OWENINNY WIND FARM COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

STRATEGIC PLAN

Date: October 2022

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1.   Introduction & Overview

The Board of Oweninny have approved this plan whilst recognising that this is a step in the process of ensuring that the Fund will deliver a positive social and economic impact for the associated communities. There is a recognition that community plans require support from more than the Oweninny Fund but the Board have reviewed the outputs and assessed them in the context of their role and function. They have examined the operation of the fund within the agreed Terms of Reference in order to meet the needs set out by the communities and will progress with the ongoing administration of the fund acknowledging where the associated communities are at and how they will develop over the life of the Fund.

The report sets out the outcome of engagement with the associated communities, set in the broader context so that the activities supported by the Fund are complimentary and add value to other available community, national and EU funds. This is in recognition of the potential for Interagency co-operation to maximise the impact of the fund. The Board of Oweninny are committed to playing their part delivering impact in the associated communities.

2.   Research & Consultation Methodology

2.1   Overview of Research Methodology
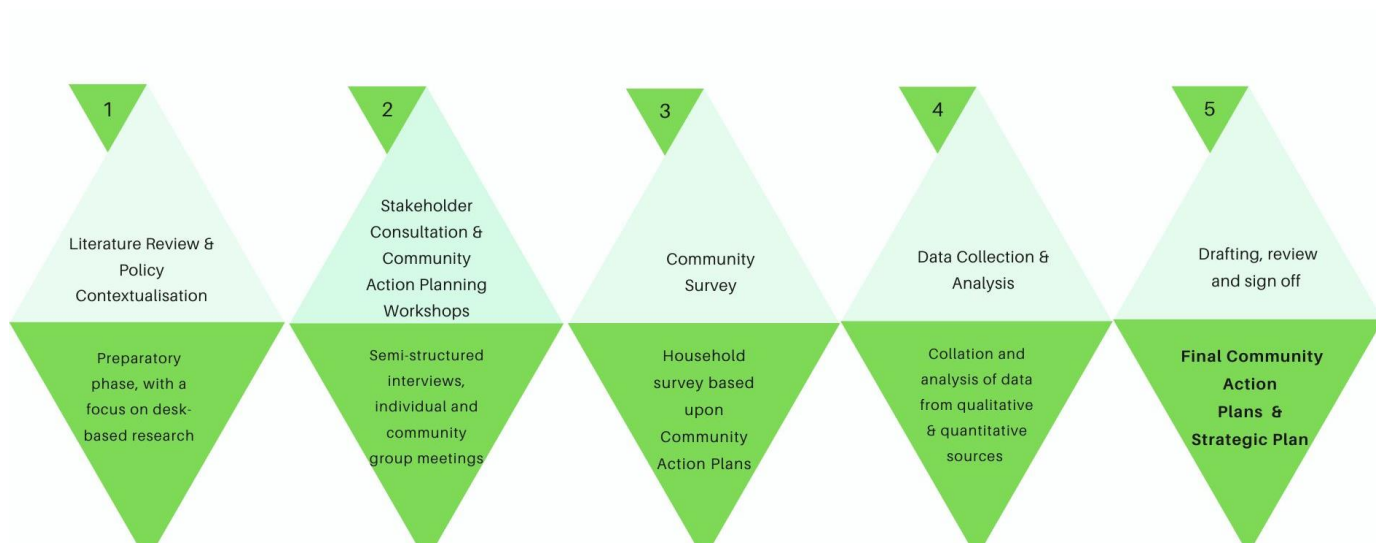
FIGURE 1: METHODOLOGY PROCESS CHART

2.1.1   Demographic and Policy contextualisation

A demographic and policy contextualisation process sought to develop a clear understanding of the study area and of the challenges and opportunities experienced by the individuals and communities living within. These desk-based exercises drew on a variety of sources, including national and local policy and strategy documents. Please see Section 3.1 for further details.

2.1.2   Stakeholder consultation

Informed by the Demographic and Policy Contextualisation, the stakeholder consultation was based on an analysis of semi-structured interviews and upon the outcomes of focus group meetings conducted with the following stakeholder groups. Please note a full list of stakeholders is included in Appendix II:

- Community Representatives & Community Groups

The purpose of the stakeholder consultation was to work with local individuals and community groups in the six identified communities within the target area (please see Appendix IV) order to ensure their voice, and views were heard and reflected in the strategic and community goals and actions. Stakeholder consultation was carried out via semi-structured interviews using guiding research questions. The interviews were informal and conversational in nature, and questions varied depending on the stakeholder group to which the interviewees belonged.

The process then evolved from a further round of in person meetings, to Community Action Planning meetings, the template for which was circulated in advance in order to give groups time to think about their approach, and potential projects.

These sessions were action orientated - Community Engagement Partners Ltd (CEP) worked with community groups to explore their vision, and sought to identify clear, well defined projects. CEP offered one of two routes to the community groups - that CEP work on the write up of the Community Action Plan and then revert back the following week, or alternatively the community group could work on the plan and send to CEP. CEP did not have a preference and as it transpired, all community groups opted for CEP to write up the plan, and circulate back to the community group for review. CEP subsequently wrote up all six plans, breaking down large projects into a series of tasks, and circulated them back to the community groups for their input and eventual approval.

In some areas, CEP were engaging with multiple community groups simultaneously. In such cases, CEP sought to collate different views and opinions into one document, which was then circulated back to the individual group for review. In this way, CEP sought to develop each Community Action Plan through a consensus based approach.

This process was iterative, and in some areas took longer than expected. However, there was significant value in this process, as it became clear to community groups that their views were being reflected clearly in their local plans.

The above is a brief synopsis of a longer process, full details of which are outlined in Appendix III – Overview of Community Engagement Process.

- Statutory Agencies & Board (including Mayo County Council & Oweninny Power DAC)

  As CEP identified additional stakeholders relevant to the project / area, they were sequentially contacted for input into the Strategic Plan and Community Action Plans. For example, in relation to trails development CEP reached out to National Parks and Wildlife, and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in relation to retrofitting / the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS).

  As a key stakeholder, representatives from Oweninny Power DAC were consulted to inform the process, and offer specific input with regards to plans around trail development etc.

2.1.3 Household survey

In late June 2022, a survey was designed which summarised the Community Vision, and priority projects for each of the six target areas, as had been identified through the action planning process. The survey was circulated through the project database, local community pages, and parish newsletters amongst other avenues. In Bellacorrick Ballymunnelly and Eskeragh, local community groups circulated paper copies, to encourage as many responses as possible. The survey closed on July 8th, after a final reminder was circulated.

Although 505 people answered the "where are you from" question only 350 gave any substantive answers, a situation spread across all communities. Since the survey was designed so that people could only see that part of the survey which was relevant to their community, it is speculated that a substantial portion of the uncompleted responses arose from people, not unnaturally, checking on the ideas in other communities. Nonetheless 350 completed responses was considered to be a very good level of completed response.

CEP analysed the survey results for each community, and provided a summary document to each of the community groups who had been consulted, asking if they wished to make any final adjustments to the plan based on the survey results. Some small changes were requested, and duly incorporated by CEP which focussed in the main on the provision of additional details, or clarifications. The Moygownagh vision was amended slightly based on feedback from the survey to emphasise the importance of making the community a diverse and welcoming place to live for people of all ages.

CEP also provided to each of the community groups involved in the consultation, a list of suggested new projects identified through the survey. This can act as a library or bank of ideas which the community may decide to explore further or act upon in the coming years.

2.1.4   Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted throughout the overall consultation, proving to be an iterative process where data was collated and incorporated into the plans on an ongoing basis.

Informed by the stakeholder and community consultation, as well as the data generated through the research process, the thematic focuses of the Strategic Plan were identified prior to the development of the Individual Community Action Plans. This process ensured that all Plans were cognizant of the overall strategic objectives for the area, and contributed to same.

2.1.5   Drafting, review & approval

The final stage of the consultation and planning process entailed the collation of all relevant information into one document, wherein the Community Action Plans sit under the umbrella of a cohesive Strategic Plan. The draft report was presented to Mayo County Council in mid-August for review, and presented to the Board of the Oweninny Wind Farm Fund in September 2022 for approval and adoption mid November.

2.2   Methodological Challenges

While CEP is satisfied that ultimately the process was both incisive and inclusive, the methodology was not without its challenges. Amongst those experienced by the team were the following -

- Identification of community groups
  As outlined in Section 2.1.2 the process involved in the identification of community groups was complex, and time-consuming. However, it was also a necessary and foundational element of the consultation, as it was critical that consultation engaged with groups with the necessary local political capital.
- Fragmented community structures
  The absence of representative / umbrella community structures was also notable, and actions to address this form part of the recommendations of this report. Given the scale of investment into the area through various community benefit and other funds, the establishment of locally elected community organisations would be very useful in terms of consultation and co-ordination, and as a key driver of local development.

3.   Brief Area Profile

3.1   Policy Context

Any development which takes place on foot of these plans should be consistent with national and local policy objectives. A number of these documents were examined and some principle policy approaches identified in order to provide a context for the proposed plans.

