

Minutes of Meeting of Cavan Local Community Development Committee

Date: 29th April 2026

Time: 3pm

Location: Online via Microsoft Teams & Council Chamber, Cavan County Council , Courthouse, Cavan

Present:

Statutory

Mr. Brendan Jennings (Cavan County Council), Cllr. TP O'Reilly (Elected Member), Cllr Val Smith (Elected Member), Cllr. Clifford Kelly (Elected Member), Mr. Conor Craven (Local Enterprise Office), Ms. Ruth Woods (H.S.E.), Ms. Carmel Denning (Department of Social Protection)

Private Sector Interests

Mr. Jim Maguire (Chairperson) (Cavan County Local Development), Ms. Connie Whelan (Cootehill Chamber), Mr. Paddy Denning (Agricultural and Farming Interests),

Apologies:

Ms. Beth McEntee (Community & Voluntary Interests), Dr. Fiona McGrath (CMETB), Mr. Barry Kavanagh (Environmental Interests), Mr. Seamus Quinn (Older People's Interests), Ms. Aisling Traynor (Youth Issues), Ms. Gayathri Devi Soman (Social Inclusion Interests),

In attendance:

Ms. Angela Fitzpatrick (Chief Officer), Mr. Terry Hyland (Cavan County Local Development), Ms. Deirdre Donnelly (Cavan County Council), Ms. Deborah Leahy (Cavan County Council), Ms. Aoife McCormick (Cavan County Council).

Mr. Jim Maguire, Chairperson, opened the meeting and apologies were noted.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from the meeting 25th March 2026 were circulated to the members by email in advance of the meeting. The minutes were proposed by Ms. Ruth Woods and seconded by Ms. Connie Whelan.

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Conflicts of Interest

The Chair reminded members of their conflict of interest's responsibilities.

4. 'HSE Regional Health Areas and Integrated Service Delivery Model in Healthcare' – Ms Ruth Woods, Network Manager, Cavan Community Healthcare Network .

Mr. Jim Maguire, Chairperson, invited Ms. Ruth Woods to deliver her presentation. Ms Woods gave a brief introduction and explained that she would discuss Sláintecare, the new health regions, how these regions are structured, how they will affect the Cavan/Monaghan area, and how they will link with the LCDC.

Ms Woods spoke about the Sláintecare model and its aims of improving access, service quality, and reform. She noted improvements through the Enhanced Community Care Programme, where 92% of patients with chronic disease are now managed in primary care rather than hospitals. The aim is to manage conditions earlier to avoid hospitalisation. She also highlighted population growth and the challenges of delivering targeted services in an expanding area.

Infrastructure was highlighted as key, with eight Primary Care teams operating across Cavan (including Bailieborough, Virginia, Cootehill, Ballyconnell, Killeshandra, and Cavan town). Six new healthcare centres have also opened across the Cavan/Monaghan region to provide more local access to services.

Ms Woods noted service quality improvements through the Healthy Communities initiative, targeting areas with greater health risks. She also outlined digital reform initiatives, including virtual wards, shared digital patient records, and a planned patient app. While these are progressing, she acknowledged that timelines are behind schedule.

Ms Woods detailed the rollout of integrated healthcare, noting that the system is currently fragmented and requires reconfiguration to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population with more complex care needs. Ms Woods explained that under the new structure, Cavan/Monaghan will form part of the North Dublin and Louth region. This includes Beaumont Hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital (Drogheda), Connolly Hospital, Cavan General Hospital, Rotunda Hospital, Louth County Hospital, Monaghan Hospital, and the Royal College of Surgeons.

Ms Woods explained that the Integrated Service Delivery model aims to provide more joined-up, person-centred care by bringing hospitals, community services, and voluntary organisations under one leadership structure. The goal is to improve access, coordination, and the overall patient journey, particularly for families.

Changes will be introduced gradually to ensure safety and quality.

