in Drogheda has facilitated this group taking on large scale collaborative projects such as Youth Connect Fest as outlined in Action 4.7. Funding provided by Louth Children and Young Persons' Services Committee (CYPSC) has also been instrumental in moving this project towards completion, along with a small allocation of funding from Drogheda Implementation Board. The Drogheda Implementation Board Coordinator and LMETB Youth Officers have also been very actively providing supports to the project.

**5.4** As discussed in previous Progress Reports, a review of the Strengthening Families programme was completed and considered by the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup. The programme is operating very well. This action is deemed to be closed.

**5.5** This action is aligned to the Service Audit outlined in action 5.2 above. The Subgroup's review of this audit identified that there continues to be a gap in counselling and mental health provision for young people in the Drogheda area. While this is impacting the town as a whole, some targeted specialist interventions had been provided through Connect Family Resource Centre (FRC) on the Northside of Drogheda. A particular gap on the Southside was therefore noted. On foot of this, funding was provided to Connect FRC to provide short-term, targeted counselling interventions for primary age children who have been impacted by trauma on the Southside of Drogheda. Connect FRC has been providing an outreach onsite counselling service to children in Marymount N.S, St. John's N.S. & St. Paul's N.S throughout 2023. Each school received 2 x 6 week blocks of counselling. The children received specialist counselling in a school setting which supported both the families and the child to access this service in a safe and familiar setting.

Resources were also provided through the Drogheda Implementation Board Small Grants Scheme to develop a Nurture room in Aston Village N.S. and specialist Therapeutic Play resources to pupils impacted by trauma in St. Bridget and St. Patrick's N.S. The Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup received funding to develop an 'Enhancing Youth Mental Health through Community Resilience' Project. This project is focused on the Southside of Drogheda and will continue into the first half of 2024.



The subgroup continue to pursue potential responses to the general gap in mental health services for young people and in Q2 2023 had the opportunity to meet with the Head of Service Mental Health in HSE CHO8 (Midlands Louth Meath) to get an insight into services currently available through the HSE and plans for the region.

The challenge of a lack of interventions for young people under the age of 16 in the Drogheda area who have, or may be at risk of, dropping out of school and potentially engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour was further noted by the subgroup. Two initiatives have been developed in response to this.

LMETB developed a proposal, in partnership with the Tusla Education Support Service and endorsed by the Drogheda Implementation Board for a pilot educational intervention programme for 12-15 years old in the Drogheda area, based in St. Oliver's Community College. LMETB are resourcing this intervention themselves with support from Tusla Education Support Service. This pilot programme, Forás, has been running since December 2022 with the support of an Education Welfare Officer, Home School Liaison service and the Holy Family School Completion Programme, working with young people at risk of not completing their Junior Cycle programme in St. Oliver's Community College. The initial pilot programme identified 12 students in year 2 and year 3, working intensively with 5 and monitoring the remaining 7 supporting them to continue to engage with school life. Following review all six year 3 students completed junior cycle examinations and progressed to Leaving Certificate programmes or Youthreach or work. The programme has identified the next cohort for the 2023-24 school year and works intensively with four students with 13 monitored. Two have refused to engage.

Foróige also submitted a successful application in 2022 to the Community Safety Innovation Fund for 'New Choices', for an individualised alternative learning programme for young people aged 10-16 who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of the school system in the Drogheda area. This proposal was developed in response to gaps identified by the Drogheda Young Person's Services Network; and the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education Subgroup Service Audit. The New Choices worker commenced in March 2023 and is based in bespoke, town centre offices to encourage engagement with young people and their families. Since the project commenced 30 referrals have been received from a variety of sources including Education welfare officers; family support services; parents; An Garda Síochána; youth diversion projects; home school liaison officers; and school principals/teachers. The project has seen 10 young people successfully return to education. These 10 young people have not only accessed educational opportunities but have also demonstrated the development of skills and increased confidence. The New Choices programme is operating at maximum capacity and has a waiting list for places.

## 5.6

Members of the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup identified that early intervention is *the* key preventative strategy in relation to addressing the causal factors that led to the commissioning of the Drogheda Report. They further identified that while a number of actions are relevant to this (for example Action 2.13) no single action

specifically places a core emphasis and focus on this. A working group of the subgroup was established and wording for a new action developed. A recommendation was made for the inclusion of a new action and prioritisation of early intervention approaches by the Subgroup to the Board with a presentation by members of this working group. This submission was ratified by the Board at their March meeting.

Since the ratification of this action, a number of interventions have been delivered including the resourcing of a Nurture Room in Aston Village N.S. through the Drogheda Implementation Board small grants scheme; allocation of funding by Tusla for the post of Family Support Worker in The Red Door Project; and the piloting of the Early Talk Boost speech and language intervention in St. John's National School in Rathmullen by Louth Local Development's ABC Programme. A number of other potential interventions are being explored by the subgroup.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Complete updated review of children and young persons' services in Drogheda	Complete	Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup
Recommendations made and actioned	Ongoing over the lifetime of the Board	Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup

## 6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1	<p>Due to the unique position and situation obtaining in St. Brigid's and St. Patrick's NS, St. Joseph's CBS, and Presentation NS, an increase in DEIS status – from Band 2 to 1 – should be granted to the three schools immediately, at least on an interim emergency basis, at a minimum until (a) the passing of the worst impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and (b) improvement in the overall crime and related social situation in Drogheda, and (c) completion of any formal update review by the Department of Education. Alternatively, or at least pending the outcome of any DEIS review, it is recommended that at a minimum some alternative way to provide equivalent additional supports to these schools and their students should be found and implemented, to address the needs identified.</p>						
<b>Current Status</b>							
<p>Following the publication of the Drogheda Scoping Report, the Department of Education met with the three schools involved and explored options to provide additional support. It was explained to the schools that at the time, a reclassification of the schools from DEIS Urban Band 2 to DEIS Urban Band 1 was not possible as work on the DEIS identification process was still ongoing.</p> <p>Following a review of the schools' teacher allocation and engagement with the National Educational Psychological Service, the Department of Education Inspectorate, Tusla Education Support Service and with the agreement of the three schools, as an interim measure, the Department allocated an additional two concessionary posts to each of the schools involved for the 2021/2022 academic year.</p> <p>The extension of the DEIS programme was completed by the Department of Education in late June 2022. The named schools were not identified as having met the criteria for inclusion under the refined DEIS identification model. The Department of Education allocated additional supports to the schools for a fixed term of 5 years in order to support the implementation of evidence-based programmes and initiatives. These programmes will build school capacity to respond to the needs of their students in relation to the issues outlined in the Scoping Report into Community Safety and Wellbeing in Drogheda. The additional resources include additional teaching posts across the three schools which will meet the recommendations set out in this action. This allocation is separate from the DEIS programme and is in response to issues raised in the Report and specifically in response to this action in the Implementation Plan.</p> <p>A case study on the impact of these interventions for the three schools in question was completed in January 2023 and can be <a href="#">viewed here</a>.</p>							
<i>Next Steps</i>							
Allocation of additional resources for evidence based programmes to named schools	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Timeline</i></th><th><i>Responsible Body</i></th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Complete</td><td>Dept of Education</td></tr> <tr> <td>Complete</td><td>Dept of Education</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>	Complete	Dept of Education	Complete	Dept of Education
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<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>						
Complete	Dept of Education						

6.2	Explore the potential for more apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programmes in Drogheda, and specifically through DIFE.	
Current status		
<p>On 19 April 2021 the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Minister of State for Skills and Further Education launched a five-year Action Plan for Apprenticeship. The Action Plan sets out a five-year strategy to deliver on the Programme for Government commitment of reaching 10,000 new apprentice registrations per year by 2025. The plan provides a roadmap to a single apprenticeship system and new supports for employers and apprentices.</p> <p>In 2022 LMETB made a successful submission to SOLAS to deliver a large-scale electrical apprenticeship hub in Drogheda which will bring over 360 apprentice training places per annum to the town in addition to up to 20 permanent jobs. A large premises on the southside of Drogheda was secured by LMETB for the purpose of delivering these apprentice training places. The first cohort of apprentices commenced in the new Drogheda College on 10 July 2023.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here</a> to view LMETB Chief Executive, Martin O’Brien speak about this new Apprentice Training provision in Drogheda.</p> <p>In April 2023 LMETB secured approval to deliver a Dental Nurse Traineeship in Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE).</p> <p>The Business, Enterprise and Employment subgroup of the Drogheda Implementation Board are exploring linkages with employers for other vocational training opportunities such as traineeships and apprenticeships to be delivered in DIFE.</p>		
	Next Steps	TimelineResponsible Body
	Action Plan for Apprenticeship to be implemented and delivered in the Drogheda area	CompleteD/FHERIS
	Drogheda Apprentice Training Centre to commence intake of apprentices	CompleteLMETB

6.3	Explore the potential for implementing an ‘Operation Encompass’ approach as part of the responding to domestic abuse and domestic violence incidents.
Current Status	
The Operation Encompass Programme, as it operates in the UK, involves the police sharing information with a child’s school where there has been a domestic incident at the child’s home the previous day. A member of staff in the school then ensures that the child is given the appropriate support during the school day.	