Key Document	Relevance
Mayo Local Economic Community Plan	The Local Economic and Community Plan is a very important policy document with regard to economic and community development in the county. It is probably not useful to review the current plan as new LECPs are presently being prepared throughout the country. What is important is that the Oweninny communities proactively engage with the LECP process and bring their goals and objectives to the process. It is not likely that policies or projects for specific community areas will be included but, what is important, is that goals and objectives are included in the LECP which reflect those of the local communities and that nothing is included which might act as a barrier to the achievement of those goals and objectives. This plan can act as a guiding document in that regard and it would be beneficial if the various communities who have been engaged in this process work together to represent the overall interests of the area within the process, to the members of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) who will approve the community part of the plan and to the Elected Members of the Local Authority who will adopt the final plan.
Mayo County Development Plan	The Mayo County Development Plan is a key strategic document which guides physical development and land-use throughout the county. Any policy or project proposed within this document, must be consistent with the policies and objectives set out in the Development Plan. In addition, the said plan must be consistent with national policy as set out in the National Development Plan and the National Planning Framework and with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Consistency with the County Development Plan, therefore, means consistency with those key national and regional policies also. The Mayo County development Plan is in the process of review at present, and a new plan will shortly be adopted. It was considered appropriate, therefore, to review the Interim Plan rather than the existing plan in this context.

Many parts of the plan are relevant to this document. However, since each of the community plans proposes physical development, the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategies are particularly important. In that regard, three of the six settlements in this document are deemed to be towns in the CDP, as follows:

Crossmolina is a Tier 3 Self-Sustaining Town
Bangor Erris is a Tier 4 Rural Settlement
Moygownagh is a Tier 5 Rural Village

The scale and nature of the developments proposed in this document would fall within the policies set out for settlements of those types.

The remaining settlements fall within areas designated as rural areas. They are all located within areas designated as *Category 2 - Remaining Rural Areas.* These areas comprise all rural areas outside of the identified pressure areas under strong urban influence. It is recognised that sustaining smaller community areas is important and as such, it is considered appropriate to facilitate rural housing in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. In these areas, the Council recognises the importance of retaining population and supporting the rural economy, while seeking to consolidate the existing rural town and village network.

In rural areas not classified as in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence, there is a presumption in favour of facilitating the provision of single housing in the countryside, based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, except in the case of single houses seeking to locate along Mayo's Scenic Routes/Scenic Routes with Scenic Views or Coastal Areas/Lakeshores (See RHO 3 below). The types of development proposed in this plan would fall within those policies.

With regard to enterprise development, it is a policy of the Interim plan *To support the development of a Smart County to develop and diversify the rural economy, to build on local enterprise and infrastructure assets, to drive innovations around energy, transport, agri-food, tourism, e-services and remote working.*

In addition, another policy is stated as being *To support rural entrepreneurship and the development of micro businesses (generally less than 10 no. employees) in rural areas, where environmental and landscape impact is minimal and such developments do not generate significant or undue traffic. This objective shall not apply to sites accessed from the National Road Network.*

Additionally, with regard to enterprise it is the Interim Development Plan policy *To support remote working in the rural*

area, at an appropriate scale, for enterprise/businesses that do not require visiting members of the public, subject to normal planning considerations.

Finally, it is a policy *To facilitate homebased economic activity that allows employers, enterprises and entrepreneurs the option of working from home or a local hub to reduce commuting, and congestion and facilitate a low carbon county.*

From all of these policies, it is clear that the policies of the Development Plan would not be a barrier to any of the developments proposed within the community plans. It should be noted, however, that this is with regard to these policies only and that other policies including those with regard to with regard to traffic safety and water and wastewater infrastructure, will also be relevant in specific cases.

With regard to community facilities, the Interim Development Plan states that *Community infrastructure is an essential part of all communities. Facilities such as community centres, sports centres, libraries and playgrounds can serve as a focal point for the communities they serve.*

They also provide venues for local sporting, cultural, community, education and social events. The provision of good quality community facilities in existing and developing areas is a key element in the development of sustainable, healthy communities across the county.

Community facilities are referenced on many occasions within the Community Plans and such developments would appear to be aligned, in principle at least, with the policies of the Interim County Development Plan.

From a tourism perspective, the principal focus of the tourism-related developments in the area are to do with Wild Neiphin and walking and cycling. The Development Plan includes a very broad range of tourism policies which would, in general, support the tourism developments identified in the community plans. Crossmolina is recognised as having considerable opportunity for tourism development but, to some extent, much of the rest of the area tends to fall between stools unless it is on one of the major walking routes in the County. One of the challenges for the communities in the area in this regard, is to create a walking/cycling resource of scale, which can be a destination in its own right and to make sure that, when plans for other adjacent routes are being developed, connectivity to the resource within the Oweninny Plan area is included.

Local Development Strategy	The Local Development Strategy for Mayo is prepared by the LCDC and has both an implementing partners and animation partner for the LEADER Programme. The area covered by this plan is supported by two of the implementing partners, Moy Valley Resources (Animation partner) and North East Mayo LEADER Partnership (Implementing Partner). The current LEADER Programme is coming to an end and a new Local Development Strategy is likely to be undertaken in the relatively near future. As with the LECP it is important that the area represent itself in a coherent way and the same comments apply as to the LECP process. There is too much detail in the existing Local development Strategy to include here but it is worth noting the key objectives which are as follows.

1. To support the development and improve the capacity of rural tourism providers to develop and create compelling and motivating visitor experiences both geographically and thematically throughout Mayo, thus increasing local employment, visitor stay and spend.
2. To increase employment and income generation and promote diversification of the rural economy in Mayo through inclusive models of support for local enterprises and entrepreneurs.
3. To support the regeneration of rural towns.
4. To contribute to the provision of reliable high-speed broadband in all areas of the county, particularly in hard to reach communities, and to ensure that people are educated in the use of IT for business and social purposes. These actions will complement national initiatives on rural broadband infrastructure.
5. To support the development of community facilities, community initiatives and targeted services for hard-to-reach communities.
6. Strategic interventions to provide services and facilities for young people, including youth mentoring, training, training of volunteers, youth facilities and equipment on a stand- alone basis or through existing community groups and youth agencies.
7. To support awareness creation, feasibility studies and practical initiatives relating to local water conservation plans and recycling schemes.
8. To promote and enhance biodiversity by awareness raising initiatives and guidance, and practical initiatives.
9. To promote local and community-based awareness raising and investment initiatives which mitigate the impact of climate change, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and enhance local energy independence.

It will be noted that many of these policies provide a good opportunity for the development and implementation of projects in the Oweninny area. Though funding is limited at this point in

the cycle, it is worth considering how future funding can be accessed and how the Oweninny Community Benefit Fund can assist in leveraging some of this funding for the area.

Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025	Our Rural Future is a key whole of Government document which sets out policies and actions for the development of sustainable and enriching communities in rural Ireland. All rural projects in the future will need to be consistent with the vision and approaches in this policy. Some of the key goals are –
	• Optimising Digital Connectivity • Supporting Employment and Careers in Rural Areas • Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages • Enhancing Participation, Leadership and Resilience in Rural Communities • Enhancing Public Services in Rural Areas • Transitioning to a Climate Neutral Society • Supporting the Sustainability of Agriculture, the Marine & Forestry
	These are very broad objectives but all of the goals and objectives as set out by the Oweninny communities fall under one or more of these policy goals.
	Our Rural Future also contains a wide range of actions to which various Government Departments are committed. These include the following which have been selected for their relevance to this area.
	• Implement the National Remote Work Strategy to facilitate employees in working from home, or from co-working spaces, which will support the retention of skilled people in rural areas. • Invest significantly in remote working facilities to support the retention of skilled people in rural communities and attract mobile talent to rural areas. • Expand the provision of free-to-use wireless internet connectivity in rural areas through the rollout of Broadband Connection Points and other initiatives such as the WiFi4EU public Wi-Fi networks and the Digital Innovation Programme. • Upgrade and reskill workers in sectors undergoing transformational technological change to adapt to new roles and new ways of working. • Assist rural economies to diversify into new sectors and markets by taking advantage of high speed broadband and new technologies. • Maximise our resources and strengths in the Green Economy to support employment opportunities for rural communities in areas such as renewable energy,

sustainable tourism, energy retrofitting, the Bioeconomy and the Circular Economy.

- Deliver a suite of new measures to support the development of Social Enterprises in rural areas to increase their social, economic and environmental impact and contribute to job creation locally.
- Further diversify tourism opportunities by strengthening Ireland's image as an outdoor activity holiday destination to the domestic and international markets.
- Invest in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support the growth in outdoor recreational tourism.
- Develop a Dark Skies Strategy for Ireland, with a focus on the opportunities it can create for rural communities and employment creation
- As part of the Town Centre First approach, provide seed capital to Local Authorities to provide serviced sites at cost in towns and villages, to allow individuals and families to build homes in rural centres.
- Examine the establishment of a Community Ownership Fund to help community groups and social enterprises to buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to be run as community-owned businesses.
- Support the development of Smart Towns and Villages which use innovative solutions to improve resilience, build on local strengths and maximise opportunities to create desirable places for people to live and work.
- Increase the number of places on the Rural Social Scheme, TÚS and Community Employment to support rural communities.
- Empower local communities and enhance community health and wellbeing by supporting heritage, arts, cultural activities and other activities to tackle social issues such as cohesion, rural isolation and mental health
- Update the Rural Housing Guidelines for planning authorities, to address rural housing in a broader rural development and settlement context.
- Provide improved rural public transport services and pilot new transport initiatives for people of all ages and abilities living in rural areas,
- Prioritise the development of microgeneration of renewable electricity, allowing people sell excess power back to the grid, through the establishment of a Microgeneration Support Scheme.
- Launch further calls for projects to be supported from the Climate Action Fund.
- Continue to develop Ireland's approach to a Just Transition away from fossil fuels
- Support rural communities to develop long-term cohesive Master Plans for their areas, to support an integrated place-based approach to rural development (aligned with the

	RSESs, County Development Plans, Local Development Plans and relevant national, regional and local policy objectives).
	It is worth reviewing all these actions to identify their implications for the Oweninny area. Again it is important that when actions arising from this policy are being implemented in Mayo, that the Oweninny communities take every opportunity to ensure that their area is properly considered and benefits from such actions to an appropriate extent. Ways in which the Oweninny Community Benefit Fund can be used to leverage specific actions in the area should always be considered.
National Development Plan (NDP), National Planning Framework (NPF) and Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy RESS	As noted above, while the NDP, NPF and REISS are important, they are reflected both in the Interim County development Plan and the Rural Development Policy and there is little additional benefit to be obtained through a detailed consideration of them here.

