



DONEGAL LOCAL  
DEVELOPMENT CLG.  
FORBAIRT ÁITIÚIL  
DHÚN NA nGALL

Donegal Local Development CLG

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

To unlock  
the potential of  
people, organisations  
and communities across  
Donegal:

Improving Lives and  
Strengthening Communities.

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# Introduction

We are delighted to present the new Donegal Local Development CLG (DLDC) Strategic Plan for 2023-2025. This new strategic plan represents the very best of DLDC and is a testament to the collaborative culture and ambitious vision we have for the organisation.

We have a lot to be proud of – over the last 27 years the organisation has provided invaluable support to individuals and communities. We are hugely thankful to the team at DLDC, all our stakeholders and community and voluntary groups who guide our work from the grassroots level. Recently, our collective ability to mobilise and respond to the unique challenges posed by the Covid 19 pandemic and Ukrainian crisis, is a further testament to the dedication, resilience, and passion to improve lives and strengthen communities in the county.

Our new strategic plan considers the wider environment in which we operate, and will help DLDC to grow and focus as an organisation, improve our ways of working and collaborating, and make DLDC a better place to work. It sets out eleven key guiding principles across four strategic areas that will guide our work and progress over the next three years. We are hugely thankful to everyone who contributed their insights and took part in the process of developing this plan. Engagement was extremely high, highlighting the enthusiasm for continuing to improve the organisation and the work we do.

Our objective is to turn this plan into tangible outcomes that have real impact in the communities of Donegal. We can only achieve this by continuing to work together with all agencies, led by the communities we support. We know that real change doesn't just happen in strategic plans; it happens in our communities – individual to individual and day-to-day. We look forward to charting a course for better ways of working together, for greater opportunities and stronger communities across Donegal.

Padraic Fingleton, CEO  
Patsy McGonagle, Chairman

# Our Purpose

To unlock the potential of people,  
organisations and communities  
across Donegal:

**Improving Lives and  
Strengthening Communities.**

## Values

1. We will engage with **empathy, honesty** and **integrity**
2. Everything we do will be **connected to local needs**
3. **Communities** are the heart of our County and people are its lifeblood
4. **All-Ireland Standards for Community Work** underpin our work
5. We believe in **partnership working** and **collaboration**
6. Our organisation will be **professional, knowledgeable** and **accountable**









# Strategic Actions and Guiding Principles

Four key areas frame our work for the strategic plan and each one is underpinned by eleven guiding principles. We have identified three 'outward' facing guiding policies which reflects the work we will do with individuals and communities across County Donegal. This is supported by eight 'inward'

facing guiding policies, which reflect our approach to improve our organisation through how we communicate, how we lead by example, how we engage and how we support and empower the staff and volunteers, who deliver on our core purpose.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS	GUIDING PRINCIPLES
 <p><b>UNLOCKING POTENTIAL</b> – Supports towards Sustainable Employment &amp; Employability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To support people towards, and into, sustainable work in a people-centric way</li> <li>2. To ensure that supports are highly targeted at those who need them the most, e.g. people living in the most deprived areas, experiencing multiple disadvantage</li> </ol>
 <p><b>STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES</b> – Supports towards the capacity building of local community groups and social enterprises</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To build capacity of local communities and social enterprises to address social inclusion, good governance and sustaining the environment</li> </ol>
 <p><b>PEOPLE, PARTNERSHIP &amp; COLLABORATION</b> Attract, retain, and nurture talent. Enable collaboration and clarity of focus. Nurture pride in the organisation through strong communications</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To ensure that DLDC is a good place to work</li> <li>2. To strengthen external relationship-building/reach is further enhanced by formalising our approach</li> <li>3. To ensure our approach to crisis management is further enhanced through staff capacity-building</li> <li>4. To redesign our organisational structure, processes and work environment to improve internal collaboration across programmes and team</li> <li>5. To ensure that internal and external communication is central to everything we do</li> </ol>
 <p><b>LEADING THE WAY</b> – Climate, Governance &amp; Finance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. To mitigate and adapt to climate change, committing to pursuing to carbon neutrality as an organisation by 2030.</li> <li>7. To ensure DLDC upholds the highest standards in Governance and Compliance and is more representative of the communities we work with</li> <li>8. To secure new funding streams which align with the three-year strategy</li> </ol>



