

Sligo.

2030 **One Voice**
One Vision

One Year On

Newsletter September 2024



FEATURING:

AIM Centre
Launch

Queen Maeve
Square Official
Opening

Sligo Women in
Business Event

#AnotherSligo2030Project



Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

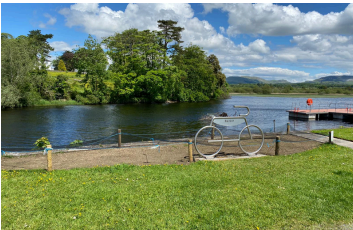
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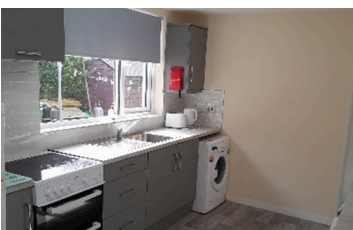
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Sligo 2030 - One Voice, One Vision Local Economic and Community Plan One Year On



A Chairde,

"It is with a sense of pride that we look back on the first year of 'Sligo 2030 One Voice, One Vision' (Sligo 2030) adopted in 2023, and reflect in this bulletin on some of what has been achieved in the first year of this integrated community and economic framework. The ambitious smart and green plan with specific actions to target transformation and innovation represents the commitment of the Council and its key partners to provide leadership in delivering on the Sligo 2030 vision for the county."

Cllr Declan Bree

Cathaoirleach, Sligo County
Council.



A Chairde,

"As Chair of Sligo Local Community Development Committee, I want to commend the ongoing work in the delivery of 'Sligo 2030 One Voice, One Vision' the Local Economic & Community Plan for Sligo. It has been a busy year for Sligo and this bulletin 'Sligo 2030 – One Year On' outlines a sample of projects, delivered and ongoing, and relates them directly back to the relevant action in the plan. The bulletin serves as an information update but also as a monitoring tool to provide an insight into delivery on the actions envisaged."

Cllr Donal Gilroy

Chair, Sligo Local Community
Development Committee.

Queen Maeve Square Official Opening

New Queen Maeve Square opens in Sligo following €4 million investment.

Developed by Sligo County Council and funded by Fáilte Ireland, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and Sligo County Council – Square to transform centre of Sligo town and act as a hub for Sligo’s community and attractions.



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Action 48: Using a co-design approach with the community, upgrade and enhance amenities across the county and in Sligo town through targeted public realm interventions that create attractive, vibrant, and multi-functional public spaces that are friendly and safe for the young and old.

Queen Maeve Square, County Sligo was officially opened on 3rd May 2024 by Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Catherine Martin TD, in the company of Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council, Councillor Gerard Mullaney. This follows an investment of over €4million by Fáilte Ireland, the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and Sligo County Council.

Queen Maeve Square has transformed the centre of Sligo into an attractive public space and orientation hub, and aims to encourage visitors to come to Sligo for events and festivals. It will also serve as an outdoor venue for concerts and other events, with a standing capacity of approximately 4,500.

Outdoor dining facilities for local businesses and attractive seating options ensure that the Square will attract visitors and encourage them to stay longer, creating a vibrant atmosphere in the centre of Sligo. An iconic Sligo sign, unveiled during the launch, is to become a focal point of Queen Maeve Square. It is expected to encourage visitors to stop for photo opportunities and spend more time in the area, while helping promote and raise the profile of the Square and Sligo.

Speaking at the official opening of Queen Maeve Square, Councillor Gerard Mullaney, Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council said:

“Queen Maeve Square will play a key role in promoting Sligo's attractions, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the visitor experience. Located in the heart of Sligo, Queen Maeve Square is designed to be a versatile and functional space that caters to the diverse needs of the community. Queen Maeve Square stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity, inviting everyone to experience the magic of this remarkable town.”

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media Catherine Martin TD, said at the opening:

“I am pleased to officially open Queen Maeve Square today in Sligo. The investment of over €4million in Queen Maeve Square helps transform the heart of the town and gives a central focus to many of Sligo’s attractions. Sligo has so much to offer visitors, and Queen Maeve Square creates a fantastic focal point for the town, and is an exciting new addition to support Sligo hosting festivals and events, like the one being held here this weekend. Queen Maeve Square is a wonderful amenity for visitors to enjoy and spend longer in the region and I look forward to seeing the tourism offering in Sligo continue to develop around



this focal point and under the guidance of Fáilte Ireland’s recently launched 5-year Destination and Experience Development Plan for Sligo.”