TABLE 1: POLICY CONTEXTUALISATION

3.2   Study area overview

The Oweninny Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund consists of a total of ten Electoral Divisions, as listed below. It is critical to note that this target area is a construct formed for administrative purposes relating to the fund, and care should be taken not to infer that the concept of "community" applies across the area as a whole. Nonetheless, the use of Electoral Divisions to determine the target area offers many advantages, not least that of having demographic data available, when compared to other methods such as linear distance from the wind farm. The following are the EDs involved.

- Bangor
- Bunaveala
- Crossmolina North and South
- Deel
- Derry
- Glenco / Skeskin
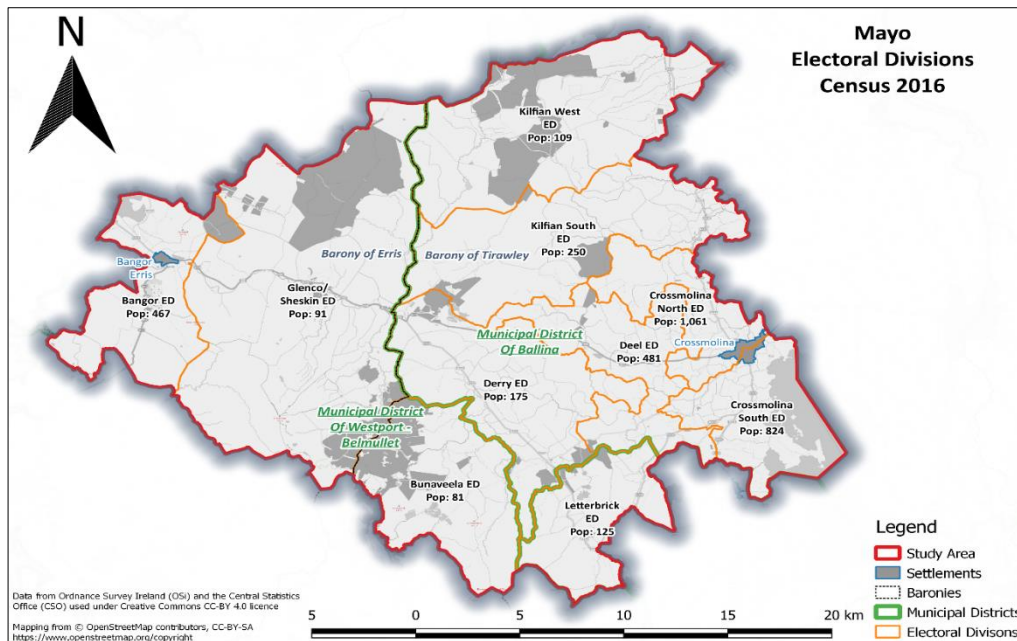- Kilfian South
- Kilfian West
- Letterbrick

FIGURE 2: MAP OF OWENINNY TARGET AREA – ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

The target area encompasses the Baronies of Erris and Tirawley, and the Municipal Districts of Ballina and Westport-Belmullet. The settlements of Bangor Erris to the West, with 306 residents and Crossmolina to the East with 1,885 are the main centres of population within the target area.

3.3   Population Trends

Between 2011 and 2016, the population of the target area decreased by 176 persons, or 4.58%. Developing a clear understanding of the age profile of the local population over time formed an important element of the community consultation, simply because age profile and trends have such a significant impact on the requirement for local services, and also population viability more generally.
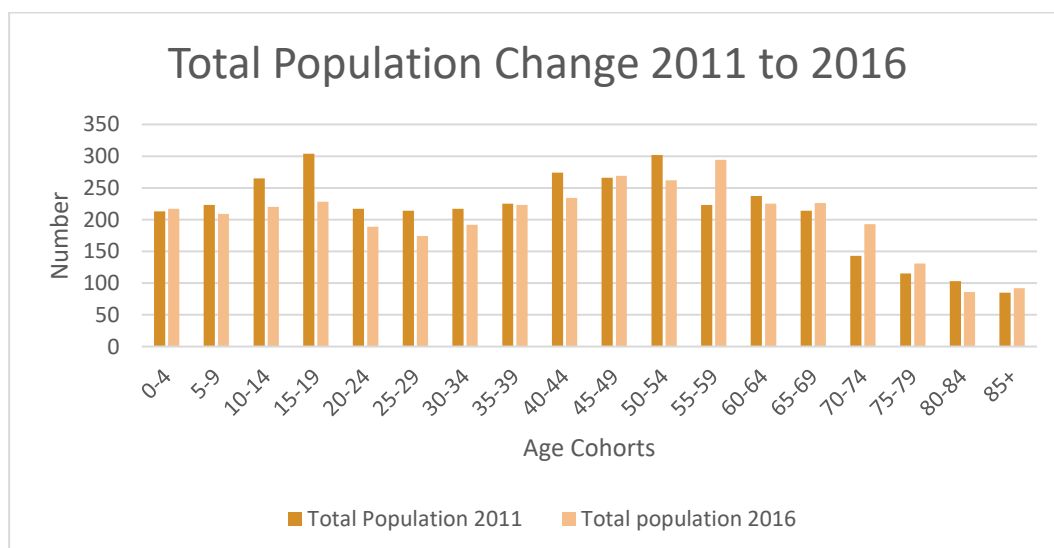

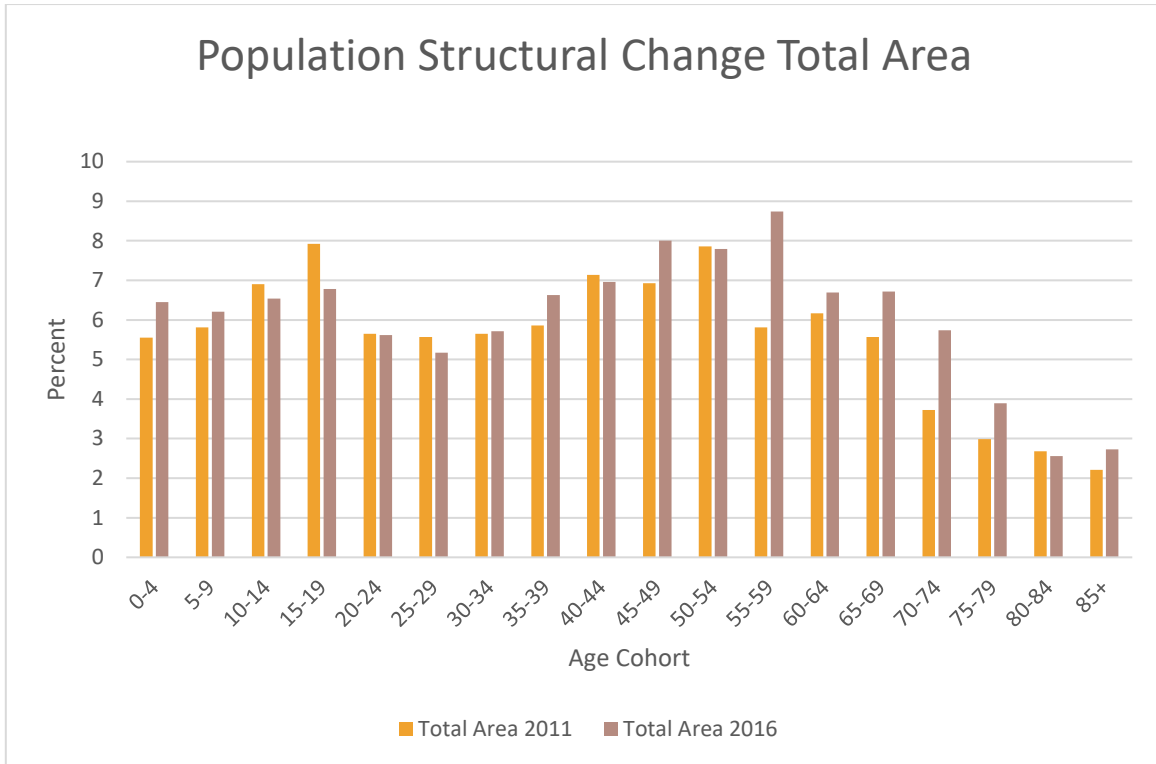**FIGURE 3: POPULATION CHANGE BETWEEN 2011 & 2016 (NUMBER)**