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) has convened an Inter-Departmental Group to explore the feasibility of the introduction of a similar programme in Ireland. Discussions have been primarily around the applicability of Operation Encompass in this jurisdiction. Ireland has a different administrative landscape to the UK, including the existence of a dedicated child and family agency. The Department of Justice, Department of Education and DCEDIY have received, and are now giving in-depth consideration to legal advice on the applicability of Operation Encompass in this jurisdiction.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Inter-Departmental Group to report on feasibility of the introduction of a programme similar to Operation Encompass. Legal advice has been obtained and requires in-depth consideration before taking the issue further.	Ongoing	DCEDIY/DE/AGS/Tusla

<b>6.4</b>	<b>Explore the potential for locating a ‘branch’ of a Higher Education Institute (HEI) in Drogheda, and also for the development of third level ‘feeder’ programmes – particularly those related to vocational and professional education and training – operating in Drogheda.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The successful application by LMETB for capital investment from SOLAS to develop a tertiary education facility on the Drogheda Institute of Education (DIFE) campus (noted under action 4.4) will greatly enhance capacity to delivery third level programmes in Drogheda through potential providers, both domestic and international. <a href="#">Click here</a> to view Davy McDonnell, Principal of DIFE speak about the tertiary education block.</p> <p>LMETB continue to seek further opportunities to develop Tertiary provision. Drogheda Institute of Further Education, the largest provider of Further Education and Training (FET) in the North East Region, is at the forefront of facilitating improved participation and progression of FET Students to Higher Education. A number of engagements took place across 2022 and 2023 between senior LMETB management and interested Third Level providers. On 3July 2023, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Dublin City University (DCU) and LMETB was signed in DIFE by Daire Keogh, President of DCU and Martin O’Brien, Chief Executive of LMETB. This partnership will expand pathways to University for graduates of DIFE in specific discipline areas and opens opportunities to pilot DCU courses within DIFE.</p> <p>Following the signing of the MOU a Memorandum of Association (MOA) was signed on the 5 September 2023 allowing 12 places at DCU’s School of Nursing to be ringfenced for nursing studies graduates from DIFE. The five-year Agreement will benefit students who graduate from DIFE’s pre–university nursing studies course beginning with the class of 2023/24, subject to certain criteria being met. Further MOA’s are being developed which if completed</p>	

will mean reserved places for DIFE students in DCU Law, Education, Science and Business programmes.

DIFE launched 10 new full-time courses in November 2022, with a critical part of the development being engagement with local industry to facilitate collaboration, networking and employer linkages for integrated work placements. DIFE also seeks to provide innovative new routes to employment opportunities through strategic partnerships with industry. In April 2023, their innovative Amazon Web Services Data Technician programme was shortlisted for 'Best Industry Academic Collaboration' Education Award, while the College received the 'Best Provider of Further Education in Ireland' award for the third time.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Next Steps</i>
Explore the potential to deliver a cluster of programmes within the DIFE campus through domestic and international 3 <sup>rd</sup> level providers	Work is progressing and will be ongoing for the duration of the Plan	LMETB
New flexible multi-purpose built tertiary facility to be developed through the capital programme to extend capacity at the Drogheda Institute for Further Education	Ongoing – project at detailed design	D/FHERIS

<b>6.5</b>	<b>Continue to develop training in and application of Restorative Practice aimed at dealing with conflict and addressing issues such as school suspensions, expulsions and refusals.</b>
<p>On reviewing this action in the context of the Scoping Report into Community Safety and Wellbeing the Family Support, Children, Young People and Education subgroup of the Board identified that restorative approaches and practice go beyond the school setting and hosted an event “Building a Restorative community through a Trauma Informed Approach” in Q3 2022 in partnership with Louth Local Development to build community capacity and awareness of this. As a first step towards building a restorative/resilient community members of Louth Local Development’s ABC Team completed a Train the Trainer programme in Restorative Practice in Q2 2023.</p> <p>The team commenced delivering training in Q4 2023 to a mix of community organisations and key statutory partners in Q4 2023. Examples of topics covered in the training include; Aims &amp; benefits of RP, RP Values, toolkit &amp; pyramid of Restorative Responses, Building relationships, RP as a Trauma-Informed Approach, Shame &amp; Vulnerability. They commenced recruitment of their second and third programme delivery in December 2023 with all spaces taken up and a waiting list in place.</p> <p>Dundalk Education Support Centre (ESC) had an introduction meeting for all the schools in November 2021, hosted by a former Director of Sligo ESC. Dundalk ESC had contacted all the schools identified by the Department in an effort to form a cluster for the Restorative Practice training. Unfortunately, only one school principal was available to attend the training- all the</p>	

other principals asked were under too much time pressure to take part in the training. As such, due to the lack of uptake, the Restorative Practice cluster did not come to pass.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Department of Education to continue to develop training in and application of restorative practices aimed at dealing with conflict and addressing issues such as school suspensions, expulsions and refusals. The Department of Education will follow up with the schools and with Dundalk ESC in relation to this training.	Ongoing	D/Education
Explore the development and delivery of a restorative community approach in Drogheda	Ongoing (Previous timeline 2023)	Drogheda Implementation Board

## 7. ARTS, CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION

7.1	Develop a strategic plan for the development of opportunities in the arts, culture and sports in the Drogheda area, specifically those aimed at and involving young people.		
Current Status			
<p>Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026 was published in December 2022. The Plan includes strategic priorities and actions regarding community arts engagement and a specific focus to bring more inclusivity, diversity and equality by reaching marginalised groups and those living in areas of disadvantage.</p> <p>Louth and Meath Cultural and Creative teams are once again collaborating on a targeted Cruinniú na nÓg programme in the Drogheda/East Meath area; elements of which will be delivered by the Droichead Arts Centre. A number of collaborative project concepts generated at the Drogheda Implementation Board hosted ‘Commencing the Conversation’ event – which brought representatives of the Arts sector together with community organisations to develop responses to the Drogheda Report and Implementation Plan – were delivered in 2023. These include <a href="#">‘Pride and Picturesque’</a>; <a href="#">Sounds Like Summer</a>; and <a href="#">Songs &amp; Strings Across the Boyne</a>. All of these projects sought to engage young people in arts/cultural activity that they may not ordinarily get the opportunity to engage in. A similar project idea generation event is planned for Q1 2024.</p> <p>Louth and Meath Local Sports Partnerships support clubs in developing opportunities in Drogheda and East Meath in a variety of other ways including distribution of grants; training supports; facilities supports; delivering women in sports leadership programmes; and specific initiatives focusing on particular sporting activity. Louth and Meath Sports Partnerships, supported by Drogheda Implementation Board, developed a collaborative proposal to deliver sport related actions in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan. If successful this project proposal – Driving Change Through Sport – would include carrying out a needs analysis with the community and the development of a plan in response to those needs.</p> <p>Drogheda Implementation Board hosted an event in Drogheda Institute of Further Education in October 2023 for sports clubs from both Drogheda and the immediate East Meath area. The event was an opportunity for clubs from different sporting codes to connect with one another, look at the actions in the Drogheda Report Implementation Plan and to come up with ideas to respond to those actions. It was attended by almost 50 representatives of 32 clubs across 15 sporting codes. The event was opened by Minister for Sport and Physical Activity, Thomas Byrne, TD., followed by a ‘fireside chat’ with Davy Fitzgerald. Attendees were then engaged in an interactive workshop to look at what resources are in the area, what is missing and to generate ideas for new initiatives. A report has been produced to capture the ideas shared on the day and is <a href="#">available to view here</a>.</p>			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Completion and confirmation of County Arts		Complete	Louth County Council



Development Plan		
Delivery of Creative Ireland Projects (2022/2023)	Complete	Louth Arts Office
Completion of Crinniú na nÓg 2022 Programme	Complete	Louth Arts Office
Delivery of a Crinniú na nÓg 2023 Drogheda/East Meath Programme	Complete	Louth Arts Office
Delivery of Projects identified during the Commencing the Conversation Event	Complete	Louth and Meath Arts Offices; Drogheda Implementation Board; Community Partners