Minister for Housing, Local Government and Housing, Darragh O’Brien TD, said:

“Queen Maeve Square is one of a number of projects my Department, through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, is supporting across County Sligo.

Along with other URDF supported projects, such as the O’Connell Street Enhancement works, this project will help drive regeneration and rejuvenation of the town centre and help make Sligo an even more attractive and vibrant place for people to live, work and invest in. Sligo County Council has been allocated over €57 million in total under the URDF and I look forward to continuing to work with them on the progression and completion of their remaining URDF projects.”



Chief Executive of Sligo County Council, Martin Lydon said:

“The opening of Queen Maeve Square marks a transformative moment for Sligo as we continue to position ourselves as a premier destination along the Wild Atlantic Way. This new civic space is not just a beautiful public amenity - it is a testament to our community's pride and ambition. Queen Maeve Square will serve as a vibrant hub for residents and visitors alike, encouraging exploration of our rich history and natural assets. I am confident this project will be a catalyst for the sustainable renewal of our

historic town centre, further enhancing Sligo's reputation as a welcoming, culturally vibrant gateway to the northwest. This is an exciting day for Sligo, and we look forward to the many events, activities and fond memories that will take place in this wonderful new public square.”

The project is enhanced with four information points which detail Sligo's rich history and inspires visitors to further explore the destination. These information points focus on different themes relevant to Sligo and the cut-out artwork for the metal signs was designed by students from ATU Sligo.



The Square will feature a map of Sligo's Coastline etched in the pavement with ground lighting to mark the 7 nearby Discovery Points along the Wild Atlantic Way. An orientation sign designed by Sligo illustrator, Annie West, provides further information to visitors, and at night, the Square will be illuminated by light projections offering an exciting, animated space.

The Queen Maeve Festival was the first event to take place in the newly launched Square and ran from Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th May 2024

The exciting and varied programme of events was provided free of charge for attendees with headline acts including Gavin James, Moncrieff and Téada & Niamh Farrell.

The Support acts included Shane Beirne & friends, The Rosecaps,

The Hit Machine Drummers and a Battle of The Bands event from Music Generation Sligo brought a terrific range to the offering.

Family friendly fun day events were delivered by Cairde. The programme included both a historical walk of Sligo town and Knocknarea. The festival provided entertainment for everyone in a safe environment.

Operational planning took place through the collaboration of multiple departments within the Council and external partners and businesses to deliver the festival and it was an exciting project for Sligo County Council, offering a taste of what is to come and what the square can offer the Sligo community and visitors alike.

This is a major enhancement to the town centre which is now available for future generations.



Sligo's new AIM Centre is a high-tech facility and a gift for manufacturers



Action 1: Retain, grow and transform existing investment to Sligo that will further consolidate the areas of pharmaceuticals, MedTech, technology, business services, the green economy and industry 4.0 and consolidate and grow existing clusters, while identifying opportunities for new or complimentary clusters.



Recently opened by Enterprise Trade and Employment Minister Simon Coveney TD, the AIM Centre will assist manufacturers from across the north-west in embracing digitalisation and new technologies.

Housed in a now-transformed building that was once Sligo's fire station, AIM provides space for up to 80 people to co-locate, collaborate and create. This shared space not only fosters connections, but also serves as a hub where creativity meets technology to address real-world challenges.



AIM provides a dedicated team of experts, including an engineering manager, robotics and automation engineers, a programme manager and an extended team with freelancer expertise is on hand to support companies in enhancing their manufacturing processes and supply chains.

The focus isn't always on acquiring new systems but rather on leveraging existing equipment more effectively, by integrating it with cutting-edge technologies.

This approach to innovation emphasises smarter use of current assets through connectivity and modern tech solutions. A key benefit for manufacturers is the time and effort they can save by availing of the expertise and facilities at AIM, rather than having to develop these skills in-house.

AIM is a partnership between Sligo County Council and ATU, and is funded by them, together with Enterprise Ireland, which invested €2.2m through the Border Enterprise Development Fund. It is also supported by Leitrim County Council and further aided by the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR), as the border area was the region most affected by Brexit.