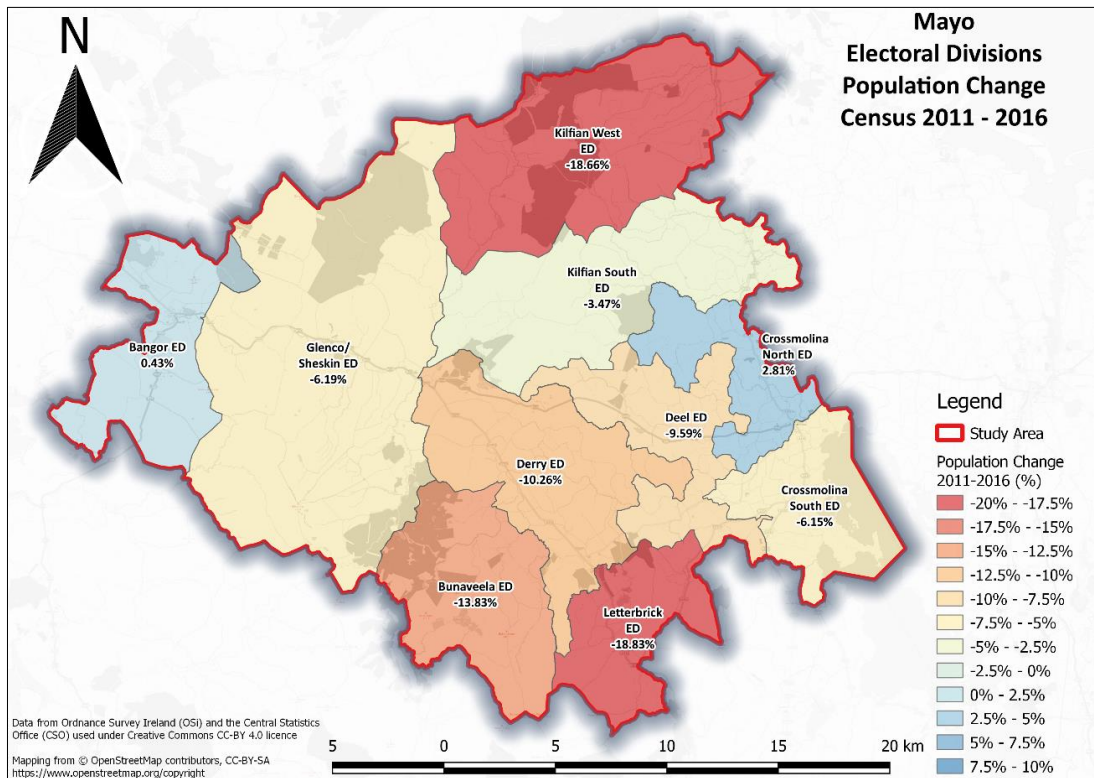**FIGURE 4: POPULATION CHANGE BETWEEN 2011 & 2016 (PERCENT)**

FIGURE 5: POPULATION CHANGE BY ELECTORAL DIVISION FROM 2011 – 2016

Following the initial analysis comparing the 2011 and 2016 census data, a historical analysis was conducted over the time period 1951 to 2016. Here, a clear trend emerges, where total population across all Electoral Divisions in the target area has decreased from 5,514 in 1951 to 3,664 in 2016 – a total population loss of 1,850. Of significant interest is that the combined population of Crossmolina North and South decreased by 18, meaning that virtually all population loss is in the "rural" Electoral Divisions.
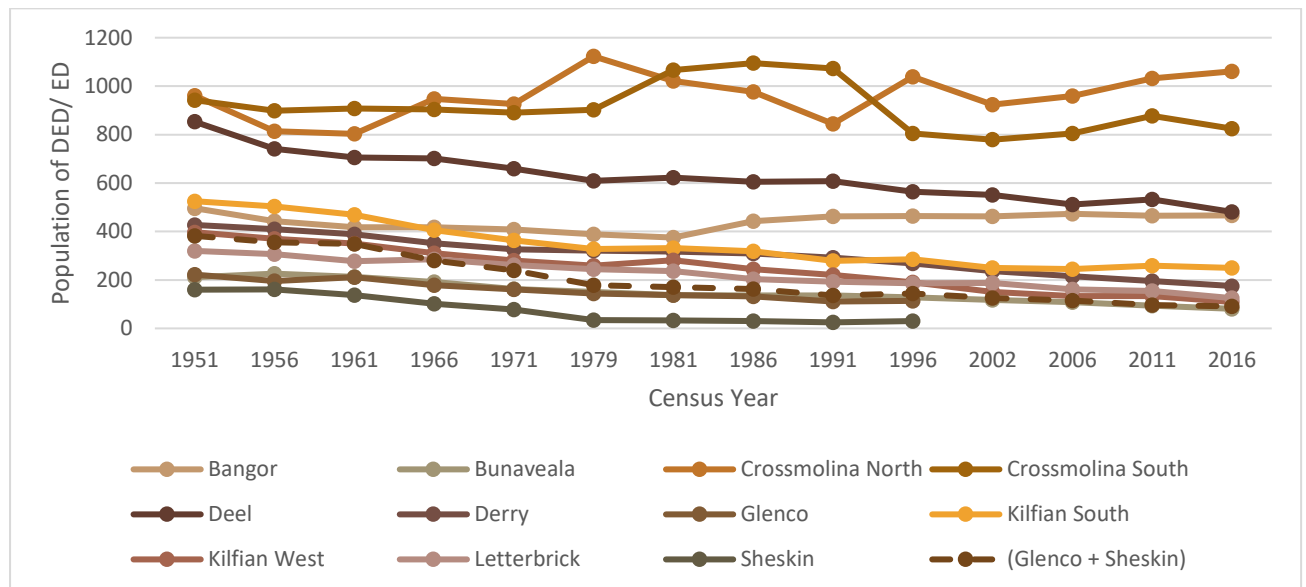

FIGURE 6: POPULATION CHANGE FROM 1951 – 2016

3.4 Households

The profile of households also appears to be changing over time; between 2011 and 2016, the number of 1 person households increased by 49. This issue surfaced during the consultation in terms of care for older persons, particularly around the provision of integrated living solutions within settlements, and is reflected in Community Action Plans, particularly that of Crossmolina.

Total Number of Households in Target Area 2016	**1448**
Rural	693
Urban (Crossmolina North / South EDs)	755

4. Vision & Strategic Objectives

4.1 Vision

In developing a vision for this area a number of contextual matters must be considered.

1. This is not a natural strategic area, either administratively or functionally. From an administrative point of view, while it is all located in County Mayo, it covers parts of two different Municipal Districts. From a functional point of view, different parts of the area tend to use different settlements as their principal service settlements with some gravitating towards Crossmolina and some towards Bangor Erris.

2. Different communities have different visions for their areas and have different priorities. This is, of course, quite appropriate but it makes it more difficult to identify strategic commonalities which can be addressed throughout the area.

3. Different communities are impacted on by the wind farm in different ways. Some feel that they are impacted by their proximity and the visual impacts they experience, whereas for others the impacts are more indirect, such as those associated with the passage of heavy traffic through their areas. For some others the impact is even less direct. These different impacts influence how individual communities view the wind farm and their expectations of the fund.

4. As an area, it generally falls outside a variety of development zones. It is not part of any of the enterprise zones within the Development Plan, for example; many of the major tourism developments identified in policy documents do not refer to the area, although Crossmolina is identified as a tourism centre and one major walking route passes through the area. Some of the Wild Neiphin National Park is contained within the south-western part of the area and can provide a basis for the development of tourism services. However, the Visitor Centre for the National Park is located to the West of this and outside the target area, which is a disadvantage to the area in terms of developing tourism-related activity associated with that resource. It should be noted that the wind farm has developed an Interpretative Visitor Centre within the wind farm site itself that can contribute to tourism development in the area. In addition to attracting tourists, the Visitor Centre is also available to local communities for use.

5. The N59 passes right through the area. This can be seen as a positive in that is provides a traffic flow the harnessing of which can be attempted. On the other hand, it presents a policy problem in respect of roadside development which is normally not permitted along national routes where the maximum speed limit applies.

6. With the exception of Crossmolina, the populations of the settlements are small which creates a challenge for the establishment and maintenance of community facilities even when the wider hinterland populations of these areas are taken into account.

7. Most of the area is within 30 minutes commute or less of major employment centres where job creation has been very positive over the last number of years and where additional opportunities for employment for the people of the Oweninny area are and will continue to be available.

8. The Oweninny Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund cannot be used to support projects which are the responsibility of Statutory organisations or the direct replacement of statutory funding or projects that duplicate work or resources (including personnel) other third parties have already committed to or completed in the area. The Fund does not normally support statutory or other accountable bodies unless they can provide evidence that the project is community-led, open, accessible and for the benefit of the community and not a statutory responsibility. For example, if a school wishes to apply to the Fund, they must demonstrate that their project would not normally be funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

Taking all of these considerations into account, therefore, and having regard to the considerations which emerged during the community consultations, a proposed vision for the overall area might be as follows-

Through collaborative action within and between communities, and with the support of the relevant agencies and the Oweninny Wind Farm Fund, this area will be one which provides a sustainable and high quality of life for all its residents; it will also be an area where employment opportunities are created and maintained and, where direct access is available to employment, social and commercial services.

4.2   Strategic Objectives

The following strategic objectives are put forward as critical elements in achieving the vision set out above. It is not suggested that they cover all aspects of the needs of the area but they do address some key items. It is also not suggested that all elements of all goals will be suitable for support by the Oweninny Wind Farm Fund, however, they do form an important part of the context within which the fund operates and their achievement, through whatever means, will help to ensure that the benefits of the fund expenditure are maximised.