7.2	Explore opportunities for developing a centre of sporting excellence in Drogheda.	
Current Status		
<p>Subgroup D of the Drogheda Implementation Board, Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport, has been assigned responsibility for this action.</p> <p>Louth and Meath Local Sports Partnership (LSP) Coordinators, as members of Subgroup D, have developed a collaborative proposal, ‘Driving Change Through Sport’ to deliver on sporting actions within this Plan. Following a series of engagements, the project was endorsed by Drogheda Implementation Board in March 2023.</p> <p>During Quarters 3 &amp; 4 of 2023, the Head of Sport for Louth LSP and the Chief Executive of Meath LSP met with both the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Sport and Physical Education to progress the “Driving Change through Sport” project. As a result, officials in the Department of Sport requested Sport Ireland to assess potential funding possibilities in response to “Driving Change through Sport.” Sport Ireland expect to conclude its assessment in mid-2024.</p>		
Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body
Explore funding opportunities to deliver the ‘Driving Change through Sport’ proposal	2023 (Overdue)	Louth and Meath Sports Partnerships/Drogheda Implementation Board/High Level Oversight Group

7.3	<b>Explore potential for increased use of the Boyne river, the sea and other local amenities that could lend themselves to development of different sporting disciplines and opportunities.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p><b>Boyne River</b></p> <p>Louth County Council in partnership with Fáilte Ireland have been exploring the potential development of a concept(s) for an ‘attraction of scale’ focused on the Boyne River and using the river as a tourism asset for Drogheda and the Boyne Valley Drive. Following market/consumer testing and refinement of the concepts, two concepts progressed to feasibility study stage. The Boyne River is central to these considerations both in terms of how and where such an attraction would be located adjacent to the Boyne, and how tourism related experiences emerging from the project can use the Boyne as a tourism asset.</p> <p>A review of concept feasibility studies by Fáilte Ireland and Louth County Council is complete. This determined that the proposed concepts were not viable given the estimated costs. Louth County Council &amp; Fáilte Ireland will continue to examine how best to maximize the tourism opportunity for Drogheda as a destination town &amp; gateway to the wider Boyne Valley destination. Work is underway to scope out the opportunities in this regard and develop a roadmap to achieve this.</p> <p>The Development of the Irish Sea Way is an element of the current Programme for Government, with Fáilte Ireland having commenced initial scoping work on the possibility of developing this initiative as a cycle route.</p> <p>There has not been any budget or resource provided to develop an Irish Sea Way. However, Fáilte Ireland are working actively with the Department of Transport and local authorities across Ireland's Ancient East to develop a connected network of visitor facing greenways, with the ambition of connecting Cork to Dublin and on to Carlingford. Sections of this are at various stages of development, with the Carlingford Lough Greenway now being developed back to the border, connecting north through Newry to Lough Neagh, and Dundalk Bay to Carlingford Greenway is currently in the initial concept &amp; feasibility stage of development, funded by TII. The first public consultation for the Dundalk Bay to Carlingford Greenway project took place in Dec 2023. Boyne Valley Greenway from Drogheda to Oldbridge House section is complete, and at preferred route stage from Oldbridge House to Trim. (See below Boyne Greenway and Navigation Restoration detail)</p> <p>Louth Local Sports Partnership has also engaged with clubs on the river to seek opportunities for participation programmes.</p> <p><b>Boyne Valley Drive</b></p> <p>Fáilte Ireland is currently delivering a project to ‘reimagine’ the Boyne Valley Drive. The Boyne Valley Drive will be re-imagined from a point to point journey between some of Ireland’s most important and compelling heritage sites, to a wider immersive visitor proposition that will become a 5000 year journey through time. The project will focus on the</p>	

development of 14 product/geographic clusters, 4 infrastructure initiatives & 5 key industry clusters across the Boyne Valley.

An Invitation to Tender has been issued to develop concept designs into works packages with statutory approvals in place and ready for tender. This includes public travel arrival experience development, wayfinding and trail development in Drogheda and experience development at nearby Baltray & King Williams Glen, Townley Hall.

Drogheda is a key touch point on the Drive and is one of 5 entry points being developed as an industry hub. Linked to this there are 2 further industry clusters being developed along the coast from Annagassan to the mouth of the Boyne and on the southern side from Julianstown to the mouth of the Boyne. In addition, there are a further 3 industry clusters in development west of Drogheda along the Drive to Slane. Together these clusters will result in new experiences that will utilise the sea, coastline and river as tourism assets for Drogheda & the Boyne Valley. Drogheda Business Improvement District lead the collective industry cluster grouping in Drogheda and surrounding catchment.

An action plan for the wider Drogheda catchment Cluster has been completed and is currently being activated. The development of a food trail and evening economy initiatives are central to this.

#### **Boyne Greenway and Navigation Restoration**

Significant progression has been made in this period in relation to this project. In December 2023, Meath County Council published details of the Emerging Preferred Route for the proposed Greenway Scheme. It also simultaneously published the feasibility study for the proposed Navigation Restoration Scheme. The latter study found that the restoration of the canal would be a significant challenge but that it was both technically possible and potentially financially viable. The feasibility study estimated the cost of the restoration at €92M and set out the scale and nature of work required.

However, the feasibility study concluded that the further development, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the scheme would require a competent corporate body with particular expertise to manage the further stages of its delivery beyond the feasibility stage. Meath County Council has considered the findings set out in the feasibility report and concluded that it does not possess the attributes of such a competent authority.

Notwithstanding this, the Council remains fully supportive of the project and is keen to explore ways to restore the canal and look for partners to help further this aim. Therefore, it is now proposed that both projects will proceed as separate stand-alone projects for the purposes of the preliminary design, planning, environmental and implementation phases. A non-statutory public consultation is currently underway and views from the public and interested parties on the proposals are being sought.

In September 2023, An Bord Pleanála refused permission for the proposed greenway between Drogheda and Mornington. Meath County Council have considered the reasons for refusal and, following publication of the National Cycle Network Plan by the Department of Transport, now intend to discuss the next steps with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

**Boyne Valley Trails** is a Drogheda based voluntary group supported by Boyne Valley Walking. Working in partnership with LOVEDROGHEDA Business Improvement District they have developed a series of walking routes and tours, including the Boyne Valley Camino & Boyne Valley Walking festival, to avail of the natural, cultural and heritage landscape in Drogheda and its' vicinity.

The Boyne Valley Camino trail, a self-guided, 25km loop walk from Drogheda was completed in Q2 2023 with signage and waymarking resourced through financial support provided by Louth County Council via the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and tourism funding. Boyne Valley Trails has also received funding of €45,000 across 3 years (2023-2025) from Fáilte Ireland to further develop the Boyne Valley Walking festival as an attractor to Drogheda and the Boyne Valley.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Fáilte Ireland project to "reimagine" Boyne Valley Drive project report to be rolled out	Ongoing	DTCAGSM/ Fáilte Ireland
Progress Greenway Route Option Report	Complete	Meath County Council
Receipt of Draft Navigation Restoration Feasibility Report	Complete	Meath County Council
Baseline and Targeted Ecological Surveys	Ongoing	Meath County Council
Non-Statutory Public Consultation in relation to the Emerging Preferred Greenway Route	Q1 2024	Meath County Council
Non-Statutory Public Consultation in relation to the feasibility of the Navigation Restoration	Q1 2024	Meath County Council
Prepare Preliminary Design and Environmental Reports for Planning for the Greenway	Q4 2025	Meath County Council
Develop a plan to create an innovative interpretative walk between Drogheda and the Battle of the Boyne site along the existing Greenway by the Boyne	Ongoing	Meath County Council
Review the feasibility of incorporating a Greenway into a coastal defence project in Drogheda. A further update will be provided in the next progress report.	2022 (Overdue)	Louth County Council

<b>7.4</b>	<b>Explore the possibility of making the Drogheda Leisure Park available to the public as a community facility in the Drogheda area.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
Drogheda Leisure Park is a premises on the Southside of Drogheda currently owned by a private consortium. Drogheda Implementation Board Chair and Coordinator met with members of this consortium and it is not within the scope of the Drogheda Implementation Board to bring this building into use as a community facility at this time.	