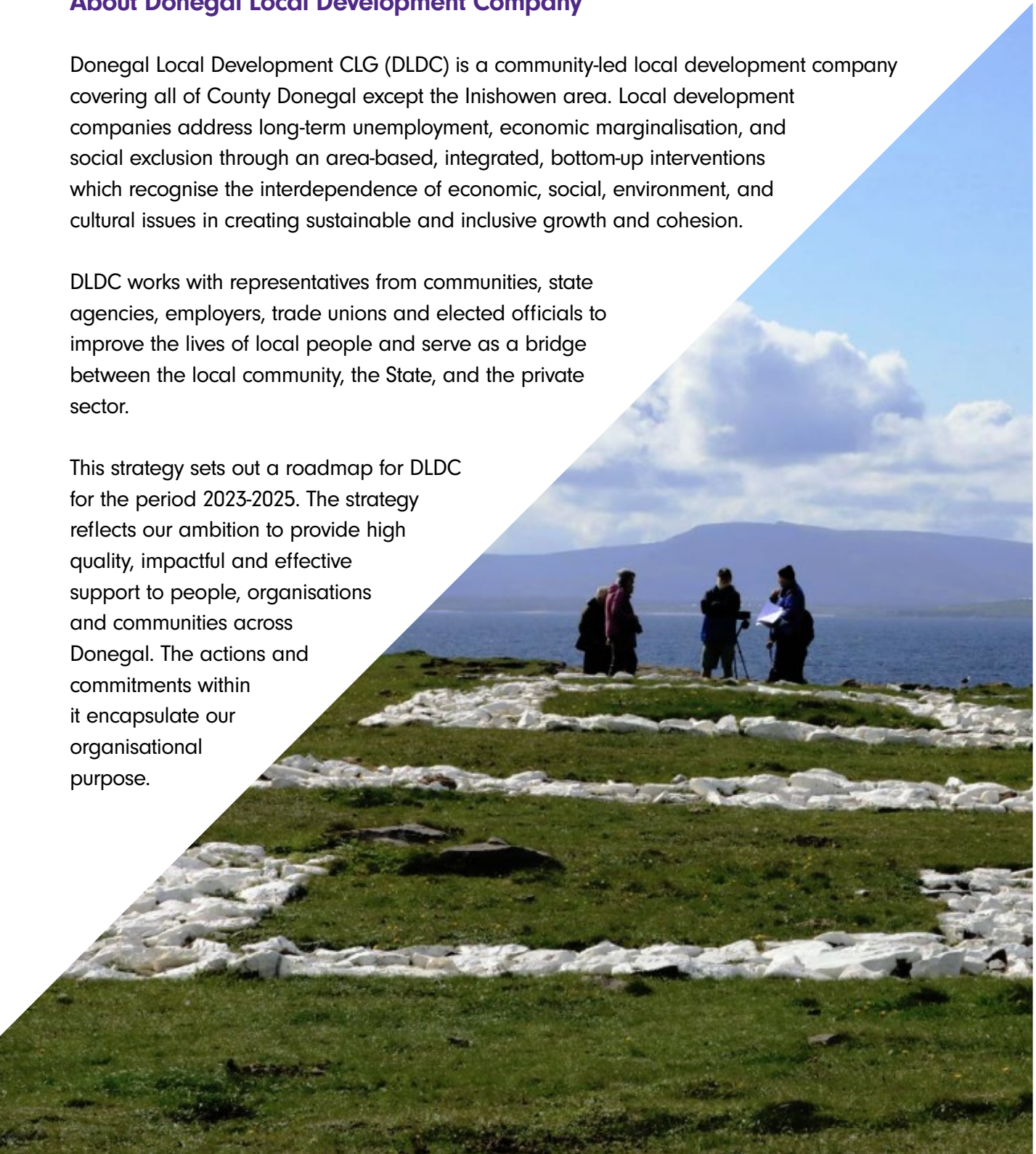
# About us

## About Donegal Local Development Company

Donegal Local Development CLG (DLDC) is a community-led local development company covering all of County Donegal except the Inishowen area. Local development companies address long-term unemployment, economic marginalisation, and social exclusion through an area-based, integrated, bottom-up interventions which recognise the interdependence of economic, social, environment, and cultural issues in creating sustainable and inclusive growth and cohesion.