Strategic Objective 1: To provide facilities and services to enable a high quality of life for the people of the area

Focus Areas

The focus areas of this objective are the various services and activities which will contribute to a high quality of life for the people of the area. Research has indicated a number of key items which are related to quality of life. These include –

- Access to services (e.g. health, education, social services, utilities, supermarkets, pharmacies, leisure services), both public and private
- Employment and career opportunities
- The maintenance of face-to-face social interaction
- The availability and cost of transport
- The security and feelings of security of the population
- Sense of agency regarding decisions which affect the individual and the community

Many of these considerations are reflected in the individual community plans, which can also be supported at a strategic level. It is noted that various communities have some similar projects in mind

e.g. community meeting places. While it is quite appropriate that some of these facilities are provided in each community, it will also be important in some situations that the relationship between others is considered and that some inter-community assessment of projects takes place. It is also worth considering how the quality of life in each community can be maximised and how inter-community projects can contribute to this outcome. One example in this regard is public transport, which is a key resource in the creation of easy access to services, particularly those which are likely to be provided in one location only in the area.

Goals

1.1   That a quality-of-life framework be developed for the target area which identifies and prioritises specific needs.

1.2   That the way in which each element of the quality-of-life framework will be maximised in each community be considered

Actions
- Develop a quality-of-life framework for the target area which identifies and prioritises specific needs
- All communities to consider how each element of the quality-of-life framework can be maximised for its members and households including through inter-community projects
- Identify specific actions to be prioritised both at community and inter-community levels

Strategic Objective 2: To stimulate an increase or at a minimum the maintenance of the populations in each community area

Focus Areas

The long-term future of each of these communities is related to the population it can maintain. If a population becomes too low it will not have the critical mass to provide even the basic social interaction required for a viable community. The absolute population level may fall in any event as household size falls but an increase in the number of households in a community can address this. One of the ways in which this issue can be addressed is by making the areas attractive places in which to live. Some of the issued addressed under the quality of life goal will help contribute to this Strategic Objective.

Goals

2.1 That sufficient social and economic services are provided and maintained which would be available to facilitate population maintenance and growth.

Actions
- Each community will work with the Local Authority to identify appropriate services required for that community
- Put in place an inter-community organisation to facilitate the provision of services at different locations throughout the area e.g. rural bus service, community facilities

2.2 That sufficient housing is available in each community to support and maintain population size.

Actions
- Put in place an inter-community organisation to identify vacant and abandoned dwellings with the intention of working with the owners to bring these dwellings onto the rental or for sale market

- Put in place an inter-community organisation to identify potential occupants of available dwellings and to market these dwellings to those potential occupants
- Consider establishing an area-wide Approved Housing Body (AHB) or working on an area basis with an existing AHB to draw up and implement a programme for the development of social housing as required across the area

Strategic Objective 3: That similar proposals at community level, particularly with regard to tourism facilities be coordinated to help the creation of a critical mass of such facilities and that the area develop an identify for tourism marketing

Focus Areas

The potential of tourism development has been identified in a number of community plans including the development of trails and small-scale tourism facilities. This is likely to be more effective and better able to attract funding if there is a degree of integration between these proposals.

Goals

3.1 That an overall tourism development strategy for the area would be developed in order to maximise visitor numbers and the financial and employment return from tourism activity

3.2 That the planned tourism-related facilities in the area would have regard to each other when specific plans are being developed and that their development and management would be coordinated and integrated

3.3 That the area would develop a unique brand identity for tourism promotion and marketing and that this would be used by public bodies, communities and individual service providers alike

Actions

- Development of a Tourism Development Strategy brief which takes account of specific tourism development proposals
- Commissioning of Tourism Development Strategy for the area
- Sharing of tourism development proposals between communities
- Development of an integrated plan for the individual development proposals, though these would still be developed separately by each community
- Commissioning of a brand development exercise perhaps by the body mentioned at 4.2 below
- Promotion of agreed brand to all relevant parties

Strategic Objective 4: That an inter-community representative organisation be put in place to represent the area as a whole with regard to matters of common interest

Focus Areas

As noted a number of times, each community has its own priorities and priority projects. It has also needs to be noted here, however, that some matters will require inter-community action and that systems need to be in place to allow agreement on what such action should be and as to the stance to be adopted with regard to draft proposals and policies. As was noted above, the area overall does not always benefit when different policies and programmes are being developed and implemented. It is important that there is an overall body which can represent the needs of the area and which can make sure that those needs are considered when policies are being developed and implemented and that any policies which would inhibit the development of the area would be avoided.

Goals

4.1 That a body representative of each community identified in this strategy would be established with clear terms of reference and decision-making processes

4.2 That the representative body would –

- Facilitate participation in policy development opportunities such as those associated with the LECP, the County Development Plan, Climate Action Plan, Local Development Strategy, Visitor Development Strategy and Local Transport Strategy
- Coordinate the development of projects with an area-wide focus and impact
- Facilitate the consideration of the impact on the whole area of projects being developed by one community but which will serve the whole area

Actions

- Put a process in place through which each community will identify representatives to a central representative body
- Provide facilitated sessions for this group of representatives through which a Terms of Reference will be prepared by that body
- Seek the endorsement of the individual communities of the Draft Terms of Reference
- Develop an Action Plan for the representative body including its processes for developing inputs and responses to policy development processes.

Strategic Objective 5: That specific supports would be put in place first and foremost for those communities closest to the wind farm.

Focus Areas

In the first instance, the focus area for this objective is those communities who are directly adjacent to the to the wind farm to ensure they are the immediate beneficiaries of the Fund. Overtime, the Fund will naturally radiate outwards from this area to communities further away.

Goals

5.1 That details of post-primary education scholarships for those in particular areas be developed and agreed
5.2 That details of retrofitting of houses and what is involved be developed and agreed in conjunction with Government Agencies (i.e. SEAI) who manage the overall retrofitting scheme in Ireland
That local communities work with SEAI to strengthen the capacity of existing Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC's), and to establish SEC's where there are gaps in coverage across the area; in order to access technical expertise and leverage SEAI funding

Actions

- Develop draft proposal for post-primary education scholarships including, but not limited to:
  - Fund allocation per year
  - Number of scholarships per annum
  - Means of application
  - Means of assessment
  - Eligible Courses
  - Costs to be supported
  - Terms and Conditions of Scheme
- Develop draft proposal for retrofitting scheme including but not limited to –
  - Formation of Sustainable Energy Community
  - Financing options available to residents
  - Fund allocation available per annum
  - Eligibility Criteria

- o Means of application
- o Means of assessment
- o Retrofitting proposals to be supported
- o Government Supports available to residents

5. Projects suitable for support from the Oweninny Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund

5.1 Community based projects

Projects were identified through the community consultation as priority projects for each of the individual communities. Each Community Action Plan includes an overview of the wider context within which the plan is situated, and in some cases provides details of other foundational issues which would need to be addressed in order to procced with these projects.

5.2 List of area wide actions

In addition to the community specific plans, a number of area wide actions have also been identified, as summarised below. Many of these actions involve the establishment of structures and the development of plans as the area is not yet at a stage where specific actions can be taken.

1. **Area wide inter-community representative organisation (Strategic Objective 4)**
   Many challenges face this region of North Mayo, including social, economic and infrastructural. Effective development of the area will require the different stakeholders from statutory agencies, local community groups and representative organisations working together in the identification and development of area wide initiatives, such as local transport links, or area based tourism.

   In time, additional Community Benefit Funds associated with renewable energy infrastructure will become available, and mechanisms such as this area wide representative organisation could be hugely effective in the targeting of supports to maximise the social and economic impact of the combined funds. Furthermore, opportunities to leverage funding opportunities will be enhanced through effective cooperation between these key actors, some of whom administrator funding streams which could be leveraged against the various community benefit funds, such as Failte Ireland, and SEAI.

2. **Establish Approved Housing Body (AHB)**
   The availability of suitable housing was a consistent issue throughout the community consultation, as reflected in Strategic Objective 2, and to a lesser extent Strategic Objective 1. A number of communities have incorporated actions related to housing within their community action plans, and projects such as the development of community led housing discussed in outline detail with some community groups.

   In order to address this issue at a suitable strategic level, the establishment of an Approved Housing Body (AHB), with the remit to provide housing for people who cannot afford to pay private sector rents or buy their own homes at market rates, should be considered. The provision of housing is complex and challenging, and would need to be addressed by a well-resourced, and experienced entity such as an AHB in order to make more housing available in the target area.

   As an alternative to establishing a new AHB, an existing AHB willing to take on an area-wide role can be identified might be identified and engaged with.

3. **Area wide tourism plan**
   This part of North Mayo is wild, beautiful and dramatic. The Céide Fields lie along the coast to the north, Wild Nephin National Park to the south west and Lough Conn on the outskirts of Crossmolina. However, the challenge lies in marketing this as a cohesive area which utilises the areas' assets in a way that can be monetised. The development of an area wide tourism plan, which incorporates visitor services, trails and walks etc, will be essential in guiding and supporting community groups and private businesses as they seek to develop as a tourism destination. This plan would have regard to existing and planned facilities, such as the Oweninny Visitors Centre and projects identified in the community plans, and will seek to ensure that the relevant stakeholders are involved at the appropriate times, in particular organisations such as Failte Ireland, Mayo County Council and North Mayo Tourism.