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Review Drogheda Leisure Park premises	Ongoing	Drogheda Implementation Board

7.5	Consider ways in which local sporting and cultural role models can be identified and employed in initiatives in engaging young people in particular in healthy and prosocial activities and implement as appropriate.							
<p>The Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport Subgroup of the Drogheda Implementation Board has been assigned responsibility for this action. A working group was established to review this action consisting of subgroup members and others with expertise including the Director of Droichead Arts Centre and the Drogheda Youth Officer. The group collaboratively explored the above action in detail, including engaging directly with young people regarding their perceptions of role models. They identified that a peer led, locally focused model with coordination support and sustainability built in, is the best fit for the need in Drogheda. The Driving Change through Sport proposal, noted in both Action 7.1 and 7.2 includes the creation and supporting of role models as a priority action. The working group noted that this proposal, which includes coordination supports, could serve as the delivery vehicle for such a peer led, locally focused programme model.</p> <p>Programmes such as the Award in Sports Leadership Programme for 13-17 year olds have the potential to develop in-community peer role models who may encourage others to engage in healthy prosocial activities. Louth Local Sports Partnership delivered this programme in Drogheda Institute of Further Education in August 2023 with further programmes planned for April and August 2024.</p> <p>Louth and Meath Library services and Arts Offices continue to explore potential cultural role models that targeted youth can engage with. For example, the Fighting Words project delivered in 2022 and 2023 by Drogheda Library in collaboration with the An Garda Síochána Junior Liaison Officer, Boyne Youth Diversion Project and Boomerang Youth Centre and Café. This project facilitated young people telling their own stories through a variety of media. An animated film of their stories was produced and shown in the Droichead Arts Centre at which a number of participants stood up on stage in front of their peers. Some of these participants also spoke at the National Youth Diversion Project Conference in Croke Park in November 2023. Projects such as this utilise cultural activity to facilitate young people growing into the role of peer leader in their own communities and beyond.</p>								
<table><tr><td>Next Steps</td><td>Timeline</td><td>Responsible Body</td></tr><tr><td>Identify appropriate role models</td><td>Ongoing</td><td>Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport Subgroup</td></tr></table>			Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body	Identify appropriate role models	Ongoing	Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport Subgroup
Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body						
Identify appropriate role models	Ongoing	Area/Community Development, Arts, Culture and Sport Subgroup						

7.6	Explore ways in which existing facilities in Drogheda (e.g. Lourdes Stadium, or DIFE – as described above) can be used to maximize their potential for the benefit of the local community.	
Current Status		
<p>The Lourdes Stadium has been physically upgraded and a new staffing structure put in place to ensure maximum use. The Louth County Council Sports Facilities Team were successful in early 2022 in securing over €100,000 from Sports Capital Funding to increase capacity in Lourdes Stadium to include a new storage area, outdoor fitness area, conversion of old storage area to new multipurpose room and additional accessible toilets. These capital works will allow further increased usage and the capacity to cater to different groups and training opportunities at the facility. Design lead and construction contractor have been appointed to this project and commenced in Q3 2023.</p>		
<p>The My Open Library service commenced in Drogheda in July 2022 and offers a democratic community space to all members of the community at times best suited to the user, making the library available to the public 14 hours a day, 365 days a year.</p>		
<p>The Lourdes Community and Recreation Centre, based in Yellowbatter on the Northside of Drogheda and in close proximity to a number of established and new social housing developments, had been closed to the public since the start of COVID. Drogheda Implementation Board, LMETB and Louth County Council carried out refurbishment works to bring this facility back into community use. LMETB committed to taking the building under licence until September 2023 to facilitate access by local community organisations. The Drogheda Branch of the Irish Red Cross has now taken over this facility in the long term and is actively using and making the premises available for use by a wide variety of community based organisations.</p>		
<p>As noted in action 7.2 a ‘Driving Change Through Sport’ proposal was developed by Louth and Meath Local Sports Partnerships. This proposed project would include working alongside local authority sports facility teams and other community resources to maximise community engagement with same.</p>		
<p>As outlined in Action 4.4 a design team has been appointed to submission by LMETB for the phased development of a sports and community changing/meeting block at Drogheda Institute of Further Education (DIFE) was successful and a design team has been appointed to this project.</p>		
Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body
Procurement of design lead and construction contractor to progress the improvement of facilities at Lourdes Stadium	Complete	Louth County Council
Reopen Lourdes Community and Recreation Centre for community use	Complete	LMETB
Explore funding opportunities to deliver the ‘Driving Change through Sport’ proposal	2023 (Overdue)	Louth and Meath Sports Partnerships/Drogheda

		Implementation Board/High Level Oversight Group
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## 8. LOCAL AUTHORITY ORGANISATION AND SERVICES

8.1	While central Government/Departmental oversight of the present proposals is recommended, the two Local Authorities (Louth and Meath), as well as other bodies under their auspices (such as LLP) to continue their important local coordination work and responsibilities.	
Current Status		
<p>Louth County Council and Meath County Council cooperate and work together over a wide range of services including Fire, Planning, Roads, Libraries and Tourism, and have developed a number of joint strategies.</p> <p>A series of joint meetings of Drogheda and East Municipal districts have been held to brief members on what is happening in relation to the activities of both local authorities in their area. Items discussed included tourism, proposed projects and works for the area of Drogheda and East Meath, Local Area Plans, Environmental Awareness Coordination, and Garda cross boundary responsibilities and activities. While not part of the statutory local area planning process, they are an opportunity to share local coordination work across Louth and Meath county boundaries.</p> <p>The joint Boyne Valley Tourism Strategy 2016 -2020 has been fully completed with an interim plan in place during Covid. Consultation on the development of a new joint 2023-2027 Tourism strategy to guide the future development and growth of tourism across the Boyne Valley was completed in 2023 with document completion anticipated for Q2 2024.</p> <p>An annual tourism plan 2024 is being implemented on a joint basis between Meath and Louth County Councils, to include press visits which will result in coverage on Drogheda in key national publications, creation of Drogheda specific content on <a href="https://discoverboynevalley.ie">discoverboynevalley.ie</a>, marketing campaigns, promotional shows and social media to attract visitors to Drogheda. A 2 day visit of tour operators of Drogheda and the Boyne Valley is being coordinated for Q1 2024. Ongoing work on the Drogheda Cluster with Drogheda Bids will be undertaken throughout 2024.</p>		
	Next Steps	Timeline
	Continuation of joint meetings of elected representatives with briefings from senior local authority staff and exchange of information	Ongoing
	Meath and Louth Local Authorities to develop a new Tourism Strategy for the Boyne Valley 2023-2027	2024
	Implement joint Annual Marketing Plan for the Boyne Valley	2024
		Responsible Body
		Louth County Council/Meath County Council
		Meath County Council/Louth County Council
		Meath County Council/Louth County Council



8.2	As a matter of urgency and priority, Louth and Meath County Councils to agree an appropriate mechanism or ‘vehicle’ for the generation, agreement and implementation of a joint local development plan for Drogheda Town in its entirety, and including the appropriate area of East Meath, particularly the Laytown-Bettystown area of County Meath.		
Current Status			
<p>Working Group and Steering Group meetings have been ongoing for some time between Meath County Council Executive and Louth County Council Executive on background work in relation to the Drogheda Local Area Plan. The Louth County Council Executive developed a Draft Strategic Issues Paper in Q4 2022, which was shared with Meath County Council Executive. A Pre-Draft Issues Paper is due for publication on 31 January 2024. A joint public consultation is due to take place in relation to this document. Once the consultation has closed work will commence on drafting a joint Drogheda Local Area Plan with a view to having this completed by Q1 of 2025. Timelines and completion date for the statutory process may be impacted by a number of factors including with regard to submissions received on the statutory draft plan and whether any material amendments are required.</p> <p>With regard to the preparation of a Drogheda Joint Urban Area Plan, Meath County Council has considered the implications of a Judicial Review judgement in the south Drogheda environs and has included a variation to the Meath County Development Plan in its work programme. This work is ongoing and scheduled to be completed in Q3 of 2024.</p>			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Variation of Meath County Development Plan for Drogheda environs		Q3 2024	Meath County Council
Louth and Meath Local Authorities to develop a Local Area Plan for Drogheda		2024-2025	Louth Local Authority/Meath Local Authority

8.3	LCC to consider ways to ensure greater Council presence, visibility and engagement in Drogheda.
Current Status	
<p>Works will conclude on the renovation of the former Community Services Building attached to the Fair Street, Council Offices. This will see the re-opening of the original Council Chamber and therefore it will return to being the centre of local democracy in the town of Drogheda. The building will now also provide a significant new exhibition space for events.</p> <p>Considerable other visible public realm works have been completed in the town centre during 2023, including the refurbishment of the pedestrian Dominic’s and de Lacy Bridges and the public realm development on Saint Peter's Hill occupying an elevated site overlooking the town of Drogheda and across to the tower at Millmount on the far side of the River Boyne.</p> <p>The West Gate Vision Planning Application was lodged with An Bord Pleanala in Q4 2023. This will provide a Council led master plan for that part of the Town.</p>	