DLDC works with representatives from communities, state agencies, employers, trade unions and elected officials to improve the lives of local people and serve as a bridge between the local community, the State, and the private sector.

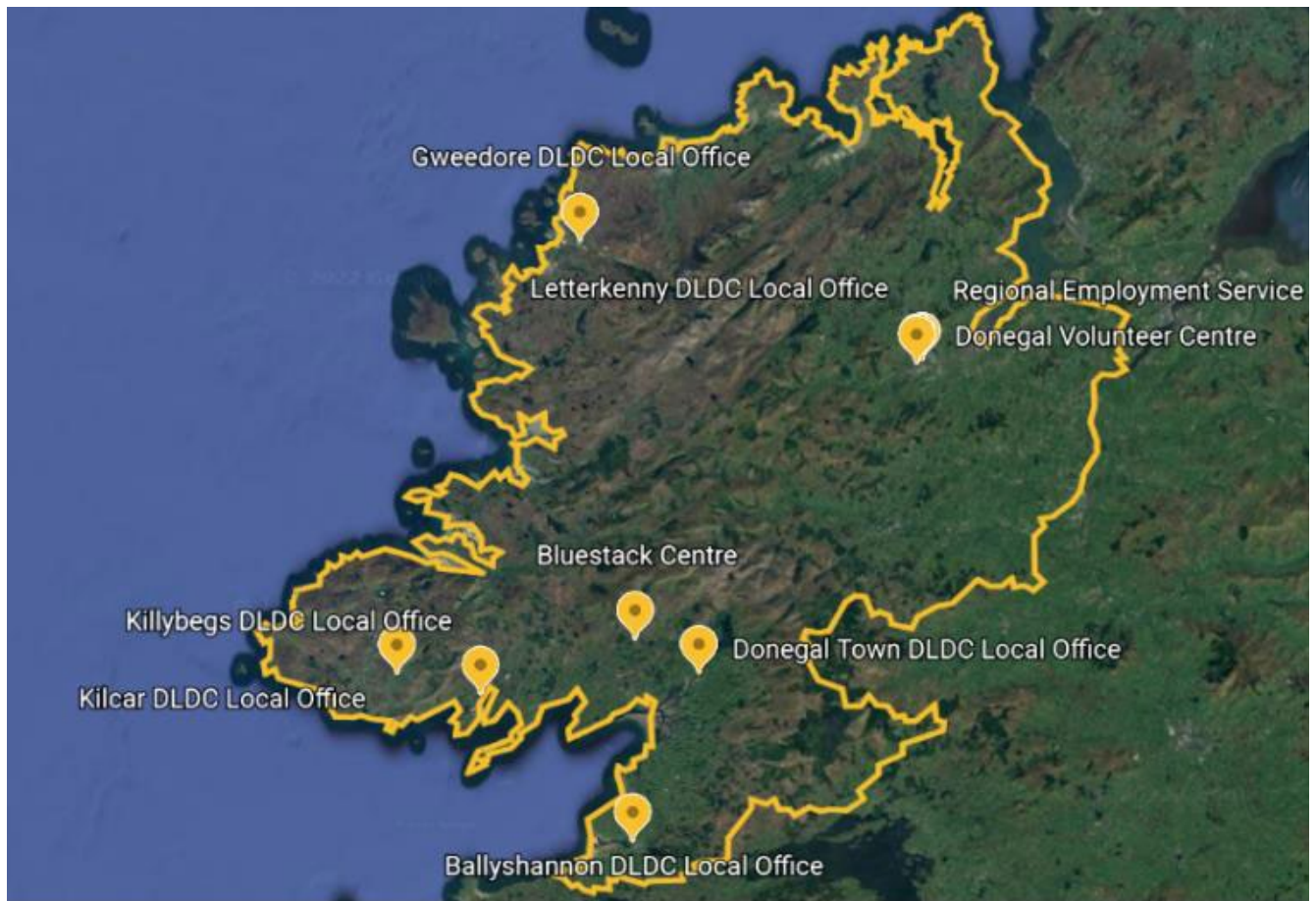
This strategy sets out a roadmap for DLDC for the period 2023-2025. The strategy reflects our ambition to provide high quality, impactful and effective support to people, organisations and communities across Donegal. The actions and commitments within it encapsulate our organisational purpose.