4. Appointment of Project Development and Implementation Officer
   In order to fulfil the ambitions expressed by the community groups consulted, it is considered essential to provide ongoing support through a dedicated resource. As demonstrated in each of the community action plans, there are many steps involved in the development and implementation of community based projects. Improved cooperation, and the development of projects between different communities would also be enhanced with appropriate supports.

5. Review of potential development options for integrated local transport across the area
   Closely associated with Strategic Objective 1, quality of life; Strategic Objective 2, housing, and also to the societal challenge of climate change, it would be of immense benefit to current and future residents of the area, to look at opportunities for integrated transport across. Options additional to public transport could be trialled, such as rurally located Go Car facilities, which addresses the challenges encounter by local individuals with regards to transport, and which in collaboration with other actions, could help to maintain and grow population over time.
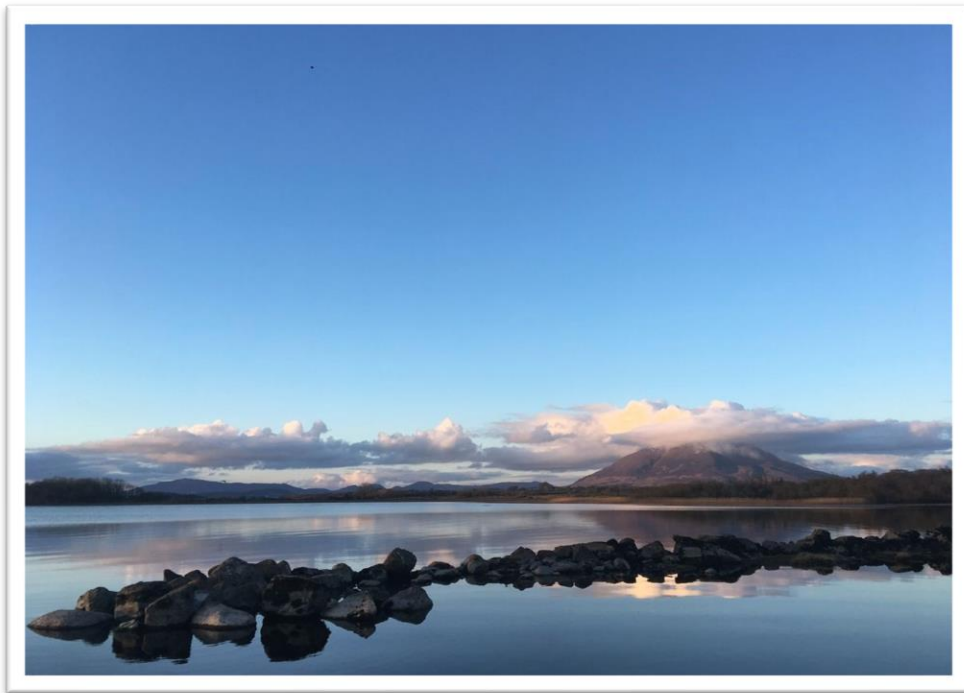
Lough Conn and Nephin, near Crossmolina. Photo reproduced with courtesy of North Mayo Tourism

5.3   Opportunities to leverage additional funding

Effective integrated development requires interagency cooperation, both in terms of implementation and funding. The Oweninny Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund also offers excellent potential to leverage additional funding into the area from sources such as the following:

- Rural Development Programme (LEADER)
- Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)
- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)
- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)
- Sports Capital Fund
- Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF)
- Clár Scheme
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme
- Community Water Fund
- Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF)
- Large Failte Ireland Funds
- Smaller Failte Ireland Funds
- Community Enhancement Programme
- Community Environment Action Fund (LA 21 Fund)
- Arts Council Funds
- Creative Ireland Funds
- Dormant Account Programmes
- Community Centre Capital Investment
- Community Climate Action Development Programme
- SEAI Energy Funds
- Philanthropic funds

Please note, that new funding opportunities are announced by funding bodies on an ongoing basis, and that it will therefore be of critical importance to continue to monitor potential sources of match as projects evolve.

6.   Oweninny Community Benefit Fund Recommendations

In addition to developing a strategic plan for the area and individual plans for each of the six communities, this project was asked to make recommendations with regard to the continued operation of the fund. These recommendations are set out below and are based on the following overall objectives –

1. Seeking to achieve a balance between the different objectives of the fund as set out hereunder.

2. Maximising the benefit of the fund to the communities involved in the long-term.

3. Meeting of the felt needs of the communities in the short-term.

4. Ensuring equity of treatment of the different communities adjacent to the wind farm on different communities in recognition that no two communities are the same.

5. Recognising the current limited capacity of the individual communities for fundraising and for accessing bridging finance.

6. Recognising that certain facilities which are important from a quality of life perspective are likely to always operate in a demand-deficient environment in which they will not be operationally viable.

7. Realising the potential of the fund to leverage funding from other sources in compliance with State Aid Rules.

8. Seeking to ensure that larger-scale developments benefit the wider community and are developed and operated with such an objective in mind.

9. Ensuring that the operation of individual developments does not become a major burden on individual communities in the long-term leading them to fall into disuse and disrepair.

The following recommendations are made in the light of these considerations.

5.3 Update Fund Guidelines

Goal: To update the existing fund guidelines in order to cater, where possible, for the expressed needs and requirements of the communities within the target area of the Oweninny Community Benefit Fund.

Specific actions should include the following at a minimum:

- Update of Fund guidelines to reflect the Strategic Objectives identified in this document, <u>and</u> which prioritise the projects identified within each Community Action Plan - subject to the overall application meeting the required criteria and terms and conditions of the Fund.
- Consider requiring that all relevant permissions are in place at application or contract stage in order to ensure projects supported by the Fund are ready to commence upon receipt of Fund Offer.
- Allow applications which include support for overhead running costs as eligible. Applicants should demonstrate need, and any such support be based upon suitable evidence such as certified accounts, or utility bills and should be capped in either absolute or percentage terms to ensure efficiency in facility management.

- Annually set aside a proportion of the fund for smaller projects which are not identified in the community action plans due to their nature or scale, e.g. small events or activities, would provide some flexibility for community groups to respond to local needs.
- Consider the development of a match funding policy which is cognizant of the population size and therefore fundraising potential of the communities within which projects are to be developed. For example, a match funding policy for capital projects over a certain size could be considered, such as a request for 5% match funding in cash or in kind for capital projects in excess of €100,000.
- Furthermore, it is also recommended that applicants are either awarded 100% of the sum which they have requested (net of match funding requirements), or 100% of specific elements within their application, in order to ensure that projects proceed as outlined and intended by the applicants.
- Cash flow is often a significant barrier to large scale community projects in smaller communities, particularly in situations where the funding is paid in arrears upon presentation of evidence that the expenditure has been incurred. This is done in order to minimise risks such as projects not proceeding as planned, or funding being diverted to unapproved projects. It is strongly recommended that alternative methods are developed in the present case.
- It is recommended that the Fund a) organise information sessions from community financing resources such as Clann Credo and Community Finance Ireland who can provide low cost loans to such groups and b) engage with local financial providers to discuss the Fund and provision of low cost finance options to successful groups
- Requiring that proposers of larger projects which are intended to facilitate the whole area are asked to include as part of their application for funding an indication as to the steps to be taken to ensure that all of the people in the area have access to the facility, service or activity in question.
- Develop a clear funding protocol for larger, multi-stage projects which will provide certainty of the availability of funding at all stages but which will allow funds to be decommitted in the event of a particular stage not being satisfactorily completed within agreed time limits.
- Consider the use of evaluation and impact assessment metrics which focus on social value. For example, a Social Return On Investment (SROI) measures change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It tells the story of how change is being created by measuring social, environmental and economic outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them. Such methodologies capture the value of projects such as meeting spaces, and skills based programmes.

5.4 Provision of Long Term Project Development and Implementation Support

While this process has helped to identify the priority projects and actions for each community, as well as strategic actions which can be carried out across the whole area, it is acknowledged that communities do not always have the capacity to pursue the development and implementation of those projects on their own. In order to enable the steps outlined in the community plans to be taken, communities will require both external expertise and support of a Project Development and Implementation Officer in accessing and effectively using such support. In addition, many projects will be expected to seek funding from funding programmes other that the Oweninny Wind Farm, and will require assistance in making such applications.

A similar resource will be required to support the area wide actions.

Goal: The intention is to support community groups to develop, implement and seek additional funding for their prioritised projects, so that they can undertake social and economic activities which contribute to the Strategic Objectives (see Section 4), at both a local and area level:

Specific actions should include the following at a minimum:

- The appointment of a Development Officer who can support community groups to undertake the tasks associated with the projects identified in each Community Action Plan.
- Support the formation of representative / elected Community Council type structures in each of the six communities included in this plan.
- Support the formation of the inter-community representative organisation identified in Strategic Objective 4.

5.5 Development of Communications Strategy, including an Implementation Plan

Goal: Enhance the communication of the Oweninny Community Benefit Fund to all stakeholders to ensure a broader understanding of its purpose and application process.