She emphasised key priorities including digital reform, integration of services, and continued partnership working to map and improve patient access. She noted that LCDC involvement is essential to ensure services are community-driven and responsive to local needs.

The Chair thanked Ms Woods for her very thorough presentation and asked if there were any questions.

Mr Brendan Jennings also thanked Ms Woods for her presentation, noting the huge undertaking in getting this message across to users. He asked why West Cavan is moving back into the Sligo/Leitrim/Donegal area. Ms Woods explained that there are two West Cavan teams. It is acknowledged that people in the very west tip of Cavan, e.g. Blacklion, tend to go towards Leitrim/Sligo for their daily activities. Glangevlin has a very small population, as confirmed in the last census. Mr Jennings asked if Belturbet and Ballyconnell would remain within Cavan services, and Ms Woods confirmed that they would.

The Chief Officer congratulated Ms Woods on her presentation. She enquired about partnership working and asked if there was any structure or stream of communication between teams. Ms Woods advised that there are eight primary care teams and one

children's team established, and these meet once a month and at these meetings Ms Woods invites in services to speak to the staff.

One example is: County Cavan Library Service. They have a large number of sensory toys available to members of the public across library branches, and she is organising a presentation on this in the Children's building so that staff there can advise parents on linking in with this resource. Ms Woods stated that if any of the LCDC members have any initiative or service that they wish to promote that they link in with her and she will ensure that the information is shared.

Mr Conor Craven asked if Family Resource Centres and agencies such as the County Childcare Committee are linking in from a community point of view. Ms Woods spoke about the Chatterbox Initiative in collaboration with the County Childcare Committee which is running in Monaghan but unfortunately no longer in Cavan. She added that resources have been limited in Cavan to hold Chatterbox, and there is a new initiative in place set up called "Happy Talk" in association with Cavan County Childcare Committee where training is introduced in preschools and also provided to parents and children, and feedback has been very positive.

Cllr T.P O'Reilly asked about staff shortages and whether this was due to the HSE embargo. Ms Woods replied that it was and noted that by December 2023, any unfilled posts were lost. She added that the embargo does not particularly affect posts in children's health services as there were few to no candidates seeking employment in this sector regardless.

Cllr O'Reilly enquired about the process of recruiting students to fill these positions. Ms Woods explained that HSE HR has linked in with colleges such as ATU Letterkenny to support progression and completion of relevant degrees. It is evident that there are not enough people currently coming through to fill the positions needed, in particular for speech and language therapists and physiotherapists for children's care. If posts can't be filled, there is a significant inconsistency in care. Cllr O'Reilly asked if positions were currently available to be filled and if there was a danger of these employees moving on after just a few months. Ms Woods advised there were available positions and she is recruiting across the board on an ongoing basis and she also noted that it is very difficult to get cover for temporary contracts

such as maternity leave cover. She moved on to say that HSE waiting lists are still recovering from the effects of the COVID pandemic, where many posts were temporarily closed as staff were redeployed to testing centres. People were not able to work within their field for a period, resulting in a backlog in the system. This was followed by the staff embargo within the HSE.

The Chief Officer asked if the recruitment of staff was a problem across the country or just rural Ireland, in counties like Cavan. Ms Woods explained that the problem is everywhere. She said Cavan/Monaghan area comparatively doing ok in terms of recruitment and said they are performing well, and waiting lists are being reduced, but acknowledged that they are still too long.

Cllr O'Reilly asked if the points-based system was too high for students to get into these posts. Ms Woods stated that, as far as she was aware, points are set based on the number of places available on a given course. She also noted that a number of students come through the UK system and, once they follow a specific process, are eligible to work in the HSE. This process currently takes approximately 8 weeks, which is greatly reduced from previous timelines.

Cllr O'Reilly also enquired about promoting healthcare as a career and whether there was a problem with this. Ms Woods stated that there are a number of factors, including media portrayal, which does not always emphasise the fantastic work carried out by HSE staff and the job satisfaction. Cllr O'Reilly added that it also needs to be promoted as financially attractive. Ms Woods agreed and added that many staff are moving into private practice. Cllr O'Reilly noted that while private practice can restrict access for families, it also helps reduce public waiting lists.