# Where We Work and What We Do

We operate from our headquarters in Letterkenny with outreach offices and locations in Gweedore, Donegal Town, Killybegs, Kilcar and Ballyshannon. We also utilise a range of community based facilities to ensure that our services and initiatives reach across the County.



Our team of 70 staff provide a range of services to individuals, community and voluntary organisations, social enterprises and others across the County, all of which are underpinned by a commitment to equality of access and support for underrepresented or marginalised communities. Our services are aligned to the needs of the local community, and we strive to ensure these are informed by ongoing consultation and engagement. Our current range of services include:





DLDC is supported by a wider range of funders including: Department of Community & Rural Development, Department of Social Protection, HSE, Healthy Ireland, Rethink Ireland, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, and others.



# DLDC in 2021



**262**

people placed in various part-time, full-time and self-employment roles.



**474**

new volunteers placed in community organisations.



**€791,500**

of LEADER funding was claimed by projects in Donegal.



**419**

participated in job activation and social inclusion schemes.



**€2.2m**

investment in Donegal in the form of programme staff time and programme initiatives.



**109**

community groups supported to tackle social exclusion.



**46**

social enterprises benefitted from intensive one-to-one support, including strategic and business planning, governance and fundraising.



**128**

people who improved their employability skills.



**€684,720**

external funding secured by social enterprises with DLDC support.



**268**

people participated in lifelong learning workshops.

Read more about our impact!



**SCAN ME**

# Developing the Strategy

## Introduction

To ensure that our strategic plan reflects the evolving needs and priorities across the County, we carried out a widespread consultation process. We received contributions from more than 80 unique organisations from across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors, reflecting the interagency nature of our work. In addition, 184 individuals responded to an online survey.

The consultation has helped identify aspects of our work that we should build on and improve, as well as setting out some emerging opportunities, issues and challenges that contribute positively to. The four staged strategic planning process is set out below.



# Who Contributed to the Strategy?

Contributions to the strategy included the following:



**290**

# of survey responses  
received overall



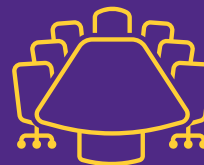
**26**

DLDC project staff  
consulted



**11**

Meetings **with external**  
stakeholder and partner  
organisations



**4**

Discussions with DLDC senior  
management and board to reflect and  
develop vision, goals and actions



**106**

Organisational responses to the online  
survey (79 C&V Sector, 8 Sport, 5  
Business and 3 Statutory/Political or  
Farming)