Specific actions should include the following at a minimum:

- Identification of key target groups - wider public, community groups, beneficiaries etc - and the development of appropriate communications channels and messaging for each cohort.
- Annual Promotional Campaign in advance of opening of Fund and during application period to promote awareness and understanding of the Fund
- Organization of Community Information Sessions/Drop-in Clinics to support groups in completion of applications and address queries
- Organisation of Information Sessions with other Third Parties such as (Mayo PPN, LEADER, Clann Credo, local Credit Union) to provide information on other funding sources and financing options available to
- Publication of a register of all projects supported by the Fund; this will assist community groups to develop project ideas, in addition to providing much requested transparency as to where funds are being invested.
- Provision of signage to all successful projects for public display and acknowledgment of the funding source
- Advertising Campaign showcasing projects supported to date (videos and photography promotion)
- The development of case studies annually which demonstrate the local impact of the Fund.

5.6 Conduct a further Strategic Planning Exercise in 2026

Goal: To continue the Strategic Planning process with communities living in the target area.

This Strategic Plan and Community Action Planning exercise has been a very substantial first step for the communities living within the target area of the Oweninny Community Benefit Fund. However to many people and groups this has been a very new for them and they were asked to think in ways with which they were not necessarily familiar The plans have been designed to provide extensive supports to community groups, and to also help them to build their capacity, and confidence in their ability to

delivery identified projects. Revisiting the Strategic Plan and Community Action Plans when confidence has developed through project delivery may result in a much more ambitious, strategic and determined set of plans.

6 Appendices

Introduction

Community Engagement Partners were appointed by Mayo County Council to work with the communities close to the Oweninny wind farm in order to develop guidelines as to how, why and where the Community Benefit Fund should be invested. This is being done through the production of an overarching Strategic Plan for the Fund, in addition to an individual Community Action Plan in each of the following six areas:

- Bangor
- Bellacorrick / Ballymunnely
- Crossmolina
- Eskeragh
- Keenagh
- Moygownagh

In consultation with community groups in each of these areas, Draft Action Plans have now been prepared. Each plan includes a vision for the community and a number of priority projects.

We now wish to gather the views of the wider community regarding the visions and the projects identified for their area. This survey has been developed in order to do that. By completing this survey you will ensure that your views are taken into account when the strategy and plans are being finalised.

The surveys are anonymous and the overall views of each community is what is being sought. Please take 10 minutes to complete this survey for your area. If you have any questions, please contact Ellenora Lynch at ellenora.lynch@gmail.com who is the Community Engagement Partner lead on this project.

Thank you.

1. To which community do you belong?

   ○ Bangor Erris

   ○ Bellacorrick & Ballymoney

   ○ Crossmolina

   ○ Eskeragh

   ○ Keenagh

   ○ Moygownagh

Note: Depending on the response this question, respondents were automatically taken to the questions on their community.

Bangor Erris

In the following questions you will be asked to respond to a vision for your community and actions which can be pursued by your community either on its own or in collaboration with others. The following are also acknowledged as actions important to the future of the community. Work with key state agencies to address local housing deficits Develop Primary Care Centre

1. The following is the Draft Vision for Bangor Erris. *We are going to work together to reimage Bangor Erris through investment in new and existing services, enhancing the area and making it an attractive place to live, work and invest in.* Please indicate your response to this draft vision.

   ○ The draft vision is satisfactory and doesn't need to be changed

   ○ The draft vision needs some minor amendments

   ○ The draft vision needs to be substantially changed

2. What is your suggestion for a vision for the area?

3. Please indicate your response to the following which have been identified as the priority projects for the Bangor Erris Area

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Garda Barracks renovated into a community hub / visitor centre.	○	○	○
Secure ownership of local industrial site. And promote most suitable economic activity	○	○	○
Work together to upgrade existing tourism assets, services and amenities	○	○	○
Create a new trail, linking the Bridge and river walk.	○	○	

4. Please outline any additional or replacement project which you think should be included.

Project One

Project Two

Bellacorrick and Ballymunnelly

In the following questions you will be asked to respond to a vision for your community and actions which can be pursued by your community either on its own or in collaboration with others. The following are also acknowledged as actions important to the future of the community.

- **Establish a post-primary scholarship scheme**
- **Design and implement a housing energy retrofit scheme**
- **Acquire (leasehold or freehold) land at the Musical Bridge & establish a Memorial Garden**
- **Pedestrian Musical Bridge (alongside existing musical bridge)**

1. The following is the Draft Vision for Bellacorrick & Ballymunnelly. *To work together in the creation of a rejuvenated village which is integrated with its environment, heritage and people.* Please indicate your response to this draft vision.

  ◯ The draft vision is satisfactory and doesn't need to be changed

  ◯ The draft vision needs some minor amendments

  ◯ The draft vision needs to be substantially changed

2. What is your suggestion for a vision for the area?

3. Please indicate your response to the following which have been identified as the priority projects for the Bellacorrick & Ballymunnelly Area

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Refurbishment of Bellacorrick Garda Station into a community hub	◯	◯	◯
Capacity building programme for Bellacorrick Women's group	◯	◯	◯
Community water rainwater harvesting conservation project	◯	◯	◯
Undertake village enhancement works to include walks / trails to garden and bridge	◯	◯	◯

4. Please outline any additional or replacement project which you think should be included.

Project One

Project Two

Crossmolina

In the following questions you will be asked to respond to a vision for your community and actions which can be pursued by your community either on its own or in collaboration with others. The following are also acknowledged as actions important to the future of the community.

- **Completion of the Crossmolina Flood Relief Scheme works**
- **Regeneration of town centre**

1. The following is the Draft Vision for Crossmolina. *Crossmolina has a vision of being a socially vibrant town, providing a wide range of services across all age groups. The town will embrace its reputation as a quality place to live and acknowledge and build upon its role as a commuting or satellite town for larger centres of employment such as Ballina, as well as a service centre for its own hinterland. Community and business interest groups will continue to explore how the area's unique cultural and historical attributes can contribute to the development of tourism potential, in collaboration with agencies such as Mayo North Tourism.* Please indicate your response to this draft vision.

   ○ The draft vision is satisfactory and doesn't need to be changed

   ○ The draft vision needs some minor amendments

   ○ The draft vision needs to be substantially changed

2. What is your suggestion for a vision for the area?

3. Please indicate your response to the following which have been identified as the priority projects for the Crossmolina Area

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Develop services and facilities required for older people based on DCU research	○	○	○
Renovate and expand functions of the Community Hub (located to rear of Crossmolina Community Centre)	○	○	○
Conduct Feasibility Study to identify Development Options for Lough Conn	○	○	○
Research, consult and decide upon short, medium and long term plans for the new Community Field.	○	○	○
Floodlit 5G full size pitch and walking track at Deel Rovers GAA Club	○	○	○

4. Please outline any additional or replacement project which you think should be included.

Project One

Project Two

Eskeragh

In the following questions you will be asked to respond to a vision for your community and actions which can be pursued by your community either on its own or in collaboration with others. The following are also acknowledged as actions important to the future of the community.

- **Establish a post-primary scholarship scheme**
- **Design and implement a housing energy retrofit scheme**
- **Engage with Bus Eireann to develop innovative collective transport options for primary and post primary students travelling from locality to neighbouring towns.**
- **Secure a Community employment scheme or RSS scheme to support the Eskeragh area.**

1. The following is the Draft Vision for Eskeragh. *Through increased community participation, work together to create a new future vision for the Eskeragh area, which is facilitated and strengthened by the development of a community hub.* Please indicate your response to this draft vision.

   ○ The draft vision is satisfactory and doesn't need to be changed

   ○ The draft vision needs some minor amendments

   ○ The draft vision needs to be substantially changed

2. What is your suggestion for a vision for the area?

3. Please indicate your response to the following which have been identified as the priority projects for the Eskeragh Area

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Development of a Village Enhancement Plan focusing on public realm	○	○	○
Development of Operational Plan for the use, management and development of Old School House.	○	○	○
Community solar energy pilot using agricultural buildings	○	○	○
Development and expansion of walking & cycling trails	○	○	

4. Please outline any additional or replacement project which you think should be included.

Project One

Project Two

Keenagh

In the following questions you will be asked to respond to a vision for your community and actions which can be pursued by your community either on its own or in collaboration with others. It is acknowledged that there may be other actions important to the future of the community to be addressed by state bodies.

1. The following is the Draft Vision for Keenagh. *Our vision is to improve the quality of the lives of existing residents in the local area, and those of its visitors, whilst attracting increased levels of tourism and residency to the area. This is to be achieved in part through the creation of a local community hub and tourism service centre, as well as other local services and amenities which will enhance the attractiveness of the area as a place to live, and visit.* Please indicate your response to this draft vision.

   ○ The draft vision is satisfactory and doesn't need to be changed

   ○ The draft vision needs some minor amendments

   ○ The draft vision needs to be substantially changed

2. What is your suggestion for a vision for the area?

3. Please indicate your response to the following which have been identified as the priority projects for the Keenagh Area

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Refurbishment of Keenagh Club House as a Community Hub and tourism service centre	○	○	○
Development and expansion of walking & cycling trails, including "bothy" style accommodation	○	○	○
Installation of walking track and lighting around the GAA pitch at Keenagh Club House	○	○	○
Commence the investigation of options to monetise the tourism activities undertaken locally	○	○	○

4. Please outline any additional or replacement project which you think should be included.

Project One

Project Two

Moygownagh

In the following questions you will be asked to respond to a vision for your community and actions which can be pursued by your community either on its own or in collaboration with others. The following are also acknowledged as actions important to the future of the community.