You can learn more about the facilities and expertise on offer at AIM at AimCentre.ie



Adoption of Sligo County Council Climate Action Plan



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Action 24: Develop a Sligo County Council Climate Action Plan as required by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and explore relevant initiatives that could be implemented as part of the plan.

Sligo County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was adopted by the Elected Members in February 2024 and it will be key in strengthening the links between local, regional, national and international climate policy.

The plan aims to deliver effective climate action at the local and community level through place-based and evidence-based climate action. The plan includes mitigation and adaptation actions that ultimately provide pathways to achieve a decarbonised society. The plan supports the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

Sligo County Council's Climate Action Plan outlines 51 no. actions across seven themes including:

- Governance & Leadership
- Sustainability & Resource Management

- Built Environment & Energy
- Community Resilience & Transition
- Environment & Biodiversity
- Transport & Mobility
- Decarbonisation Zone

For example Action 28 sets out how Sligo County Council is tasked with delivering the Community Climate Action Fund. They are currently in the process of providing €445,000 to 23 no. community groups and supporting initiatives like community gardens, solar energy, community composting, energy efficiency, active travel and circular economy. These funds will support a wide variety of organisations, from sports clubs to tidy towns and from local enterprise to community development groups – to help them take climate actions in their local community, save energy and money and support local climate related initiatives.



Sligo Women In Business Network

Roundtable meeting with Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney, T.D.



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Action 2: Support and actively promote local businesses by promoting awareness and availability of supports to Women in Business.

As part of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Sligo's remit to lead out on supporting Sligo as a Regional Growth centre to drive sustainable economic activity and employment, the LEO actively promotes awareness of supports to SMEs. Moreover, to inform the supports supplied, the LEO also facilitates initiatives for SMEs to articulate their needs to supporting Agencies and Government Departments.

To that end, in February, the Local Enterprise Office's Sligo Women in Business Network (SWIBN), supported by Maria Walsh M.E.P,

invited Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney T.D., to a roundtable meeting at City Hall, Sligo.

Twelve members of SWIBN, from sectors including Health & Well-being, Social Inclusion, Environment, Technology, Communications, Human Resources, Hospitality, Arts, Business Consulting, and the Local Enterprise Office represented the Network at the meeting which was also attended by Maria Walsh M.E.P., Frank Feighan T.D. and Sligo Strandhill MD electoral candidate Fergal Nealon.



Network members were keen to impress on the Minister, and accompanying Local, National and European representatives, the nature of conducting small business in Sligo and the challenges associated as well as the intrinsic value of living and working in Sligo. There was a lively discussion on topics including: Financial and soft supports available to SMEs and opportunities to look at further scope; Increases in the Minimum Wage and Statutory Paid Sick leave and their effect on SMEs; Increased cost of doing business; VAT rates in the hospitality sector; Opportunities for people who migrate into the region to work; Housing and the effect on growing business; Consideration should be given to the nature and scale of regulatory reporting that has to be done by SMES; Capitalising on remote

working to garner critical skills for SMEs in Sligo and, conversely, for people in Sligo (and other rural locations) to offer their skills to larger companies, often enabling a better work/life balance.

Minister Coveney undertook to consider all topics raised and asked for the Network to feedback a synopsis of the meeting to his Department.



Sligo Company, Sleater Solutions Wins the North-West Regional Award at the National Enterprise Awards



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Action 3: In line with the North West Regional Enterprise Plan, encourage and support entrepreneurship throughout Sligo and increase the number of Enterprise Ireland supported companies.

Sleater Solutions, who are supported by Local Enterprise Office Sligo, were winners at this year's National Enterprise Awards. The awards, which took place at the Round Room in the Mansion House in Dublin, were in their 24th year and run annually by the Local Enterprise Offices.

Keith Sleater of Sleater Solutions took home the North-West Regional Award. Sleater Solutions is a recognised industry expert in the provision of engineering, automation, and software solutions for clients in the food and beverage, manufacturing, automotive, medical device and pharmaceutical sectors. The company, which was founded in 2002, is based at Union Road Business Park, Collooney, Co. Sligo and employs 12 full-time and 5 other-time staff.