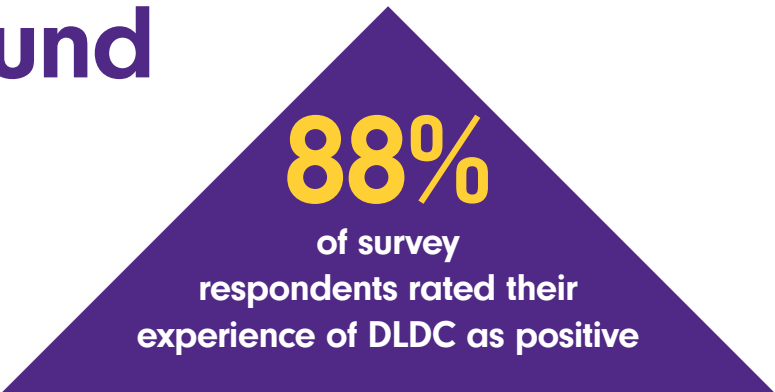
**184**

Responses from individuals  
to the online survey



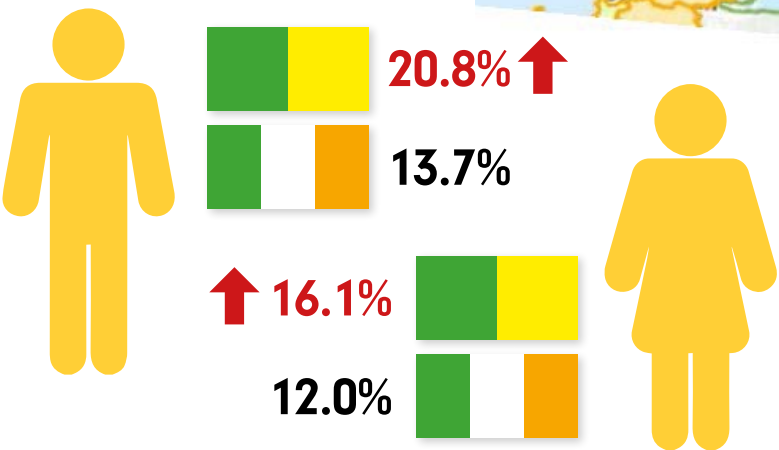
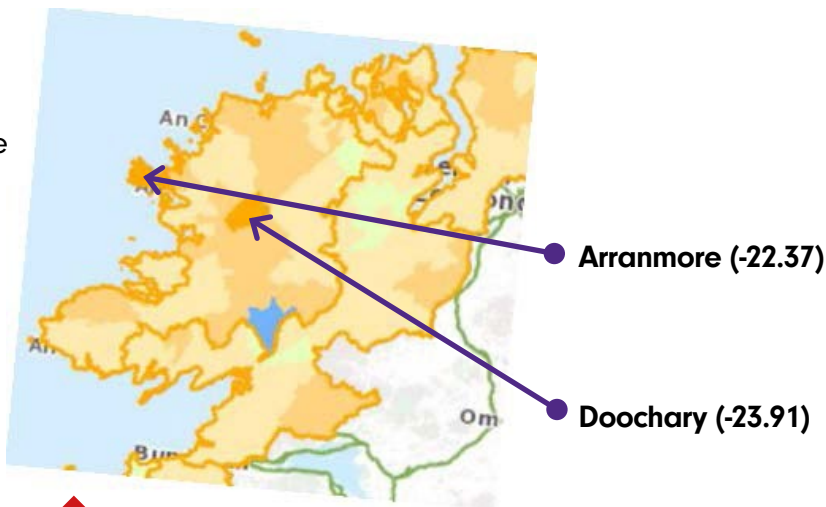
# What We Found Out