- **Partner with Eir and Mayo Co Council and the GAA to use the High Speed Fibre link in the village to develop a digital hub for hybrid working facilities in the GAA owned offices.**

1. The following is the Draft Vision for Moygownagh. *Moygownagh will become a more elderly friendly, inclusive and diverse community, which attracts new people to live in and visit the area through the continued development of local services, heritage sites and amenities. Additionally, Moygownagh will take direct actions to develop new housing in the village, acknowledging and building upon its role as a quality place to live, and as a satellite village.* Please indicate your response to this draft vision.

   ○ The draft vision is satisfactory and doesn't need to be changed

   ○ The draft vision needs some minor amendments

   ○ The draft vision needs to be substantially changed

2. What is your suggestion for a vision for the area?

3. Please indicate your response to the following which have been identified as the priority projects for the Moygownagh Area

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Review governance of Moygownagh Community Council, and amend to reflect best practice	○	○	○
Construct a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)	○ ○	○	
Agree a Development Plan and Action Plan for Moygownagh including housing needs	○	○	○
Develop and expand of walking & cycling trails	○ ○	○	
Develop Blanemore Forest Walk into a recreation park and walk of regional importance	○	○	○

4. Please outline any additional or replacement project which you think should be included.

Project One

Project Two

Thank you!! You have completed the questionnaire.
Thank you very much for your opinions. They will be of great value in preparing the final strategy and plans.

Bangor Development Action Group

Ballymunnelly Development Group

Bellacorrick Women's Group

Bord na Mona

Corvoderra Residents

Eskeragh Old School House

Oweninny Residents

Keenagh Community Development

Mayo County Council

Mayo North Tourism

Moygownagh Community Council

Moygownagh GAA

National Federation of Group Water Schemes

Scoil Neifinn

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

SEAI Sustainable Energy Community Programme

St Cormac's Society

Please note, the researcher(s) were led in their questioning by the participant, therefore not all questions were asked in all interviews. This flexibility allowed the researcher(s) the space to explore different aspects of the participants' experience as they arose.

Significant emphasis was placed on the integrity and quality of the community consultation phase of the project. The steps detailed below all formed part of the Stakeholder Consultation (see Section 2.1.2), and illustrates the level of detailed planning, and complexity required in such circumstances.

Database Collation

Following the contextualisation review and initial meeting with the Oweninny Community Benefit Fund Board, Community Engagement Partners (CEP) began the process of identifying local community groups with which to consult. This was considered a critical part of the process, and formed a key part of the preparation for the stakeholder consultation. The objective was to identify key local representative organizations and umbrella groups that the company could consult with on behalf of the wider community.

As a first step, CEP consulted with Mayo County Council to identify local community groups, and it is important to note that whilst Mayo County Council sought to support the consultants, they were also very unintrusive in their approach, in order not to influence the overall methodology or outcomes. CEP then reviewed other public sources of information, including the Mayo Public Participation Network (PPN) website to locate community groups in the area. This proved challenging, in that very few local community groups were identified in this manner.

CEP held a meeting with the Oweninny Evaluation Committee to ask for assistance in identifying local community representative, and community groups. CEP followed up individually with the Evaluation Committee members, and at this point began to collate a database and contact list for each of the six areas, identifying community groups, community representatives and activists within that area.

Individual meetings with community representatives

CEP then contacted all of the community representatives identified in each of the six areas on an individual basis, by means of an introductory email and follow up phone call, where necessary. This communication sought to inform them about the process (see Information Sheet below / following page) and to arrange to meet online or over the phone, it is interesting to note that the vast majority of those contacted agreed to become part of the process.
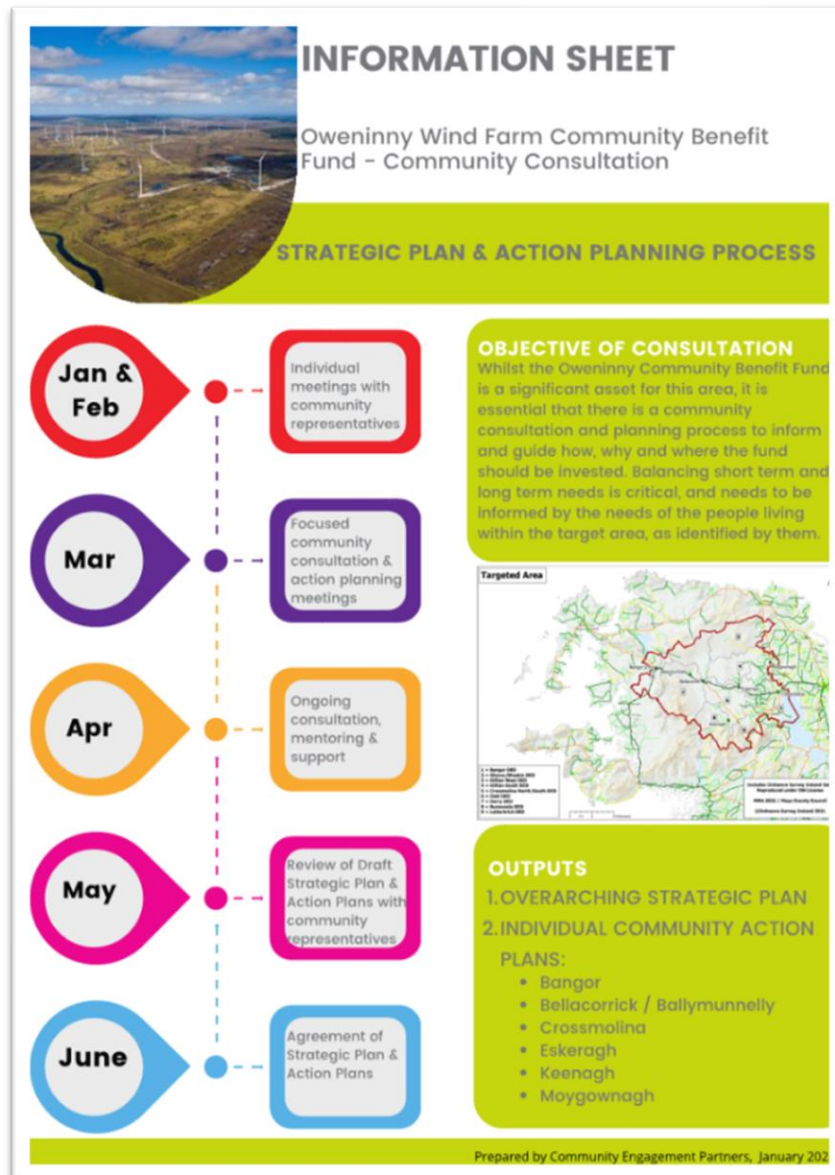
FIGURE 02: OWENINNY INFORMATION SHEET

An extensive series of meetings then took place throughout January, February and March 2022, amounting to approximately 40 meetings in all. During the course of these initial meetings, many additional community representatives were identified, and invitations to participate extended to these. This is termed a snowballing technique, whereby "samples begin from a core of known elements and are then increased" (2014). The Guiding Questions used during the semi structured interviews were as follows:

- What is it like living in your area?
- How do you see your area developing over the long term?
- What are the main challenges being experienced by people living in your area at the moment?
- Where are services delivered? What gaps are you aware of?
- Brief discussion of key services availability and location.
- What do you see as key assets in your area?

- In the short term – what kind of changes would you like to see? What actions do you think should be prioritise by the fund over the next 3-5 years?
- What are local expectations around the Oweninny Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund?

Community Action Planning Meetings

When a good overview of the area had been developed, CEP arranged a series of in person community group meetings to begin the in-depth community action planning process. It was explained that the purpose of the meetings at this stage, was to try and "reimagine a sustainable future for the area".

FIGURE 7: OWENINNY COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

In practice, many of these meetings involved quite a lot of discussion about the wind farm - some positive, some negative. It was a very important part of the process that CEP allowed these views to surface, whilst not allowing them to dominate. CEP sought to contain discussions around historic issues, instead seeking to orientate people towards the future. Key themes began to emerge from this initial set of community meetings, including retrofitting, post-secondary scholarships and provision of basic services amongst others. CEP then prepared a mind map which was used to group ideas according to thematic areas, and to share information easily across the team.

Community Asset Audit & Service Delivery Assessment

To gain a more in-depth understanding of each area, CEP asked the community groups to complete two mapping exercises – a Community Asset Audit and Service Delivery Assessment. These documents were provided in template format, and following a request for additional information, explanatory Information Sheets were provided.

The Community Asset Audit is an extremely useful community planning tool, which can be used for the general purpose of assisting a community to reflect on the physical and non-physical assets which the community contains. It is a process which helps communities to identify the tangible and non tangible assets in their area, and in the areas where it was completed, provided a valuable insight to the planning process. The Service Delivery Assessment is based on the premise that services can be provided in one of four ways, and it was particularly interesting to see where different rural communities within the target area tended to gravitate towards.

Whilst the information gained from these exercises was very valuable, it is important to note that they were moderately complex, and not all communities participated in this part of the consultation process. It was made clear by CEP that the completion of this element of the process was entirely voluntary, but would be of value.

FIGURE 8: ASSET MAPPING & SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT

Community Action Planning Meetings

The next step in the process was to arrange a further round of in person meetings to start work specifically on the Community Action Plans.

Targeted Area

1 = Bangor DED
2 = Glenco/Sheskin DED
3 = Kilfian West DED
4 = Kilfian South DED
5 = Crossmolina North/South DED
6 = Deel DED
7 = Derry DED
8 = Bunaveela DED
9 = Letterbrick DED

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