On receiving his award, Keith said: "On behalf of the entire Sleater Solutions team, I'm delighted to accept this award, which is a testament to the drive, energy and commitment of the company. From our initial base in Strandhill, to our recently-expanded headquarters in Collooney, Sleater Solutions works with clients around the globe. I'd like to thank both Local Enterprise Office Sligo, and Enterprise Ireland for their ongoing efforts to assist us in developing our business."

Liam Kiely, Acting Head of Enterprise, Sligo County Council said: "We are delighted to see the achievements of Sleater Solutions achieving well-deserved national recognition this evening. The National Enterprise Awards serve to highlight the very best businesses that the Local Enterprise Offices are working with across the country. Local Enterprise Office Sligo have been working with Keith and the team at Sleater Solutions for many years and recently assisted in their transfer to Enterprise Ireland. We wish Keith and his committed team continued success going forward."

This year's winners share a €50,000 investment fund and eight regional winners were announced on the night.

The National Enterprise Awards also celebrated 10 years since the inception of the Local Enterprise Offices in 2014 with several former winners attending on the evening.



Pilot Programme of Shared Tenancies to Reduce and Prevent Homelessness



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Action 8: Address current and future housing needs and requirements in Sligo.
Action 33: Develop and implement initiatives that support and strive for inclusive, connected, and vibrant communities.
Action 36: Address rising poverty and deprivation levels across all groups and areas where it exists in Sligo.

Sligo County Council's pilot programme of Shared Tenancies to reduce and prevent homelessness.

In March 2024, The Housing Section commenced a pilot programme in which family-sized Council houses located in housing estates in Sligo Town were repurposed as Shared Tenancy properties.

The rationale behind this was to fill a void created by the huge shortage of private rented properties at the present time, and to ensure that adults without dependents who are not in need of supports, and who are at risk of homelessness or currently in homeless accommodation could be offered their own room in a shared house. All these adults are qualified for social housing supports and are on the Council's housing list. Most are working or undertaking courses of study and would

previously have availed of informal private rented tenancies or HAP, but due to the housing crisis, have presented to the Council with Notices of Termination or having already been made homeless. Some of those now residing in shared tenancies would have been at risk of rough sleeping in cars, vans or couch surfing, while trying to hold down full-time jobs.

In the North-West Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2023-28 and the 2024 Draft Implementation Plan, it was proposed that the Local Authorities "pilot the use of social housing as shared accommodation for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, while recognising that shared accommodation does not suit all clients" (Action 39 in Draft.)

There are currently four Shared Tenancy houses in Sligo Town, providing homes for thirteen people who have been matched by gender, cultural background, age and lifestyle, where possible. Each person has signed a licence agreement and contributes to their rent and utilities costs.

To establish the Shared Tenancy houses, the Council was grant-aided funding for furniture and appliances by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

While this is a temporary measure and residents are expected to move on whenever they have sourced other accommodation, it is proving to be a valuable tool to reduce those numbers of homeless adults who do not have support needs nor dependents, who were previously bed-blocking in the communal emergency hostels.

When assessing the demographics of this cohort of shared housing residents, there are two people under age 25 years; 5 non-Irish nationals/new communities; one person with a disability; and a person in recovery from addiction issues.

This representation of vulnerable minority groups is explained by their lack of social and family supports and their increased risk of poverty and social exclusion.



SLIGO 2030 ACTIONS AT A GLANCE



Tourism

Action 55: Develop Sligo's leisure tourism offering to deliver world class visitor experiences including through implementing the Sligo Destination Experience Development Plan through collaboration with tourism agencies, visitors, industry, communities and environment.

In March Fáilte Ireland launched a new five-year plan that will help drive and sustain tourism in County Sligo. The Sligo Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) aims to create a sustainable tourism destination by progressing a range of key initiatives that will disperse tourists across the wider destination and strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing sustainable employment opportunities.

Key stakeholders in the area were consulted and contributed to the plan including Sligo County Council, the Destination Sligo Forum, tourism businesses and community groups. A representative working group drawn from across the tourism sector in County Sligo was a key partner in the development of the plan.



Active Travel

Action 10: Invest in critical transport infrastructure to maximise the opportunities and build future transport needs of the county across road, rail and smart travel.