## People's Experience of DLDC



## About Our County

**Insight:** Donegal has above average levels of **deprivation**, with pockets experiences considerable deprivation.

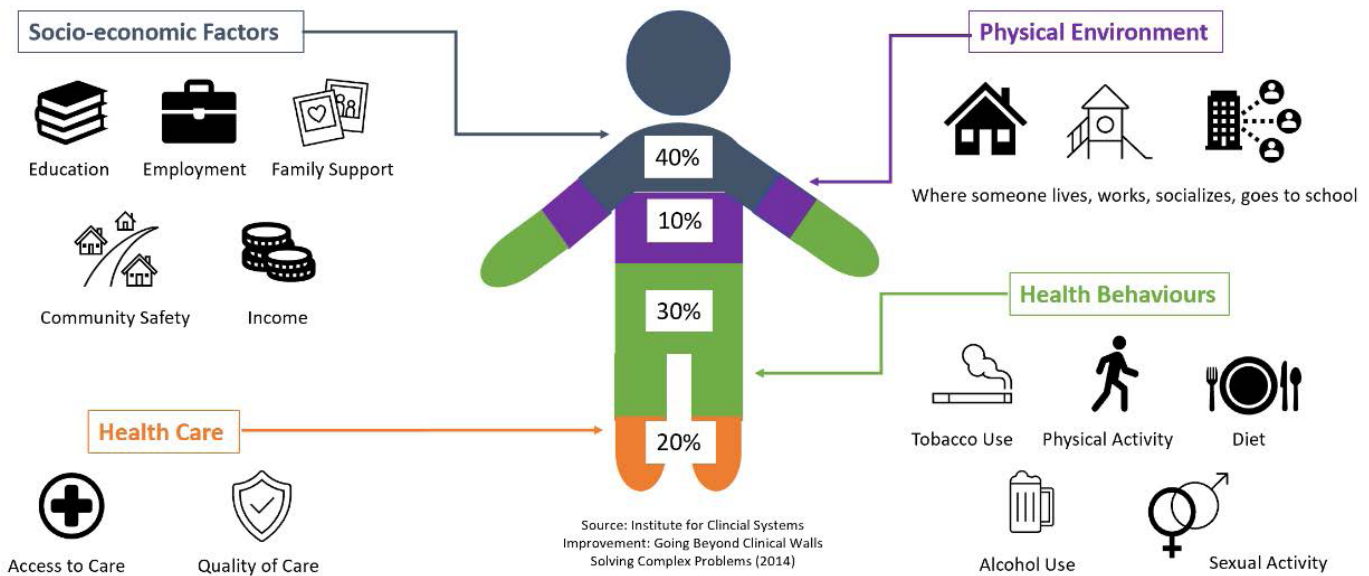


**Insight:** Donegal has persistently high levels of **unemployment** relative to the national average.

**Insight:** Donegal has one of lowest levels of **educational attainment** in Ireland. Over one in five persons (21.9%) in Donegal, aged 15 and over, had not been educated beyond **primary level**, the highest for any county.