Arising from urgent repair works that were necessary on the Tholsel, advantage will be taken to restore the façade of that building which has always been a focal point of the town.		
<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Construction / reconstruction of Louth County Council Offices to commence	Complete	Louth County Council
Construction / reconstruction of Louth County Council Offices in Drogheda	Q 2 2024	Louth County Council

8.4	Local Authority to consider and decide on an effective way of responding to and managing anti-social behaviour by its tenants and others as appropriate.		
Current Status			
Louth County Council Estate Management team continues to offer services to the housing tenants in Drogheda. The Estate Management Team work collaboratively with An Garda Síochána to manage what can be a challenging environment regarding ASB challenges and matters relating to dumping and illegal burning of refuse.			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
The work of the Estate Management team to continue.		Ongoing	Louth County Council

8.5	Local Authority also to put in place effective ways of responding to estate management issues that can assist in addressing anti-social behaviour (e.g., closing off alleyways, cutting back or removing hedging, installing lighting or speed ramps on roads etc).		
Current Status			
The Council deploy significant resources to address these matters some of which are resulting from original design weakness. The Council will continue to consider all options and mitigations to address such matters.			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Continue the progression of infill housing and other mitigations		Ongoing	Louth County Council

8.6	Local Authority to explore and implement appropriate ways of speeding up implementation of the policy and practice of dealing with social housing ‘voids.’
Current Status	
Rolling void units are a feature of managing a stock more than 4000 social housing units in the County. Most long-term voids are now returned to service and plans to secure funding and address the remaining void stock is an objective of the Housing Section of LCC.	

An energy retrofit programme is also currently underway which commenced with OPD units, many of which were completed in Drogheda including in Moneymore and Georges Street.		
<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
58 void units returned to use, a further 25 units to be improved under the energy retrofit scheme in order to eliminate voids backlog in Drogheda area	Complete	Louth County Council
Continue to manage the vacant housing stock and expedite the Energy retrofit scheme	Ongoing	Louth County Council

8.7	Louth County Council to engage as a matter of urgency with residents of Moneymore and Castlemanor (and any other stakeholders as appropriate), with a view to closing off the offending ‘gap’ and taking other measures arising; or else finding a mutually acceptable and reasonable resolution to this issue.	
Current Status		
Louth County Council have engaged with residents of both Moneymore and Castlemanor in relation to this matter. It has now been agreed that this “gap” provides an excellent Active Travel Route and plans and specifications have now been drawn up to permanently and securely open this route. This project will have provision for CCTV oversight along with natural passive surveillance but more importantly will provide a safe route to school for children in the locality.		
Next Steps	Timeline	Responsible Body
Alternative routes and options to be explored	Complete	Louth County Council
Commence works to regularise access	2024 (Previously Q4 2023)	Louth County Council

## 9. LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ASSETS

9.1	Local Authority to clarify, for the relevant governance and oversight bodies, the potential value and specific contribution that the PANCR and other similar strategic local developments can add to the combined efforts at improving community wellbeing in Drogheda.	
Current Status		
<p>The construction of the Port Access Northern Cross Route has been a strategic objective of Louth County Council for over 20 years. Louth County Council continues to prioritise the delivery of Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR) and recognise that the construction of the road and associated infrastructure is one of the key requirements to ensure Drogheda develops to its full potential in a sustainable manner. Louth County Council notes that this critical piece of infrastructure, once delivered, will bring benefits that include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Opening up new areas for housing construction (circa 6000 units) in North Drogheda</li><li>2. Opening up a direct route from the M1 Motorway to the port removing vast numbers of HGVs from the North Quay Drogheda</li><li>3. Allowing the construction of new housing/office and retail spaces in the port area of the town.</li><li>4. Greatly improve the quality of life for Drogheda residents, workers and visitors to the town.</li></ol> <p>Works are well advanced and the first phase of these works will be opened in Quarter 1 2024.</p>		
Next Steps		Timeline
Phase 1 to be opened.		Q1 2024
Phase 2 to be commenced		Q3 2024
		Responsible Body
		Louth County Council
		Louth County Council

9.2	<b>Local Authority (and others as appropriate) progress the West Gate Vision plan for Drogheda Town centre</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>Using funding secured under the first round of Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF), Louth County Council carried out a public consultation process for the development of the master plan for the Westgate Vision. The Westgate Vision Consultation Report was published in March 2022 and is available to view here <a href="https://www.westgatevision.ie/downloads/westgate-consultation-survey-report.pdf">https://www.westgatevision.ie/downloads/westgate-consultation-survey-report.pdf</a> .</p> <p>A public realm team is in place to manage this project and a design team has been procured to progress the plan. Designs were completed in Q3 2022 and presented to elected members of Louth County Council. The public realm team worked very closely with the design consultants on a full review of the planning pack including EIAR, AA Stage 2 Reports and</p>	

drawings with a submission lodged to An Bord Pleanála Q4 2023. A further application will be submitted to the Urban Regeneration Development Fund.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Louth County Council to make an application for the first phase public realm redevelopment in the next round of the Urban Regeneration Development Fund.	Ongoing	Louth County Council

<b>9.3</b>	<b>Local Authority clarify what the ‘Destination Town’ designation can bring to Drogheda, and how this can be progressed accordingly</b>
<b>9.4</b>	<b>As part of this, enhance the visitor servicing provision in the town.</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p><b>9.3</b> Drogheda has been identified as a Tourism Destination Town by Louth County Council and has received €500,000 support from Fáilte Ireland for development in this regard. The Fáilte Ireland guidelines for Destination Towns set out the key drivers of what makes a town appealing to the international tourist. Drogheda’s designation as a Destination Town is recognition by Fáilte Ireland in terms of the town’s enormous potential as a key destination for tourists in the future. As outlined in action 7.3 work is ongoing on identifying what an attraction of scale might look like in Drogheda.</p> <p>An Access &amp; Orientation Plan was developed for Drogheda as an initial stage of the Destination Town plan. This was underpinned by the objectives of ‘Linking the Heritage Assets’ in Drogheda’s historic core. The Plan was brought to Part 8 completion by Louth County Council in January 2020. It includes a wayfinding system which is more easily understood by visitors as well as a visitor Signage &amp; Orientation Plan for Drogheda. Groundworks and installation commenced on this project in Q2 2023 and was completed in Q3 2023.</p> <p>Louth County Council secured funding of €672,000 from Fáilte Ireland for a three-year Urban Animation Project in Drogheda which has been branded Lú Festival of Light. The first iteration of this family friendly festival, held over 10 days during Hallowe’en 2022, leveraged Drogheda’s connection to Ireland’s mythological past, consisting of spectacular light projections on key heritage buildings in the town and drawing thousands to the streets of Drogheda for a safe, evening activity. Further funding was made available under this scheme in Q3 2023 which allowed for extra lighting displays for the festival held across 9 days during Hallowe’en 2023, including a really spectacular, one of its kind, display on the river Boyne.</p> <p>A ‘Local experts’ visitor servicing programme is taking place in 2023 across the wider destination of Meath &amp; Louth. One of these ‘local experts’ events took place in Q2 2023 in Co. Louth with 76 attendees; with 50 attendees at the programme delivered in Meath in Q3 2023. An extension of this programme – ‘Local Champions’ – will be delivered in Q2 2024.</p> <p><b>9.4</b> Visit Louth already manage a tourism office at the Tholsel in Drogheda. Fáilte Ireland provides maps and other relevant information to this office. Louth County Council currently share a Tourism Officer with Meath County Council whose work is focused on the</p>	

Boyne Valley area, which includes Drogheda. The Tourism Officer highlights Drogheda offerings at national and international level, including at shows such as Bloom and Balmoral (see action 8.1 above). Louth County Council have applied for sanction to recruit a Tourism Officer for County Louth who will also have responsibility for Drogheda/South Louth. Louth County Council recently held interviews for a County Louth Tourism Officer and an appointment is due to be made in January 2024. The Tourism Officer will be present in the Tourist Office in the Tholsel on a weekly basis. They will also become a member of the Drogheda Cluster group and other committees relevant to the role and develop plans and ideas for the advancement of Drogheda's Tourism industry into the future.