The Chief Officer asked if students are taken on by Primary Care Centres for work experience. Ms Woods explained that placements are available for third-level students but noted that taking on secondary-level students is challenging due to GDPR, safeguarding, and health and safety requirements. She acknowledged the need for a presence in secondary schools but noted that managing waiting lists remains the priority.

Cllr O'Reilly suggested introducing a recorded presentation initiative in schools. Ms Woods acknowledged this and noted that such initiatives are being considered.

The Chair asked if there were any further questions. There were none, and he thanked Ms Ruth Woods for her presentation.

5. PEACEPLUS.

The Chief Officer gave the following update:

The PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting was held on Thursday 16th April 2026 in the Council Chamber.

All projects remain on target and performance target numbers are currently 2,875 participants. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 21st May 2026.

An assessment meeting for the delivery of a project to create a network of Cross Border Farming communities took place after the meeting. There was one submission and the assessment committee propose to appoint Philip Farrelly and Company as the delivery agent. The value of the project is €55,283.

Approval was proposed by Cllr. Clifford Kelly and seconded by Cllr. T.P. O'Reilly.

6. Cavan Public Participation Network update

The Chief Officer gave the following update:

- a) Publication of 5x ENews editions.
- b) PPN Engagement with National Director of LCSPs Grainne Berrill.
- c) Attendance at Age Friendly AI Event in Johnston Library.
- d) Hosting of Oversight Committee of Cavan PPN, Council and LDC Host.
- e) Preparation for Swanlinbar Meitheal on 7th May 2026 with guest speaker Muintir na Tire.
- f) The Cavan PPN Plenary Session is scheduled for Tullyvin on Saturday June 27th 2026.

7. Agency Updates.

The Chairperson asked all members if they had any update on items that would be of interest to the work of the committee. There were no updates.

8. AOB

The Chief Officer informed the members about the following new initiative.

- Rural Action and partners, Irish Rural Link (IRL) and NIRWN (NI Rural Women's Network) are launching the Maximising Community Space (MCS) Programme this afternoon. This major new initiative will be investing €2,753,293, in rural communities and in the people that manage the halls, facilities and community spaces that bring people together. Supported by PEACEPLUS and delivered by Rural Action and partners, this regional programme will work with 40 community groups across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim, Donegal, Sligo and Louth. The programme is designed to help community organisations unlock the full potential of their spaces, making them more inclusive, more welcoming and better equipped to meet local needs. Through leadership development, practical support, new activity planning and cross-border networking, the programme aims to strengthen shared rural spaces and build long-term community connections. The Chief Officer explained that Cavan County Council will be linking in with Rural Action and Partners and will provide further updates on the project to the LCDC as it is being delivered.

- The Chief Officer advised members that the National Office for Children and Young People is currently exploring whether the 'What Works Funding' programme could be used to support collaborative projects between LCDCs and CYPSCs. In this context, the National Office has contacted CYPSC at local level, seeking proposals for potential new collaborations between the LCDC and CYPSC. CYPSC Cavan has submitted a proposal focused on the development of social hubs to address the shortage of youth-friendly spaces. The Chief Officer will keep the LCDC members informed as to progress on this when there is more clarity.

- **LECP Review and Implementation Plan** - The Chief Officer gave a brief update on the process of reviewing the first two-year LECP implementation plan. She stated that the email will be sent out by 30th April to all Leads and responses will be due back by 12th May at 5pm. Following this, a steering group will meet to discuss the responses provided in the review.
- **Paperless Meetings** – The Chief Officer advised the members that moving forward that the idea of paperless meetings will be explored, using Sharepoint for document sharing etc.

There were no other issues raised under AOB

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the LCDC will take place on Wednesday 27th May at 3pm in the Council Chamber.

The meeting ended

Signed: _____


Chairperson

Date: _____

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