Sligo County Council Active Travel in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA) are delivering new active travel infrastructure in Enniscrone along Cliff Road and Main Street. This Safe Routes to School project involves the reallocation of roadspace to provide for improved road safety measures and reduce vehicular speeds. Features of the works include construction of new pedestrian crossings, widened footpaths, junction tightening, raised table top at golf club entrance, road markings, landscaping and public lighting energy efficiency upgrade. The aim is to increase safety at the school zone and prioritise active travel (walking, cycling, wheeling and scooting) to and from the school and for all general public.



Connectivity

Action 10: (A) Continuing to support upgrades and improvements to Sligo's road networks including the N16 to Enniskillen and Belfast.

The N16 Lugatober (Drumkilsellagh to Lugnagall) Project will improve one of the most substandard national roads in Ireland. The project will deliver 2.54km of single carriageway national road realignment along with 2.9km of active travel facilities. The Project is managed by the Sligo Regional Design Office of Sligo County Council and is funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland. Construction work which is being undertaken by BAM Civil Ltd. is well advanced and expected to be substantially complete by Q4 2024.

SLIGO 2030 ACTIONS AT A GLANCE



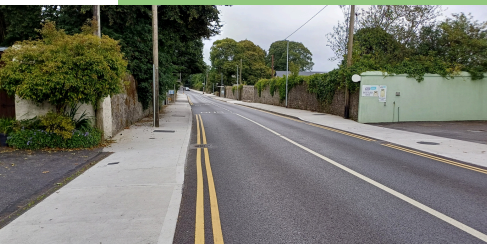
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Active Travel

Action 27: Encourage smarter travel and increase and upgrade active travel infrastructure including cycleways, greenways and cycle paths across the county.

Collooney active travel scheme

The Active Travel Department of Sligo County Council have completed a significant project in Collooney Village. The project included, provision of new footpaths, provision of dedicated pedestrian crossings and provision of new bus shelters. Additionally, the roads department have completed the upgrade of the road pavement. The project in its entirety provides a safer environment for road users. It provides dedicated facilities for public transport.



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Active Travel

Action 27: Encourage smarter travel and increase and upgrade active travel infrastructure including cycleways, greenways and cycle paths across the county.

Sligo Urban Area Active Travel Scheme

Design and Completion of a significant pedestrian crossing at Wolfstone Street- Church Hill junction. This Scheme was designed and developed by the Active Travel Department. The design ethos of this project centres around universal design.



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Community



Action 44: Maximize the opportunities for rural communities in Sligo by continuing to support the LCDC as the Local Action Group for the delivery of the rural development programme (LEADER)

Sligo Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Sligo County Council and Sligo LEADER Partnership announced the commencement of the 2023 – 2027 LEADER Programme at City Hall, Sligo on Thursday 30th May 2024 with members of the LCDC, staff of Sligo County Council and Sligo LEADER Partnership attending. Sligo's LEADER Programme 2023-2027 is open to accept 'Expressions of Interests'. Community groups, private individuals and new or existing businesses are invited to find out more about Sligo LEADER Programme 2023-2027 funding and its application process.

Sligo have secured funding of €6,054,309 million to support and facilitate the continued development of rural communities all over County Sligo to include programme funding and administration and animation costs. Sligo LEADER Programme 2023-2027 will be delivered through three main areas – Economic Development and Job Creation, Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion, and Sustainable Development of Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation.

SLIGO 2030 ACTIONS AT A GLANCE



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Health

Action 40: In line with the Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan, promote healthy life choices (including food and diet), positive mental health and build on community well-being initiatives including: (A) Developing a Healthy Sligo Strategy for the county which will be a local interagency framework to develop collaborative local programmes that align with the Healthy Ireland Fund including programmes to address health inequalities in areas with the highest deprivation across the lifecycle

The first Activator Poles programme took place in Mitchell Curly Park and is part of ongoing work in the promotion of fitness walking in County Sligo. One of the participants commented: "A great community activity."

The "Stronger for Longer" programme aims to increase physical activity and encourages participation in strength and conditioning based exercise for 50 plus. Some of the feedback included: "A great programme and a great way to get out and exercise!"



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PEACE

Action 35: Deliver the PEACE Plus programme 2021-2027 for County Sligo.

Sligo PEACEPLUS Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plan has been developed and the online application with all documentation was submitted to SEUPB on 28th March 2024.

No clarifications have been received to date however a decision is pending, expected by the end of Q3.

The plan delivery is to commence on receipt of the Letter of Offer.



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