Fáilte Ireland is implementing a new comprehensive plan for distributing tourist information to visitors to ensure visitors do more and spend more, directly supporting tourism businesses and jobs. The new plan is in response to changing consumer behaviours, digital trends, and falling visitor numbers to tourist information offices. Locally the new plan focuses on maximising hyper-local digital information resources on [discoverireland.ie/louth](https://discoverireland.ie/louth) and on installing high-impact tourist information kiosks in high-footfall locations (closest Kiosks are Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre and Brú Na Boinne). The plan also included a regional map-guide production and distribution plan and the delivery of the Local Experts (local Champions) programme, as reported on above.

Regarding Tourist Information Centres (TIC), in line with the significant drop in demand of recent years, Fáilte Ireland has and continues to significantly reduce its TIC footprint. That said, Fáilte Ireland continues to offer literature, branding and training support to community offices. Fáilte Ireland will work with Visit Louth Tourism to install a tourist information kiosk at their office at the Tholsel in Drogheda.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Louth County Council to officially Launch Drogheda Destination Town Project (see update above)	Project complete Launch Q1 2024	Louth County Council / Fáilte Ireland
Fáilte Ireland to advise on the future provision of visitor information services in line with its national approach which has been developed to meet visitor needs	Complete	Fáilte Ireland / Louth County Council
Install a Tourist Information kiosk at The Tholsel in Drogheda.	Q2 2024	Fáilte Ireland / Louth County Council
Roll out a 'Local Champions' visitor servicing programme in 2024 across the wider destination of Meath & Louth	Q1 & Q2 2024	Fáilte Ireland

9.5	Local Authority (and others as appropriate) explore and clarify the potential for future use of the Dominican Church and Priory in Drogheda Town (being acquired by LCC).		
Current Status			
<p>Louth County Council has purchased this building. The conveyance process has now been completed. A number of opportunities are currently under consideration by Louth County Council with the design consultants leading on the Westgate Vision appointed to review same.</p> <p>The Dominican Priory is currently in use as centre for housing Ukranian refugees.</p>			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Continue to explore options for use and funding for any such plans.		Work is progressing and will be ongoing for the duration of the Plan	Louth County Council

9.6	As part of strategic planning for the development of the Town, explore ways in which to develop and promote Drogheda as a healthier and welcoming town.
Current Status	
<p>Fáilte Ireland continue to work closely with Louth local authority, as their delivery partner, and other key stakeholders such as Drogheda Business Improvement District to further the Fáilte Ireland Destination Experience Development Plan ethos which is about revealing the landscape, exploring the destination, wandering through time on ancient routes, trails pathways and blueways. This applies equally to their urban centres. All the development projects are about finding new and exciting ways to explore the tourism assets. Projects such as industry hubs/clusters and the destination town will create a sense of arrival. The Urban Animation Project referenced in action 9.3 is an element of this objective.</p> <p>Work is ongoing on the visitor orientation plan linking all the heritage assets along the axis of the old town walls, currently being rolled out with interpretation. Four concept options for an attraction of scale were market tested and are being refined with a Business Plan developed for two refined concepts. See Action 7.3 above for a detailed update.</p> <p>Louth County Council Operations and Community sections continue to work with a variety of stakeholders. A collaboration between Louth County Council, Drogheda and District Chamber of Commerce, Drogheda Business Improvement District, Drogheda Tidy Towns and the Mayor of Drogheda was launched in Q4 2022 to respond to issues relating to litter in the town. #LookingGoodDrogheda is an initiative of the business community of Drogheda to improve the town’s appearance. These collaborative efforts resulted in a significant improvement in Drogheda’s standing in the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) report moving from a grade of ‘seriously littered’ and 39th out of 40 towns in the 2022 survey to ‘clean to European norms’ and 27th out of 40 in the 2023 survey.</p>	

In October 2022 it was announced that Louth County Council were successful in their application for a Night-Time Economy Advisor for Drogheda. The Night-Time Economy Advisory's role is to drive and support a more sustainable night-time economy, working with business, communities, residents, venues and artist to create a more vibrant nightlife for all in a safe and sustainable way. The new Night Time Economy Advisor commenced in August 2023 and commenced working with key stakeholders, including local community groups, in Q3 2023.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Roll-out of the Fáilte Ireland Destination Experience Development Plan	Work is progressing and will be ongoing for the duration of the Plan	Fáilte Ireland
Louth County Council, Drogheda BIDs, and Drogheda Tidy Towns to continue to develop initiatives to promote Drogheda as a healthier and welcoming town	Ongoing	Louth County Council, Drogheda BIDs, Drogheda Tidy Towns
Appointment of a Healthy Ireland Coordinator	Complete	Louth County Council



## 10. EMPLOYMENT, ENTERPRISE AND DEVELOPMENT

10.1	Local Authority and other relevant stakeholders - consider possibility to develop a new business and technology park on the North side of Drogheda.	
Current Status		
<p>In June 2021, IDA Ireland acquired a new landbank on the north side of Drogheda, Co Louth. This land acquisition is part of IDA Ireland’s long term strategic plans to position Louth and the wider North-East region to compete for FDI investment. The necessary site works are to be delivered within the current IDA Ireland strategy timelines. A contractor has been appointed by the IDA who is currently on site upgrading and repairing existing on-site infrastructure. The acquisition and development of this landbank is part of IDA Ireland’s overall property programme which is supported by the Government through the Department of Enterprise, Trade &amp; Employment.</p> <p>The proposed Advanced Building Solution is currently in planning with a Further Information from Louth County Council issued that IDA are working through to respond. The stage 1 of the contractor selection process has commenced and is advertised on eTenders. Works anticipated to commence in 2024 subject to receiving a satisfactory planning permission and contractor procurement.</p> <p>Presentations have been given by the IDA Regional Manager and the Enterprise Ireland Director of the North East region to Drogheda Implementation Board to facilitate a deeper understanding of enterprise activity and opportunities in the area.</p>		
	Next Steps	Timeline
	IDA to deliver on site works on the new land bank on the North Side of Drogheda.	Work is progressing and will be ongoing for completion in 2024
	Under the IDA Regional Property Programme, IDA will progress the delivery of an Advanced Building Solution in Drogheda.	2021-2024
		IDA

10.2	Explore ways to develop productive links – in terms of promoting employment opportunities – with appropriate third level institutions.
Current Status	
As detailed in previous reports a wide variety of Enterprise Ireland funded programmes and initiatives delivered through DkIT are available to relevant Enterprise Ireland clients and to entrepreneurs in Drogheda, examples of same outlined below:	
<b>New Frontiers-</b> 6 New Frontiers participants on the various phases of the programme between 2022 and 2023 were from the Drogheda area.	
<b>Innovation Vouchers</b> – DkIT completed a third Innovation Voucher with Drogheda based Whizzco Ltd in May 2023.	

**Connected Health and Wellbeing Cluster** - Members from Drogheda include aCGTvector, BD, OLOL, HeyMylo, and EVB Sports.

#### **dConnect**

- Continued to engage with Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital staff on EIT Health iDays (student innovation days as part of an EU project funding through EIT), and HSE staff based in Drogheda on the eHealth Embark accelerator.
- Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital representatives spoke at the 5 Nations Health ecosystem conference, hosted by dConnect in Dundalk in early 2023, on their virtual Physio programme.
- 3 HSE employees based at Southgate Drogheda participated in the 'AI for Health' programme in Q4 2023.
- 1 Drogheda native was a participant on the eHealth-Embark startup accelerator programme in 2023.

**CREDIT Tech Gateway** - Delivered Energy Workshops in Spring 2023 in Sacred Heart Secondary School and Ballymakenny Community College and was a guest judge at the Ballymakenny Community School SciFest in Spring 2023.