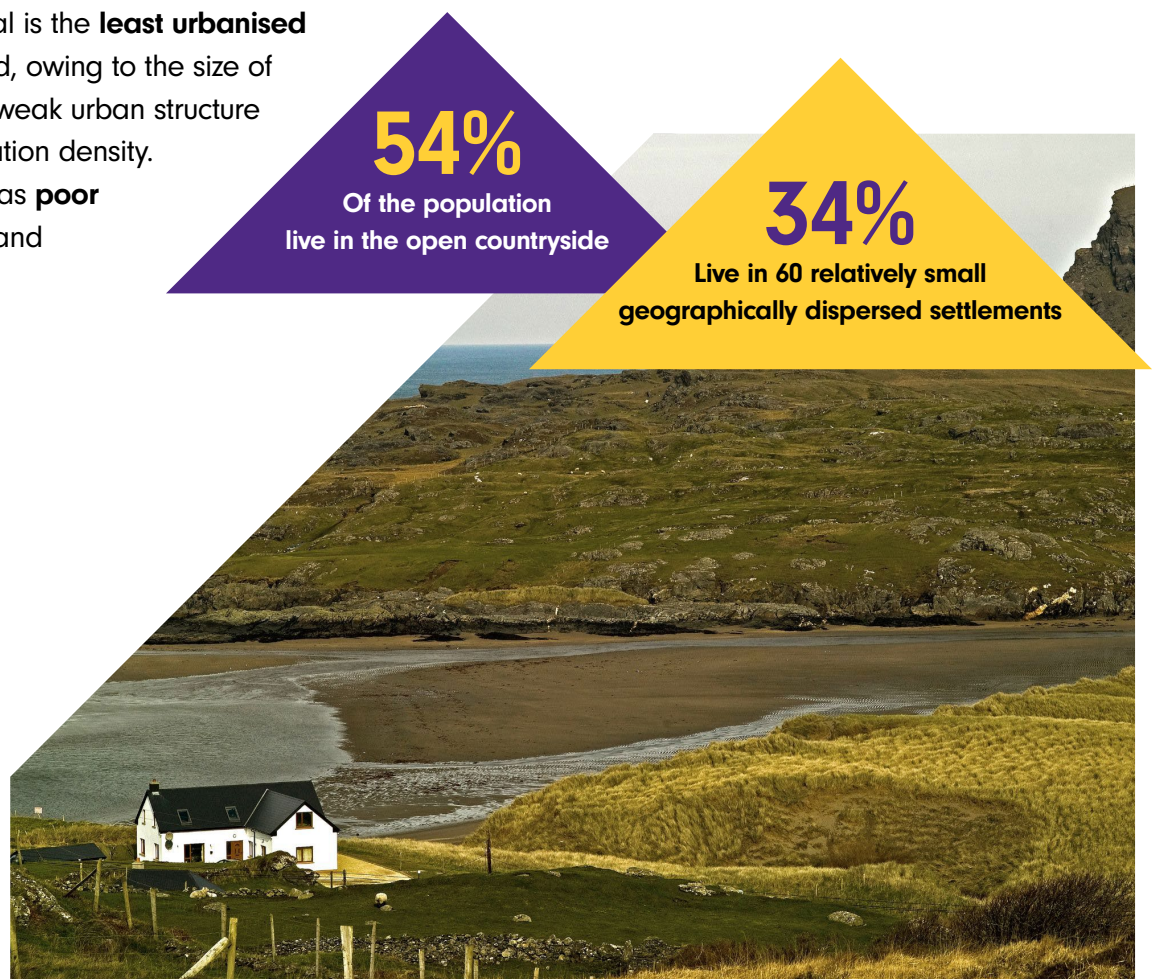


**Insight:** Employment and education are key social determinants of the health and wellbeing of an individual.



Source: [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

**Insight:** Donegal is the **least urbanised** county in Ireland, owing to the size of the county, our weak urban structure and low population density. Donegal also has **poor transport** links and infrastructure.



**Insight:** As the impacts of **climate change and the environment** are ever-increasing, it poses a risk to the quality of life in Donegal, with the most disadvantaged disproportionately impacted.



Increased incidence of heavy rainfall, flooding and storms



Increased temperatures could impact on human wellbeing



Changes to natural ecosystem



Ocean warming and acidification



Rising sea-level and inundation of low-lying habitats and communities

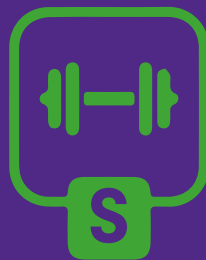
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**Insight:** Population by Ethnic and Cultural background 87.2% of the population are White Irish, 5.9% coming from another White non-Traveller background. 0.5% of the population are Black/Black Irish, 1.2% are Asian/Asian Irish and 0.4% are Irish Travellers (Census 2016)





# About Our Organisation



## STRENGTHS

### **Responsiveness Relationships Reach**

DLDC is good at being responsive to emerging needs, building, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders and having a wide reach across the county



## WEAKNESSES

### **Collaboration Communication Clarity of Focus**

There is a need for DLDC to improve internal collaboration, internal and external communication and clarity of focus



## OPPORTUNITITES

### **Better Place to Work**

The is an opportunity for DLDC to become a better place to work. We need to find additional means of improving staff wellbeing, retention and attracting new talent



## THREATS

### **Financial Dependency**

DLDC has a financial dependency risk on a number of key programmes

# Our Guiding Principles, Actions and Key Results

The following section outlines the specific actions to be delivered to achieve our 11 guiding principles across four strategic objectives. Included against each of the guiding principles are a set of key results, enabling the organisation to be accountable for our actions and report on our impact. We will be using OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) as the process to deliver our plan. Objectives are goals and intents, Key Results are time-bound and measurable milestones under these goals and intents.



## **UNLOCKING POTENTIAL**

Supporting people into sustainable work



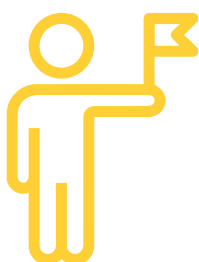
## **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES**

Build capacity of local communities



## **PEOPLE, PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION**

Attract, retain, and nurture talent and enable them to the implementers of our strategy through collaboration, communications, and clarity of focus



## **LEADING THE WAY**

Excellent governance, compliance and financial systems that ensure resilience, sustainability and efficiency





## UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

Supporting people into sustainable work

Guiding Principle	Key results	Actions
To support people towards, and into, sustainable work in a people- centric way	Number of people supported into sustainable employment	Provide employability supports to unemployed and underemployed people
	Number of people with enhanced employability, e.g. improved self-efficacy, improved skills	
	Employer Engagement score in annual stakeholder survey	Support local community groups/social enterprises to create employment, e.g. successful CSP applications, Shared Services Model, etc.
		Develop stronger relationships with industry and employers to better understand needs. Be a reliable source to advertise vacancies and seek candidates.
To ensure that supports are highly targeted at those who need them the most, e.g. people living in the most deprived areas, experiencing multiple disadvantage	Outreach campaign to raise awareness among target groups and areas of DLDC supports	Number of total supports dedicated to target groups/ areas across all programmes



## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Build capacity of local communities

Guiding Principle	Key results	Actions
To build capacity of local communities and social enterprises to address social inclusion, good governance and sustaining the environment	Number of local community groups/social enterprises progressed along the Community Development Matrix	Build the capacity of local community groups and social enterprises with particular focus on governance and committee skills
	Value of funding secured/ trading income generated with DLDC support	Support local community groups and social enterprises to secure funding and increase trading income
	Number of volunteers placed and retained for 6 months in high-quality roles	Support local community groups, social enterprises to recruit and retain volunteers
	Number of community groups with increased awareness of climate change  Value of funding allocated and number of local community groups delivering initiatives to address climate change	Generate awareness among local community groups and social enterprises about the impact of climate change as well as mitigation and adaptation strategies
	Number of Networks created and supported  Number of Community Groups benefiting from belonging to Networks	Support the development of theme based community networks



## PEOPLE, PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Attract, retain, and nurture the talent and enable them to the implementers of our strategy through collaboration, communications, and clarity of focus

Guiding Principle	Key results	Actions
To ensure that DLDC is a good place to work	HR and H&S policies, procedures and benefits updated and designed to attract, retain and nurture talent  Staff satisfaction score in annual staff survey  Staff retention numbers	HR and H&S policies and procedures are up-to-date and easy to use
		Launch the DLDC High-Five
		Introduce staff health and wellbeing initiatives
		Introduce flexible working
		Introduce four volunteering days per annum to volunteer with a DLDC-affiliated local community group during work hours
		Continuous professional development for all people managers
		Develop a culture of innovation and a tolerance for calculated risk through the development of an Internal Innovation Fund
To ensure that our strength in relationship-building/reach is further enhanced by formalising our approach	Stakeholder relationship score in annual stakeholder survey.  Number of agencies and sectoral partners reporting positively on our community response approaches on annual survey	Provide ongoing learning and development in relationship-building best practice
		Strengthen relationships with local community groups and social enterprises to better understand how we can support them
		Strengthen relationships with agencies to better understand their work
		Develop a working environment where information is shared with colleagues

Guiding Principle	Key results	Actions
To ensure our approach to crisis management is further enhanced through staff capacity-building	Company response team established	Create a company crisis response team and provide crisis management training
To redesign our organisational structure, processes and work environment to improve internal collaboration across programmes and team	<p>Number of staff reporting improved collaboration and positive work environment in annual survey</p> <p>Reduced administration time involved in project work</p>	<p>Develop cross-programme outward objectives with shared responsibility across Departments for delivery</p> <p>Develop new systems and processes that reduce administration workload</p>
To ensure that internal and external communication central to everything we do	Increase in metrics across social media, media coverage, and internal communications	Develop a communication strategy in line with the Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025 which identifies clear measures of success for internal and external communications





## LEADING THE WAY

Excellent governance, compliance and financial systems that ensure resilience, sustainability and efficiency

Guiding Principle	Key results	Actions
To mitigate and adapt to climate change, committing to pursuing to be carbon neutrality as an organisation by 2030	Percentage reduction in carbon footprint	Calculate the organisations carbon footprint and implement measures to reduce carbon footprint to net zero
To ensure DLDC upholds the highest standards in Governance and Compliance and is more representative of the communities we work with	Compliance with the Charities Governance code and the introduction of policies of best practice	Undertake a comprehensive review of the governance of organisation
	Increase in nationality and gender diversity on structures	Review of structures to be more diverse and representative of the community
	Number of representations on behalf of marginalised communities	Advocate on behalf of marginalised communities with key stakeholders
To secure new funding streams which align with the Strategy 2023-2025	Increase in funding and trading income secured	Develop a system for identifying and appraising all possible funding opportunities and applying for funding



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Rialtas  
na hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta  
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Employment Affairs  
and Social Protection



An Roinn Cultúir,  
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta  
Department of Culture,  
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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