**THRIVE4Women Programme** - Four participants from the Drogheda area on 2023 programmes.

**DkIT Research** - A research project completed between The DkIT Research Centre for Freshwater and Environmental Studies and Drogheda based Development Perspectives will inform the future direction and priorities for the protection and sustainable uses of the Boyne river catchment.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Cluster Manager to continue to develop workplans and programmes for specific groups.	Ongoing	DkIT
Establish Credit Technology Gateway in DkIT	Complete	Enterprise Ireland
Roll out Innovation Vouchers initiative	Ongoing	Enterprise Ireland
Develop Innovation Partnership Projects between Companies and DkIT research teams	Ongoing	Enterprise Ireland
Support Commercialisation Fund Projects in DkIT	Ongoing	Enterprise Ireland
Support the development of sustainable new businesses through New Frontiers	Ongoing	Enterprise Ireland
Enhance collaboration between DkIT research teams and industry through the DTIF	Ongoing	Enterprise Ireland

10.3	Explore potential for enterprise initiatives and job creation in the agri-food sector	
Current Status		
<p>The Boyne Valley Food Innovation District is a smart specialisation collaborative for the Mid and North East regions that nurtures food and drink SMEs and talent from across the regions to achieve their commercialisation and scaling potential.</p> <p>The Boyne Valley Food Hub in Navan opened in May 2023. Phase 1 saw the development of 9 individual food units and production labs in a continuum of sizes to support opportunities for food entrepreneurs and their staff to interact with each other; facilitating relationships and creating critical mass between businesses and institutions to generate, sharpen and accelerate the advancement of ideas. Phase II, which is for the development of a four storey agri food tech hub, has obtained planning permission and will be the subject of an application of the Enterprise Ireland Smart Fund in March 2024.</p> <p>Meath and Louth local authorities are co-funding the development of the Boyne Valley as a national/international Centre of Food Culture, including the funding of a new Project Manager post and the implementation of Year One of the Centre of Food Culture Operational Plan. A Development Manager was appointed to the role in October 2023, whilst this delayed the full implementation of Year One of the plan significant progress was made, including the establishment of governance structures; instigation of brand identity, website and social media; and establishment of an office base. Delivery of the strategy will continue in 2024.</p>		
	Next Steps	Timeline
	Application to Enterprise Ireland Smart Fund for Agri Food Hub	Q1 2024
	Re-tendering for Boyne Valley Food Hub Completed	Complete
	Centre of Food Culture Project Manager in place	Complete
	Delivery of Year One Operational Plan for Boyne Valley Centre of Food Culture	2024
		Meath Co. Council
		Meath County Council
		Meath County Council/Louth County Council
		Meath County Council/Louth County Council

10.4	Consider ways to reduce the impact of crime and antisocial behavior on business and employment in the Town.
10.6	Ensure that community Garda foot patrols in the town centre and more widely are maintained
Current Status	
As outlined in action 2.4 Community Gardaí have been assigned to dedicated sectors within communities in both urban and rural locations in the District. A member of the Drogheda Community Policing Team has been assigned as a specific point of contact for the Business Community.	

An Garda Síochána Drogheda continue to liaise very closely with the Business Improvement District Scheme Committee and are proud to be associated with the Purple Flag initiative for Drogheda Town Centre, ensuring high visibility patrols are carried out to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, and to reduce fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Beat Patrols are central to An Garda Síochána's strategies in this regard. A high profile high visibility operation of Beat Patrols was carried out in the month of December 2023 which was very successful.

'Ask For Angela' is a safety campaign that allows people to discreetly signal if they need feel unsafe on a date or night out.

An Garda Síochána, Drogheda Implementation Board and a number of community partners such as the Vintners Federation, Restaurant Association, Taxi Federation, Drogheda Business Improvement District and Drogheda & District Chamber of Commerce launched an #AskForAngela campaign in Drogheda in 2022. This initiative was implemented as part of a suite of community safety initiatives by An Garda Síochána and Drogheda Implementation Board. See Something Say Something, as outlined in action 2.12, is another Community Safety initiative aimed at reducing the impact of antisocial behaviour in Drogheda. Both initiatives were well received by the community and are working well. Both are monitored by an Inspector in Drogheda District.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Continue to engage with relevant stakeholders	Ongoing	AGS

<b>10.5</b>	<b>Explore ways to attract or facilitate at least some of the estimated 15,000 people from Drogheda who commute to other locations for work every day back to work in the Town</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	
<p>The development and leveraging of remote work infrastructure is a crucial component to the progression of increased national remote work adoption. Adequate infrastructure must be in place to allow employers and employees avail of remote working opportunities both at home and in hubs. Further developing and leveraging the existing remote work hub infrastructure and the delivery of broadband nationally will be a significant driver in facilitating people to work remotely. Pillar 2 of the National Remote Work Strategy is focused on developing and leveraging remote work infrastructure. The Strategy's actions are being monitored by the InterDepartmental Group (IDG) on Remote Work chaired by Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and progress is underway to achieve all actions by their respective delivery dates. The IDG will continue to meet as the year progresses to drive implementation of the Strategy.</p> <p><b>Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub</b></p> <p><a href="https://themilldrogheda.ie/ddih/">https://themilldrogheda.ie/ddih/</a></p> <p>Funded under the Border Enterprise Development fund, the Drogheda Digital Innovation Hub (DDIH), was developed by Louth County Council with Drogheda Enterprise Centre CLG t/a The Mill Enterprise Hub (The Mill) and supported by Enterprise Ireland. This project has been</p>	

awarded €587,600 in funding against project costs of €734,500 (80%) and is designed to encourage high-potential future oriented tech projects seeking to start and grow, to locate in the greater Drogheda/North East region.

The project aims to foster an environment to facilitate these businesses to succeed in the region, through the provision of a bespoke and affordable co-working space in Drogheda town centre complemented with tailored management and mentoring support to facilitate their growth and export potential. This project is an opportunity to target 'post-covid' commuters, those seeking a career change from employee (commuter) to entrepreneur (in the region) and the 'Brexit opportunity' to target UK businesses seeking an EU home will add to the project's success. It is also an opportunity to attract many technology start-ups located outside the region due to the lack of viable property solutions. The project will also offer entrepreneurs a viable alternative to locating in Dublin city, which has successfully built a reputation as a centre for future oriented technology companies. Of note, the project intends to partner with Dublin BIC on greater support across the Northeast, and specifically target highly skilled commuters to create tech startups via a CommuTECH support programme.

There are 3 elements to this initiative:

1. A pre-accelerator programme to be delivered in Drogheda, aimed at those from the greater Drogheda region. The specification for the first pre-accelerator, 'Commu-tech', has been completed with LEO Louth managing the e-tender/ procurement process. The programme will be managed, promoted and driven by the LEO in partnership with the Mill Enterprise Hub. A procurement process for the delivery of the DDIH Pre-Accelerator Programme commenced in December 2022 and tender awarded in Q2 2023.
2. The post of DDIH Programme Manager has been sanctioned with the recruitment of this post taking place in late 2023 with a view to commencement in January 2024
3. Refurbishment of premises in Drogheda Town Centre. A new location, on Narrow West Street has been identified by Louth County Council's Public Realm team to complement the design of the West Gate Vision. The previous location compromised the greater vision for the WestGate area. Louth County Council have appointed an architect led design team who are overseeing the design and fit out of this premises on Narrow West Street.

The Employment, Business and Enterprise subgroup of the Drogheda Implementation Board, in response to this action, launched the Drogheda Nurture Fund, a new microfinance fund for Drogheda and the Laytown-Bettystown Area in September 2023. This Fund is jointly resourced by Louth and Meath local authorities through their Local Enterprise Offices and makes a total fund of €100,000 available over a three year period to approved entrepreneurs and enterprises. The Fund is administered by the Louth County Enterprise Fund. For more information see [www.thefund.ie/nurture-fund](http://www.thefund.ie/nurture-fund).

Drogheda Chamber of Commerce, Love Drogheda BIDS, and The Mill Enterprise Hub are collaborating on a new strategy to encourage more startups, multinationals and remote workers to base themselves in the wider Drogheda region. They recently completed a remote working and commuter survey to inform the development of this strategy. Drogheda

Chamber have developed [www.InDrogheda.com](http://www.InDrogheda.com) to showcase Drogheda to the international business market and attract employment opportunities to the local area.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
Enterprise Manager to be recruited	Q1 2024 (Original Timeline Q4 2021)	Louth County Council
Refurbishment work to be completed on DDIH Hub	Q4 2024 (Original Timeline Q2 2022)	Louth County Council

<b>10.6</b>	<b>Ensure that community Garda foot patrols in the town centre and more widely are maintained</b>
This recommendation has been grouped with recommendation 10.4 above.	

## 11. ETHNIC AND RACIAL ISSUES

11.1	All stakeholders – consider the practical implications of the recently (2020) launched Louth Meath Joint Integration Strategy and implement accordingly.		
Current Status			
<p>The Joint Louth Meath Migrant Integration Forum was established and a work plan on the delivery of the strategy agreed. The Forum meets on a quarterly basis. As the implementation of the joint Migrant Integration strategy was delayed by the Covid pandemic the Forum is reviewing the strategy in order to prioritise actions that can be delivered in the current year. It is anticipated that a new National Migrant Integration Strategy will be in place by the end of 2023. Given this, a proposal to extend the work of the Forum to December 2023 went before the respective Louth and Meath LCDCs and was ratified in January 2023. The Joint Migrant Integration Forum hosted an event in November 2023 in the Glenside Hotel, County Meath, just outside Drogheda. This event was very well attended by members of the migrant community from across Louth and East Meath and showcased services and supports available in the area. The Joint Migrant Integration Forum held its final meeting on 7 December 2023. Integration Teams have now been established in both local authorities to work with International Protection Applicants, people with Refugee status and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. A new National Migration Integration Strategy is to be put in place which will inform the work of the Integration Teams going forward.</p>			
Next Steps		Timeline	Responsible Body
Implementation of Joint Louth Meath Migrant Integration Strategy		Complete	Louth Local Authority/ Meath Local Authority
Establishment of new National Migrant Integration Strategy		Ongoing	DCEDIY

11.2	Explore and identify any existing or emerging issues of racial tension in the area and agree steps to deal with these.	
Current Status		
Following the completion of the Joint Migrant Integration Forum the Integration Teams and Joint Policing Committees in each local authority will engage and act as a channel to identify and seek to address racial tension issues that may arise.		
	Next Steps	Timeline
	Continue to monitor the issues through the Joint Louth Meath Migrant Integration Forum and the Local Migrant Integration Network.	Complete
	Continue to monitor the issues through the Integration Teams in each Local Authority	Ongoing
		Responsible Body
		Joint Louth Meath Migrant Integration Forum via LCC & MCC
		Louth and Meath Local Authorities

<b>11.3</b>	<b>Plan at oversight group level how to engage with and involve the traveller and Roma communities in the area to a greater extent than currently, to include specific actions.</b>
<b>11.4</b>	<b>LLP to progress actions already identified to engage and build development capacity in the traveller and Roma communities.</b>
<b>11.5</b>	<b>HSE and other partners - build on positive engagement made with travellers and Roma during the course of the public health response to the Covid-19 pandemic.</b>
<i>Current Status</i>	
<p>Opportunities to support Traveller and Roma communities are explored via the Louth Community Development Committee and Louth Local Development's Networks Provision. Addressing such support needs is provided for via the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP).</p> <p>The Louth Local Development SICAP Development Officer is currently establishing links with key agencies and local stakeholders in the development of an engagement approach with members of the Travelling Community. The Louth Local Development SICAP Social Inclusion Manager has been liaising with the HSE to plan and organise a meeting regarding the Primary Health Care Unit in the context of the Drogheda area.</p> <p>A Business Case supporting the need to re-establish the Traveller Health Unit and support structures was prepared in December 2021. This was considered at a HSE Midlands Louth Meath Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO8) Senior Leadership Team meeting in February 2022, with support in principle for the need to re-establish the Traveller Health Unit. In respect of funding for same and to progress matters, it was agreed that in-year (2022) COVID 19 monies would be used to support appointment where possible of key staff (either through HSE or a section 39 organisation or Agency) or align structures across CHO8 to fulfil:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Inclusion Manager</li> <li>• Community Developmental Coordinators</li> </ul> <p>Work is progressing and the HSE Traveller Health Unit for Louth Meath (THU) has been re-established, meeting every two weeks.</p> <p>Separately, CHO8 has submitted a Business Case in an effort to secure ongoing revenue funding for the Service for 2023 onwards through a HSE-led Initiative to improve health outcomes for other vulnerable groups (including Roma, Migrants and Women), who are currently living in insecure or unsuitable housing. This has provided the CHO with an opportunity to bid for €200,000 funding for development of a Traveller Project for Co. Louth.</p> <p>The HSE prepared a submission for Estimates Process 2023 for a number of posts for Louth/Meath as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traveller Health Unit Coordinator for Louth Meath</li> <li>2. Three community Development posts (1.5WTE) for Primary Health Care for Traveller projects in Louth Meath (Navan, Drogheda &amp; Dundalk).</li> </ol>	



Funding has been approved. Extern who support the Meath Primary Health care Project completed a scoping exercise with a view to establishing a Traveller Primary Health Care Project in Drogheda. This identified:

- current supports
- key stakeholders
- resources and budget required and include in proposal & roadmap to establish a Traveller Primary Health Care Project in Drogheda.

### **Background Information to Establishing the Drogheda Project**

The Louth Local Development (LLD; formerly Louth Local Partnership - LLP) SICAP Development Officer is currently establishing links with key agencies and local stakeholders in the development of an engagement approach with members of the Travelling Community. The LLD Social Inclusion Manager and SICAP Development Officer in the Drogheda area met with the HSE in Q4 2022 and Q1 2023 to discuss the engagement strategies and potential developments of a Traveller Primary Health Care Team Project within the Drogheda area.

The LLD Social Inclusion Manager attended an interagency Traveller Health Consultations meeting in March 2023 and from this the Local Traveller Health Implementation Plan has been circulated. This plan will aim to strengthen health supports amongst Primary Care Traveller Projects 2022 – 2027 in CHO8. In July the Social Inclusion Manager and Community Development team have been actively collaborating with the HSE in an engagement strategy with local Travellers in the Drogheda area to scope the resources involved for the reinstatement of a Primary Healthcare for Travellers Project in Drogheda.

LLD's Youth and Education Team have been using a youth work approach to engage with Youth Travellers. Working in collaboration with a number of specialist youth projects in the town including Turning Point – a Foróige programme, Youth Diversion projects in the town and YouthReach they coordinated virtual driving school opportunities referenced in Action 4.5. LLD Youth and Education Team are also working with Turning Point to develop and support the delivery of a QQI Major Award Level 4 Leadership Programme that will focus on building the capacity to develop Community Champions. Participants within this programme will include Youth Travellers.

Five young Travellers from Drogheda received adult guidance supports in the second half of 2022 from the LLD Youth and Education team. These young people have progressed to bespoke training opportunities that were fully funded by SICAP and have received further support to access Third Level Access Grants.

Following positive collaboration and outreach work by the Louth Local Development (LLD) Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Community Development Officer, two Traveller women's groups in the Drogheda area formed and received extensive support within a pre-development cycle. One of these groups, consisting of 14 women from the local Traveller community in Drogheda were recruited for the Traveller Primary Healthcare Project (see below).

The other group, Mincéir Drogheda, is exploring setting up a Traveller peer support group in Drogheda, with a particular focus on supporting young Travellers. These women brought together a group of 10 young Travellers to participate in a consultation to identify needs for their community. This process identified a need for a Traveller specific youth project in Drogheda. Follow up discussions have been held with the Drogheda Youth Officer and Youth Work Ireland Louth to progress this, with committee members of the Mincéir Drogheda group offering to train as volunteer leaders in this project and completing the necessary governance steps to facilitate this happening.

From September to December 2023 the groups met weekly and completed workshops in a wide variety of activities relating to health and wellbeing. Some of these sessions were planned and delivered by Traveller women themselves. In all, almost 30 Traveller women were involved in these workshops, as well as participating in a visit to DKIT for Diversity Week and a festive celebratory meal in the D Hotel. The LLD team also supported a number of members of the Traveller Community living in the local area to attend the Drogheda Community Safety and Wellbeing Event (see action 4.5 above). Following this a group member is being supported to develop their capacity to sit as a representative on Louth County Council's Traveller Accommodation Network.

The LLD SICAP Community Development Officer has also been connecting with relevant statutory, voluntary and community services throughout 2023 to promote interagency collaborations that will empower and support the Traveller community in the Drogheda area, these include Louth County Council, Youth Work Ireland, Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point, LMETB, Department of Social Protection, HSE, Creative Ireland and Extern.

The LLD SICAP Manager and Community Development Officer have had a number of engagements with the HSE to support the establishment of a Primary Healthcare Unit in Drogheda. Extern will commence a scoping exercise in relation to this initiative from January 2024.

<i>Next Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Responsible Body</i>
<p>In line with the National Traveller Health Action Plan (NTHAP) 2022-2027, CHO8 will Develop and strengthen processes and mechanisms to ensure implementation of relevant NTHAP actions at a regional and local level in partnership with Travellers and Traveller organisations.</p> <p>CHO8 is currently reviewing the functioning and capacity of the Traveller Health Unit with a view to strengthening and standardising representation, membership staffing, resources etc. A further update will be provided in the next progress report.</p>	<p>2023 (Overdue)</p>	<p>HSE</p>

<p>The CHO8 Traveller Health Unit will develop, oversee, and be accountable for the implementation of an action plan which includes the re-establishment of a Traveller Primary Health Care Project in Drogheda (NTHAP 2022-2027 Goal 1 Strategic Action &amp; Goal 4 Strategic Action 43).</p>		
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